MUSIC HISTORY SEQUENCE LACC



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Music History Sequence LACC

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Detailed Licensing

Licensing

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1: Introduction to Music History

Introduction

On the face of it, "music history" seems like a simple thing: facts, dates, musical pieces, composers, etc. But, like all history, it turns out that things are a bit more (maybe a lot more) complicated than that, but that also means it's much more interesting.

Music history is one of the scholarly branches of music study, as opposed to the *practical* study of how to play instruments/sing/compose. It fits under a large umbrella called "**Musicology**." Underneath the big heading of "Musicology," we have **Historical Musicology**, which is what we're dealing with in this class. We also have **Systemic Musicology**, which includes sub-branches like music theory, music pedagogy, acoustics, etc. We also have **Ethnomusicology** (a debated and somewhat problematic term), a sub-discipline which is the study of music in various cultures, often combined with anthropology and field research.

The scholarly study of music history began in earnest in Europe, and took off specifically in Germany. As the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* puts it: “Germany led the rest of Europe in establishing the academic discipline of modern music scholarship. The German university provided the institutional framework within which the new field could evolve.” (Duckles 853) University support, especially in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, allowed German musicologists to be extremely productive, writing biographies, critical editions, analyses, books, reviews, and all sorts of things. A lot of this scholarship focused on German or Austrian composers. For example, German publisher Breitkopf and Härtel began the tradition of publishing a composer’s complete works beginning with German composer J.S. Bach in 1851. Other places in Europe followed Germany's lead eventually. Italy, for example, took a little bit of time to catch up. Italy had an enormous amount of source material —libraries full of old music, learning treatises, and theoretical documents—but were slow to start systematically studying it.

So what? Well, when the birth of historical musicology starts in a place and is nurtured by that place, it becomes attached to that place. German musicology WAS musicology. For a while, at least. Perhaps you see where we're going with this. Musicology was, for a long time, a study undertaken by a narrow subsection of scholars to study the musical accomplishments of a narrow subsection of artists. Thankfully, we are beginning to address that there is more to history than that narrow view. However, the history of this class comes right out of this narrow view tradition.

"Western" Music History

Because Musicology started out focusing on white and male composers and artists, what we have now is a curriculum that struggles with diversity. Music appreciation and music history classes began teaching about a group of composers and a set pieces we now refer to as "the canon." You will have heard some of these names: Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Brahms... All of the ones I just named are Austrian or German. Of course other European composers became an important part of this group: Berlioz (France), Verdi (Italy), Elgar (England), Tchaikovsky (Russia), Chopin (Poland), Liszt (Hungary), and many others. But for many, many years there were few women, few people of color, and very little diversity of ANY kind in the music of Western Europe. It doesn't mean that the global majority of people was uninvolved in the practice of music-making--far from it--it just means that the scope of this class has traditionally focused on a mere sliver of the world's diversity.

There are a lot of problems clearly. The absence of women is a function of the patriarchy of white, European (and later American) society. For centuries, it was "unseemly" for a woman of marrying age to be a performer or composer in these societies. Even if a young woman showed promise in music, it was expected that she'd confine her music-making to the home after a certain age. Musical talent would make her more attractive to a mate, but could or should not lead to an acceptable career. The absence of people of color speaks to systematic racism in Europe and the United States. It wasn't until the 20th-century when color lines *started* to weaken, and even then, progress happened at a glacial pace. We still have a long way to go. Homophobia has been rampant in different places at different times. Tchaikovsky's status as a gay man had to be hidden in his native Russia; it was illegal to be a homosexual at that time. To quiet the rumors about him, he married Antonina Miliukova. It was a miserable and disastrous union for them both.

The role of Western European music in the global perspective is even more complicated because of colonization. Many of the countries in Europe participated in the so-called "Age of Empire," in which countries sent ships out into the world to create colonies in distant areas. In the best case scenario, these colonies provided an exchange of ideas, materials, crops, and culture. In the worst cases, colonizers wiped out indigenous populations, seeing no value except the land to extend their empires. More

commonly, though, the colonizers imposed cultural ideas upon the colonized, which infiltrated every aspect of life, including music.

For example, in 1498, Spain claimed the Caribbean islands of Trindad and Tobago as a colony. Not only did Spain eradicate many of the indigenous people living there, but they also changed the demographics of the islands by bringing enslaved Africans to work the land. This had far-reaching effects. Even today, the population of Trinidad and Tobago is about 40% people of African descent. In the late 18th century, Spain invited the French to take over the agriculture of the area, but near the turn of the 19th-century, the British swooped in and took over, keeping control of Trinidad and Tobago until 1962. Slavery was abolished there in 1838, so to replace that workforce, the British brought in indentured servants from India, whose descendants now make up another 40% of the population. Interested in controlling aspects of culture, the British banned drums in 1834. (I have no words for this--it boggles the mind.) In response, a new tradition grew--steelpan. According to *Resonances*, "impoverished Afro-Trinidadian youth began building drums out of discarded biscuit tins in the late 1930s." Soon, the Trinidadians began using oil barrels (thanks to the trash from a U.S. Naval base on the island) to create their unique instrument. It was like a drum, but it could play individual pitches, and therefore melodies. And it was loud, meaning that it was perfect for outdoor events like the Catholic tradition of Carnival. At first, the British (who were not Catholic) worried that these new instruments would incite violence (again, I don't understand), but then a steelpan musician played "God Save the King" for the (British) governor, and he not only gave his approval, but also supported the promotion of the instrument. But then weirdly, in many nationally sponsored music competitions, the steelpan players often played arrangements of European classical music. So...you see it's complicated.

Some interesting facts:

- The Vienna Philharmonic operated for 155 years until they allowed the first woman to join...in 1997.
- Composer Florence Price was the first African-American composer to have a symphony performed by a professional orchestra in the U.S. (1933)
- Composer Amy Beach was the first American woman to write a symphony (that we know about, of course) and the first woman anywhere to have her symphony performed by a major orchestra (1896).

"The Grand Narrative"

In the traditional Music History "sequence" (a series of classes that are supposed to cover all music history) we have 6 basic time periods covering Western European music history:

- Medieval (~1150-1400)
- Renaissance (~1400-1600)
- Baroque (~1600-1750)
- Classical (~1750-1820)
- Romantic (~1820-1900)
- 20th Century (~1900-2000) - also called "Modern" or "Modern/Post-modern"

This is the basis of a "grand narrative" of music history, beginning when music began to be systematically notated. Because this notation began happening in Roman Catholic monasteries in Western Europe, this narrative centralizes the music that follows in this notated tradition.

These time periods have been the accepted categories for music history classes (and music appreciation classes as well) for close to a century now, but they are problematic for a number of reasons. As with any vague time periods, there is stylistic overlap--sometimes significant--between two adjacent periods. This timeline is heavily dependent on music being notated in a standard system. The 20th century period covers a century that is extremely diverse and home to many distinct stylistic movements including Jazz, Electronic Music, Minimalism, Integrated Serialism, Neo Classicism, among many others. And this version of 20th century doesn't even begin to scratch the surface of rock, funk, soul, or any of the other "popular" styles. What version of "20th century music" ignores these dominant influences?

Our Music History Sequence

Rather than stick only to the older version of this sequence, which studies the Western Classical Music tradition mostly in a vacuum, I want to make Mozart and Beethoven part of a larger conversation that also includes Lead Belly, the Beatles, Appalachian folk ballads, Beijing Opera, epic recitation from West Africa, meditative minimalism from the US in the 1960s, electronic music from Germany, atonality, hip-hop, psychedelia, surf rock, Gregorian chant, etc. AND I also want to make sure you understand the old tradition of those 6 periods.

In order to do this, we need to pull from a few different sources. You will be able to see where our source material comes from on these libretext pages, but there will also be some originally written material as well. It's going to be a fun journey over two semesters, and I'm glad you're here!

~Dr. Christine Lee Gengaro

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

2: Music Fundamentals

Learning Objectives

1. Recognize a wide variety of sounds, comparing and contrasting them using musical elements of pitch, volume, articulation, and timbre.
2. Aurally identify important performing forces (use of the voice and instruments) of Western music.
3. Define basic elements of melody, harmony, rhythm, and texture and build a vocabulary for discussing them.
4. Identify basic principles and types of musical form.
5. Listen to music and describe its musical elements and forms.
6. Compare and contrast categories of art music, folk music, and pop music.
7. Identify ways in which humans have used music for social and expressive purposes

2.1: What is Music?
2.2: Performing Forces for Music
2.3: Melody, Harmony, Rhythm, Texture
2.4: Putting it All Together
2.5: Chapter Summary

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2.1: What is Music?

Music moves through time; it is not static. In order to appreciate music we must remember what sounds happened, and anticipate what sounds might come next. Most of us would agree that not all sounds are music! Examples of sounds not typically thought of as music include noises such as alarm sirens, dogs barking, coughing, the rumble of heating and cooling systems, and the like. But, why? One might say that these noises lack many of the qualities that we typically associate with music.

We can define **music** as the intentional organization of sounds in time by and for human beings. Though not the only way to define music, this definition uses several concepts important to understandings of music around the world. “Sounds in time” is the most essential aspect of the definition. Music is distinguished from many of the other arts by its temporal quality; its sounds unfold over and through time, rather than being glimpsed in a moment, so to speak. They are also perceptions of the ear rather than the eye and thus difficult to ignore; as one can do by closing his or her eyes to avoid seeing something. It is more difficult for us to close our ears. Sound moves through time in waves. A sound wave is generated when an object vibrates within some medium like air or water. When the wave is received by our ears it triggers an effect known as sound, as can be seen in the following diagram:

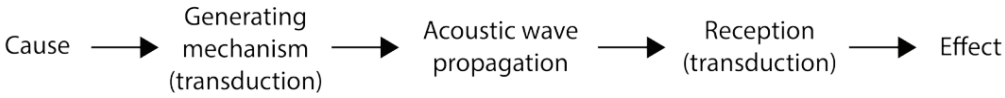


Figure 2.1.1: Movement of a sound wave by Corey Parson Source:Original Work

As humans, we also tend to be interested in music that has a plan, in other words, music that has intentional organization. Most of us would not associate coughing or sneezing or unintentionally resting our hand on a keyboard as the creation of music. Although we may never know exactly what any songwriter or composer meant by a song, most people think that the sounds of music must show at least a degree of intentional foresight. A final aspect of the definition is its focus on humanity. Bird calls may sound like music to us; generally, the barking of dogs and the hum of a heating unit do not. In each of these cases, though, the sounds are produced by animals or inanimate objects, rather than by human beings; therefore the focus of this text will only be on sounds produced by humans.

Acoustics

Acoustics is “the science of sound.” It investigates how sound is produced and behaves, elements that are essential for the correct design of music rehearsal spaces and performance venues. Acoustics is also essential for the design and manufacture of musical instruments. The word itself derives from the Greek word acoustikos which means “of hearing.” People who work in the field of acoustics generally fall into one of two groups: **Acousticians**, those who study the theory and science of acoustics, and **acoustical engineers**, those who work in the area of acoustic technology. This technology ranges from the design of rooms, such as classrooms, theatres, arenas, and stadiums, to devices such as microphones, speakers, and sound-generating synthesizers, to the design of musical instruments like strings, keyboards, woodwinds, brass, and percussion.

Sound and Sound Waves

As early as the sixth century BCE (500 years before the birth of Christ), Pythagoras reasoned that strings of different lengths could create harmonious (pleasant) sounds (or tones) when played together if their lengths were related by certain ratios. Concurrent sounds in ratios of two to three, three to four, four to five, etc. are said to be harmonious. Those not related by harmonious ratios are generally referred to as **noise**. About 200 years after Pythagoras, Aristotle (384-322 BCE) described how sound moves through the air—like the ripples that occur when we drop a pebble in a pool of water—in what we now call waves. Sound is basically the mechanical movement of an audible pressure wave through a solid, liquid, or gas. In physiology and psychology, sound is further defined as the recognition of the vibration caused by that movement. **Sound waves** are the rapid movements back and forth of a vibrating medium—the gas, water, or solid—that has been made to vibrate.

1.3.3 Properties of Sound: Pitch

Another element that we tend to look for in music is what we call “definite pitch.” A definite **pitch** is a tone that is composed of an organized sound wave. A note of definite pitch is one in which the listener can easily discern the pitch. For instance, notes produced by a trumpet or piano are of definite pitch. An indefinite pitch is one that consists of a less organized wave and tends to be perceived by the listener as **noise**. Examples are notes produced by percussion instruments such as a snare drum.

Numerous types of music have a combination of definite pitches, such as those produced by keyboard and wind instruments, and indefinite pitches, such as those produced by percussion instruments. That said, most tunes are composed of definite pitches, and, as we will see, melody is a key aspect of what most people hear as music.

The sound waves of definite pitches may come in many frequencies.

Frequency refers to the repetitions of a wave pattern over time and is normally measured in **Hertz** or **cycles per second (cps)**. Humans normally detect types of sound called musical tones when the vibrations range from about twenty vibrations per second (anything slower sounds like a bunch of clicks) to about 20,000 vibrations per second (anything faster is too high for humans to hear.) Watch the first five minutes of this excellent explanation of how different types of sounds result from the combination of the **partials** above the basic tone. In actuality, all sounds result from different variations of this process, as it naturally occurs in our environment.

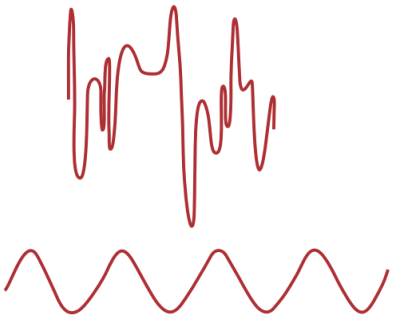


Figure \(\PageIndex{2}\): Two sound waves, the first an indefinite pitch and the second a definite pitch by Corey Parson Source:Original Work

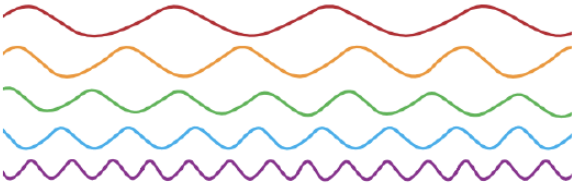
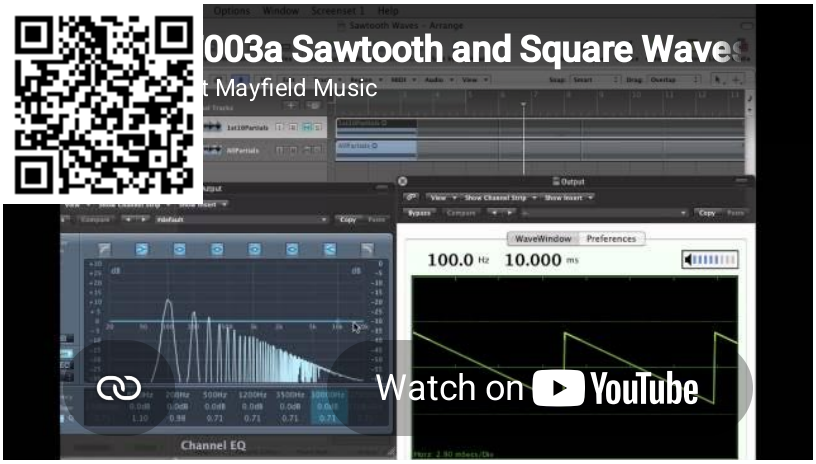


Figure \(\PageIndex{3}\): Sine waves of varying frequencies Author by Corey Parson Source:Original Work

Ex. 1.1: The Audio Kitchen; Sawtooth and Square Waves (2012)



http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A1gwC8Y0yMU

In the Western world, musicians generally refer to definite pitches by the “musical alphabet.” The musical alphabet consists of the letters A-G, repeated over and over again (…ABCDEFGABCDEFGABCDEFG…), as can be seen from this illustration of the notes on a keyboard. These notes correspond to a particular frequency of the sound wave. A pitch with a sound wave that vibrates 440 times each second, for example, is what most musicians would hear as an A above middle C. (Middle C simply refers to the

note C that is located in the middle of the piano keyboard.) As you can see, each white key on the keyboard is assigned a particular note, each of which is named after the letters A through G. Halfway between these notes are black keys, which sound the sharp and flat notes used in Western music. This pattern is repeated up and down the entire keyboard.

SIDEBAR: How Waves Behave

- **Reflection** – sound waves reflect off of hard surfaces
- **Absorption** – sound waves are absorbed by porous surfaces
- **Amplitude** – refers to how high a wave appears on an oscilloscope; i.e., how much energy it has and therefore how loud it is
- **Frequency** – refers to how many times a wave vibrates each second. This vibrating speed is measured using cycles per second (cps) or the more modern Hertz (Hz)

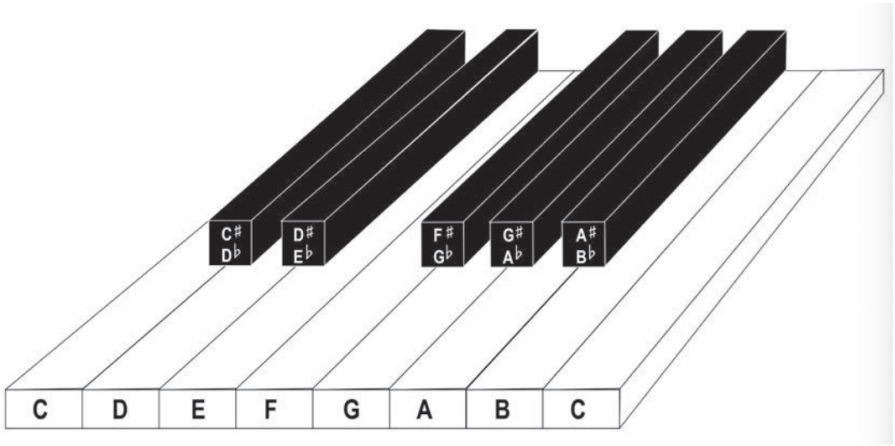


Figure \(\PageIndex{4}\): The keyboard and the musical alphabet by Corey Parson Source:Original Work

When a sound wave is generated, it often generates other waves or ripple effects, depending on the medium through which it travels. When a string of a certain length is set into motion, for example, its waves may also set other strings of varying lengths into motion.

The vibration with the lowest frequency is called the **fundamental pitch**. The additional definite pitches that are produced are called **overtones**, because they are heard above or "over" the fundamental pitch (tone). Our musical alphabet consists of seven letters repeated over and over again in correspondence with these overtones. Please see Figure 1.3.6 for the partials for the fundamental pitch C:

To return to the musical alphabet: the first partial of the overtone series is the loudest and clearest overtone heard "over" the fundamental pitch. In fact, the sound wave of the first overtone partial is vibrating exactly twice as fast as its fundamental tone. Because of this, the two tones sound similar, even though the first overtone partial is clearly higher in pitch than the fundamental pitch. If you follow the overtone series, from one partial to the next, eventually you will see that all the other pitches on the keyboard might be generated from the fundamental pitch and then displaced by **octaves** to arrive at pitches that move by **step** (refer to Figure 1.3.6).

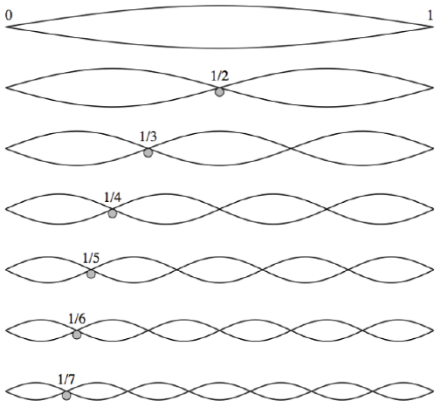


Figure \(\PageIndex{5}\): Overtones of a vibrating string by "Qef" Source:Wikimedia License | Public Domain

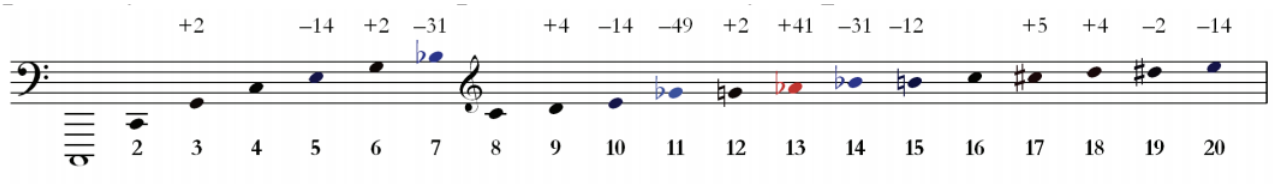
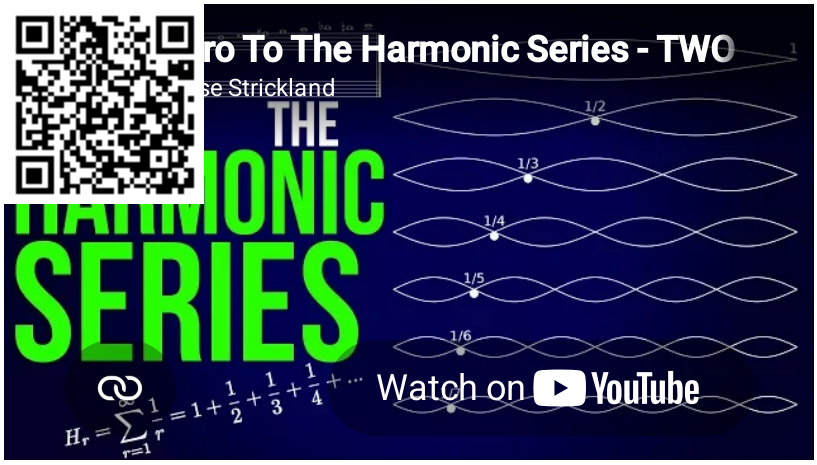


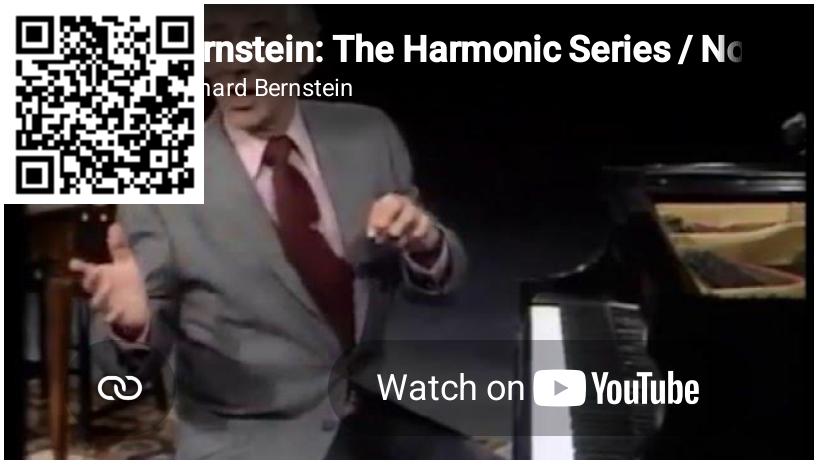
Figure 2.1.6: Partials of C by “MusicMaker5376” Source: Wikimedia

Watch these two videos for an excellent explanation of the harmonic series from none other than Leonard Bernstein himself, famous conductor of the New York Philharmonic and composer of the music of West Side Story.

Ex. 1.2: **The Harmonic Series**



Intro To The Harmonic Series



Bernstein: The Harmonic Series / Norton Lectures

The distance between any two of these notes is called an interval. On the piano, the distance between two of the longer, white key pitches is that of a step. The longer, white key pitches that are not adjacent are called leaps. The interval between C and D is that of a second, C and E that of a third, the interval between C and F that of a fourth, the interval between C and G that of a fifth, the interval of C to A is a sixth, the interval of C to B is a seventh, and the special relationship between C and C is called an octave.

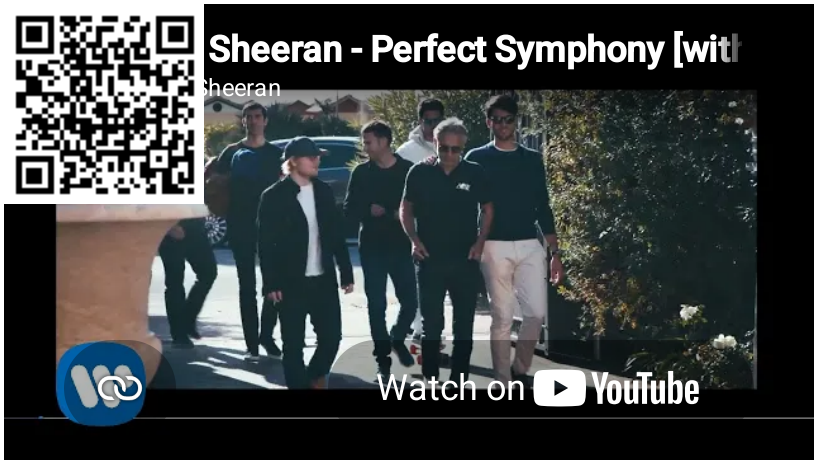
1.3.4 Other Properties of Sound: Dynamics, Articulation, and Timbre

The volume of a sound is referred to as **dynamics**; it corresponds with the **amplitude** of the sound wave. The **articulation** of a sound refers to how it begins and ends, for example, abruptly, smoothly, gradually, etc. The **timbre** of a sound is what we mean when we talk about tone color or tone quality. Because sound is somewhat abstract, we tend to describe it with adjectives typically used for tactile objects, such as “gravelly” or “smooth,” or adjectives for visual descriptions, such as “bright” or “metallic.” It is

particularly affected by the ambiance of the performing space, that is, by how much echo occurs and where the sound comes from. Timbre is also shaped by the **equalization (EQ)**, or balance, of the fundamental pitch and its overtones.

The video below is a great example of two singers whose voices have vastly different timbres (as well as styles). How would you describe Ed Sheeren's voice? Perhaps you would call it "nasal" or "sinewy." How would you describe Andrea Bocelli's voice? Perhaps it could be called "centered" or "open."

Ex. 1.3: Ed Sheeran - "Perfect Symphony" featuring Andrea Bocelli



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2.2: Performing Forces for Music

Music consists of the intentional organization of sounds by and for human beings. In the broadest classification, these sounds are produced by people in three ways: (1) through the human voice, the instrument with which most of us are born, (2) by using acoustic musical instruments, or (3) by using electronic and digital equipment to generate purely electronic sounds.

The Human Voice as a Performing Force

The human voice is the most intimate of all the musical instruments in that it is the one that most of us have. We breathe in, and, as we exhale, air rushes over the vocal cords causing them to vibrate. Depending on the length of the vocal cords, they will tend to vibrate more slowly or more quickly, creating pitches of lower or higher frequencies. The muscles in the larynx contract, causing the vocal cords to close, and air pressure forces them open. This closing and opening can happen hundreds of times a second. To reach a higher pitch, vocal cords vibrate more rapidly. Changing the shape of your vocal cavity allows for different timbres and vowel sounds.

Changing the position of the mouth and lips allows for further variety in sound and for the production of consonants. Because men tend to have thicker and longer vocal cords, they tend to have lower voices than women, whose vocal cords tend to be shorter and slimmer.

The natural speaking voice exhibits some variation in pitch. One's voice often rises at the end of a question. When you have a cold and the vocal chords are swollen, you often speak in lower pitches than normal. Singing generally differs from speaking in that it uses a wider **range** of definite pitches that often occur in a regular meter (discussed later). By range, we mean the number of pitches, expressed as an intervallic distance. A trained opera singer might have a range of three to four octaves, whereas the average person has a range of a little over an octave.

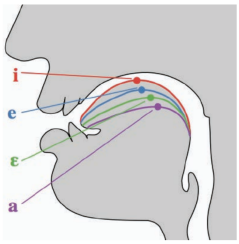


Figure 2.2.1: Position of the larynx for various vowel sounds. by User "Badseed." Source: Wikimedia

Additionally, as we speak we generally focus on consonants, which articulate the beginnings and ends of syllables and help make our meaning plain. In singing, performers often focus on the vowels, as vowels carry better than consonants. Also, the meaning of the words is sometimes deemed less significant than the melodies themselves. Here's an explanation of how and why the vowels are so important--

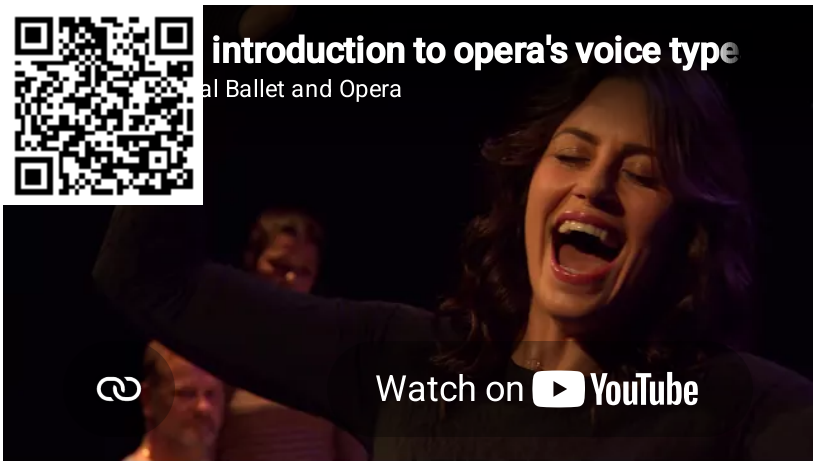
Ex. 1.2: Why vowels are important



In Western music, voice ranges are typically split into four categories (see video below for subdivisions of these ranges):

1. **Bass**: lowest male voices; sing in a low **register**, below middle C on the piano (middle C being the C approximately in the middle of the range of the piano)
2. **Tenor**: highest male voices; sing in a register around and below middle C
3. **Alto**: lowest female voices; sing in a register around and above middle C
4. **Soprano**: highest female voices; sing almost exclusively above middle C

Ex. 1.2: Vocal Ranges



Western classical music uses all four of these ranges, whereas melodic register and range in jazz, rock, and pop are more limited.

Musical Instruments as Performing Forces

Humans have been making music with bone, stone, wood, textiles, pottery, and metals for over 35,000 years. A musical instrument is any mechanism, other than the voice, that produces musical sounds. As we study both classical and commercial music, we will be listening to two types of musical instruments, purely acoustic instruments and electronic instruments.

A purely **acoustic instrument** is an instrument whose sound is created and projected through natural acoustic characteristics of the materials of which it is made--as listed above--bone, stone, wood, textiles, pottery, and metals. When one hits wood or bone or stone or metal, one sends vibrations through it which might be amplified by the use of a small chamber like a sound box or a gourd. When one plucks a string, one creates sound waves that might be amplified through a piece of wood or box of wood, such as one finds in an acoustic guitar or violin. As with the voice, the larger the instrument, the deeper the pitches it plays—consider, for example, the cello versus the violin. Instruments also differ in their ranges, some being able to produce a wide variety of notes while others are much more restricted in the pitches that they can play. (For example, the piano has a range of over seven octaves, while the saxophone normally plays only two and a half). The **timbre** (pronounced *tam-ber*) of a sound coming from a musical instrument is affected by the materials used and the way in which the sound is produced. Based on these two characteristics, we categorize acoustic instruments into five groups: strings, woodwinds, brass, percussion, and keyboard.

Strings: instruments whose sound is produced by setting strings in motion. These strings can be set in motion by plucking the strings with your finger, or a pick (a piece of plastic). They can also be set in motion by bowing. In bowing, the musician draws a bow across the string, creating friction and resulting in a sustained note. Most bows consist of horsehair held together on each end by a piece of wood. String examples: violins; violas; violoncellos; string bass (also known as the double bass or stand-up bass); classical, acoustic, and bass guitars; harps.

Woodwinds: instruments traditionally made of wood whose sound is generated by forcing air through a tube, thus creating a vibrating air column. This can be done in one of several ways. The air can travel directly through an opening in the instrument, as in a flute. The air can pass through an opening between a reed and a wooden or metal mouthpiece as in a saxophone or clarinet or between two reeds as in a bassoon or oboe. Although many woodwind instruments are in fact made of wood, there are exceptions. Instruments such as the saxophone and the modern flute are made of metal while some clarinets are made of plastic. These instruments are still considered woodwinds because the flute was traditionally made of wood and the saxophone and clarinet still use a wooden reed to produce the tone. Woodwind examples: flute, clarinet, oboe, bassoon.

Brass: instruments traditionally made of brass or another metal (and thus often producing a “bright” or “brassy” tone) whose sound is generated by “buzzing” (vibrating the lips together) into a mouthpiece attached to a coiled tube. This “buzzing” sets the air

within the tube vibrating. The pitches are normally amplified by a flared bell at the end of the tube. Brass examples: trumpet, bugle, cornet, trombone, (French) horn, tuba, and euphonium.

Percussion: instruments that are typically hit or struck with the hand, with sticks, or with hammers, or that are shaken or rubbed. Some percussion instruments (such as the vibraphone) play definite pitches, but many play indefinite pitches. The standard drum set used in many jazz and rock ensembles, for example, consists of mostly indefinite-pitch instruments. Percussion examples: drum set, agogo bells (double bells), glockenspiel, xylophone, vibraphone, bass drum, snare or side drum, maracas, claves, cymbals, gong, triangle, tambourine.

The Orchestra

When we put these families together, in various combinations and numbers, we get the performing ensembles of various sizes (number of performers) that are unique to classical music. For example, the performing ensemble that has become the focal point for much classical music is the symphony orchestra which is the largest of the instrumental ensembles and plays symphonies, overtures, concertos, and the like. In fact, as we begin to explore music in its historical context, we will often be looking at the growth of the orchestra from a small group to the larger version we know today and much of the music used as examples will be played by orchestras of various sizes.

Ex. 1.3: George Meets the Orchestra



Non-acoustic instruments

Electric sounds and instruments: instruments can be electric in several ways. In some cases, an acoustic instrument, such as the guitar, violin, or piano may be played near a microphone that feeds into an amplifier. In this case, the instrument is not electric. In other cases, amplifiers are embedded in or placed onto the body of an acoustic instrument. In still other cases, acoustic instruments are altered to facilitate the amplification of their music. Thus, solid body violins, guitars, and basses may stand in for their hollow-bodied cousins.

Another category of electronic instruments are those that produce sound through purely electronic or digital means. Synthesizers and the modern electric keyboard, as well as beat boxes, are examples of electronic instruments that use wave generators or digital signals to produce tones.

Synthesizers are electronic instruments (often in keyboard form) that create sounds using basic wave forms in different combinations. The first commercially available compact synthesizers marketed for musical performance were designed and built by Dr. Robert Moog in the mid-1960s.



Figure 2.2.9: Early Minimoog by R. A. Moog Inc. (ca. 1970) by “glacial23” Source: Wikimedia

A staple of twenty-first-century music, synthesizers are widely used in popular music and movie music. Their sounds are everywhere in our society. Synthesizers are computers that combine tones of different frequencies. These combinations of frequencies result in complex sounds that do not exist in nature. Listen to the recording below of Bjork, which incorporates live musicians with a variety of strange and interesting synthesized sounds.

Ex. 1.4: Björk – Hyperballad



Solid-state electronics have enabled the synthesizer to shrink in size from its early days in the 1970s. Compare the number of electronic components in the photo of Keith Emerson’s “rig” with the much smaller one used by RZA linked below.

Ex. 1.5: Emerson, Lake, and Palmer – “Tarkus” 1997



Synthesizers can also be used to imitate the complex sounds of real instruments, making it possible for a composer to create music and have it played without having to hire a real orchestra. The video below features music created using sample-based synthesis, a method that incorporates recorded audio “samples” to approximate the sound of an orchestra through a computer. (Jump ahead to 1:30 to skip the specs.)

Ex. 1.6: Vienna Symphonic Library



The ultimate techno dominance in pop music is heard in Hip Hop. Here, RZA demonstrates his portable Beat Thang at Guitar Center. He shows how he creates and customizes a beat on the fly. (He also shows off his freestyling skills.)

EX. 1.7 RZA demos his Beat Thang.



https://youtu.be/rrcV2W73rGc

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2.3: Melody, Harmony, Rhythm, Texture

Melody

The melody of a song is often its most distinctive characteristic. The ancient Greeks believed that melody spoke directly to the emotions. **Melody** is the part of the song that we hum or whistle, the tune that might get stuck in our heads. A more scientific definition of melody might go as follows: melody is the coherent succession of definite pitches in time. Any given melody has range, register, motion, shape, and phrases. Often, the melody also has a rhythmic organization.

The first of these characteristics, range, is one that we've already encountered as we talked about pitch. The range of a melody is the distance between its lowest and highest notes. We talk about melodies having narrow or wide ranges. **Register** is also a concept we discussed in relation to pitch. Melodies can be played at a variety of registers: low, medium, high.

As melodies progress, they move through their given succession of pitches. Each pitch is a certain distance from the previous one and the next. Melodies that are meant to be sung tend to move by small intervals, especially by intervals of seconds or steps. A tune that moves predominantly by step is a stepwise melody. Other melodies have many larger intervals that we might describe as "skips" or "leaps." When these leaps are particularly wide and with rapid changes in direction (that is, the melody ascends and then descends and then ascends and so forth), we say that the melody is **disjunct**. Conversely, a melody that moves mostly by step, in a smoother manner—perhaps gradually ascending and then gradually descending—might be called **conjunct**.

Shape is a visual metaphor that we apply to melodies. Think of a tune that you know and like: it might be a pop tune, it might be from a musical, or it might be a song you recall from childhood. Does it correspond with any of the shapes in Figure Figure 2.3.1?

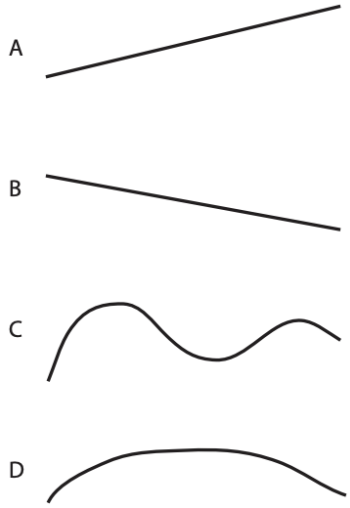


Figure 2.3.1: Melodic Shapes by Corey Parson Source: Original Work

In other words, do the pitches of the melody primarily ascend; shape A? Descend; shape B? Oscillate, much like a wave; shape C? Ascend, arch up, and then descend; shape D? These are shapes that we might hear unfolding over time. As we think back to a melody that we know, we can replay it in our mind and visualize the path that it traces.

Most melodies have smaller sub-sections called **phrases**. These phrases function somewhat like phrases in a sentence. They are complete thoughts, although generally lacking a sense of conclusion. In the song "Row, Row, Row Your Boat," the music corresponding with the words "Row, row, row your boat," might be heard as the first phrase and "gently down the stream," as the second phrase. "Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily," comprises the third phrase, and "life is but a dream," a fourth, and final, phrase.

Melodies are also composed of motives. A **motive** (also called a ***motif***) is the smallest musical unit, generally a single rhythm of two or three pitches. In "Row, Row, Row Your Boat," the music set to "merrily" might be heard as a motive. Motives repeat, often in sequence. A **sequence** is a repetition of a motive or phrase at a different pitch level. Thus, in "Row, Row, Row Your Boat," the first time you hear "merrily" is when it is at the top of the melody's range. The next time, it is a bit lower in pitch, the next time a bit lower still, and the final time you hear the word, it is sung to the lowest pitch of the melody.

Finally, here is the first movement of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony 5 with a graphical score. The colored bars make it easy to "see/hear" the motive and the sequence of the motive as it works its way through the work.

Harmony

Most simply put, harmony is the way a melody is **accompanied**. While melody can be described as the horizontal aspect of music, harmony refers to the vertical aspect of music and is concerned with the different musical sounds that occur at the same moment.

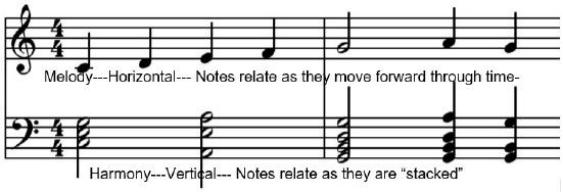


Figure : Example of the relationships between melody and harmony.

Western music culture has developed a complex system to govern the simultaneous sounding of pitches. Some of its most complex harmonies appear in classical music, while other forms of popular music tend to have fewer and simpler harmonies.

We call the simultaneous sounding of three or more pitches a **chord**.

Chords can be **consonant** or **dissonant**. Consonant intervals and chords tend to sound sweet and pleasing to our ears. They also convey a sense of stability in the music. Dissonant intervals and chords tend to sound harsher to our ears, and often convey a sense of tension or instability. In general, dissonant intervals and chords tend to resolve to consonant intervals and chords. Seconds, sevenths, and tri-tones sound dissonant and resolve to consonance. While some of the most consonant intervals are unisons, octaves, thirds, sixths, fourths, and fifths. From the perspective of physics, consonant intervals and chords are simpler than dissonant intervals and chords. However, the fact that most individuals in the Western world hear consonance as sweet and dissonance as harsh probably has as much to do with our musical socialization as with the physical properties of sound.

Key (sometimes called "tonality") is closely related to both melody and harmony. The key of a song or composition refers to the pitches that it uses. A key is a collection of pitches, much like you might have with a collection of stamps, bottles, etc. The most important pitch of a key is its tonic, that is, the note from which the other pitches are derived. For example, a composition in C major has C as its tonic; a composition in A minor has A as its **tonic**; a blues in the key of G has G as its tonic. A key is governed by its **scale**. A scale is a series of pitches, ordered by the interval between its notes. There are a variety of types of scales. Every major scale, whether it is D major, C major, or G-sharp major, has pitches related by the same intervals in the same order. Likewise, the pitches of every minor scale comprise the same intervals in the same order. The same could be said for a variety of other scales that are found in jazz, rock, and popular music, including the blues scale and the pentatonic scale.

Major and minor scales are most often found in Western music today. The difference in quality between the major scale and the minor scale is in the perception of the sound. Major sounds relatively bright and happy. "Happy birthday" and "Joy to the World" (the Christmas Carol) are based on the major mode.

You might know that the simplest form of the blues scale is a type of pentatonic or five-note scale. This reflects the origins of the blues in folk music; much of the folk music around the world uses pentatonic scales. Blue notes are pitches that are sometimes added to blues scales and blues pieces. The most important blues note in the key of A is E-flat. In a sense, blues notes are examples of accidentals. **Accidentals** are notes that are not normally found in a given key. For example, F-sharp and B-flat are accidentals in the key of C. Accidentals are sometimes called **chromatic** pitches: the word chromatic comes from the ancient Greek word meaning color, and accidentals and chromatic pitches add color and excitement to a composition.

The chords of a key tend to progress in an orderly fashion. Certain chords tend to resolve to other chords. The dominant or V chord normally resolves directly to the tonic or I chord. We call a series of chords a **chord progression**.

Rhythm

When you think of the word rhythm, the first thing that might pop into your head is a drum beat. But rhythm goes much deeper than that. Earlier, we defined music as intentional organization of sounds. **Rhythm** is the way the music is organized in respect to time. It works in tandem with melody and harmony to create a feeling of order. The most fundamental aspect of rhythm is the **beat**, which is the basic unit of time in music. It is the consistent pulse of the music, just like your heartbeat creates a steady, underlying pulse within your body. The beat is what you tap your feet to when you listen to music. Imagine the beat as a series of equidistant dots passing through time as in the Figure .

Figure : The Beat by Thomas Heflin. Source: Original Work

It should be noted that the beat does not measure exact time like the second hand on a clock. It is instead a fluid unit that changes depending on the music being played. The speed at which the beat is played is called the **tempo**. At quick tempos, the beats pass by quickly, as represented by Figure below showing our beats pressed against each other in time.



Figure : Fast Tempos by Thomas Heflin. Source: Original Work

At slow tempos, the beats pass by slowly, as seen above showing our beats with plenty of space between them. Composers often indicate tempo markings by writing musical terms such as “allegro” which indicates that the piece should be played at a quick, or brisk, tempo.

In other cases, composers will write the tempo markings in beats per minute (BPM), when they want more precise tempos. Either way, the tempo is one of the major factors in establishing the character of a piece. Slow tempos are used in everything from sweeping love songs to the dirges associated with sadness or death.

Take for example, Chopin’s famous funeral march (Piano Sonata Op.35 No.2).

Fast tempos can help to evoke anything from bouncy happiness to frenzied madness. One memorable example of a fast tempo occurs in “Flight of the Bumblebee,” an orchestral interlude written by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov for his opera The Tale of Tsar Saltan, which evokes the busy buzzing of a bee.

Beats are the underlying pulse behind music, while **meter** refers to the way in which those beats are grouped together in a piece. Each individual grouping is called a **measure** or a **bar** (referring to the bar lines that divide measures in written music notation). Most music is written in either duple meter (groupings of two), triple meter (groupings of three), or quadruple meter (groupings of four). These meters are conveyed by stressing or “accenting” the first beat of each grouping. In the figure below, you can see examples of triple and quadruple meter. The first beat of each bar is larger than the rest to indicate this accent. These larger beats are often referred to as strong beats, while the smaller beats between them. are referred to as weak beats.

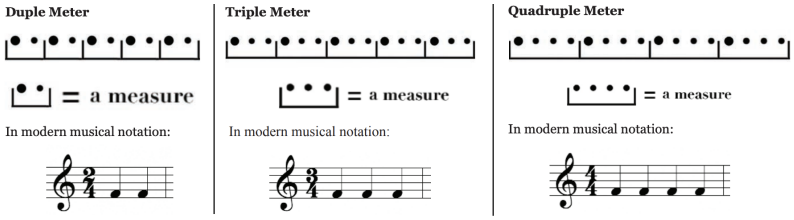


Figure : Meter by Thomas Heflin. Source: Original Work

One way to add a sense of rhythmic variation to music is through the use of syncopation. **Syncopation** refers to the act of shifting of the normal accent, usually by stressing the normally unaccented weak beats or placing the accent between the beats themselves. Syncopation is one of the defining features of ragtime and jazz, and is one aspect of rhythmic bounce associated with those genres of music.

In some cases, certain types of music may feature the use of a **polyrhythm**, which simply refers to two or more different rhythms being played at the same time. A common polyrhythm might pit a feeling of four against a feeling of three. Polyrhythms are often associated with the music of Africa. However, they can be found in American and European music of the twentieth century, such as jazz.

Texture

Texture refers to the ways in which musical lines of a musical piece interact. We use a variety of general adjectives to describe musical texture, words such as transparent, dense, thin, thick, heavy, and light. We also use three specific musical terms to describe

texture: monophony, homophony, and polyphony. Of these three terms, homophony and polyphony are most important for jazz, rock, and popular music.

Monophonic music is music that has one melodic line. This one melodic line may be sung by one person or 100 people. The important thing is that they are all singing the same melody, either in unison or in octaves. Monophony is rare in jazz, rock, and popular music. An example would be a folk melody that is sung by one person or a group of people without any accompaniment from instruments. Gregorian chant is another excellent example of monophonic music.

Homophonic music is music that has one melodic line that is accompanied by chords. A lot of rock and popular music has a homophonic texture. Anytime the tune is the most important aspect of a song, it is likely to be in homophonic texture. Elvis Presley's "Hound Dog" (1956), The Carter Family's version of "Can the Circle be Unbroken" (1935), and Billy Joel's "Piano Man" (1973), are relatively good examples of homophony.

Polyphony simultaneously features two or more relatively independent and important melodic lines. Dixieland jazz and bebop are often polyphonic, as is the music of jam bands such as the Allman Bros. "Anthropology" (ca. 1946) for example, a jazz tune recorded by Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Parker, and others reflects the busy polyphony typical in bebop. Some jazz played by larger ensembles, such as big bands, is also polyphonic at points, although in this case, there is generally a strong sense of a main melody. Much of the music that we will study in this text exists somewhere between homophony and polyphony. Some music will have a strong main melody, suggesting homophony, and yet have interesting countermelodies that one would expect in polyphony. Much rap is composed of many layers of sounds, but at times those layers are not very transparent, as one would expect in polyphony.

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2.4: Putting it All Together

1.11.1 Form in Music

When we talk about musical **form**, we are talking about the organization of musical elements—melody, harmony, rhythm, texture, timbre—in time. Because music is a temporal art, memory plays an important role in how we experience musical form. Memory allows us to hear repetition, contrast, and variation in music. And it is these elements that provide structure, coherence, and shape to musical compositions.

A composer or songwriter brings myriad experiences of music, accumulated over a lifetime, to the act of writing music. He or she has learned how to write music by listening to, playing, and studying music. He or she has picked up, consciously and/or unconsciously, a number of ways of structuring music. The composer may intentionally write music modeled after another group's music: this happens all of the time in the world of popular music where the aim is to produce music that will be disseminated to as many people as possible. In other situations, a composer might use musical forms of an admired predecessor as an act of homage or simply because that is "how it's always been done." We find this happening a great deal in the world of folk music, where a living tradition is of great importance. The music of the "classical" period (1775-1825) is rich with musical forms as heard in the works of masters such as Joseph Haydn and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. In fact, form plays a vital role in most Western art music (discussed later in the chapter) all the way into the twenty-first century. We will discuss these forms, such as the rondo and sonata-allegro, in later chapters, but for the purpose of this introduction, we will focus on those that might be more familiar to the modern listener.

1.11.2 The Twelve-Bar Blues

Many compositions that on the surface sound very different use similar musical forms. A large number of jazz compositions, for example, follow either the twelve-bar blues or an AABA form. The twelve-bar blues features a chord progression of I-IV-I-V-IV-I. Generally the lyrics follow an AAB pattern, that is, a line of text (A) is stated once, repeated (A), and then followed by a response statement (B). The melodic idea used for the statement (B) is generally slightly different from that used for the opening a phrases (A). This entire verse is sung over the I-IV-I-V-IV-I progression. The next verse is sung over the same pattern, generally to the same melodic lines, although the singer may vary the notes in various places occasionally.

Listen to Elvis Presley's version of "Hound Dog" (1956) using the link below, and follow the chart below to hear the blues progression.

Ex. 1.18: Elvis Presley "Hound Dog" (1956)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ZdC6oQKU-w

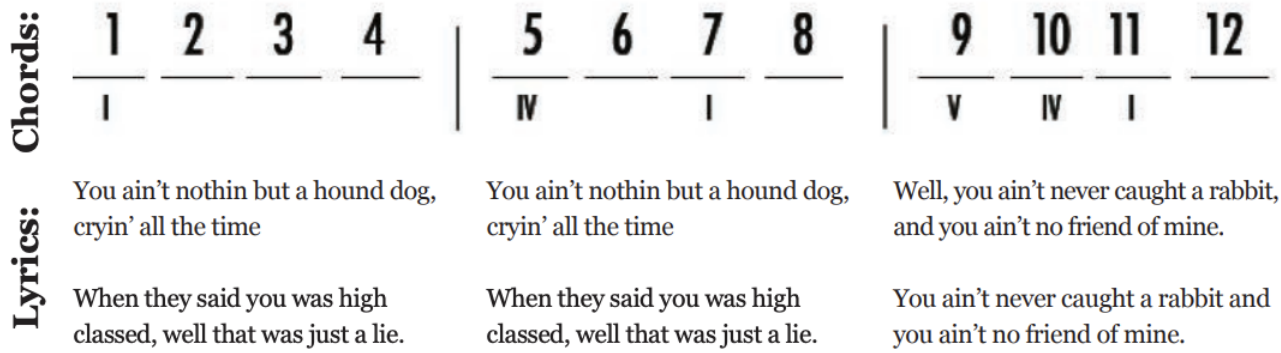


Figure 2.4.1: Format Breakdown of Elvis's "Hound Dog" by Thomas Heflin. Source: Original Work

This blues format is one example of what we might call musical form. It should be mentioned that the term "blues" is used somewhat loosely and is sometimes used to describe a tune with a "bluesy" sound, even though it may not follow the twelve-bar blues form. The blues is vitally important to American music because it influenced not only later jazz but also rhythm and blues and rock and roll.

1.11.3 AABA Form

Another important form to jazz and popular music is AABA form. Sometimes this is also called thirty-two-bar form; in this case, the form has thirty-two measures or bars, much like a twelve-bar blues has twelve measures or bars. This form was used widely in

songs written for Tin Pan Alley, Vaudeville, and musicals from the 1910s through the 1950s. Many so-called jazz standards spring from that repertoire. Interestingly, these popular songs generally had an opening verse and then a chorus. The chorus was a section of thirty-two-bar form, and often the part that audiences remembered. Thus, the chorus was what jazz artists took as the basis of their improvisations.

"(Somewhere) Over the Rainbow," as sung by Judy Garland in 1939 (accompanied by Victor Young and his Orchestra), is a well-known tune that is in thirty-two-bar form.

Ex. 1.19: Judy Garland "(Somewhere) Over the Rainbow" (1939)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PSZxmZmBfnU

After an introduction of four bars, Garland enters with the opening line of the text, sung to melody A. "Somewhere over the rainbow way up high, there's a land that I heard of once in a lullaby." This opening line and melody lasts for eight bars. The next line of the text is sung to the same melody (still eight bars long) as the first line of text. "Somewhere over the rainbow skies are blue, and the dreams that you dare to dream really do come true." The third part of the text is contrasting in character. Where the first two lines began with the word "somewhere," the third line begins with "someday." Where the first two lines spoke of a faraway place, the third line focuses on what will happen to the singer. "Someday I'll wish upon a star, and wake up where the clouds are far, behind me. Where troubles melt like lemon drops, away above the chimney tops, that's where you'll find me." It is sung to a contrasting melody B and is eight bars long. This B section is also sometimes called the "bridge" of a song. The opening a melody returns for a final time, with words that begin by addressing that faraway place dreamed about in the first two A sections and that end in a more personal way, similar to the sentiments in the B section. "Somewhere over the rainbow, bluebirds fly. Birds fly over the rainbow. Why then, oh why can't I?" This section is also eight bars long, adding up to a total of thirty-two bars for the AABA form.

Although we've heard the entire thirty-two-bar form, the song is not over. The arranger added a conclusion to the form that consists of one statement of the A section, played by the orchestra (note the prominent clarinet solo); another restatement of the A section, this time with the words from the final statement of the A section the first time; and four bars from the B section or bridge: "If happy little bluebirds…Oh why can't I." This is a good example of one way in which musicians have taken a standard form and varied it slightly to provide interest. Now listen to the entire recording one more time, seeing if you can keep up with the form.

1.11.4 Verse and Chorus Forms

Most popular music features a mix of verses and choruses. A chorus is normally a set of lyrics that recur to the same music within a given song. A chorus is sometimes called a refrain. A verse is a set of lyrics that are generally, although not always, just heard once over the course of a song.

In a simple verse-chorus form, the same music is used for the chorus and for each verse. "Can the Circle Be Unbroken" (1935) by The Carter Family is a good example of a simple verse-chorus form. Many childhood songs and holiday songs also use a simple verse-chorus song.

Ex. 1.20: The Carter Family "Can the Circle Be Unbroken" (1935)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qjHjm5sRqSA

In a simple verse form, there are no choruses. Instead, there is a series of verses, each sung to the same music. Hank Williams's "I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry" (1949) is one example of a simple verse form. After Williams sings two verses, each sixteen bars long, there is an instrumental verse, played by guitar. Williams sings a third verse followed by another instrumental verse, this time also played by guitar. Williams then ends the song with a final verse.

Ex. 1.21: Hank Williams: I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry (1949)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oyTOZCfp8OY

A contrasting verse-chorus form features different music for its chorus than for the statement of its verse(s). "Light my Fire" by the Doors is a good example of a contrasting verse-chorus form. In this case, each of the two verses are repeated one time, meaning that the overall form looks something like: intro, verse 1, chorus, verse 2, chorus, verse 2, chorus, verse 1, chorus. You can listen to "Light my Fire" by clicking on the link below.

Ex. 1.22: The Doors, "Light my Fire" (1967)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=deB_u-to-IE

Naturally, there are many other forms that music might take. As you listen to the music you like, pay attention to its form. You might be surprised by what you hear!

1.11.5 Composition and Improvisation

Music from every culture is made up of some combination of the musical elements. Those elements may be combined using one of two major processes; composition and improvisation.

Composition

Composition is the process whereby a musician notates musical ideas using a system of symbols or using some other form of recording. We call musicians who use this process "composers." When composers preserve their musical ideas using notation or some form of recording, they intend for their music to be reproduced the same way every time.

Listen to the recording of Mozart's music linked below. Every element of the music was carefully notated by Mozart so that each time the piece is performed, it can be performed exactly the same way.

Ex. 1.23: Mozart "Piano Sonata K.457 in C minor" (1989)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=JrUH5VAetEg

Improvisation

Improvisation is a different process. It is the process whereby musicians create music spontaneously using the elements of music. Improvisation still requires the musician to follow a set of rules. Often the set of rules has to do with the scale to be used, the rhythm to be used, or other musical requirements using the musical elements.

Listen to the example of Louis Armstrong below. Armstrong is performing a style of early New Orleans jazz in which the entire group improvises to varying degrees over a set musical form and melody. The piece starts out with a statement of the original melody by the trumpet, with Armstrong varying the rhythm of the original written melody as well as adding melodic embellishments. At the same time, the trombone improvises supporting notes that outline the harmony of the song and the clarinet improvises a completely new melody designed to complement the main melody of the trumpet. The rhythm section of piano, bass, and drums are improvising their accompaniment underneath the horn players, but are doing so within the strict chord progression of the song. The overall effect is one in which you hear the individual expressions of each player, but can still clearly recognize the song over which they are improvising. This is followed by Armstrong interpreting the melody. Next we hear individual solos improvised on the clarinet, the trombone, and the trumpet. The piece ends when Armstrong sings the melody one last time.

Ex. 1.24: Louis Armstrong, "When the Saints Go Marching In" (1961)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5WADCJ4_KmU

Composition and Improvisation Combined

In much of the popular music we hear today, like jazz and rock, both improvisation and composition are combined. Listen to the example linked below of Miles Davis playing "All Blues." The trumpet and two saxophones play an arrangement of a composed melody, then each player improvises using the scale from which the melody is derived. This combined structure is one of the central features of the jazz style and is also often used in many popular music compositions.

Ex. 1.25: Miles Davis "All Blues" (1949)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uRBgy43gCoQ

1.11.6 Music and Categories

Categorizing anything can be difficult, as items often do not completely fit in the boxes we might design for them. Still, categorizing is a human exercise by which we attempt to see the big picture and compare and contrast the phenomenon we encounter, so that we can make larger generalizations. By categorizing music we can attempt to better understand ways in which music has functioned in the past and continues to function today. Three categories which are often used in talking about music are (1) art music, (2) folk music, and (3) popular music. These categories can be seen in the Venn diagram below:

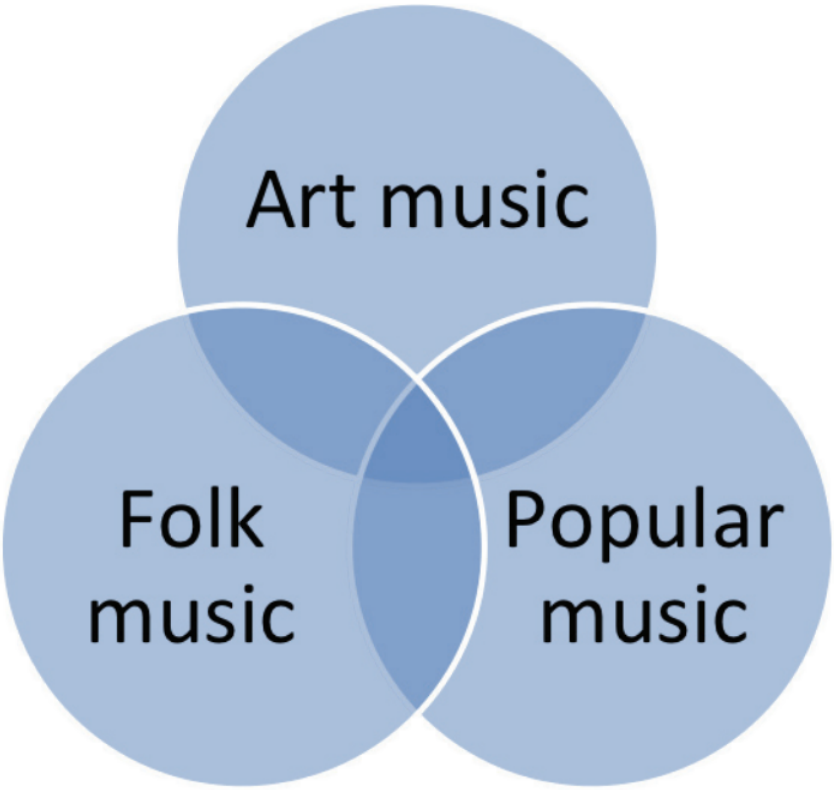


Figure 2.4.2: Venn Diagram of the Three Categories of Music by Elizabeth Kramer Source: Original Work

Much of the music that we consider in this book falls into the sphere of art music in some way or form. It is also sometimes referred to as classical music and has a written musical tradition. Composers of art music typically hope that their creative products will be played for many years. Art music is music that is normally learned through specialized training over a period of many years. It is often described as music that stands the test of time. For example, today, if you go to a symphony orchestra concert you will likely hear music composed over a hundred years ago. Folk music is another form of music that has withstood the test of time, but in a different way.

Folk music derives from a particular culture and is music that one might be expected to learn from a family at a young age. Although one can study folk music, the idea is that it is accessible to all; it generally is not written down in musical notation until it becomes an object of scholarship. Lullabies, dance music, work songs, and some worship music are often considered folk music as they are integrated with daily life.

Popular music is marked by its dissemination to large groups of people. As such, it is like folk music. But popular music is generally not expected to be passed down from one generation to the next as happens with folk music. Instead, as its name implies, it tends to appeal to the masses at one moment in time. To use twentieth-century terminology, it often hits the charts in one month and then is supplanted by something new in the next month. Although one might find examples of popular music across history, popular music has been especially significant since the rise of mass media and recording technologies in the twentieth century. Today, music can be put online and instantly go viral around the world. Some significant twentieth-century popular music is discussed in chapter eight.

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2.5: Chapter Summary

In this chapter, we learned a basic definition of music as well as definitions of the basic elements of music. We also explored some basic facts about acoustics, including the nature of sound. We learned how tones comprised of organized sound waves sound to us like definite pitches, while disorganized sound waves are perceived as noise. We briefly touched on the harmonic series and how it influenced the nature of music, including properties of sound such as timbre.

Next, we explored how the development of musical notation made it possible to organize sounds into a wide variety of configurations. There are an infinite number of possible **performing forces**, but the most common would have to be the human voice followed by a wide variety of instruments including strings, woodwinds, brass, percussion, keyboards, and electric instruments.

Next we discussed the four main components of music: melody, harmony, rhythm and texture. Melody is defined primarily by its shape, and can be broken up into smaller components called motives. Harmony, which is the vertical aspect of music, can be described in its most basic terms as dissonant or consonant. Harmony is often built in thirds through the use of three-note chords called triads or four-note chords called seventh chords. Whole sequences of chords are known as chord progressions. Compositions are harmonically grounded through the use of key centers, tonic notes, and scales.

Rhythm is the way the music is organized in respect to time. The fundamental unit of time is the beat, which is further broken into groupings called measures. These groupings are determined by the meter of the piece, which is often either duple, triple, or quadruple. The speed at which these beats go by is known as the tempo. Other rhythmic devices such as syncopation and polyrhythm can add further variety to the music. On a larger scale, music is put together in terms of its form. We discussed three common song forms, the blues, AABA and the Verse and Chorus.

Texture refers to the ways in which musical lines of a musical piece interact. Common textures include monophonic texture (one melodic line), homophonic texture (accompanied by chords), and polyphonic texture (simultaneous melodies). We also saw that composition and improvisation are the two major processes used to combine the musical elements we discussed. They may be used independently or they may be combined within a composition. These topics are key concepts to remember while reading the upcoming chapters where they are further expanded upon.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

3: Music for Spiritual Expression

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3.2: Hildegard of Bingen - “O Strength of Wisdom”

3.3: Giovanni da Palestrina - Pope Marcellus Mass

3.4: Johann Sebastian Bach - Fugue in G minor and Sleepers, Wake

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3.1: Introduction

Religious practitioners around the world have long used music to express their spiritual convictions. Music plays a particularly significant role in the context of worship. This is hardly surprising: Music has the power to encourage a wide variety of emotional states, ranging from meditative calm to frenzied excitement. It can help participants in worship to feel close to each other and to their deity. It also aids in the memorization and communal recitation of texts, which often define religious practice. Individual creative artists also draw inspiration from their religious convictions, even if the music they produce is not intended for the purpose of facilitating worship.

In this chapter, we will explore a variety of examples related to Christian worship and beliefs. The focus on Christianity is the result of the Western and classical bias of this text. Christianity has been the dominant religion of Europe since the 4th century, when it was legalized by the Roman emperor Constantine the Great. Most of the influential composers in the classical tradition belonged to Christian denominations, and many wrote beautiful music for use in church services. As a result, church music through the ages has both reflected and shaped broader musical practices. The stylistic variety of this music is nearly infinite. This variety results from the combined forces of general musical taste, the requirements of religious authorities, and the needs and histories of congregations.

This chapter will be dedicated to the examination of worship music from different eras. Although today we are more likely to hear most of this music in concert halls or on recordings, much of it was first intended for practical use in church services. To understand how this music came to be and what it meant in its time and place, we will consider each example in its religious context.

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3.2: Hildegard of Bingen - “O Strength of Wisdom”

Histories of European music almost always begin with the chants that were used in medieval Catholic churches. This is for the simple reason that **Gregorian chant**, as it is most commonly known, was the first music to be written down using the early form of staff notation from which modern musical notation is descended. As such, it is the earliest European music to have been preserved, and therefore the earliest music that is available for close examination.

Gregorian Chant

Gregorian chant constitutes an enormous body of music for use in Catholic worship services. In musical terms, it is fairly simple to characterize. The rhythms of Gregorian chant are determined by the natural stresses of the text, and it therefore does not have a regular pulse or meter. The melodies tend to have a small range and feature conjunct motion, making them accessible to untrained singers. Gregorian chants are often in modes other than major and minor, which can make them sound unusual to modern ears. Finally, Gregorian chants are **monophonic**, meaning that each was written down as a single, unaccompanied vocal line to be sung by a group in unison or by a soloist. (Although we known that countermelodies and accompaniments were often improvised, these were not recorded using notation.)

The name “Gregorian chant” derives from a popular legend concerning the origins of this body of music. According to tradition, the Holy Spirit regularly visited Pope Gregory I in the form of a dove so as to impart divine wisdom. Following the unification of state and church powers as the Holy Roman Empire in 800, the entire body of chant began to be attributed to Gregory, and was thereafter named for him. This attribution— which was taken as fact by most believers—served an important purpose, for it suggested that the style of chant preferred in Rome came straight from God. However, there are some problems with this story. The practices of Gregorian chant predated Gregory I, who served as Pope from 590 to 604, by centuries, and it continued to grow and develop long after his reign. In fact, it is today considered unlikely that Gregory I contributed anything to the repertoire that bears his name.



Image 11.2.1 : This 12th-century manuscript illumination shows the Holy Spirit, in the form of the dove, whispering into the ear of Pope Gregory I. Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: Unknown License: Public Domain

The use of chant is common across many religious traditions. Within Christianity, there are a variety of chant styles, including Russian Orthodox chant, the Byzantine chant of Greece, Ethiopian Orthodox chant, and Anglican chant. In Judaism, congregants chant from the Torah. In Islam, the call to prayer is chanted five times a day from the minaret of the mosque. In Buddhism, monks chant together to facilitate their meditative practice. In Hinduism, practitioners chant when they perform religious rituals in the home. All of these forms of chant have elements in common, due to the fact that each uses the human voice to sound a sacred text on an occasion of great solemnity.



Image 11.2.2 : These Buddhist monks are chanting as part of a religious ceremony. Source: Flickr Attribution: Joy Holland License: CC BY 2.0

Gregorian chant began to develop in the Benedictine monasteries of Italy, the first of which was founded by St. Benedict of Nursia in 529. All monks and nuns withdraw from the world to dedicate their lives to God by means of regular prayer and humble living. Those belonging to Benedictine orders live according to the Rule of St. Benedict, a book that describes the organization of monasteries and monastic life. In particular, the Rule of St. Benedict punctuates each day with eight worship services known as the **Canonical Hours**. Each of the Hours has a different purpose and contents, but all include the chanting of Psalms—all 150 of which are chanted each week. The Hours also include other types of chant, the texts of which are in Latin and are primarily derived from the Bible.

But why chant? All of these texts could just as easily be recited. What does the act of singing contribute to the worship experience? There are a number of good reasons for which monks began to chant. To begin with, the act of communal singing creates a shared physical experience. Participants breathe together and their heart rates begin to coordinate. Singing also has a calming effect. In addition, singing helps with the memorization of text. Although monastics were often literate and had access to books, they did not usually read words (or music) in the context of worship. Books were valuable and rare, and were reserved for close study, not daily use. Singing also helps words to carry through a large space—such as the cavernous interior of a medieval church. Finally, singing helped the monks to stay awake. Monastic life allowed for very little sleep, and several of the Canonical Hours took place when most would rather be in bed.



Image 11.2.3 : Monasteries, like this 9th-century example in Armenia, were often built in remote locations so that monks and nuns could fully remove themselves from society. Source: Wikipedia Attribution: User “Stevage” License: CC BY-SA 3.0

Benedictines and other Catholics had been chanting for centuries before any of this music was written down. The Catholic church first became concerned with recording its repertoire of chant after the founding of the Holy Roman Empire in 800. As the church spread across Europe, the authorities in Rome began to worry about losing control over distant congregations. In order to maintain centralized authority and prevent churches from breaking away, it was necessary for the **liturgy**—all of the words, music, and actions that constitute church services—to be standardized. Texts could be written down and actions described, but music remained ephemeral.

Before the development of music notation, chants were passed on and preserved by means of **oral tradition**. Practitioners would learn and memorize the music through repeated hearings. A monk or priest could then bring the chant to a distant community and teach it to the Christians there. This was risky, however, for music in the oral tradition usually changes over time and distance as individual musicians forget how it goes, commit errors, or make intentional alterations. Catholic authorities worried that the emergence of unique musical traditions would lead churches to desire independence in other ways as well.

A solution to this problem was finally recorded around 1026 by the Italian monk Guido of Arezzo. Guido sought to create a system by which monks and choristers could more easily learn Gregorian chants. To facilitate learning, he assigned syllables to the first six pitches of what today we call the scale. These syllables—ut, re, mi, fa, sol, and la—were drawn from the Latin text to a hymn, and they are still in use today (“ut” was replaced by the more singable “do” in the 17th century). He then began positioning the pitches on a lined staff that indicated their relative distance from one another. Guido’s system of notation was not quite like that in use today: His staff had only four lines, his noteheads looked quite different, and he had no way of indicating rhythms. Modern notation, however, is directly descended from this medieval invention.

Beginning in the 11th century, therefore, the melodies of Gregorian chant could be preserved on paper. Although we take musical notation for granted today, it transformed the development of music in the Western world. For the Catholic church, it offered a guarantee that Gregorian chants would be sung in the same way across Europe. Over time, however, notation would develop to allow for the construction and preservation of increasingly complex musical structures containing many simultaneous melodies, such as we will encounter with the next example. It also allowed for composers to emerge as significant and powerful figures.
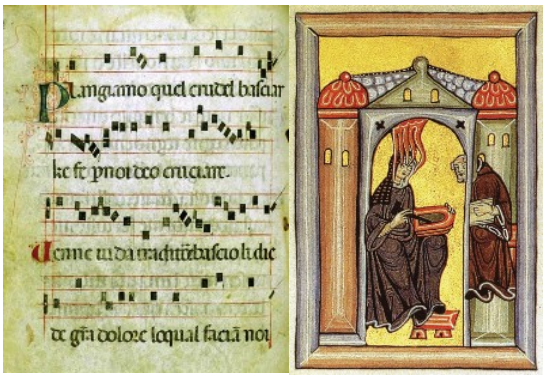


Figure 11.2.4 : (left) Although this example dates from about 200 years after Guido of Arezzo, it illustrates the principles of his music notation system. Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: User “Juandelaencina” License: Public Domain. (right) This famous image from *Scivias* portrays Hildegard receiving a vision from god. Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: Unknown License: Public Domain

All of this took time, however, and it was typical in the medieval era for chant composers to remain uncredited and anonymous. This was in part due to the myth that assigned authorship of all chant to Pope Gregory I, and in part due to the fact that individual creativity was not highly esteemed. But there is one major exception to this rule: the abbess Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179), who not only composed dozens of extraordinary chants but also exerted far-reaching influence within the Catholic church.

Hildegard’s Extraordinary Life

Hildegard was born into a minor noble family in what is today southern Germany. As a child she was pledged to the Benedictine monastery at Disibodenberg— perhaps as a tithe (tradition holds that she was the tenth child), perhaps as a ploy by her parents to gain favor, or perhaps because she had experienced spiritual visions from the age of three. Hildegard was trained by Jutta, an older woman who served as abbess at the monastery and who was also an **anchor**. As such, she was permanently enclosed in a small hut adjoining the monastery. An opening allowed food to be passed in and waste to be passed out, but Jutta herself remained in place until her death in 1136.

Hildegard was elected to replace Jutta as abbess. Disibodenberg, however, was home to monks as well, and the entire community was under the authority of the abbot. Hildegard wanted greater independence for herself and her nuns, and asked that they be allowed to move to Rupertsberg. When the abbot refused her request, Hildegard went to the archbishop instead. Although the archbishop granted his permission, the abbot still refused to allow the women to depart. Hildegard then became very ill to the point of total bodily paralysis. The abbot took this to be a sign from God, and finally permitted the nuns to leave Disibodenberg. Hildegard officially founded her monastery at Rupertsberg in 1150, followed by a second at Eibingen in 1165.

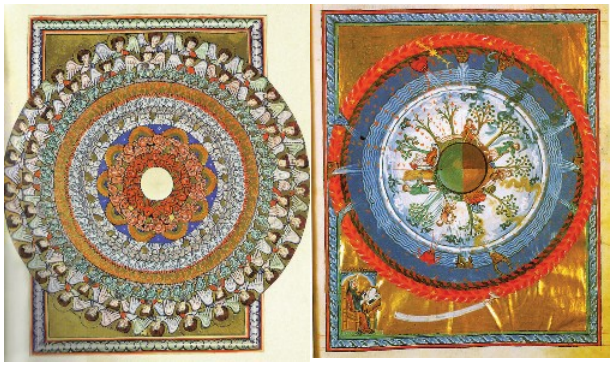


Figure 11.2.5 : (left) This illumination captures Hildegard’s vision of the angelic hierarchy. Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: Unknown License: Public Domain. (right) Image 11.7: This illustration of the earth and heavens appeared in Hildegard’s third and final theological compendium, *Book of Divine Works*. Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: Hildegard von Bingen License: Public Domain

At Rupertsberg, the nuns had need for only a single male monastic, who visited in order to give communion and hear confession. This monk, Volmar, also served as Hildegard’s scribe and encouraged her to record her visions. She finally did so in the 1151

compendium *Scivias* (Latin for “Know the Ways”), which included rich illustrations and a number of musical compositions. This was followed by two additional volumes of theological writing. Pope Eugene III accepted Hildegard’s recorded visions as church doctrine, thereby according her unusual status in the church for a woman. Hildegard also wrote on the topics of botany and medicine, created recipes, recorded church history, and invented her own secret alphabet. She was finally recognized as a Saint and Doctor of the Church in 2012, following a centuries-long canonization process.

Hildegard’s music is remarkable for its creativity and expressivity. Her best- known work is a musical drama called *Ordo Virtutum* (Order of the Virtues), which portrays the struggles of a human soul to resist mortal temptation. The play’s single male role—the devil, who speaks instead of singing to indicate his nature—was probably played by Volmar. Hildegard also composed a wide variety of chants for use in church services. These are notable for their melodic complexity, extensive vocal ranges, frequent variations, and **text painting** (the practice—unusual for the time— of expressing the meaning of the text in music). In short, Hildegard broke all of the rules for chant composition, and as a result created unusually compelling works.

“O Strength of Wisdom”

We will examine her **antiphon** “O Strength of Wisdom” (Latin: “O Virtus Sapientiae”).1 An antiphon is a short chant that can be used in various ways throughout the course of the Canonical Hours. Antiphon texts were usually drawn from the Psalms, but Hildegard always wrote her own chant texts. The imagery is inspired by her visions and makes reference to her theological writings:

> O strength of Wisdom who, circling, circled, enclosing all
>
> in one lifegiving path, three wings you have:
>
> one soars to the heights,
>
> one distils its essence upon the earth, and the third is everywhere.
>
> Praise to you, as is fitting, O Wisdom.
>
> *Translation by Kate Quartano Brown.*

“O Strength of Wisdom” 1. Composer: Hildegard of Bingen. Performance: Rebecca Ramsey, Armonico Consort, Choir of Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge (2019)

Divine Wisdom (Latin: Sapientia), embod- ied by a woman, was a prominent allegorical character in Hildegard’s writings. For her, Sapi- entia was the life-giving force that animated the cosmos. The three-winged figure might refer to an illustration that appeared in *Scivias*, which in turn represented the “Jealousy of God” as he battled the devil. The number three is always as- sociated with the Holy Trinity of God the Father (who “soars to the heights”), God the Son (who is found “upon the earth”), and God the Holy Spirit (who “is everywhere”)—the three natures of the single creator.



Figure 11.2.6 : This illumination appeared in *Scivias*, Hildegard’s first theological work. Source: WikiArt.Attribution: Hildegard von Bingen License: Public Domain

This chant is in the Phrygian mode, which is similar to minor but also contains a lowered second scale degree. This can give music in the Phrygian mode a dark and ominous character, but Hildegard’s chant is essentially joyful in terms of text and music. It begins with a long **melisma** on the invocation “O.” (A melisma is a sequence of notes sung on a single syllable.) This sets a reverential mood. She uses melismas throughout to emphasize important words—the first mention of “Sapientiae,” for example, contains sixteen pitches. Melismas also draw out the text so that the listener has an opportunity to meditate on its meaning: Without them, the poem would be sung too quickly. Hildegard employs text painting when she elevates her melody to its highest note with the words “to the heights,” and then down nearly to its lowest to illustrate the passage “upon the earth.”

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3.3: Giovanni da Palestrina - Pope Marcellus Mass

Next we will consider a famous piece of choral music composed in the late 16th century for use in the Sistine Chapel, which is located within the Vatican in Rome and used by the Pope himself. This piece of music is not only beautiful but historically significant. To understand how it came to be composed and why it has the characteristics that it does, we must take a look at the religious politics of the era.

The Reformation

Beginning in 800, with the foundation of what would later be known as the Holy Roman Empire, the Catholic Church was the dominant religious force in Europe. During the 16th century, however, the Catholic Church began to run into trouble. One by one, factions began to break off, forming new denominations and rejecting the authority of the Pope.

The first sign of defection came in 1517, when Martin Luther, a Catholic priest, posted his 95 theses to the door of a church in Wittenburg, Germany (or so the story goes—it is likely that his writings were in fact disseminated in a less flamboyant manner). Luther's 95 theses were a list of complaints about the Catholic Church. Some of his objections were to practices that amounted to outright corruption. The most famous of these was the sale of indulgences, whereby priests would forgive the sins of their parishioners in return for money. Luther also objected to the complexity of the Catholic hierarchy, which he saw a preventing Christians from experiencing a direct relationship with God. Finally, he had concerns about the services, which were in Latin (a language that was not understood by most members of the public), and the music, which he worried was overly complex and exclusive.



Figure 11.3.1 : This portrait of Martin Luther was painted by Lucas Cranach the Elder in 1529. Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: Lucas Cranach the Elder License: Public Domain

Luther had no intention of founding a new church. His only desire was to convince the Catholic Church to reform itself. However, he unwittingly began a chain of events that led to the creation of the Lutheran Church—the music of which we will explore in the next section. The English soon followed the Germans in abandoning Catholicism. The Anglican Church was founded in 1534 by King Henry VIII when the Pope refused to annul his marriage to Catherine of Aragon. And in Switzerland, the Calvinists were defecting from the Catholic Church during this same period.

All of this constituted a crisis for the Catholic Church, which saw the first major challenge to its authority in Europe. To address the crisis, the Pope convened an ecumenical council of high-ranking church officials to reform Catholic doctrine. The Council of Trent was held between 1545 and 1563. It debated a number of issues, and in fact adopted some of the reforms first suggested by Luther.

In 1562, the Council turned its attention to music. It determined that music for worship had come to inappropriately resemble that intended for entertainment. To correct this, the Council banned the use of musical instruments, which were associated with dancing and secular song and were therefore considered inappropriate for worship. Instruments, however, were not the only concern. Church composers had developed the habit of including popular tunes in their music, usually to demonstrate how clever they were at reworking preexisting musical material into something new. Their compositions were also becoming virtuosic and extravagant, and the Council was concerned that the focus of church music was on fancy singing, not the meaning of the text.

The Council was particularly critical of **polyphonic** music, in which each vocal part has an independent melody. In such compositions, the sopranos, altos, tenors, and basses each sing the words of the text at different times, which can make those words almost impossible to understand. Such music is beautiful, but it was perceived to be undermining the goals of the church service.

The Council of Trent briefly considered banning polyphonic music altogether, but ultimately did not, instead issuing strict rules about how such music must be composed. They required that music for the church be sober and restrained, avoiding the showy excesses that were characteristic of music for entertainment, and that the text always be comprehensible. They encouraged styles

that were **syllabic**, meaning that each pitch corresponds to a single syllable of text, and **homorhythmic**, meaning that all of the voices move in rhythm together, each singing the same text at the same time.



Figure 11.3.2 : This 1588 painting by Pasquale Cati depicts the Council of Trent. Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: Pasquale Cati License: Public Domain

Luckily for the Catholic Church, a composer was ready to take on the challenge of creating compelling music that met their requirements. Giovanni da Palestrina (1525- 1594) spent his entire life in the employment of the Catholic Church. He served as organist, singer, and choir director at a variety of churches in Rome, including St. Peter's basilica, the largest church in the world. It is worth noting that women were prohibited from singing in the choir at St. Peter's. Instead, the high vocal parts were performed by boys, by men who sang in a high **falsetto** range, or by men known as **castrati** due to the fact that they had been castrated before puberty with the result that they retained voices in the soprano range. In total, Palestrina served ten Popes—a testament to the longevity and impact of his career.

Palestrina and his Music

Palestrina was an advocate of a musical style known as the ***ars perfecta***, or "perfect art." Members of this school of composition believed, first and foremost, that music—like human beings—could be perfected. They sought to develop and formalize a style that was rational and aesthetically pleasing. Palestrina, after all, lived and worked at the height of the Italian **Renaissance**, a period during which the sciences and arts both flourished as intellectuals revived the values of ancient Greek and Roman civilizations. Adherents to the *ars perfecta* developed a set of rules for composers to follow. The resulting music was calm, free of dissonance, and fairly predictable. It radiated a sense of self-control and rationality. It also all sounded pretty much the same. Perfection, after all, cannot be improved upon.



Figure 11.3.3 : (left) In this engraving we see Giovanni da Palestrina presenting his work to Pope Julius III. Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: Unknown License: Public Domain. (right) This lithograph of Palestrina was produced by Henri-Joseph Hesse in 1828. Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: Unknown License: Public Domain

Palestrina's enormous body of music is considered to exemplify the peak of achievement in the *ars perfecta* style. His compositions were particularly influential due to the invention in 1501 of a technique for printing music. Rome was home to one of the first music publication firms, meaning that Palestrina's compositions could easily be published and distributed across Europe. Palestrina was enormously productive. He wrote over four hundred motets—stand- alone choral pieces with Latin texts that are intended for use during church services. He also created at least 104 settings of the Mass Ordinary, the most famous of which we will examine here.

The **Mass Ordinary** contains all of the words that are spoken or sung at every Catholic Mass, which today we can think of as the typical Sunday morning service. The entire text of the service, including the parts that change from day to day, is termed the **liturgy**. The Mass Ordinary, like the rest of the service, is principally in Latin, and it contains five parts: Kyrie, Gloria, Credo,

Sanctus, and Agnus Dei. Each part contains a text that is considered central to the Catholic faith, and which parishioners must speak, sing, or at least hear every time they attend a service.

Pope Marcellus Mass

We will examine the Kyrie and Credo from Palestrina's *Pope Marcellus Mass*. Out of Palestrina's many Masses, this one is the most closely associated with the Council of Trent and its musical reforms. Indeed, it is fabled that the Council decided not to ban polyphony after hearing this Mass, although most historians doubt the truth of this story. However, this Mass was certainly composed with the musical values of the Reformation in mind, and it satisfied the Council's requirements.

It is not certain when Palestrina composed this Mass, but it is named for Pope Marcellus II, who reigned for only twenty-two days in 1555. Marcellus's brief papacy happened to span Holy Week, the most sacred period in the Catholic calendar. Holy Week encompasses the seven days leading up to Easter. The most austere of these is Good Friday, on which day the faithful remember Jesus's crucifixion. Following the 1555 Good Friday service in the Sistine Chapel, Pope Marcellus berated the choir for singing music that he found inappropriate given the seriousness of the occasion. Apparently they had chosen music that was complex and virtuosic, while the Pope would have preferred something simple and modest.



Figure 11.3.4 : This 1555 engraving captured Pope Marcellus II during his brief reign. Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: Giulio Bonasone License: CC0

This Mass, therefore, was a direct response to the Pope's complaint, but also a more general response to concerns that were later expressed by the Council of Trent. By the time it was published in 1567, it was a model for Catholic composers everywhere. With the *Pope Marcellus Mass*, Palestrina satisfied the new requirements of the Catholic Church without abandoning his musical values. His Mass was beautiful and expressive, but also modest and clear. He has succeeded in producing art that served the requirements of worship.

To see how this music worked, we will consider the Kyrie and the Credo. These are the most disparate movements of the Mass. The Kyrie has the shortest text: It translates in its entirety to "Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy." The text is also unusual because it is in Greek, not Latin. The Credo has the longest text, for it details all of the core Catholic beliefs. This text is also known as the Nicene Creed, for it was adopted by the First Council of Nicea in 325. In the context of a musical setting, however, this movement is always termed the Credo. The Latin verb "credo," which opens the text, means "I believe." The Credo goes on to summarize the story of Christ and state the essential tenets of the faith. The current English version of the Nicene Creed as used by the Catholic Church reads as follows:

> I believe in one God, the Father almighty,
>
> maker of heaven and earth,
>
> of all things visible and invisible.
>
> I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,
>
> begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made.
>
> For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven,
>
> and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried,

and rose again on the third day

in accordance with the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven

and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory

to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son,

who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Kyrie

For his setting of the Kyrie, Palestrina did not take particular concern with the clarity of the text. The reason is evident enough: The text is very brief, and it is instantly recognizable by its first word, which appears nowhere else in the liturgy. In keeping with the three-part structure of the text, Palestrina uses a ternary musical structure. He repeats the short text many times within each section, such that the listener hears the Greek words dozens of times.

Table 11.3.1 : Pope Marcellus Mass, Kyrie Composer: Giovanni da Palestrina. Performance: The Sixteen, conducted by Harry Christophers (2003)

Time	Form	What to listen for
0’00”	“Lord have mercy”	Each of the six parts enters independently; it is impossible to say which has the melody
1’17”	“Christ have mercy”	This section begins with the soprano and bass in homorhythm, but soon becomes polyphonic
2’37”	“Lord hav emercy”	This section has the same texture as the first “Lord have mercy,” but the musical contents are different

The nature of the text allows Palestrina to do two things with his music that were otherwise frowned upon by church authorities. First, his Kyrie is highly **imitative**, each vocal part entering independently. There are six vocal parts, meaning that the texture quickly becomes dense. First, we hear the altos. Next, the highest sopranos, followed by the lowest basses. Within half a minute, everyone is singing. No single part has the melody. Instead, as is typical of polyphonic music, every part is equally important, and melodic fragments are passed around. This also means that the text does not line up between vocal parts. Second, his vocal lines are melismatic, meaning that many notes are sung on a single syllable of text.

All the same, Palestrina is careful not to show off. The music is noble and stately. The melodies are modest and restrained, while the harmonies move slowly and deliberately. The movement has a single, introspective mood. Palestrina aims to create an atmosphere in which churchgoers can ponder the meaning of the words and prepare for worship.

Credo

The Credo is quite different. To begin with, although the Credo text is about thirty times as long as the Kyrie text, the Credo movement is only about twice as long as the Kyrie. This is because Palestrina does not repeat text and does not draw out words using melismas. Instead, he focuses on moving through the text from beginning to end with the maximum of clarity.

Palestrina achieves this clarity in several ways. First, he seldom uses the entire choir, instead limiting the texture to three or four vocal parts. Second, he uses a homophonic texture in which all of the parts sing the same words at the same time. Finally, he avoids melismas, using them only at the ends of phrases once the meaning has already been communicated.

Figure 11.3.2 : Pope Marcellus Mass, Credo Composer: Giovanni da Palestrina. Performance: The Sixteen, conducted by Harry Christophers (2003)

Time	Text	What to listen for
0’00”	“I believe in one God ...”	The opening line is chanted by a solo male voice
0’07”	“... the Father almighty ...”	We seldom hear all six voice parts at the same time; instead, groups of three to five voice parts take turns singing phrases in homorhythm
2’31”	“... and by the Holy Spirit ...”	The note values lengthen and the rhythmic complexity lessens
3’27”	“For our sake he was crucified...”	The texture is reduced to four voices; at first, we hear only the low parts
5’11”	“I believe in the Holy Spirit. . .”	The texture expands to six voices; this passage is sprinkled with melismas
7’53”	“Amen”	The texture becomes increasingly polyphonic

The Credo contains more musical diversity than the Kyrie. Palestrina divides it into four sections. The first includes the opening text, the second begins with Christ’s incarnation, and the third describes his crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. The final section lists the core Catholic beliefs. Because the third section contains the text most essential to Christianity, it receives the most serious treatment. Palestrina reduces his choir to four parts and uses long note values for the passage about Christ’s burial, followed by more rapid rhythms to symbolize his return to life.

Palestrina’s *Pope Marcellus Mass* provides an excellent example of how the values of the Christian church influenced the development of music. Palestrina’s Latin-texted compositions are frequently performed by choirs today, and they are widely admired for their elegance and beauty. However, Palestrina might never have produced music in quite this style were it not for pressure from his employers.

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3.4: Johann Sebastian Bach - Fugue in G minor and Sleepers, Wake

About 150 years later, another composer of church music was also guided by the needs and preferences of his faith community. The church music of Johann Sebastian Bach (1685- 1750) is quite different from that of Palestrina, however, both because musical tastes had changed in the intervening years and because Bach worked not for the Catholic but for the Lutheran Church. We will take a look at two of his most famous creations: a piece of music for the organ and a composition for choir and orchestra.

Bach's Legacy

Today, the music of J.S. Bach is performed more frequently than that of almost any other composer from the European tradition. Ensembles all over the world are dedicated to his music, while countless books have detailed his life and works. He is esteemed by many as the greatest composer of all time (although, as will be discussed in the final chapter of this book, it is nearly impossible to define "greatness" in music).



Image 11.4.1 : This portrait of Johann Sebastian Bach was painted in 1746 by Elias Gottlob Haussmann. Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: Elias Gottlob Haussmann License: Public Domain

All of this would have very much surprised the composer himself. During his lifetime, Bach was not particularly famous or respected, and he struggled constantly with difficult working conditions and low pay. He was better known as an organist than as a composer: While Bach was respected as a virtuoso performer, his compositions were considered old-fashioned and stuffy. Only a handful of his works—mostly for keyboard—were published before his death, and he had no reason to expect future generations to take any interest in his music.



Image 11.4.2 : During his lifetime, Bach was best known as an organist. He is depicted at the console in this 1725 engraving. Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: Unknown License: Public Domain

Bach's fortunes shifted in the early 19th century, when German musicians began to revive and popularize his music. The most significant such event took place in 1829 when the composer Felix Mendelssohn staged a performance of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* in Berlin. Like *Sleepers, Wake* (German: *Wachet auf*), which we will examine, the *St. Matthew Passion* was a work for choir and orchestra intended for use in a Lutheran church service. Bach never imagined that any of his church music would be performed in concert halls or consumed as either art or entertainment. He sought only to support the work of the church. Since the time of Mendelssohn, however, Bach's choral compositions have been a staple of the concert repertoire, and today's listener can access thousands of recordings.

A brief examination of Bach's life and career will serve to contextualize his work as a composer. Bach was born into a large family of German musicians that extended back for many generations. His father, grandfather, great-grandfather, uncles, and other male ancestors were all performers and in most cases composers, while his sons were all to become composers as well. From the time of

his birth, therefore, there was no doubt about Bach's future career. Musicians of his time and place generally found employment with either a court or a city, in which capacity they would produce new compositions, oversee performances, and participate in those performances as instrumentalists or singers.

Bach's Career

Bach never lived outside the region of Thuringia, which today is located in central Germany, and he never travelled beyond the borders of the modern German nation. Following an education in Eisenach, he took a series of five professional posts. First he served as a church organist in the cities of Arnstadt (1703-1707) and Mühlhausen (1707-1708). His next position was at the ducal court in Weimar (1708-1717), where he played the organ and served as music director. After this he became music director at the court of Prince Leopold in Köthen (1717-1723). Finally, Bach took the position of music director at the St. Thomas Church in the city of Leipzig, where he remained until his death.

Famously, Bach was not the city council's first choice for the job. They initially offered the post to a composer—Georg Philipp Telemann—whose music is only seldom performed today, but who at the time was considered to be more fashionable. Bach was in turn loathe to accept the job, which was less prestigious than the post he held in Köthen. He made the move to Leipzig, however, out of concern for his family. Bach, who was married twice, had a total of twenty children, ten of whom survived into adulthood. Leipzig had excellent schools, and he knew that his sons would have better prospects in that city. Bach's second wife, Anna Magdalena, was herself a highly-skilled musician. She provided her husband with invaluable assistance, copying out parts by hand each week so that the church musicians could perform his music during the Sunday service.



Image 11.4.3 : Today, this statue of Bach stands outside of the St. Thomas Church in Leipzig. Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: User "Appaloosa" License: CC BY-SA 3.0

In Leipzig, Bach was required to perform a variety of tasks on behalf of the municipal government. He was principally responsible for music at the St. Thomas Church, but also oversaw music at the city's other three churches. As music director, Bach produced instrumental and vocal compositions for use in the church, hired musicians, ran rehearsals, and played the organ. He also taught music and Latin at the St. Thomas School, which was attached to the church. Finally, he was obliged to produce music for civic occasions, including commemorations of important events and celebrations of esteemed visitors.



Image 11.4.4 : This 1723 engraving depicts the St. Thomas Church and adjoining School, where Bach taught music and Latin. Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: Johann Gottfrieg Krügner License: Public Domain. (right) Image 11.17: The interior of the St. Thomas Church looks much the same today as it did in Bach's time. Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: User "S-kay" License: Public Domain

Bach frequently complained about his immense workload and limited resources. He felt that the city did not provide adequate funds with which to hire the musicians that he needed, and he often had to limit his instrumentation due to budgetary concerns. Although today one can hear Bach's music rendered by the best choirs and orchestras in the world, Bach himself was seldom able to arrange for high-quality performances of his music. He relied primarily on students from the St. Thomas School and from the nearby Leipzig University.

We will examine two pieces of church music from two different parts of his career. Bach's Fugue in G minor dates from his early years as a church organist in Arnstadt. Like most of Bach's music, it has survived only as a handwritten manuscript. The same it

true of *Sleepers, Wake*, which was created in 1731 for use at the St. Thomas Church in Leipzig.

Fugue in G minor

Bach wrote hundreds of fugues, most of which had nothing to do with his work as a church musician. The term **fugue** refers to a compositional technique that can be applied across genres. Bach wrote most of his fugues for keyboard instruments such as the harpsichord, which resembles a small piano in appearance but creates sound using quite a different process: When the player depresses a key, it causes a string to be plucked with a quill or piece of hard leather. Most famously, Bach twice wrote keyboard fugues in every major and minor key. His two collections, known as *The Well-Tempered Clavier* Book I (1722) and Book II (1742), were intended to demonstrate a new method for tuning the harpsichord. Bach also wrote fugues for solo string instruments, orchestra, and choir. One of Bach's final works, entitled *The Art of Fugue*, was left incomplete at his death but nonetheless demonstrated his ultimate mastery of the technique.

Fugal technique was widely employed in the 18th century. It is simple in principle, but very challenging to execute. Whether a fugue is written for instrumentalists or singers, we always speak of its "voices" and use the typical choral designations: soprano, alto, tenor, and bass. Most fugues have four voices, although Bach wrote for as few as two and as many as six.

Every fugue begins with a solo melody in one of the voices. This melody is called the **subject**. The composer will introduce the subject in each of the voices in turn until all have entered the texture. This section of the fugue is called the **exposition**. For the remainder of the fugue, sections that do not contain the subject, which are known as **episodes**, will alternate with statements of the subject, which constitute the **development**. The subject will appear in many different keys and sometimes in different forms (for example, the melody might be turned upside down) until finally it is heard one last time in the original key and the fugue concludes. A fugue might have many episodes or none at all, and there is no predetermined length or precise form.

Table 11.4.1 : Fugue in G minor. Composer: Johann Sebastian Bach Performance: Wolfgang Rübsam (1977)

Time	Form	What to listen for
0'00"	Exposition	The subject is heard first in the soprano voice, then alto, then tenor, then bass
0'51"	Episode	All of the episodes consist largely of sequences
0'58"	Subject	After a false entrance in the tenor, the subject is heard in the soprano
1'11"	Episode	
1'17"	Subject	Heard in the alto
1'28"	Episode	
1'36"	Subject	Heard in the bass
1'47"	Episode	
1'59"	Subject	Heard in the soprano
2'10"	Episode	This is the most diverse and lengthy episode
2'31"	Subject	Heard in the bass; the tempo slows before the final cadence

Fugue

Episode(s)

Bridging material for return to Subjects

Exposition

• Subject introduced

• Subject answered (in different keys)

• Countersubjects accompany subjects

Optional: **Coda** (at the end)

Development

• Subject presented in different keys

• Possible transformations of the subject (inversions, etc.)

Final

Episode(s)

Bridging material for return to Subjects

• Subject and countersubject in the original key

Fugues are difficult to write because the composer must follow complex rules concerning the relationships between the voices. These rules concern the distances between simultaneous pitches, the directions in which voices move, the special treatment of notes that do not belong to chords, and the keys in which the subject must appear. Because the subject itself can never be altered, the composer must employ all of their skill to avoid breaking rules. (These rules are not arbitrary, but rather emerged over decades of practice and guide the composer in creating a fugue that sounds good.) Bach seems to have enjoyed the challenge of fugue writing, and he often created subjects that were especially difficult to work with.

Although a fugue is not necessarily an example of church music, Bach composed



Image 11.4.4 : Although the church in Arnstadt was known as the New Church during the time that Bach worked there, in 1935 it was renamed the Bach Church in honor of the composer. Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: Michael Sander License: CC BY-SA 3.0

organ fugues for use in Lutheran church services. We will examine a fairly simple fugue that he composed in his capacity as church organist for the city of Arnstadt. He would have played his Fugue in G minor at the beginning or end of services, but also on organ recitals that were intended not for worship but for the enjoyment of the audience. While this piece of music sets a mood that is appropriately serious for worship, its complexities also reward careful listening.

In Arnstadt, Bach played on an organ that had just been installed by the builder Johann Friederich Wender. All organs work by blowing air through pipes, which might be made out of wood or metal, be of various shapes, or contain reeds. These variations allow organs to produce many different sounds. Most organs have multiple keyboards, each of which can be linked to one or more sets of pipes. In this way, the performer can quickly change from one sound quality to another by moving between keyboards. Sets of pipes are activated or deactivated by adjusting wooden rods known as stops. Organs also have an additional keyboard, termed the pedalboard, that is operated using the feet. The pedalboard is typically linked to pipes that sound in the lowest register.



Image 11.4.5 : The organ in the New Church at Arnstadt. Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: User “Mtag” License: CC0

Despite its complexity, the organ is actually one of the oldest instruments found in Europe. Organs were first developed in ancient Greece over two thousand years ago. Although early organs were small and portable instruments, they began to grow in the 14th century when the first permanent organ was installed in a church. By the 19th century organs had become enormous instruments capable of producing a great range of volumes and timbres. Bach's organ in Arnstadt is still played today. Like other Baroque organs, it is fairly small, although still capable of producing a wide variety of sounds. It has two keyboards and a pedalboard, which together give the player access to twenty-one sets of pipes. Baroque organs are not capable of gradual changes in dynamic. The performer can suddenly alternate between loud and soft by changing keyboards, but all notes played using a given set of pipes are the same volume. Fugues, therefore, are most often performed without any dynamic changes.

Bach's Fugue in G minor (often called the "Little" Fugue in G minor, to distinguish it from others in the same key) has a five-measure subject. The subject begins with long note values, but gradually incorporates shorter and shorter note values as it proceeds. This creates an impression of increased activity, even though the tempo does not accelerate. The fugue has four voices, which enter from highest to lowest in the order soprano-alto-tenor-bass. The texture quickly becomes dense, and—after the opening measures—at least one voice is moving rapidly at all times. Although the fugue is short, therefore, one needs to listen to it several time to hear everything that is going on. It can be challenging to pick out the subject, even once it has become familiar.

Bach was noted for the density and complexity of his music. Indeed, that was the characteristic that earned him scorn in his own time—just as it earned him respect a century after his death. He also preferred to establish and then maintain a single mood with each piece of music. As such, there is little expressive variation within the Fugue in G minor. Once the engine starts, it runs steadily and unerringly until the final cadence.

Sleepers, Wake

During the early years of his employment in Leipzig, J.S. Bach dedicated most of his energy to the creation of **Lutheran church cantatas**. This was a big job because the churches there required a new cantata every week. The Lutheran liturgical calendar is organized into a year-long cycle of Biblical readings, and the cantata corresponded with the topic of the readings and the sermon. For this reason, Bach needed to produce an appropriate cantata for every Sunday morning Mass and for special services, making for a total of sixty cantatas a year.

After his first year on the job, Bach could have begun to reuse old cantatas—but instead he completed a whole second cycle and most of three additional cycles. Bach had also written church cantatas at several of his previous jobs. However, none of his church cantatas were ever published. As a result, about two hundred are extant today, while hundreds more might have been lost.

A **cantata** is a multi-part work for voice(s) and instrumental accompaniment. Bach's Lutheran church cantatas are multi-movement works for choir, soloists, and orchestra. Bach always used texts in German, the language of his congregation. He did not write the texts himself, however, but rather selected them from among the works of various theological poets. Each cantata is thirty to forty minutes long and usually contains four to seven movements. Some of the movements use the entire choir, while others feature solo singers, often paired with solo instruments.

Bach's cantatas constituted the musical focus for worship at St. Thomas and other churches in Leipzig. Although forty minutes of choral music might seem excessive, the services themselves lasted four hours. The centerpiece was a one- hour sermon, which was preceded by opening prayers, hymns, readings, and the performance of the cantata. Communion followed the sermon.

The cantata had a very specific purpose: It reflected on the Biblical readings for the day, interpreted their meaning for the congregation, and prepared listeners to understand and appreciate the sermon. As stated above, Bach in no way regarded his cantatas as entertainment—or even, strictly speaking, art. He was deeply committed to his Lutheran faith and he understood his role in the service to be essentially spiritual. His cantatas shaped churchgoers' understanding of their relationship with God.

We will see Bach's approach to cantata composition in *Sleepers, Wake*. Although many of Bach's cantatas are difficult to date, we know that this one was first performed on November 25, 1731. The occasion was the 27th Sunday after Trinity—a day that occurs only in years during which Easter falls very early, for in regular years the liturgical season of Advent will have already commenced. This explains why Bach had to write this cantata several years after having completed his annual cycles, for the 27th Sunday after Trinity had not occurred since 1704. *Sleepers, Wake* was performed only once in Bach's lifetime, at Leipzig's St. Nicholas Church. The Epistle reading for the 27th Sunday after Trinity is 1 Thessalonians 5: 1-11, while the Gospel reading is Matthew 25: 1-13. Both exhort Christians to be prepared for the return of Christ. In Paul's letter to the Thessalonians, he warns that the Lord will come "like a thief in the night," without any warning. Matthew records the parable of the wise and foolish virgins. All had gathered together to await the coming of the bridegroom (an allegory for Christ), but the foolish virgins had failed to bring extra oil for their lamps. While they were away buying oil, the bridegroom arrived and the wedding feast commenced. The wise virgins, who were

prepared for the arrival, were welcomed into the hall, but the foolish virgins were shut out in the darkness. The message is clear: Christians must be prepared for Christ's coming. If they are not, they will be excluded from heaven and denied eternal life.



Figure 11.4.6 : (left) Bach was also responsible for music at the large St. Nicholas Church in Leipzig. Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: Dr. Bernd Gross License: CC BY-SA 3.0. (right) Here we see the original 1599 publication of the chorale "Sleepers, Wake." Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: Philip Nicolai License: Public Domain

Bach's cantata reflects on this parable using a variety of musical and dramatic techniques. He began by selecting an appropriate **Lutheran chorale** on which to base his cantata. Chorales are unison hymns sung by the congregation, and they were first developed by Martin Luther himself in the early years of the church. One of Luther's objections to Catholic worship was that the music was performed in Latin by professional choirs. He preferred participatory music in the language of the congregants. To develop a repertoire of chorales, he wrote new tunes, adapted Gregorian chants, and even borrowed popular melodies. Luther saw no problem with using secular music for worship. As he supposedly put it, "Why should the devil have all the good tunes?"

Because *Sleepers, Wake* is based on a Lutheran chorale, it is a special type of cantata known as a **chorale cantata**. Bach primarily wrote chorale cantatas while in Leipzig, and he developed a unique approach to their construction, of which *Sleepers, Wake* is a fine example. The cantata contains seven movements, three of which—the first, fourth, and seventh— include text and music from a 1599 chorale of the same name. Bach selected this chorale because it, too, comments on the parable of the wise and foolish virgins, thereby offering another layer of interpretation. Everyone in the congregation at St. Thomas would have known the chorale well and would have instantly recognized the words and music. Because the chorale is in A A B form, each of the movements based on it is in that same form.

I. Wake up, the voice calls us

Bach spreads his references to the chorale throughout the cantata, and he integrates it with his own music differently on each occasion. In the first movement, we hear the choir sing the first verse of the chorale text:

> Wake up, the voice calls us
>
> of the watchmen high up on the battlements, wake up, you city of Jerusalem!
>
> This hour is called midnight;
>
> they call us with a clear voice:
>
> where are you, wise virgins? Get up, the bridegroom comes;
>
> Stand up, take your lamps! Hallelujah! Alleluia!
>
> Make yourselves ready for the wedding,
>
> you must go to meet him!
>
> *Translation by Francis Browne*

We also hear the chorale melody, but it is buried in a dense texture of newly- composed music. While Bach's congregation would have recognized the chorale, many modern listeners have a hard time even picking the melody out.

Table 11.4.1 : I. "Wake up, the voice calls us" from Sleepers, Wake. Composer: Johann Sebastian Bach Performance: American Bach Soloists

(2007)

Time	Form	What to listen for
0’00”	Ritornello	The violins and oboes exchange melodic material in a call-and-response texture
0’28”	A “Wake up, the voice calls us...”	The sopranos sing the chorale melody while the altos, tenors, and basses sing newly-composed material
1’32”	Ritornello A	This ritornello is identical to that which opened the movement
2’00”	“This hour is called midnight...”	The A music repeats with a new texts
2’10”	Episode	This is the most diverse and lengthy episode
2’31”		Subject Heard in the bass; the tempo slows before the final cadence
3’04”	Ritornello	This ritornello sounds different because it moves through several key areas
3’24”	B	“Get up, the We hear exclamations of “get up” and “stand bridegroom up” from the choir comes...”
3’57”		“Alleluia!” This passage is especially ornate; the chorale melody does not enter until near the end
4’42”		“Make yourselves The texture returns to normal ready...”
5’32”	Ritornello	We hear the complete ritornello one last time

The first movement starts with orchestral music, the uneven dotted rhythms of which suggest a wedding march. Dotted rhythms were also associated with royalty in this era—another appropriate connotation for music about Christ’s coming. This opening passage is in fact a **ritornello**. In this movement Bach combines ritornello form, in which an orchestral melody returns throughout a piece of music, with the A A B form of the chorale. The resulting form is: rit A rit A rit B rit. The orchestra also provides short interjections between the verses within each section. Although a congregation might sing the first verse of the chorale in less than two minutes, the first movement of the cantata takes nearly four times as long to perform. This is due to the slowed-down chorale melody and frequent orchestral interruptions. As a result, however, the congregation has an opportunity to meditate on the text, the meaning of which is reinforced by Bach’s musical setting.
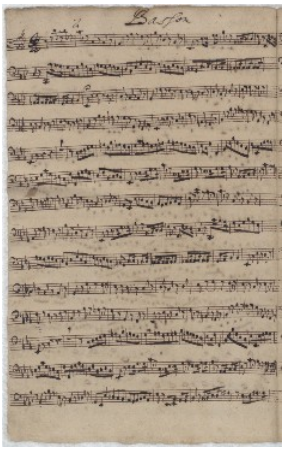


Figure 11.4.7 : This bassoon part in Bach's own hand is one of only a few extant original manuscripts for *Sleepers, Wake*. Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: Johann Sebastian Bach License: Public Domain

The first movement is texturally very dense. There are active parts for strings, winds, and voices, and it is seldom possible to identify a single, dominant melody. The opening ritornello contains three distinct layers. Underpinning everything is the **basso continuo**, a feature of almost all music composed in the Baroque era (1600-1750). Basso continuo is always performed by some combination of low- pitched instruments and instruments that can play chords. In this case, we hear cello, bassoon, organ, and harpsichord. While Baroque bass lines can be simple, Bach's seldom are. This one contains a variety of interesting rhythmic and melodic elements, thereby attracting an unusual amount of the listener's attention. Above that, the violins and oboe trade melodic motifs back and forth in a six-part texture. When the singers enter, the orchestra begins by repeating the musical material from the ritornello. The already-dense texture suddenly becomes much more complex. First we hear the sopranos with the familiar chorale melody. While the sopranos sing in slow, even note values, the altos, tenors, and basses sing quickly. These other voices occasionally integrate text painting as well, such as with their ascending cries on the text "wake up". Also notable is the passage on the text "Alleluia," which features excitable melismas in the altos, tenors, and basses.

Table 11.4.2 : Ritornello Form: Movements I & IV of Bach's *Sleepers, Wake*

ritornello orchestra	**A** ***from chorale*** lines 1-3 of text with accompaniment	**ritornello** orchestra	**A** ***from chorale*** lines 4-6 of text with accompaniment	**ritornello** orchestra	**B** ***from chorale*** lines 7-12 of text with accompaniment	**ritornello** orchestra

IV. Zion hears the watchmen sing

The chorale disappears until the fourth movement,2 when we hear the second verse sung by the tenor section:

> Zion hears the watchmen sing, her heart leaps for joy,
>
> she awakes and gets up in haste.
>
> Her friend comes from heaven in his splendour, strong in mercy, mighty in truth.
>
> Her light becomes bright, her star rises.
>
> Now come, you worthy crown, Lord Jesus, God's son!
>
> Hosanna!
>
> We all follow
>
> to the hall of joy
>
> and share in the Lord's supper.
>
> *Translation by Francis Browne.*

IV. “Zion hears the watchmen sing” from *Sleepers, Wake* 2. Composer: Johann Sebastian Bach Performance: American Bach Soloists (2007)

This movement is much simpler than the first movement. In place of the orchestral ritornello, with its call-and-response texture, we have a unison ritornello melody from the violins and violas. The chorale melody, instead of being buried in a complex texture, is clearly presented without competition from other vocal parts. All the same, this movement is by no means simple. The two melodies—one in the strings, one in the tenors—weave around one another in unpredictable and extraordinary ways. While their phrases never start or end together, the parts always complement one another.

VII. May gloria be sung to you

We finally hear a straightforward presentation of the chorale in the seventh movement,3 in which the entire choir—and perhaps the congregation as well—sing the third verse in four-part harmony:

> May gloria be sung to you
>
> with the tongues of men and angels, with harps and with cymbals.
>
> The gates are made of twelve pearls, in your city we are companions
>
> of the angels on high around your throne. No eye has ever perceived,
>
> no ear has ever heard such joy.
>
> Therefore we are joyful, hurray, hurray!
>
> for ever in sweet rejoicing.
>
> *Translation by Francis Browne*

VII. “May gloria be sung to you” from *Sleepers, Wake.* 3. Composer: Johann Sebastian Bach Performance: American Bach Soloists (2007)

Although Bach borrowed chorale melodies from the Lutheran tradition, he always created his own harmonizations. In practice, this means that the soprano part is borrowed, but the alto, tenor, and bass parts are original. Bach has the orchestral musicians double the vocal parts, playing the same melodies that are being sung. This makes the ensemble sound exceptionally full and rich without distracting from the chorale melody: a fitting culmination to the cantata.

II. He comes

Although there are four movements that do not contain the chorale melody or text, we will look at only two of them. The text was supplied by an unknown poet. It includes many references to the Song of Solomon—a passage of Biblical love poetry that was understood by Bach and his contemporaries to be a metaphor for the love between Jesus and the faithful soul. To set this expressive new text, Bach used musical forms from the opera stage: **recitative** and **aria**. Bach never wrote an opera and did not think highly of the form, but he often adapted operatic conventions for his own purposes.

The second movement4 of *Sleepers, Wake* is a recitative for solo tenor:

> He comes, he comes, the bridegroom comes!
>
> You daughters of Zion, come out,
>
> he hastens his departure from on high to your mother’s house.
>
> The bridegroom comes, who like a roedeer and a young stag
>
> leaps on the hills
>
> and brings to you the wedding feast.
>
> Wake up, rouse yourselves to welcome the bridegroom!
>
> There, see, he comes this way.
>
> *Translation by Francis Browne.*

II. “He comes” from *Sleepers, Wake*4. Composer: Johann Sebastian Bach Performance: American Bach Soloists (2007)

He announces the coming of the bridegroom with a series of exuberant melodic leaps, accompanied only by basso continuo. This movement contains no repetition and has no particular form. In fact, the singing—as is always the case with recitative—is not particularly melodic at all. Instead, its purpose is to declaim the text with the utmost expressive force.

III. When are you coming, my salvation?

The recitative serves to introduce the third movement, which is a duet for soprano and bass. Just as recitative developed within the operatic tradition, this is clearly an operatic duet—specifically, the type of duet sung by two characters who are in love. The soprano and bass call back and forth to one another, expressing their mutual desire. Bach’s lovers, however, are a Soul (soprano) and Jesus (bass), and they offer a dramatic enactment of the desire that all Christians are meant to feel for their savior.

Table 11.4.2 : III. “When are you coming, my salvation?” from Sleepers, Wake. Composer: Johann Sebastian Bach Performance: American Bach Soloists (2007)

Time	Form	What to listen for
0’00”	Ritornello A	This ritornello features a virtuosic violin obbligato
0’26”	“When are you coming. . .”	The soprano and bass exchange lines while the solo violin line weaves about them
1’46”	Ritornello	This ritornello is similar to that which opened the movement, but it is in a different key
1’59”	B “Open the hall. . .”	This passage has the same texture as A, but the music and text are different
2’32”	Ritornello	This passage is not closely related to the opening ritornello
2’46”	B’	This passage is similar to B, but it is in a different key
3’18”	Ritornello A’	This ritornello is very brief, for it is interrupted by the return of the A text
3’25”	“When are you coming. . .”	This passage echoes A, but is not musically identical
4’25”	Ritornello	The closing ritornello is identical to that which opened the movement

Because the third movement is based in operatic conventions, it has the ***da capo* form** of an opera aria. “Da capo” literally means “from the head,” and it serves as an instruction to the performers to repeat the first of two parts, resulting in an A B A form. (The second A is not written out.) Bach accompanies his aria with basso continuo and an ***obbligato*** (or “obligatory”) instrumental solo. He intended the obbligato part in the fourth movement to be performed on the violino piccolo, a type of small violin that is tuned higher than a modern instrument. However, it can also be performed on a standard violin. The instrumental soloist provides ritornellos before, between, and after each of the sung sections, but also supplies a virtuosic accompaniment to the vocal soloists. The resulting music is beautiful and expressive—even if the text is a bit corny:

> Soul: When are you coming, my salvation? Jesus: I come, your portion.
>
> Soul: I wait with burning oil. Jesus: Open the hall
>
> Soul: I open the hall
>
> Both: to the heavenly feast. Soul: Come, Jesus!
>
> Jesus: Come, lovely soul!

Translation by Francis Browne.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

4: Music of the Middle Ages

Learning Objectives

1. Demonstrate knowledge of historical and cultural contexts of the Middle Ages
2. Recognize musical styles of the Middle Ages
3. Identify important genres and uses of music of the Middle Ages
4. Identify aurally selected compositions of the Middle Ages and critically evaluate the style
5. Compare and contrast music of the Middle Ages with today's contemporary music

4.1: Introduction and Historical Context
4.2: Music in the Middle Ages- An Overview
4.3: Music for Medieval Christian Worship
4.4: Music in Medieval Courts
4.5: Chapter Summary

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4.1: Introduction and Historical Context

2.3.1 Musical Timeline

Event in History	Events in music
From the 1st Century CE: Spread of Christianity through the Roman Empire 4th Century CE: Founding of the monastic movement in Christianity c. 450 CE: Fall of Rome 11th Century CE: Rise of Feudalism & the Three Estates 11th Century CE: Growth of Marian Culture 1088 CE: Founding of the University of Bologna c. 1095-1291 CE: The Crusades c. 1163-1240s CE: Building of Notre Dame in Paris and the rise of Gothic architecture 13th Century CE: Development of Polyphony 1346-53: Height of the Bubonic Plague (Black Death)	2nd millennia BCE: First Hebrew Psalms are written 7th Century BCE: Ancient Greeks and Romans use music for entertainment and religious rites 6th Century BCE: Pythagoras and his experiments with acoustics 4th Century BCE: Plato and Aristotle write about music c. 400 CE: St Augustine writes about church music 4th – 9th Century CE: Development/Codification of Christian Chant c. 800 CE: First experiments in Western Music 11st Century CE: Guido of Arezzo refines of mu11 sic notation and development of solfège 12th Century CE: Hildegard of Bingen writes Gregorian chnat 13th Century CE: Development of Polyphony c. 1275 CE: King Alfonso the Wise collects early songs in an exquisitely illuminated manuscript 14th Century CE: Further refinement of musical notation, including notation for rhythm 1300-1377 CE: Guillaume de Machaut composes songs and church music

Introduction

What do you think of when you hear the term the Middle Ages (450-1450)? For some, the semi-historical figures of Robin Hood and Maid Marian come to mind. Others recall Western Christianity's Crusades to the Holy Land. Still others may have read about the arrival in European lands of the bubonic plague or Black Death, as it was called. For most twenty-first-century individuals, the Middle Ages seem far removed. Although life and music were quite different back then, we hope that you will find that there are cultural threads that extend from that distant time to now.

We normally start studies of Western music with the Middle Ages, but of course, music existed long before then. In fact, the term Middle Ages or medieval period got its name to describe the time in between (or "in the middle of") the ancient age of classical Greece and Rome and the Renaissance of Western Europe, which roughly began in the fifteenth century. Knowledge of music before the Middle Ages is limited but what we do know largely revolves around the Greek mathematician Pythagoras, who died around 500 B.C.E. (See his profile on a third century ancient coin: Figure 2.1.1)



Figure 4.1.1: Profile of Pythagoras on ancient coin by User "Schaengel89" Source: Wikimedia. Commons License | Public Domain

Pythagoras might be thought of as a father of the modern study of acoustics due to his experimentation with bars of iron and strings of different lengths. Images of people singing and playing instruments, such as those found on the Greek vases provide evidence that music was used for ancient theater, dance, and worship. The Greek word musicka referred to not music but also referred to poetry and the telling of history. Writings of Plato and Aristotle referred to music as a form of ethos (an appeal to ethics). As the Roman Empire expanded across Western Europe, so too did Christianity (see Figure 2.1.2, a map of Western Europe around 1000). Considering that Biblical texts from ancient Hebrews to those of early Christians, provided numerous records of music used as a

form of worship, the Empire used music to help unify its people: the theory was that if people worshipped together in a similar way, then they might also stick together during political struggles.



Figure 4.1.2: Map pf Western Europe by User "Roke". Source: Wikimedia. License: Public Domain

Later, starting around 800 CE, Western music is recorded in a notation that we can still decipher today. This brief overview of these five hundred years of the Roman Empire will help us better understand the music of the Middle Ages.

Historical Context for Music of the Middle Ages (800-1400)

During the Middle Ages, as during other periods of Western history, sacred and secular worlds were both separate and integrated. However during this time, the Catholic Church was the most widespread and influential institution and leader in all things sacred. The Catholic Church's head, the Pope, maintained political and spiritual power and influence among the noble classes and their geographic territories; the life of a high church official was not completely different from that of a noble counterpart, and many younger sons and daughters of the aristocracy found vocations in the church. Towns large and small had churches, spaces open to all: commoners, clergy, and nobles. The Catholic Church also developed a system of monasteries, where monks studied and prayed, often in solitude, even while making cultural and scientific discoveries that would eventually shape human life more broadly. In civic and secular life, kings, dukes, and lords wielded power over their lands and the commoners living therein. Kings and dukes had courts, gatherings of fellow nobles, where they forged political alliances, threw lavish parties, and celebrated both love and war in song and dance.





Figure 4.1.3: Notre-Dame de Paris by User "Zuffe" Source: Wikimedia. Figure 4.1.4: The ambulatory of Notre Dame by User "Zmorgan" Source: Wikimedia. Commons License: Public Domain

Many of the important historical developments of the Middle Ages arose from either in the church or the court. One such important development stemming from the Catholic Church would be the developments of architecture. During this period, architects built increasingly tall and imposing cathedrals for worship through the technological innovations of pointed arches, flying buttresses,

and large cut glass windows. This new architectural style was referred to as “gothic,” which vastly contrast the Romanesque style, with its rounded arches and smaller windows. Another important development stemming from the courts occurred in the arts. Poets and musicians, attached to the courts, wrote poetry, literature, and music, less and less in Latin—still the common language of the church—and increasingly in their own vernacular languages (the predecessors of today’s French, Italian, Spanish, German, and English). However, one major development of the Middle Ages spanned sacred and secular worlds: universities shot up in locales from Bologna, Italy, and Paris, France, to Oxford, England (the University of Bologna begin the first). At university, a young man could pursue a degree in theology, law, or medicine. Music of a sort was studied as one of the seven liberal arts and sciences, specifically as the science of proportions. (Look for music in this twelfth-century image of the seven liberal arts from the Hortus deliciarum of the Herrad of Landsberg (Figure 4.1.5).

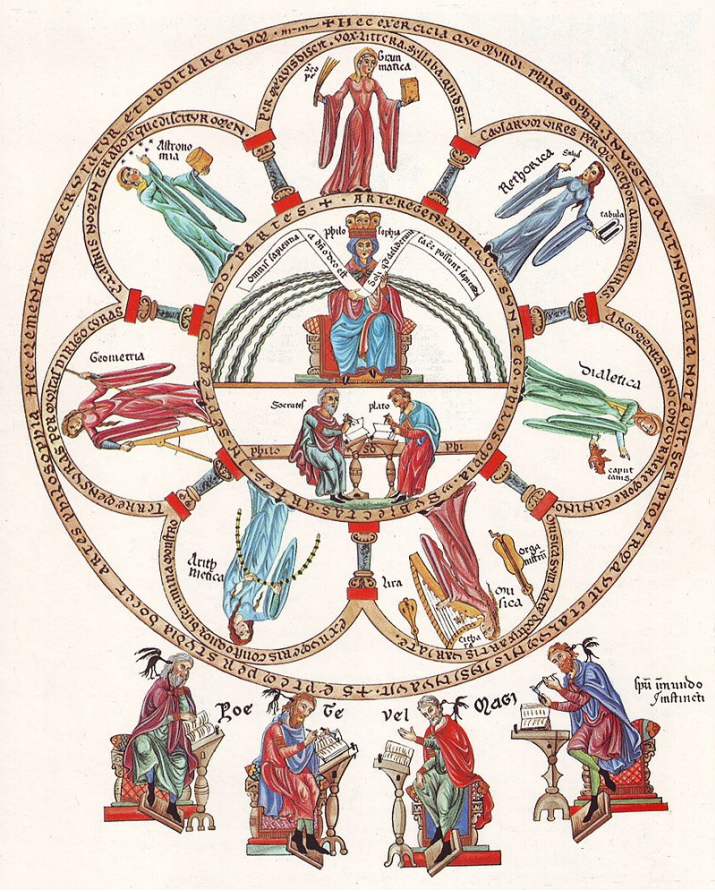


Figure 4.1.5: Hortus deliciarum of the Herrad of Landsberg by Herrad von Landsberg. Source: Wikimedia Commons License: Public Domain

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4.2: Music in the Middle Ages- An Overview

Not surprisingly, given their importance during the Middle Ages, both the Catholic Church and the network of aristocratic courts left a significant mark on music of the time. Much of the music from that era that was written down in notation and still exists comes from Christian worship or court entertainment. Churches and courts employed scribes and artists to write down their music in beautifully illuminated manuscripts such as this one that features Guillaume Machaut's "Dame, a vous sans retoller," discussed later. Churchmen such as the monk Guido of Arezzo devised musical systems such as "solfège" still used today.
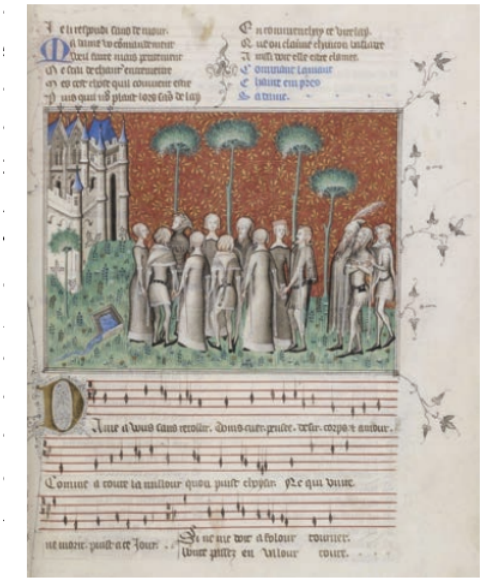


Figure 4.2.1: Group of people dancing depicted in Machaut's manuscript by Guillaume de Machaut. Source: Wikimedia

As we study a few compositions from the Middle Ages, we will see the following musical developments at play: (1) the development of musical texture from monophony to polyphony, and (2) the shift from music whose rhythm is hinted at by its words, to music that has what we refer to today as meter. Although we know that instrumental music existed in the Middle Ages, most of the music that has survived is vocal.

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4.3: Music for Medieval Christian Worship

The earliest music of Catholic Christianity was chant, that is, monophonic a cappella music, most often sung in worship. As you learned in the first chapter of this book, monophony refers to music with one melodic line that may be performed by one or many individuals at the same time. Largely due to the belief of some Catholics that instruments were too closely associated with secular music, instruments were rarely used in medieval worship; therefore most chant was sung a cappella, or without instruments. As musical notation for rhythm had not yet developed, the exact development of rhythm in chant is uncertain. However, based on church tradition (some of which still exist), we believe that the rhythms of medieval chants were guided by the natural rhythms provided by the words.

Medieval Catholic worship included services throughout the day. The most important of these services was the **Mass**, at which the Eucharist, also known as communion, was celebrated (this celebration includes the consumption of bread and wine representing the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ). Five chants of the mass (the Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, and Agnus Dei) were typically included in every mass, no matter what date in the church calendar. Catholics, as well as some Protestants, still use this Liturgy in worship today.

In the evening, one might attend a Vespers service, at which chants called hymns were sung. Hymns, like most of the rest of the Catholic liturgy, were sung in Latin. Hymns most often featured four-line strophes in which the lines were generally the same length and often rhymed. Each strophe of a given hymn was sung to the same music, and for that reason, we say that hymns are in strophic form. **Hymns** like most chants generally had a range of about an octave, which made them easy to sing.

Throughout the Middle Ages, Mary the mother of Jesus, referred to as the Virgin Mary, was a central figure in Catholic devotion and worship. Under Catholic belief, she is upheld as the perfect woman, having been chosen by God to miraculously give birth to the Christ while still a virgin. She was given the role of intercessor, a mediator for the Christian believer with a petition for God, and as such appeared in many medieval chants.



Figure 4.3.1: The Virgin Mary faetured in a panel from an altarpiece painted by Cimabue around 1280 by Cimabue Source: Wikimedia

Focus Composition: Ave Generosa by Hildegard of Bingen (Twelfth Century)

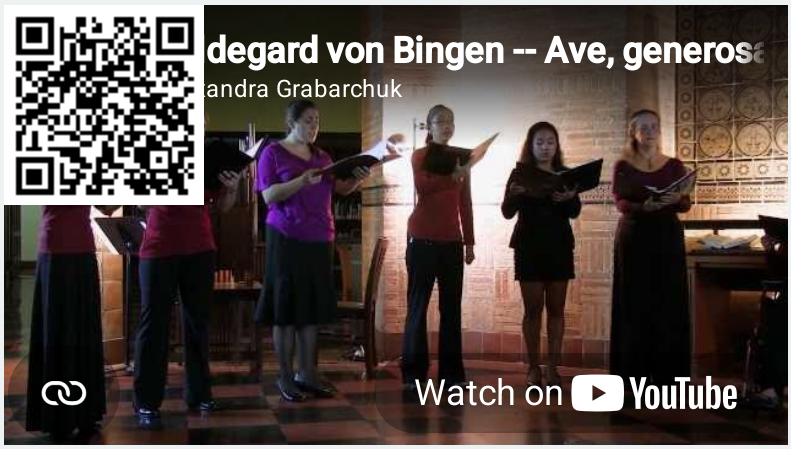
Many composers of the Middle Ages will forever remain anonymous. Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179) from the German Rhineland is a notable exception. At the age of fourteen, Hildegard's family gave her to the Catholic Church where she studied Latin and theology at the local monastery. Known for her religious visions, Hildegard eventually became an influential religious leader, artist, poet, scientist, and musician. She would go on to found three convents and become an abbess, the chief administrator of an abbey.

Writing poetry and music for her fellow nuns to use in worship was one of many of Hildegard's activities, and the hymn "Ave Generosa" is just one of her many compositions. This hymn has multiple strophes in Latin that praise Mary and her role as the bearer of the Son of God. The manuscript contains one melodic line that is sung for each of the strophes, making it a strophic monophonic chant. Although some leaps occur, the melody is conjunct. The range of the melody line, although still approachable for the amateur singer, is a bit wider than other church chant of the Middle Ages. The melody also contains melismas at several places. A **melisma** is the singing of multiple pitches on one syllable of text. Overall, the rhythm of the chant follows the rhythm of the syllables of the text.



Figure 4.3.2: Depiction of Hildegard of Bingen in the Rupertsberger Codex of her Liber Scivias by Hildegard. Source: Wikimedia

Chant is by definition monophonic, but scholars suspect that medieval performers sometimes added musical lines to the texture, probably starting with drones (a pitch or group of pitches that were sustained while most of the ensemble sang together the melodic line). Performances of chant music today often add embellishments such as occasionally having a fiddle or small organ play the drone instead of being vocally incorporated. Performers of the Middle Ages possibly did likewise, even if prevailing practices called for entirely a cappella worship.



Video 4.3.1: UCLA Early Music Ensemble; Soloist Arreanna Rostosky; Audio & video by Umberto Belfiore; listen through 3:17 for the first four strophes. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RJze...ature=youtu.be

LISTENING GUIDE

Composer: Hildegard of Bingen

Composition: Ave Generosa

Date: 12th century

Genre: Hymn (a type of chant)

Form: Strophic

Nature of Text: multiple, four-line strophes in Latin, praising the Virgin Mary [text and translation found at Norma Gentile, www.healingchants. com/contact2.html]

Performing Forces: small ensemble of vocalists

What we want you to remember about this composition:

- It is chant.
- It is a cappella.
- Its rhythms follow the rhythms of the text.
- It is monophonic (although this performance adds a drone).

Other things to listen for:

- Its melodic line is mostly conjunct.
- Its melody contains many melismas.
- It has a Latin text sung in a strophic form.

Timing	Performing Forces, Melody, and Texture	Text and Form
0:00	Solo vocalist enters with first line using a monophonic texture. The melody opens with an upward leap and then moves mostly by step: conjunct	Strophe 1: Ave, generosa, “Hail generous one”
0:10	Group joins with line two, some singing a drone pitch. The melody continues mostly conjunctly, with melismas added. Since the drone is improvised, this is still monophony.	Strophe 1 continues: Gloriosa et intacta puella… “Noble, glorious, and whole woman…”
0:49	Repetition of the melody to new words sung by all with monophonic texture (the drone continues)	Strophe 2: Nam hec superna infusio in te fuit… “The essences of heaven flooded into you…
1:37	Repetition of the melody to new words sung by all with monophonic texture (the drone continues)	Strophe 3: O pulsherrima et dulcissima… “O lovely and tender one…”
2:34	Repetition of the melody to new words sung by all with monophonic texture (the drone continues)	Strophe 4: Venter enim tuus gaudium havuit… “Your womb held joy…”

The Emergence of Polyphonic Music for the Medieval Church

Initial embellishments such as the addition of a musical drone to a monophonic chant were probably improvised during the Middle Ages. With the advent of musical notation that could indicate polyphony, composers began writing polyphonic compositions for worship, initially intended for select parts of the Liturgy to be sung by the most trained and accomplished of the priests or monks

leading the mass. Originally, these polyphonic compositions featured two musical lines at the same time; eventually, third and fourth lines were added. Polyphonic liturgical music, originally called organum, emerged in Paris around the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In this case, growing musical complexity seems to parallel growing architectural complexity.

Composers wrote polyphony so that the **cadences**, or ends of musical phrases and sections, resolved to simultaneously sounding perfect intervals. Perfect intervals are the intervals of fourths, fifths, and octaves. Such intervals are called perfect because they are the first intervals derived from the overtone series (see chapter one). As hollow and even disturbing as perfect intervals can sound to our modern ears, the Middle Ages used them in church partly because they believed that what was perfect was more appropriate for the worship of God than the imperfect.



Figure 4.3.3: Depiction of Hildegard of Guillaume de Machaut by Anonymous Source: Wikimedia

In Paris, composers also developed an early type of rhythmic notation, which was important considering that individual singers would now be singing different musical lines that needed to stay in sync. By the end of the fourteenth century, this rhythmic notation began looking a little bit like the rhythmic notation recognizable today. Beginning a music composition, a symbol fell indicating something like our modern meter symbols (see chapter one). This symbol told the performer whether the composition was in two or in three and laid out the note value that provided the basic beat. Initially almost all metered church music used triple time, because the number three was associated with perfection and theological concepts such as the trinity.

Elsewhere in what is now France, Guillaume de Machaut (c. 1300-13) emerged as the most important poet and composer of his century. He is the first composer about which we have much biographical information, due in part to the fact that Machaut himself, near the end of his life, collected his poetry into volumes of manuscripts, which include a miniature image of the composer (see Figure 2.9 of Machaut at work from a fourteenth century manuscript). We know that he traveled widely as a cleric and secretary for John, the King of Bohemia. Around 1340, he moved to Reims (now in France), where he served as a church official at the cathedral. There he had more time to write poetry and music, which he seems to have continued doing for some time.

Focus Composition: Agnus Dei from the Nostre Dame Mass (c. 1364 CE) by Guillaume de Machaut

We think that Machaut wrote his Mass of Nostre Dame around 1364. This composition is famous because it was one of the first compositions to set all five movements of the mass ordinary as a complete whole: these movements are the pieces of the Catholic liturgy comprising every Mass, no matter what time of the year. Movement in music refers to a musical section that sounds complete but that is part of a larger musical composition. Musical connections between each movement of this Mass cycle—the Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, and Agnus Dei—suggest that Machaut intended them to be performed together, rather than being traded in and out of a Mass, based on the preferences of the priest leading the service. Agnus Dei was composed after the Machaut's brother death in 1372, this Mass was likely performed every week in a side chapel of the Reims Cathedral. Medieval Catholics commonly paid for Masses to be performed in honor of their deceased loved ones.

As you listen to the Agnus Dei movement from the Nostre Dame Mass, try imagining that you are sitting in that side chapel of the cathedral at Reims, a cathedral that looks not unlike the Cathedral of Notre in Paris. Its slow tempo might remind us that this was music that memorialized Machaut's dead brother, and its triple meter allegorized perfection. Remember that although

its perfect intervals may sound disturbing to our ears, for those in the Middle Ages they symbolized that which was most appropriate and musically innovative.



LISTENING GUIDE

For audio, go to: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mvIEA2dBKGA

Oxford Camerata directed by Jeremy Summerly

Composer: Guillaume de Machaut Composition: Agnus Dei from the *Nostre Dame Mass* Date: c.1364 CE

Genre: Movement from the Ordinary of the Mass Form: A-B-A

Nature of Text: Latin words from the Mass Ordinary: Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, Miserere nobis" (Lamb of God, who takes away the sin, have mercy on us) Performing Forces: small ensemble of vocalists

What we want you to remember about this composition:

- It is part of the Latin mass.
- It uses four-part polyphony.
- It has a slow tempo

Other things to listen for:

- Its melodies lines have a lot of melismas
- It is in triple meter, symbolizing perfection
- It uses simultaneous intervals of fourths, fifths, and octaves, also symbolizing perfection.
- Its overall form is A-B-A

Timing	Performing Forces, Melody, and Texture	Text & Form
0:00	Small ensemble of men singing in four-part polyphony; a mostly conjunct melody with a lot of melismas in triple meter at a slow tempo. The section ends with a cadence on open, hollow-sounding harmonies such as octaves and fifths.	**A**: Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, Miserere nobis

Timing	Performing Forces, Melody, and Texture	Text & Form
1:11	This section begins with faster notes sung by the alto voice. Note that it ends with a cadence to hollowing-sounding intervals of the fifth and octave, just like the first section had	**B**: Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, Miserere nobis
2:27	Same music as at the beginning.	**A**: Agnus Dei, qui tollis pe

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4.4: Music in Medieval Courts

Like the Catholic Church, medieval kings, dukes, lords and other members of the nobility had resources to sponsor musicians to provide them with music for worship and entertainment. Individuals roughly comparable to today's singer-songwriters served courts throughout Europe. Like most singer-songwriters, love was a favored topic. These poet-composers also sang of devotion to the Virgin Mary and of the current events of the day.

Many songs that merge these two focus points appear in a late thirteenth-century manuscript called the Cantigas de Santa Maria (Songs for the Virgin Mary), a collection sponsored by **King Alfonso the Wise** who ruled the northwestern corner of the Iberian peninsula. Cantigas de Santa Maria also includes many illustrations of individuals playing instruments. The musician on the left in Figure 2.6.1 is playing a rebec and the one to the right a lute. Elsewhere in the manuscript these drummers and fifers appear (see Figure 2.6.2). These depictions suggest to us that, outside of worship services, much vocal music was accompanied by instruments. We believe such songs as these were also sung by groups and used as dance music, especially as early forms of rhythmic notation indicate simple and catchy patterns that were danceable. Other manuscripts also show individuals dancing to the songs of composers such as Machaut.



Figure 4.4.1: (right) Rebec and Lute Players depicted in *Cantigas de Santa Maria* by Unknown via Wikimedia Figure. (right) Drummers and fifers depicted in *Cantigas de Santa Maria* by Unkown. Source: Wikimedia.

Focus Composition: Song of Mary, No. 181: "The Virgin will aid those who most love her"

"The Virgin will aid those who most love her," is one of over four hundred songs praising the Virgin Mary in the Cantigas de Santa Maria described above. "The Virgin will aid those who most love her" praises Mary for her help during the crusades in defeating a Moroccan king in the city of Marrakesh. It uses a verse and refrain structure similar to those discussed in chapter one. Its two-lined chorus (here called a **refrain**) is sung at the beginning of each of the eight four-lined strophes that serve as verses. The two-line melody for the refrain is repeated for the first two lines of the verse; a new melody then is used for the last two lines of the verse. In the recent recording done by Jordi Savall and his ensemble, a relatively large group of men and women sing the refrains, and soloists and smaller groups of singers perform the verses. The ensemble also includes a hand drum that articulates the repeating rhythmic motives, a medieval fiddle, and a lute, as well as medieval flutes and shawms, near the end of the excerpt below. These parts are not notated in the manuscript, but it is likely that similar instruments would have been used to accompany this monophonic song in the middle ages.



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=770O...ature=youtu.be Performed by Jordi Savall and Ensemble; listen from 0:13 through 3:29.

LISTENING GUIDE

Composer: Anonymous

Composition: Song of Mary, No. 181: "The Virgin will aid those who most love her" (Pero que seja a gente d'outra lei [e]descreuda)

Date: c.1275

Genre: Song

Form: Refrain [A] & verses[ab] =A=ab

Nature of Text: Refrain and strophes in an earlier form of Portuguese, praising the Virgin Mary

Performing Forces: small ensemble of vocalists, men and women singing together and separately

What we want you to remember about this composition:

- It is music for entertainment, even though it has a sacred subject.
- It is monophonic.
- Its narrow-ranged melody and repetitive rhythms make it easy for non-professionals to sing.

Other things to listen for:

- In this recording, the monophonic melody is sung by men and women and is played by a medieval fiddle and lute; a drum plays the beat; near the end of the excerpt, you can also hear flutes and shawms.
- Its musical form is A-ab, meaning that the refrain is always sung to the same music

Timing	Performing Forces, Melody, and Texture	Text and Form
0:00	Fiddles and lute playing melody for refrain; Drum playing rhythmic motive; monophonic texture throughout; Mostly conjunct melody with a narrow range; Repeated motive shifts back and forth between twos and threes	A: Intro
0:12	Sung by men and women	A: Refrain
0:23	One woman starts and then others join, singing monophonically the same the same melodic phrase as the refrain	a: First two lines of the first verse

Timing	Performing Forces, Melody, and Texture	Text and Form
0:37	Several women singing with a monophonic texture a different melodic phrase	b: Second two lines of the first verse
0:48	Men and women; same melody as in the Refrain above	A: Refrain
1:00	One man, joined by other men; same melody as in the first half of the verse above	a: First two lines of the second verse
1:14	Several men; same melody as in the second half of the verse above	b: Second two lines of the second verse
1:26	Men and women; same melody as in the Refrain above	A: Refrain
1:37	1:37 Women; same melody as the other verses; men join them for the b phrase of the melodic theme.	ab: Verse three
2:03	Men and women	A: Refrain
2:13	Men start and women sing the b-phrase of the melodic theme.	ab: Verse four
2:40	Men and women	A: Refrain
2:52	Played by flutes, medieval fiddle, lutes, drums, zither	a: First two lines of the fifth verse
3:05	Played by same instruments as above	b: Second two lines of the second verse
3:17	Played by the above instruments plus shawms.	A: refrain

Medieval poet composers also wrote a lot of music about more secular love, a topic that continues to be popular for songs to the present day. Medieval musicians and composers, as well as much of European nobility in the Middle Ages, were particularly invested in what we call courtly love. Courtly love is love for a beloved, without any concern for whether or not the love will be returned. The speakers within these poems recounted the virtues of their beloved, acknowledging the impossibility of ever consummating their love and pledging to continue loving their beloved to the end of their days.

Guillaume de Machaut, who wrote the famous Mass of Nostre Dame discussed above, also wrote many love songs, some polyphonic and others monophonic. In his “Lady, to you without reserve I give my heart, thought and desire,” a lover admires his virtuous beloved and pledges undying love, even while suspecting that they will remain ever apart. Like “The Virgin will aid,” its sung words are in the original French. Also like “The Virgin will aid,” it consists of a refrain that alternates with verses. Here the refrain and three verses are in a fixed medieval poetic and musical form that can be notated as Abba-Abba-Abba-Abba. Machaut’s song, written over fifty years after “The Virgin will aid,” shows medieval rhythms becoming increasingly complex. The notes are grouped into groups of three, but the accentuation patterns often change. We suspect that this song was also used as dance music, given the illustration of a group dancing in a circle appearing above its musical notation in Machaut’s manuscript. As we noted earlier, songs like this were most likely sung with accompaniment, even though this accompaniment wasn’t notated; the recording excerpt in the link below uses tambourine to keep the beat.

For audio, go to: www.youtube.com/watch?v=7VM99EwcXNU Studio der Frühen Musik

Listening Guide

Composer: Guillaume de Machaut

Composition: “Lady, to you without reserve I give my heart, thought and desire” (Dame, à vous sans retollir”)

Date: Fourteenth century

Genre: song

Form: Refrain [A] & Verses [bba]

Nature of Text: French poem about courtly love with a refrain alternating with three verses.

Performing Forces: soloist alternating with small ensemble of vocalists

What we really want you to remember about this composition:

- It is a French song about courtly love.
- It is monophonic, here with tambourine articulating the beats
- Its form consists of an alternation of a refrain and verses

Other things to listen for:

- Its melodic line is mostly conjunct, the range is a little over an octave, and it contains several short melismas.

Timing	Performing Forces, Melody, and Texture	Text and Form
0:00	Small group of women singing in monophonic text with tambourine; Mostly conjunct melody with a narrow range; Notes fall in rhythmic groups of three, but the accent patterns change often	**A**: Refrain
0:14	Female soloist still in monophonic texture without tambourine; the b phrase is mostly conjunct, starts high and descends, repeats, then returns to the a phrase as heard in the refrain	**bba**: Verse
0:40	Same music as in the A phrase	**A**: Refrain above with the words of the refrain
0:53	Female soloist as heard above to new words	**bba**: Verse
1:18	As heard in the Refrain above, words and music	**A**: Refrain
1:31	As heard above verses, with new words	**bba**: Verse
1:57	As heard in the Refrain above, words and music	**A**: Refrain

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4.5: Chapter Summary

In this chapter, we have studied music that dates back almost 1500 years from today. In some ways, it differs greatly from our music today, though some continuous threads exist. Individuals in the Middle Ages used music for worship and entertainment, just as occurs today. They wrote sacred music for worship and also used sacred ideas in entertainment music. Music for entertainment included songs about love, religion, and current events as well as music that might be danced to. Though the style and form of their music is quite different from ours in many ways, some aspects of musical style have not changed. Conjunct music with a relatively narrow range is still a typical choice in folk and pop music, owing to the fact that it is easy for even the amateur to sing. Songs in strophic form and songs with a refrain and contrasting verses also still appear in today's pop music. As we continue on to study music of the Renaissance, keep in mind these categories of music that remain to the present day.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

5: Music of the Renaissance

Learning Objectives

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the historical and cultural contexts of the Renaissance
2. Recognize musical styles of the Renaissance
3. Identify important genres and uses of the music of the Renaissance
4. Identify aurally selected compositions of the Renaissance and critically evaluate its style
5. Compare and contrast the music of the Renaissance with today's contemporary music

5.1: Introduction and Historical Context

5.2: Music of the Renaissance

5.3: Worship Music

5.4: Secular Music - Entertainment Music of the Renaissance

5.5: Chapter Summary

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5.1: Introduction and Historical Context

3.3.1 What is the renaissance?

The term **Renaissance** literally means “rebirth.” As a historical and artistic era in Western Europe, the Renaissance spanned from the late 1400s to the early 1600s. The Renaissance was a time of waning political power in the church, somewhat as a result of the Protestant Reformation. Also during this period, the feudal system slowly gave way to developing nationstates with centralized power in the courts. This period was one of intense creativity and exploration. It included such luminaries as Leonardo da Vinci, Christopher Columbus, Ferdinand Magellan, Nicolaus Copernicus, and William Shakespeare. The previous medieval period was suppressive, firmly established, and pious. The Renaissance however, provided the thinkers and scholars of the day with a revival of Classical (Greek and Roman) wisdom and learning after a time of papal restraint. This “rebirth” laid the foundation for much of today’s modern society, where humans and nature rather than religion become the standard for art, science, and philosophy.

The School of Athens (1505), Figure 3.1.1, by Raphael demonstrates the strong admiration, influence, and interest in previous Greek and Roman culture. The painting depicts the Greek philosophers Aristotle and Plato (center), with Plato depicted in the likeness of Leonardo da Vinci.



Figure 5.1.1: The School of Athens by Raphael. Source: Wikimedia

3.3.2 Renaissance Timeline

Events in History	Events in Music and Arts

1440: Gutenberg's printing press	c. 1475: Josquin Desprez, *Ave Maria*
1453: Fall of Constantinople	c. 1482: Bottecelli, *La Primavera*
1456: Gutenberg Bible	c. 1503: Leonardo da Vinci, *Mona Lisa*
1492: Columbus reaches America	1504 Michelangelo, *David*
1517: Martin Luther nails The Ninety-Five Theses on Wittenberg Church Door	c. 1505: Raphael, *School of Athens, Madonna del Granduca*
	1563: Giovanni Pierluigi da Patestrina, *Pope Marcellus Mass*
1545-1563: Council of Trent	c. 1570: Titian, *Venus and the Lute Player*
1558-1603: Elizabeth I, Queen of England	1597: Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*
1588: Spanish Armada defeated	1601: Thomas Weelkes, *As Vesta Was Descending*

Occurrences at the end of the Middle Ages accelerated a series of intellectual, social, artistic, and political changes and transformation that resulted in the Renaissance.

By the 1500s, Catholic liturgical music had become extremely complex and ornate. Composers such as Josquin des Prez and Palestrina were composing layered Masses that utilized musical textures such as polyphony and imitative counter- point (more on these techniques later). The mass is a sacred choral composition historically composed as worship liturgy.

The complexity of the music in the Catholic Mass garnered criticism from **Martin Luther**, a Roman Catholic priest and the eventual father of the Protestant Reformation, who complained that the meaning of the words of the mass, formal worship liturgy, were lost in the beautiful polyphony of the music. Also, Catholic Masses were always performed in Latin, a language seldom used outside the church. Early Protestant hymns stripped away contrapuntal textures, utilized reg- ular beat patterns, and set biblical texts in German. Martin Luther himself penned a few hymns, many of which the great classic composer Johann Sebastian Bach would revisit about 125 years later.

3.3.3 Renaissance Humanism

The Humanism movement is one which expressed the spirit of the Renaissance era that took root in Italy after eastern European scholars fled from Constantinople to the region bringing with them books, manuscripts, and the traditions of Greek scholarship. Humanism is a major paradigm shift from the ways of thought during the medieval era where a life of penance in a feudal system was considered the accepted standard of life. As a part of this ideological change there was a major intellectual shift from the dominance of scholars/clerics of the medieval period (who developed and controlled the scholastic institutions) to the secular men of letters. Men of letters were scholars of the liberal arts who turned to the classics and philosophy to understand the meaning of life.

Humanism has several distinct attributes as it focuses on human nature, its diverse spectrum, and all its accomplishments. Humanism syncretizes all the truths found in different philosophical and theological schools. It emphasizes and focuses on the dignity of man, and studies mankind's struggles over nature.

Medival vs. Renaissance



Figure 5.1.2: Rendition of David Fighting Goliath found on a Medieval Cast plate; 613-630 by Unknown. Source: Met Museum license | OASC



Figure 5.1.3: Michelangelo's rendition of David preparing to fight Goliath, stone in hand and sling over his shoulder; 1501-1504 by Jörg Bittner Unna. Source: Wikimedia Commons license | CC BY 3.0

3.3.4 Rebirth of Ancient Civilizations

Renaissance

Predecessors to the Renaissance and the Humanist movement include Dan- te and Petrarch. In 1452, after the fall of Constantinople, there was considerable boost in the Humanist movement. Humanism was accelerated by the invention of

the printing press, which permitted mass reproduction of the classical text—once only found in hand-written manuscripts—the availability of literature improved immensely. Thus, literacy among the common people increased dramatically. The scholastic and intellectual stimulation of the general public facilitated by Human- ism initiated a power and knowledge shift from the land-owning upper class and the church to the individual. This shift facilitated and contributed to the beginning of the Reformation. As mentioned above, Martin Luther was a leading religious re- former who challenged the authority of the central Catholic Church and its role in governance, education, and religious practices. Like most other European groups of the era, the Humanists at the time, were divided in their support of the reforma- tion and counter-reformation movements.

3.3.5 Symmetry and Perspective in Art



Figure 5.1.4: Cimabue's Madonna; 1280 by Cimabue. Source: Wikimedia



Figure 5.1.5: Giotto's Madonna; 1310 by Giotto. Source: Wikimedia



Figure 5.1.6: Raphael's Madonna; 1504 by Raphael. Source: Wikimedia

The shift away from the power and authority of the church between the Medieval period and the Renaissance period is not only evident in music but is also found in the visual arts. Artists and authors of the Renaissance became interested in classical mythology and literature. Artists created sculptures of the entire hu- man body, demonstrating a direct lineage from ancient Greek culture to the Renaissance. In the Middle Ages, such depictions of the nude body were thought to be objects of shame or in need of cover. Artists of the Middle Ages were more focused on religious symbolism than the lifelike representation created in the Renaissance era. Medieval artists perceived the canvas as a flat medium/surface on which subjects are shown very two dimensionally. Painters of the Renaissance were more interested in portraying real life imagery in three dimensions on their canvas. See the evolution of the Virgin Mary from the Medieval period to the Renaissance period

In Figures 3.1.4, Figure 3.1.5, figure 3.1.6 above. You can see the shift from the religious symbolism to the realistic depiction of the human body features.

Raphael and Leonardo da Vinci focused on portraying realism, utilizing linear perspective and creating illusions of space in their works. A geometric system was effectively used to create space and the illusion of depth. This shift from the religious symbolism

to the real portrayal of the human is representative of the decline of the church in the arts as well as music. Music outside of the church, secular mu- sic, increased in importance.

3.3.6 The Protestant reformation

In the Middle Ages, people were thought to be parts of a greater whole: members of a family, trade guild, nation, and church. At the beginning of the Renaissance, a shift in thought led people to think of themselves as individuals, sparked by Martin Luther's dissent against
several areas and practices within the Catholic Church. On October 31, 1517, Luther challenged the Catholic Church by posting The Ninety-Five Theses on the doors of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany. The post stated Luther's various beliefs and interpretations of Biblical doctrine which challenged the many practices of the Catholic Church in the early 1500s. Luther felt that educated/literate believers should be able to read the scriptures and become individual church entities themselves. With the invention of the Gutenberg Press, copies of the scriptures and hymns became available to the masses which helped spread the Reformation. The empowerment of the common worshiper or middle class continued to fuel the loss of authority of the church and upper class.

3.3.7 Gutenberg Press

Few inventions have had the significance to modernization as the Gutenberg Press. Up until the invention of the press, the earliest forms of the books with edge bounding, similar to the type we have today, called codex books were hand pro- duced by monks. This process was quite slow, costly, and laborious, often taking months to produce smaller volumes and years to produce a copy of the Bible and hymn books of worship.

Gutenberg's invention of a much more efficient printing method made it possible to distribute a large amount of printed information at a much accelerated and labor efficient pace. The printing press enabled the printing of hymn books for the

middle class and further expanded the involvement of the middle class in their worship service-a key component in the reformation. Gutenberg's press served as a major engine for the distribution of knowledge and contributed to the Renaissance, Scientific Revolution, and Protestant reformation.

3.3.8 Columbus's voyage

Columbus's discovery of the New World in 1492 also contributed to the spirit and spread of the Humanist movement. The discovering of new land and the potential for colonization of new territory added to the sense of infallibility and ego of the human race. The human spirit of all social classes was invigorated. The invigoration of the middle class influenced the arts and the public's hunger for art and music for the vast middle class population.

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5.2: Music of the Renaissance

Characteristics of the Renaissance Music include: steady beat, balanced phras- es (the same length), polyphony (often imitative), increasing interest in text-music relationships, Petrucci and the printing of music, and a growing merchant class singing/playing music at home. **Word painting** was utilized by Renaissance composers to represent poetic images musically. For example, an ascending me- lodic line would portray the text “ascension to heaven.” Or a series of rapid notes would represent running.

Art music in the Renaissance served three basic purposes: (1) worship in both the Catholic and burgeoning Protestant Churches, (2) music for the entertainment and edification of the courts and courtly life, and (3) dance music. Playing musical instruments became a form of leisure and a significant, valued pastime for every educated person. Guests at social functions were expected to contribute to the eve- ning’s festivities through instrumental performance. Much of the secular music in the Renaissance was centered on courtly life. Vocal music ranged from **chansons** (or songs) about love and courtly intrigue to madrigals about nymphs, fairies, and, well, you name it. Both chansons and madrigals were often set for one or more voices with plucked-string accompaniment, such as by the lute, a gourd-shaped instrument with frets, raised strip on the fingerboard, somewhat similar to the modern guitar.

A **madrigal** is a musical piece for several solo voices set to a short poem. They originated in Italy around 1520. Most madrigals were about love. Madrigals were published by the thousands and learned and performed by cultured aristocrats. Similar to the motet, a madrigal combines both homophonic and polyphonic tex- tures. Unlike the motet, the madrigal is secular and utilizes unusual harmonies and word painting more often. Many of the refrains of these madrigals utilized the text “Fa La” to fill the gaps in the melody or to possibly cover risqué or illicit con- notations. Sometimes madrigals are referred to as Renaissance Fa La songs.

A volume of translated Italian madrigals were published in London during the year of 1588, the year of the defeat of the Spanish Armada. This sudden public interest facilitated a surge of English madrigal writing as well as a spurt of other secular music writing and publication. This music boom lasted for thirty years and was as much a golden age of music as British literature was with Shakespeare and Queen Elizabeth I. The rebirth in both literature and music originated in Italy and migrated to England; the English madrigal became more humorous and lighter in England as compared to Italy.

Renaissance music was mostly polyphonic in texture. Comprehending a wide range of emotions, Renaissance music nevertheless portrayed all emotions in a bal- anced and moderate fashion. Extreme use of and contrasts in dynamics, rhythm, and tone color do not occur. The rhythms in Renaissance music tend to have a smooth, soft flow instead of a sharp, well-defined pulse of accents.

Composers enjoyed imitating sounds of nature and sound effects in their com- positions. The Renaissance period became known as the golden age of *a cappella* choral music because choral music did not require an instrumental accompaniment.

Instrumental music in the Renaissance remained largely relegated to social purposes such as dancing, but a few notable virtuosos of the time, including the English lutenist and singer John Dowland, composed and performed music for Queen Elizabeth I, among others.

Dowland was a lutenist in 1598 in the court of Christian IV and later in 1612 in the court of King James I. He is known for composing one of the best songs of the Renaissance period, *Flow, my Teares.* This imitative piece demonstrates the melancholy humor of the time period. Dowland’s *Flow, My Teares* may be heard at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jkRrzAo9Wl4. For more information on Dowland, and lyrics to *Flow My Tears*, go to genius.com/John-dowland- flow-my-tears-annotated.

The instruments utilized during the Renaissance era were quite diverse. Local availability of raw materials for the manufacture of the instrument often deter- mined its assembly and accessibility to the public. A renaissance consort is a group of renaissance instrumentalists playing together. A whole consort is an ensemble performing with instruments from the same family. A broken consort is an ensem- ble comprised of instruments from more than one family.

Instruments from the Medieval and Renaissance may be found at: www. music.iastate.edu/antiqua/instrumt.html.

3.4.1 style overview

Medieval Music

- Mainly monophony
- Majority of the music’s rhythm comes from the text
- Use of perfect intervals such as fourths, fifths, and octaves for cadences
- Most music comes from the courts or church
- Music instruction predominantly restricted to the church and patron’s courts

Renaissance Music

• Mainly polyphony (much is imitative polyphony/overlapped repetition—please see music score below)

• Majority of the music's rhythms is indicated by musical notation

• Growing use of thirds and triads

• Music – text relationships increasingly important with the use of word painting

• Invention of music publishing

• Growing merchant class increasingly acquires musical skills

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5.3: Worship Music

During the Renaissance from 1442 to 1483, church choir membership increased dramatically in size. The incorporation of entire male ensembles and choirs sing- ing in parts during the Renaissance is one major difference from the Middle Ages' polyphonic church music, which was usually sung by soloists. As the Renaissance progressed, the church remained an important supporter of music although, mu- sical activity gradually shifted to secular support. Royalty and the wealthy of the courts seeking after and competing for the finest composers replaced what was originally church supported. The motet and the mass are the two main forms of sacred choral music of the Renaissance.

3.5.1 motet

The **motet**, a sacred Latin text polyphonic choral work, is not taken from the ordinary of the mass. A contemporary of Leonardo da Vinci and Christopher Co- lumbus, **Josquin des Prez** was a master of Renaissance choral music. Originally from the region that is today's Belgium, Josquin spent much of his time serving in chapels throughout Italy and partly in Rome for the papal choir. Later, he worked for Louis XII of France and held several church music directorships in his native land. During his career, he published masses, motets, and secular vocal pieces, and was highly respected by his contemporaries.

Josquin's "Ava Maria ...Virgo Serena"("Hail, Mary ... Serene Virgin") ca. 1485 is an outstanding Renaissance choral work. A four part (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) Latin prayer, the piece weaves one, two, three and four voices at different times in polyphonic texture.

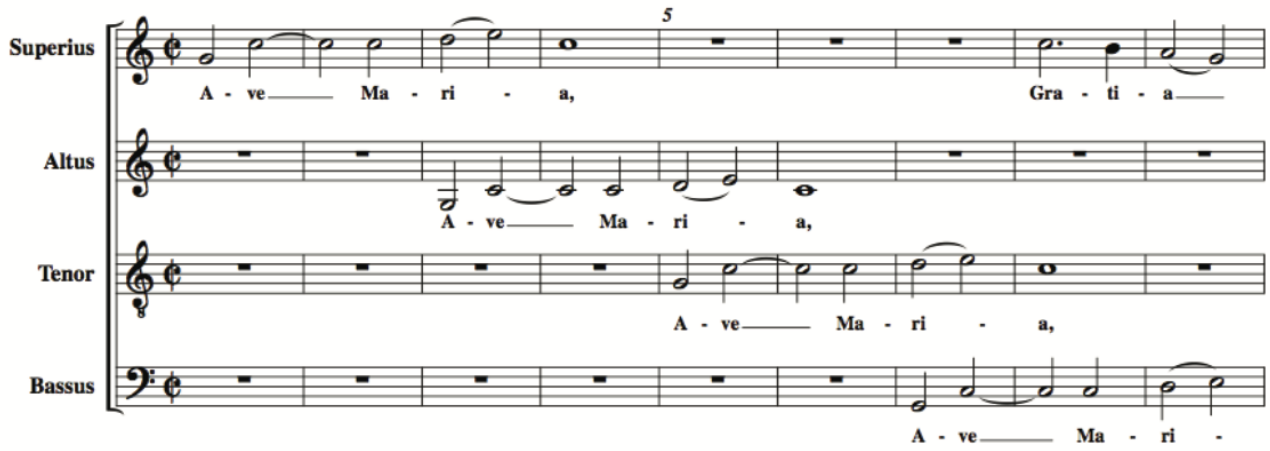


Figure 5.3.1: Opening line of Ave Maria by Josquin des Prez. Source: Wikimedia

LISTENING GUIDE For audio go to: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LUAgAF4Khmg To view a full text score of Josquin des Prez "Ave Maria...Virgo Serena" while listening, go to: www.cengage.com/music/book_co...57273X_wright- Simms/assets/more/scores/JosquinAveMaria.pdf
Composer: Josquin des Prez
Composition: Ava Maria...Virgo Serena
Date: c. 1485, possibly Josquin's earliest dated work
Genre: motet
Form: through composed in sections
Translation: Available at the following link: http://unam-ecclesiam.blogspot.com/2...utiful-ave-ma- ria-by-josquin.html
Performing Forces: four-part choir
What we want you to remember about this composition: The piece is revolutionary in how it presented the imitative weaving of melodic lines in polyphony. Each voice imitates or echoes the high voice (soprano).

Other things to listen for: After the initial introduction to Mary, each verse serves as a tribute to the major events of Mary's life—her conception, the na- tivity, annunciation, purification, and assumption. See above translation and listening guide.

3.5.2 music of Catholicism—renaissance mass

In the sixteenth century, Italian composers excelled with works comparable to the mastery of Josquin des Prez and his other contemporaries. One of the most important Italian Renaissance composers was Giovanni Pieruigi da Palestrina (c. 1525-1594). Devoting his career to the music of the Catholic Church, Palestrina served as music director at St. Peter's Cathedral, composed 450 sacred works and 104 masses. His influence in music history is best understood with a brief back- ground of the Counter-Reformation.

Protestant reformists like Martin Luther and others, sought to correct mal- practices and abuses within the structure of the Catholic Church. The Reformation began with Martin Luther and spread to two more main branches: The Calvinist and The Church of England. The protestant reformists challenged many practices that benefitted only the church itself and did not appear to serve the lay members (parishioners). A movement occurred within the church to counter the protestant reformation and preserve the original Catholic Church. The preservation move- ment or "Counter-Reformation" against the protestant reform led to the develop- ment of the Jesuit order (1540) and the later assembling of the Council of Trent (1545-1563) which considered issues of the church's authority and organizational structure. The Council of Trent also demanded simplicity in music in order that the words might be heard clearly.

The Council of Trent discussed and studied the many issues facing the Catholic Church, including the church's music. The papal leadership felt that the music had gotten so embellished and artistic that it had lost its purity and original meaning. It was neither easily sung nor was its words (still in Latin) understood. Many accused the types of music in the church as being theatrical and more entertaining rather than a way of worship (something that is still debated in many churches today). The Council of Trent felt melodies were secular, too ornamental, and even took dance music as their origin. The advanced weaving of polyphonic lines could not be understood, thereby detracting from their original intent of worship with sacred text. The Council of Trent wanted a paradigm shift of religious sacred music back toward monophonic Gregorian chant. The Council of Trent finally decreed that church music should be composed to inspire religious contemplation and not just give empty pleasure to the ear of the worshipper.

Renaissance composer Palestrina heeded the recommendations from The Council of Trent and composed one of the period's most famous works, "Missa Papae Marcelli" (Pope Marcellus Mass). Palestrina's restraint and serenity reflect the recommendations of The Council of Trent. The text, though quite polyphonic, is easily understood. The movement of the voices does not distract from the sacred meaning of the text. Through history, Palestrina's works have been the standard for their calmness and quality.

Listening Guide
For audio go to:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oeLI...&feature=youtu. be&list=PLlu9u9ap3Q8ySADTqkhuoNyX_NeL44yrQ

Composer: Giovanni Pieruigi da Palestrina (1525-1594)

Composition: "Missa Papae Marcelli" (Pope Marcellus Mass)- 1. Kyrie

Date: c. 1562

Genre: Choral, Kyrie of Mass

Form: through-composed (without repetition in the form of verses, stanzas, or strophes) in sections

Nature of Text:
Latin Text English Translation
Kyrie eleison, Lord have mercy,
Christe eleison, Christ have mercy,
Kyrie eleison, Lord have mercy,

Performing Forces: Unknown vocal ensemble

What we want you to remember about this composition: Listen to
the polyphony and how the voices move predominantly stepwise after a leap upward. After initial voice begins the piece, the other voices enter imitating the initial melody and then continue to weave the voices as more enter. Palestrina's mass would come to represent proper counterpoint/polyphony and become the standard for years to come.

Other things to listen for: even though the voices overlap in polyphony, the text is easily understood. The masses were written as to bring out the text and make it simple to understand. The significance of the text is brought out and easily understood.

Listening Guide: Follow the musical score as you listen to the selection.
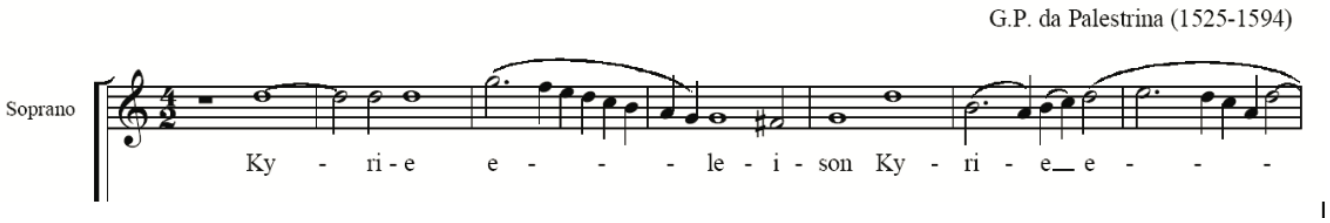


Figure 5.3.2: Musical score of "Kyrie" opening by User "Joonasl". Source: Wikimedia Commons

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3.5.3 Music of the Protestant Reformation

As a result of the Reformation, congregations began singing strophic hymns in German with stepwise melodies during their worship services. This practice enabled full participation of worshipers. Full participation of the congregations' members further empowered the individual church participant, thus contributing to the Re- naissance's Humanist movement. Early Protestant hymns stripped away contrapun- tal textures, utilized regular beat patterns, and set biblical texts in German.

Instead of a worship service being led with a limited number of clerics at the front of the church, Luther wanted the congregation to actively and fully partici- pate, including in the singing of the service. Since these hymns were in German, members of the parish could sing and understand them. Luther, himself a com- poser, composed many hymns and chorales to be sung by the congregation during worship, many of which Johann Sebastian Bach would make the melodic themes of his Chorale Preludes 125 years after the original hymns were written. These hymns are strophic (repeated verses as in poetry) with repeated melodies for the different verses. Many of these chorales utilize syncopated rhythms to clarify the text and its flow (rhythms). Luther's hymn "A Mighty Fortress" is a good example of this practice. The chorales/hymns were usually in four parts and moved with homophonic texture (all parts changing notes in the same rhythm). The melodies of these four-part hymn/chorales used as the basis for many chorale preludes per- formed on organs prior to and after worship services are still used today.

An example of one such Chorale Prelude based on Luther's him can be found at:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hVN0CIcqRYs

LISTENING GUIDE

For audio go to:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=G42xwWoUS-0;
This recording is in English and performed by the Mormon Tabernacle Choir.

Composer: Martin Luther

Composition: "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" (also known as the "Battle Hymn of the Reformation")

Date: 1529

Genre: Four-Part homophonic church anthem. This piece was written to be sung by the lay church membership instead of just by the church leaders a was practiced prior to the Reformation.

Form: Four part Chorale, Strophic

Nature of Text (topic, lyrics, translations): Originally in German so it could be sung by all church attendees.

Performing Forces: Congregation-This recording is the Mormon Tabernacle Choir

Things to listen for: Stepwise melody, Syncopated rhythms centered around text

Translation:
Translated from original German to English by Frederic H. Hedge in 1853.
A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing;
Our helper He, amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing: For still our ancient foe doth seek to work us woe;
His craft and power are great, and, armed with cruel hate, On earth is not his equal.
Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing; Were not the right Man on our side, the Man of God's own choosing:
Dost ask who that may be? Christ Jesus, it is He;
Lord Sabaoth, His Name, from age to age the same,
And He must win the battle.
And though this world, with devils filled, should threaten to undo us, We will not fear, for God hath willed His truth to triumph through us: The Prince of Darkness grim, we tremble not for him;
His rage we can endure, for lo, his doom is sure,
One little word shall fell him.
That word above all earthly powers, no thanks to them, abideth;
The Spirit and the gifts are ours through Him Who with us sideth: Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also;
The body they may kill: God's truth abideth still,
His kingdom is forever.

You can view a PBS Luther documentary at:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PyVrPIp4QsA

For another movie on Martin Luther, go to:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=jmcKlPyRxSM

3.5.4 Anthem

Composer **William Byrd** (1543 – 1623) became very distinguished from ma- ny of his contemporary composers because of his utilization of many different compositional tools that he used in his music. His works represent several musical personalities instead of one single style. As his career progressed, Byrd become more interested and involved in Catholicism. The influence of Catholicism through the use of biblical text and religious styles increasingly permeated his music. The mandates established and requirements imposed by the Council of Trent placed a serious stumbling block in the path of the development of church music compositional techniques after the reformation. Several denominations had to adapt to the mandates required by the Council of Trent. The music in the Catholic Church experienced relatively little change as the result of the reformation. This lack of change was the result composers such as Byrd who remained loyal to the religion and their refusal to change their "traditional catholic" style of composing.



Figure 5.3.3: William Byrd by Vandergucht. Source: Wikimedia

In Byrd's Anglican Anthem, "Sing Joyfully Unto God," the opening phrase of the text is set with a single voice on each part. This technique is very similar to the Catholic Church settings of Chant incipits. This full anthem by Byrd is much more polyphonic in nature than that of verse anthems. It also borrows heavily from both madrigal and motet styles, though modified for the liturgy. "Sing Joyfully Unto God" is one of the most thoroughly motet-like of the many Byrd anthems. Within the anthem there is a new point of imitation for each new phrase of text. Byrd extensively uses the text depictions to creatively illustrate the music's meaning. Below is an example of how Byrd's "Sing Joyfully, Unto God" emphasizes the trumpet call of the text. All voices are singing together to depict the fullness of a trumpet fanfare, thickening the texture to illustrate the musical concept. This section begins with homophony, but polyphony is employed throughout the work. Byrd uses this technique primarily for a structural contrast device.

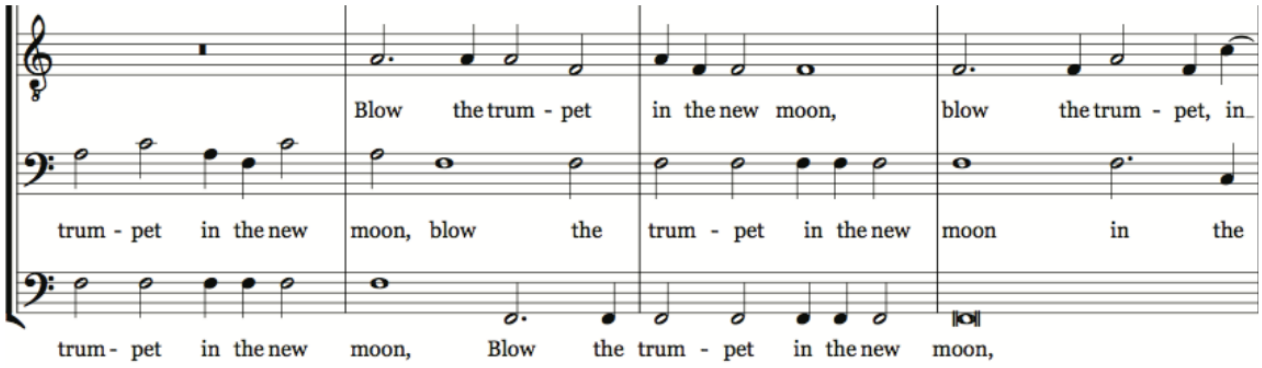


Figure 5.3.4: Homophony as text depiction in Byrd's *Sing Joyfully Unto God by* Edward Tambling. Source: ChoralWiki

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The use of imitation as a structural tool is maintained primarily within full anthems. Byrd also uses a technique called pairing of voices, which was highly popular within the Renaissance period.1

this is a footnote

1 Mitchell, Shelley. "William Byrd: Covert Catholic Values with Anglican Anthems Comparison of Style to Catholic Gradualia." MA thesis. Indiana State University, 2008. Web. 15 December 2015.

Listening Guide
For audio, go to:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4mPkPnN-T9o
University of Wisconsin Eau Claire Concert Choir

Composer: William Byrd

Composition: *Sing Joyfully Unto God*

Date: circa 1580-1590

Genre: Choral (Anthem)

Form: Through-composed

Nature of Text: SSAATB
Sing joyfully to God our strength;
sing loud unto the God of Jacob!
Take the song, bring forth the timbrel, the pleasant harp, and the viol.
Blow the trumpet in the New Moon, even in the time appointed,
and at our feast day.
For this is a statute for Israel,
and a law of the God of Jacob.

Performing Forces: six-part choir

What we want you to remember about this composition:
This is a very much a motet-like sounding church anthem. It sounds very much like a mass but the text does not come from any of the five sections of the mass. The work incorporated many of the polyphony techniques used in the mass. Listen how the six voices interweave.
Significant points: One of the most popular pieces from the time period. The Psalm 81 text is set in English. Scored in SSAATB (two sopranos, two alsos, one tenor, and one bass).

- imitative polyphony
- a capella in English
- some word painting

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5.4: Secular Music - Entertainment Music of the Renaissance

Royalty sought the finest of the composers to employ for entertainment. A single court, or royal family, may employ as many as ten to sixty musicians, singers, and instrumentalists. In Italy, talented women vocalists began to serve as soloists in the courts. Secular pieces for the entertainment of nobility and sacred pieces for the chapel were composed by the court music directors. Musicians were often transported from one castle to another to entertain the court's patron, traveling in their patron's entourage.

The Renaissance town musicians performed for civic functions, weddings, socials, and religious ceremonies/services. Due to market, that is, the supply and demand of the expanding Renaissance society, musicians experience higher status and pay unlike ever before. The Flanders, Low Countries of the Netherlands, Belgium, and northern France became a source of musicians who filled many important music positions in Italy. As in the previous era, vocal music maintained its important status over instrumental music.

Germany, England, and Spain also experienced an energetic musical expansion. Secular vocal music became increasingly popular during the Renaissance. In Europe, music was set to poems from several languages, including English, French, Dutch, German, and Spanish. The invention of the printing press led to the publication of thousands of collections of songs that were never before available. One instrument or small groups of instruments were used to accompany solo voices or groups of solo voices.

3.4.1 Thomas Weelkes

Thomas Weelkes, a church organist and composer, became one of the finest English madrigal composers. Thomas Weelkes' "As Vesta Was Descending" serves as a good example of word painting with the melodic line following the meaning of the text in performance.

LISTENING GUIDE

For audio, go to:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=95DJ7oqTWK8

Composer: Thomas Weelkes

Composition: "As Vesta Was From Latmos Hill Descending"

Date: 1601

Genre: Madrigal

Form: Through-composed

Performing Forces: Choral ensemble

One thing to remember about this composition:
This composition is a great example of "word painting" where the text and melodic line work together. When the text refers to descending down a hill, the melody descends also.

figure 3.4.1
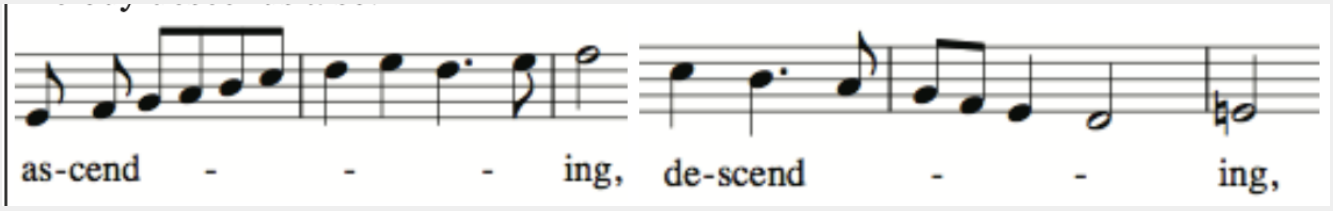


Figure 5.4.1:Examples of "word painting" in Weelkes's "As Vest Was From Latmos Hill Descending" by Diana Thompson. Source: ChoralWiki

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Timing	Performing Forces, Melody, and Texture	Text and Form
0:00	Descending melodic/scales on "descending"	As Vesta was from Latmos hill descending,

0:14	Ascending melodic/scales on “ascending”	she spied a maiden queen the same ascending,
0:31	Melody gently undulates, neither ascending nor descending.	attended on by all the shepherds swain,
0:45	Rapid imitative descending figures on running down	to whom Diana’s darlings came running down amain.
1:05	Two voices, three voices, and then all voices	First two by two, then three by three together,
1:12	solo voice or unison	leaving their goddess all alone, hasted thither,
1:24	All voices in delicate polyphony	and mingling with the shepherds of her train with mirthful tunes her presence entertain.
1:40	All voices unite to introduce the final proclamation	Then sang the shepherds and nymphs of Diana,
1:52	Brief, joyful phrase imitated among voices is repeated over and over	Long live fair Oriana!

3.6.2 Renaissance Dance Music

With the rebirth of the Renaissance, came a resurgence of the populari- ty of dance. This resurgence led to instrumental dance music becoming the most wide-spread genre for instrumental music. Detailed instruction books for dance also included step orders and sequences that followed the music accompaniment.

The first dances started, similar to today’s square dances, soon evolved into more elaborate and unique forms of expression. Examples of three types of Renaissance dances include the pavanne, galliard, and jig.

The **pavanne** is a more solemn stately dance in a duple meter (in twos). Its participants dance and move around with prearranged stopping and starting places with the music. Pavannes are more formal and used in such settings.

The **galliard** is usually paired with a pavanne. The galliard is in triple meter (in threes) and provides an alternative to the rhythms of the pavanne. The **jig** is a folk dance or its tune in an animated meter. It was originally developed in the 1500s in England. The instrumental jig was a popular dance number. Jigs were regularly performed in Elizabethan theatres after the main play. **William Kemp** actor, song and dance performer, and a comedian, is immortalized for having created comic roles in Shakespeare. He accompanied his jig performances with pipe and tabor and snare drum. Kemp’s jig started a unique phrasing/cadence system that carried well past the Renaissance period.

LISTENING GUIDE For audio, go to: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YWO2UWOrV2o
Composer: Composer unknown but was performed by William Kemp. The piece became known as Kemp’s Jig
Composition: “Kemp’s Jig”
Date: late 1500
Genre: Jig (Dance Piece instrumental)
Performing Forces: Lute solo instrumental piece

What we want you to remember about this composition:
A jig is a light folk dance. It is a dance piece of music that can stand alone when played as an instrumental player. This new shift in instrumental music from strictly accompaniment to stand alone music performances begins a major ad- vance for instrumental music. Will Kemp was a dancer and actor. He won a bet that he could dance from London to Norwich (80 miles). “Kemps Jig” was written to celebrate the event.

One thing to remember about this composition:
This piece of dance music is evolving from just a predictable dance accompani- ment to a central piece of instrumental music. Such alterations of dance music for the sake of the music itself are referred to as the stylization of dance music that has carried on through the centuries.

To view an informative Renaissance Music Timeline, go to:

http://musiced.about.com/od/famousmu...enaissance.htm

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5.5: Chapter Summary

The Renaissance period was truly a time of great discovery in science, music, society, and the visual arts. The reemergence and renewed interests of Greek and Roman history/culture is still current in today's modern society. Performing music outside of the church in courts and the public really began to thrive in the Renais- sance and continues today in the music industry. Many of the master works, both sacred and secular, from the Renaissance are still appreciated and continue to be the standard for today's music industry. Songs of love, similar to Renaissance chan- sons, are still composed and performed today. The beauty of Renaissance music, as well as the other arts, is reintroduced and appreciated in modern-day theater performances and visually in museums. The results of the Protestant Reformation are still felt today, and the struggles between contemporary and traditional church worship continues very much as it did during the Renaissance. As we continue our reading and study of music through the Baroque period, try to recall the changes and trends of the Medieval and Renaissance eras and how they thread their way through history to today. Music and the Arts do not just occur; they evolve and also remain the same.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

6: Sung and Danced Drama

6.1: Introduction

6.2: Sung Drama

6.2.1: Lin-Manuel Miranda - Hamilton

6.2.2: Claudio Monteverdi - Orpheus

6.2.3: Tian Han - The Tale of the White Snake

6.3: Danced Drama

6.3.1: Javanese Traditional - The Love Dance of Klana Sewandana

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6.1: Introduction

The notion that characters in a staged drama might periodically break out into song or dance is fundamentally strange. All the same, sung and danced dramas permeate our lives, and they have for a long time. Even if you do not regularly visit the opera or ballet, you have likely seen *Frozen* or *The Little Mermaid*. Films such as these fit squarely into a tradition of musical theater that extends back for hundreds of years.

Musical drama, as the examples in this chapter will demonstrate, is highly diverse. It can be tragic or comic. It can be realistic or self-consciously artificial. It can be emotionally compelling or merely entertaining. It also encompasses endless variety in musical style, and it can be difficult to draw lines between genres. The examples in this chapter might variously be described as "musical theater," "opera," or "ballet" (a term that both European and Javanese performers use to describe their dance drama traditions). However, there are many overlaps between these categories. European ballet first developed as a part of opera, for example, and many operatic traditions include dancing. Dance dramas often include singing— something that is true of both examples in this chapter.

The most difficult categories to differentiate are "musical theater" and "opera." For example, one does not hear *Frozen*—even in its live, staged version—referred to as an opera. But why not? Because it is in English? Lots of operas are in English. Because it has spoken dialogue? So does Mozart's *The Magic Flute*. Because the music is written in a popular style? The Italian opera composer Giuseppe Verdi was responsible for the greatest hit tunes of his day. The most substantial difference between "musical theater" and "opera," as those categories are understood today, has to do with the training of the performers on the one hand and the venues in which they perform on the other. However, these categories are already shaky, and they will continue to change as new styles of sung and danced drama are developed and popularized.

We encourage the reader of this chapter to approach each example on its own terms, without undue preconceptions about genre. Whether we are talking about New York City in 2015 or Mantua in 1608, it is always helpful to consider the cultural context in which the work was created. Who was the audience, and how were they prepared to understand and appreciate what they saw onstage? Although our examples are diverse, each effectively uses music to enrich the storytelling.

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SECTION OVERVIEW

6.2: Sung Drama

Topic hierarchy

6.2.1: Lin-Manuel Miranda - Hamilton

6.2.2: Claudio Monteverdi - Orpheus

6.2.3: Tian Han - The Tale of the White Snake

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6.2.1: Lin-Manuel Miranda - Hamilton

Hamilton is considered by many to be the greatest American musical theater production of the current era. The musical tells the story of Alexander Hamilton, an immigrant who travelled from the West Indies to the American colonies before the time of the American Revolution, and who came to be one of the founding fathers of the United States and the first Secretary of the Treasury under George Washington. The musical is based upon the biography by Ron Chernow (b. 1949), Alexander Hamilton, published in 2004.

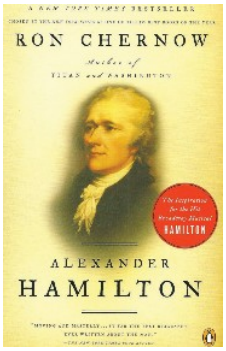


Image 4.1: Ron Chernow published his biography of Hamilton in 2004. Source: Flickr. Attribution: Nathan Hughes Hamilton License: CC BY 2.0

Miranda and *Hamilton*

Hamilton is the singular creation of the actor, writer, and musician Lin-Manuel Miranda (b. 1980), who, in addition to premiering the title role, wrote the music and lyrics. Miranda is one of the biggest musical theater celebrities of his generation, having won multiple Emmys, Grammys, and Tony Awards for his music, lyrics, and performances. Much of Miranda's work is influenced by his origins. As the child of parents of Puerto Rican descent, he grew up in a largely Latino neighborhood in Inwood, New York City, regularly visiting family in Puerto Rico. His musical preferences—Miranda grew up listening to salsa and American musicals (such as West Side Story)—reflected both an early interest in his musical heritage and a fascination with the stage. Miranda was gifted musically and academically, attending the highly competitive primary and secondary schools at Hunter College before enrolling at Wesleyan University.



Image 4.2: Lin-Manuel Miranda in the title role of *Hamilton*. Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: Steve Jurvetson License: CC BY 2.0

In his theatrical work, Miranda foregrounds his multi-cultural upbringing and Latino identity. As a director, he has always made a conscious decision to cast actors from various cultural and racial backgrounds. This feature of *Hamilton* has created some controversy, given the historical fact that the men and women represented in the musical were primarily white. Miranda, however, has defended this approach by drawing parallels between his casting and musical decisions. Just as he did not attempt to write music in the style of the 1770s, he did not attempt to create a visual image representative of the 1770s. Miranda's *Hamilton* was created to represent America in the current age. He makes the point that the United States was founded by immigrants. The founding fathers themselves—despite their skin color—were either immigrants or the children or grandchildren of immigrants. Hamilton himself was born in the West Indies, coming to America at a young age to make a name for himself. What is more American than that?



Image 4.3: This photograph, taken in 2015 by White House photographer Pete Souza, captures the diversity of the Hamilton cast. Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: Pete Souza License: Public Domain

The musical numbers in *Hamilton* incorporate hip-hop beats and rap. The use of popular styles in a musical is not unique to

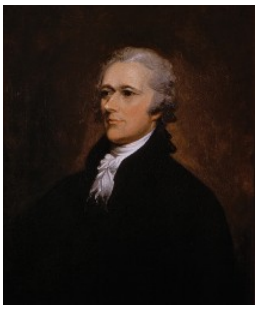
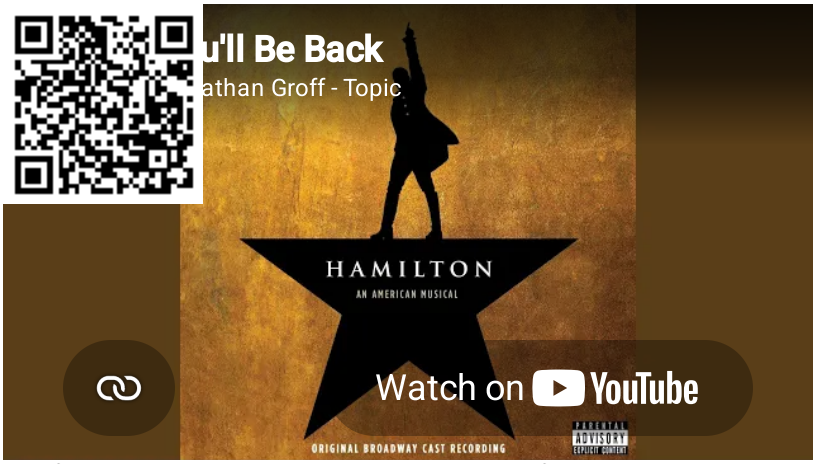


Image 4.4: Alexander Hamilton was the first US Secretary of the Treasury, serving from 1789 to 1795. Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: John Trumbull License: Public Domain

Hamilton: *Hair* (1967) and *Jesus Christ Superstar* (1970) were the first modern- era musicals to incorporate rock styles, and Lin-Manuel Miranda had already used rap and hip-hop in his first musical, *In the Heights* (on Broadway from 2008 to 2011). In writing Hamilton, Miranda found that rap was not only musically exciting but also very useful, for he was able to fit more words into a shorter span of time. Hamilton the man was known for being poetically loquacious. In addition, rap allowed Miranda to incorporate a large amount of information from Chernow's biography, in addition to Hamilton's own words. The entire musical is 150 minutes long, but includes over 20,000 words.

Miranda also uses music to communicate with the *Hamilton* audience in ways that both complement and transcend the script and stage action. One of his favorite techniques for doing so is **allegory**, or the use of musical sounds to signify hidden meaning. We will address several ways in which Miranda employs instruments or musical styles in an allegorical manner.

Allegory



"You'll be Back" from Hamilton. Composer: Lin-Manuel Miranda Performance: Original Cast Recording (2015)

Time	Form	What to listen for

Time	Form	What to listen for
0’00”	Introduction	King George III of England addresses America
	“You say…”	to a homophonic accompaniment of sustained piano chords in a four-chord descending pattern
0’33”	Verse 1 “You’ll be back…”	The accompaniment switches to short harpsichord accents; the overall tone of the text becomes more sinister, which offers an unusual juxtaposition with happy music
1’15”	Hook “Da-da-da-da-da…”	This catchy passage is sung to nonsense words and is reminiscent of the outro of The Beatles’ “Hey Jude,” which is similar in terms of key and melodic arc
1’29”	Bridge “You say our love is draining…”	Stop-time accompaniment; double entendre on the word subject at 1’46”
2’12”	Verse 2	Same musical material as Verse 1; harpsichord “You’ll be returns to the front of the mix, one octave back, like higher than before; tempo slows, emphasizing before…” text, until the word “Love” at 2’36”
2’46”	Hook/Outro	The performer is joined in this catchy tune by “Da-da-da-da-da. ” the rest of the cast members on stage

There are several additional musical allegories in *Hamilton*. Let us consider, for example, the number “You’ll Be Back,” which is sung from the perspective of King George III. The music for this number is in the style of 1960s British Invasion pop. (Incidentally, The Beatles—the most famous and influential of the British Invasion bands—prominently featured harpsichord in their 1967 album *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band*.) Again, Miranda makes a connection between a British musical style (an invasive one at that) and an imperialistic British character. But that’s not all: Miranda further uses the pop genre to heighten the impact of his character’s words. King George sings this number to a personified America. The music is relentlessly upbeat, as if expressing the emotional state of a delirious ex-boyfriend who cannot grasp that the relationship is over. The text, which is quite disturbing at times, is hilariously juxtaposed with the some of the happiest and tuneful music of the show.

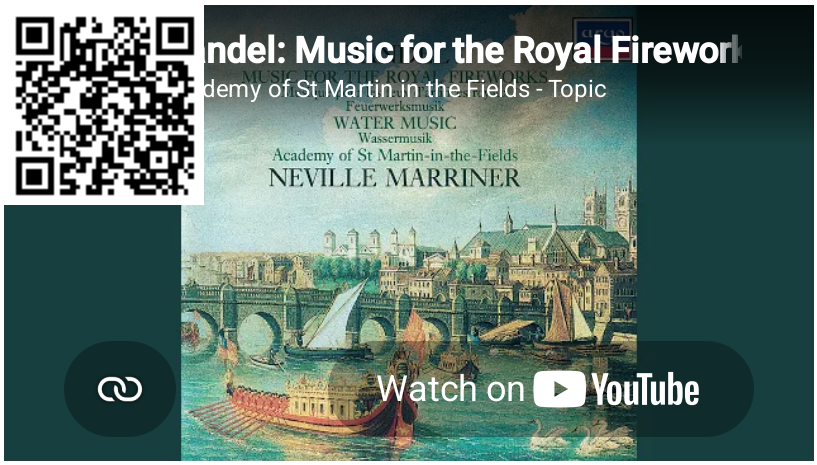
Let us also consider Miranda’s use of the harpsichord. Miranda writes for two keyboard instruments in his musical: the harpsichord and the piano. The two instruments really did not coexist in history. During the course of the 1700s, the harpsichord was gradually replaced by the fortepiano, which was itself an early predecessor to the piano. In *Hamilton*, however, we do not hear a fortepiano but rather a modern, 20th-century piano—an instrument historically separated from the harpsichord by over one hundred years. The harpsichord, therefore, represents an old way of life—and, more particularly, an old way of conducting politics. Specifically, Miranda uses the harpsichord to represent British rule before the revolution.

The sound of the harpsichord was, historically speaking, the sound of the 18th-century British monarchy. In order to draw a historical comparison, we might consider the music of George Frederic Handel. Handel served as music director (German: *Kapellmeister*) to the German Prince George of Hanover, who later became King George I of England. While living in London, Handel composed many great works for the King, most notably his *Water Music* and *Music for the Royal Fireworks*1. Handel was also one of the best-known and highly celebrated harpsichordists of his time. It is therefore fitting that the harpsichord should represent King George III, England, political oppression, and a deranged narcissistic ex-suitor.



Figure 4.2.1.1 : (left) This French harpsichord was built in 1780. Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: Gérard Janot License: CC BY-SA 3.0. (center) This 1795 fortepiano looks like a harpsichord, but, like a modern piano, it creates sound by striking the strings with hammers. In a harpsichord, the strings are plucked. Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: User "JaGa" License: CC BY-SA 4.0. (right) A modern piano is considerably larger than the fortepiano and has a metal frame, which allows the string tension to be greater. As a result, the instrument is much louder. Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: Carl Bechstein License: CC0

We encounter this allegory in several musical examples. In "Farmer Refuted,"2 Bishop Samuel Seabury, accompanied by harpsichord, defends his decision to remain loyal to England and begs Hamilton to do the same. "You'll Be Back" begins with King George III singing to a subdued piano accompaniment. When his lyrics turn sinister, however, we hear the harpsichord enter. In both of these cases, therefore, the sound of the harpsichord is a symbol for the old-fashioned values of the British monarchy.



G.F. Handel's *Music for the Royal Fireworks* incorporates the harpsichord in a way that is typical of 18th-century European music.



In "Farmer Refuted," Miranda uses the harpsichord to symbolize loyalty to England.

Cyclicism

King George later returns to perform “I Know Him.” This song is a musical **reprise** of the first number he sang (“You’ll Be Back”). At this point in the musical, the Revolution is long over and John Adams has been elected president. The harpsichord can still be heard, but it is less prominent than it was in “You’ll Be Back.” Instead, it is lurks behind a texture that consists primarily of strings played pizzicato. This is significant: England (harpsichord) has lost the war and King George (harpsichord) no longer rules over the Americans.



“I Know Him” from Hamilton. Composer: Lin-Manuel Miranda Performance: Original Cast Recording (2015)

Time	Form	What to listen for
0’00”	Introduction “They say…”	Same introductory chords as the original introduction, despite plot changes
0’24”	“I’m perplexed...”	Unusual harmonies
0’42”		“John Adams…” is spoken in surprise.
0’45”	Verse 1 “I know him…”	Begins with the same tune and feel of Verse 1 from “You’ll Be Back,” but there is no harpsichord; instead, the texture consists of plucked strings, which recall the sound of the harpsichord but offer a warmer timbre; harpsichord returns to the mix in the background at 0’54” on the words, “Years ago”
1’18”	Hook	Only one iteration of this, unlike before, and there is no “everybody” joining in

“I Know Him” is not the only example of a musical reprise. Indeed, in crafting the score to *Hamilton*, Miranda sought to unify the various parts of the work using **cyclical techniques**. *Hamilton* contains many musical ideas that harken back to earlier points in the work. This approach to creating a narrative can be compared to Wagner’s use of leitmotifs. For example, the opening of the musical begins with a narrative rapped by Aaron Burr: “How does a bastard [...] grow up to be a hero and scholar?” Miranda treats this passage from Aaron Burr’s opening number, which is entitled “Alexander Hamilton,”3 as a **leitmotif**, which later returns in “A Winter’s Ball,” “Guns and Ships,” “What’d I Miss,” “The Adams Administration,” and “Your Obedient Servant.” Despite the recurrence of musical material, however, each of these numbers has a distinct character. In “What’d I Miss,” the borrowing takes on a swinging feel as the once-straight sixteenths of the opening become dotted. In “Your Obedient Servant,” on the other hand, the tone is darkened by tremolo strings and the omission of the snaps that were previously heard on offbeats: Burr, now downright angry, is resentful of Alexander Hamilton.



The opening phrases of “Alexander Hamilton” become a leitmotif and return throughout the work.

Success

Upon its Broadway premiere in 2015, *Hamilton* immediately sold out. As of 2019, it continues to be nearly impossible to secure a ticket, the aftermarket prices of which have soared to record-breaking levels. The musical is currently on tour to cities across the globe, including Puerto Rico and London, England. It has won numerous awards, including ten Lortel Awards, three Outer Critic Circle Awards, eight Drama Desk Awards, the New York Drama Critics Circle Award for Best New Musical, and an Obie for Best New American Play.

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6.2.2: Claudio Monteverdi - Orpheus

In this section, we will encounter one of the very first European operas ever created, Claudio Monteverdi's *Orpheus*. First, however, we will consider the social structures and values that gave rise to opera in the first place, and we will address the new ways of writing music that made sung drama possible.

The Origins of European Opera

European opera was born in the city of Florence in the late 16th century. Beginning in the 1570s, a group of intellectuals began meeting in the home of Count Giovanni de' Bardi to discuss artistic matters. They called themselves the Camerata (a name derived from the Italian term for "chamber"), and today are referred to as the **Florentine Camerata**. The members of the Camerata were courtiers, composers, poets, and scholars, and they were concerned with the modern development of artistic forms. In particular, they believed that the arts had become corrupted, and that artistic expression could only be revived by returning to the principles of ancient Greece. Where music was concerned, however, ancient Greece could offer only limited guidance. While many theoretical and philosophical treatises on music survive, very few compositions were preserved, and we don't really know what those would have sounded like. Resurrecting the musical practices of ancient Greece, therefore, is a tricky endeavor.

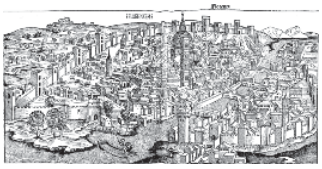


Image 4.8: This map shows the walled city of Florence about 100 years before opera was born there. Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: Hartmann Schedel License: Public Domain

The members of the Camerata drew much of their inspiration from the work of Girolamo Mei (1519-1594), a Roman scholar and the leading authority on ancient Greece. In his 1573 treatise *On the Musical Modes of the Ancients*, Mei argued that all ancient Greek poetry and drama had been sung, not spoken. He also wrote about the extraordinary power that music had over the listener. His descriptions fascinated the Florentine intellectuals, who felt compelled to develop a modern approach to sung drama. Their aim was to recapture the emotional impact that, according to Mei, sung plays had once had on audiences.



Image 4.9: Music was very important in ancient Greece, both in the context of theater and as everyday entertainment. Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: Colmar Painter License: Public Domain

The leading music theorist of the Camerata was none other than Vincenzo Galilei (1520-1591), father of the famous astronomer Galileo Galilei. In order to facilitate sung drama, Galilei sought to develop a new approach to writing vocal music that imitated dramatic speech. It would be modelled on the way in which actors used variations in pacing and pitch to expressively declaim text from the stage. Such music would be free of repetition, of course, since every note would be uniquely tied to the word it illuminated. The rhythms would be derived from the text, while the melodies and harmonies would portray the emotional content.

Today, this style is termed **recitative**, for it more closely resembles dramatic recitation than typical singing.

Of course, a solo singer needs accompaniment. Although Galilei and his colleagues did not invent **basso continuo**, they did adopt it as the ideal vehicle for supporting sung text. The term "basso continuo" (which translates to "continuous bass") refers to a style of accompaniment that came to be used in almost all music of the **Baroque** period (ca. 1600-1750). When a composer writes an accompaniment in the form of basso continuo, they indicate only the bass line and harmonies, which are usually to be played by at least two instruments. They do not usually specify instruments or exact pitches of each chord, which are chosen on the spot by the performers. An instrument that can play chords— harpsichord, organ, and lute were most common—is required, while an instrument that can play a bass line—cello or bassoon, perhaps— is usually included.



Image 4.10: Here we see the cover of Galilei's 1581 treatise, On Music Ancient and Modern. Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: Vincenzo Galilei License: Public Domain

Members of the Camerata began experimenting with short sung dramas in 1589, while the first full-length opera—now lost—was composed by Jacopo Peri (1561-1633) in 1597. In 1600, Peri created *Euridice*, an operatic portrayal of the Orpheus myth. This work, which survives, consists almost entirely of recitative, as does a second version of *Euridice* produced by another member of the Camerata, Giulio Caccini (1551-1618), in 1602. (The two men were colleagues and collaborators, but also saw themselves as being in competition with one another.)

All of these developments took place in Florence, and were supported by the Medici court. Peri's Euridice, for example, was created and staged to celebrate the marriage between King Henry IV of France and Maria de Medici.



Image 4.11: This photograph of the interior of the Medici Palace in Florence captures the splendor in which the family lived. Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: User "Sailko" License: CC BY-SA 3.0

From its inception, opera was understood to be aristocratic entertainment. It upheld noble values and catered to refined musical tastes. It also offered the opportunity for luxurious spectacle in the form of fantastical costumes and scenery. Musically, however, these early operas were a bit boring, and the art form might have lived and died in Florence had not one of the great composers of the century developed an approach to sung drama that was truly compelling.

Orpheus

Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643) was born in Cremona—an Italian city most famous for its legendary violin makers. He secured a position at the Mantuan court in 1590, where he served the Gonzaga family. Although Monteverdi flourished under the employment of Duke Vincenzo I, he was abruptly dismissed by the Duke's son and successor in 1612. The next year he won the prestigious post of music director at St. Mark's basilica in Venice, where he remained for the rest of his long life—despite a 1620 invitation to return to his post in Mantua, which he gleefully rejected. Although we will examine an opera that Monteverdi produced early in his life for the Gonzagas, he returned to the genre in his old age, creating three operas for the Venetian public in the 1640s.



Figure 6.2.2.1 : This portrait of Claudio Monteverdi was painted around 1640 by Bernardo Strozzi. Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: Bernardo Strozzi License: Public Domain. (right) This portrait of Duke Vincenzo I was produced around 1600. Source: Wikimedia Commons. Attribution: Studio of Frans Pourbus the Younger License: Public Domain

The oldest opera still to be regularly performed and enjoyed is Monteverdi's *Orpheus* (Italian: *L'Orfeo*). We will begin with the occasion for which Monteverdi created this masterpiece. Then we will summarize the story before examining several musical excerpts.

Like the operas developed by the Florentine Camerata, *Orpheus* was intended for the private enjoyment of courtiers and their guests. This opera was among the festive entertainments on offer for the 1607 **Carnival** season. Carnival is celebrated in Catholic countries around the world during the days or weeks preceding Ash Wednesday, which marks the beginning of the liturgical season of **Lent**. During the forty days of Lent, Catholics are expected to give up earthly pleasures and demonstrate penitence for their sins. Lent culminates in Holy Week, when the story of Christ's crucifixion is told, and ends with Easter, which celebrates the resurrection. Carnival, therefore, marks the last opportunity for the faithful to enjoy food, drink, and entertainment. Although *Orpheus* was one of the first operas written for Carnival, the genre would be associated with the Carnival season for centuries to come. Opera would also come to be prohibited during Lent. *Orpheus*, like other early operas, served a dual purpose. On the one hand, it provided dazzling entertainment to accompany a courtly celebration. On the other, it put the wealth and splendor of the court on display for the purpose of impressing those in attendance. Because he was tasked with exhibiting the affluence of the Gonzagas, Monteverdi did not need to worry about keeping his production within budget. For this reason he was able to write for an enormous orchestra and cast, and the original staging would have been extravagant.

It is not difficult to guess why Monteverdi chose the Orpheus myth as the subject for his opera. To begin with, by doing so he set himself up for favorable comparison with the Florentine composers who had already produced operas on this topic. Monteverdi's boss, Duke Vincenzo, had in fact seen the production of Jacopo Peri's opera *Euridice*, which had inspired him to commission a similar sung drama from his own court composer. The story itself is also particularly well-suited to an operatic telling. The Orpheus myth is, in essence, a story about the power of music to sway emotions. This, of course, was exactly what the architects of opera wanted to accomplish with their new art form.



Image 4.14: Orpheus and his lyre have been the subject of countless paintings. In the work from the 1630s, we see him captivating woodland creatures with his musical ability. Source: Wikimedia Commons. Attribution: Theodoor van Thulden and Frans Snyders License: Public Domain

Monteverdi set a **libretto** (the text for a sung drama) written by another member of the Mantuan court, Alessandro Striggio, who crafted a narrative in five acts. In the first part of the opera, Orpheus—a legendary musician fathered by the god Apollo—weds Euridice, a wood nymph. A raucous celebration follows, but the revelers are interrupted by Euridice's friend Sylvia, who reports that she has died as the result of a bite from a venomous snake. Orpheus is at first devastated, but soon resolves to pursue her into

the underworld and bring her back to life. Using the power of song, he convinces the boatman Caronte to carry him across the river Styx. He then persuades the rulers of the underworld to release his beloved. She is permitted to follow him back to the Earth's surface, but Orpheus is warned that he must trust that she walks behind him, for he will lose her forever if he looks back. Unable to control himself, he looks—and she is once more taken away from him. Orpheus returns home distraught, but is comforted by his father, who carries him away to the heavens. (This is a relatively happy ending: In a more authentic telling, Orpheus is torn to pieces by the Furies.)



Image 4.15: In this 1862 painting by Edward Poynter, we see Orpheus leading Euridice out of the underworld. Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: Edward Poynter License: Public Domain

Perhaps because they were working in a different city, Monteverdi and Striggio departed from the dogmatic prescriptions of the Florentine Camerata. Instead of setting the entire story in recitative, they interspersed recitative with different types of structured vocal music, including folk-like **strophic songs** (in which many verses are sung to the same melody), choral **refrains** (interjections by the choir), and a massive, ornate **aria** (a highly formalized song) for Orpheus. The resulting opera is full of variety, although it still relies on recitative to convey emotion at all of the key dramatic moments.

Toccata

The first thing the audience heard at the premiere of *Orpheus* was not singing but instrumental music. This would become typical of opera and other types of sung theater, which always begin with an orchestral **overture**. Monteverdi described his overture as a "toccata"4, an Italian term that translates to "a thing that is touched" and was used at the time to indicate music for instruments. The toccata is very simple, for it served a simple purpose: It alerted the audience, with appropriate grandiosity, that the show was about to start. For his toccata, Monteverdi composed a repetitive melody in the style of a bugle call. It contains only the first six notes of a major scale, and consists primarily of ascending and descending stepwise motion. The melody is played three times using different sets of instruments. In our recording, it is heard first in the brass, second in the strings, and finally in the brass again.



"Toccata" from *Orpheus*. 4. Composer: Claudio Monteverdi Performance: Le Concert des Nations and La Capella Reial de Catalunya, directed by Jordi Savall (2002)

This recording—and *Orpheus* in general—provides us with an excellent opportunity to encounter instruments of the Baroque era. As one can see and hear, they are similar to modern instruments, but not entirely familiar. The instrumentation in *Orpheus* is particularly interesting because, counter to common practice, Monteverdi specified it himself. Up until the Baroque era, it was typical for composers to write generic "instrumental" music that could be performed on any instrument. Monteverdi, however, took special concern with the sound qualities of his opera. In particular, he specified that the scenes on earth were to be accompanied by strings and flutes, while the scenes in the underworld were to be dramatized by the sounds of brass and the reed organ. The resulting timbres reinforce the darkness of Hades.

Most modern productions, including both referred to in this text, use what are termed **period instruments**. These are usually copies of instruments that were built in the Baroque era. In the first pass through the toccata, we see a drum, a trumpet that is a bit different in shape than the modern instrument, and two sackbuts—small predecessors of the modern trombone. During the repeat by the full orchestra, we see a variety of additional instruments: Baroque violins, which can differ slightly in shape and are played with arched bows; cornetti, which sound somewhat like trumpets but look like oboes or clarinets; recorders (the predecessor to the modern flute); a Baroque harp; theorbos, which are lutes with long necks and additional bass strings; and bass viols, which look a bit like cellos but are different in shape and have frets. The ensemble sounds familiar, but has a timbre that is notably different than that of a modern orchestra.

We will continue to address instrumentation throughout the opera, for it plays an important role. The richest area for discussion, however, is not the orchestra but the basso continuo section. Monteverdi provides a diverse selection of continuo instruments, including harpsichord, theorbo, harp, pipe organ, reed organ, bass viol, and cello. These can be combined in a variety of ways to produce a nuanced palette of sound colors. As a result, even long passages of recitative are full of variety, as accompanying instruments enter and leave the texture.

Act II

We will skip the wedding and start at the beginning of Act II with the party. In this scene, Orpheus is celebrating with the nymphs and shepherds who reside in an unnamed rural paradise. As might be expected on such an occasion, they sing and dance together. Monteverdi took the opportunity to abandon the solemn recitative of the previous act and compose a string of folk-like songs to be performed by Orpheus and his friends. Almost all of the songs are **strophic**, meaning that two or more verses of text are sung to the same melody. In between the songs, different assortments of orchestral instruments provide **ritornellos**, which are repeating instrumental themes. The performing forces slowly grow: first we hear a solo, then a duet, then the entire chorus. Finally, Orpheus himself sings the longest strophic song of all—containing four verses—on the topic of his extreme happiness.



Act II from Orpheus. Composer: Claudio Monteverdi Performance: Gran Teatre de Liceu, Barcelona directed by Jordi Saval (1978)

Time, Form, What to listen for

(If the video doesn't start at 25:46, please skip forward to begin listening there.)

25’46” Ritornello & Aria A, Ritornello: strings and flutes; Aria: Orpheus, one verse

26’24” Ritornello & Aria B, Ritornello: violins; Aria: a shepherd, two verses

27’03” Ritornello & Aria C, Ritornello: violins; Aria: a pair of shepherds, two verses

27’58” Ritornello & Aria D with Chorus, Ritornello: flutes; Aria: a pair of shepherds, one verse, Chorus: one verse

29’03” Orpheus’s aria; Orpheus sings a four-verse aria; the ritornello is a lively dance tune played by the strings

31’07” Recitative: Shepherd - Basso continuo: harp and cello

31’42” Refrain: Messenger - The Messenger enters with a melodic refrain that will return throughout Act II Basso continuo: theorbo, organ, and cello

33’09” Recitative: Shepherd - Basso continuo: harpsichord and cello

33’51” Recitative: Messenger - Basso continuo: theorbo, organ, and cello

38’31 Refrain: Shepherd - One of the shepherds repeats the Messenger’s refrain

39’51” Recitative: Orpheus - Basso continuo: theorbo and cello

42’12” Refrain: Chorus - The chorus repeats the Messenger’s refrain, which is extended into a choral lament

43’33” End of listening guide

All of this music can be heard in a **diegetic** framework. That is to say, we can understand the characters on stage to really be singing. This interpretation makes sense in the dramatic context. Orpheus in particular is a famed musician who would be likely to sing for his friends, while the setting—a wedding celebration— suggests the presence of music. The folk-like attributes of the songs also make them particularly appropriate for the characters to sing. However, we must also assume that the characters are not hearing *exactly* the same music that we are. Although shepherds might sing and dance, they would not have a large orchestra at their disposal. Monteverdi treads the line between the realistic portrayal of a party and the fantastical world of opera, in which everything happens to musical accompaniment.

At the conclusion of Orpheus’s song, the music suddenly changes. The orchestra drops out, leaving only basso continuo in support of a solo singer (one of the shepherds). This is recitative. Suddenly, the scene is interrupted by Sylvia, who comes bearing the news of Euridice’s death. In our production, her entrance is marked visually with the descent of a black cloth over the backdrop, but also musically with a change in basso continuo instrumentation. While the shepherd had sung with an accompaniment of harp and cello, Sylvia sings with theorbo and organ. The new timbres contrast with the pastoral scene, making her message all the more disruptive.

Following interjections from several of the other characters, each marked with a change in basso continuo, Sylvia tells her story. It might seem strange that one of the most dramatic scenes in the opera is not portrayed onstage, but rather described in a lengthy monologue. Compared with the party that opened the act, the next few minutes are a bit drab. Sylvia’s recitative lacks variety in texture and instrumentation, and it contains no melodic repetition—indeed, it contains no memorable melodies whatsoever. However, it does allow Monteverdi to exhibit his skill at expressing emotion by means of harmonized text declamation.

We might see Monteverdi’s technique at work by examining the emotional high point of the recitative, which arrives when Sylvia recounts Euridice’s final words: “Orpheus, Orpheus!” These are the highest pitches that she sings, and her delivery of the text closely mimics Euridice’s unsung cry, which the listener can easily imagine. The harmonies are stark and surprising. Throughout this passage, the listener is kept ill at ease as Monteverdi leads the singer through countless harmonic twists and turns. The devastating development of the story is paralleled by unpredictable, dark, and even ugly chords.

After a response from the shepherds, the first of whom repeats Sylvia’s text and melody from her entrance (“Ah, bitter blow!), Orpheus finally speaks. His opening words are low, set to a murky, chromatic melody and accompanied by gut- wrenching harmonies. As he moves from disbelief to anguish, his melody becomes higher, louder, and faster. Soon, however, his mood changes again as he resolves to bring her back from the underworld. Orpheus engages in a bit of **text painting** as he sings the words “I will surely descend to the deepest abyss” to a melody that itself descends into his lowest range. His final passage, in which he bids farewell to the sun and sky, in turn ascends into his highest range.

Act III

We will briefly visit Act III to hear the sounds of the underworld. Caronte, the boatman who is responsible for transporting deceased souls across the river Styx, sings to the somewhat horrible accompaniment of reed organ. This instrument's aggressive timbre underscores Caronte's gloomy job and belligerent character, expressed in his refusal to transport to Orpheus. Next we hear the music of Caronte's world: a funereal march performed principally on sackbuts.

After the march, Orpheus sets about the task of convincing Caronte to carry him across the river. He does so, of course, using the power of music. Orpheus sings a magnificent aria, "Mighty spirit and formidable god," that lasts for nearly ten minutes. Unlike his joyful song from the wedding party, this aria is slow, grandiose, and expressive. As in recitative, his singing is mostly unmetered. There is a fixed melody, and although it varies between the first three verses, the bass line remains the same. The listener, however, would be forgiven for failing to observe the repetition, for the bass line is so long and complex that it is difficult to recognize even upon repeated hearings. Recognition is made more difficult by the fact that the singer heavily ornaments the melody, and does so differently on each repetition. **Ornamentation** refers to the practice of adding notes according to accepted rules.



Act III from Orpheus. Composer: Claudio Monteverdi Performance: Gran Teatre de Liceu, Barcelona directed by Jordi Saval (1978)

Time, Form, What to listen for

(If the video does not begin at 59:55, please skip forward to that time stamp.)

59:55" Recitative: Caronte; Basso continuo: reed organ

1:01:24 March: Played by cornetti, sackbuts, and harp

1:02:15 Orpheus's aria - Verse 1: Basso continuo: theorbo and organ, accompanied by a pair of violins

1:04:02 Orpheus's aria - Verse 2: Accompanied by a pair of cornetti

1:05:22 Orpheus's aria - Verse 3: Accompanied by harp

1:08:10 Orpheus's aria - Verse 4: Accompanied by orchestral strings

1:11:13 End of listening guide

Orpheus's aria also provides us with one more opportunity to encounter some of Monteverdi's more interesting instruments. Each verse of the aria is decorated with instrumental interjections and completed by an instrumental refrain. First, we hear two violins: one playing from the stage or pit, and the other echoing from a distance. (Monteverdi was particularly fond of this echo effect, and used it in several dramatic contexts.) Next, we hear similar music from a pair of cornetti. This instrument—now almost extinct—employs a trumpet-like mouthpiece connected to a narrow tube, traditionally made from an animal horn and wrapped in leather. Finally, we hear from the double harp, a Baroque instrument with two rows of strings (modern harps have one row). The fourth verse of Orpheus's aria, which is accompanied by strings, is different—an indication that he is gaining control of the situation. He wins his argument with a concluding passage of comparatively simple and straightforward singing.

As with the dance songs that open Act II, we can understand this aria to be diegetic: Orpheus the character really *is* singing. Whether or not he has in fact conjured up cornetto and harps to accompany his singing, however, is up for debate. It is more

reasonable to interpret these instruments as belonging only to the theater orchestra, not to the scene in the underworld. The double harp in particular can be heard as a symbolic stand-in for Orpheus's own instrument, the lyre, which is a type of small harp used in ancient Greece. This scene is expressly about the music, however, for it is Orpheus's hypnotic singing and playing, in combination with his eloquence, that wins over the reluctant Caronte.

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6.2.3: Tian Han - The Tale of the White Snake

Europe and the United States are, of course, not alone in developing sung drama traditions. Examples of musical drama can be found around the world. Here we will examine two, each of which has a unique set of characteristics and each of which—like European opera—requires years of dedicated training for those who desire careers as performers. Each of these traditions—also like European opera— is highly heterogeneous. Different styles and forms have dominated in different eras, and one can encounter a variety of contemporary practices.

Beijing Opera

The form of musical theater known as **Beijing opera** is the most popular of the many forms of Chinese opera. Although the roots of Chinese opera extend back thousands of years, Beijing opera dates only to 1790—about when Mozart set to work on *The Magic Flute*. This particular form is said to have emerged when four regional opera troupes visited the Beijing court simultaneously to celebrate the 80th birthday of the Emperor. Although Beijing opera (like Italian opera) was available only as courtly entertainment for several decades, it soon found favor with the broader public, and by 1845 its conventions were both firmly established and widely enjoyed.

Here is a great video with an overview of Beijing opera:





Image 4.22: Beijing is located in the Northeast of China. Source: MapsWire Attribution: MapsWire License: CC BY 4.0



Image 4.23: Aristocratic female characters have ornate headdresses, fancy apparel, and complicated sleeves. Source: Flickr Attribution: Gustavo Thomas License: CC BY-NC-ND 2.0



Image 4.24: The Jing, or "painted face," character is always powerful. This is the historical figure Xiang Yu, who was King of Western Chu in the second century BC. His final battle is the subject of the piece *Attack from All Sides* discussed in Chapter 6. Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: User "G41rn8" License: CC BY-SA 4.0

Beijing opera combines a variety of different art forms, and its practitioners must be well-versed not only in singing but also in gesture, dance, makeup application, and acrobatics. Traditionally, children were apprenticed to traveling troupes. They were offered little formal education, and were instead expected to learn through imitation. Today, this system has been replaced by formal schooling. Other changes have also shaped the tradition. Until the 1890s, all Beijing opera performers were men, many of whom specialized in female roles. When women first began to perform, they were confined to all-female troupes— some members of which, naturally enough, had to take on male roles. Troupes were integrated following the founding of the Republic of China in 1911, but men continue frequently to perform female roles, especially that of the beautiful young woman.

The roles in Beijing opera are highly standardized. There are four character types: Sheng (the lead male), Dan (any female), Jing (a forceful male), and Chou (the clown). Each character type has a variety of subtypes based on age and social status. An actor must specialize in playing a specific character type, for each has a distinct manner of speaking, singing, and moving. The Jing types also wear special face paint, the designs of which reveal facets of their character and mark them as being on the side of good or evil.

Many genres of Chinese music, including Beijing opera, are categorized into "civil" and "martial" works. Civil operas concern the court intrigues and love interests of the aristocracy, while

martial operas contain scenes of military conflict. Plots of both types are drawn from history, traditional stories, and novels, all of which are already familiar to the audience. A single opera will usually present only a few episodes from a much longer story, and it is typical to combine serious and comical elements.

Like the operas themselves, the orchestra that provides music for Beijing opera is divided into civil and martial instrument groups. The civil group contains string instruments.



Image 4.25: In a Beijing opera orchestra, only one person plays each type of instrument. The additional *jinghu* fiddles sitting at the feet of the performer are probably tuned to different modes. Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: Xavier Serra License: CC BY-SA 2.0

The most significant of these is the *jinghu*, a high-pitched bowed fiddle after which the genre itself is named. The other principal instrument is the *yueqin*, a moon-shaped lute with four strings. The martial group—which might also be described as the percussion section—contains gongs of different sizes, cymbals, and a pair of instruments known as *guban* that consists of a high-pitched drum and a wooden clapper. These last are the most important, as they are played by the ensemble director. This person has a challenging task, for the percussion section must accompany action, punctuate speech, and provide sound effects—all of which requires precise timing. The orchestra might also contain additional lutes and wind instruments.



Figure 6.2.3.1 : (left) The *jinghu* is held upright on the left knee. Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: Metropolitan Museum of Art License: CC0. (right) The *yueqin* lute dates to the second century BC. Its name derives from its shape: “Yue” means “moon” in Chinese. Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: Queensland Museum License: CC BY-SA 3.0

The division of the Beijing opera orchestra into string, wind, and percussion sections mirrors the European orchestra. However, there are significant differences both in the makeup of the ensemble and in its function. A Beijing opera orchestra usually contains only one player per instrument, and the music performed by the orchestra is **heterophonic** in texture, meaning that all of the instruments play the same melody, but not in perfect unison. Instead, each player interprets the melody in a way that is appropriate to the instrument, contributing ornaments or adding/removing pitches as considered suitable.

Beijing opera performances contain various types of orchestral and vocal music. None of this music, however, is composed for a specific opera. Instead, the melodies all belong to the tradition in general, and they are used by individual performers to characterize specific roles. Certain instrumental pieces, for example, are always played to accompany certain scenes, such as a banquet or the arrival of an important character. Onstage characters sing short arias in one of two modes: *xipi* for happy or energetic lyrics, and *erhuang* for serious or heroic lyrics. Each mode arranges the pitches of the pentatonic scale (degrees 1 2 3 5 and 6 of the major scale) in a different way, and the melodies in each tend to have different shapes.

For this reason, individual operas in this tradition do not have composers. The plots and dialogues are crafted by playwrights, but the music is drawn from a communal store. The same arias and instrumental numbers will be heard in a variety of different works. The singers themselves also have a great deal of control over the music, which will reflect their training, style, and vocal range. It is generally considered desirable to sing the arias as high as possible, so it is the onstage performers who determine what key the music will be in. While this level of flexibility will seem unusual to someone who is used to Western opera or musical theater, Beijing opera is in fact remarkably rigid when compared to other Chinese opera forms. The Shenqu opera of Shanghai, for example, can be completely improvised, with plots based on the news stories of the day.

The vocal timbre used in Beijing opera is one of its most remarkable features. Singers strive to produce a piercing, nasal sound with a slow, controlled vibrato. They will sometimes slide between pitches, each of which is carefully placed. The speech in Beijing opera is also highly stylized, and is often delivered in high range. To accomplish this, male actors frequently employ **falsetto** when singing and speaking. Actors employ an ancient dialect that is not always intelligible to modern listeners, but they communicate as much with their gestures and steps as with their voices. The Chou (clown) is the only character permitted by tradition to speak in modern Beijing dialect or to improvise onstage.

Finally, a word about the trappings of the stage. Costumes are often elaborate, and they always reflect the social status of the character. Sleeves are especially

important, and are carefully managed by the actors for expressive purposes. Stage sets, however, tend to be minimal or non-existent. Audiences are expected to imagine the scene, which is brought to life through the use of symbolic props. A table, for example, might serve as a wall, a mountain, or a bed, while a single oar is enough to suggest the presence of a boat.



Image 4.28: Although the costumes used for Beijing opera are elaborate, the stage sets are minimal. Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: Chen Wen License: CC BY 2.5

The Tale of the White Snake

We will see all of these elements at play in our example, Tian Han's dramatization of *The Tale of the White Snake*. The source of this opera is a legend concerning a white snake spirit that transforms into a young woman named Bai Suzhen after consuming a substance that grants immortality and wisdom. The legend contains many episodes, but Tian chose to focus on events that lead up to and follow Bai's marriage to Xu Xian, who through a twist of fate was originally responsible for her powers. Tian himself was a leading playwright in the first half of the 20th century, but he was condemned by Mao's government in 1966 for writing a play that was considered to undermine Communist values. He died in prison two years later.

We will examine two scenes from *The Tale of the White Snake*, which, as a typical martial opera, contains both civil and martial scenes. The first, a civil scene, comes from near the beginning of the opera. Bai Suzhen and her friend Xiao Qing (also previously a snake) have been caught in a downpour when they meet Xu Xian.

The three of them share a boat, and Bai and Xu proceed to fall in love. This excerpt will allow us to hear a variety of speech and song types, to hear the orchestra in its various roles, and to witness the conventions by which actors communicate their emotions and conjure up absent settings and props.

The second scene, which is martial in character, concludes the initial episode of the couple's romance. A few months after their marriage, Xu dies of fright after seeing his wife in her snake spirit form. Bai has journeyed to Mount Emei, home of the immortals, where she hopes to obtain a magical fungus that will bring Xu back to life. This scene contains almost no singing, but instead features acrobatics and martial arts as Bai battles the guardians of the sacred shrine.

Our first scene begins with the entrance of Xu Xian, who sings an aria to explain his recent activities, describe the weather, and clarify that he has no interest in love. He sings in a high, falsetto range, as is typical of Sheng-type characters. The orchestra both accompanies and doubles him, following the contour of his melody and arriving at the same final pitches. The orchestra, however, does not play only what he sings, but also tacks on repeated motifs that add rhythmic and melodic interest. Although the aria has a regular pulse for the most part, it slows at the end as the singer adds ornaments to draw out the final notes.

The excerpt should start around 14:36, and you should listen until about 17:15:



Xu's aria is followed by spoken dialogue between the characters, which is punctuated by percussive bursts. Soon, however, they are interrupted by singing from offstage. This aria, performed by a boatman, is quite different in character from Xu's lively aria. It is slower and the notes more connected to one another—a style that would be described in the West as *legato*. Also, the boatman's aria is accompanied by the *dizi*, a bamboo flute, in addition to the standard instruments. Finally, the heterophonic texture is more clear, since the orchestral instruments double the voice without adding any additional pitches.



Image 4.29: The *dizi* is a Chinese bamboo flute. Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: Metropolitan Museum of Art License: CC0

Xu engages the boatman to take him and the two ladies to their destinations, and the boatman invites them to board. There is, of course, no boat. Instead, the actors help us to imagine it using carefully choreographed actions. After Bai and Xiao step into the boat, for example, they sway back and forth in perfect unison, as if being rocked by gentle waves. The journey of the boat is accompanied by appropriate music from the orchestra, to the melody of which the boatman sings a suitable Chinese proverb.

During the journey, all three characters engage in an extended accompanied musical number that combines singing and speaking. Again, the conclusion of the aria, sung by Bai, slows gradually to a stop as she makes the vital observation that Xu is a very nice young man. Pantomime and speech follow as the boat arrives at its first destination. The scene concludes with another musical sequence, in which Bai thanks Xu for his aid. Her final warning that he not break her heart is particularly effective: She draws the words out, singing unaccompanied for some time and concluding with a long series of ornaments. The phrase "gaze through autumn waters" is an idiom that indicates that one is waiting expectantly for another with tears in one's eyes.



Image 4.30: The *sheng*, or mouth organ, is a Chinese wind instrument. Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: User "PraktykantSiM" License: CC BY-SA 4.0

The scene ends with orchestral music to accompany Bai and Xiao's departure from the stage. We now hear another instrument clearly: the *sheng*, or mouth organ. The *sheng* consists of a series of vertical reed pipes attached to a mouthpiece. The instrument is

held with both hands, and the player positions their fingers over openings to sound the various pipes. The *sheng* will be heard during interludes such as this throughout the opera, although it seldom accompanies singing.

The scene we have just examined includes a typical mix of song, speech, and instrumental music, accompanied by symbolic movement and punctuated with percussive sound effects. As in European opera, speech (often cast as recitative in the Western tradition) moves the plot along, while song provides an opportunity for characters to express their emotions or reflect on what has happened.

Our next scene10 is quite different. Because this scene is martial in character, the focus is not on speech or song but on action. Bai sings to mark her entrance onto the stage, but she then executes an extended martial display to percussion accompaniment. Next she sings an excited aria about her mission to save her husband. When the guardian of the shrine blocks Bai's way, she begs his mercy using speech. He refuses to assist her, and they enter into a long physical battle accompanied only by the percussion section. The battle features remarkable acrobatics from both of the guardians, who represent a Chou character type known as Wu Chou, or "military clown."

Bai is ultimately defeated by the guardians, but the scene ends with an elder immortal gifting the magical fungus to Bai and sending her away to revive her husband. The two characters do not sing, but their dramatic and highly melodic speech is executed over orchestral accompaniment featuring both the *dizi* and *sheng*. After the long stretch of percussive music, the entrance of the full orchestra effectively underscores the emotion of the scene, communicating both the mercy of the immortal and the grateful joy of Bai. Please watch from 58:44 to 1:06:29.



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SECTION OVERVIEW

6.3: Danced Drama

Topic hierarchy

6.3.1: Javanese Traditional - The Love Dance of Klana Sewandana

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6.3.1: Javanese Traditional - The Love Dance of Klana Sewandana

Like sung drama, danced drama can be found around the world. Some of the richest traditions hail from Southeast Asia, where one can find dozens of distinct varieties of danced storytelling. Our example belongs to the ***wayang wong*** tradition, which developed in the courts of central Java, an island that is now part of Indonesia. Although *wayang wong* is unique to this small region, many of its musical and dramatic elements can be found across Java and throughout Indonesia. The most important of these is ***gamelan*** music, which is played on pitched gongs and keyed metallophones (marimba and xylophone are Western examples of such instruments).



Image 4.37: The *wayang wong* dance tradition developed in the courts of Yogyakarta and Surakarta, now the major cities of central Java. Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: User “Gobbler” License: CC BY-SA 2.0

Indonesia as Kingdom and Colony

Indonesia’s performing arts traditions reflect its diverse cultural heritage. Civilization on the islands dates back thousands of years. Indonesia was at first ruled over by a series of Hindu and Buddhist kingdoms, but the arrival of Islam in the 15th century resulted in the gradual conversion of the population. Today, Indonesia is the largest Muslim nation in the world, although many inhabitants practice a form of the religion that contains traces of the region’s Hindu and Buddhist heritage.

Javanese music is well known in the West due to the island’s colonial history. Dutch traders began to visit the Indonesian islands in the 16th century. The profitability of trade led to an influx of Dutch settlers, who established a local government under the auspices of the United East India Company. When the company failed in 1800, the Dutch government formally annexed the Dutch East Indies—which included most of Java—as a colony. Under Dutch rule, indigenous courts were allowed to remain intact, but they were granted only ceremonial powers. While this denied Indonesians their political autonomy, it contributed to the flourishing of Indonesian art, which the Dutch encouraged. It also facilitated the spread of Javanese music and art to Europe.

During World War II, Indonesia was occupied by the Japanese, who drove out the Dutch in an attempt to claim the islands for themselves. At the conclusion of the war, the Indonesians proclaimed independence. The Netherlands attempted to reassert its claim to the territory by force, and a military conflict ensued. In 1949, however, facing intense pressure from other powers, the Dutch acknowledged Indonesia as an independent nation. The impact of Dutch colonialism on the spread of Javanese cultural products resonates into the present day, and *gamelan* music in particular can be heard throughout the world. Indeed, there are over one hundred *gamelan* ensembles in the United States alone.

Wayang Wong

The dance form we will explore here, *wayang wong*, developed during the colonial era and resulted from the conflict between indigenous and colonial powers. *Wayang wong* was created at the court of Hamengkubuwono I, the first Sultan of Yogyakarta. Hamengkubuwono was to inherit the throne of the Mataram Sultanate from his brother, Pakubuwono II, but instead led his followers in a civil war after Pakubuwono agreed to cooperate with the United East India Company. The war ended in 1755 with a treaty establishing courts at Yogyakarta and Surakarta. Although this was nominally a victory for Hamengkubuwono, the Dutch ultimately benefited by pitting the courts against one another over the next two centuries. All the same, Yogyakarta remained a stronghold of Javanese resistance, and today serves as the capital of an independent region of the same name.

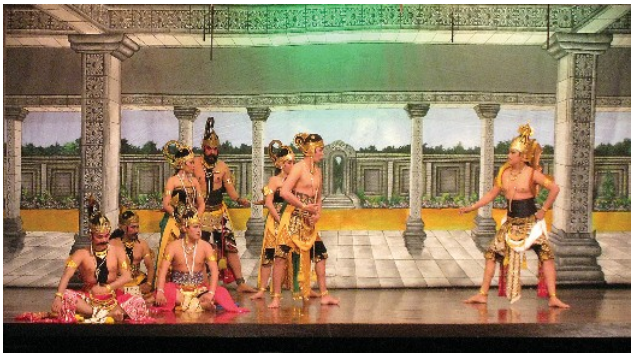


Image 4.38: These *wayang wong* dancers are portraying a scene from the Mahabharata. Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: Gunawan Kartapranata License: CC BY-SA 3.0

Wayang wong was initially conceived of as a decadent three-day spectacle celebrating and affirming the power of the newly-established Yogyakarta court. Although the first performance required dozens of dancers and lasted from dawn to dusk on each of the days, it has persisted in scaled-down forms. The term wayang wong literally means “human wayang.” This is in deference to the principal form of Indonesian theater, *wayang kulit*, which uses shadow puppets to act out traditional epics to the accompaniment of music.

All forms of *wayang* tell stories that have a long history in Indonesian culture. The principal sources are two Indian epics, the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*. *Wayang* performances also draw from the Panji stories, which concern the life of a legendary Javanese prince. Each of these epics is much too long and complex to be related in a single performance. Instead, *wayang* performers select individual stories, which they often elaborate in ways that add novelty without disrupting the traditional narrative. Indonesian audiences are already familiar with the stories, and they appreciate seeing the characters and events presented with originality.



Image 4.39: This view from behind the screen shows a dhalang manipulating the shadow puppets in a wayang kulit performance. The dhalang, who must be highly trained, not only moves the puppets but narrates, provides dialogue, and sings. His performances usually exceed eight hours in length, lasting from sunset to sunrise. Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: User “PL 05 SIGIT” License: CC BY-SA 4.0

Gamelan

Our example presents an excerpt from the Panji stories, which we will consider in greater detail below. Before that, however, we owe some attention to the music that accompanies *wayang wong* dance. The instruments used in *gamelan* music date back to at least the 8th century, although they did not acquire their present form until the 15th or 16th century, when gamelan music became an important component of court life. Gamelan music is ubiquitous in traditional Indonesian culture. It can be performed on its own, but it is also used to accompany dance and theater. It is played for court celebrations and religious ceremonies, pursued by amateurs for their own enjoyment, and consumed by fans as entertainment.

A gamelan is a collection of bronze percussion instruments that are struck using a variety of mallets. The components of a gamelan include vertically-hung gongs of various sizes, smaller gongs suspended horizontally in wooden frames, and melodic instruments consisting of metal bars suspended over resonating chambers. The instruments of a gamelan are built together and they remain together. It is not possible for players to bring their own instruments, or for an instrument to be substituted. This is because there is no fixed pitch system in Indonesian music, so gamelan instruments are tuned to one another by the original builder. Every gamelan therefore plays a distinct set of pitches.



Image 4.40: Although it bears a superficial resemblance, the saron differs from the gendèr in many ways. The bronze keys rest directly on the instrument, and the resonating chamber is a space within the wooden body of the instrument. The keys are also struck differently. Source: Wikimedia Commons. Attribution: Tropenmuseum, part of the National Museum of World Cultures. License: CC BY-SA 3.0



Image 4.41: The word “gong,” several examples of which we see here, comes from Indonesia. Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: Tropenmuseum, part of the National Museum of World Cultures License: CC BY-SA 3.0



Image 4.42: The *gendèr* is one of several gamelan instruments with bronze keys strung over bamboo resonators. Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: Tropenmuseum, part of the National Museum of World Cultures License: CC BY-SA 3.0



Image 4.43: The *kenong* and *kethuk* are horizontally- suspended gongs used to mark the underlying rhythmic cycle in gamelan music. Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: Tropenmuseum, part of the National Museum of World Cultures License: CC BY-SA 3.0



Image 4.44: The gongs of the bonang resemble those of the *kenong* and *kethuk*, but are strung together and tuned to allow the rendition of melodies. Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: Tropenmuseum, part of the National Museum of World Cultures License: CC BY-SA 3.0

In addition to being communally stored and maintained, gamelans are bestowed with names. This not only recognizes the gamelan’s status as a complete ensemble but also signifies the traditional belief that a gamelan possesses a spirit. This spirit resides primarily in the largest suspended gong, the *gong ageng*, which might be provided offerings of food, flowers, and incense. The blacksmith who forges the bronze components of the gamelan instruments is traditionally understood to hold special powers, and he is expected to prepare for his task through fasting and self-purification. His carefully-tuned gongs and bars are then set in ornately-carved wooden frames.

Each instrument in a gamelan occupies a specific place in the musical texture. The vertically- and horizontally-suspended gongs are all used to mark the pulses of the rhythmic cycles that underlie gamelan music. These cycles, each of which is named, consist of patterns of timbres provided by the various gongs. The *gong ageng* always marks the end of the cycle, which repeats throughout a performance and provides the structure.

The other bronze instruments—which include two sizes of *bonang*, *gendèr*, *slenthem* (an instrument that resembles the *gendèr* but is pitched lower and has fewer keys), and two sizes of *saron*— play the same melody in heterophonic texture. However, each of

these instruments interprets the melody in a markedly different way. Some play ornate versions, some play spare versions, and some play syncopated versions. The result is a complex texture woven out of the brilliant and resonant timbres of the many instruments.

Gamelan music also uses a few additional instruments, although these are not part of the main gamelan ensemble. Such instruments usually provide improvised melodies that follow the contour of the main melody but are otherwise independent. The instruments that might fill this role include the *rebab* (a bowed fiddle related to the Chinese *jinghu*), the *gambang* (a wood-keyed xylophone), and the *suling* (a type of flute). Finally, a male choir or female soloist might sing, drawing their texts from a body of poems and riddles that belong to the gamelan tradition. These texts, however, are not associated with any particular musical composition. Instead, they might be heard in a variety of contexts.



Image 4.45: A *kendhang* player. Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: Raimond Spekking. License: CC BY-SA 4.0

A gamelan performance is led by the drummer, who plays three different sizes of a drum known as *kendhang*. The drummer starts and stops performances, but his most important task is to control the pace and to signal the dramatic shifts in tempo that are characteristic of gamelan music. During performance, the ensemble will periodically slow to half of its former tempo or accelerate to twice the tempo. This is accompanied by changes in how the melody is interpreted by each of the instruments, which will add notes at slow tempos in order to maintain a consistent texture.

The Love Dance of Klana Sewandana

We are now prepared to turn to our example: A *wayang wong* performance that presents an episode from the Panji legends. *Wayang wong* is practiced both in masked and unmasked versions. This is obviously an example of the former. The use of masks in Indonesian dance dates back thousands of years. The masks are symbolically significant, and their shape, color, and details carry information about the character.

Many episodes of the Panji legend concern his romantic relationship with Sekartaji, who often finds herself separated from the Prince due to the intervention of malevolent forces. To survive, she frequently disguises herself as a man, at one point becoming the King of Bali and meeting Prince Panji on the battlefield. (There is also a long history of cross dressing in *wayang* dance itself.) The scene we will examine opens on Sekartaji alone in the forest. She has fled from the unwanted affections of King Klana Sewandana, whose obsession with her has driven him insane. Klana Sewandana attempts to seduce Sekartaji, but she rebuffs his advances. Luckily, Prince Panji has been drawn to the scene by his great love for Sekartaji. He fights and defeats Klana Sewandana, and the lovers are reunited. Please watch this video from 32:14:



The Love Dance of Klana Sewandana. Performance: The court dancers and musicians of Yogyakarta

Time	Form	What to listen for
32’14”		A few of the metallophones play a slow, Sekartaji alone in simple melody; the rebab and solo the forest female singer improvise high melodies; a percussionist taps rhythms on a wooden box
35’12”	Klana Sewandana	The music at first becomes faster and more enters and rhythmically intense; this is followed by attempts to fluctuations in tempo and dynamic seduce Sekartaji
36’08		A male solo singer enters and the rhythm becomes more regular
37’52	The brighter/louder metallophones reenter	Prince Panji arrives and fights Klana the texture Sewandana
38’21”		The male choir enters and most of the instruments drop out
39’06”		The rebab enters
39’35”		The solo female singer joins the male choir Instruments and singers continue to [...] leave and reenter the texture as the music fluctuates in intensity
45’30		Prince Panji and Sekartaji are The music slows in tempo, then accelerates reunited
48’19		The music slows in anticipation of the final note

The three dancers in the scene move differently, for they represent the three character types of *wayang wong*. As a female type, Sekartaji keeps her feet close to the ground while executing refined movements with her hands, neck, and head. Klana Sewandana is a strong male, as betrayed by his wide stance, large steps, and aggressive movements. Prince Panji, on the other hand, is a refined male. As such, he keeps his feet close to the ground and moves fluidly.

Throughout the episode, the gamelan provides a constant musical backdrop while accentuating the dramatic contour. Klana Sewandana’s arrival in the forest, for example, is marked by an intensification of the music, which grows in volume and increases in tempo. Musical outbursts punctuate the fight scene, while a musical calm descends on the final scene between Panji and Sekartaji. From time to time we hear the *rebab*, the *suling*, and various singers, who can be seen seated behind the dancers. The

words they are singing have nothing in particular to do with the drama unfolding onstage, but voices contribute an important aesthetic element to any performance.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

7: Music of the Baroque Period

Learning Objectives

1. Demonstrate knowledge of historical and cultural contexts of the Baroque Period
2. Recognize musical performing forces (voices, instruments, and ensembles), styles, composers, and genres of the Baroque
3. Explain ways in which music and extra-musical influences interact in music of the Baroque Period
4. Aurally identify selected music of the Baroque, making critical judgments about its style and use

7.1: Introduction and Historical Context
7.2: Music in the Baroque Period
7.3: More Monteverdi
7.4: New Music for Instruments

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7.1: Introduction and Historical Context

Introduction

This brief introduction to the Baroque period is intended to provide a short summary of the music and context in the Baroque Era, which lasted from about 1600-1750. This period includes several composers that we now hear on so-called “classical” music stations. You are probably familiar with such names as Bach, Handel, and Pachelbel, whose Canon is used in many modern weddings. You have almost certainly heard snippets of these composers on TV shows, commercials, or movies. In this section, we will add some context and history to these and many other personalities from the Baroque Era.

It’s appropriate that we hear Handel and his contemporaries in commercials today considering the Baroque era was essentially the first age in which music be- came a commercial commodity. Opera in the seventeenth century was the entertainment equivalent of movies today. The biggest opera stars in 1720 were followed around by paparazzi and gossiped about just as are, say, Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie. You’ll encounter more on that when you get to the opera portion of this learning chapter.

The term “Baroque” has an interesting and disputed past. Baroque ultimately is thought to have derived from the Italian word *barocco*. Philosophers during the Middle Ages used this term to describe an obstacle or veerings from schematic logic. Later the term came to denote or bring attention to any contorted idea, obscure thought, or anything different, out of the ordinary, or strange. Another possible origin is from the Portuguese term *barrocco*, in Spanish *barrueco*. Jewelers use this term even today to describe irregular or imperfectly shaped pearls: a baroque pearl. The baroque period is a time of extremes resulting from events stemming back to the renaissance. The conflict between the reformation and counterreformation, and the influence of Greek/Roman culture as opposed to medieval roots are present throughout the Baroque era.

In art circles, the term baroque came to be used to describe the bizarre, irregular, grotesque, or anything that departs from the regular or expected. This definition was adhered to until 1888 when Heinrich Woolfflin coined the word as a stylistic title or designation. The baroque title was then used to describe the style of the era. The term “rococo” is sometimes used to describe art from the end of the Baroque period, from the mid to late eighteenth century. The rococo took the extremes of baroque architecture and design to new heights with ornate design work and gold gilding (see figure of a rococo church). Historical events and advances in science influenced music and the other arts tremendously. It is not possible to isolate the trends of music during this period without briefly looking into what was happening at the time in society.

Science

Sir Isaac Newton and his studies made a great impact on Enlightenment ideology. In addition to creating calculus, a discipline of mathematics still practiced today, he studied and published works on universal gravity and the three laws of motion. His studies supported heliocentrism, the model of the solar system’s planets and their orbits with the sun. Heliocentrism invalidated several religious and traditional beliefs.

Johannes Kepler (b. 1571-1630), a German astronomer, similarly re-evaluated the Copernican theory that the planets move in a circular motion in their orbits around the sun. In utilizing Brahe’s records, Kepler concluded that the planets move in ellipses in their orbits around the sun. He was the first to propose elliptical orbits in the solar system

William Harvey conducted extensive anatomical research concerning the circulatory system. He studied the veins and arteries of the human arm and also concluded that the blood vessel system is an overall circle returning back to the heart while passing through the lungs.

Philosophy

Descartes (1595-1650) was a famous philosopher, mathematician, and scientist from France. He is arguably considered to be one of the pioneer modern philosophers to make an effort to defeat skepticism. His opinions on the relationship of the body and mind as well as certainty and knowledge have been very influential. He laid the foundation for an analysis and classification of human emotions at a time when more and more writers were noting the powers of music to evoke emotional responses in their listeners

John Locke (1632-1704) is regarded as the founder of the Enlightenment movement in philosophy. Locke is believed to have originated the school of thought known as British Empiricism, laid the philosophical foundation for the modern idea of limited liberal government. Locke believed each person has “natural rights,” that government has obligations to its citizens, that government has very limited rights over its citizens and, in certain circumstances, it can be overthrown by its citizens.

Art

Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1598-1680) was a famous Italian sculptor of the Baroque era. He is credited with establishing the Baroque sculpture style. He was also a well-known architect and worked most of his career in Rome. Although he enjoyed the patronage of the cardinals and popes, he challenged artistic traditions.



Figure 7.1.1: Michelangelo's David by Jörg Bittner Unna. Source: Wikimedia



Figure 7.1.2: Bernini's David by Galleria Borghese Official Site. Source: Wikimedia

His art reflects a certain sense of drama, action, and sometimes playfulness. Compare for instance his sculpture of David (1623-1624) with the David sculpture (1501-1504) of Renaissance artist Michelangelo. (Figures 4.1.1 and 4.1.2)

Where Michelangelo's David appears calm- ly lost in contemplation, Bernini's David is in the act of flinging his slingshot, jaw set and muscles tensed. We see similar psychological intensity and drama in music of the Baroque period.

Elaborate formal Baroque gardens indicating man's control over nature were used to demonstrate the owner's power and prestige. France was a major contributor to the development of these highly ornamental gardens. These gardens became associated with autocratic government. The de- signs of these elaborate gardens were from "Cartesian" geometry (science and mathematics) while drawing the landscape into the composition. Look at the Leonard Knyff oil rendering of the Hampton Court Baroque garden.

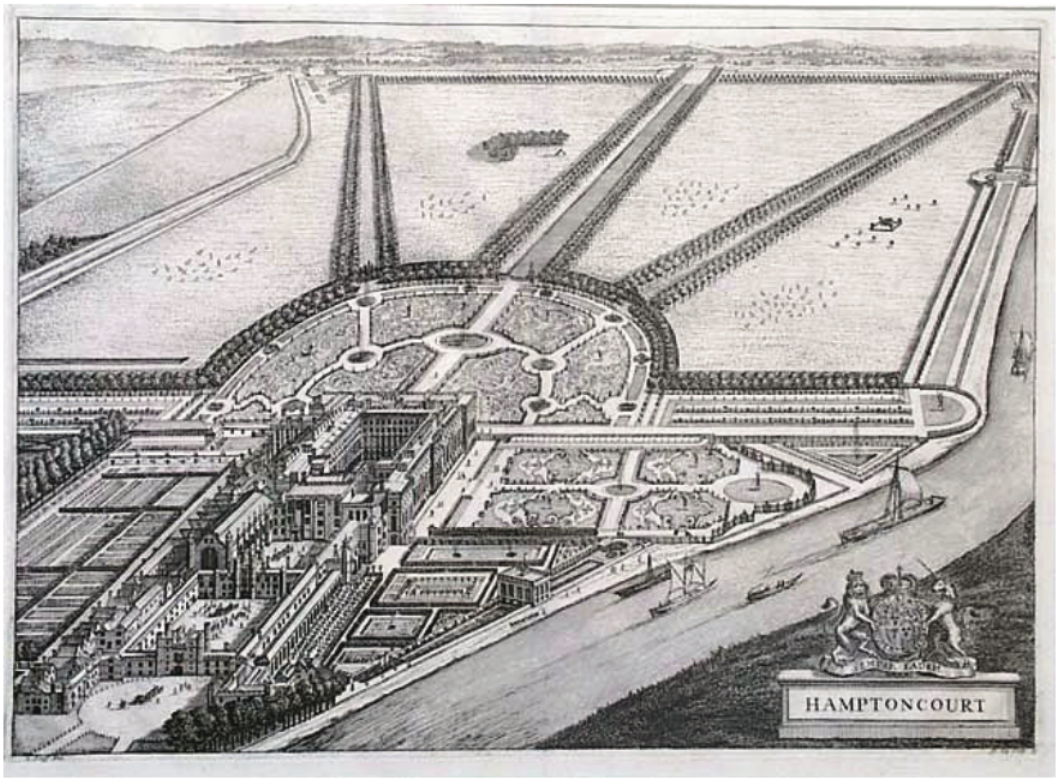


Figure 7.1.3: Hampton Court Gardens by Leonard Knyff. Source: Wikimedia

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Literature

Literature during the Baroque period often took a dramatic turn. William Shakespeare (1564-1616), playwright and poet, wrote the play *Hamlet* and many other great classics still enjoyed by millions of readers and audiences today. Music composers have long used Shakespeare's writing for text in their compositions; for example, his *Hamlet* was used as the basis for an opera. Shakespeare's writings depict an enormous range of human life, including jealousy, love, hate, drama, humor, peace, intrigue, war, as well as all social classes—matter that provides great cultural entertainment. For more information on this topic, go to:

metopera.org/en/watch-and-lis...demand/MOoDIn- stitutional-Access/Spotlight-on-Shakespeare/

Jean Racine (1639-1699) wrote tragedies in the neoclassic (anti-Baroque) and Jansenism literary movements. Many works of the classical era utilized rather twisted complicated plots with simple psychology. Racine's neoclassic writing did just the opposite, incorporating simple and easy to understand plots with challenging uses of psychology. Racine is often grouped with Corneille, known for developing the classic tragedy form. Racine's dramas portray his characters as human with internal trials and conflicting emotions. His notable works include *Andromaque*, *Phèdre*, and *Athalie*.

Miguel de Cervantes (1547-1616) was a Spanish playwright, poet, and novelists. *Don Quixote* is his most famous work and is often considered the first modern novel from Europe. It was published in 1605 and portrays the traditions of Sevilla, Spain. Legend has it that the early portions of *Don Quixote* were written while the author was in jail for stealing.

Other Baroque-era authors include John Milton (1608-1674), author of the epic *Paradise Lost;* John Dryden (1631-1700), dramatist and poet who wrote several semi-operatic works incorporating music by contemporary composer Henry Purcell; Jonathan Swift (1667-1745) an Anglo-Irish essayist and proto-novelist, poet, and cleric who authored *Gulliver's Travel;*, and Henry Fielding (b. 1707-1754) a proto-novelist and dramatist who authored *Tom Jones*.

We will find a similar emphasis on drama as we study Baroque music, especially in the emergence of genres such as opera and oratorio.

Politics

In **politics**, three changes that started in the Renaissance became defining forces in the Baroque period. First, nation-states (like France and England) developed into major world powers, ruled by absolutist monarchs. These absolute monarchs were kings and queens whose authority, it was believed, was divinely bestowed upon them. They amassed great power and wealth, which they often displayed through their patronage of music and the other arts. With the rise of this system of absolutism, the state increasingly challenged the power base of the Church. In the case of Germany, these nation-states were smaller and often

unstable. Second, Protestantism spread throughout northern Europe. Places such as England, where Georg Frideric Handel spent most of his adult life, and central Germany, where Johann Sebastian Bach spent all of his life, were Protestant strongholds. J. S. Bach wrote a great deal of music for the Lutheran Church. Third, the middle class continued to grow in social and economic power with the emergence of printing and textile industries and open trade routes with the New World (largely propelled by the thriving slave trade of the time).

Exploration and Colonialism

The 1600s saw the first era of the Colonization of America. France and England were the most active in the colonization of America. The quest for power in Europe, wealth/economics and religious reasons energized the colonial progression. Hudson explores the later-named Hudson River (1609); landing of Pilgrims at Plymouth (1620); Manhattan bought from Native Americans (1626); Boston founded (1630); Harvard University founded (1636).

Musical Timeline

Events in History	Events in Music
1618-1648: Thirty Years War 1623: Galileo Galileo publishes *The Assayer* 1642-1651: English Civil War 1643-1715: Reign of Louis XIV in France 1649: Descartes publishes *Passions of the Soul* 1687: Isaac Newton publishes his *Principia* 1740-1846: Reign of Frederick the Great of Prussia	1597: Giovanni Gabrieli writes his *Sacrae Symphoniae* 1607: Monteverdi performs *Orfeo* in Mantua, Italy 1678: Vivaldi born in Venice, Italy 1685: Handel and Bach born in Germany 1741: Handel *Messiah* performed in Dublin, Ireland 1750: J. S. Bach dies

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7.2: Music in the Baroque Period

Music Comparison Overview

Renaissance Music	Baroque Music
• Much music with rhythms indicated by musical notation • Mostly polyphony (much is imitative polyphony) • Growing use of thirds and triads • Music – text relationships increasingly important with word painting • Invention of music publishing • Growing merchant class increasingly acquires musical skills	• Meter more important than before • Use of polyphony continues • Rise of homophony. Rise of instrumental music, including the violin family • New genres such as opera, oratorio, concerto, cantata, and fugue • Emergence of program music • First notation of dynamics and use of terraced dynamics • Continued present of music at church and court • Continued increase of music among merchant classes

General Trends of baroque music

The characteristics highlighted in the chart above give Baroque music its unique sound and appear in the music of Monteverdi, Pachelbel, Bach, and others. To elaborate:

1. Definite and regular rhythms in the form of meter and “motor rhythm” (the constant subdivision of the beat) appear in most music. Bar lines become more prominent.
2. The use of polyphony continues with more elaborate techniques of imitative polyphony used in the music of Handel and Bach.
3. Homophonic (melody plus accompaniment) textures emerge including the use of basso continuo (a continuous bass line over which chords were built used to accompany a melodic line)
4. Homophonic textures lead to increased use of major and minor keys and chord progressions (see chapter one)
5. The accompaniment of melodic lines in homophonic textures are provided by the continuo section: a sort of improvised “rhythm section” that features lutes, viola da gambas, cellos, and harpsichords. Continuo sections provide the basso continuo (continuous bass line) and are used in Baroque opera, concerti, and chamber music
6. Instrumental music featuring the violin family—such as suites, sonatas, and concertos emerge and grow prominent.
7. These compositions are longer, often with multiple movements that use defined forms having multiple sections, such as ritornello form and binary form.
8. Composers start to notate dynamics and often write abrupt changes between loud and softs, what are called terraced dynamics.

Genres of the baroque Period

Much great music was composed during the Baroque period, and many of the most famous composers of the day were extremely prolific. To approach this mu- sic, we’ll break the historical era into the early period (the first seventy-five years or so) and the late period (from roughly 1675 to 1750). Both periods contain vocal music and instrumental music.

The main genres of the early Baroque vocal music are: madrigal, motet, and opera. The main genres of early Baroque instrumental music include the canzona (also known as the sonata) and suite. The main genres of the late Baroque instrumental music are the concerto, fugue, and suite. The main genres of late Baroque vocal music are: Italian opera seria, oratorio, and the church cantata (which was rooted in the Lutheran chorale, already discussed in chapter three). Many of these genres will be discussed later in the chapter.

Solo music of the Baroque era was composed for all the different types of instruments but with a major emphasis on violin and keyboard. The common term for a solo instrumental work is sonata. Please note that the non-keyboard solo instrument is usually accompanied by a keyboard, such as the organ, harpsichord or clavichord.

Small ensembles are basically named in regard to the number of performers in each (trio = three performers, etc.). The most common and popular small ensemble during the Baroque period was the trio sonata. These trios feature two melody instruments (usually violins) accompanied by basso continuo (considered the third single member of the trio).

The large ensembles genre can be divided into two subcategories, orchestral and vocal. The concerto was the leading form of large ensemble orchestral mu- sic. Concerto featured two voices, that of the orchestra and that of either a solo instrument or small

ensemble. Throughout the piece, the two voices would play together and independently, through conversation, imitation, and in contrast with one another. A concerto that pairs the orchestra with a small ensemble is called a **concerto grosso** and a concert that pairs the orchestra with a solo instrument is called a **solo concerto**.

The two large vocal/choral genres for the Baroque period were **sacred works** and **opera**. Two forms of the sacred choral works include the **oratorio** and the **mass**. The oratorio is an opera without all the acting. Oratorios tell a story using a cast of characters who speak parts and may include **recitative** (speak singing) and **arias** (sung solos). The production is performed to the audience without the per- formers interacting. The **Mass** served as the core of the Catholic religious service and commemorates the Last Supper. **Opera** synthesizes theatrical performance and music. Opera cast members act and interact with each other. Types of vocal selections utilized in an opera include recitative and aria. Smaller ensembles (duets, trios etc.) and choruses are used in opera productions.

Oratorio	Opera Seria	Cantata
• Similar to opera except: No costumes or staging • A lot of choral numbers • Typically on biblical topics • Some examples of Handel's biblical oratorios: *Saul*, *Solomon*, and *Judas Maccabeus* • Some examples of Handel's non-biblical oratorios: *Hercules*, *Acis and Galatea*, and *The Triumph of Time and Truth* • Vocal soloist perform in front instruments utilized for accompaniment	• Serious opera • Historical or Mythological plots • Lavish costumes • Spectacular sets • Showcased famous solo singers • All sung; no narration • Acted and performed on stage • Examples of Baroque opera: *L'Orfeo*, *L'Arianna*, *The Fairy Queen* (based on Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*), and *Ottone in Villa*	• A work for voices and instruments • Either sacred and resembling a short oratorio or secular as a lyrical drama set to music. • Sacred cantata often involves church choirs and are not acted out • Can utilize narration • Example is Bach's famous Reformation *Cantata* BWV 80: *Ein feste Burg ist unser Got* (A Mighty Fortress is Our God)

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7.3: More Monteverdi

Monteverdi and the Second Practice

We talked a lot about word painting a couple of weeks ago, and we already mentioned the madrigal, but I actually wanted to drill down a little deeper into that genre in the language of its origin: Italian.

Using Claudio Monteverdi--composer of *Orpheus*, the first really important opera--to talk about the madrigal is ideal, since his work in the genre covered pretty much all phases of its developments. He wrote multiple books of madrigals, and you can study them in chronological order to see how things changed. The earliest ones had three voices, then four, then five. The harmony got more complex and expressive, and in book 5, something really important happens.

I have to go back a second and explain. Monteverdi was a very careful composer. He knew the "rules" of writing and harmony, and he was not a reckless guy. But a much older, very respected music theorist named Giovanni Artusi (check out his Wikipedia page here) had called Monteverdi out--first in a series of private letters and later in a published treatise (fancy name for a book or publication that systematically discusses a topic)--for using dissonance in a way that went against nature and all of the established rules of harmony.

In this treatise Artusi writes:

"It is my belief that there is nothing but smoke in the heads of such composers and that 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...But do you know what usually happens to such works as these?...In the end they are built without foundation, they are quickly consumed by time and cast to the ground, and the builders remain deluded and mocked at."

To the argument that music must evolve and change with time, Artusi says:

"Do you not know that all the arts and sciences have been brought under rules by scholars of the past and that the first elements, rules and precepts on which they are founded have been handed down to us in order that, so long as there is no deviation from them, one person shall be able to understand what another says or does? .... [*further discussion of the individual passages of Monteverdi's work follows*] ... Our ancients never taught that sevenths [*the interval between do and ti*] may be used absolutely and openly, as you see them used in the second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh measures, for they do not give grace to the composition and, as I said a little while ago, the higher part has no correspondence to its whole, beginning, or foundation."

So basically Artusi said that Monteverdi's practice of using dissonance so freely in his composition was wrong, and that in doing so, he was disrespecting the old ways. You can read more about this argument here and here.

Monteverdi for his part, was really only trying to find new ways to make vocal music more expressive. This desire would actually culminate in his work in opera. This whole controversy is happening between 1600 and 1603 and his first opera, *Orpheus*, would be completed in 1607. In his fifth books of madrigals, Monteverdi published this rebuttal as part of the dedication:

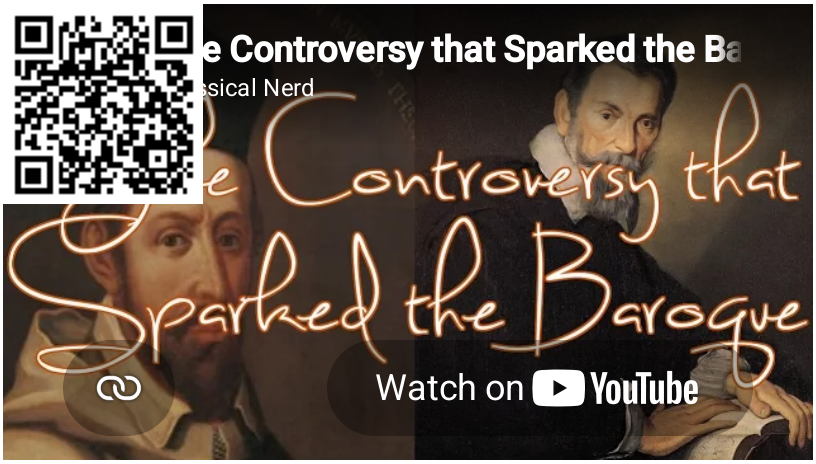
> *I hereby present to Your Grace this group of madrigals I have created....*
> *Do not be surprised at my publishing these madrigals without first replying to the objections raised by Artusi to a few tiny portions of them. Since I am in the service of His Grace the Duke of Mantua, I do not have the necessary time at my disposal. Nevertheless, I have written the reply to show what I do is not done by accident. As soon as my reply is copied out it will be published under the title Seconda Pratica, overo Perfettione Della Moderna Musica. Some people may marvel at this, thinking that there is no other practice than the one taught by Zarlino [Giuseppe Zarlino, 1517 - 1590, codifier of the old Netherlandish style, exemplified by Josquin]; but they can be sure that, with regard to consonances and dissonances, there is yet another point of view which defends modern compositional practice to the satisfaction of both the mind and the senses. I wanted to tell you this both to keep others from preempting my expression "Second practice," and so that even ingenious persons may meanwhile countenance other new viewpoints on*

> *harmony. Believe me, the modern composer is building upon the foundations of truth. Live happily.*

Monteverdi's explanation says two things: I meant to do it like this (I know the rules and I'm breaking them on purpose) and I can do this because it makes sense based on this SECOND practice, not the FIRST practice that you're talking about.

Monteverdi's brother Giulio got into the argument too explaining: "My brother says that he does not compose his works at haphazard because, in this kind of music, it has been *his intention to make the words the mistress of the harmony and not the servant* [that phrase is very important] and because it is in this manner that his work is to be judged in the composition of the melody.... Artusi takes certain details, or, as he calls them "passages" from my brother's madrigal *Cruda Amarilli*, paying no attention to the words, but neglecting them as though they had nothing to do with the music, later showing the said "passages" deprived of their words, of all their harmony and of their rhythm....[My brother] promises to show, in refutation of his opponent, that the harmony of the madrigal *Cruda Amarilli* is not composed at haphazard, but with beautiful art and excellent study, unperceived by his adversary and unknown to him...."

Check out Classical Nerd's take on this situation:



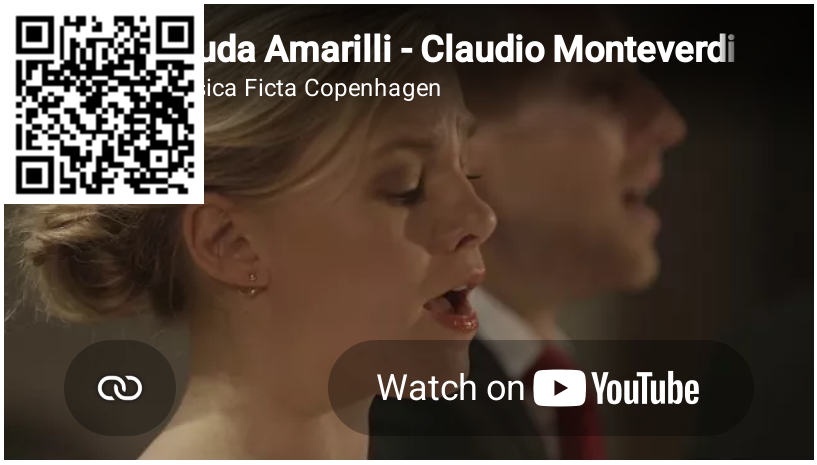
Here's the original text and its translation, and note that the places that speak of cruelty, suffering, etc. are the ones that would be set in uncomfortable dissonances:

original Italian text and English translation of Cruda Amarilli

original Italian text	English translation

1. Cruda Amarilli, che col nome ancora, d'amar, ahi lasso! amaramente insegni; Amarilli, del candido ligustro più candida e più bella, ma de l'aspido sordo e più sorda e più fera e più fugace; poi ché col dir t'offendo, i' mi morrò tacendo.	1. Cruel Amaryllis, who with your name to love, alas, bitterly you teach; Amaryllis, more than the white privet pure, and more beautiful, but deafer than the deaf asp, and fiercer and more elusive; since in speaking I offend you, I shall die in silence.
2. Ma grideran per me le piaggie, e i monti e questa selva, a cui sì spesso il tuo bel nome di risonar insegno; per me piangendo i fonti, e mormorando i venti, diranno i miei lamenti;	2. Yet for me will cry out the hills and the mountains and these woods, to which so often your fair name to resound I teach. Weeping for me, the springs, and murmuring, the winds, will tell my laments;
3. Parlerà nel mio volto la pietate e'l dolore; e se fia muta ogn'altra cosa al fine parlerà il mio morire, e ti dirà la morte il mio martire.	3. In my face will speak compassion and sorrow; and if every other thing is silent, in the end, will speak my dying, and to you my death will tell of my suffering.

Now listen to the madrigal itself. Do yourself a favor and listen twice. Chances are, you're not going to feel angry or upset at the use of dissonance the way Artusi was. You might even like it. I love this repertoire and think Monteverdi was right on.



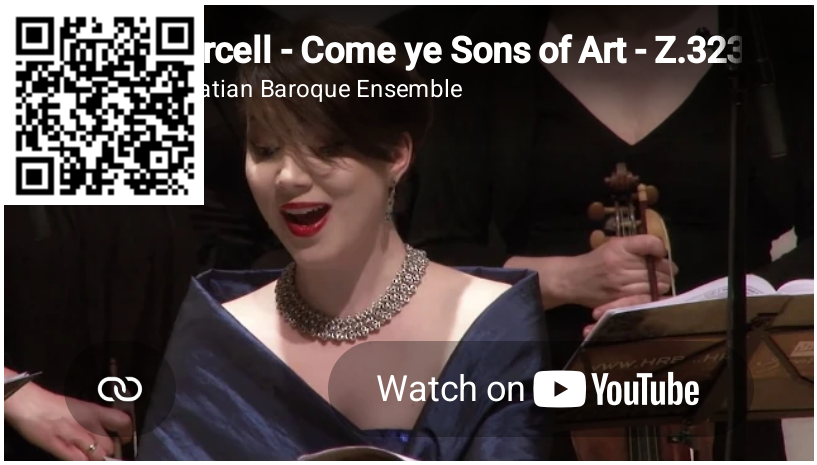
Opera in England

Since we already looked at Italian opera through Monteverdi, I thought it would be great to talk about opera in another place. Even though opera was thoroughly an Italian genre to begin with, eventually it made its way into other countries and into other languages. This took a while, although the example we're going to look at here is fairly early.

Henry Purcell (1659-1695)

Purcell was born in the Westminster area of London in 1659. His name is commonly pronounced PUR-suhl (not pur-CELL). He started his musical life as a chorister, and in addition to musicians in the family there were also composers among the family's friends. Their warm relationship with successful composer Matthew Locke, who wrote in a dramatic/musical genre called the "semi-opera," was probably a very important influence for young Henry. Unlike proper Italian operas, which were sung throughout, semi-operas usually had spoken dialogue and possibly dancing. A few of Locke's semi-operas were based on Shakespearean plays like *Hamlet* and *The Tempest*.

When he was about 20 years old, he began writing music for the Chapel Royal. Some works were anthems, which we learned in a previous chapter were important for the Anglican Church services. He also wrote Odes, which were vocal/choral works for special occasions, like "Come, Ye Sons of Art" for Queen Mary's Birthday. It's a very lively and lovely piece of music:



Purcell wrote only one true opera in his short life--he died around the age of 36. Certainly not a lot of time on this earth, and yet even with so short a career, he was England's most famous and respected opera composer until the twentieth century. His one true opera was called *Dido and Aeneas*, and it dramatized an excerpt from Book IV of Virgil's Latin epic, *The Aeneid*. It was completed sometime between 1683 and 1688--we're really not sure of the exact date. In this excerpt of Virgil's text, Aeneas, who is on a quest, has stopped on the island of Carthage where he meets Queen Dido. Here is a painting by Sir Nathaniel Dance-Holland (1735-1811) which hangs in London's Tate gallery, depicting their meeting:


painting of Dido and Aeneas' first meeting.

Because no epic would be complete without the interference of the gods, Cupid and other deities cause all kinds of trouble. Dido, who had sworn loyalty to her deceased husband, has her will weakened by Cupid, and she ends up falling in love with Aeneas. Aeneas, who knows his fate lies elsewhere, eventually leaves Carthage, but Dido is devastated and heartbroken. She sings the following lament (video below), and then ends her life. I've chosen an unstaged version of the song, to avoid any triggering imagery.

Now, a couple of things to remember. First, this opera was written to be performed at a girl's school. A school! So like, this would have been sung by a high-schooler! Can you imagine doing that now? It would never happen.

Second, this was by no means, Purcell's first dramatic work. He had written songs for plays and other stage works. He based the work on the libretto by Nahum Tate's play *The Enchanted Lovers*. He definitely had a talent for the dramatic, because honestly, this aria is heart-breaking and also so beautiful.

Third, musically speaking, this is a fascinating aria because it's built on a **ground bass**. A ground bass is a repeating bass pattern that doesn't change at all within the piece. Here is the bassline:


musical notation of the repeating bassline

As you listen, see if you can follow the bassline as it repeats. It's played once in between the recitation ("Thy hand, Belinda") and the aria ("When I am laid...") so you can hear what it sounds like by itself. It repeats 10 or 11 more times underneath the aria. In this video, watch the woman playing the cello-like instrument because she's got the bassline. There is also some word painting elements, so pay attention to that as well.



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7.4: New Music for Instruments

The Baroque period saw an explosion in music written for instruments. Had you lived in the Middle Ages or Renaissance, you would have likely heard instrumental music but much of it would have been either dance music or vocal music played by instruments. Around 1600, composers started writing more music specifically for musical instruments that might be played at a variety of occasions. One of the first composers to write for brass instruments was Giovanni Gabrieli (1554-1612). His compositions were played by ensembles having trumpets and sackbuts (the trombones of their day) as well as violins and an instrument called the cornet (which was something like a recorder with a brass mouth piece). The early brass instruments, such as the trumpet and sackbut, as well as the early French horn, did not have any valves and were extremely difficult to play. Extreme mastery of the air column and embouchure (musculature around the mouth used to buzz the lips) were required to control the pitch of the instruments. Good Baroque trumpeters were highly sought after and in short supply. Often they were considered the aristocrats in the orchestra. Even in the wartime skirmishes of the Baroque era, trumpeters were treated as officers and given officer status when they became prisoners of war. Composers such as Bach, Vivaldi, Handel, and others selectively and carefully chose their desired instrumentation in order to achieve the exact tone colors, blend, and effects for each piece.

Giovanni Gabrieli was an innovative composer of the late Renaissance Venetian School. His masterful compositional technique carried over and established technique utilized during the Baroque era. Giovanni succeeded Andrea Gabrieli, his uncle, at Venice's St. Marks Basilica as the organist following his uncle's death in 1586. Giovanni held the position until his death in 1612. Giovanni's works rep- resent the peak of musical achievement for Venetian music.

Gabrieli continued and perfected the masterful traditional compositional technique known as **cori spezzati** (literally, "split choirs")**.** This technique was developed in the sixteenth century at St. Mark's where composers would contrast different instrumentalists and groups of singers utilizing the effects of space in the performance venue, that is, the church. Different sub-ensembles would be placed in different areas of the sanctuary. One sub-ensemble would play the "call" and another would give the "response." This musical back and forth is called antiphonal performance and creates a stereophonic sound between the two ensembles. In- deed, this placement of performers and the specific writing of the parts created the first type of stereo sound and three-dimensional listening experiences for parishioners in the congregation. Many of Gabrieli's works were written for double choirs and double brass ensembles to perform

simultaneously. See the interior image of St. Mark's Basilica with its chamber on the left and right that are used for op- posing brass ensembles (Figure 7.4.1).

An example of one such piece with an eight-part setting is Gabrieli's *Jubilate*. The interior of the Basilica had multiple coves and lofts where musicians could be placed for performing Gabrieli's stereophonic works. In later years, Giovanni became known as a famous music teacher. His most recognized student was Heinrich Schütz of Germany.



Figure 7.4.1: Interior of St. Mark's Basilica by User "Morn". Source: Wikimedia

Focus Composition:

Gabrieli, "sonata pian'e forte" from *Sacrae Symphoniae* (1597)

Another famous composition by Gabrieli in eight parts, consisting of two four- part groups, is the *Sonata pian'e forte* which is included in the *Sacrea Symphoniae* composed in 1597. This collection includes several instrumental **canzoni** for six- to eight-part ensembles. These, in addition to several **Toccatas** and **Ricercars,** have provided a great deal of interesting repertoire for brass players. Many of the original works by Gabrieli were written for sackbuts (early versions of the modern trombone) and cornetti (cupped shape mouth pieces on a curved wooden instrument) but have since been transcribed for various brass ensembles.

Let's listen to and study the *Sonata pian'e forte from* Gabrieli's *Sacrea Symphoniae.* This collection is pioneering in musical scoring in that Gabrieli wrote specific louds and softs (volume) into the individual parts for the performers to ob- serve. Through the use of its two keyboards played simultaneously, the pian'eforte could achieve two relative dynamic (volume) levels, soft and loud. The introduction of writing in dynamics (volume p-soft to f-loud) into music by composers is a major step toward notating expression into the music score. Gabrieli also incorporated imitative polyphony and the use of **polychoral** techniques.

Listening Guide For audio, go to: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jx2xgbBkjbg As performed on instruments from the Renaissance/Baroque transition era, directed by Bernard Fabre-Garrus at the Festival des Cathedrales in Picardie (timings below correspond to this version).
Composer: Giovanni Gabrieli
Composition: *Sonata pian e forte for 8 parts, C. 176* from *Sacrea Symphoniae*
Date: 1597
Genre: Sonata
Form: through-composed in sections
Nature of Text: Antiphonal instrumental work in eight parts
Performing Forces: Two "choirs" **(**Double instrumental quartet—8 parts) of traditional instruments—sackbuts (early trombones) and wooden cornets

What we want you to remember about this composition:

- Antiphonal call and response;
- the use of musical **dynamics** (louds and softs written in the individual parts);
- and contrapuntal imitation

Other things to listen for:

- listen to the noted balance so the melody is heard throughout and how the instruments sound very "vocal" as from earlier time periods (the Renaissance)
- The piece's texture is the division of the forces into two alternating groups in polychoral style.

Timing	Performing Forces, Melody, and Texture	Text and Form
0:00	Choir 1 introduces the first theme in a piano dynamic in a slow tempo and duple meter. Like many early sonatas and canzonas, the composition starts with a repeated-note motive. The notes and harmonies come from the Dorian mode, a predecessor to the minor scale. The composition starts in the key of G.	**Strophe 1:** Ave, generosa, "Hail generous one"
0:29	As the first choir cadences, the second choir begins, playing a new theme still at a piano dynamic and slow tempo. Later in the theme the repeated note motive (first heard in the first theme of the composition) returns.	**Strophe 1 continues:** Gloriosa et intacta puella... "Noble, glorious, and whole woman..."
0:52	Choirs 1 and 2 play together in a *tutti* section at a forte dynamic. The new theme features faster notes than the first two themes and the parts are more (The key moves to the Mixolydian mode, a predecessor to the major scale, and the key moves to C.)	**Strophe 2:** Nam hec superna infusio in te fuit... "The essences of heaven flooded into you..."
1:02	Central antiphonal section. Choir 1 opens with a short phrase using a piano dynamics and answered by choir 2 with a different short phrase, also with a piano dynamics. This call and response continues. Some times, the phrases last for only two measures; other times they are as long as four measures. After each passage of antiphonal exchanges, there is music of three to four measures in length where the whole ensemble joins together, usually with different melodic material (e.g. 40-43). The tonal or key center shifts during this section. There is a new theme that uses dotted rhythms that starts in measure 60 (approximately 2:07 in the recording).	**Strophe 3**: O pulsherrima et dulcissima... "O lovely and tender one..."

2:34	Repetition of the melody to new words sung by all with monophonic texture (the drone continues)	**Strophe 4**: Venter enim tuus gaudium havuit... “Your womb held joy...”

To hear other Giovanni Gabrieli musical compositions, go to:

https://www.google.com/webhp?sourceid=chrome-in- stant&ion=1&espv=2&ie=UTF-8#q=giovanni+gabrieli+canzon+duodec-imi+toni&stick=H4sIAAAAAAAAAONgFuLQz9U3yC4ySlHiArEMLdPLy7K1B-H1LizOTHYtKMotLQvKD8_PSAbASq34rAAAA

4.6.1 Rise of the Orchestra and the Concerto

The Baroque period also saw the birth of the orchestra, which was initially used to accompany court spectacle and opera. In addition to providing accompa- niment to the singers, the orchestra provided instrumental only selections during such events. These selections came to include the overture at the beginning, the interludes between scenes and during scenery changes, and accompaniments for dance sequences. Other predecessors of the orchestra included the string bands employed by absolute monarchs in France and England and the town collegium musicum of some German municipalities. By the end of the Baroque period, com- posers were writing compositions that might be played by orchestras in concerts, such as concertos and orchestral suites.

The makeup of the Baroque orchestra varied in number and quality much more than the orchestra has varied since the nineteenth century; in general, it was a small- er ensemble than the later orchestra. At its core was the violin family, with woodwind instruments such as the flute, recorder, and oboe, and brass instruments, such as the trumpet or horn, and the timpani for percussion filling out the texture. The Baroque orchestra was almost always accompanied by harpsichord, which together with the one or more of the cellos or a bassonist, provided a basso continuo.



Figure 7.4.1: Violin by User “Just Plain Bill.” Source: Wikimedia



Figure 7.4.2: Viola by User “Just Plain Bill.” Source: Wikimedia



Figure 7.4.3: Cello by Georg Feitscher. Source: Wikimedia



Figure 7.4.4: Double Mass by User “AndrewKepert”. Source: Wikimedia

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The new instruments of the violin family provided the backbone for the Baroque orchestra (see Figures 4.4.1, 4.4.2, 4.4.3, and 4.4.4). The violin family—the violin, viola, cello (long form violoncello) and bass violin—were not the first bowed string instruments in Western classical music. The Middle Ages had its fiddle (see Figure 4.10), and the Renaissance had the viola da gamba (see Figure 4.11). Bowed strings attained a new prominence in the seventeenth century with the widespread and increased manufacturing of violins, violas, cellos, and basses. Some of these instruments, such as those made by Antonio Stradavari (1644-1737), are still sought after

today as some of the finest specimens of instruments ever made. With the popularity of the violin family, instruments of the viola da gamba family fell to the side- lines. Composers started writing compositions specifically for the members of the violin family, often arranged with two groups of violins, one group of violas, and a group of cellos and double basses, who sometimes played the same bass line as played by the harpsichord.

One of the first important forms of this instrumental music was the concerto. The word concerto comes from the Latin and Italian root *concertare*, which has connotations of both competition and cooperation. The musical concerto might be thought to reflect both meanings.

A concerto is a composition for an instrumental soloist or soloists and orchestra; in a sense, it brings together these two forces in concert; in another sense, these two forces compete for the attention of the audience. Concertos are most often in three movements that follow a tempo pattern of fast – slow – fast. Most first movements of concertos are in what has come to be called **ritornello form**. As its name suggests, a ritornello is a returning or refrain, played by the full orchestral ensemble. In a concerto, the ritornello alternates with the solo sections that are played by the soloist or soloists.



Figure 7.4.5: Vielle player by Unknown. Source: Wikimedia

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One of the most important composers of the Baroque concerto was the Italian Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741). His father taught him to play at a young age and he probably began lessons in music composition as a young teen.

Vivaldi began studying for the priesthood at age fifteen and, once ordained at age twenty-five, received the nickname of "The Red Priest" because of his hair color. He worked in a variety of locations around Europe, including at a prominent Venetian orphanage called the Opsedale della Pietà. There he taught music to girls, some of whom were illegitimate daughters of prominent noblemen and church officials from Venice. This orphanage became famous for the quality of music performed by its in- habitants. Northern Europeans, who would travel to Italy during the winter months on what they called "The Italian Tour"—to avoid the cold and rainy weather of cities such as Paris, Berlin, and London—wrote home about the fine performances put on by these orphans in Sunday afternoon concerts.



Figure 7.4.6: Regola Rubertina Titelbild by Silvestro Ganassi. Source: Wikimedia Commons

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These girls performed concertos such as Vivaldi's well known *Four Seasons*. The *Four Seasons* refers to a set of four concertos, each of which is named after one of the seasons. As such, it is an example of program music, a type of music that would become more prominent in the Baroque period. **Program music** is instrumental music that represents something extra musical, such as the words of a poem or narrative or the sense of a painting or idea. A composer might ask orchestral instruments to imitate the sounds of natural phenomenon, such as a babbling brook or the cries of birds. Most program music carries a descriptive title that suggests what an audience member might listen for. In the case of the *Four Seasons*, Vivaldi connected each concerto to an Italian sonnet, that is, to a poem that was descriptive of the season to which the concerto referred. Thus in the case of Spring, the first concerto of the series, you can listen for the "festive song" of birds, "murmuring streams," "breezes," and "lightning and thunder."

Each of the concertos in the *Four Seasons* has three movements, organized in a fast – slow – fast succession. We'll listen to the first fast movement of Spring. Its "Allegro" subtitle is an Italian tempo marking that indicates music that is fast. As a first movement, it

is in ritornello form. The movement opens with the ritornello, in which the orchestra presents the opening theme. This theme consists of motives, small groupings of notes and rhythms that are often repeated in sequence. This ritornello might be thought to reflect the opening line from the son- net. After the ritornello, the soloist plays with the accompaniment of only a few instruments, that is, the basso continuo. The soloist's music uses some of the same motives found in the ritornello but plays them in a more virtuosic way, showing off one might say.



Figure 7.4.7: Portrait of Antonio Vivaldi by Anonimo Bolognese. Source: Wikimedia

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As you listen, try to hear the alternation of the ritornellos and solo sections. Listen also for the motor rhythm, the constant subdivision of the steady beat, and the melodic themes that unfold through melodic sequences. Do you hear birds, a brook, and a thunderstorm? Do you think you would have associated these musical moments with springtime, if, instead of being called the Spring Concerto, the piece was simply called Concerto No. 1?

Listening Guide For audio, go to: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zW0p...&feature=youtu. be&list=PL0D30A7BBDC001432 Giuliano Carmignola (solo violin); Giorgio Fava (violin I); Gino Mangiocavallo (violin II); Enrico Parizzi (viola); Walter Vestidello (violoncello); Alberto Rasi (violone); Giancarlo Rado (archlute); Andrea Marcon (harpsichord); I Sonatori de la Gioiosa Marca / Giuliano Carmignola (conductor)
Composer: Antonio Vivaldi
Composition: The first movement of Spring from *The Four Seasons*
Date: 1720s
Genre: solo concerto and program music
Form: ritornello form
Nature of Text: the concerto is accompanied by an Italian sonnet about springtime. The first five line are associated with the first movement: Springtime is upon us. The birds celebrate her return with festive song, and murmuring streams are softly caressed by the breezes. Thunderstorms, those heralds of Spring, roar, casting their dark mantle over heaven, Then they die away to silence, and the birds take up their charming songs once more.
Performing Forces: solo violinist and string orchestra

What we want you to remember about this composition:

- It is the first movement of a solo concerto that uses ritornello form
- This is program music
- It uses terraced dynamics
- It uses a fast allegro tempo

Other things to listen for:

- The orchestral ritornellos alternate with the sections for solo violin
- Virtuoso solo violin lines
- Motor rhythm
- Melodic themes composed of motives that spin out in sequences

Timing	Performing Forces, Melody, and Texture	Text and Form
0:00	Orchestra plays the Ritornello. Repetitive motives played by all the violins; cellos subdivide the beat, provided the motor rhythm; Dy- namics terraced from loud to soft to loud to soft, every three measures; In E major	“Coming of spring”
0:36	Solo Section featuring the solo violin, joined by two other violins. Solo violin imitates the birds with repeated notes that are ornamented by trills and then repeated in short- er note values	“Birds celebrate” with “festive song.”
1:08	Ritornello starts with opening phrase. Opening phrase returns and then a softer new phrase with oscillating notes to depict the murmuring brook; Forte for the return of the opening phrase; then forte repeated low notes foreshadowing the appearance of lightening.	“Murmuring streams” “caressed by the breezes”;
1:49	Solo section. Solo violinist playing rapid notes in groups of three to represent lightning; answered by low repeated note in other strings representing thunder	“Thunderstorms...roar”
2:07	Orchestra plays the ritornello.	Opening theme (just three measures)
2:15	Solo section: Solo violin + 2 violins; cello sustains a drone pitch. More high-pitched, ornamented and repeated notes to represent	More chirping birds

2:33	Orchestra. Return of a motivic fragment from the opening phrase now more legato and repeated in a sequence.	
2:45	Solo violin + basso continuo. More fast, repeated and oscillating notes	Final reference to birds and streams

2:58	Orchestra: ritornello. Forte for the first melodic phrase of the ritornello; last phrase ends piano	

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

8: Music of the High Baroque

8.1: Rise of the Orchestra and Concerto

8.2: Music of George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)

8.3: Music of Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

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8.1: Rise of the Orchestra and Concerto

Instrumental Genres of the High Baroque

The Baroque period saw the birth of the orchestra, which was initially used to accompany court spectacle and opera. In addition to providing accompaniment to the singers, the orchestra provided instrumental-only selections during such events. These selections came to include the overture at the beginning, the interludes between scenes and during scenery changes, and accompaniments for dance sequences. Other predecessors of the orchestra included the string bands employed by absolute monarchs in France and England and the town *collegium musicum* of some German municipalities. By the end of the Baroque period, composers were writing compositions that might be played by orchestras in concerts, such as concertos and orchestral suites.

The makeup of the Baroque orchestra varied in number and quality much more than the orchestra has varied since the nineteenth century; in general, it was a small- er ensemble than the later orchestra. At its core was the violin family, with woodwind instruments such as the flute, recorder, and oboe, and brass instruments, such as the trumpet or horn, and the timpani for percussion filling out the texture. The Baroque orchestra was almost always accompanied by harpsichord, which together with the one or more of the cellos or a bassonist, provided the basso continuo.

The new instruments of the violin family provided the backbone for the Baroque orchestra. The violin family—the violin, viola, cello (long form violoncello) and bass violin—were not the first bowed string instruments in Western classical music. The Middle Ages had its fiddle, and the Renaissance had the viola da gamba. Bowed strings attained a new prominence in the seventeenth century with the widespread and increased manufacturing of violins, violas, cellos, and basses. Some of these instruments, such as those made by Antonio Stradavari (1644-1737), are still sought after today as some of the finest specimens of instruments ever made. With the popularity of the violin family, instruments of the viola da gamba family fell to the sidelines. Composers started writing compositions specifically for the members of the violin family, often arranged with two groups of violins, one group of violas, and a group of cellos and double basses, who sometimes played the same bass line as played by the harpsichord.

If you're interested in seeing a Baroque violin up close (and hearing why it's different from a modern violin), check out this short video from a violinist who plays for the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment:



One of the first important forms of this instrumental music was the **concerto**. The word concerto comes from the Latin and Italian root *concertare*, which has connotations of both competition and cooperation. The musical concerto might be thought to reflect both meanings.

A concerto is a composition for an instrumental soloist or soloists and orchestra; in a sense, it brings together these two forces in concert; in another sense, these two forces compete for the attention of the audience. Concertos from this time period are most often in three movements that follow a tempo pattern of fast – slow – fast. Most first movements of concertos are in what has come to be called **ritornello form**. As its name suggests, a ritornello is a returning or refrain, played by the full orchestral ensemble. In a concerto, the ritornello alternates with the solo sections that are played by the soloist or soloists.

Check out the first 2 minutes of this video for a brief overview of the genre. (Feel free to watch the whole thing, but the first two minutes is the most important for this time period.):



One of the most important composers of the Baroque concerto was the Italian Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741). His father taught him to play at a young age and he probably began lessons in music composition as a young teen.

Vivaldi began studying for the priesthood at age fifteen and, once ordained at age twenty-five, received the nickname of "The Red Priest" because of his hair color. He worked in a variety of locations around Europe, including at a prominent Venetian orphanage called the Ospedale della Pietà. There he taught music to girls, some of whom were illegitimate daughters of prominent noblemen and church officials from Venice. This orphanage became famous for the quality of music performed by its inhabitants. Northern Europeans, who would travel to Italy during the winter months on what they called "The Italian Tour"—to avoid the cold and rainy weather of cities such as Paris, Berlin, and London—wrote home about the fine performances put on by these orphans in Sunday afternoon concerts.

These girls performed concertos such as Vivaldi's well known *Four Seasons*. The *Four Seasons* refers to a set of four concertos, each of which is named after one of the seasons. As such, it is an example of **program music**, a type of music that would become more prominent in the Baroque period. Program music is instrumental music that represents something extra musical, such as the words of a poem or narrative or the sense of a painting or idea. A composer might ask orchestral instruments to imitate the sounds of natural phenomenon, such as a babbling brook or the cries of birds. Most program music carries a descriptive title that suggests what an audience member might listen for. In the case of the Four Seasons, Vivaldi connected each concerto to an Italian sonnet, that is, to a poem that was descriptive of the season to which the concerto referred. Thus in the case of Spring, the first concerto of the series, you can listen for the "festive song" of birds, "murmuring streams," "breezes," and "lightning and thunder." In the case of winter, you hear suggestions of chattering teeth and someone trembling in the cold. It is thought that Vivaldi wrote the poems as well as the music.

Each of the concertos in the Four Seasons has three movements, organized in a fast – slow – fast succession. In a future module, we're going to talk about Spring from the Four Seasons, so for this lesson, we are going to cover my favorite concerto in the bunch: Summer. Let's start with the poem (this translation comes from the Charlotte Symphony website.):

******

***L'Estate* (*Summer*)**
Opus 8, No. 2, in G minor

I. *Allegro non molto*--
Under the heat of the burning summer sun,
Languish man and flock; the pine is parched.
The cuckoo finds its voice, and suddenly,
The turtledove and goldfinch sing.
A gentle breeze blows,
But suddenly, the north wind appears.
The shepherd weeps because, overhead,
Lies the fierce storm, and his destiny.

II. *Adagio*; *Presto*--
His tired limbs are deprived of rest
By his fear of lightning and fierce thunder,
And by furious swarms of flies and hornets.

III. *Presto*--
Alas, how just are his fears,
Thunder and lightening fill the Heavens, and the hail
Slices the tops of the corn and other grain.

*****

Look at the Italian words at the beginning of each stanza of the poem. These indicate the tempos. When tempo descriptions first started showing up in written musical scores, they were usually in Italian. This was true for many years, and not just in Italy either. *Allegro non molto* means lively (allegro), but not too much so (non molto). *Adagio* indicates a slower tempo, while *Presto* indicates a much faster one. One of the most fun things about this particular concerto, however, is the constantly changing tempos--even within a single movement. Here it really pays to know the poetry so the constantly shifting moods and speeds make some kind of sense. And oh man, those blazing solos are breathtaking. Here's a great performance of this concerto by violinist Mari Samuelson and the Trondheim Soloists.

Movement 1 = 0:10 - 6:00

Movement 2 = 6:04 - 8:10

Movement 3 = 8:11 - 10:42 (this part is my favorite):



As you watch this, make sure that you are paying attention to the way that the soloist plays and the way that the orchestra plays. Notice that the orchestra's individual parts are not as showy, although they may contribute to the overall showiness of the music. It is really the soloist's job to shine here, and Vivaldi gives the soloist plenty of flourishes and quick writing to show off.

Check out this description of Summer from the Boston Baroque program notes for this piece, written by Martin Pearlman;

"The first movement of *Summer* closely follows the program laid out in the sonnet. The quiet stillness of the opening, headed "languishing in the heat," is broken by the voice of the cuckoo and then of the turtle dove and goldfinch in the solo violin, but the movement ends with the shepherd imagining a violent storm. The second movement contrasts the calm repose of the solo line against the mildly annoying dotted figures of the orchestral violins, which are designated "flies and blowflies." This peaceful scene is repeatedly interrupted by the distant approach of thunder. The summer storm breaks in all its fury in the closing movement."

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8.2: Music of George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)

18th-Century Italian Opera

When we talked about the birth of opera a couple of weeks ago, we put Monteverdi's *Orpheus* in the spotlight. It was the first really important example of the genre of opera, but it was only the beginning. Italy continued to dominate the world of opera for a long time, but the genre had some issues.

One thing that was problematic was the use of castratti. A castrato was a male singer who underwent castration before puberty with the aim of retaining a voice with a high range. The "operation" usually happened to boys between the ages of 8 and 10. The practice was not looked upon favorably (it was not, in fact, a legal practice), but castrato voices were extremely sought after--the main male parts of nearly all Italian operas for more than a century were played by castratti. If fact, it was said that if an opera opened in Italy **without** a castratto in a main role, that opera was doomed to fail. Why was this such a common practice in Italy? Why did Italians pay money to go hear castratti sing the role of main male character? And just to clarify, the characters played by castratti were supposed to be men, so this voice type wasn't used to play female roles. Here's a passage from the Wikipedia page about the castrato:

> *"As the castrato's body grew, his lack of testosterone meant that his epiphyses (bone-joints) did not harden in the normal manner. Thus the limbs of the castrati often grew unusually long, as did their ribs. This, combined with intensive training, gave them unrivaled lung-power and breath capacity. Operating through small, child-sized vocal cords, their voices were also extraordinarily flexible, and quite different from the equivalent adult female voice. Their vocal range was higher than that of the uncastrated adult male."*

Italian audiences for opera were seemingly more interested in vocal fireworks than they were in character development or even plot. More on this in a minute.

Here is a clip from a 1994 movie called *Farinelli* about a famous castrato, Carlo Broschi, better known by his stage name, Farinelli. This clip features an aria from an opera by George Frideric Handel called *Rinaldo*.

This clip intercuts scenes remembered by Farinelli's older brother (the shifty-looking guy sitting underneath the stage) depicting young Carlo's castration--you can see him being placed in a milk bath, which was supposed to be soothing, I guess? We also see scenes of young Carlo's training. It's also a great clip to show you the candle-lit theater of the 18th century as well as the wigs and ornate dress of the time. The man with the very long, curly wig, who whips it off at the end, is Handel himself!



The singing in this film is actually a composite of two voices, one is that of female soprano Ewa Malas-Godlewska, and the other is that of countertenor, Derek Lee Ragin. A countertenor is a non-castrated male singer, whose voice--either through physical characteristics or through training--reaches up into the alto or soprano range. Counter-tenors are still trained today, and there are even some non-castrated men whose voices are able to reach up into the soprano range quite beautifully.

It is indeed barbaric that thousands, yes, THOUSANDS, of young boys were mutilated in this way in the slim hope of fame and fortune. Only a handful of them had the fame and career of a Farinelli, while the vast majority of these men were forced to live with a live-changing injury that could never be reversed.

The Da Capo Aria

Building on the idea that the Italian audiences wanted nothing more than to go to the opera to see amazing singers sing amazingly, we see a popular structure in arias designed to show off the singer. The structure is called the "Da Capo" form. It's basically an A-B-A form. We can argue that this is the second big issue with Italian operas: the prioritization of showing off the singers over telling compelling stories or building interesting characters. For Italian audiences cool singing > dramatic effectiveness.

The da capo aria is a big part of this problem. The first part (the first A section) lays out the emotional state of the character. The contrasting B section changes mood a bit. There might be a tempo change, a key change, or a meter shift. In this middle section, the character might decide to take action or have a change of heart. But then, the A returns, to give the singer the opportunity to revisit the music of the first A, but this time with impressive vocal improvisation. This gave Italian audiences what they wanted (vocal fireworks), but it stopped the natural progression of the drama. A character singing a da capo aria ends up in the same emotional place they started in. So it's not so great as a story-telling device.

Also! And forgive a tangent of a tangent, famous singers used to have favorite arias they liked to sing, and they would just sing them in whatever opera was playing--even if it didn't match at all with the story. It's like if I was playing Maria in *West Side Story*, but I decided to sing a song from *Oklahoma!* instead because I sounded great singing it. They called these arias "Suitcase arias" because singers would just carry them from opera to opera. It was a weird practice!

Anyway, in the video above, you can hear an example of the da capo form (this aria was actually written for the opera, and wasn't a "suitcase" aria). The first A is happening as the video begins. The contrasting B section starts at 1:38, and then the ornamented A section returns at 2:11.

Eventually, the use of the castrato fell out of favor as tastes changed. A composer named Christoph Gluck proposed opera reforms in the 1760 that suggested that everything in an opera (music, dance, singing, staging, etc.) must serve the drama. And after a while, even the Italians started to feel weird about the whole castration thing, so the "heroic tenor" became the main type of singing voice for the main male character. It took a while to finally die completely. The last great castrato role was written for an opera in the 1820s, but by then it was a very strange anomaly.

The Music of George Frideric Handel

George Frideric Handel was one of the superstars of the late Baroque period He was born the same year as one of our other Baroque superstars, Johann Sebastian Bach, not more than 150 miles away in Halle, Germany. His father was an attorney and wanted his son to follow in his footsteps, but Handel decided that he wanted to be a musician instead. With the help of a local nobleman, he persuaded his father to agree. After learning the basics of composition, Handel journeyed to Italy to learn to write opera. Italy, after all, was the home of opera, and opera was the most popular musical entertainment of the day. After writing a few operas, he took a job in London, England, where Italian opera was very much the rage, eventually establishing his own opera company and producing scores of Italian operas, which were initially very well received by the English public. After a decade or so, however, Italian opera in England imploded. Several opera companies there each competed for the public’s business. The divas who sang the main roles and whom the public bought their tickets to see demanded high salaries. In 1728, a librettist name John Gay and a composer named Johann Pepusch premiered a new sort of opera in London called ballad opera. It was sung entirely in English and its music was based on folk tunes known by most inhabitants of the British Isles. For the English public, the majority of whom had been attending Italian opera without understanding the language in which it was sung, English language opera was a big hit. Both Handel’s opera company and his competitors fought for financial stability, and Handel had to find other ways to make a profit. He hit on the idea of writing English oratorio.



Figure 8.2.1: Georg Friedrich Händel by Philip Mercier. Source: Wikimedia

What is an Oratorio?

Oratorio is sacred opera that is not staged. Like operas, they are relatively long works, often spanning over two hours when performed in entirety. Like op- era, oratorios are entirely sung to orchestral accompaniment. They feature recitatives, arias, and choruses, just like opera. Most oratorios also tell the story of an important character from the Christian Bible. But oratorios are not acted out. Historically-speaking, this is the reason that they exist. During the Baroque period at sacred times in the Christian church year such as Lent, stage entertainment was prohibited. The idea was that during Lent, individuals should be looking inward and preparing themselves for the death and resurrection of Christ, and attending plays and operas would distract from that. Nevertheless, individuals still wanted entertainment, hence, oratorios. These oratorios would be performed as concerts not in the church but because they were not acted out, they were perceived as not having a "detrimental" effect on the spiritual lives of those in the audience. The first oratorios were performed in Italy; then they spread elsewhere on the continent and to England.

Handel realized how powerful ballad opera, sung in English, had been for the general population and started writing oratorios but in the English language. He used the same music styles as he had in his operas, only including more choruses. In no time at all, his oratorios were being lauded as some of the most popular performances in London.

His most famous oratorio is entitled *Messiah* and was first performed in 1741. About the life of Christ, it was written for a benefit concert to be held in Dublin, Ireland. Atypically, his librettist, took the words for the oratorio straight from the King James Version of the Bible instead of putting the story into his own words.

Once in Ireland, Handel assembled solo singers as well as a chorus of musical amateurs to sing the many choruses he wrote for the oratorio. There it was popular, if not controversial. One of the soloists was a woman who was a famous actress. Some critics remarked that it was inappropriate for a woman who normally performed on the stage to be singing words from sacred scripture. Others objected to sacred scripture being sung in a concert instead of in church. Perhaps influenced by these opinions, *Messiah* was performed only a few times during the 1740s. Since the end of the eighteenth century, however, it has been performed more than al- most any other composition of classical music. While these issues may not seem controversial to us today, they remind us that people still disagree about how sacred texts should be used and about what sort music should be used to set them.

I'm including a couple of excerpts from *Messiah* (part I) to show you the different kinds of singing it offered. In the first, we hear a soloist singing a recitative, "There Were Shepherd Abiding in the Fields," followed by a chorus, "Glory to God." In this performance, I want you to notice a couple of things:

- Notice how the soloist is featured, but how the choir takes up the main focus of the stage.
- The choir features 4 voice parts (soprano, alto, tenor, bass), but in this case, all parts are sung by boys and men.
- Some of the soloist's recitative is accompanied just by organ (long notes) and harpsichord (arpeggiated chords); but some of her section is also accompanied by the strings as well because she's talking about the glory of this angelic vision. These are two

different kinds of recitative. First, there is *secco* (meaning dry) recitative, which is accompanied with just a keyboard instrument. This small scale allows for dramatic flexibility. A singer can move through the recitative fast or slow, and the accompanying harpsichord can easily follow her. The other type, *accompagnato* (or accompanied), has less rhythmic flexibility because more players are involved. Notice how the *secco* parts don't feel super rhythmic, while the *accompagnato* sections generally have a beat you can follow.

- Once the choir comes in, notice that they start out singing homophonically--they are all singing in the same rhythm, but they are singing different notes. This brings out "Glory to God" as important words. But as we get to the "good will towards men" words, the voice parts break off into imitation, which means they all sing a version of the tune. Handel chose to have the choir repeat the same words in this imitative section, because it's hard to understand words when the choir is singing polyphonically.
- The quiet ending is my absolute favorite. I love that he went for subtlety here. Handel, by all accounts, was not a subtle guy. So that makes this feel special.



Finally, I want to share a recitative and aria from Part III. The recitative is "Behold, I Tell You A Mystery," and the aria is "The Trumpet Shall Sound." Notice the Baroque-era trumpet being played for this aria, and pay attention the way the vocal part and the trumpet part kinda weave around each other and sometimes even imitate each other. These long, melismatic (remember that word?) lines that barely give the singer or the trumpet time to breathe are basically a staple of the High Baroque style. (check out the long phrase at 5:06-5:21!) Also, this is basically a da capo aria starting after the instrumental opening at 0:36, with B section starting around 4:09, and the A coming back at 5:30. In this performance, the second A section isn't really much different from the first A. So, probably because this was a quasi-sacred composition, the vocal fireworks were not prioritized the way they would have been in an opera.



The famous Hallelujah Chorus also comes from Messiah, but for sure you've heard that before. If you want to listen to it, I've included it here. Best thing about it is it's a great choral piece to hear homophony and polyphony. There's even a moment of monophony, when all voices (except soprano) sing "For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth" in unison. It's a good way to train your ear to tell the difference among the various textures. Also notice in this performance that the audience is standing. This is

customary, so if you ever go see *Messiah*, don't be surprised if folks just stand up at this part. Legend has it (unproved), at the London premiere, the King stood up for this part, which meant that everyone had to stand up as well (royal tradition).



Focus Composition:

Movements from Handel's Water Music Suite

Although Handel is perhaps best known today for his operas and oratorios, he also wrote a lot instrumental music, from concertos like Vivaldi wrote to a kind of music called the suite. Suites were compositions having many contrasting movements. The idea was to provide diverse music
in one composition that might be interesting for playing and listening. They could be written for solo instruments such as the harpsichord or for orchestral forces, in which case we call them orchestral suites. They often began with movements called overtures and modeled after the overtures played before operas. Then they typically consisted of **stylized dance** movements. By stylized dance, we
mean a piece of music that sounds like a dance but that was not designed for dancing. In other words, a stylized dance uses the distinct characteristics of a dance and would be recognized as sounding like that dance but might be too long or too complicated to be danced to.



Figure 8.2.2: An illustration from Kellom Thomlinson's Art of Dancing, London, 1735 by Kellom Tomlinson. Source: Wikimedia

Dancing was very popular in the Baroque period, as it had been in the Middle Ages and Renaissance. We have several dancing text- books from the Baroque period that mapped out the choreography for each dance. Some of the most popular dances included the saraband, gigue, minuet, and bourée. The saraband was a slow dance in triple meter, whereas the gigue (or jig) was a very fast dance with triple subdivisions of the beats. The minuet was also in triple time but danced at a much more stately tempo. The bourrée, on the other hand, was danced at a much faster tempo, and always in duple meter.

When King George I asked Handel to compose music for an evening's diver- sion, the suite was the genre to which Handel turned. This composition was for an event that started at 8pm on Wednesday the seventeenth of July, 1717. King George I and his noble guests would launch a barge ride up the Thames River to Chelsea. After disembarking and spending some time on shore, they re-boarded at 11pm and returned via the river to Whitehall Palace, from whence they came. A contemporary newspaper remarked that the king and his guests occupied one barge while another held about fifty musicians and reported that the king liked the music so much that he asked it to be repeated three times.



Figure 8.2.3:Westminster Bridge from the North on Lord Mayor's Day by Canaletto. Source: Wikimedia Commons

The bourée, as noted above, is fast and in duple time. The minuet is in a triple. Many of the movements that were played for the occasion were written down and eventually published as three suites of music, each in a different key. You have two stylized dance movements from one of these suites here, a bourée and a minuet. We do not know with any certainty in what order these movements were played or even exact- ly who played them on that evening in 1717, but when the music was published in the late eighteenth century, it was set for two trumpets, two horns, two oboes, first violins, second violins, violas, and a basso continuo, which included a bas- soon, cello(s), and harpsichord.

The bourée, as noted above, is fast and in duple time. The minuet is in a triple meter and taken at a more moderate tempo. They use repeated strains or sections of melodies based on repeated motives. As written in the score, as well as interpreted today in the referenced recording, different sections of the orchestra—the strings, woodwinds, and sometimes brass instruments—each get a time to shine, providing diverse timbres and thus musical interest. Both are good examples of binary form.

Composer: Handel

Composition: Bourée from *Water Music*

Date: 1717

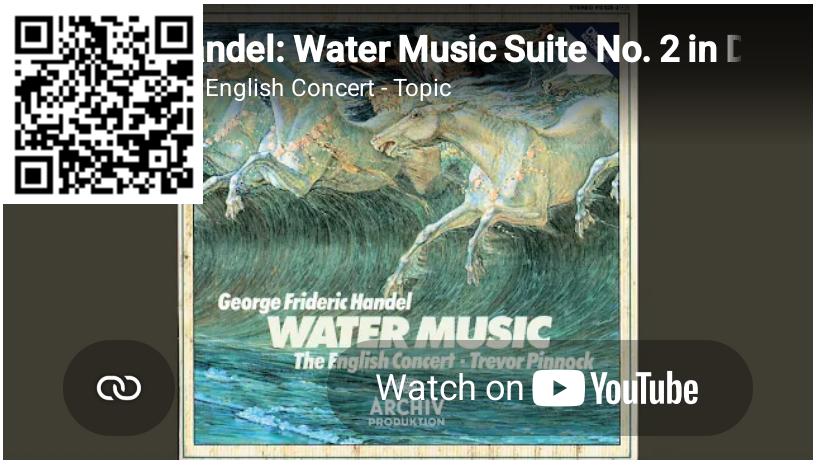
Genre: stylized dance movement from a suite

Form: Binary form, AABB, performed here three times; B is twice as long as A

Other things to listen for:

- The A section is half the length of the B section; each section is repeated
- The brass and woodwind instruments alternate taking the lead in this performance

- The cello, bassoon, and harpsichord make up the basso continuo
- continuo



Composer: Handel

Composition: Minuet from *Water Music*

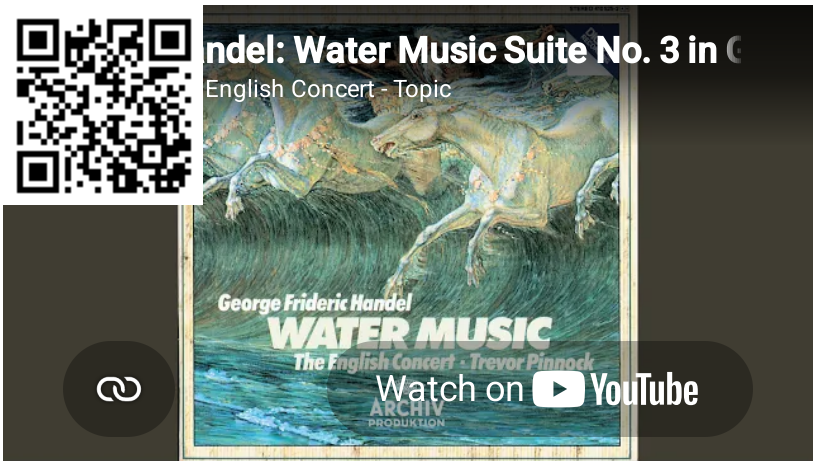
Date: 1717

Genre: stylized dance movement from a suite

Form: Binary form

Other things to listen for:

- gentle, stately mood for this dance
- triple meter
- repetitions of the two main sections
- even though it wasn't meant to be danced, it still conforms to the length of sections necessary to accommodate the proper dance steps



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8.3: Music of Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

During the seventeenth century, many families passed their trades down to the next generation so that future gen- erations may continue to succeed in a vocation. This practice also held true for Johann Sebastian Bach. Bach was born into one of the largest musical families in Eisenach of the central Germany region known as Thuringia. He was orphaned at the young age of ten and raised by an older brother in Ohrdruf, Germany. Bach's older brother was a church organist who pre- pared the young Johann for the family vocation. The Bach family, though great in number, were mostly of the lower musical stature of town's musicians and/or Lutheran Church organist. Only a few of the Bach's had achieved the accomplished stature of court musicians, but the Bach family members were known and respected in the region. Bach also in turn taught four of his sons who later became leading composers for the next generation.



Figure 8.3.1: Portrait of Johann Sebastian Bach by Elias Gottlob Haussmann. Source: Wikimedia

Bach received his first professional position at the age of eighteen in Arnstadt, Germany as a church organist. Bach's first appointment was not a good philosophical match for the young aspiring musician. He felt his musical creativity and growth was being hindered and his innovation and originality unappreciated. The congregation seemed sometimes confused and felt the melody lost in Bach's writings. He met and married his first wife while in Arnstadt, marrying Maria Barbara (possibly his cousin) in 1707. They had seven children together; two of their sons, Wilhelm Friedemann and Carl Phillipp Emmanuel, as noted above, became major composers for the next generation. Bach later was offered and accepted another position in Műhlhausen.

He continued to be offered positions that he accepted and so advanced in his professional position/title up to a court position in Weimer where he served nine years from 1708-1717. This position had a great number of responsibilities. Bach was required to write church music for the ducal church (the church for the duke that hired Bach), to perform as church organist, and to write organ music and sacred choral pieces for choir, in addition to writing sonatas and concertos (instrumental music) for court performance for his duke's events. While at this post, Bach's fame as an organist and the popularity of his organ works grew significantly.

Bach soon wanted to leave for another offered court musician position, and his request to be released was not received well. This difficulty attests to the work relations of court musicians and their employers. Dukes expected and demanded loyalty from their court musician employees. Because musicians were looked up- on somewhat as court property, the duke of the court often felt betrayed when a court musician wanted to leave. Upon hearing of Bach's desire to leave and work for another court for the prince of Cöthen, the Duke at Weimer refused to accept Bach's resignation and threw Bach into jail for almost a month for submitting his dismissal request before relenting and letting Bach go to the Cöthen court.

The Prince at Cöthen was very interested in instrumental music. The Prince was a developing amateur musician who did not appreciate the elaborate church music of Bach's past; instead, the Prince desired instrumental court music, so Bach focused on composing instrumental music. In his five year (1717-1723) tenure at Cöthen, Bach produced an abundance of clavier music, six

concerti grossi honoring the Margrave of Brandenburg, suites, concertos and sonatas. While at Cöthen (1720), Bach's first wife Maria Barbara died. He later married a young singer, Anna Magdalena and they had thirteen children together. Half of these children did not survive infancy. Two of Bach's sons birthed by Anna, Johann Christoph and Johann Christian, also went on to become two of the next generation's foremost composers.

At the age of thirty-eight, Bach assumed the position as cantor of the St. Thom- as Lutheran Church in Leipzig, Germany. Several other candidates were considered for the Leipzig post, including the famous composer Telemann who refused the offer. Some on the town council felt that, since the most qualified candidates did not accept the offer, the less talented applicant would have to be hired. It was in this negative working atmosphere that Leipzig hired its greatest cantor and musician. Bach worked in Leipzig for twenty-seven years (1723-1750).

Leipzig served as a hub of Lutheran church music for Germany. Not only did Bach have to compose and perform, he also had to administer and organize music for all the churches in Leipzig. He was required to teach in choir school in addition to all of his other responsibilities. Bach composed, copied needed parts, directed, rehearsed, and performed a cantata on a near weekly basis. Cantatas are major church choir works that involve soloist, choir, and orchestra. Cantatas have several movements and last for fifteen to thirty minutes. Cantatas are still performed today by church choirs, mostly on special occasions such as Easter, Christmas, and other festive church events.

Bach felt that the rigors of his Leipzig position were too bureaucratic and restrictive due to town and church politics. Neither the town nor the church really ever appreciated Bach. The church and town council refused to pay Bach for all the extra demands/responsibilities of his position and thought basically that they would merely tolerate their irate cantor, even though Bach was the best organist in Germany. Several of Bach's contemporary church musicians felt his music was not according to style and types considered current, a feeling which may have resulted from professional jealousy. One contemporary critic felt Bach was "old fashioned."

Beyond this professional life, Bach had a personal life centered on his large family. He had seven children by his first wife, one by a cousin, and thirteen by his second wife, Anna Magdalena, who was also a singer. He wrote a little home school music curriculum entitled *The Notebook of Anna Magdalena Bach.* At home, the children were taught the fundamentals of music, music copying, performance skills, and other musical content. Bach's children utilized their learned music copying skills in writing the parts from the required weekly cantatas that Sebastian was required to compose. Bach's deep spirituality is evident and felt in the meticulous attention to detail of Bach's scared works, such as his cantatas. Indeed, the spirituality of Bach's Passions and his Mass are unequaled by other composers.

Bach did not travel much, with the exception of being hired as a consultant with construction contracts to install organs in churches. He would be asked to test the organs and to be part of their inauguration ceremony and festivities. The fee for such a service ranged from a cord of wood or possibly to a barrel of wine. In 1747, Bach went on one of these professional expeditions to the Court of Frederick the Great in Potsdam, an expedition that proved most memorable. Bach's son, Carl Philipp Emanuel, served as the accompanist for the monarch of the court who played the flute. Upon Bach's arrival, the monarch showed Bach a new collection of pianos—pianos were beginning to replace harpsichords in homes of society. With Bach's permission, the king presented him with a theme/melody that Bach based one of his incredible themes for the evening's performance. Upon Bach's return to Leipzig, he further developed the king's theme, adding a trio sonata, and entitled it. *The Musical Offering* attesting to his highest respect for the monarch and stating that the King should be revered.

Bach later became blind but continued composing through dictating to his children. He had also already begun to organize his compositions into orderly sets of organ chorale preludes, preludes and fugues for harpsichord, and organ fugues. He started to outline and recapitulate his conclusive thoughts about Baroque music, forms, performance, composition, fugal techniques, and genres. This knowledge and innovation appears in such works as *The Art of Fugue*—a collection of fugues all utilizing the same subject left incomplete due to his death—the thirty-three *Goldberg Variations* for harpsichord, and the *Mass* in B minor.

Bach was an intrinsically motivated composer who composed music for him- self and a small group of student and close friends. This type of composition was a break from the previous norms of composers. Even after his death, Bach's music was ignored nor valued by the musical public. It was, however, appreciated and admired by great composers such as Mozart and Beethoven.

Over the course of his lifetime, Bach produced major works, including *The Well-Tempered Clavier* (forty-eight preludes and fugues in all major and minor keys), three sets of harpsichord suites (six movements in each set), the *Goldberg Variations*, many organ fugues and chorale preludes (chorale preludes are organ solos based upon church hymns—several by Luther), the *Brandenburg Concertos*, and composite works such as *A Musical Offering* and *The Art of Fugue*, an excess of 200 secular and sacred cantatas,

two Passions from the gospels of St. Matthew and St. John, a *Christmas Oratorio*, a *Mass* in B minor, and several chorale/hymn harmonizations, concertos, and other orchestral suites and sonatas.

Instrumental Music of J.S. Bach - Brandenburg Concertos

In the Spring of 1721, Bach was working in Cöthen supporting his family by working as Kapellmeister. In this capacity, Bach would have been in charge of the musical activity of a court. His duties would have included composing music for different occasions, leading performances, and possibly teaching. His employer, Prince Leopold, was a music lover, and Bach and his family were getting along very well in that city. Then two things happened to change Bach's fortunes. One was the death of his first wife, the second was Prince Leopold's marriage to a woman who didn't care for music. Bach slowly began to feel that it was time to move on to greener pastures. After running into the Margrave of Brandenburg by chance (as Bach was shopping for a new harpsichord), Bach decided to try to capitalize on this fortuitous meeting.

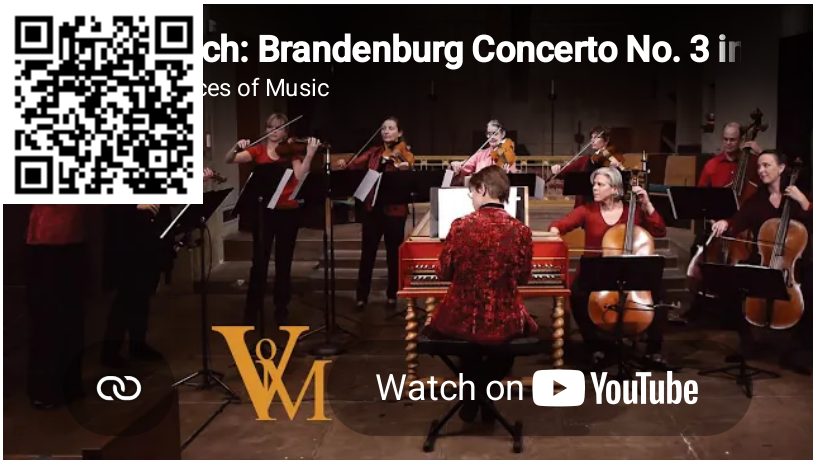
Bach sent a set of six concertos to the Margrave in response to a request (the Margrave had apparently asked for some music), but also, many speculate, as a bid for a new job. Bach didn't write these pieces specifically for this purpose; he almost certainly began these concertos while happily working in Cöthen (the forces he wrote for match perfectly with the musicians he had at his disposal), but he must have realized how impressive they were. He copied the works into a set and sent them off to Brandenburg. Bach's dedication has a bit more bowing and scraping than was probably necessary, but Bach was nothing if not humble. Part of the first sentence reads: "[I beg] Your Highness most humbly not to judge [the concertos'] imperfection with the rigor of that discriminating and sensitive taste, which everyone knows Him to have for musical works, but rather to take into benign Consideration the profound respect and the most humble obedience which I thus attempt to show Him."

Sadly, the Margrave appears to have completely ignored these masterpieces of the High Baroque style; he never had the works performed, and the set collected dust in the Margrave's library until his death in 1734. The pieces were subsequently sold—the concertos apparently went for about $20 (in today's money)—and were found in the Brandenburg archives in the nineteenth century. Regardless of any philosophical reasons for not acknowledging the works, on a practical note, the Margrave didn't have the available forces for the successful execution of the concertos, a fact that often prevents their being performed in a complete set even today (there are at least two solo instruments in every concerto, and the larger ensemble is rounded out by strings and basso continuo—bass instrument plus harpsichord).

I'm including two of the Brandenburg Concertos here, #3 and #5.

Notes about #3

Brandenburg Concerto #3 is in G major and features 3 violins, 3 violas, and 3 cellos, as well as a harpsichord. The outer movements are in ritornello form, and the middle movement--which just appears as two chords in the written score--is interpreted here as a very slow rendering of these chords. In other performances, people might include longer cadenzas (solo passages) as their interpretation of the score. Enjoy the interplay of the instruments here and keep your eye on how the instruments come in and out to create the subtlest shading and contrast. The final movement is a great thing to listen to if you need to feel energized while you're working.



Brandenburg 5 is a concerto grosso, and its 3 soloists are the violin, flute, and harpsichord. This means that the harpsichord is actually doing two jobs here: providing the harmonies for the basso continuo and acting as soloist. There is speculation that Bach

designed this concerto specifically to show off his own skill on the harpsichord. Please notice the absolutely blazing solo section at 6:40. The emotional second movement (staring at 10:12) features only the soloists (the group known as the *concertino* in the concerto grosso), playing an intense trio. The final movement (starting at 15:10) is delightfully lively, with the concertino and the whole ensemble engaging in effervescent counterpoint.



Wrapping it all up

As we have seen, the Baroque period introduced the rise of musical superstar composers such as G. F. Handel and his contemporary, J. S. Bach, who, although he may have not been the most famous musician of his day, since then has become one of the most appreciated composers of Western classical music. The period between roughly 1600 and 1750 also saw the birth of genres such as opera, oratorio, cantata, concerto, and fugue. In many cases these new genres were propelled by a focus on instrumental music written for the increasingly sophisticated instruments such as harpsichords and organs of the keyboard family. The violin family also flourished and formed the basis for a new ensemble: the orchestra.

Genres such as opera, oratorio, and concerto will continue to be important in the Classical Period, as will keyboard music. Orchestral music will become even more important, with the opera overtures and orchestral suites of the Baroque Period giving way to the symphonies of the Classical period.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

9: Listening at Home and at Court

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9.1: Introduction

Introduction

Today, you can enjoy almost any kind of music in the privacy of your home. In fact, it seems likely that every kind of music is heard through headphones and stereo speakers more often than it is heard live. However, it is important to address the contexts for which music is created, and only certain types of music have traditionally been available for home consumption. In this chapter, we will focus on musical genres and works that were created explicitly for performance and enjoyment in domestic environments.

Some songs, like a piece we study in Part 2 of this class--Franz Schubert's "Elf King," for example--was intended for performance at a living room concert before a small audience. The environment for which this song was created determined many of its characteristics. Because he knew the performance space would be small, Schubert wrote for just two performers. (This work was written in 1815, by the way.) Much later, composers following in Schubert's footsteps would provide full orchestral accompaniment for their songs, but Schubert used only a piano. At the same time, Schubert's goals for this song could only be achieved by means of an intimate performance. He sought to communicate an intense drama to a rapt audience. This is not music for a noisy bar or a cavernous hall. Schubert wanted the singer and listener to be physically close and to share an emotional experience.

While we can enjoy public music in private or make private music public (baritone Dietrich Fischer-Diskau's most famous performance of "The Elf King"was broadcast on television), the experience is enriched by remembering how the music was meant to be consumed. Knowing about the original performance environment also helps us to understand why certain musical decisions were made. Such considerations will apply to all of the diverse examples in this chapter.

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9.2: The Beatles, Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band

It might seem odd to start with an album by a famous rock 'n' roll band who once performed in front of 55,000 fans at Shea Stadium in Queens and appeared frequently on national television. No performers of the era were more public. However, this album represented a deliberate and explicit break with the concert model, and it was intended to be heard through headphones by attentive, isolated listeners.

Background

Frequently hailed as the greatest album ever recorded, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* (1967) epitomizes a musical work intended for domestic consumption. In fact, before even recording the album, The Beatles themselves knew that its contents would never be performed publicly. From the outset, according to producer George Martin, Sgt. Pepper's was intended to contain songs that "couldn't be performed live: they were designed to be studio productions." With their previous two albums, *Rubber Soul* (1965) and *Revolver* (1966), The Beatles had matured beyond the rock 'n' roll of their early period. (Chronologically and stylistically, *Revolver* marks the center of the band's career, and discussions of their discography tend to place it near the middle of a transitional period from *Rubber Soul* to *Sgt. Pepper's*.) The Beatles had become a rock band, and *Sgt. Pepper's* represents a continuation and acceleration of their progression away from Beatlemania and the British Invasion era.

By the time *Sgt. Pepper's* was released, The Beatles were well on their way to becoming the most influential band of all time. Along with *Rubber Soul* and *Revolver*, it is remembered as one of the first albums of the album era, a period from the mid-1960s to the mid-2000s during which the album, in various formats (LP, 8-track, cassette, CD), was the dominant medium for recorded music. Increasingly, albums came to be seen as more than just cost-effective vehicles for the distribution of hit-single compilations or collections of random songs. Artists had come to view their albums as extended works of art, in which each song was part of a unified whole, and The Beatles were at the forefront of this trend. With *Rubber Soul*, *Revolver*, and *Sgt. Pepper's*, the band, producer George Martin, and engineer Geoff Emerick succeeded in creating albums that were truly greater than the sum of their parts. (At Martin's request, Emerick was named The Beatles' engineer in April 1966, just before the *Revolver* sessions began.) Each album features songwriting that is more sophisticated and explores a wider variety of styles than its predecessor, and each reveals the band's ever-growing desire to experiment with the latest technological innovations. The impressive production and engineering skills of Martin and Emerick proved invaluable in this latter regard. By approaching the recording studio as another sort of musical instrument, they greatly facilitated The Beatles' attempts to realize their grand musical ideas. Although it took several hundred hours to record (an exorbitant amount of time by 1960s standards), *Sgt. Pepper's* was a huge hit in the Summer of Love, praised not only for bridging the cultural divide between popular music and high art but also for providing a musical representation of its generation and the contemporary counterculture.

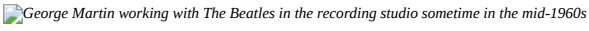

George Martin working with The Beatles in the recording studio sometime in the mid-1960s

Image 8.3: This photo shows George Martin working with The Beatles in the recording studio sometime in the mid-1960s.

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The Beatles began recording *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* on November 24, 1966, in Studio Two at EMI Recording Studios (now Abbey Road Studios), London. Still fresh in their minds were the previous summer's momentous events. On June 24, 1966, two days after completing their seventh album, *Revolver*, The Beatles had begun a tour of West Germany, Japan, the Philippines, and North America. The tour was relatively unsuccessful and plagued by weaker-than-expected ticket sales and run-ins with local authorities and protest groups. It ended with what became the group's final commercial concert, an eleven-song set at Candlestick Park in San Francisco on August 29. By then, each band member had agreed (probably in St. Louis, on August 21) that The Beatles would never again perform publicly. (They did, however, give one last public performance, from the rooftop of the London headquarters of Apple Corps, Ltd., their multimedia corporation, on January 30, 1969.) Many Beatles scholars consider the band's August 1966 decision to stop touring to be the most important one of their career. Within days of their August 31 return to London, they parted ways to begin a three-month break.

On November 19, 1966, five days before the Sgt. Pepper's recording sessions began, Paul McCartney conceived and began developing the idea of an Edwardian era military band, namely, Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band, whose members would be The Beatles' alter egos. The inspiration occurred "suddenly," during his return flight to London from a short safari vacation to Kenya with his then girlfriend Jane Asher and Beatles assistant Mal Evans. In the following, McCartney recounts the episode:

> *I got this idea. I thought, let's not be ourselves. Let's develop alter egos. [Let's] actually take on the personas of this different band. We could say, "How would somebody else sing this? He might approach it a bit more sarcastically, perhaps." . . . It would be a freeing element. I thought we [could] run this philosophy through the whole album: with this alter-ego band, it won't be us making all that sound, it won't be The Beatles, it'll be this other band, so we'll be able to lose our identities in this.*
>
> *[Mal and I] were having our [in-flight] meal, and they had those little packets marked "S" and "P." Mal said, "What's that mean? Oh, salt and pepper." We had a joke about that. So I said, "Sergeant Pepper," just to vary it, "Sergeant Pepper, salt and pepper," an aural pun, not mishearing him but just playing with the words.*
>
> *Then, "Lonely Hearts Club," that's a good one. [At the time, there were a] lot of those about, the equivalent of a dating agency now. I just strung those [words] together rather in the way that you might string together Dr. Hook and the Medicine Show. All that culture of the Sixties going back to those traveling medicine men, Gypsies. It echoed back to the previous century, really. I just fantasized, well, "Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band." That'd be crazy enough, because why would a Lonely Hearts Club have a band? If it had been Sergeant Pepper's British Legion Band, that's more understandable. The idea was to be a little more funky. That's what everybody was doing. That was the fashion. The idea was just [to] take any words that would flow.*

In late November 1966, when The Beatles began work on their eighth studio album, they had yet to choose its title. During the earliest sessions for what became Sgt. Pepper's, the band recorded "Strawberry Fields Forever" and "Penny Lane." When composing these songs, Lennon and McCartney drew inspiration from their memories of Liverpool, the band's hometown in Northwest England. For instance, Lennon, as a child, had played in the garden of Strawberry Field, a Salvation Army children's home (now closed) in Woolton, a Liverpool suburb. And Penny Lane is an actual street in south Liverpool: The song's lyrics vividly describe its associated characters. Also recorded during these early sessions was "When I'm Sixty-Four," a song from The Beatles' formative years and the only one of these three that appears on *Sgt. Pepper's*. Succumbing to management and record-company pressure, the band and producer George Martin agreed to release "Strawberry Fields Forever" and "Penny Lane" as a double A-side single on February 13, 1967. *In his Summer of Love: The Making of Sgt. Pepper*, Martin calls his agreement to leave these two songs off the album "the biggest mistake of my professional life."

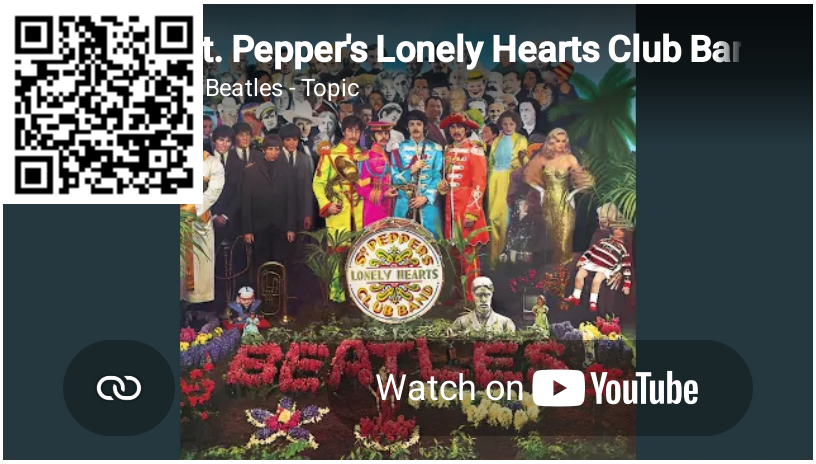
Despite their exclusion from *Sgt. Pepper's*, "Strawberry Fields Forever" and "Penny Lane" were crucial in setting its overarching theme, one involving the band members' childhood experiences in Liverpool. ("Strawberry Fields Forever," as Martin recalls in Summer of Love, "set the agenda for the whole album.") In the first week of February 1967, The Beatles recorded what became the album's title track, "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band," yet another song evoking nostalgia for earlier times. More importantly, it was also the earliest realization of McCartney's alter-ego idea from the previous November 19, and he soon proposed that the entire album should represent a performance by the fictional band.

This qualifies *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* as one of the first examples of a **concept album**—an approach to album design that would become increasingly important over the next few years and that persists into the present day. A concept album, like a song cycle from Romantic-era European vocal music, brings together a unified collection of songs to tell a story or capture an experience. Although *Sgt. Pepper's* does not present a specific narrative, it encourages the listener to imagine that they are present at a live concert—a concert, however, that they soon realize could never take place, due to the diversity of instruments and pervasiveness of studio editing.

"Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band"

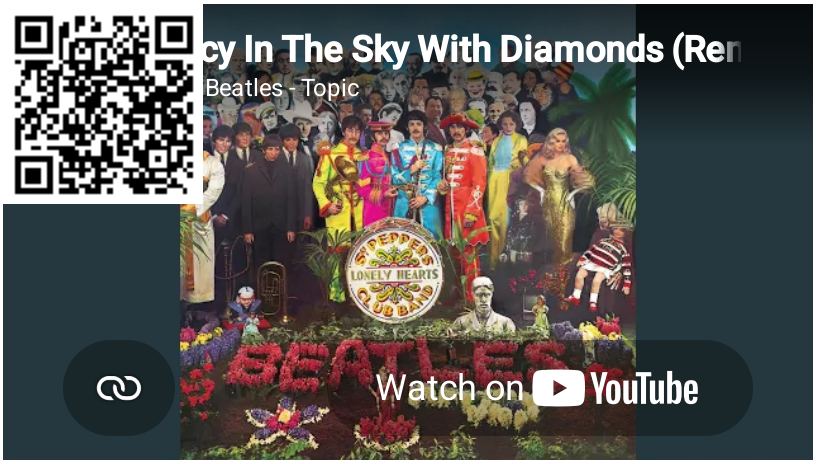
The scene is set by the opening track, "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band," which opens with ambient noises intended to create the illusion that a show is about to begin. Martin combined crowd noises he had recorded at a theatrical performance with the sounds of an orchestra warming up, which he captured in the studio while recording tracks for use in the album's final song. Of

course, the ambient instrumentals aren't quite right: We seem to hear strings at the outset, but they are absent from the song itself, which features typical rock band instruments (electric guitars, electric bass, and drums). Our expectations are soon disrupted, however, when an ensemble of French horns joins the soundscape at the conclusion of the first verse. These are hardly at home in a rock lineup, and it is hard to imagine them being played onstage. The entrance of the horns is greeted by a cheer from the crowd, and crowd sounds punctuate the performance, reminding that listener that they are "present" at a live event. [Forgive the abrupt cut-off of this recording. It should blend seamlessly into the next song.]



McCartney's lyrics—belted in a rock style—also reinforce the setting. He begins by providing a brief history of the band, after which he introduces it by name. Later, with lines like "we hope that you enjoy the show," "it's wonderful to be here," and "you're such a lovely audience," he clearly establishes the premise for the album. To further solidify the idea that we are hearing a live concert, McCartney concludes "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" by transitioning directly into the second song. McCartney introduces a fictional singer, "the one and only Billy Shears" (voiced by Ringo Starr), who then launches into "With A Little Help From My Friends" to the sound of applause.

After "With A Little Help From My Friends", the concert conceit begins to evaporate. We no longer hear the sounds of the crowd, and we are gradually invited to forget the surroundings made real in the opening seconds of the album. While Starr's song is fairly conventional in terms of instrumentation and form, the third song begins the journey that will take the listener far away the concert stage.



By the time they wrote and recorded *Sgt. Pepper's*, The Beatles had experimented with both cannabis and LSD, and the extent to which the band's use of these psychoactive drugs influenced its creation has long been debated. Of all the album's tracks, the third, "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds," is the one most discussed in this regard. Many believe that the first letters of the nouns in the song's title, L, S, and D, are a reference to lysergic acid diethylamide, LSD. Lennon repeatedly denied this, maintaining that the title was derived from that of a pastel drawing by his three-year-old son, Julian, that depicted the boy's nursery-school classmate Lucy O'Donnell. During an episode of The Dick Cavett Show airing on September 21, 1971, Lennon recalled Julian's presentation of the drawing to him, which Starr witnessed:

This is the truth. My son came home with a drawing, and showed me this strange-looking woman flying around. I said, “What is it?” He said, “It’s Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds,” and I thought, “That’s beautiful.” I immediately wrote a song about it.

Whatever the case, the song itself is a masterpiece of psychedelic rock, due in no small part to its imaginative lyrics, with their “marmalade skies,” “cellophane flowers,” “rocking horse people,” and “newspaper taxis.” In writing them, Lennon was directly influenced by the literary style of Lewis Carroll’s novels *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and its sequel, *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There* (1871), especially the latter’s final chapter (chapter 12), “Which Dreamed It?”

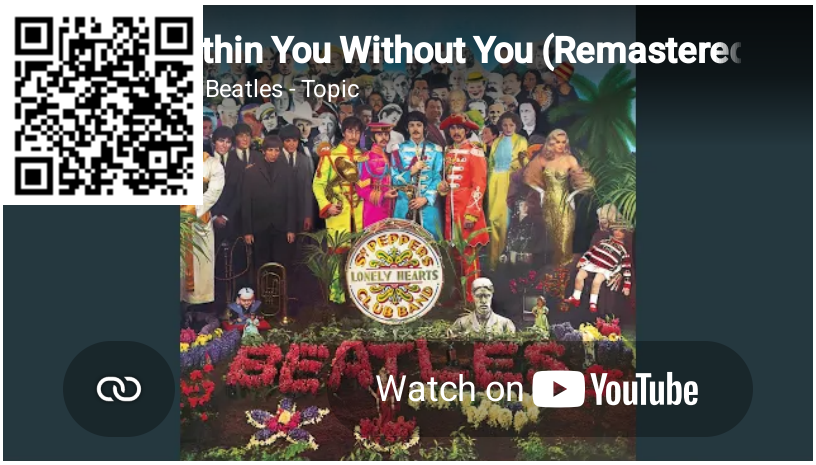
Musically, “Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds” exemplifies The Beatles’ artistic maturation over the period 1965–67. Its three main sections, the verse, the bridge, and the chorus, are in different keys: A major, B-flat major, and G major, respectively. Following a short introduction, this verse–bridge–chorus structure is heard for the first time, and is then repeated. A second repetition begins, but this time, the bridge is absent: verse 3 leads directly to chorus 3, which is then repeated through the fade-out. Moreover, the song employs mixed meter. The introduction, the verse, and the bridge (except its last measure) are in triple meter, while the bridge’s last measure and the chorus are in quadruple meter, also known as common time. The technique of shifting from triple to quadruple meter one measure before the chorus is also used to connect verse 3 to chorus 3. Each meter-change is accompanied by a noticeable tempo shift.

“Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds” also reflects The Beatles’ increasing tendency to utilize sounds and instruments infrequently heard in contemporary rock. The song’s introduction, for instance, features a memorable keyboard part, brilliant in its simplicity, played by McCartney on a Lowrey DSO-1 Heritage Deluxe electronic organ. The ear-catching harpsichord- or celeste-like sound used for this part is (probably) a combination of the organ’s harpsichord, vibraharp, guitar, and musicbox stops. Then, about halfway through the first verse, Harrison enters on the tambura (tanpura), a long-necked, unfretted lute commonly associated with Indian music. Typically, as heard here, the player plucks the instrument’s strings (usually four or five) in a continuously repeating pattern, producing a buzzing, overtone-rich drone. (In Western art music, the repetition of a musical pattern numerous times in succession is called **ostinato**.)

Indian music’s influence is again evident at the start of the first bridge. Here, as author Peter Lavezzoli explains, Harrison “mirrors Lennon’s [lead] vocal with electric guitar, as if he were playing a sarangi behind a khyal singer.” The Beatles’ guitarist is known to have “liked ‘Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds’ a lot.” In discussing his contributions to its arrangement, Harrison highlights the song’s integration of non-Western elements: I particularly liked the sounds on it where I managed to superimpose some Indian instruments onto the Western music. . . . I like the way the drone of the tambura could be fitted in there. There was another thing: during vocals in Indian music, they have an instrument called a sarangi, which sounds like the human voice, and the vocalist and [the] sarangi player are more or less in unison in a performance. For “Lucy,” I thought of trying that idea, but because I’m not a sarangi player, I played it on guitar. . . . I was trying to copy Indian classical music.

“Within You Without You”

We are skipping the rest of side one and jumping into side 2. We must consider, for a moment, the nature of the medium for which *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club* was intended. So far, all of the songs we have encountered appeared on the first side of the LP. “Being for the Benefit of Mr. Kite” closed out that side with its “hallucinogenic carousel ride.” Next, the listener would have to take a brief break from listening in order to turn the record over. What they encountered next would represent the most distant point on their sonic journey. The North Indian instruments heard in “Within You Without You” are not new to the listener, but Harrison goes further in his efforts to absorb and reflect Indian musical influence, such that this song represents The Beatles’ deepest foray into the world of Indian music. The Beatles’ fascination (especially Harrison’s and Lennon’s) with Indian music and philosophy began in 1965. Like “Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds,” the songs “Norwegian Wood (This Bird Has Flown),” from *Rubber Soul*, and “Tomorrow Never Knows,” from *Revolver*, contain obvious examples of Indian musical influence. Written primarily by Lennon, all three are firmly rooted in the Western popular music tradition. Their “Indian” elements, though innovative, are essentially superficial, a sort of sonic flavoring, mainly involving the use of non-Western instruments (e.g., sitar, tambura).



“Within You Without You” features a veritable orchestra of Indian and Western instruments, including three tamburas, two dilrubas (a bowed lute), a sitar, eight violins, three cellos, and tabla (a pair of hand drums). The unusual scales on which the melodies are based reflect Indian influence, as does the fact that the entire song is rooted in a persistent drone. Other Indian-derived elements include the slides we hear between pitches and the use of call and response between solo and grouped instruments. The lyrics convey Lennon’s understanding of Eastern philosophy.

The inclusion, at Harrison’s request, of the images of four Indian gurus on the album’s iconic cover further attests to the culture’s profound impact on the band at this time. The gurus appear there in a collage of several dozen celebrities and historical figures, before which The Beatles stand, posed as the fictional Lonely Hearts Club Band, in their brightly colored Edwardian-era military uniforms.

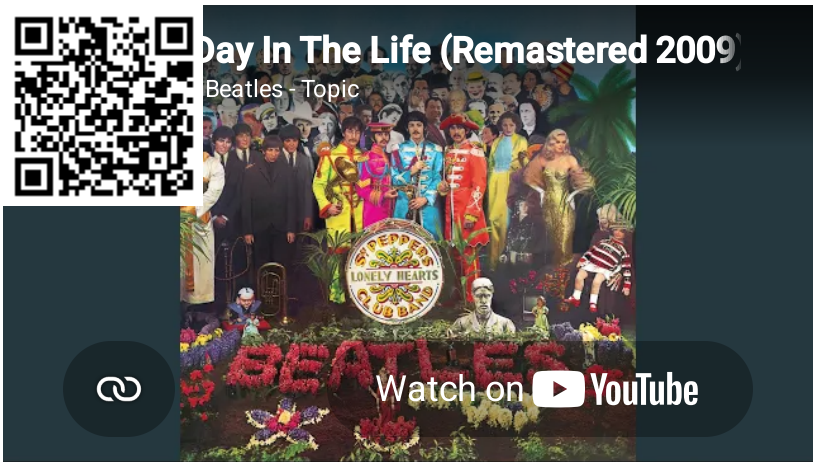
cover of the Sgt. Pepper's album

If you want to know everyone featured on the cover, please check out the Wikipedia article for the coverLinks to an external site. specifically.

“A Day in the Life”

Near the end of the second side, “Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band” returns as a reprise. It seems to the listener that this is the end of the concert—a message reinforced by the lines “we hope you have enjoyed the show” and “we’re sorry, but it’s time to go.” The song sounds a little bit different than it did the first time: it’s faster, shorter, and at a lower pitch level. The crowd sounds are back, however, and cheers at the end suggest that the concert has indeed concluded. Instead, the music transitions directly into a final song—the longest and most complicated song on the entire album. “A Day in the Life”5 begins with the spare texture of guitar and piano, but upon the words “I’d love to turn you on” the listener is gradually overwhelmed by a sound that grows in volume, pitch, and intensity with inevitable force. Although it is hard to identify, what we are actually hearing is forty orchestral musicians each recorded four times, for a total of 160 tracks. (It was during this recording session that Martin captured the ambient “warming up” noises heard at the beginning of the album.)

Following the climax of the crescendo, we are returned to what seems to be a totally different song. It certainly bears little relation to what preceded the orchestral noise. This time, the words “I went into a dream” cue the return of orchestral instruments, which now underpin McCartney’s floating vocals. The next section brings back the opening material, which again spills into a cacophonous orchestral crescendo. This time, however, it is followed up with a piano chord—in fact, a thrice overdubbed recording of three musicians playing three pianos—that slowly fades away over the course of forty-three seconds. The last thing we hear is some incidental studio chatter, which was originally cut into the outer groove so that it would loop indefinitely until the listener lifted the tonearm off of the disc.



Legacy

Few musical works in history have enjoyed the success of *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*. After reaching number one on the UK's "Official Albums Chart" on June 10, 1967, it remained there for twenty-three consecutive weeks. In the U.S., *Sgt. Pepper's* began a fifteen-week run atop the "Billboard 200" album chart on July 1, 1967. Since that time, it has spent hundreds of weeks on both charts. Meanwhile, critical assessments of the album have remained almost universally positive for more than five decades. (To this day, its few negative critics are attacked as heretical pariahs, often publicly shamed by their colleagues.) As author Jonathan Gould explains, the critics' seemingly endless heaping of praise on *Sgt. Pepper's* began immediately after its release:

The overwhelming consensus was that The Beatles had created a popular masterpiece: a rich, sustained, and overflowing work of collaborative genius whose bold ambition and startling originality dramatically enlarged the possibilities and raised the expectations of what the experience of listening to popular music on record could be. On the basis of this perception, *Sgt. Pepper['s]* became the catalyst for an explosion of mass enthusiasm for album-formatted Rock that would revolutionize both the aesthetics and the economics of the record business in ways that far outstripped the earlier Pop explosions triggered by the Elvis phenomenon of 1956 and the Beatlemania phenomenon of 1963.

Sgt. Pepper's has garnered a vast multitude of accolades. At the 10th Annual Grammy Awards ceremony (in February 1968, honoring 1967 releases), for example, it became the first rock album to be named Album of the Year (for The Beatles and producer George Martin). *Sgt. Pepper's* also received three other Grammys that night: Best Contemporary Album (again for The Beatles and producer George Martin), Best Engineered Recording—Non-Classical (for engineer Geoff Emerick), and Best Album Cover, Graphic Arts (for art directors Peter Blake and Jann Haworth). The Library of Congress added the album to the National Recording Registry in 2003, in recognition of its cultural, historic, and aesthetic significance, and in 2012, Rolling Stone ranked *Sgt. Pepper's* number one in its list of the "500 Greatest Albums of All Time." As of today, it has sold more than thirty-two million copies worldwide, making it one of the best-selling albums ever released.

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9.3: Countess of Dia, “I Must Sing”

COUNTESS OF DIA, “I MUST SING”

For most of history, of course, intimate music making has required live performers. As a result, various traditions of song accompanied by one or a few acoustic instruments have arisen in various times and places. We will examine several of these, beginning with the first secular song repertoire ever to be written down: that of the medieval troubadours, who wrote songs in what is now southern France.

Troubadours

In historical terms, troubadours were not professional musicians. They were noblemen and noblewomen who wrote and performed courtly songs for their own entertainment. The term “troubadour” comes from the Provençal language, which was spoken in the Duchy of Aquitaine. It literally means “one who finds,” and was used to describe the work of poets, who were understood not to create their works but to discover them. Troubadours certainly dedicated most of their energy to crafting elaborate verses, but these were always set to music and sung, not recited.

Although troubadours wrote in dozens of distinct genres, they were primarily preoccupied with romantic concerns. The most significant genre of troubadour song was the **canso**, which expressed the courtly sentiment of fin’amors (“refined love”). Typically speaking, fin’amors was the passion that a knight felt for the lady he served. This passion was romantic and all-consuming, but it could never be satisfied, for the knight was pledged to serve his master and mistress—an obligation that precluded the possibility of intruding upon their marriage. Instead, the knight would suffer in song, lamenting the impossibility of winning the woman he desired but finding solace in dedicating his life to her service.

This ideal of unrequited passion was at the center of Aquitainian courtly life, as we see when we examine the biographies, or **vidas**, of the troubadours. These short narratives, which were only loosely grounded in historical truth, include few details about the troubadour’s work or life. Instead, they focus entirely on the noble personages whom the troubadour loved and on behalf of whom the troubadour suffered. Take, for example, the vida of Bernart of Ventadorn, the most famous of all the troubadours. His rather long vida is dedicated entirely to his romantic life. It tells us how he first loved the wife of the Viscount of Ventadorn, about whom he wrote all of his songs. Upon the discovery of his passion, however, Bernart was dismissed and joined the court of the Duchess of Normandy—with whom he fell in love, of course, and about whom he wrote many more songs. Upon her departure for England, Bernart reportedly entered an order of monks and died of a broken heart.

Although troubadours are best remembered for their celebrations of idealized romantic suffering, they also sang about more earthly love affairs. The **alba** was a song about lovers interrupted by the dawn (and the return of the woman’s husband), while the **serena** concerned a lover impatiently awaiting his partner’s arrival in the evening. In a **pastorela**, a knight suggested to a peasant girl that they make love; sometimes she acceded, sometimes she did not. In sum, the repertoire makes it clear that troubadours didn’t spend all of their time yearning for unobtainable aristocrats.

The troubadours were active throughout the 12th century, while the Duchy of Aquitaine flourished. During this period, their tradition was primarily oral. They wrote songs in their heads and performed them from memory, and those songs were then carried from place to place by minstrels who learned them by ear. In the early 13th century, however, an effort was made to preserve the songs of the troubadours. This is when the vidas were recorded. In addition, hundreds of poems and a smaller number of melodies were collected in richly-embellished manuscripts.

However, the need to preserve a fading tradition is not the only reason that the songs of the troubadours became the first secular music ever to be recorded. The troubadours and their supporters were also in the unique position of having access to the wealth and education necessary to write music down. In the medieval era, books were difficult and expensive to produce and were therefore enormously valuable. The pages were usually **velum** (dried sheep skin), and few people had the skills necessary to read or write. Music literacy in particular was largely restricted to clerics. While the troubadour repertoire is prized, we must remember that it offers only a glimpse into the rich traditions of song and dance music that flourished in medieval oral culture. Although the songs of the troubadours were indeed preserved, we still have only shadowy ideas about what this music sounded like. This is because only the melodies were recorded, using a primitive form of notation that did not indicate rhythmic values. The extant manuscripts seem to suggest, therefore, that troubadours sang without accompaniment, but we know from illustrations that this was not the case. Manuscript illuminations depict troubadours and minstrels playing a variety of instruments, including the lute, citole, vielle, rebec, psaltery, harp, shawm, and bagpipes. It is clear that these instruments were used to accompany both dancing and singing. Today,

therefore, performers use their imaginations when they approach the troubadour repertoire, creating appropriate accompaniments based on what we know about the instruments, styles, and practices of the time.

Mystery surrounds not only the songs but their creators. Most of the troubadours are known only by their brief vidas, which are highly unreliable. This is certainly the case of the Countess of Dia, who authored the canso that we will examine. Her vida reads as follows: “The Countess of Dia was the wife of Lord Guillem of Peitieu, a beautiful and good lady. And she fell in love with Lord Raimbaut of Orange and composed many good songs about him.” This vida certainly tells us all that the author felt we needed to know: The Countess was beautiful and good (attributes commonly assigned to noblewomen), she loved a man who was not her husband, and she wrote songs about him. Unfortunately, scholars have been unable to identify the Countess, although competing theories thrive.

“I Must Sing”

The Countess of Dia’s “I Must Sing” is the only song by a **trobairitz** (the female counterpart to a troubadour) to survive with music. However, it is clear that trobairitz thrived in the courts of Aquitaine, where men and women enjoyed relative equality. Although trobairitz were highly regarded for their poetic skill, they were discouraged from performing their songs in public—an activity considered unseemly for a woman. Instead, male performers would learn and share their music.

Trobairitz also had to be a bit more circumspect regarding their declarations of courtly love. While troubadours could be fairly explicit, trobairitz sang in more general terms about the suffering that unrequited love caused them to endure. “I Must Sing” follows the standard form for a canso. It is in five complete stanzas, the first of which clearly states the lover’s complaint. A partial sixth stanza bids the listener farewell via an imagined messenger and offers a closing moral (“many people suffer for having too much pride”). In the intervening stanzas, the speaker reminds her errant lover of her many fine qualities and washes her hands of any blame for the separation:

I must sing of what I do not want,

I am so angry with the one whom I love,

Because I love him more than anything:

Mercy nor courtesy moves him,

Neither does my beauty, nor my worthiness,

nor my good sense,

For I am deceived and betrayed

As much as I should be, if I were ugly.

I take comfort because I never did anything wrong,

Friend, towards you in anything,

Rather I love you more than Seguin did Valensa,

And I am greatly pleased that I conquered you in love,

My friend, because you are the most worthy;

You are arrogant to me in words and appearance,

And yet you are so friendly towards everyone else.

I wonder at how you have become so proud,

Friend, towards me, and I have reason to lament;

It is not right that another love take you away from me

No matter what is said or granted to you.

And remember how it was at the beginning

Of our love! May Lord God never wish

That it was my fault for our separation.

The great prowess that dwells in you

And your noble worth retain me,

For I do not know of any woman, far or near,

Who, if she wants to love, would not incline to you;

But you, friend, have such understanding

That you can tell the best,

And I remind you of our sharing.

My worth and my nobility should help me,

My beauty and my fine heart;

Therefore, I send this song down to you

So that it would be my messenger.

I want to know, my fair and noble friend,

Why you are so cruel and savage to me;

I don't know if it is arrogance or ill will.

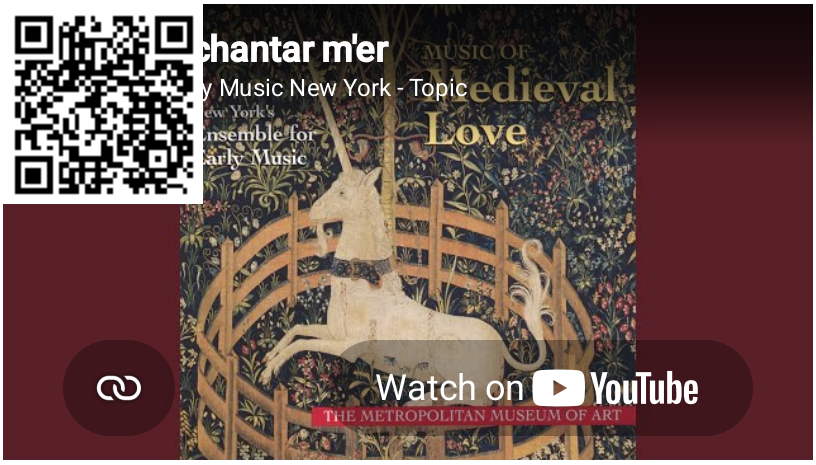
But I especially want you, messenger, to tell him

That many people suffer for having too much pride.

Translated by Craig E. Bertolet. Used with permission.

As was always the case among troubadours, the Countess of Dia set her poem as a strophic song, meaning that each stanza is sung to the same melody. Although this means that there can be no direct correlation between text and music (since the music repeats), her melody is nonetheless expressive. She uses a standard troubadour form known as bar form, which follows an A A B pattern. The A section starts in the medium range and then descends—perhaps emblematic of the singer's sorrow. The B section ascends to the song's highest note by means of a series of leaps, creating a climactic moment before returning to the low range. The song is in the Dorian mode, which is very similar to the minor mode; only a single pitch in "I Must Sing" does not come from the minor scale.

In order to demonstrate the variety that characterizes modern performances of troubadour songs, we will consider two recordings of "I Must Sing." The first is very simple. The female singer begins without accompaniment, but she is joined by a harp in the second A phrase of the first verse. The harp continues to play for the remainder of the performance. It provides simple harmonies, alternating between two chords derived from the pitches on which the phrases of the melody end. The singer chooses her rhythms based on the meaning of the text and sound of the words, while the harp follows her phrasing. This rendition could easily be performed by a single musician accompanying her own singing—just as we know these songs were often performed in the troubadour era.



The second recording is more complex. First, we hear fragments of the melody played on a variety of stringed instruments, including lute, harp, and bass viol. When the singer enters, she interprets the melody with rhythmic freedom while the instruments add flourishes. In between verses, instrumental interludes feature a percussive pulse and the sounds of the ney flute and kanun zither, which perform a metered version of Dia's melody. Both the ney and the kanun—along with several other instruments heard on this recording—will be discussed in the next section, which addresses court music of the Ottoman Empire. The music director who created this recording, Jordi Savall, is renowned for his recreations of medieval European song using the instruments and performance techniques associated with Middle Eastern music of the same era. It is likely that the two musical traditions had many common elements in the 12th century. While troubadour practices were eradicated, however, those of Middle Eastern courts have persisted into the present.



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9.4: Tanburi Cemil Bey, “Samâi Shad Araban”

TANBURI CEMIL BEY, “SAMÂI SHAD ARABAN”

Where there are powerful rulers, there is music. We might select examples of court music from any of the great empires of history, for all have used music to advertise power, signify elite status, invest ceremonies with dignity, ornament daily life, and entertain guests. Many relevant instances are discussed elsewhere in this book: Claudio Monteverdi’s Orpheus (Chapter 4), for example, was designed for the Gonzaga court at Mantua, while the jali of West Africa (Chapter 5) were principally occupied with serving the Mandinkan aristocracy. Here, however, in keeping with the focus of this chapter on unstaged chamber music intended for small spaces and private audiences, we will consider a tradition that developed in the courts of the Ottoman Empire. This example will also help us to understand how troubadour songs (discussed in the previous section) are interpreted by performers today, for they often incorporate the instruments, textures, and ornamentation of Middle Eastern court music. Finally, this example will provide a point of reference for evaluating Pyotr Illyich Tchaikovsky’s exoticized “Arabian” music in *The Nutcracker* (Chapter 4).

Music in the Ottoman Empire

The Ottoman Empire was founded in 1299 by the Turkish tribal leader Osman I. In 1453, the Ottomans captured the Christian city of Constantinople, which had until that point been the capital of the Byzantine Empire. Renamed Istanbul, that city became the capital of the Ottoman Empire: a centralized seat from which the sultan (Arabic for “supreme authority”) could expand his reach. The Ottoman Empire achieved the height of its power in the late 16th century, at which point it extended from Central Europe across North Africa and well into the Middle East. The 19th century, however, saw the Empire’s gradual decline as it ceded power and territory to its neighbors. Following the Great War (later renamed World War I), the Empire was formally dissolved and ultimately replaced by the Republic of Turkey in 1923.

For several centuries, however, the Ottoman Empire mediated between European powers and the Far East. The Western border of the Empire came very near Vienna, which was a major European political and cultural center in the 18th and 19th centuries. As a result, Ottoman music had a significant impact in Europe. The Ottoman military band tradition, in particular, can be identified as the precursor to Western marching bands, while composers like Mozart and Beethoven frequently referenced Ottoman instruments and styles in their music.

The Ottoman Empire certainly cultivated rich musical traditions. Here, we will examine the most elite of those traditions: **makam music**, which was performed for (and sometimes even created by) the sultan and members of his court. As inmost great empires, the Ottoman rulers sought to manage cultural diversity, not eradicate it. As the Empire absorbed citizens from three continents, it simultaneously assimilated their cultural traditions. Ottoman musical practices, therefore, reflected Byzantine, Armenian, Arabic, Persian, and even European influence.

The term ***makam*** is itself derived from the Arabic maqam, which describes a system of musical **modes**. In European music, modes are scales, the most prominent of which in use today are major and minor. A *makam*, however, is more than just a scale. To begin with, there are many more *makams* than there are European modes—between 60 and 120. They are difficult to count because *makams* are always coming and going. An individual *makam* might fall out of use, or a new one might be developed.

The number of *makams* is so high because each contains a great deal of information about how music associated with it is expected to sound. A *makam* determines not only pitches but characteristic melodic motifs, ascending and descending melodic patterns, phrase endings, and the specific tuning of individual notes. This last element can be particularly striking, for the Turkish system divides each whole step into nine possible microtones (the European system divides it into only two). A note that is meant to be just slightly flat or slightly sharp, therefore, will sound out of tune to a Western ear, even though the performer has in fact placed it with perfect precision.

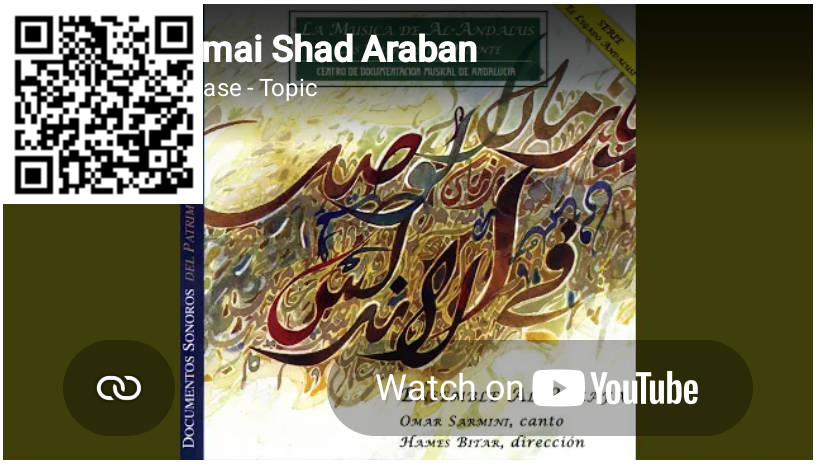
Makam music is performed using instruments that can be found across the Mediterranean region. These include the *oud* (a type of lute), the *kanun* (a plucked zither), the *ney* (an end-blown reed flute), and the *rebab* and *kemençe* (both bowed fiddles), although these last instruments have been almost completely replaced by the violin. Percussion instruments are also important, for they mark the rhythmic cycle, known as the *usul*. These instruments include the pair of pot-shaped *kudüm* drums, the *bendir* (a circular frame drum), and the *def*, which is related to the tambourine. In the performance of *makam* music, only one of each instrument is typically present, and their unique timbres are easy to discern in the texture.

Ottoman musicians organized their court performances into suites of individual pieces. Such a suite is known as a *fasıl*, and it might contain six or eight pieces, all in the same *makam*, totalling about thirty minutes of music. A traditional *fasıl* is full of

variety: It contains different types of songs and several vocal and instrumental improvisations.Although most of the pieces feature a singer, the *fasıl* starts and ends with lengthy selections for the instrumental ensemble. The introductory *peşrev* is slow and stately, while the concluding *saz semâisi* contains passages in a lively dance tempo.

Samâi Shad Araban

We will consider a famous *saz semaisi* composed by Tanburi Cemil Bey (1843-1916). Cemil Bey was famous for his virtuosity as a performer. Although he began his training on the violin and kanun, he soon gained renown for his skill on the *tanbur*—a long-necked lute that developed in the Ottoman Empire—and kemençe. Cemil Bey lived late enough that he was able to leave behind recordings, made on 78 rpm discs. These attest to his ability and continue to influence performers today, who still employ techniques that he developed and popularized. In addition to revolutionizing performance techniques, Cemil Bey left behind a large numbeof compositions, many of which are among the most frequently performed in the Turkish classical tradition. Although Cemil Bey did not personally serve in the court of the sultan (the Ottoman Empire, after all, was well into its decline during his lifetime), he worked in the forms that had been developed for court entertainment. His "Samâi Shad Araban," therefore, has the typical characteristics of a *saz semâisi*, and by examining it we will be able to understand how this type of composition has functioned for hundreds of years. We will also have an opportunity to hear the typical Turkish instruments and consider how they are used in performance.



To begin with, we must consider the nature of composition in the Ottoman tradition. Like medieval Europeans (consider, for example, the Countess of Dia), Ottoman performers learned, composed, and taught music without the aid of notation. Although Ottoman music was notated as early as the 17th century, the purpose of notation has always been primarily to record compositions for future reference, and it is seldom used for teaching or performance. Even today, Turkish classical musicians rely on aural and oral processes—that is, listening, imitating, and correcting—to acquire techniques and repertoire.

A typical characteristic of music in oral traditions is variation. When a performer learns a tune by ear, they are likely to introduce minor alterations by accident. However, in the Ottoman tradition, variation is not only accepted but encouraged. The composer expects individual performers to interpret the melody in a way that reflects the characteristics of their instrument, their training, and their own personal preference. As a result, while a performance of "Samâi Shad Araban" is always recognizable, no two musicians will play exactly the same notes.

Another type of variation emerges due to the norms of Ottoman performance practice. A piece of music such as Clara Schumann's Piano Trio in G minor, discussed at the end of this chapter, is intended for a specific assortment of instruments: one piano, one violin, and one cello. Schumann also used notation to indicate exactly what each performer is supposed to do. Compositions in the Ottoman tradition, however, can be realized using any permutation of the classical ensemble. "Samâi Shad Araban," therefore, can be performed as a solo or by an ensemble. A typical performance will feature about six performers, with only one playing each of the instruments described above. However, a rendition by a smaller or larger ensemble is perfectly viable.

This flexibility is a characteristic of the **heterophonic** texture of Ottoman classical music, in which all pitched instruments play essentially the same melody. "Samâi Shad Araban," for example, can be **transcribed** (written down using staff notation) as a single melodic line. However, no two instruments play exactly the same pitches. Sometimes the variations have to do with the technical limitationsof the instrument: a *rebab* player, for example, can slide between pitches, while a kanun player cannot. Other variations

have to do with training or personal preference, as described above. The result is a complex musical texture in which the listener can easily perceive a core melody, even as the performers constantly alter that melody with diverse shadings and ornaments.

We will hear all of this in our recording of “Samâi Shad Araban.” First, however, we must consider the typical characteristics of a *saz semâisi*. In terms of form, a *saz semâisi* always features a repeated melodic refrain (known as a teslim) that follows upon a series of disparate melodic passages (each of which is termed a hane, or “house”). The form of “Samâi Shad Araban” can be summarized as A T B T C T D T, in which T (for *teslim*) is the refrain.

While each of the *hane* are melodically distinct, the D *hane* is markedly different from the others. To begin with, it contains a great deal of internal repetition— each of the first three melodic phrases is repeated at least once. Most striking, however, is that it is in a different meter. While the predominant *usul* (meter) of a *saz semâisi* consists of a cycle of ten beats in a moderate tempo, the *usul* of the D *hane* has six beats and is performed at a significantly faster tempo. As a result,the penultimate passage of “Samâi Shad Araban” is more energetic and exciting than those that preceded it. This makes the *saz semâisi* a good piece of music with which to conclude a suite, for it always comes to a rollicking finish.

The melodic instruments in our recording are the violin, *ney*, *oud*, and *kanun*. Because the timbre of each is so different, it is fairly easy to pick the various instruments out of the texture. In addition, each adds unique, **improvised** ornaments. The *kanun* player periodically contributes melodic flourishes and rhythmic elements that are not played by the other instruments, while the violin player emphasizes their ability to slide between pitches. The *oud* is foregrounded near the end of the performance, when it renders a solo version of the *teslim* before we hear it one last time from the entire ensemble.

The percussion accompaniment to “Samâi Shad Araban”—and, indeed, to any *saz semâisi*—is not specified by the composer. Instead, the performers use their knowledge of the *usul* and the melody to improvise an accompaniment that demarcates the rhythmic cycle while also reflecting the character of the melodic phrases. In this recording, we can clearly hear the jingling sounds of the *def* above the regular beats of the various drums.

Finally, a word about mode. The *makam* of “Samâi Shad Araban” is indicated by its title, which tells us the type of piece that this is —a *saz semâisi*—and its mode, Shad Araban. (This is similar to the European convention of naming a piece of music something like Symphony in E Minor.) The pitches of Shad Araban are not particularly similar to those of the major or minor scale. This *makam* features two intervals of an augmented second: a large interval that is not present in any European scale. It also contains a large number of half steps, the smallest European interval. As a result, melodies in Shad Araban move by intervals that seem alternately cramped and spacious.

If you'd like to hear the pitches of Shad Araban, please watch this video on YouTube.

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9.5: John Dowland, “Flow, My Tears”

JOHN DOWLAND, “FLOW, MY TEARS”

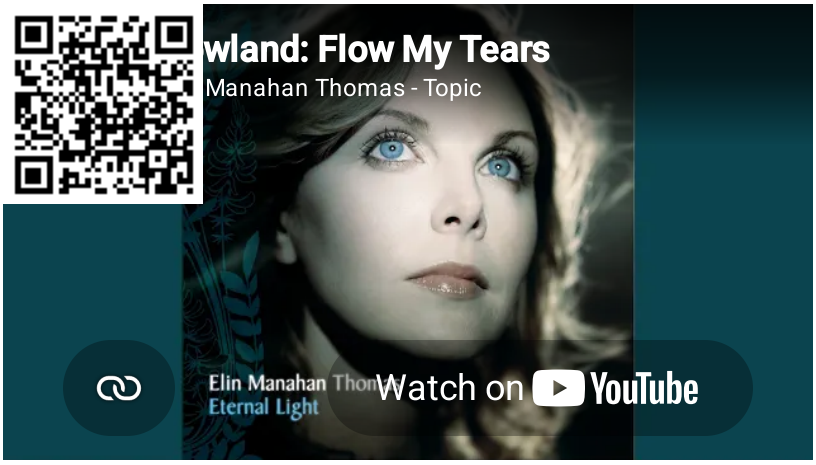
John Dowland (1563-1626) was indisputably one of the finest lute players of his day. Although he was best known for his skill as a performer, he also wrote a great deal of music, both for his own instrument and for viol consort (an ensemble of string instruments that predated the modern violin family). He gained a reputation for writing exceptionally sad songs that celebrated melancholy.

Dowland’s Career

Despite his widely-recognized skill, Dowland was repeatedly frustrated in his attempts to secure a position at the court of Queen Elizabeth I. This might have been due to the fact that he had converted to Catholicism, although Elizabeth, who was tolerant of religious diversity, employed other Catholic musicians. Whatever the case, he spent decades working on the European continent while continuing to publish his music in England. In 1594 he accepted a position at the court of the Duke of Brunswick-Lüneburg. Then, in 1598, he became lutenist at the court of Christian IV, King of Denmark, where he was held in high esteem and paid an astronomical sum.

Dowland returned to England in 1606, but it was not until 1612 that he was finally able to secure a position at the English court. By this time, he not only had an international reputation but had published a wealth of compositions. Writing music served Dowland’s interests in several ways. By producing new music for his own instrument, the lute, Dowland increased his value as a court employee. By publishing music for the lute and other instruments, he created an additional source of income and strengthened his reputation. Finally, by dedicating his publications to wealthy aristocrats, he won their professional and financial support.

“Flow, My Tears” The lute song “Flow, My Tears”9 provides an excellent example of Dowland’s professional savvy. The composition began life as a pavan10 for solo lute entitled “Lachrimae” (a Latin term meaning “tears”). A pavan is a type of slow, stately court dance that was popular in Europe at the time. Although Dowland’s music was not intended to accompany dancing, he was often influenced by the characters and styles of dance music. When “Lachrimae” became Dowland’s most popular work, he took the opportunity to capitalize on his success by transforming it into a song.



This is the song it was adapted from:



“Flow, My Tears” was first published in Dowland’s 1600 collection The Second Booke of Songs or Ayres (an “ayre” is a solo song with lute accompaniment). Dowland had previously developed a novel approach to typesetting his lute songs, many of which had more than one vocal part. Before Dowland, it was common practice to publish each vocal and instrumental part to a piece of music in a separate book, known as a “part book.” Each performer therefore needed to possess the correct book, and could only see their own part. Dowland began printing all of the parts in a single book, which could be laid out on a table before the performers. In this way they could all read from the same page.

This tells us something important about how Dowland’s music was used: He was writing for groups of friends or family members, who would perform his music gathered around a table in the home. Although today you are more likely to hear Dowland performed by professionals in a concert setting, that was never what he had in mind. He was producing music for the domestic entertainment market— music to fill the long evening hours when there was little else to do.

The layout of “Flow, My Tears” can help us to visualize a home performance, even if one cannot read the music. The lute and primary vocal part are paired together, since they might be performed by the same person. The lute part, as was typical of the era, is printed using tablature instead of staff notation. Lute tablature, much like guitar tab today, indicates where the fingers of the left hand go on each string of the instrument. It also includes rhythms. The extra vocal part is printed on the second page, and it faces in a different direction. This was for convenience: The additional singer would sit to the right of the lutenist, along the adjoining edge of the table.


sheet music for Flow My Tears in a format that facilitated home use.

Image 8.21: As you can see, the additional vocal part in the original edition of Dowland’s ayre faces a different direction than the lute and principal vocal parts. This facilitates an in-home performance for which the optional extra singer sits on the adjacent edge of a table. Source: First Edition Scanned Image Attribution: John Dowland License: Public Domain

“Flow, My Tears” is a prime example of Dowland’s work in terms of affect, form, and style. To begin with, the text is characteristically gloomy:

Flow, my tears, fall from your springs!

Exiled for ever, let me mourn;

Where night’s black bird her sad infamy sings,

There let me live forlorn.

Down vain lights, shine you no more!

No nights are dark enough for those

That in despair their lost fortunes deplore.

Light doth but shame disclose.

Never may my woes be relieved,

Since pity is fled;

And tears and sighs and groans my weary days

Of all joys have deprived.

From the highest spire of contentment

My fortune is thrown;

And fear and grief and pain for my deserts

Are my hopes, since hope is gone.

Hark! you shadows that in darkness dwell,

Learn to condemn light

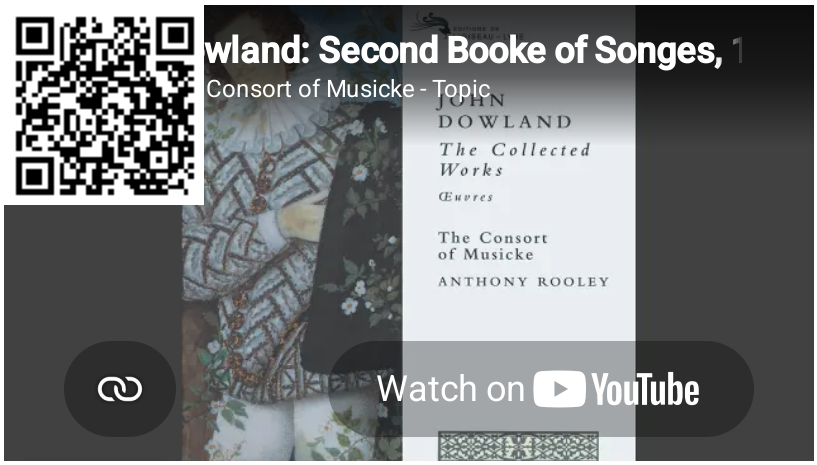
Happy, happy they that in hell

Feel not the world's despite.

Dowland—who wrote his own words—expresses the most profound hopelessness. The final stanza, in which he argues that even those who are in hell should be glad they are not in his position, takes this sentiment to the extreme. We do not, however, need to take this text too seriously. Melancholy was in fashion at the time. When people sang "Flow, My Tears," they indulged in emotional role-playing that probably had a cathartic effect.

Dowland's ayre is in three parts. The first two stanzas are sung to the same music, while the next two are sung to a new tune. The final stanza has its own music, which provides a satisfying conclusion. The resulting form, therefore, is A A B B C. Although the song can be performed by a solo singer with lute accompaniment, Dowland also provided an additional vocal part in the bass range, which would allow another performer to join in.11 The vocal and instrumental parts are highly independent: Each is equally difficult and has its own rhythms and melodies.

In this rendition, we hear Dowland's song with both the primary soprano melody and the optional bass melody:



The music, which is in the minor mode, is highly expressive. The opening melody descends, providing a musical portrayal of falling tears. In the B section, Dowland sets his list of sorrowful expressions (in the third stanza: "and tears, and sighs, and groans") to a melody that ascends by leap, accompanied by echoes from the lute. This technique communicates the passion and suffering behind these complaints. The highest pitch of the melody arrives in the C section with the word "happy"—but Dowland's descending melody indicates that he does not feel happiness himself.

In 1604, Dowland capitalized on the success of "Lachrimae" and "Flow, My Tears" yet again by publishing a further version of the work for viol consort. It appeared in a volume dedicated to Anne, the new Queen of England—an effort by Dowland to secure that elusive court position. This time, the composition became the first of a set of pavans entitled Lachrimae, or Seven Tears, all of which begin with the descending "tears" motif that we heard in the lute solo and song. The first pavan in the collection, "Lachrimae Antiquae" ("Ancient Tears"),12 is essentially identical to "Lachrimae" and "Flow, My Tears." The additional six pavans explore different musical possibilities that are introduced by the "tears" motif. All are profoundly mournful in character. As if feeling the need to cement his reputation for melancholy, Dowland followed the set of Lachrimae pavans with a composition entitled Semper Dowland semper Dolens: Latin for "Always Dowland always mournful."

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9.6: Barbara Strozzi, My Tears

BARBARA STROZZI, MY TEARS

Barbara Strozzi (1619-1677), like Dowland, was a gifted performer who wrote music for her own use. Also like Dowland, she favored sorrowful laments that showcased her gifts, as a performer and composer, for extravagant emotional expression. Most of her vocal works concerned suffering caused by unrequited love. Strozzi's unique social position, however, meant that her artistic motivations were quite unlike Dowland's, while her geographic and temporal distance from him—Strozzi lived in Venice, and her career began shortly after Dowland's death— meant that her style was significantly different.

Strozzi's Career Strozzi was the adopted daughter of the renowned poet and cultural luminary Giulio Strozzi. Her mother was a servant in Giulio's household. Although Strozzi's birth certificate indicates that her father was unknown, it was almost certainly Giulio himself. This sort of arrangement was not unusual in 17th-century Venice. Giulio himself was the illegitimate son of an illegitimate son, while Strozzi would in turn have four children out of wedlock. Whatever the case, Giulio took an active interest in his daughter's career as a singer and composer, writing texts for her to sing and facilitating her private performances before the city's artistic elite.


portrait of Barbara Strozzi

Image 8.22: This portrait by Bernardo Strozzi is entitled Female Musician with Viola da Gamba, but is believed to be of Barbara Strozzi.

Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: Bernardo Strozzi License: Public Domain

In 1637, Giulio established a formal academy dedicated to music over which his daughter presided. Academies were an important facet of intellectual life in Venice and other Italian-speaking cities of the era. They were not formal schools but, rather, gatherings of educated citizens who came together for discussion and debate. Giulio's named his association the Accademia degli Unisoni. This translates to "Academy of the Like-Minded," but also incorporates a music-themed pun on the word "unisoni," which can mean "unison" in the sense of multiple voices singing the same notes. At the academy meetings, Barbara Strozzi suggested topics for debate, judged the forensic skill of participants, awarded prizes, and performed as a singer (probably accompanying herself on the lute).

Although Strozzi embarked on a singing career just as opera was becoming big business in Venice, she never appeared on the opera stage. This is important. Although opera offered roles for women, taking to the stage meant social exclusion. A woman who performed in public was assumed to be a prostitute—and indeed, Strozzi herself faced such accusations as her fame grew. By confining her activities to the private sphere, she retained greater social capital. Her decision to perform only in domestic settings also influenced Strozzi's work as a composer, which focused on the chamber genres of aria (a strophic song) and cantata (an extended semi-dramatic work for soloist with accompaniment).

While it was typical for 17th-century Italian singers to write their own music, Strozzi pursued the task with unusual resolve. In fact, she published more solo vocal music than any other Venetian composer of her era. In total, she completed and published an astonishing eight single-author volumes of vocal music. Most of this was secular music with Italian texts (some of which she might have written herself), although she also produced one collection of sacred works with Latin texts. Her volumes, which were published between 1644 and 1664, were highly regarded and widely consumed, and many of her most successful compositions were included in collections alongside the work of other great composers. While Strozzi performed before small groups of connoisseurs in a domestic setting, therefore, her music was also available for others to perform at home for their own entertainment, or for gatherings of family and friends.



My Tears (Italian: Lagrime mie) appeared in Strozzi's seventh volume of music, which was published in 1659 and bore the title *The Pleasures of Euterpe* (in the mythology of ancient Greece, Euterpe was the Muse of Music).

the title page of Strozzi’s collection The Pleasures of EuterpeImage 8.24: Here we see the title page of Strozzi's collection *The Pleasures of Euterpe*.

The largest type sets the name of the dedicatee, from whom Strozzi might have expected payment in gratitude.

Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: Barbara Strozzi License: Public Domain

Pietro Dolfino's text is a lament for a beloved—Lidia—who has been imprisoned by her disapproving father:

My tears, why do you hold back?

Why do you not let burst forth the fierce pain

that takes my breath and oppresses my heart?

Lidia, whom I so much adore,

Because she looked on me with a pitiable glance

is imprisoned by her strict father.

Between two walls

the beautiful innocent one is confined,

where the sun's ray can't reach her;

and what grieves me most,

and adds torment and pain to my agony,

is that my beloved

suffers on my account.

And you, sorrowful eyes, you don't cry?

My tears, why do you hold back?

Alas, I yearn for Lidia,

my idol whom I so much adore;

she's captured in hard marble,

she for whom I sigh and yet do not die.

Because I welcome death,

now that I'm deprived of hope;

Ah, take away my life,

I pray to you, my bitter pain.

But well I realize that to torment me

even more

Fate denies me even death.

Since it's true, oh God, that vicious Destiny

thirsts only for my wailing,

My tears, why do you hold back?

Translation by Jennifer Gliere. Used with permission.

Like many secular cantata texts, this one features a **refrain**—"My tears, why do you hold back?"—that appears three times: once at the beginning, once in the middle, and once at the end. The melody to which the words "my tears" is sung descends from the top of the singer's range, dripping down in a vivid impression of falling tears. It is full of tortuous intervals and sigh-like ornaments that communicate the singer's distressed emotional state.

After the opening refrain, the singer carries on in the **recitative** style, allowing the rhythm and meaning of the text to determine her phrasing. Strozzi continues to employ text painting, such as with the drawn-out, descending chromatic line on the word "pain" (Italian: "dolore") and the gasping pause in the middle of the word "breath" (Italian: "respiro"). Strozzi finally settles in to a metered rhythm with the passage on the text, "And you, sorrowful eyes, you don't cry?" This type of music— more structured than recitative but less formal than an aria—is termed **arioso**. Again, Strozzi employs text painting in the form of repeated, descending sighs.

This is followed by the refrain, which leads into the aria. This is the most formal part of the cantata and the only passage of music in which two stanzas of text are sung to the same melody. The text concerned begins with "Alas, I yearn for Lidia" and concludes with "I pray to you, my bitter pain." The final passage of the text is set to music that continues to shift and bend in accordance to the singer's baleful emotions. The last thing we hear is the refrain—evidence that the singer's suffering has not lessened.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

10: Stories without Words

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10.1: Introduction

In this class, we have examined a variety of musical forms and works that communicate narratives. These have included examples that rely on staged action, such as opera and ballet, and examples that incorporate a sung text. In this chapter, we will encounter music that tells a story without that aid of staged action or performed text. This music will use sound alone—perhaps supplemented by a written explanation—to communicate with the listener.

But how can sound tell a story? How can we know what music is about without seeing the story acted out or hearing the story told through words? In many ways, music is handicapped as a storytelling medium, for it cannot be specific. Sound cannot tell us the name of a character, or provide details about a dramatic setting, or convey dialogue, or even communicate a plot of any complexity. At the same time, sound can also be a particularly powerful storytelling medium. Because of its potential to provoke emotions in the listener, it can tell compelling stories on the emotional or psychological level. Music can also incorporate the sounds that would be heard in a specific setting or that might accompany a sequence of events, thereby recreating the aural experience of a story.

In general, music is able to communicate specific content using three techniques. While these have been primarily exploited in the European concert tradition, they are not unique to Western music. The three techniques are **mimesis**, **quotation**, and the use of **musical topics**. After an introduction to each in turn, we will see them at work in a variety of examples.

Mimesis is the simplest technique, and also the most common across traditions. In cases of mimesis, music imitates real-world sounds in order to call elements of the physical world to mind. These sounds might include birdsong, animal cries, trains, explosions, footsteps—anything that makes noise. Mimesis can be used to create a dramatic scene using sound alone.

In the case of **quotation**, one piece of music incorporates a passage from another. Quotation can be used in many different ways. Sometimes, the quoted music will have a text that the listener is expected to know. In this way, a composer can include specific dramatic content without employing text directly. Other times, the quoted music can be understood as part of a scene. For example, the American composer Charles Ives quoted the music of Wagner in his piano composition *Concord Sonata*. His intent was to recreate the living room of the Alcott family, with Louisa May playing her favorite tunes at the piano.

When a composer employs **musical topics**, they refer to recognizable musical styles or clichés in order to communicate with the listener. Some musical topics are associated with specific genres or traditions, such as military marches, waltzes, or Christian hymns. Upon hearing one of these styles referenced in a musical work, the listener might think of an army, or a ball, or a church service. In this way, the composer can transport an audience to a specific place.

Other musical topics rely on the use of standardized techniques to portray specific scenes, such as a storm, or a romantic tryst, or shepherds tending their flocks. This approach builds on the tradition of music for the theater. An operatic love scene, for example, is usually accompanied by slow, sweeping gestures in the strings, while shepherds appear to the accompaniment of droning bagpipes (usually imitated by orchestral instruments), flute, and double reeds (usually oboe or English horn). Musical topics often incorporate mimesis, although the technique is more complex. Hunting scenes, for example, were long set to music that used mimetic techniques to imitate the sounds of horses galloping and hunting horns blasting. The imitation of hoofbeats is an example of mimesis, but the hunting topic is associated not only with the sounds of hunting but also with the tradition of writing hunting music. The storm topic provides a similar example. While rapid chromatic scales, dynamic swells, and sudden accents can imitate wind blowing through the trees and lightning striking the ground, we recognize storm music primarily because we are familiar with the long tradition of this type of music being used to accompany storm scenes in opera, films, and cartoons.

In the European tradition, instrumental music that claims to tell a specific story or to otherwise communicate **extramusical** information is termed **program music**. This term was first employed in the 19th century, at which point in history a fierce debate took place between various European composers and critics concerning the purpose of music. Some argued in favor of program music, even going so far as to suggest that music could (and should) convey complex philosophical ideas. Wagner belonged to this school of thought. Others advocated on behalf of **absolute music**, or “music for music’s sake”—that is, music that does not aspire to be more than sound, and that should be judged on the basis of its form and construction, not its power to communicate. Even in the 19th century, however, program music was not a new thing. As we shall see, earlier European composers had already established the various techniques with which music can communicate meaning. Similarly, composers and performers in other parts of the globe had long exploited sound as a storytelling vehicle.

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10.2: Antonio Vivaldi - The Four Seasons, “Spring”

Back to Vivaldi

Program music is a term that refers to instrumental music (no words) that refers to something non-musical or a story just with the music. We have already encountered program music with Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*, and we will continue that discussion here. Vivaldi (1678-1741) was particularly fond of program music, and he produced a great deal. His set of violin concertos known as *The Four Seasons* (Italian: Le quattro stagioni, 1725) are the most famous. Indeed, they rank among the best known pieces of music from the European concert tradition. Some of this bio might be a rehash, so skim if you need to.

Vivaldi spent his life in the city of Venice, which at the time was a wealthy and independent Republic. He initially trained as a Catholic priest, but ill health prevented him from performing many of his duties. However, he became highly skilled as a violinist and composer, and in 1703 he took the position of violin master at a local orphanage, the Devout Hospital of Mercy (Italian: *Ospedale della Pietà*; note that Hospital at this time does not indicate a center for medical care). Venetian orphanages were not the squalid workhouses we know from Victorian literature. Indeed, quite the opposite. It was common— even acceptable—for Venetian aristocrats to keep mistresses, but the children of these relationships could not be brought up in the marital home. Instead, unwanted infants were deposited at orphanages via the scaffetta, which was an opening just large enough to fit a newborn. While not all of the surrendered infants were of high birth, the city’s noblemen took an interest in the welfare of their illegitimate children, which meant that the orphanages were always well-funded. The children were brought up with all of the advantages (except parents), and were prepared for comfortable lives.

The Devout Hospital of Mercy, at which Vivaldi took a position, was an orphanage for girls. His job was to teach them the musical skills that would allow them to secure desirable husbands. Vivaldi was exceptionally good at his job, and soon the girls at the orphanage became the best musicians in the city. He not only taught them how to play their instruments but wrote music for them to play. His primary vehicle was the concerto, which is a work for an instrumental soloist accompanied by an orchestra. Over the course of his career, Vivaldi wrote 500 concertos. About half were for violin, including 37 for his most successful protege, a virtuoso known as Anna Maria dal Violin. The other were mostly for bassoon, flute, oboe, and cello—all instruments played by girls at the Hospital.

Naturally enough, the citizens of Venice wanted to hear the girls perform. This, however, presented a serious problem. Women in Venetian society were generally prohibited from performing publicly. Some women took to the opera stage, but in doing so they were confirming their sexual availability and precluding the possibility of marriage. Most of the girls at the orphanage were destined for either husbands or a lifetime of service to the church, so they could not become soiled in this way. Those who did desire a career in music were likely to stay at the orphanage into adulthood, where they were provided with an opportunity to teach and perform. At least two girls who studied at the orphanage, Anna Bon and Vincenta Da Ponte, went on to become composers.

The orphanage developed a clever means by which to facilitate public performances without upsetting social convention. Each Sunday night, a public Vespers service was held for which the orchestra and choir provided music. Although this weekly church service was, for all intents and purposes, a public concert, the simple act of retitling protected the girls’ honor. Members of high society came from across the region to hear the girls, who were physically isolated from the visitors to further ensure their chastity.

Vivaldi was promoted to music director in 1716, and he continued to teach at the orphanage even as he became quite famous outside of Venice. In addition to writing instrumental music, he wrote operas that were staged across Europe and provided choral music for Catholic church services. His long tenure at the orphanage was noteworthy, for male teachers at girls’ orphanages usually got into trouble with one of their charges and eventually had to be dismissed. Vivaldi, on the other hand, developed a reputation for his ethical behavior.

For Vivaldi, the concerto was a relatively new genre. The first concertos had been written by Italian composers in the middle of the 17th century. At first, soloists were used primarily to add variation in volume to an orchestral performance—after all, a few players make less noise than many, and individual string instruments of the time did not have a large dynamic range. Vivaldi still valued the potential for concertos to include a great deal of variety, but he also used them as a vehicle for virtuosic display. The solo parts, therefore, were often quite difficult, and allowed the player to show off her capabilities.



This 1720 depiction of a concert at the Devout Hospital of Mercy shows how the girls performed from high balconies, out of reach from visitors. Not well represented are the ornate grates that hid the girls from view. Source: Wikimedia Commons. Attribution: Gabriele Bella, photographer Didier Descouens License: CC BY-SA 4.0

An early 18th-century concerto always followed the same basic form. It would contain three movements in the order fast-slow-fast. The outer movements would both be in ritornello form. “Ritornello” is an Italian term that roughly translates to “the little thing that returns,” and it refers to a passage of music that is heard repeatedly. In a concerto, the ritornello is played by the orchestra. It is heard at the beginning and at the end of a movement, but also frequently throughout, although often not in its entirety. In between statements of the ritornello, the soloist plays. Although the ritornello always remains basically the same, the material played by the soloist can vary widely. The slow movement of a concerto would consist of an expressive melody in the solo instrument backed up by a repetitive accompaniment in the orchestra.

Spring

We will see an example of these forms in Vivaldi’s “Spring” concerto. However, form is certainly not what makes this composition interesting. Vivaldi published his Four Seasons concertos in a 1725 collection entitled The Contest Between Harmony and Invention. This evocative title was supposed to draw attention to novel aspects of Vivaldi’s latest work. While eight of the twelve concertos contained in the collection were adventurous in purely musical terms, the first four were unusual for programmatic reasons.

Each of the Four Seasons concertos— one each for Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter—was accompanied by a sonnet. The poetry described the dramatic content of the music, and Vivaldi went to great trouble to indicate exactly how the music reflected the text. To do so, he inserted letter names beside each line of poetry and then placed the same letter at the appropriate place in the score.

The correlation between musical and poetic passages, however, is easy to hear. This, in combination with the fact that no author is indicated, has led most scholars to believe that Vivaldi wrote the sonnets himself.

The sonnet for the “Spring” concerto reads as follows. The lines of poetry are broken up between the three movements, each of which is titled with an Italian tempo marking:

I. Allegro

Springtime is upon us.

The birds celebrate her return with festive song, and murmuring streams are

softly caressed by the breezes. Thunderstorms, those heralds of Spring, roar, casting their dark mantle over heaven,

Then they die away to silence,

and the birds take up their charming songs once more.

II. Largo

On the flower-strewn meadow, with leafy branches rustling overhead, the goat-herd sleeps,

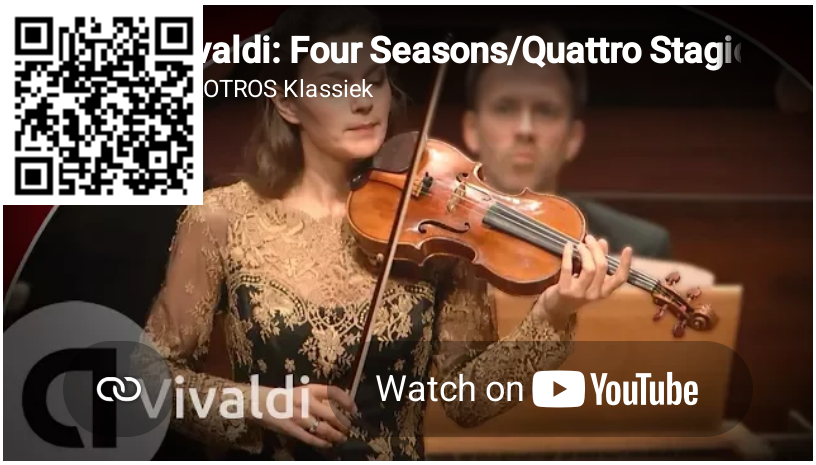
his faithful dog beside him.

III. Allegro

Led by the festive sound of rustic bagpipes, nymphs and shepherds lightly dance beneath the brilliant canopy of spring.

****

This video has all four seasons, but Spring is first.



Movement 1: 0:04 - The opening ritornello in the first movement captures the spirit of the first line of poetry. It is joyful and exuberant. It is also simple and repetitive, giving the impression that it might really be folk music—the kind of tune one might hear at a country dance. The birds appear with the first solo episode, which requires two violinists from the orchestra to join with the soloist in imitating avian calls. After an orchestral ritornello, we hear some new music from the orchestra that captures the sounds of murmuring streams and caressing breezes. Another ritornello is followed by the thunderstorm. Rapid notes, sudden accents, and violent ascending scales in the orchestra are interrupted by energetic arpeggios in the solo violin, while shifts to the minor mode darken the mood of the passage. After another ritornello, the bird songs gradually reemerge, gaining strength as the storm clears for good. One more solo passage and a final ritornello close out the movement.

Movement 2: 3:31 - The second movement is considerably simpler. The solo violin plays a beautiful, calm melody—suitable for the portrayal of a sleeping goat-herd. Underneath, the leafy branches rustle in the violins, who play undulating, uneven rhythms throughout, while the faithful dog barks in the violas. (This last touch is a little strange, for a barking dog would certainly wake the sleeper, but Vivaldi did not have any other tools with which to represent the animal.) The fact that no low strings or harpsichord are present in this movement gives it an ethereal feeling.

Movement 3: 6:02 - The last movement has the same form as the first, although the storytelling is considerably less intricate. In the opening ritornello, Vivaldi imitates a bagpipe by having the violas, cellos, and basses sustain long notes outlining the interval of a fifth. The sound is meant to remind the listener of a bagpipe's drone. The rhythms of the melody are appropriate for dancing, while the lively mood sets the scene for a celebration of spring. The soloist—other than momentarily imitating a bagpipe herself—does not contribute anything in particular to the storytelling. She seems content to interject lively, virtuosic passagework at the appropriate points.

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10.3: Chinese Solo Repertoire - Attack on All Sides and Spring River in the Flower Moon Night

At the same time that European composers were producing vivid programmatic works, a parallel tradition of program music was flourishing in China. We will consider two examples from the literature for solo instruments, which is predominantly programmatic. One piece will portray a historical battle, while the other will reflect on the contents of a famous poem. Although Chinese music follows different rules than European music, is it not difficult for a Western listener to understand what this music is about. This is due both to the use of mimesis and to a cross-cultural agreement about the representation of calm and energetic moods in sound.



Image 6.16: Music has long been important in Chinese culture. Here, we see musicians in a 6th-century tomb painting. Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: Unknown License: Public Domain

When we discuss this music, however, we will have to do so in slightly different terms than we have so far. Although Chinese musicians have developed a variety of notational systems that have allowed musical compositions to be preserved, they have not always prioritized notation or valued the authority of the composer. Individual pieces are usually passed down directly from performer to performer by means of **oral tradition**, while the names of composers are seldom recorded. As a result, we are not always able to identify the authors of this repertoire or determine when the pieces were written.

The history of music in China extends back for thousands of years, and some of the instruments date to antiquity. This is not to say, however, that the music has remained unchanged, or that all of the repertoire items are old. As we saw in Chapter 4, Beijing opera dates only to the late 18th century, and alternative opera traditions have continued to emerge and change. In the sphere of instrumental music, the use of individual instruments—as well as their physical structure— transformed with the passage of time. We will encounter two instruments, the pipa and the guqin. In doing so, we will consider their history, construction, and use in the performance of program music.

Pipa: *Attack on All Sides*

The pipa is a type of **lute** used in a variety of Chinese musical traditions. It dates back to at least the 3rd century, although it did not acquire its modern form until the 20th century. Like most of the instruments commonly used in Chinese music, the pipa was probably imported from

Central Asia or India along the Silk Road trade route. At first, it was used only to accompany singing and dancing, but during the Tang dynasty (618-907) a repertoire of solo pipa music emerged. As such, the pipa repertoire is among the oldest in the Chinese tradition. The instrument was historically favored by both aristocrats and working musicians, and was long associated with women —specifically, courtesans.

The pipa has a distinctive, pear-shaped body and is played in an upright position. Modern instruments have twenty-four **frets** spaced according to the Western chromatic scale. The frets on the neck have a unique wedge shape, such that a player's finger does not in fact touch the neck when the string is depressed. The pipa's four strings can be tuned to a variety of pitches. Although they used to be silk, the fact that pipa strings have been manufactured out of steel since the 1950s gives the modern instrument a powerful sound. This is further accentuated by the fact that the player wears picks on the fingers of her right hand.



Image 6.17: This 897 painting portrays the planet Venus, embodied as an elegant lady, playing the pipa. Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: Chang Huai-hsing License: Public Domain

A great deal of the traditional pipa repertoire has survived into the present day due to the publication of four collections in the 19th century. The notation used in these collections, known as *gongche*, is completely unrelated to Western **staff notation**. Instead of mapping pitches and rhythms onto a graph, as staff notation does, it represents pitches with numbers and rhythms with dots and lines. In the context of a tradition that is primarily aural, however, such notation was used only to document music for preservation or reference. It was not used to learn unfamiliar music or in performance.

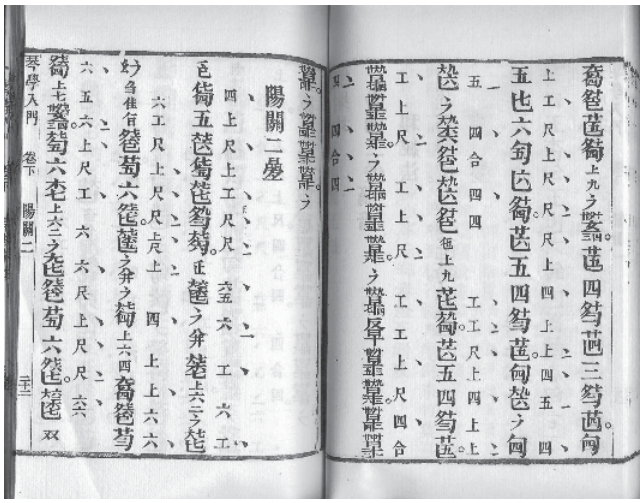
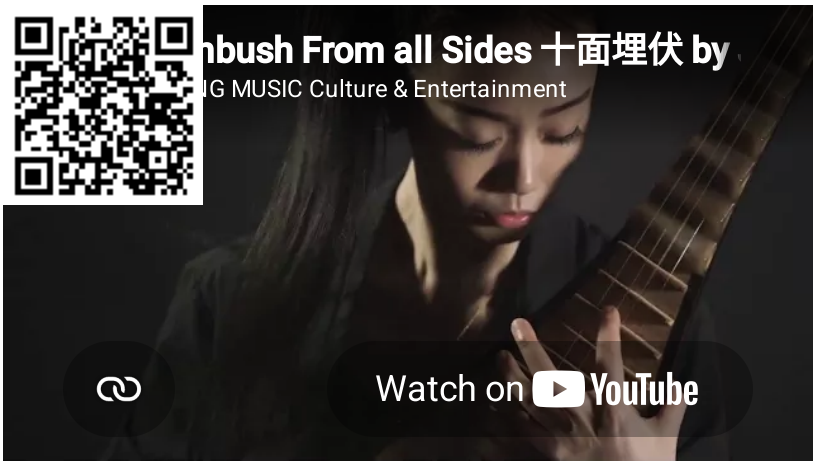


Image 6.18: An example of gongche notation from an 1864 collection. Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: Cheung Hok License: Public Domain

*Attack on All Sides*9 is the most popular piece in the pipa repertoire. It is also very difficult, however, and is usually only performed by the most accomplished players. The earliest notated version appears in an 1818 collection, but it is impossible to say when (or by whom) it was in fact composed. *Attack on All Sides* is an example of a "large" composition, containing many distinct sections. (The pipa repertoire also includes "small" compositions, which are shorter and have a single section.) While *Attack on All Sides* can always be recognized and identified, some published versions omit sections that are included elsewhere. Therefore, not every performance is identical. No single version can be identified as "correct." This can be contrasted with most music in the European concert tradition, for which there is generally understood to exist a single authoritative version.



As with Beijing opera, pipa solos are divided into "civil" and "martial," the latter having to do with military themes. *Attack on All Sides* is most certainly a martial composition. It portrays a famous battle that took place in 202 BC between the armies of two Chinese provinces, Western Chu and Han, who were fighting for dominion over China. The conflict ended with the Battle of Gaixia, in which the Han troops kidnapped the Chu general's wife and used her to lure the enemy troops into a canyon. There, they fell victim to the "ambush from ten sides"—another common title for this piece. The battle itself hinged on musical warfare, for the Han sought to defeat their enemy by psychological means. To this end, they sang Chu folk songs throughout the night, with the effect of making the demoralized enemy homesick and inspiring soldiers to desert. The Chu general, Xiang Yu, is said to have composed a song of his own that same night. His lament, *The Song of Gaixia*, is still performed today. Tradition holds that he first sang the verses in alternation with his wife, who, feeling that she was at fault for the defeat, subsequently killed herself with his sword. The battle ended with Xiang Yu's suicide on the banks of the Wu river.

All of this is captured in *Attack on All Sides*. The fact that this composition is made up of many sections allows the performer to explore the various emotions and activities of the battle scene. In the first sections, we bear witness to the assembling Han troops. The energy of the music communicates their vitality and resolution, but we also hear the drums and bugles of battle. The battle itself is captured by a variety of virtuosic pipa techniques that produce rapid sequences of notes. After the battle, however, the music becomes mournful—a reflection of Xiang Yu's sorrow at his loss. The final word goes to the victor, however, and the piece concludes with a representation of the Han general's triumph.

Guzheng: Peng Xiuwen, *Spring River in the Flower Moon Night*

The oldest extant guzheng dates to about 500 BC. The guzheng is a type of **zither**, and its plucked strings run along the face of a resonant wood box. Each string passes over an individual wooden bridge, which can be moved to adjust the pitch. Players use picks on the fingers of the right hand to pluck the strings to one side of the bridges, while using the left hand either to pluck strings on the right-hand side or to press or pull the strings on the other side. This causes pitch fluxuations, which are carefully controlled and used to ornament the melody. As with the pipa, the strings of the guzheng, once silk, have been made of steel since the 1950s. They increased in number from thirteen to twenty-one around the same time. The strings are tuned to the pitches of the **pentatonic scale**, which is common in Chinese music. We might think of these as the first, second, third, fifth, and sixth notes of the major scale.



Image 6.19: A player uses finger picks to pluck the strings of the guzheng. Source: Hanscom Air Force Base Attribution: Mark Wyatt License: Public Domain

Because the modern guzheng is so different from the ancient instrument, performers tend to favor recently-composed pieces that make use of its full range. Such is the case with our example, *Spring River in the Flower Moon Night*, which is the work of Peng Xiuwen (1931-1996). Following the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, Peng became a leading figure in the development of post-revolution Chinese music. In particular, he contributed to the development of the Chinese orchestra—an ensemble type that dates only to the 1930s. In most traditional forms of Chinese ensemble music, only one of each instrument is included, and the performers are granted the freedom to embellish their individual parts. In a Chinese orchestra, on the other hand, instruments of the same type are gathered into sections, and they use notated music to play in unison under the leadership of a **conductor**. This approach is obviously modelled on the European orchestra, and its popularity at first reflected Chinese admiration for Western technological achievements.

Peng became director of the China Broadcasting Chinese Orchestra, one of the most important ensembles of its type, in 1956, when he was only twenty-four years old. In addition to improving the tuning and balance of the orchestra, he arranged a large number of pieces from the European repertoire for Chinese orchestra and composed original pieces. One of these was *Spring River in the Flower Moon Nigh*t,10 which soon became even more popular with solo guzheng players. As we will see, its pentatonic pitch content and meditative mood suit the instrument well.



The title *Spring River in the Flower Moon Night* refers to a famous poem written by Zhang Ruoxu around the turn of the 8th century. The poem has inspired countless artistic interpretations over the centuries, including paintings and musical compositions. As the title might suggest, Zhang's poem describes the moonlit Yangtze river. After several evocative passages that conjure the beauty of the scene, however, he turns to themes of longing and loss, meditating on the ephemerality of life and the sorrows of travellers who leave their loved ones behind.

In his composition, Peng strives to evoke the full range of emotions contained in the poem. The guzheng version of *Spring River in the Flower Moon Night* requires a variety of techniques, including rapid tremolo picking on a single string, strums (both delicate and energetic), left-hand bends that add notes to the melody, and left-hand bends that are merely ornamental. Peng's ultimate goal is to leave the listener in the same state of sorrowful tranquility that they would experience upon reading the poem.

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10.4: Anoushka Shankar - Raga Madhuvanti

We will conclude this chapter with a consideration of how cultural context can facilitate musical storytelling even in the absence of a specific text. Every example that we have considered thus far has been accompanied at some level by a description. In the case of Berlioz, we had a long prose explanation from the composer himself. In the case of Mussorgsky, references to the titles of paintings. In the case of Vivaldi, a poem. The titles of the two Chinese examples refer us to a historical event on the one hand and a poem on the other, while Likhuta explains how her composition connects with lived experience. This final example also has specific meaning, but it is only available to those initiated into the musical tradition from which it comes. While anyone can enjoy the sounds of "Raga Madhuvanti," its meaning is unveiled only when one positions it correctly within the web of North Indian musical and artistic practice.

Before we can approach our example, we need to know something about North Indian classical music. It is important to note that this text can provide only a shallow and perfunctory glimpse of a tradition that requires a lifetime of dedication to master. Like their Western counterparts, North Indian classical musicians immerse themselves in their tradition for decades before claiming any sort of authority. But as with European classical music, a listener does not need to master the theoretical nuances in order to enjoy a performance.

Raga Theory

The North Indian classical music of today combines relatively modern instruments and practices with a theoretical system that dates to the 9th century. Here, we will focus on the concept of **raga**, which is roughly analogous to the scale. Unlike the scale, however, which provides a composer or performer only with a set of pitches and some information about their hierarchy (the first note of the scale, for example, is the most important), a raga carries a great weight of information, both musical and extramusical (having to do with non-sounding elements). Ragas are sometimes used as the basis for fixed compositions, but more often they are explored in an **improvised** performance—a practice that we will explore below. It is impossible to determine the precise number of ragas in existence. About five hundred seem to be in use at any given time, while an individual musician might master a few dozen.

We will use Raga Madhuvanti as an example. Raga Madhuvanti contains seven distinct pitches, just like the Western scale. However, the pitches found in Raga Madhuvanti are not found in any Western mode. If we were to imagine starting from a major scale, the third pitch would be flat but the fourth would be sharp, creating a large gap between them. In addition, the pitches contained in a raga vary depending on whether one is ascending or descending. The most important scale degree in Raga Madhuvanti is 1, while the second most important is 5.

This video begins by demonstrating the ascending and descending forms of Raga Madhuvanti. It then demonstrates some of the typical melodic fragments before concluding with a sample song:



This is already more information about performance practice than one can derive from a Western scale, but we have only begun. Each of the pitches indicated above must be precisely tuned, for North Indian music employs **microtones**, or pitches that fall between the keys on the piano. These must be learned by ear— and are unique to a given raga. Each pitch must also be approached and ornamented in the correct manner, for this is a rich vocabulary of slides, **vibratos**, and **trills**. Raga Madhuvanti also contains prescribed resting places for the melody as it develops. Any melody played in

Raga Madhuvanti will be further shaped by a vocabulary of typical phrases that identify the raga. Finally, one cannot incorporate any additional pitches without destroying the raga.

But we have still only begun. It is now time to move on to the extramusical characteristics of Raga Madhuvanti. To begin with, Raga Madhuvanti is used to express gentle, loving, and romantic sentiments. In particular, it communicates the emotion that one feels for one's beloved. It is also considered sweet and playful. The root of the name, "madhu," translates to "honey." The character of the raga is captured in poetry and paintings known as **ragamalas**. The practice of personifying musical ragas through verse began in the 14th century, which in turn inspired the miniature paintings of the 16th and 17th centuries. There are no classical representations of Raga Madhuvanti, which was developed in the 1930s, but we can still link it to art. Ragas are organized into families, known as *thaat*, and Madhuvanti belongs to the Todi thaat. Ragas in a family share a variety of musical and extramusical characteristics. Raga Todi is portrayed as a beautiful woman, the wife of Raga Hindol, who is separated from her lover. She is always surrounded by deer, and focuses her attention on the buck, who represents masculine virility.



Image 6.22: A ragamala portraying Raga Todi, dating from 1591. In this image, she holds a rudra vina, which was the most important melody instrument from the 16th through the 19th centuries but which has now been replaced by the sitar. The presence of the instrument suggests the sound of the raga, even though it is unheard. Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: Anonymous License: Public Domain

At this point we've wandered a bit far from our topic—but all of this is relevant to the understanding of Raga Madhuvanti, which is traditionally considered to possess a spiritual existence independent of any performance or description. When we say that Raga Madhuvanti was "developed" in the 1930s, that is not quite correct. It might be better to say that it was "discovered," for most musicians would agree that ragas exist whether or not they are named and performed. When a musician begins to perform a raga, they embark upon the lifelong task of becoming acquainted with it, as if it were another human being. Every encounter reveals new facets of the raga, which cannot be fully captured in any single performance.

Finally, Raga Madhuvanti, like all ragas, is associated with a specific season and time of day. Raga Madhuvanti is an evening raga that should be performed during the fourth quarter of the day—or, roughly, between 4 and 8 pm. It is also considered appropriate for the summer season. At one time, these associations were taken very seriously. The North Indian classical tradition developed in the courts, where musicians played ragas that were suited to the moment. A morning raga for the monsoon season, for example, would be heard only on a monsoon morning. In the courts, musicians played constantly, and were therefore able to maintain correlations between ragas and time markers. With the rise of concert life in the 20th century, however, this became impossible, and North Indian classical musicians today generally perform ragas without concern for time or season. Nevertheless, these associations linger.

Tala Theory

This has been an overview of raga theory, which concerns the melodic and extramusical contents of a performance. Tala theory, which concerns rhythmic content, is equally complex, but we will largely pass over it here due to the fact that it is difficult for untrained listeners to perceive the rhythmic nuances of North Indian classical music. We will note only that a **tala** is a pattern of beats used in the performance of a raga. The number of beats in a tala can range from three to 128, although most contain between six and sixteen beats. Beats can be strong or weak, and each is characterized by a specific percussive sound. A tala, therefore, is best thought of as a cycle of timbres. This is simple enough, but a drummer will almost never play the cycle unadorned. Instead, they will improvise complex rhythms over the tala, which exists only in the imagination of the performers and listeners.

This video includes a demonstration of Rupak Tala. You don't have to watch the whole thing, but the first minute or so will give you a good idea of the basic sound and pattern:



Ragas and talas are not paired up one-to-one, but only specific talas may be used with a given raga. We will be hearing a performance of Raga Madhuvanti paired with Rupak Tala, which contains seven beats divided into three groups containing three, two, and two beats respectively. North Indian classical musicians learn talas by reciting the syllables associated with each beat, which in turn represent that sound of the drum and indicate how it is to be struck to create that sound. The syllables for the seven beats of Rupak Tala12 are Tin Tin Na Dhin Na Dhin Na. The most common percussion instrument in North Indian classical music is the tabla, which is a pair of small drums—one a bit larger than the other—that are played with the hands. “Tin” indicates a resonant stroke with the right hand, while “Na” is a damped stroke with the right hand and “Dhin” is a resonant stroke with both hands. An accomplished player will be careful to use the correct fingers with the appropriate force in exactly the right spot on the drum head.

Instruments and Transmission

We are finally ready to consider a modern performance of Raga Madhuvanti. We will begin with the instruments, one of which—the tabla—has already been introduced. All North Indian classical music is performed over a drone, which usually consists of the two most important notes in the raga. In the case of Raga Madhuvanti, as noted above, those are the first and fifth scale degrees. The drone is most often performed on a tanpura. This long-necked lute is almost completely hollow and therefore extremely resonant. It has no frets and cannot be used to play melodies. Instead, the performer lightly plucks each of the four strings in turn to create a sustained drone. The tanpura is most often played by an apprentice of the soloist.

The sitar is capable of producing its own drone, but it is a much more complicated instrument and is used primarily to perform the raga. Today, the sitar is the most common North Indian melodic instrument. It was made famous in the second half of the 20th century by the virtuoso Ravi Shankar, who influenced The Beatles (see Chapter 8) and frequently performed at popular music festivals (including Woodstock, discussed in Chapter 7). The sitar, however, is not a particularly ancient instrument, dating only to the 18th century. Like the tanpura, the sitar has a hollow neck and is highly resonant. Both instruments also produce a light, metallic buzzing sound that is essential to the timbre. Unlike the tanpura, the sitar has large, arched frets.



Image 6.23: The tanpura is held vertically by the player, who plucks the strings one at a time. Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: User “Martin spaink” License: CC BY-SA 3.0

Melodies are played on the strings that run across them. These strings can either be pressed down, shortening the length of the string, or pulled to the side, increasing the tension on the string. Both actions change the note produced when the string is plucked,

and they can be combined to produce the effect of sliding between pitches. Sitars in fact have three different types of strings. The top three are used to play the melody. Below these are three or four strings that are used to produce the drone. Most interesting, however, are the twelve to fourteen **sympathetic strings** that run down the neck behind the frets. These strings are tuned to the pitches of the raga and resonate when the same pitches are played on the melody strings, thereby contributing to the vibrancy of the instrument's sound. They can also be strummed.



Image 6.24: Anoushka Shankar is one of the most famous living sitar players. Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: Harald Krichel License: CC BY-SA 3.0

Mastering the sitar is comparable in difficulty to mastering the nuances of the raga and tala systems. Traditionally, aspiring musicians committed themselves to a **guru**, or teacher, at a young age. The student would move in with the guru and become part of the family, completing household tasks in return for musical guidance. Although this system has largely been replaced by private lessons and music schools in the European model, both of the musicians we will discuss here learned their craft immersively in the traditional way. One is Ravi Shankar, who was apprenticed to sarod player Allauddin Khan, and the other is Anoushka Shankar, who learned from her father.

The Shankars

Ravi Shankar (1920-2012) is remembered as the performer who popularized North Indian music in the West. He began his regular tours of Europe and the United States in 1956. At concerts, he focused on educating audiences about his instrument—the sitar—and the North Indian classical tradition, winning fans in the process. In the 1960s he began to form relationships with popular musicians, including George Harrison of The Beatles. He was invited to participate in both of the major popular music festivals of the 1960s: the 1967 Monterey Pop Festival and the 1969 Aquarian Exposition, better known as Woodstock (see Chapter 7). His influence can be heard on a number of rock albums from the era, including The Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* (see Chapter 8).



Image 6.25: This photograph captures Ravi Shankar performing at the Woodstock festival in 1969. Source: Wikipedia. Attribution: User “Markgoff2972” License: CC BY-SA 4.0

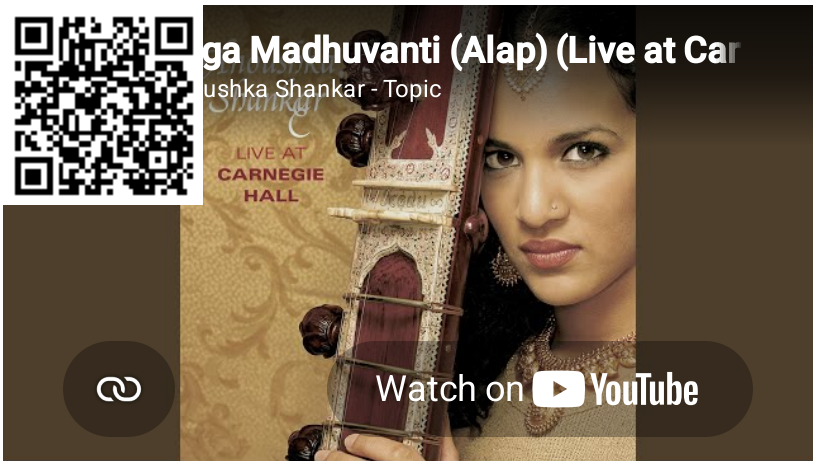
Ravi’s daughter Anoushka was born in London in 1981, when Ravi was sixty-one years old. She began training with him at the age of seven, and was soon appearing beside him onstage playing the tanpura. Anoushka gave her first solo performance at the age of thirteen, making her first studio recording shortly thereafter. Although she is certainly a master of the North Indian classical tradition, Anoushka has been primarily interested in cross-cultural collaborations, and has released a series of albums that explore the connections between different musical traditions. Like her father, she has also maintained connection with the world of popular music. Her most frequent collaborator is singer Norah Jones—who also happens to be her half-sister.

Raga Madhuvanti

We will focus on Anoushka’s rendition of Raga Madhuvanti, made live at a Carnegie Hall concert in 2000. Ravi’s recording will serve for comparison, for although both are performances of Raga Madhuvanti, they are quite different and cannot be considered to represent “the same piece.” In the North Indian tradition, the roles of composer and performer are essentially indistinguishable. A player “composes” in the process of performing a raga, improvising melodic motifs and shapes. At the same time, the identity of the raga is paramount, and two performances of the same raga are therefore expected to communicate similar emotional and expressive content.

Both recordings are considerably shorter than a traditional performance, which might extend to an hour or more. This is typical of the modern era, for audiences desire variety and expect to hear several ragas on a concert. Both recordings, however, exhibit the traditional structure of a raga performance, which is in two large parts.

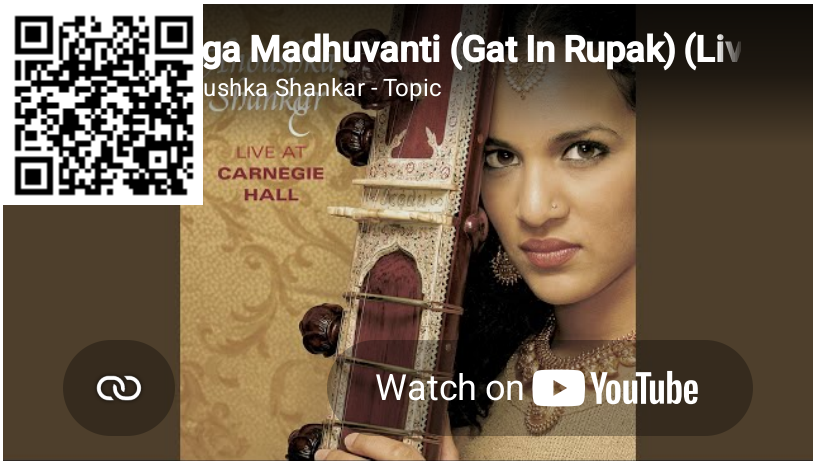
In the first part of a performance,termed the *alap*, Anoushka introduces the notes of Raga Madhuvanti.13 This is done slowly and deliberately over the course of nearly ten minutes. She establishes the notes in order, ornamenting them with characteristics slides and melodic fragments. Because the notes of the raga must be presented from lowest to highest, her playing begins in the low range and gradually extends into the high. Once Anoushka has established all of the notes, she gradually introduces a regular pulse into the music. This pulse quickens, and she begins to play with increased rhythmic activity. As a result, the *alap*, which begins in a meditative mood, concludes with breathtaking excitement.



Our recording of the *alap* closes with applause from the audience, but this is not the end of the performance. However, musicians in the North Indian classical tradition don’t think of “performance” in the same way as Western classical musicians. There is seldom a

clear beginning to the rendition of a raga, which instead emerges gradually from a process of strumming and tuning (activities that a Western player might describe as “warming up”). A performer will often continue to adjust their tuning throughout the *alap*. These habits reflect the continuity between “practice” and “performance” that is characteristic of the North Indian classical tradition. Every rendition of a raga—whether executed in privacy or before an audience—brings the performer and listener one step closer to really “knowing” it.

The second part of the performance is called the *jhala*. Its beginning is marked by the entrance of the tabla, which establishes the tala (rhythmic cycle). In this case, we are hearing the seven-beat Rupak Tala, as described above. The role of the sitar also changes at this point. While Anoushka has been freely improvising thus far, now she plays a fixed melody called a *gat*. Such melodies are usually traditional, and they can be heard in many different performances of the same raga. For the remainder of the *jhala*, Anoushka improvises using fragments of the *gat* according to the rules associated with Raga Madhuvanti. One can recognize the *gat* from time to time as Anoushka works it into the fabric of her playing. As in the *alap*, she increases the rhythmic complexity and virtuosity of her improvisations as she builds to the exciting conclusion.

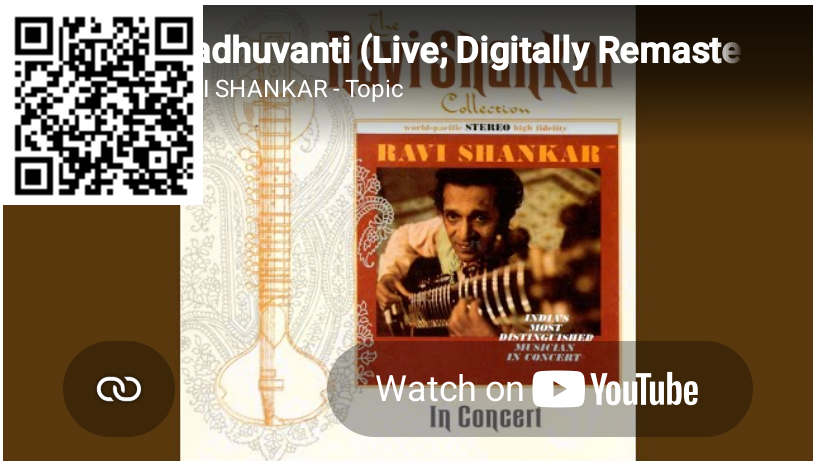


Comparing Performances

This performance of Raga Madhuvanti by Ravi Shankar offers an excellent opportunity to determine what constitutes the essential character of a raga. As the listener will easily observe, it is quite different from Anoushka’s performance.

A brief consideration of Ravi’s performance of Raga Madhuvanti reveals the flexibility that characterizes the North Indian classical tradition. His *alap* is very brief: less than two minutes, in comparison with Anoushka’s ten. He establishes the pitches of the raga much more quickly, and his playing is lively from the start. At the beginning of the *jhala*, he plays a completely different *gat*, which then leads into an extremely long improvisation—twenty minutes—that, because it is founded on a different *gat*, sounds nothing like Anoushka’s. In short, the two recordings of Raga Madhuvanti have very little in common. They are not, in a Western sense, recordings of the same piece of music.

This performance of Raga Madhuvanti by Ravi Shankar offers an excellent opportunity to determine what constitutes the essential character of a raga. As the listener will easily observe, it is quite different from Anoushka’s performance:



They are, however, recordings of the same raga, which brings us back to the question that opened this chapter: How can sound tell a story? An experienced listener will hear these two performances as both communicating aspects of the essential character of Raga Madhuvanti. Neither of these performances tells a specific story, containing a narrative, events, or characters (like we encountered in Berlioz's *Fantastical Symphony*). However, each is decidedly dramatic, insofar as it engages with and elucidates the extramusical character of the raga. A listener will know that Raga Madhuvanti is associated with the evening and that it expresses romantic love. They might also be familiar with the poetry or paintings that have captured and contributed to the raga's character. Each performance, therefore, adds to the grander narrative of Raga Madhuvanti—a narrative that stretches across generations and continents.

This example also presents an opportunity to discuss the non-universality of programmatic musical expression. Do you hear these performances as expressing the sentiment of romantic love? Do you hear them as playful? Do you connect them with the evening, or the summer? Do you even hear them as communicating the same emotional content as one another? The answer may very well be no. Most music communicates meaning within a cultural context. In this case, that meaning is determined by the listener's familiarity with North Indian classical music, with the raga system in general, and with Raga Madhuvanti in particular. A lifetime of exposure to this music will lead one to make the correct emotional connections. Those emotions, however, are not inherent in the music and not obvious to every listener. This is true of every musical tradition.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

11: Music of the Classical Period

Learning Objectives

1. Demonstrate knowledge of historical and cultural contexts of the Classical period
2. Recognize musical performing forces (voices, instruments, and ensembles), styles, composers, and genres of the Classical period
3. Aurally identify selected music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven and explain how it interacts with forms of the day

11.1: Introduction and Historical Context

11.2: Music in the Classical period

11.3: Music of Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)

11.4: Music of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

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11.1: Introduction and Historical Context

Welcome to the Classical Period

Of all the musical periods, the Classical period is the shortest, spanning less than a century. Its music is dominated by three composers whose works are still some of the best known of all Western art music: Joseph Haydn (1732-1809), Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791), and Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827). Although born in different European regions, all three spent a substantial amount of time in Vienna, Austria, which might be considered the European musical capital of the time.

Music scholars have referred to this time as the Classical period in music for several reasons. For one, the music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven has served as the model for most composers after their time and is still played today; in this way, the music is "classic" in that it has provided an exemplar and has stood the test of time. As we will also see, this music has often been perceived as emulating the balance and portion of ancient Greek and Roman art, the time period to which the word "classical" is affixed within literature and art history, as well as the wider field of history.

Our use of the Classical period to refer to music of roughly 1750 to 1815, how- ever, should not be confused with our broader use of the term "classical music" to refer to art music (music that does not otherwise fall within the spheres of popular music or folk music).

Beginning towards the end of the 16th century, citizens in Europe became skeptical of traditional politics, governance, wealth distribution, and the aristocracy. Philosophers and theorists across Europe began to questioning these norms and issues and began suggesting instead that humanity could benefit from change. Publications and scientific discoveries of these thinkers proving and understanding many of nature's laws spurred the paradigm shift of logic referred to as the Age of Reason, or the Enlightenment.

The seeds for the Enlightenment can be found in England in approximately the 1680s. In that decade, Newton published *Principia Mathematica* and John Locke published his "Essay Concerning Human Understanding." These two works pro- vided the philosophical, mathematical, and scientific foundation for the Enlightenment's great developments. Locke stressed that knowledge is gained through accumulated life experience rather than by acquired outside truth. Newton's mathematics and optical theory showed that humans can observe, study, define, and test the world around them and can also mathematically measure and prove natural occurrences.

Besides Locke and Newton, Enlightenment thinkers included Voltaire, Montesquieu, Jean-Jacque Rousseau, Benjamin Franklin, and Immanuel Kant. Their works especially stressed improving humanity's condition through the use of reason and common sense in order to provide liberty and justice for all. Many Enlightenment thinkers challenged blind and unconditional following of the authority of religious traditions and institutions and emphasized what they saw as "universal human goods and rights." They believed that if humankind would simply act with common sense—found in ideas such as "the golden rule"—then societies might advance with greater universal justice and liberty.

Being able to solve and understand many of the mysteries of the universe in a quantifiable manner using math and reason, was empowering. Much of the educated middle class applied these learned principles to improve society. Enlightenment ideals lead to political revolutions throughout the Western world. Governmental changes such as Britain's embrace of constitutional democratic form of government and later the United States of America's establishment of democratic republic completely changed the outlook of the function of a nation/state. The overall well-being and prosperity of all in society became the mission of governance.

Up until the mid-1700s art, including music, was under the direct control or patronage of the monarchy/aristocracy, the class whose unquestioned rule was founded on divine hereditary right. The arts were their (and the church's) privilege, luxury, and adornment for generations to come. In its in- fancy, the Enlightenment's power shift toward the middle class was neither perceived nor anticipated by those in power. America's successful revolution against England landed a devastating blow to the doctrine of the divine ruling rights of kings. Shortly afterward, the ensuing French Revolution had an unintentional im- pact on the arts and is one of the greatest influences on Western classical music.

Artists and architects of the second half of the eighteenth century looked to classical antiquity as its model; their work is referred to as neoclassical. You can see this interest when one compares the Parthenon in Athens to the columns of the White House. While in power, aristocrats and their wealthy peers exalted the Hellenism that protected them from getting too involved in the current issues of life. The aristocrats saw the ancient Roman gods, heroes, and kings assemblances of themselves. They viewed themselves in the same light as super humans entitled to rule, possess great wealth, and be powerful. This detachment shaped their relationship with the arts in architecture and the visual arts. The rising middle class, on the contrary, viewed and interpreted neoclassical arts as

representations of Ro- man and Greek city-states. This view assisted their resolve to rebel against the ty- rants and abolish despotism. Here musical terminology diverges from that used by art historians (Neoclassicism in music would have to wait for the 20th century). As we have few musical exemplars from classical antiquity and as the music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven would become the model for nineteenth century music, music historians have referred to this period as a time of Musical Classicism.



Figure 11.1.1: Benjamin Franklin, 1759 by Benjamin Wilson. Source: Wikimedia

The mid and second half of the 18th century saw a revolutionary political and economic shift in Europe. Here the dramatic paramount shift of power from the aristocracy to the middle class began and strengthened. The wealth of the middle class had been expanding due the growing capitalism from the Industrial Revolution. This revolution resulted from a series of momentous inventions of the mid-1700s, including the Watt Steam Engine, James Hargreaves's spinning jenny, Edmund Cartwright's power loom, and Eli Whitney's cotton gin.

The following decades witnessed great scientific achievements and discoveries including: electricity by Benjamin Franklin, medical smallpox vaccination by Edward Jenner, the discovery of oxygen by Joseph Priestly, the advancement of the mechanistic view of the universe by Pierre-Simon Laplace, and the invention of the voltaic pile (battery) by Alessandro Volta Pierre Laplace (b. 1749-1827) a gifted and talented scientist and mathematician, felt that due to scientific explanation for the planets, their motion, and possibly how they began, humans no longer had any need for God. This mindset even further reduces the influence of the church on society and music.

During the enlightenment, the burgeoning middle class became a major market for art superseding the aristocracy as the principal consumer of music and art. This market shift facilitated a great demand for new innovations in the humanities. While the increased literacy of the middle class led to the proliferation of newspapers, periodicals, and novels throughout Western Europe. These sources provide us with reviews of concerts and published music and capture eighteenth century impressions of and responses to music.

The visual arts and architecture

The visual arts developed two major styles in the Enlightenment. Both are representative of the dualism found in the arts during the classical era. As the aristocracy tried to adhere to the Greek and Roman mythological antiquity, artists such as the painter Jacques-Louis David (b.1748-1835), of the French revolution adorned his canvases with themes of Roman and Athenian democracy. David's paintings were admired by Thomas Jefferson, but David's painting *The Death of Marat* (1793) received particular praise. Marat, to whom the painting refers, is the murdered Jean-Paul Marat, an influential French revolutionary leader. Marat's previous

influence paired with his murder and David's painting instantly trans- posed him into a political martyr. David's painting thus became a symbol of sacrifice in the name of the republic.1

Architecture in the late eighteenth century leaned toward the clean lines of ancient buildings such as the Athenian Parthenon and away from the highly ornate decorative accents of Baroque and Rococo design. One might also argue that the music of Haydn, Mozart, and early Beethoven aspires toward a certain simplicity and calmness stemming from ancient Greek art.

Music in Late Eighteenth Century

The three most important composers of the Classical period were Joseph Haydn, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, and Ludwig van Beethoven. Although they were born in different places, all three composers spent the last years of their lives in Vienna, Austria, a city which might be considered the musical capitol of the Classical period (see map below).

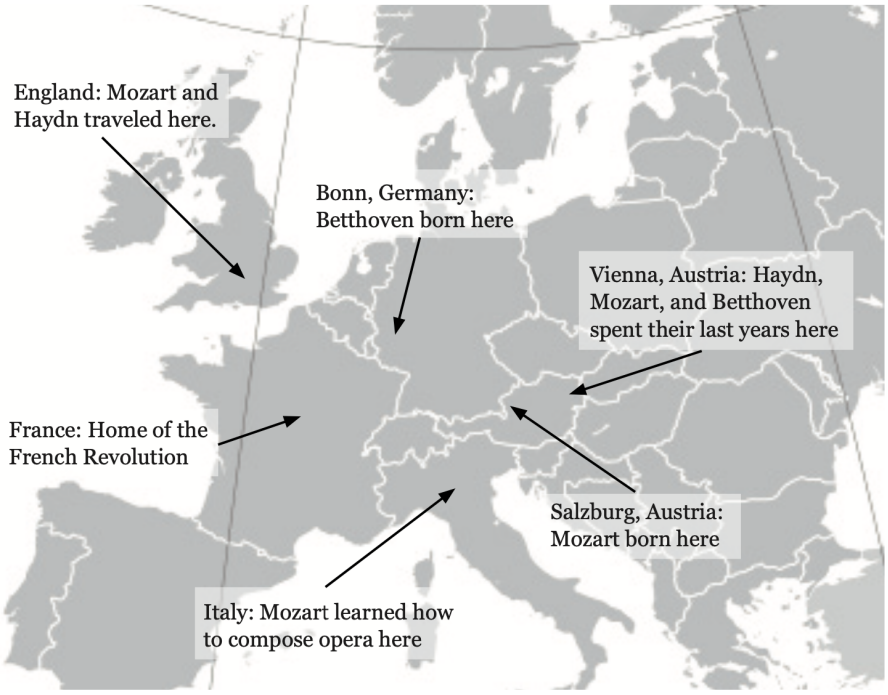


Figure 11.1.2: Map of Europe by User: "Ssolbergj." Source: Wikimedia

Their music careers illustrate the changing role of the composer during this time. The aristocratic sponsors of the Classical artists—who were still functioning under the patronage system—were more interested in the final product than in the artists' intrinsic motivations for creating art for its own sake. For most of his life, Haydn worked for the aristocracy composing to order and wearing the livery of the Esterházy family, who were his patrons. Though successful working under their patronage, Haydn had more freedom to forge his own career after Prince Nikolaus Esterházy's death and staged concerts for his own commercial benefit in London and Vienna. Beethoven, the son of a court musician, was sent to Vienna to learn to compose. By 1809, he had succeeded in securing a lifetime annuity (a promise from local noblemen for annual support). Beethoven did not have to compose mu- sic for them; he simply had to stay in Vienna and compose. In some ways, the role of aristocratic patron and composer was turned on its head. When philosophically compatible with a sponsor, the artist flourished and could express his/her creativity. But in Mozart's case, the patronage system was stifling and counterproductive to his abilities. Mozart was also born and raised by a father who was a court musician, though his father was a court musician for the Archbishop of Salzburg. It was expected that Mozart would also enter the service of the Archbishop; instead, he escaped to Vienna, where he attempted the life of a freelancer. After initial successes, he struggled to earn enough money to make ends meet and died a pauper in 1791. The journey through the Classical period is one between two camps, the old and the new: the old based upon an aristocracy with city states and the new in the rising and more powerful educated middle class. The traditional despotism is dying while the new class system increasingly thrives.

Musical Timeline

Events in History	Events in Music

1762: French philosopher Rousseau publishes *Émile, or Treatise on Education*, outlining Englightenment educational ideas 1776: Declaration of Independence in the U.S.A. 1789: Storming of the Bastille and beginning of the French Revolution (Paris, France) 1793: In the U.S.A., invention of the Cotton Gin, an innovation of the Industrial Revolution	1732: Haydn born 1750: J. S. Bach dies 1756: Mozart born 1770: Beethoven born 1781: Mozart settles in Vienna 1790: Beethoven moves to Vienna 1791: Mozart dies 1791-95: Haydn travels to London 1792: Beethoven moves to Vienna 1809: Haydn dies 1827: Beethoven dies

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11.2: Music in the Classical period

Music Comparison Overview

Baroque Music	Classical Music
• Rise of homophony; polyphony still used • Rise of instrumental music, including the violin family • Meter more important than before • New genres such as opera, oratorio, concerto, cantata, and fugue • Emergence of program music • Continued presence of music at church and court • Continued increase of music among merchant classes • Motor rhythm	• Mostly homophony, but with variation • New genres such as the symphony and string quartet • Use of crescendos and decrescendos • Question and answer (aka antecedent consequent) phrases that are shorter than earlier phrases • New emphasis on musical form: for example, sonata form, theme and variations, minuet and trio, rondo, and first-movement concerto form • Greater use of contrasting dynamics, articulations, and tempos

General Trends of Classical music

Musical Style

The Classical style of music embodies balance, structure, and flexibility of expression, arguably related to the noble simplicity and calm grandeur that the eighteenth century art historian Johann Joachim Winckelmann saw in ancient Greek art. In the music of Haydn, Mozart, and the early Beethoven, we find tuneful melodies using question/answer or antecedent/consequent phrasing; flexible deployment of rhythm and rests; and slower harmonic rhythm (harmonic rhythm is the rate at which the chords or harmonies change). Composers included more expressive marks in their music, such as the crescendo and decrescendo. The homophony of the Classical period featured predominant melody lines accompanied by relatively interesting and independent lines. In the case of a symphony or operatic ensemble, the texture might be described as homophony with multiple accompanying lines or polyphony with a predominant melodic line.

Performing Forces

The Classical period saw new performing forces such as the piano and the string quartet and an expansion of the orchestra. Initially called the fortepiano, then the pianoforte, and now the piano was capable of dynamics from soft to loud; the player needed only to adjust the weight applied when depressing a key. This feature was not available in the Baroque harpsichord. Although the first pianos were developed in the first half of the eighteenth century, most of the technological advancements that led the piano to overtaking all other keyboard instruments in popularity occurred in the late eighteenth century.

Besides the keyboard instruments, the string quartet was the most popular new chamber music ensembles of the Classical period and comprised two violins, a viola, and a cello. In addition to string quartets, composers wrote duets, trios, quintets, and even sextets, septets, and octets. Whether performed in a palace or a more modest middle class home, chamber music, as the name implies, was generally performed in chamber or smaller room.

In the Classical period, the orchestra expanded into an ensemble that might include as many as thirty to sixty musicians distributed into four sections. The sections include the strings, woodwinds, brass, and percussion. Classical composers explored the individual unique tone colors of the instruments and they did not treat the instrumental sections interchangeably. An orchestral classical piece utilizes a much larger tonal palette and more rapid changes of the ensemble's timbre through a variety of orchestration techniques. Each section in the classical orchestra has a unique musical purpose as penned by the composer. The string section still holds its prominence as the center-piece for the orchestra. Composers continue to predominantly assign the first violins the melody and the accompaniment to the lower strings. The woodwinds are orchestrated to provide diverse tone colors and often assigned melodic solo passages. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, clarinets were added to the flutes and oboes to complete the woodwind section. To add volume and to emphasize louder dynamic, horns and trumpets were used. The horns and trumpets also filled out the harmonies. The brass usually were not assigned the melody or solos. The kettle drum or timpani were used for volume highlights and for rhythmic pulse. Overall, the Classical orchestra matured into a multifaceted tone color ensemble that composers could utilize to produce their most demanding musical thoughts acoustically through an extensive tonal palette. General differences between the Baroque and Classical (1750-1815) orchestras are summarized in the following chart.

Baroque Orchestras	Classical Orchestras
• Strings at the core • Woodwind and brass instruments such as the flutes or oboes and trumpets and horns doubled the themes played by the strings or provided harmonies • Any percussion was provided by timpani • Harpsichord, sometimes accompanied by cello or bassoon, provided the basso continuo • Generally led by the harpsichord player	• Strings at the core • More woodwind instruments— flutes and oboes and (increasingly) clarinets—which were sometimes given their own melodic themes and solo parts • More brass instruments, including, after 1808, trombones. • More percussion instruments, including cymbals, the triangle, and other drums • Phasing out of the basso continuo • Generally led by the concertmaster (the most important first violinist) and increasingly by a conductor

Emergence of New Musical Venues

The Classical period saw performing ensembles such as the orchestra appearing at an increasing number of concerts. These concerts were typically held in theaters or in the large halls of palaces and attended by anyone who could afford the ticket price, which was reasonable for a substantial portion of the growing middle class. For this reason, the birth of the public concert is often traced to the late eighteenth century. At the same time, more music was incorporated into a growing number of middle class households.

The redistribution of wealth and power of this era affected the performing forces and musical venues in two ways. First, although the aristocracy still employed musicians, professional composers were no longer exclusively employed by the wealthy. This meant that not all musicians were bound to a particular person or family as their patron/sponsor. Therefore, public concerts shifted from performances in the homes and halls of the rich to performances for the masses which evolved the symphony into a genre for the public concert, as they were eventually written for larger and larger ensembles. Second, middle class families incorporated more music into their households for personal entertainment. For example, middle class households would have their children take music lesson and participate in chamber music or small musical ensembles. Musicians could now support themselves through teaching lessons, composing and publishing music, and per- forming in public venues, such as in public concerts. Other opportunities included the public opera house, which was the center for vocal music experimentation during the Classical era. Composers also continued to write music for the church.

Musical Form

As musical compositions of the Classical period incorporated more performing forces and increased in length, a composition's structure became more important. As an element of organization and coherence, form helps give meaning to a mu- sical movement or piece, we have some evidence to suggest that late eighteenth and early nineteenth century audiences heard form in music that was especially composed to play on their expectations.

Sonata Form

The most important innovation in form during the Classical period is what we call **Sonata Form**. This form got its name from being used as the first movement of most piano sonatas of the Classical period. Consisting of three sections—exposition, development, and recapitulation—it was also used for the first movements (and sometimes final movements) of almost all Classical symphonies and string quartets. The **exposition** of a sonata form presents the primary themes and keys of the movement. After the first theme is presented in the home or tonic key, the music modulates to a different key during a sub-section that is called a "transition." Once the new key is established, subsequent themes appear. The exposition generally ends with a rousing confirmation of the new key in a sub-section called the "closing." The exposition then often repeats.

As its name implies, the **development** "develops" the primary themes of the movement. The motives that comprise the musical themes are often broken apart and given to different parts of the orchestra. These motives are often repeated in sequences (refer back to chapter 1 for more about sequences), and these sequences often lead to frequent modulations from one musical key to another that con- tribute to an overall sense of instability. Near the end of the development, there is sometimes a sub-section called the "retransition" during which the harmonies, textures, and dynamics of the music prepare the listener for the final section of the form, the recapitulation.

Also true to its name, the **recapitulation** brings back the primary themes and home key of the movement. A simultaneous return of the first theme and home key generally marks its beginning. In the recapitulation, the listener hears the same musical themes as in the first presented in the exposition. The main difference between the exposition and the recapitulation is that the recapitulation stays in the home key. After all, the movement is about to end and ending in the home key provides the listener a sense of closure. Recapitulations often end with sub-sections called codas. The **coda**, or "tail," of the movement is a sub-section that re-emphasizes the home key and that generally provides a dramatic conclusion.

Starting in the late eighteenth century, there are reports of listeners recognizing the basic sections of sonata form, and contemporary music theorists outlined them in music composition treatises. Their descriptions are generalizations based on the multitudinous sonata form movements composed by Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven. Although the sonata form movements of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven share many of the characteristics outlined above, each sonata form is slightly different. Perhaps that is what makes their music so interesting: it takes what is expected and does something different. In fact, composers continued to write sonata forms through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. By the end of the nineteenth century, some of these sonata forms were massive, almost-hour-long movements. You will have the opportunity to hear sonata form in several of our focus compositions from the Classical period.

Other Important Forms in Classical Music

Another form of the Classical period is the **Theme and Variations**. Theme and Variations form consists of the presentation of a theme and then the variations upon it. The theme may be illustrated as A with any number of variations follow- ing it: A', A'', A''', A'''', etc. Each theme is a varied version of the original, keeping enough of the theme to be recognizable, but providing enough variety in style for interest. Variations change melodies (often through ornamentation), harmonies, rhythms, and instrumentation. Theme and variations forms were often found in slow movements of symphonies and string quartets. Some fast movements are also in theme and variations form.

The **Minuet and Trio** form found in many Classical symphonies and string quartets stems from the stylized dances of the Baroque Period, and then followed by the Minuet A section: A B A for short. To save paper, the return of the A section was generally not written out. Instead, the composer wrote the words **da capo**, meaning to the head, at the end of the B section indicating a return to the A section. As a movement in three parts, Minuet and Trio form is sometimes called a ternary form. As we will see in our discussion of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, by the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Minuet and Trio was perceived as dated, and composers started writing fast ABA ternary form movements called **scherzos**.

The **rondo** is another popular instrumental form of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Rondo consists of the alternation of a refrain "A" with contrasting sections ("B," "C," "D," etc.). Rondos are often the final movements of string quartets, classical symphonies, concerti, and sonata (instrumental solos).

Genres

We normally classify musical compositions into genres by considering their performing forces, function, the presence and quality of any text, and their musical style and form. Changes in any of these factors can lead to changes in genres. The two most important new genres of the Classical period were the symphony and the string quartet; instrumental genres that continued from the Baroque period include the concerto.

Although one might trace its origins to the opera overture, the symphony developed as an orchestral composition for the public concert. By the end of the Classical period, it typically had four movements. The first movement was generally

fast in tempo and in sonata form. The final movement was normally fast in tempo and used sonata, rondo, or theme and variations form. The interior movements consisted of a slow and lyrical movement and a moderate-tempo dance-like movement generally using the style of the minuet, a popular eighteenth century dance.

The string quartet became one of the most popular genres of Classical chamber music. Its overall structure and form was exactly like the symphony. However, it was always performed by two violins, one viola, and one cello (thus its name) and commonly used as entertainment in the home, although on occasion string quartets were performed in public concerts. Also popular for personal diversion was the piano sonata, which normally had only three movements (generally lacking the minuet movement found in the string quartet and the symphony).

The most pronounced change in the Classical period vocal music was the growing popularity of **opera buffa**, or comic opera, over the more serious plot and aristocratic characters of Baroque opera seria. Opera buffa portrayed the lives of middle class characters and often mixed tragedy with comedy; as we will see, Mozart would produce some of the most famous opera buffa of all time. (As

a side note, Mozart also transformed the opera overture into a preview of the musical themes to follow in the opera proper.) Composers Haydn and Beethoven also continued to write oratorios.

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11.3: Music of Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)

Joseph Haydn

Born in 1732, Joseph Haydn grew up in a small village that was located about a six-hour coach ride east of Vienna (today the two are about an hour apart by car). His family loved to sing together, and perceiving that their son had musical talent, apprenticed six-year-old Joseph Haydn to a relative who was a schoolmaster and choirmaster. As an apprentice, Haydn learned harpsichord and violin and sang in the church. So distinct was Haydn's voice that he was recommended to Vienna's St.Stephen's Cathedral's music director.



Figure 11.3.1: Joseph Haydn,1791 by Thomas Hardy. Source: Wikimedia

In 1740 Haydn became of student of St. Stephen's Cathedral. He sang with the St. Stephen's Cathedral boys' choir for almost ten years, until his voice broke (changed). After searching, he found a job as valet to the Italian opera composer Nicola Porpora and most likely started studying music theory and music composition in a systematic way at that time. He composed a comic musical and eventually became a chapel master for a Czech nobleman. When this noble family fell into hard times, they released Haydn. In 1761, he became a Vice-Chapel Master for an even wealthier nobleman, the Hungarian Prince Esterházy. Haydn spent almost thirty years working for their family. He was considered a skilled servant, who soon became their head Chapel Master and was highly prized, especially by the second and most musical of the Esterházy princes for whom Haydn worked.

The Esterházys kept Haydn very busy: he wrote music, which he played both for and with his patrons, ran the orchestra, and staged operas. In 1779, Haydn's contract was renegotiated, allowing him to write and sell music outside of the Esterházy family. Within a decade, he was the most famous composer in Europe. In 1790, the musical Prince Nikolaus Esterházy died and his son Anton downsized the family's musical activities. This shift allowed Haydn to accept an offer to give a concert in London, England, where his music was very popular. Haydn left Vienna for London in December. For the concerts there, he composed an opera, symphonies, and chamber music, all of which were extremely popular. Haydn revisited London twice in the following years, 1791 to 1795, earning—after expenses—as much as he had in twenty years of employment with the Esterházys. Nonetheless, a new Esterházy prince decided to reestablish the family's musical foothold, so Haydn returned to their service in 1796. In the last years of his life, he wrote two important oratorios (he had been much impressed by performances of Handel's oratorios while in London) as well as more chamber music.

Overview of Haydn's Music

Like his younger contemporaries Mozart and Beethoven, Joseph Haydn com- posed in all the genres of his day. From a historical perspective, his contributions to the string quartet and the symphony are particularly significant: in fact, he is often called the Father of the Symphony. His music is also known for its motivic construction, use of folk tunes, and musical wit. Central to Haydn's compositional process was his ability to take small numbers of short musical motives and vary them in enough ways so as to provide interesting music for movements that were several minutes long. Folk-like as well as popular tunes of the day can be heard in many of his compositions for piano, string quartet, and orchestra. Contemporary audiences and critics seemed to

appreciate this mixing of musical complexity and the familiar. Ernst Ludwig Gerber (1790-92), an important eighteenth-century musical connoisseur, wrote that Haydn "possessed the great art of *appearing* familiar in his themes" (*Historisch-biographisches Lexikon der Tonkünstler* of 1790-1792). Additionally, many of his contemporaries remarked on Haydn's musical wit, or humor. Several of his music compositions play on the listeners' expectations, especially through the use of surprise rests, held out notes, and sudden dynamic changes.

Focus Composition:

Haydn, String Quartet in D Major, Op. 20, No. 4 (1772)

The string quartet was one of the important performing forces and genres of the Classical period, and Haydn was one of its most important composers. Over the course of his life, Haydn wrote sixty-eight quartets, many of which were played both by Haydn's aristocratic patrons and published and available for the amateur musician to purchase and play. In fact, many late eighteenth century writers (including the famous German poet Goethe) referred to the string quartet as "a conversation between four intelligent people," in this case, the four people being the first and second violinist, violist, and cellist.

The string quartet by Haydn which we will study is one of six quartets that he wrote in 1772 and published as opus twenty quartets in 1774 (roughly speaking, the "twenty" meant that this was Haydn's twentieth publication to date). In many ways, this follows the norms of other string quartets of the day. It is in four movements, with a fast first movement in sonata form, a slow second movement that uses a theme and variations form, a moderate-tempo third movement that is like a minuet, and a fourth fast movement, here in sonata form. As we will see, the third movement is subtitled "alla Zingarese," or "in the style of the Hungarians" (a good example of Haydn being "folky"). The entire quartet comprises a little over twenty minutes of music.

First, we will listen to the first movement, which is marked "allegro di molto," or very fast, and is in D major, as expected given the string quartet's title. It uses sonata form, and as stated earlier, in the exposition, the home key and musical themes of the movement are introduced, or "exposed." In the development, those themes are broken apart and combined in new and different ways, or "developed." In the recapitulation, the home key and original musical themes return; in other words, they are "recapitulated" or "recapped."

The exposition, development, and recapitulation are further broken into sub- sections to correspond to modulations in keys and the presentation of new and different themes. For the time being, simply listen for the main sections of sonata form in the first movement of Haydn's string quartet. You might also listen for Haydn's motivic style. In the first musical theme, you'll hear three motives. The first motive, for example, repeats the same pitch three times. The second motive consists of an arched musical phrase that ascends and descends and outlines the pitches of an important chord of the movement. The final motive that Haydn packs into his opening musical theme is a musical turn, or a series of notes that move by rapids. Each of these motives is heard repeatedly through the rest of the movement.

Guide for Listening:

- Composer: Haydn
- Composition: String Quartet in D major, Op. 20, no. 4 (I: Allegro di molto)
- Date: 1772
- Genre: string quartet
- Form: I: Allegro di molto is in **sonata form**
- Performing Forces: string quartet, i.e., two violins, one viola, one cello

What we want you to remember about this part of the composition:

- It uses sonata form: exposition, development, and recapitulation
- It is in D major
- Haydn's style here is very motivic

Other things to listen for:

- The interplay of the two violins, viola, and cello, in ways that might remind you of a "conversation between four intelligent people."
- The subsections of the sonata form (exposition, development, recapitulation)

Please watch this video, which tells you on screen what is happening. The first movement goes from 0:08 to 9:00:



The third movement of Haydn's String Quartet in D major, Op. 20, no. 4 uses a moderate tempo (it is marked "allegretto," in this case, a slow allegro) and the form of a minuet. Keeping with the popular culture of the day, a great number of Haydn's compositions included minuet movements.

Here, however, we see Haydn playing on our expectations for the minuet and writing a movement that is *alla zingarese*. The minuet was not a Hungarian dance, so the listener's experience and expectations are altered when the third movement sounds more like a lively Hungarian folk dance than the stately western-European minuet. (For comparison's sake, you can listen to the second movement of Haydn's String Quartet in E flat, Op. 20, no. 1, which is a much more traditional-sounding minuet.) Haydn retains the form of the stylized minuet, which consisted of a minuet and a trio. The trio consists of musical phrases that contrast with what was heard in the minuet: the trio got its name from an earlier practice of assigning this music to a group of three wind players. Here the entire string quartet plays throughout. After the trio, the group returns to the minuet, resulting in a minuet (A)—trio (B)— minuet (A). As was the custom, Haydn did not write out the minuet music at its return—remember paper was much more expensive 200 years ago than it is today. Instead, Haydn wrote two Italian words: "da capo" . As these words were used by all composers of the day, the players knew immediately to flip to the beginning of the movement and repeat the minuet, generally without repeats.

- Composer: Haydn
- Composition: String Quartet in D major, op. 20, no. 4 (III. Allegretto alla zingarese)
- Date: 1772
- Genre: string quartet
- Form: III. Allegretto alla zingarese uses the form of a minuet and trio, that is, Minuet (A) Trio (B) Minuet (A).
- Performing Forces: string quartet comprised of 2 violins, 1 viola, and 1 cello

What we want you to remember about this composition:

- It is in triple time and a moderate tempo, like most minuets
- The music for the repeat of the minuet is not written out; instead, Haydn writes "da capo" at the end of the Trio
- Instead of sounding like a stately minuet, it sounds more like a lively Hungarian dance

Other things to listen for:

- It hardly sounds like triple meter, because Haydn writes accents on beats two and three instead of mainly on beat one

This is the same video, although it should now start at the 3rd movement. In case it doesn't start in the correct place, please go to 18:54. The movement ends at 20:42:



Focus Composition:

Haydn, Symphony No. 94 in G major, "Surprise"

Haydn is also often called the Father of the Symphony because he wrote over 100 symphonies, which, like his string quartets, span most of his compositional career. As already noted, the Classical orchestra featured primarily strings, with flutes and oboes (and, with Haydn's last symphonies, clarinets) for woodwinds, trumpets and horns for brass, and timpani (and occasionally another drums or the cymbals or triangle) for percussion. The symphony gradually took on the four-movement form that was a norm for over a century, although as we will see, composers sometimes relished departing from the norm.

Haydn wrote some of his most successful symphonies for his times in London. His Symphony No. 94 in G Major, which premiered in London in 1792, is a good ex- ample of Haydn's thwarting musical expectations for witty ends. Like most symphonies of its day, the first movement is in sonata form. (Haydn does open the symphony with a brief, slow introduction before launching into the first movement proper.)

Haydn's sense of humor is most evident in the moderately slow andante second movement which starts like a typical theme and variations movement consisting of a musical theme that the composer then varies several times. Each variation retains enough of the original theme to be recognizable but adds other elements to provide interest. The themes used for theme and variations movements tended to be simple, tuneful melody lines. In this case, the theme consists of an eight-mea- sure musical phrase that is repeated. This movement, like many movements of Classical symphonies and string quartets, ends with a coda.

Why did Haydn write such a loud chord at the end of the second statement of the *a* phrase of the theme? Commentators have long speculated that Haydn may have noticed that audience members tended to drift off to sleep in slow and often quietly lyrical middle movements of symphonies and decided to give them an abrupt wakeup. Haydn himself said nothing of the sort, although his letters, as well as his music, do suggest that he was attentive to his audience's opinions and attempted at every juncture to give them music that was new and interesting: for Haydn, that clearly meant playing upon his listener's expectations in ways that might even be considered humorous.

- Composer: Haydn
- Composition: Symphony No. 94 in G major, "Surprise" (II. Andante)
- Date: 1791
- Genre: symphony
- Form: II. Andante is in theme and variations form
- Performing Forces: Classical orchestra here with 1st violin section, 2nd violin section, viola section, cellos/bass section, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 trumpets, 2 horns, 2 bassoons, and timpani

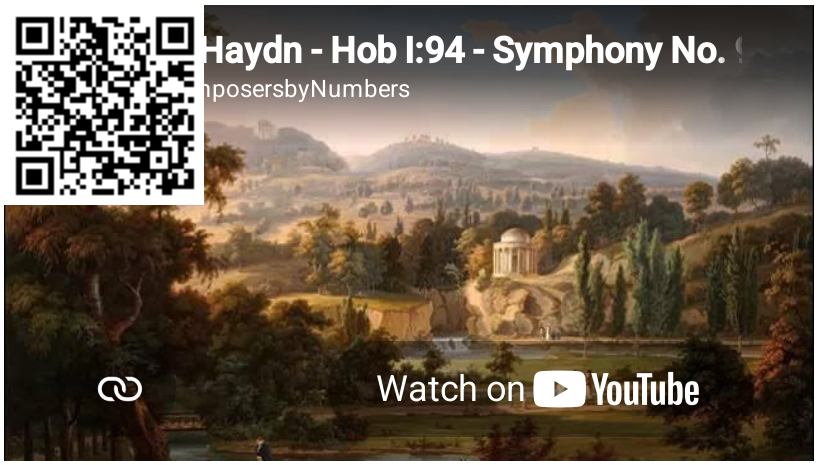
What we want you to remember about this composition:

- It is in theme and variations form
- The very loud chord that ends the first phrase of the theme provides the "surprise"

Other things to listen for:

- The different ways that Haydn varies the theme: texture, register, instrumentation, key

The video should begin at the second movement, but in case it does not, please go to 8:45.



Movement II: Andante

8:46 - main theme (a section and a repeat) - Eight-measure theme with a question and answer structure. The “question” ascends and descends and then the “answer” ascends and descends, and ends with a very loud chord (the answer). In C major and mostly consonant. In homophonic texture, with melody in the violins and accompaniment by the other strings; soft dynamics and then very soft staccato notes until ending with a very loud chord played by the full orchestra, the “surprise.”

9:21 - b section -Contrasting more legato eight-measure phrase ends like the staccato motives of the a phrase without the loud chord

9:39 - b section - Repetition of b

9:57 - Variation 1 of aa - Theme in the second violins and violas under a higher-pitched 1st violin counter- melody. Still in C major and mostly consonant. Ascending part of the theme is forte and the descending part of the phrase is piano; the first-violin countermelody is an interesting line but the overall texture is still homophonic

10:30 - bb - Similar in texture and harmonies; piano dynamic throughout

11:05 - Variation 2 of aa - The first four measures are in unison monophonic texture and very loud and the second four measures (the answer) are in homophonic texture and very soft; In C minor

11:41 - develops motives from a and b phrases - In C minor with more dissonance; very loud in dynamics; The motives are passed from instrument to instrument in polyphonic imitation.

12:20 - Variation 3 of aa - Back in C major. The oboes and flutes get the a phrase with fast repeated notes in a higher register; the second time, the violins play the a phrase at original pitch; uses homophonic texture throughout.

12:56 - bb - The flutes and oboes play counter-melodies while the strings play the theme.

13:27 - Variation 4 of ab - The winds get the first a phrase and then it returns to the first violin; very loud for the first statement of a and very soft for the second statement of a; homophonic texture throughout.

14:01 - bb+ extension - Shifting dynamics

14:50 - Coda

The third movement of Haydn’s “Surprise” Symphony is a rather traditional minuet and trio movement. The fourth movement is equally traditional; it uses a light-hearted form called the rondo. As state above, in a rondo, a musical refrain, labeled as “A,” alternates with other sections, alternately called B, C, D, etc. See if you can hear the recurrence of the refrain as you listen to this joyful conclusion to the symphony.

- Composer: Haydn
- Composition: Symphony No. 94 in G major, “Surprise” (IV. Finale: Allegro Molto)
- Date: 1791
- Genre: symphony
- Form: IV. Finale: Allegro molto is in a (sonata) rondo form

- Performing Forces: Classical orchestra here with 1st violin section, 2nd violin section, viola section, cellos/bass section, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 trumpets, 2 horns, 2 bassoons, and timpani

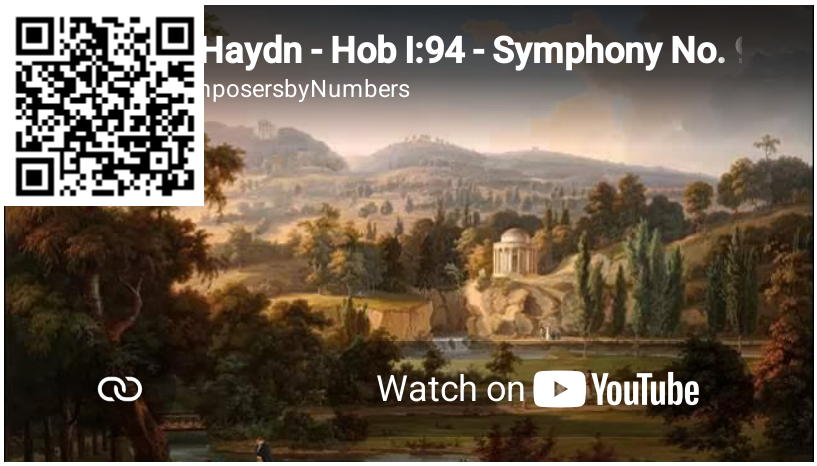
What we want you to remember about this composition:

- This movement uses a rondo form
- It is at a very fast tempo
- It uses a full orchestra

Other things to listen for:

- The alternation of the different sections of the rondo form
- The changes in key and texture

The beginning of movement 4 is 19:15 (it should automatically start there):



Movement IV: Rondo

19:17 - A - Fast and tuneful theme in duple time in homophonic texture; in G major, with more dissonances as the music modulates to...

20:19 - B - D major for a different tuneful theme B that opens descending motion;

20:42 - A' -Returns to G major and the first theme; texture becomes more polyphonic as it...

20:49 - C -modulates through several keys.

21:17 - A - Return to the first theme in G major

21:26 - D - Opening motive of the first theme in minor and then sequences on other motives that modulate through minor keys.

21:47 - A and Coda - Back in G major with the first theme and other music of A that is extended into a coda that brings back b momentarily and juxtaposes forte and piano dynamics before its rousing close.

Haydn's symphonies greatly influenced the musical style of both Mozart and Beethoven; indeed, these two composers learned how to develop motives from Haydn's earlier symphonies. Works such as the Surprise Symphony were especial- ly shaping for the young Beethoven, who, as we will later discuss, was taking music composition lessons from Haydn about the same time that Haydn was composing the Symphony No. 94 before his trip to London.

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11.4: Music of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Amadeus

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (b. 1756-91) was born in Salzburg, Austria. His father, Leopold Mozart, was an accomplished violinist of the Archbishop of Salzburg's court. Additionally, Leopold had written a respected book on the playing of the violin. At a very young age, Wolfgang began his career as a composer and performer. A prodigy, his talent far exceeded any in music, past his contemporaries. He began writing music prior to the age of five. At the age of six, Wolfgang performed in the court of Empress Maria Theresa.

Mozart's father was quite proud of his children, both being child prodigies. At age seven, Wolfgang, his father, and his sister Maria Anna (nicknamed "Nannerl") embarked on a tour featuring Wolfgang in London, Munich, and Paris. As was customary at the time, Wolfgang, the son, was promoted and pushed ahead with his musical career by his father. While his sister, the female, grew up traditionally, married, and eventually took care of her father Leopold in his later years. However, while the two siblings were still performing, these tours occurred from when Wolfgang was between the ages of six and seventeen. The tours, though, were quite demeaning for the young
musical genius in that he was often looked upon as just a superficial genre of entertainment rather than being respected as a musical prodigy. He would often be asked to identify the tonality of a piece while listening to it or asked to sight read and perform with a cloth over his hands while at the piano. Still, the tours allowed young Mozart to accumulate knowledge about musical styles across Europe. As a composer prior to his teens, the young Mozart had already composed religious works, symphonies, solo sonatas, an opera buffa, and *Bastien and Bastienne*, an operetta; in short, he had quickly mastered all the forms of music.

Back in Salzburg, Mozart was very unhappy due to being musically restrained by the restrictions of his patron the Archbishop of Salzburg, Hieronymus von Colloredo. At approximately the age of twenty-five, he moved to Vienna and became a free artist (agent) and pursued other opportunities. Another likely reason for Wolfgang's ultimate departure to Vienna was to become independent of his father. Though Leopold was well-meaning and had sacrificed a great deal to ensure the future and happiness of his son, he was an overbearing father. Thus at the age of twenty-five, Mozart married Constance Weber. Mozart's father did not view the marriage favorably and this marriage served as a wedge severing Wolfgang's close ties to his father.

Wolfgang's new life in Vienna however was not easy. For almost ten years, he struggled financially unable to find the secure financial environment in which he had grown up. The music patronage system was still the main way for musicians to prosper and thrive: several times, Mozart was considered for patron employment but was not hired. Having hired several other musicians ahead of Mozart, Emperor Joseph II hired Mozart to basically compose dances for the court's balls. As the tasks were far beneath his musical genius, Mozart was quite bitter about this assignment.



Figure 11.4.1: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart by Barbara Krafft. Source: Wikimedia

While in Vienna, Mozart relied on his teaching to sustain him and his family. He also relied on the entertainment genre of the concert. He would write piano concertos for annual concerts. Their programs would also include some arias, solo improvisation, and possibly an overture of piece by another composer.

The peak of Mozart's career success occurred in 1786 with the writing of *The Marriage of Figaro* (libretto by Lorenzo da Ponte). The opera was a hit in Prague and Vienna. The city of Prague, so impressed with the opera, commissioned another piece by Mozart. Mozart, with da Ponte again as librettist, then composed *Don Giovanni*. The second opera left the audience somewhat confused. Mozart's luster and appeal seemed to have passed. As a composer, Mozart was trying to expand the spectrum, or horizons, of the musical world. Therefore, his music sometimes had to be viewed more than once by the audience in order for them to understand and appreciate it. Mozart was pushing the musical envelope beyond the standard entertainment expected by his aristocratic audience, and patrons in general did not appreciate it. In a letter to Mozart, Emperor Joseph II wrote of *Don Giovanni* that the opera was perhaps better than *The Marriage of Figaro* but that it did not set well on the pallet of the Viennese. Mozart quickly fired back, responding that the Viennese perhaps needed more time to understand it.

In the final year of his life, Mozart with librettist (actor/poet) Emanuel Schikaneder, wrote a very successful opera for the Viennese theatre, *The Magic Flute*. The newly acclaimed famous composer was quickly hired to write a piece (as well as attend) the coronation of the new Emperor, Leopold II, as King of Bohemia. The festive opera that Mozart composed for this event was called *The Clemency of Titus*. Its audience, overly indulged and exhausted from the coronation, was not impressed with Mozart's work. Mozart returned home depressed and broken, and began working on a Requiem, which, coincidentally, would be his last composition.

The *Requiem* was commissioned by a count who intended to pass the work off as his own. Mozart's health failed shortly after receiving this commission and the composer died, just before his thirty-sixth birthday, before completing the piece. Mozart's favorite student, Franz Xaver Süssmayr, completed the mass from Mozart's sketch scores, with some insertions of his own, while rumors spread that Mozart was possibly poisoned by another contemporary composer. In debt at the time of his death, Mozart was given a common burial. As one commentator wrote:

Thus, "without a note of music, forsaken by all he held dear, the remains of this Prince of Harmony were committed to the earth, not even in a grave of their own, but in the common fosse affected to the indiscriminate sepulture of homeless mendicants and nameless waifs."

Overview of Mozart's Music

From Mozart's youth, his musical intellect and capability were unmatched. His contemporaries often noted that Mozart seemed to have already heard, edited, listened to, and visualized entire musical works in his mind before raising a pen to compose them on paper. When he took pen in hand, he would basically transcribe the work in his head onto the manuscript paper. Observers also said that Mozart could listen and carry on conversations with others while transcribing his music to paper.

Mozart was musically very prolific in his short life. He composed operas, church music, a Requiem, string quartets, string quintets, mixed quintets and quartets, concertos, piano sonatas, and many lighter chamber pieces (such as divertimentos), including his superb *A Little Night Music* (*Eine kleine Nachtmusik).* His violin and piano sonatas are among the best ever written both in form and emotional content. Six of his quartets were dedicated to Haydn, whose influence Mozart celebrated in their preface.

Mozart additionally wrote exceptional keyboard music, particularly since he was respected as one of the finest pianists of the Classical period. He loved the instrument dearly and wrote many solo works, as well as more than twenty piano concertos for piano and orchestra, thus contributing greatly to the concerto's popularity as an acceptable medium. Many of these concerti were premiered at Mozart's annual public fundraising concerts. Of his many piano solo pieces, the *Fantasia in C minor* K 475 and the *Sonata* (in C minor) K 457 are representative of his most famous.

And Mozart composed more than forty symphonies, the writing of which extended across his entire career. He was known for the full and rich instrumentation and voicing of his symphonies. His conveying of emotion and mood are especially portrayed in these works. His final six symphonies, written in the last decade of his life, are the most artistically self-motivated independent of art patronage and supervision that might stifle creativity. Mozart's late and great symphonies include the *Haffner* in D (1782), the *Linz* in C (1783), the *Prague* in D (1786), and his last three symphonies composed in 1788. Mozart's final symphony probably was not performed prior to his death. In addition to the symphonies and piano concertos, Mozart composed other major instrumental works for clarinet, violin and French horn in concertos.

Opera: *Don Giovanni*

For a rundown of the plot of the opera, please check out the Metropolitan Opera's page for it.

- Composer: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
- Librettist: Lorenzo Da Ponte
- Composition: Deh, vieni alla finestra, Testo (Aria) from Don Giovanni, in Italian
- Date: 1787, First performed October 29, 1787
- Genre: Aria for baritone voice
- Form: binary
- Nature of Text: Originally in Italian; Translation in English available at the Aria Database:
- Performing Forces: Baritone and Classical Orchestra

What we want you to remember about this composition:

This is a really a beautiful love-song where the womanizer Don Giovanni tries to woo Elvira's maid. The piece in D major begins in a 6/8 meter. The musical scoring includes a mandolin in the orchestra with light plucked accompaniments from the violins which supplement the feel of the mandolin. The atmosphere created by the aria tends to convince the audience of a heartfelt personal love and attraction The piece is written in a way to present a very light secular style canzonetta in binary form, which tends to help capture the playfulness of the Don Giovanni character. This video version has subtitles in English.



Focus composition

Mozart, Piano Concerto No. 20 in D Minor, K. 466 [1785]

Classical composers like Mozart took the Baroque concerto for soloist and orchestra and expanded it into a much larger form. Like Vivaldi's concertos, Mozart's concertos were generally in three movements, with fast, slow, and fast tempos, respectively. The first movements of Mozart's concertos also featured the alternation of ritornello sections and solo sections, like we heard in the concerto by Vivaldi in the previous chapter. Mozart, however, also applied the dynamics of sonata form to the first movements of his concertos, resulting in a form that we now call **double exposition form**. In double exposition form, the first statement of the exposition was assigned to the orchestra, and the second statement of the exposition was assigned to the soloist with orchestral accompaniment in the background. The alternation between orchestra and soloist sections continues in the development and recapitulation. Near the end of the recapitulation and during the final orchestra exposition, the orchestra holds a suspenseful chord, at which point the soloist enters and the orchestra drops out. For a minute or longer, the soloist plays a **cadenza**. A cadenza is a solo section that sounds improvised, though sometimes composers or performers wrote these ahead of time, as is the case with this concerto (the recording cited by the text features a cadenza that was written by Beethoven). A cadenza normally ends with the pianist sustaining a chord (often with a trill) signaling the orchestra's final entrance in the piece, playing the last phrase of the ritornello to bring the movement to a conclusion.

The first movement of Mozart's Concerto No. 20 in D minor, K. 466 is a good example of double exposition form. As the program annotator for the Burgess Hill Symphony Orchestra puts it:

The orchestral tutti opens with the D minor first subject. This suggests dark threatening skies, emphasized by syncopation and dynamic contrasts. For a brief while the louring mood is relieved by the second subject, which has modulated into F major. The solo piano makes its entry with a plaintive new theme back in D minor - a little theme that refuses to go away. As the development progresses Mozart reviews all his themes, and press- es onwards to a rather stormy climax leading to the cadenza. Mozart left no written cadenzas for this work. When the score came into the hands of Beethoven, he immediately decided that such a dramatic movement as this sorely needed one. He promptly sat down and wrote the shadowed brilliance that will be played by today's soloist.

For the recording of a lecture recital on this piece, please go to this BBC archive.

- Composer: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
- Composition: Piano Concerto No. 20 in D minor, K466, First Movement 1. Allegro (Cadenzas by Beethoven)
- Date: 1785
- Genre: Piano Concerto
- Form: Double exposition form
- Performing Forces: piano soloist and Classical orchestra

What we want you to remember about this composition:

- It is in double exposition form.
- At the end of the recapitulation, in the final ritornello, the orchestra drops out and the soloist plays a cadenza that sounds improvised.

- The movement (like the concerto as a whole) starts and ends in D minor and is one of only two Mozart concertos in a minor key

This is a recording of pianist Martha Argerich playing this work in 1998. The first movement lasts from the beginning of the video until 13:27.



0:00 - Orchestral Exposition - Orchestra alone, in a minor key Orchestral Exposition throughout.

2:18 - Solo Exposition - Spotlight on the solo piano, with some accompaniment from the orchestra; the key modulates to F majors.

5:05 - Development - Focus switches back and forth from solo piano and the orchestra while the music develops the themes, motives, and harmonies from the exposition.

7:23 -Recapitulation: Ritornello & solo sections - Back in D minor with the first themes from the exposition. Frequent alternation between the soloist and orchestra as they share the themes.

10:17 - Recapitulation: Final ritornello - Orchestra begins the final ritornello and then sustains a suspenseful chord.

10:35 -Recapitulation: Cadenza -The pianist plays in a improvisatory manner, shifting suddenly between different motives, tempos, and styles. Listen for many ornaments such as trills and rapid and virtuosic scales. After a final, extended series of trills (starting at 12:17), the orchestra returns for...

12:30 - Recapitulation: Ritornello concludes - the final phrase of the ritornello and movement (which ends in D minor).

It is impossible to know how many more operas and symphonies Mozart would have written had he lived into his forties, fifties, or even sixties. Haydn's music written after the death of Mozart shows the influence of his younger contemporary, and Beethoven's early music was also shaped by Mozart's. In fact, in 1792, a twenty-something Beethoven was sent to Vienna with the expressed purpose of receiving "the spirit of Mozart from the hands of Haydn."

Conclusion

As we have seen, around the 50 or so years that span the musical compositions of Haydn and Mozart were rife with innovations in musical genre, style, and form. In many ways, they shaped music for the next 200 years. Composers continued to write symphonies and string quartets, using forms such as the sonata, theme, and variations. A large portion of late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century society continued playing music in the home and going to theaters for opera and to concerts at which orchestral compositions such as concertos and symphonies were performed. Although that live performance culture may not be as prevalent at the beginning of the twenty-first century, we might ask why it was so important for Western music culture for so long. We also might ask if any of its elements inform our music of today.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

12: Nineteenth-Century Music and Romanticism

Learning Objectives

1. Demonstrate knowledge of historical and cultural contexts of nineteenth-century music, including musical Romanticism and Nationalism
2. Aurally identify selected genres of nineteenth-century music and their associated expressive aims, uses, and styles
3. Aurally identify the music of selected composers of nineteenth-century music and their associated styles
4. Explain ways in which music and other cultural forms interact in nineteenth-century music in genres such as the art song, program music, opera, and musical nationalism

12.1: Music of Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)
12.2: Romanticism- Introduction and Historical Context
12.3: Music in the Nineteenth Century
12.4: Music of the Early Romantics
12.5: Romantic Piano Music

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12.1: Music of Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Beethoven: Crossover from Classicism to Romanticism

Beethoven was born in Bonn in December of 1770. As you can see from the map at the beginning of the last module, Bonn sat at the Western edge of the Germanic lands, on the Rhine River. Those in Bonn were well-acquainted with traditions of the Netherlands and of the French; they would be some of the first to hear of the revolutionary ideas coming out of France in the 1780s. The area was ruled by the Elector of Cologne. As the Kapellmeister for the Elector, Beethoven's grandfather held the most important musical position in Bonn; he died when Beethoven was three years old. Beethoven's father, Johann Beethoven, sang in the Electoral Chapel his entire life. While he may have provided his son with music lessons at an early stage of Ludwig's life, it appears that Johann had given into alcoholism and depression, especially after the death of Maria Magdalena Keverich (Johann's wife and Ludwig's mother) in 1787.

Although hundreds of miles east of Vienna, the Electorate of Cologne was u der the jurisdiction of the Austrian Habsburg empire that was ruled from this Eastern European city. The close ties between these lands made it convenient for the Elector, with the support of the music-loving Count Ferdinand Ernst Gabriel von Waldstein (1762-1823), to send Beethoven to Vienna to further his music training. Ferdinand was the youngest of an aristocratic family in Bonn. He greatly support- ed the arts and became a patron of Beethoven. Beethoven's first stay in Vienna in 1787 was interrupted by the death of his mother. In 1792, he returned to Vienna for good.

Perhaps the most universally-known fact of Beethoven's life is that he went deaf. You can read entire books on the topic; for our present purposes, the timing of his hearing loss is most important. It was at the end of the 1790s that Beethoven first recognized that he was losing his hearing. By 1801, he was writing about it to his most trusted friends. It is clear that the loss of his hearing was an existential crisis for Beethoven. During the fall of 1802, he composed a letter to his brothers that included his last will and testament, a document that we've come to know as the "Heiligenstadt Testament" named after the small town of Heiligenstadt, north of the Viennese city center, where he was staying.To read the text of this letter, check out the wikipedia page for it.

The "Heiligenstadt Testament" provides us insight to Beethoven's heart and mind. Most striking is his statement that his experiences of social alienation, connected to his hearing loss, "drove me almost to despair, a little more of that and I have ended my life—it was only *my art* that held me back." The idea that Beethoven found in art a reason to live suggests both his valuing of art and a certain self-awareness of what he had to offer music. Beethoven and his physicians tried various means to counter the hearing loss and improve his ability to function in society. By 1818, however, Beethoven was completely deaf.

Beethoven had a complex personality. Although he read the most profound philosophers of his day and was compelled by lofty philosophical ideals, his own writing was broken and his personal accounts show errors in basic math.



Figure 12.1.1: Ludwig van Beethoven by Joseph Karl Stieler. Source: Wikimedia

He craved close human relationships yet had difficulty sustaining them. By 1810, he had secured a lifetime annuity from local noblemen, meaning that Beethoven never lacked for money. Still, his letters—as well as the accounts of contemporaries—suggest a man suspicious of others and preoccupied with the compensation he was receiving.

Overview of Beethoven's Music

Upon arriving in Vienna in the early 1790s, Beethoven supported himself by playing piano at salons and by giving music lessons. Salons were gatherings of literary types, visual artists, musicians, and thinkers, often hosted by noblewomen for their friends. Here Beethoven both played music of his own composition and improvised upon musical themes given to him by those in attendance.

In April of 1800 Beethoven gave his first concert for his own benefit, held at the important Burgtheater.

As typical for the time, the concert included a variety of types of music, vocal, orchestral, and even, in this case, chamber music. Many of the selections were by Haydn and Mozart, for Beethoven's music from this period was profoundly influenced by these two composers.

Scholars have traditionally divided Beethoven's composing into three chronological periods: early, middle, and late. Like all efforts to categorize, this one pro- poses boundaries that are open to debate. Probably most controversial is the dating of the end of the middle period and the beginning of the late period. Beethoven did not compose much music between 1814 and 1818, meaning that any division of those years would fall more on Beethoven's life than on his music.

In general, the music of Beethoven's first period (roughly until 1803) reflects the influence of Haydn and Mozart. Beethoven's second period (1803-1814) is sometimes called his "heroic" period, based on his recovery from depression documented in the "Heiligenstadt Testament" mentioned earlier. This period includes such music compositions as his Third Symphony, which Beethoven subtitled "*Ero- ica*" (that is, heroic), the Fifth Symphony, and Beethoven's one opera, *Fidelio*, which took the French revolution as its inspiration. Other works composed during this time include Symphonies No. 3 through No. 8 and famous piano works, such as the sonatas "Waldstein," "Appassionata," and "Lebewohl" and Concertos No. 4 and No. 5. He continued to write instrumental chamber music, choral music, and songs into his heroic middle period. In these works of his middle period, Beethoven is often regarded as having come into his own because they display a new and original musical style. In comparison to the works of Haydn and Mozart and Beethoven's earlier music, these longer compositions feature larger performing forces, thicker poly- phonic textures, more complex motivic relationships, more dissonance and de- layed resolution of dissonance, more syncopation and **hemiola** (hemiola is the momentary simultaneous sense of being in two meters at the same time), and more elaborate forms.



Figure 12.1.2: Burgtheater by Michael Frankenstein. Source: Wikimedia

When Beethoven started composing again in 1818, his music was much more experimental. Some of his contemporaries believed that he had lost his ability to compose as he lost his hearing. The late piano sonatas, last five string quartets, monumental *Missa Solemnis*, and Symphony No. 9 in D minor (*The Choral Symphony*) are now perceived to be some of Beethoven's most revolutionary compositions, although they were not uniformly applauded during his lifetime. Beethoven's late style was one of contrasts: extremely slow music next to extremely fast music and extremely complex and dissonant music next to extremely simple and consonant music.

Although this chapter will not discuss the music of Beethoven's early period or late period in any depth, you might want to explore this music on your own. Beethoven's first published piano sonata, the Sonata in F minor, Op. 2, No. 1 (1795), shows the influence

of its dedicatee, Joseph Haydn. One of Beethoven's last works, his famous Ninth Symphony, departs from the norms of the day by incorporating vocal soloists and a choir into a symphony, which was almost always written only for orchestral instruments. The Ninth Symphony is Beethoven's longest; its first three movements, although innovative in many ways, use the expected forms: a fast sonata form, a *scherzo* (which by the early nineteenth century—as we will see in our discussion of the Fifth Symphony—had replaced the minuet and trio), and a slow theme and variations form. The finale, in which the vocalists participate, is truly revolutionary in terms of its length, the sheer extremes of the musical styles it uses, and the combination of large orchestra and choir. The text or words that Beethoven chose for the vocalists speak of joy and the hope that all humankind might live together in brotherly love. The "Ode to Joy" melody to which Beethoven set these words was later used for the hymn "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee."

Focus Composition:

Beethoven, Symphony No. 5 in C Minor, Op. 67 (1808)

Although there are many wonderful works in Beethoven's output, we will focus on possibly Beethoven's most famous composition, his Fifth Symphony (1808). The premiere of the Fifth Symphony took place at perhaps the most infamous of all of Beethoven's concerts, an event that lasted for some four hours in an unheated theater on a bitterly cold Viennese evening. At this time, Beethoven was not on good terms with the performers, several who refused to rehearse with the composer in the room. In addition, the final number of the performance was finished too late to be sufficiently practiced, and in the concert, it had to be stopped and restarted. Belying its less than auspicious first performance, once published the Fifth Symphony quickly gained the critical acclaim it has held ever since.

The most famous part of the Fifth Symphony is its commanding opening. This opening features the entire orchestra playing in unison a musical motive that we will call the short-short-short-long (SSSL) motive, because of the rhythm of its four notes. We will also refer to it as the Fate motive, because at least since the 1830s, music critics have likened it to fate knocking on the door, as discussed in this NPR interview with conductor Christopher Eschenbach. The short notes repeat the same pitch and then the long, held-out note leaps down a third. After the orchestra releases the held note, it plays the motive again, now sequenced a step lower, then again at the original pitches, then at higher pitches. This sequenced phrase, which has become the first theme of the movement, then repeats, and the fast sonata-form movement starts to pick up steam. This is the exposition of the movement.

After a transition, the second theme is heard. It also starts with the SSSL motive, although the pitches heard are quite different. The horn presents the question phrase of the second theme; then, the strings respond with the answer phrase of the second theme. You should note that the key has changed—the music is now in E flat major, which has a much more peaceful feel than C minor—and the answer phrase of the second theme is much more legato than anything yet heard in the symphony. This tuneful legato music does not last for long and the closing section returns to the rapid sequencing of the SSSL motive. Then the orchestra returns to the beginning of the movement for a repeat of the exposition.

The development section of this first movement does everything we might expect of a development: the SSSL motive appears in sequence and is altered as the keys change rapidly. Also, we hear more polyphonic imitative in the development than elsewhere in the movement. Near the end of the development, the dynamics alternate between piano and forte and, before the listener knows it, the music has returned to the home key of C minor as well as the opening version of the SSSL motive: this starts the recapitulation. The music transitions to the second theme—now still in the home key of C minor—and the closing section. Then, just when the listener expects the recapitulation to end, Beethoven extends the movement in a coda. This coda is much longer than any coda we have yet listened to in the music of Haydn or Mozart, although it is not as long as the coda to the final movement of this symphony. These long codas are also another element that Beethoven is known for. He often restates the conclusive cadence many times and in many rhythmic durations.
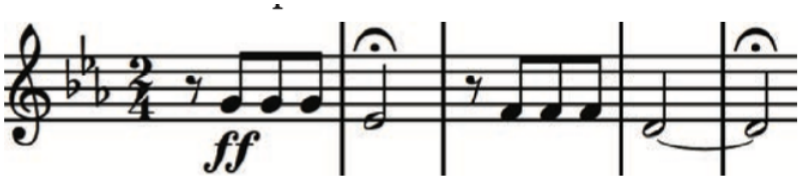


Figure 12.1.3: Opening of Symphony No. 5, Op. 67 by Stelios Samelis. Source: Mutopia Project

The second movement is a lyrical theme and variations movement in a major key, which provides a few minutes of respite from the menacing C minor; if you listen carefully, though, you might hear some reference to the SSSL fate motive. The third movement returns to C minor and is a scherzo. Scherzos retain the form of the minuet, having a contrasting trio section that divides the two

presentations of the scherzo. Like the minuet, scherzos also have a triple feel, although they tend to be somewhat faster in tempo than the minuet.

This scherzo third movement opens with a mysterious, even spooky, opening theme played by the lower strings. The second theme returns to the SSSL motive, although now with different pitches. The mood changes with a very imitative and very polyphonic trio in C major, but the spooky theme reappears, alongside the fate motive, with the repeat of the scherzo. Instead of making the scherzo a discrete movement, Beethoven chose to write a musical transition between the scherzo and the final movement, so that the music runs continuously from one movement to another. After suddenly getting very soft, the music gradually grows in dynamic as the motive sequences higher and higher until the fourth movement bursts onto the scene with a triumphant and loud C major theme. It seems that perhaps our hero, whether we think of the hero as the music of the symphony or perhaps as Beethoven himself, has finally triumphed over Fate.

The fourth movement is a rather typical fast sonata form finale with one exception. The second theme of the scherzo (b), which contains the SSSL fate motive, ap- pears one final time at the end of the movement's development section, as if to try one more time to derail the hero's conquest. But, the movement ultimately ends with a lot of loud cadences in C major, providing ample support for an interpretation of the composition as the overcoming of Fate. This is the interpretation that most commentators for almost two hundred years have given the symphony. It is pretty amazing to think that a musical composition might express so aptly the human theme of struggle and triumph. Listen to the piece and see if you hear it the same way.

- Composer: Beethoven
- Composition: Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Op. 67
- Date: 1808
- Genre: symphony
- Form: Four movements as follows:
  - I. Allegro con brio – fast, sonata form
  - II. Andante con moto – slow, theme and variations form
  - III. Scherzo. Allegro – Scherzo and Trio (ABA)
  - IV. Allegro – fast, sonata form

Performing Forces: piccolo (fourth movement only), two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, contrabassoon (fourth movement only), two horns, two trumpets, three trombones (fourth movement only), timpani, and strings (first and second violins, viola, cellos, and double basses)

What we want you to remember about this composition:

- Its fast first movement in sonata form opens with the short-short- short-long motive (which pervades much of the symphony): Fate knocking at the door?
- The symphony starts in C minor but ends in C major: a triumphant over fate?

We follow with listening guides for movement 1 and 2 (please feel free to listen to the whole symphony!):

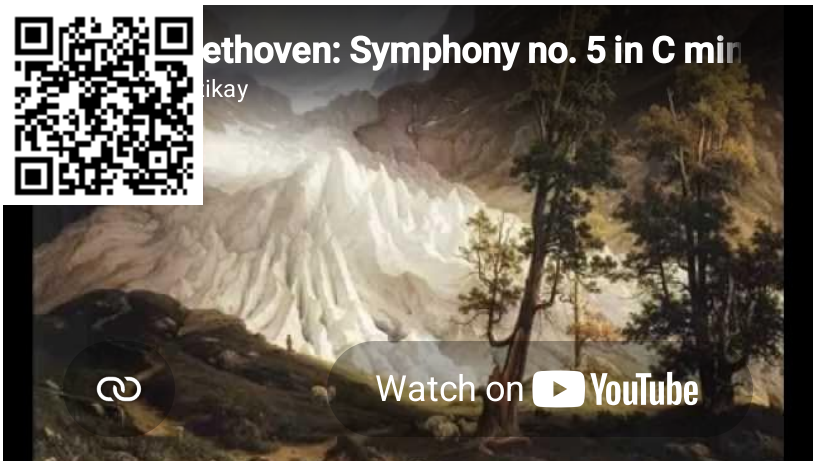
Movement 1 - Allegro con moto:

For a detailed analysis of this movement, please check out this video from Khan AcademyLinks to an external site..

What we want you to remember about this movement

- Its fast first movement in sonata form opens with the short-short- short-long motive (which pervades much of the symphony): Fate knocking at the door?
- Its C minor key modulates for a while to other keys but returns at the end of this movement
- The staccato first theme comprised of sequencing of the short-short- short-long motive (SSSL) greatly contrasts the more lyrical and legato second theme
- The coda at the end of the movement provides dramatic closure.

Please watch/listen to the first movement in this video. There is a listening guide to follow along below:



0:00 - EXPOSITION: First theme - Full orchestra in a mostly homo- phonic texture and forte dynamic. Melody starts with the SSSL motive introduced and then suspended with a fermata (or hold). After this happens twice, the melody continues with the SSSL motive in rising sequences.

0:21 - Transition - The forte dynamic continues, with emphasis from the timpani. Falling sequences using the SSSL rhythm.

0:40 - Second theme - After the horn call, the strings lead this quieter section. A horn call using the SSSL motive introduces a more lyrical theme— now in a major key.

1:01 - Closing - SSSL rhythms passes through the full orchestra that plays at a forte dynamic. The SSSL rhythm returns in down- ward sequences.

1:17 - EXPOSITION repeats

2:32 - DEVELOPMENT - Some polyphonic imitation; lots of dialogue between the low and high instruments and the strings and winds. Rapid sequences and changing of keys, fragmentation and alternation of the original motive.

3:23 - Retransition - Music moves from louds to softs

3:40 - RECAPITULATION: First theme - but ends with a short oboe cadenza. Starts like the exposition.

4:09 - "Transition" - Similar to the transition in the ex- position but does not modulate.

4:28 - Second theme - Now started by the oboes and bas- soons.Now in C minor, not E flat major, which provides a more ominous tone.

4:53 - Closing - As above

5:08 - Coda - After a sudden piano articulation of the SSSL motive, suddenly ends in a loud and bombastic manner: Fate threatens. Re-emphasizes C minor.

Movement 2 - Andante con moto:

For a detailed analysis of this movement, please check out this video from Khan AcademyLinks to an external site..

Please see the above video for the recording of movement 2 (it begins at 6:32).

What we want you to remember about this movement:

- It is a slow theme and variations movement
- Its major key provides contrast from the minor key of the first movement

6:32 - Theme: a and b - Mostly homophonic. Consists of two themes, the first more lyrical; the second more march-like.

8:12 - Variation 1: a and b - More legato and softer at the beginning, although growing loud for the final statement of b in the brass before decrescendoing to piano again. Violas subdivide the beat with fast running notes, while the other instruments play the theme.

9:47 - Variation 2: a and b - Starts with a softer dynamic and more legato articulations for the “a” phrase and staccato and louder march-like texture when “b” enters, after which the music decrescendos into the next variation. Even more rapid subdivision of the beat in the lower strings at the beginning of “a.” Then the “b” phrase returns at the very end of the section.

12:02 - Variation 3: a - Lighter in texture and more staccato, starting piano and crescendoing to forte for the final variation. The “a” phrase assumes a jaunty rhythm and then falls apart.

12:37 - Variation 4: A - The full orchestra plays forte and then sections of the orchestra trade motives at a quieter dynamic. The violins play the first phrase of the melody and then the winds respond with its answer.

13:17 - Coda - Full orchestra plays, soft at first, and then crescendoing, decrescendoing, and crescendoing a final time to the end of the movement. Motives are passed through the orchestra and re-emphasized at the very end of the movement.

As we have seen, around the 75 years that span the musical compositions of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven were rife with innovations in musical genre, style, and form. In many ways, they shaped music for the next 200 years. Composers continued to write symphonies and string quartets, using forms such as the sonata, theme, and variations. A large portion of late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century society continued playing music in the home and going to theaters for opera and to concerts at which orchestral compositions such as concertos and symphonies were performed. Although that live performance culture may not be as prevalent at the beginning of the twenty-first century, we might ask why it was so important for Western music culture for so long. We also might ask if any of its elements inform our music of today.

Since Beethoven's later works moved us into the Romantic period, let's continue with the music of this period.

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12.2: Romanticism- Introduction and Historical Context

Welcome to the Romantic Period

This chapter considers music of the nineteenth century, a period often called the "Romantic era" in music. Romanticism might be defined as a cultural movement stressing emotion, imagination, and individuality. It started in literature around 1800 and then spread to art and music. By around 1850, the dominant aesthetic (artistic philosophy) of literature and visual art began to shift to what is now often called a time of realism (cultural expressions of what is perceived as common and contemporary). Cultural Nationalism (pride in one's culture) and Exoticism (fascination with the other) also became more pronounced after 1850, as reflected in art, literature, and music. Realism, nationalism, and Exoticism were prominent in music as well, although we tend to treat them as sub-categories under a period of musical Romanticism that spanned the entire century.

In his Preface to the second edition of the *Lyrical Ballads* (1801), English poet William Wordsworth declared that "all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings." The power and expression of emotion exalted by literary Romanticism was equally important for nineteenth-century music, which often explicitly attempted to represent every shade of human emotion, the most prominent of which are love and sorrow. Furthermore, the Romantics were very interested in the connections between music, literature, and the visual arts. Poets and philosophers rhapsodized about the power of music, and musicians composed both vocal and instrumental program music explicitly inspired by literature and visual art. In fact, for many nineteenth-century thinkers, music had risen to the top of the aesthetic hierarchy. Music was previously perceived as inferior to poetry and sculpture, as it had no words or form. In the nineteenth century, however, music was understood to express what words could not express, thus transcending the material for something more ideal and spiritual; some called this expression "absolute music."

As we listen to nineteenth-century music, we might hear some similarities with music of the Classical era, but there are also differences. Aesthetically speaking, classicism tends to emphasize balance, control, proportion, symmetry, and restraint. Romanticism seeks out the new, the curious, and the adventurous, emphasizing qualities of remoteness, boundlessness, and strangeness. It is characterized by restless longing and impulsive reaction, as well as freedom of expression and pursuit of the unattainable. There are many parallels between what was going on historically in society and what was occurring in music. We cannot study one with- out studying the other because they are so inter-related, though music will be our guiding focus.

Geo-politically, the nineteenth century extends from the French Revolution to a decade or so before World War I. The French Revolution wound down around 1799, when the Napoleonic Wars then ensued. The Napoleonic Wars were waged by Napoléon Bonaparte, who had declared himself emperor of France. Another war was the Unites States Civil War from 1861-1865. The United States also saw expansion westward as the gold rush brought in daring settlers. Even though the United States was growing, England was the dominant world power at this time. Its whaling trade kept ships sailing and lamps burning. Coal fueled the Industrial Revolution and the ever-expanding rail system. Economic and social power shifted increasingly towards the common people due to revolts. These political changes affected nineteenth-century music as composers who began to aim their music at the more common people, rather than just the rich.

Political nationalism was on the rise in the nineteenth century. Early in the century, Bonaparte's conquests spurred on this nationalism, inspiring Italians, Austrians, Germans, Eastern Europeans, and Russians to assert their cultural identities, even while enduring the political domination of the French. After France's political power diminished with the Congress of Vienna in 1814-1815, politics through- out much of Europe were still punctuated by revolutions, first a minor revolution in 1848 in what is now Germany, and then the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871. Later in the century, Eastern Europeans, in what is now the Czech Republic and Slovakia, and the Russians developed schools of national music in the face of Austro-German cultural, and sometimes political, hegemony. Nationalism was fed by the continued rise of the middle class as well as the rise of republicanism and democracy, which defines human beings as individuals with responsibilities and rights derived as much from the social contract as from family, class, or creed.

Philosophy

The nineteenth century saw some of the most famous continental philosophers of all time: Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832), Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831), Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860), and Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (1844-1900). All responded in some way or another to the ideas of their eighteenth-century predecessor Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), who revolutionized the way human beings saw themselves in relation to others and to God by positing that human beings can never see "the thing in itself" and thus must relate as subjects to the objects that are exterior to themselves. Based on the work of Kant, as well as on a revival of ancient philosophical idealism, Hegel proposed some resolution of this subject-object dichotomy by

characterizing human existence as thesis meeting its opposite in antithesis and thus yielding synthesis. Schopenhauer, on the other hand, maintained that Kant had been right to point to the divide between subject and object. (For our purposes here, consider music to be the human phenomenon in which one might experience the thing, or object, in itself.) His ideas influenced the musical philosophy of Richard Wagner, and both of Schopenhauer's and Wagner's ideas shaped Friedrich Nietzsche's early philosophy. In the middle of the nineteenth century, the ideas of Kant and Hegel, and to a lesser extent Schopenhauer, influenced American Transcendentalism, often reflected in the writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) and Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862).

Science

Science and technology made great strides in the nineteenth century. Some of its inventions increased mobility of the individuals in the Western world, such as with the proliferation of trains running across newly-laid tracks and steamships sailing down major rivers and eventually across oceans. Other advances, such as the commercial telegraph (from the 1830s), allowed news to travel more quickly than before. All this speed and mobility culminated in the first automobiles that emerged at the very end of the century. Plate and then chemical photography were invented in the first half of the 1800s, with film photography emerging at the end of the century: we have photographs of several of the composers studied in this chapter. Experiments with another sort of recording, sound recording, would get started in the mid 1800s and finally become commercially available in the twentieth century. The nineteenth century saw ongoing experiments with electricity and electrically powered lamps such as the light bulb that would also blossom as the century turned.



Figure 12.2.1: John James Audubon, 1826 by John Syme. Source: Wikimedia

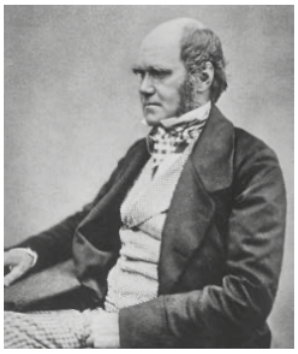


Figure 12.2.2: Charles Darwin, 1854 by Henry Maull and John Fox. Source: Wikimedia

Romantics were fascinated by nature, and the middle class public followed naturalists, like Americans John James Audubon (1785-1851) and John Muir (1838-1914) and the Englishman Charles Darwin (1809-1882), as they observed and recorded life in the wild. Darwin's evolutionary theories based on his voyages to locales such as the Galapagos Islands were avidly debated among the people of his day.

Visual Art

Romantics were fascinated by the imaginary, the grotesque, and by that which was chronologically or geographically foreign. Emphasis on these topics began to appear in such late eighteenth-century works as Swiss painter Henry Fuseli's *Nightmare* from 1781. Romantics were also intrigued by the Gothic style: a young Goethe raved about it after visiting the Gothic Cathedral in Strasbourg, France. His writings in turn spurred the completion of the Cathedral in Cologne, Germany, which had been started in the Gothic style in 1248 and then completed in that same style between the years of 1842 and 1880.



Figure 12.2.3: The Nightmare by Henry Fuseli. Source: Wikimedia

Romantic interest in the individual, nature, and the supernatural is also very evident in nineteenth-century landscapes, including those of Caspar David Friedrich (1774-1840). One of his most famous paintings, *Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog* (1818), shows a lone man with his walking stick, surrounded by a vast horizon. The man has progressed to the top of a mountain, but there his vision is limited due to the fog. We do not see his face, perhaps suggesting the solitary reality of a human subject both separate from and somehow spiritually attuned to the natural and supernatural.

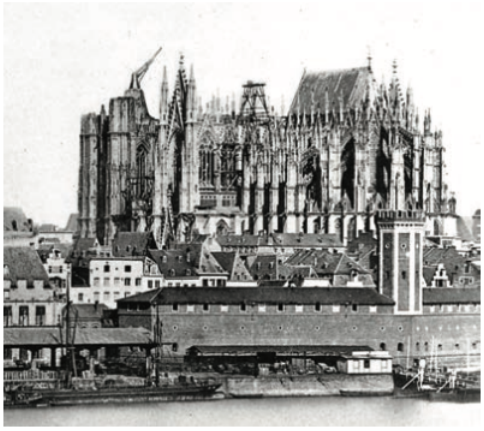


Figure 12.2.4: Cologne Cathedral by Johann Franz Michiels. Source: Wikimedia



Figure 12.2.5: The Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog by Caspar David Friedrich. Source: Wikimedia

In France, Eugène Delacroix (1798-1863) captured the revolutionary and nationalist fervor of the time in such paintings as *Liberty Leading the People* (1830). He was also a good friend with musicians Frydryk Chopin and Hector Berlioz, whom he immortalized in portraits.

Francisco de Goya (1746 -1828) was born in Fuendetodos, Spain. He painted for the Spanish Royal court, producing portraits of nobility. However, he also painted works criticizing the social and political problems of his era.



Figure 12.2.6: *Liberty Leading the People* by Eugène Delacroix. Source: Wikimedia



Figure 12.2.7: *Disasters of War, Plate 39* by Francisco Goya. Source: Wikimedia



Figure 12.2.8: *The Third of May 1808 by* Francisco Goya. Source: Wikimedia

One of Goya's personal projects, *Disasters of War*, however, was commissioned by no one. It was Goya's private project, which he never even published in his lifetime. *Disasters of War* unflinchingly depicts mutilation, torture, rape, and many other atrocities indiscriminately inflicted on Spanish citizens by French and Spanish alike. In The Third Day of May, Goya commemorated the Spanish resistance to Napoleon's Armies in 1808 in the Peninsular War. It portrays an execution by Napoleon's Troops.

As the nineteenth century progressed, European artists became increasingly interested in what they called "realist" topics, that is, in depicting the lives of the average human, as he or she went about living in the present moment. While the realism in such art is not devoid of idealizing forces, it does emphasize the validity of the everyday life as a topic for art alongside the value of craft and technique in bringing such "realist" scenes to life.

Literature

The novel, which had emerged forcefully in the eighteenth century, became the literary genre of choice in the nineteenth century. Many German novels focused on a character's development; most important of these novels are those by the German philosopher, poet, and playwright, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe who was fascinated with the supernatural and set the story of Faust. Faust is a man who sells his soul to the devil in exchange for knowledge, in an epic two-part drama. English author Mary Shelley (1797-1851) explored nature and the supernatural in the novel *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus* (1818), which examines current scientific discoveries as participating in the ancient quest to control nature. Later in the century, British author Charles Dickens exposed the plight of the common man during a time of Industrialization. In France, Victor Hugo (1802-1885) wrote on a broad range of themes, from what his age saw as the grotesque in *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame* (1831) to the topic of French Revolution in *Les Misérables* (1862). Another Frenchman, Gustav Flaubert, captured the psychological and emotional life of a "real" woman in *Madame Bovary* (1856). And in the United States, Mark Twain created *Tom Sawyer* (1876).

Besides novels, poetry continued strong in the nineteenth century with such important English poets as George Gordon, Lord Byron, Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and John Keats. In addition to Goethe, other German literary figures included Friedrich Schiller, Adrian Ludwig Richter, Heinrich Heine, Novalis, Ludwig Tieck, and E. T. A. Hoffmann; their works contributed librettos and settings for nineteenth-century music. Near the end of the century, French symbolism, a movement akin to Impressionism in art and music, emerged in the poetry of Paul Verlaine, Stéphane Mallarmé, and Arthur Rimbaud.

Check out this website for a comprehensive timeline that compares historical events of the Romantic time period to the musical events of the period.

Nineteenth-Century Musical Contexts

We have already alluded to a new respect for vocal and instrumental music that emerged at the end of the eighteenth century. Music's influence only grew in the nineteenth century, becoming more prominent yet in the education of the still growing middle class; even the United States, which throughout most of the nineteenth century was deemed somewhat a cultural backwaters of the Western world, had music education in the public schools by the end of the century. An increasing number of music magazines was published, and amateur music making in the home and in local civic groups was at a height. Piano music was a major component of private music making. The salons and soirées of upper middle class and aristocratic women drew many of these private musical performances.

More concerts in public venues enjoyed increased attendance; some of these concerts were solo recitals and others featured large symphony orchestras, some- times accompanied by choirs. Their performers were often trained in highly specialized music schools called conservatories, which took root in major European cities. By the end of the nineteenth century, traveling virtuoso performers and composers were some of the most famous personalities of their time. These musicians hailed from all over Europe. Some of them became quite wealthy from revenues of ticket sales and publications. Others fit the stereotype of the starving artist, paid in respect though not in the currency of their day.

Romantic aesthetics tended to conceptualize musicians as highly individualistic and often eccentric. Beethoven modeled these concepts and was the most influential figure of nineteenth-century music, even after his death in 1827. His perceived alienation from society, the respect he was given, and the belief in the transformative power of music that was often identified in his compositions, galvanized romantic perceptions. His music, popular in its own day, only became more popular after his death. Subsequent composers looked to his innovations in sym- phonic compositions, especially his use of recurring motives and themes, as we heard in the Fifth Symphony. For them, Beethoven was also something of a problem: how might one compose in the shadow of such a musical giant?

Musical Timeline

Events in History	Events in Music

1801: Wordsworth publishes his *Lyrical Ballades* 1814-1815: Congress of Vienna, ending Napoleon's conquest of Europe and Russia 1818: Mary Shelley publishes *Frankenstein* 1818: Caspar David Friedrich paints *Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog* 1830s: Eugène Delacroix captures revolutionary and nationalist fervor in his paintings 1832: Johann Wolgang von Goethe dies 1850s: Realism becomes prominent in art and literature 1861-1865: Civil War in the U.S. 1870-71: Franco-Prussian War	1815: Schubert publishes *The Erlking* 1827: Beethoven dies 1829: Felix Mendelssohn leads a revival of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*,which leads to a revival of Bach's music more generally 1830: Hector Berlioz premiers his most famous work, the *Symphonie fantastique* 1830s: Clara Wieck and Franz Liszt tour (separately) as virtuoso pianists 1831: Fryderyk Chopin immigrates to Paris, from the political turmoil in his native country of Poland 1840: Clara and Robert Schumann marry 1853: Verdi composes *La Traviata* 1874: Bedřich Smetana composes *The Moldau* 1876: Johannes Brahms completes his First Symphony 1876: Wagner premiers *The Ring of the Nibelungen* at his Festival Theatre in Bayreuth, Germany 1882: Tchaikovsky writes the *1812* Overture 1891-1892: John Philip Sousa tours the U.S. leading the U.S. Marine Band 1892-1895: Antonin Dvořák visits the U.S., helps establish the first American music conservatory, and composes the *New World* Symphony.

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12.3: Music in the Nineteenth Century

Comparing the Classical Style to Romanticism

Classical Music	Nineteenth-Century Music
• Mostly homophony, but with variation • New genres such as the symphony and string quartet • Use of crescendos and decrescendos • Question and answer (aka antecedent consequent) phrases that are shorter than earlier phrases • New emphasis on musical form: for example, sonata form, theme and variations, minuet and trio, rondo, and first-movement concerto form • Greater use of contrasting dynamics, articulations, and tempos	• Lyrical melodies, often with wider leaps • Homophonic style still prevalent, but with variation • Larger performing forces using more diverse registers, dynamic ranges, and timbres • More rubato and tempo fluctuation within a composition • More chromatic and dissonant harmonies with increasingly delayed resolutions • Symphonies, string quartets, concertos, operas, and sonata-form movements continue to be written • Newly important miniature genres and forms such as the *Lied* and short piano composition • Program music increasingly prominent • Further development in performers' virtuosity • No more patronage system

Musical Style, Performing Forces, and Forms

The nineteenth century is marked by a great diversity in musical styles, from the conservative to the progressive. As identified by the style comparison chart above, nineteenth century melodies continue to be tuneful and are perhaps even more songlike than classical style melodies, although they may contain wider leaps. They still use sequences, which are often as a part of modulation from one key to another. Melodies use more chromatic (or "colorful") pitches from outside the home key and scale of a composition. Along with the continuing emphasis on tuneful melodies comes predominantly homophonic textures, although as compositions use more instruments, there are also increasing numbers of accompanying, but relatively interesting, musical lines.

Harmonies in nineteenth-century music are more dissonant than ever. More chords add a fourth note to the triad, making them more dissonant and chromatic. These dissonances may be sustained for some time before resolving to a chord that is consonant. One composition may modulate between several keys, and these keys often have very different pitch contents. Such modulations tend to disorient the listening and add to the chaos of the musical selection. Composers were in effect "pushing the harmonic envelope."

The lengths of nineteenth-century musical compositions ran from the minute to the monumental. Songs and short piano pieces might be only a couple of minutes long, although they were sometimes grouped together in cycles or collections. On the other hand, symphonies and operas grow in size. By the end of the century, a typical symphony might be an hour long, with the operas of Verdi, Wagner, and Puccini clocking in at several hours each. Performing forces reflected similar extremes. There is much nineteenth-century music for solo piano or solo voice with piano accompaniment. The piano achieved a modern form, with the full eighty-eight-note keyboard that is still used today and an iron frame that allowed for greater string tension and a wider range of dynamics. Crescendos and decrescendos became more common, alongside more tempo fluctuations, even within compositions. As we will see, Fryderyk Chopin was the first composer to make prevalent use of rubato as a performance instruction in his musical scores.

During the nineteenth century, the industrial revolution facilitated and enabled marked improvements to many musical instruments besides the piano with its improved and updated iron frame and tempered metal strings. Efficient valves were added to the trumpet and a general improvement in metal works tightened tolerances and metal fittings of all brass instruments. Along with the many improvements to instruments, new instruments were researched and created, including the piccolo, English horn, tuba, contrabassoon, and saxophone.

Orchestras also increased in size and became more diverse in makeup, thereby allowing composers to exploit even more divergent dynamics and timbres. With orchestral compositions requiring over fifty (and sometimes over 100) musicians, a conductor was important, and the first famous conductors date from this period. In fact, generally-speaking, the nineteenth-century orchestra looked not unlike what you might see today at most concerts by most professional orchestras (see Figure 6.9). Nineteenth-century composers knew well the forms and genres used by their predecessors, most prominently the music of Beethoven, but also the

music of com- posers such as Mozart, Handel, Haydn, and Bach. They continued to compose in these forms and genres, while sometimes transforming them into something quite different, especially among those composers who identified themselves as progressives, as opposed to conservatives. The wider nineteenth-century interest in emotion and in exploring connections between all of the arts led to musical scores with more poetic or prose instructions from the composer. It also led to more program music, which as you will recall, is instrumental music that represents something "extra musical," that is, something outside of music itself, such as nature, a literary text, or a painting. Nineteenth-century critics and philosophers sustained expansive debates about ways in which listeners might hear music as related to the extra musical. Extra musical influences, from the characteristic title to a narrative attached to a musical score, guided composers and listeners as they composed and heard musical forms.

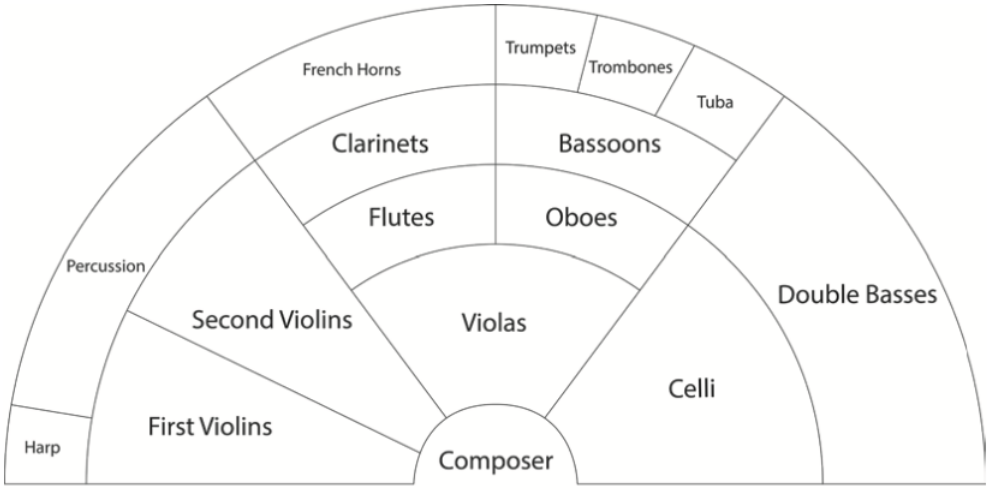


Figure 12.3.1: Nineteenth-Century Orchestra Diagram by Corey Parson. Source: Original Work

Genres of Instrumental Music

Some nineteenth-century compositions use titles similar to those found in classical style music, such as "Symphony No. 3," "Concerto, Op. 3," or "String Quartet in C Minor." These compositions are sometimes referred to as examples of absolute music (that is, music for the sake of music). Program music with titles came in several forms. Short piano compositions were described as "character pieces" and took on names reflecting their emotional mood, state, or reference. Orchestral program music included the program symphony and the symphonic poem (also known as the tone poem). The program symphony was a multi-movement composition for orchestra that represented something extra musical, a composition such as Hector Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique* (discussed below). A symphonic or tone poem was a one-movement composition for orchestra, again with an extra musical referent, such as Bedřich Smetana's *Moldau*.

Genres of Vocal Music

Opera continued to be popular in the nineteenth century and was dominated by Italian styles and form, much like it had been since the seventeenth century. Itaian opera composer Giacomo Rossini even rivaled Beethoven in popularity. By the 1820s, however, other national schools were becoming more influential. Carl Maria von Weber's German operas enhanced the role of the orchestra, whereas French grand opera by Meyerbeer and others was marked by the use of large choruses and elaborate sets. Later in the century, composers such as Giuseppe Verdi and Richard Wagner would synthesize and transform opera into an even more dramatic genre.

Other large-scale choral works in the tradition of the Baroque cantata and oratorio were written for civic choirs which would sometimes band together into larger choral ensembles in annual choral festivals. The song for voice and piano saw revived interest, and art songs were chief among the music performed in the home for private and group entertainment. The art song is a composition for solo voice and piano that merges poetic and musical concerns. It became one of the most popular genres of nineteenth-century Romanticism, a movement that was always looking for connections between the arts. Sometimes these art songs were grouped into larger collections called song cycles or, in German, *Liederkreis*. Among the important composers of early nineteenth-century German *Lieder* were Robert and Clara Schumann, Johannes Brahms, and Franz Schubert.

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12.4: Music of the Early Romantics

The Mendelssohns

In terms of musical craft, few nineteenth-century composers were more accomplished than Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy (1809-1847). Growing up in an artistically-rich, upper-middle class household in Berlin, Germany, Felix Mendelssohn received a fine private education in the arts and sciences and proved himself to be precociously talented from a very young age. He would go on to write chamber music for piano and strings, art songs, church music, four symphonies, and oratorios as well as conduct many of Beethoven's works as principal director of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra. All of his music emulates the motivic and organic styles of Beethoven's compositions, from his chamber music to his more monumental compositions. Felix was also well-versed in the musical styles of Mozart, Handel, and Bach.



Figure 12.4.1: Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy by James Warren Childe. Source: Wikimedia

Felix descended from a family of prominent Jewish intellectuals; his grandfather Moses Mendelssohn was one of the leaders of the eighteenth-century German Enlightenment. His parents, however, seeking to break from this religious tradition, had their children baptized as Reformed Christians in 1816. Anti-Semitism was a fact of life in nineteenth-century Germany, and such a baptism opened some, if not all, doors for the family. Most agree that in 1832, the failure of Felix's application for the position as head of the Berlin *Singakadmie* was partly due to his Jewish ethnicity. This failure was a blow to the young musician, who had performed frequently with this civic choral society, most importantly in 1829, when he had led a revival of the *St. Matthew Passion* by Johann Sebastian Bach. Although today we think of Bach as a pivotal figure of the Baroque period, his music went through a period of neglect until this revival.

Initially, Felix's father was reluctant to see his son become a professional musician; like many upper-middle class businessmen, he would have preferred his son enjoy music as an amateur. Felix, however, was both determined and talented, and eventually secured employment as a choral and orchestral conductor, first in Düsseldorf, and then in Leipzig, Germany, where he lived from 1835 until his death. In Leipzig, Felix conducted the orchestra and founded the town's first music conservatory.

Felix's music was steeped in the styles of his predecessors. Although he remained on good terms with more experimental composers of his day, including Hector Berlioz and Franz Liszt, he was not fond of their music. It is not surprising, then, that he composed in genres passed down to him, including the symphony, string quartet, and oratorio.

Focus Composition: Mendelssohn, Excerpts from Elijah (1846)

One of his last works, his oratorio *Elijah*, was commissioned by the Birmingham Festival in Birmingham, England. The Birmingham Festival was one of many nineteenth-century choral festivals that provided opportunities for amateur and professional musicians to gather once a year to make music together. Mendelssohn's music was very popular in England, and the Birmingham Festival had already performed another Mendelssohn oratorio in the 1830s, giving the premier of *Elijah* in English in 1846.

Elijah is interesting because it is an example of music composed for middle-class music-making. The chorus of singers was expected to be largely made up of musical amateurs, with professional singers brought in to sing the solos. The topic of the oratorio, the Hebrew prophet Elijah, is interesting as a figure significant to both the Jewish and Christian traditions, both of which Felix embraced to a certain extent. (In general, Felix was private about his religious convictions, and interpretations of *Elijah* as representing the composer's beliefs will always remain somewhat speculative.) This composition shows Felix's indebtedness to both Baroque composers Bach and Handel, while at the same time it uses more nineteenth-century harmonies and textures.

The following excerpt is from the first part of the oratorio and sets the dramatic story of Elijah's calling the followers of the pagan god Baal to light a sacrifice on fire. Baal fails his devotees; Elijah then summons the God of Abraham to a display of power with great success. The excerpt here involves a baritone soloist who sings the role of Elijah and the chorus that provides commentary. Elijah first sings a short accompanied recitative, not unlike what we heard in the music of Han- del's *Messiah*. The first chorus is highly polyphonic in announcing the flames from heaven before shifting to a more homophonic and deliberate style that uses longer note values to proclaim the central tenet of Western religion: "The Lord is God, the Lord is God! O Israel hear! Our God is one Lord, and we will have no other gods before the Lord." After another recitative and another chorus, Elijah sings a very melismatic and virtuoso aria.

Elijah was very popular in its day, in both its English and German versions, both for music makers and musical audiences, and continues to be performed by choral societies today.



Elijah - "O Thou, who makest," "The Fire Descends," "Is not His word like a fire!. Performed by the Texas A&M Century Singers with orchestra and baritone soloist Weston Hurt."

- **Composer**: Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy
- **Composition**: Excerpts from *Elijah*
- **Date**: 1846
- **Genre**: Recitative, choruses, and aria from an oratorio
- **Form**: Through-composed
- **Nature of Text:**

  Elijah (recitative): O Thou, who makest Thine angels spirits; Thou, whose ministers are flaming fires: let them now descend!

  The People (chorus): The fire descends from heaven! The flames consume his offering! Before Him upon your faces fall! The Lord is God, the Lord is God! O Israel hear! Our God is one Lord, and we will have no other gods before the Lord.

  Elijah (recitative): Take all the prophets of Baal, and let not one of them escape you. Bring them down to Kishon's brook, and there let them be slain.

  The People (chorus): Take all the prophets of Baal and let not one of them escape us: bring all and slay them!

  Elijah (aria): Is not His word like a fire, and like a hammer that breaketh the rock into pieces! For God is angry with the wicked every day. And if the wicked turn not, the Lord will whet His sword; and He hath bent His bow, and made it ready.

- **Performing Forces:** Baritone soloist (Elijah), four-part chorus, orchestra
- What we want you to remember about this composition:

- It's an oratorio composed for amateurs and professionals to perform at a choral festival
- It uses traditional forms of accompanied recitative, chorus, and aria to tell a dramatic story

- **Other things to listen for:**
  - A much larger orchestra than heard in the oratorios of Handel
  - A very melismatic and virtuoso aria in the style of Handel's arias
  - More flexible use of recitatives, arias, and choruses than in earlier oratorios
  - More dissonance and chromaticism than in earlier oratorios

Felix was not the only musically precocious Mendelssohn in his household. In fact, the talent of his older sister Fanny (1805-1847) initially exceeded that of her younger brother. Born into a household of intelligent, educated, and socially sophisticated women, Fanny was given the same education as her younger brother. But for her, as for most nineteenth-century married women from middle-class families, a career as a professional musician was frowned upon. Her husband, Wilhelm Hensel supported her composing and presenting her music at private house concerts held at the Mendelssohn's family residence. Felix also supported Fanny's private activities, although he discouraged her from publishing her works under her own name. In 1846, Fanny went ahead and published six songs without seeking her husband's or brother's permission.

Musicians today perform many of the more than 450 compositions that Fanny wrote for piano, voice, and chamber ensemble. Among some of her best works are the four-movement Piano Trio in D minor, Op. 11, and several volumes of songs and piano compositions. This piano trio holds its own with the piano trios, piano quartets, piano quintets, and string quartets composed by other nineteenth-century composers, from Beethoven and Schubert to the Schumanns, Johannes Brahms, and Antonin Dvorak.

Music of the Schumanns

Husband and wife Robert and Clara Schumann were another prominent musical pair of the nineteenth century. The couple became acquainted after Robert (1810- 1856) moved to Leipzig and started studying piano with Friedrich Wieck, the father of the young piano prodigy Clara (1819-1896). The nine-year-old Clara was just starting to embark on her musical career. Throughout her teens, she would travel giving concerts, dazzling aristocratic and public audiences with her virtuosity. She also started publishing her compositions, which she often incorporated into her concerts. Her father, perhaps realizing what marriage would mean for the career of his daughter, refused to consent to her marriage with Robert Schumann, a marriage she desired as she and Robert had fallen in love. They subsequently married in 1840, shortly before Clara's twenty-first birthday, after a protracted court battle with her father.

Once the two were married, Robert's musical activities became the couple's first priority. Robert began his musical career with aims of becoming a professional pianist. When he suffered weakness of the fingers and hands, he shifted his focus to music journalism and music composition. He founded a music magazine dedicated to showcasing the newer and more experimental music then being composed. And he started writing piano compositions, songs, chamber music, and eventually orchestral music, the most important of which include four symphonies and a piano concerto, premiered by Clara in 1846. While Robert was gaining recognition as a composer and conductor, Clara's composition and performance activities were restricted by her giving birth to eight children. Then in early 1854, Robert started showing signs of psychosis and, after a suicide attempt, was taken to an asylum. Although one of the more progressive hospitals of its day, this asylum did not allow visits from close relatives, so Clara would not see her husband for over two years and then only in the two days before his death. After his death, Clara returned to a more active career as performer; indeed, she spent the rest of her life supporting her children and grandchildren through her public appearances and teaching. Her busy calendar may have been one of the reasons why she did not compose after Robert's death.

The compositional careers of Robert and Clara followed a similar trajectory. Both started their compositional work with short piano pieces that were either virtuoso showpieces or reflective character pieces that explored extra musical ideas in musical form. Theirs were just a portion of the many character pieces, especially those at a level of difficulty appropriate for the enthusiastic amateur pianist, published throughout Europe. After their marriage, they both merged poetic and musical concerns in Lieder—Robert published many song cycles, and he and Clara joined forces on a song cycle published in 1841. They also both turned to traditional genres, such as the sonata and larger four-movement chamber music compositions.

Focus Composition

Ballade in D minor, Op. 6, no. 4

- Composer: Clara Wieck Schumann
- Composition: Ballade in D minor, Op. 6, no. 4

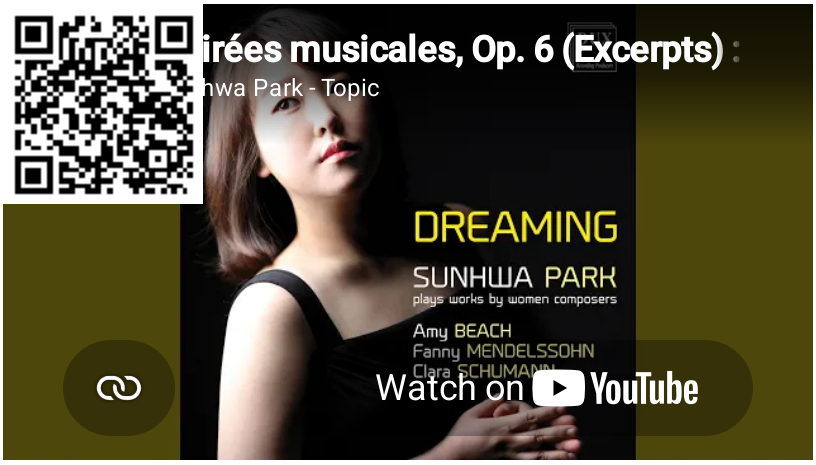
- Date: 1836
- Genre: piano character piece
- Form: ABA; This is a ballade, that is, a composition with narrative premises
- Performing Forces: piano

What we want you to remember about this composition:

- A lyrical melody over chordal accompaniment making this homophonic texture
- A moderate to slow tempo
- In duple time (in this case, four beats for each measure)

Other things to listen for:

- Musical themes that develop and repeat but are always varied
- Musical embellishments in the form of trills and turns



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12.5: Romantic Piano Music

The Piano

The Romantic era marked a turning point in the history of the piano, transforming it from a refined salon instrument into one of the most powerful and expressive voices in Western music. Advances in piano construction during the 19th century expanded its range, dynamic capabilities, and tonal richness, allowing composers and performers to explore new depths of emotion and technical brilliance. As public concerts became more popular, the piano moved from private homes into large concert halls, where virtuoso performers captivated audiences with dazzling displays of skill and personal expression. Composers such as Fryderyk Chopin and Franz Liszt were central to this transformation: Chopin elevated the piano's lyrical and poetic potential through intimate, expressive works, while Liszt redefined virtuosity with bold, dramatic compositions that pushed the limits of technique and performance. Together, they helped establish the piano not only as a dominant solo instrument, but also as a powerful medium for conveying the emotional intensity and individuality that define Romantic music.

Fryderyk Chopin

Fryderyk Chopin (1810-1849) grew up in and around Warsaw, Poland, son of a French father and Polish mother. His family was a member of the educated middle class; consequently, Chopin had contact with academics and wealthier members of the gentry and middle class. He learned as much as he could from the composition instructors in Warsaw—including the keyboard music of Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven—before deciding to head off on a European tour in 1830. The first leg of the tour was Vienna, where Chopin expected to give concerts and then head further west. About a week after his arrival, however, Poland saw political turmoil in the Warsaw uprising, which eventually led to Russian occupation of his home country. After great efforts, Chopin secured a passport and, in the summer of 1831, traveled to Paris, which would become his adopted home (this is why you sometimes see his first name written in its French spelling: Frédéric). Paris was full of Polish émigrés, who were well received within musical circles. After giving a few public concerts, Chopin was able to focus his attention on the salons, salons being smaller, semi-private events, similar to soirées, generally hosted by aristocratic women for artistic edification. There and as a teacher, he was in great demand and could charge heavy fees.

Much like fellow Romantics (and married couple) Robert and Clara Schumann, Chopin's first compositions were designed to impress his audiences with his virtuoso playing. As he grew older and more established, his music became more subtle. Also, like the Schumanns, he composed pieces appropriate in difficulty for the musical amateur as well as work for virtuosos such as himself. Unlike many of the other composers we have discussed, Chopin wrote piano music almost exclusively. He was best known for character pieces, such as mazurkas, waltzes, nocturnes, etudes, ballades, polonaises, and preludes.

Focus Composition:

Chopin Mazurka in F Minor, Op. 7, No. 1 (1832)

The composition on which we will focus is the Mazurka in F minor, Op. 7, no. 1, which was published in Leipzig in 1832 and then in Paris and London in 1833. The mazurka is a Polish dance, and mazurkas were rather popular in Western Europe as exotic stylized dances. Mazurkas are marked by their triple meter in which beat two rather than beat one gets the stress. They are typically composed in strains and are homophonic in texture. Chopin sometimes incorporated folk-like sounds in his mazurkas, sounds such as drones and augmented seconds. A drone is a sustained pitch or pitches. The augmented second is an interval that was commonly used in Eastern European folk music but very rarely in the tonal music of Western European composers.



Figure 12.5.11: Fryderyk Chopin by Eugène Delacroix. Source: Wikimedia

All of these characteristics can be heard in the Mazurka in F minor, Op. 7, No. 1, together with the employment of rubato. Chopin was the first composer to widely request that pianists use rubato when playing his music.

- Composer: Fryderyk Chopin
- Composition: Mazurka in F minor, Op. 7, no. 1
- Date: 1836
- Genre: piano character piece
- Form: aaba'ba'ca'ca'
- Nature of Text: the title indicates a stylized dance based on the Polish mazurka
- Performing Forces: solo piano

What we want you to remember about this composition:

- This mazurka is in triple time with emphasis on beat two
- The texture is homophonic
- Chopin asks the performer to use rubato

Other things to listen for:

- Its "c" strain uses a drone and augmented seconds
- Its form is aaba'ba'ca'ca'



Music of Franz Liszt

Franz Liszt (b. 1811-1886) was born in Doborján, Hungary (now Raiding, Austria). His father, employed as a steward for a wealthy family, was an amateur musician who recognized his son's talent. A group of Hungarian noblemen sponsored him with a stipend that enabled Franz to pursue his musical interest in Paris. There, he became the friend of Mendelssohn, Hugo, Chopin, Delacroix, George Sand, and Berlioz; these friends influenced him to become part of the French Romanticism movement.

Also in Paris in 1831, Liszt attended a performance of virtuoso violinist Paganini, who was touring. Paganini's style and success helped make Liszt aware of the demand for a solo artist who performed with showmanship. The ever growing mass public audience desired gifted virtuoso soloists performers at the time. Liszt, one of the best pianists of his time, became a great showman who knew how to energize an audience. Up until Liszt, the standard practice of performing piano solos was with the solo artist's back to the audience. This limited—and actually blocked—the audience from viewing the artist's hands, facial expression, and musical nuance. Liszt changed the entire presentation by turning the piano sideways so the audience could view his facial expressions and the manner in which his fingers interacted with the keys, from playing loud and thunderously to gracefully light and legato. Liszt possessed great charisma and performance appeal; indeed, he had a following of young ladies that idolized his performances. During his career of music stardom, Liszt never married and was considered one of the most eligible bachelors of the time. But he did have several "relationships" with different women, one of whom was the novelist Countess Marie d'Agoult who wrote under the pen name of Daniel Stern. She and Liszt traveled to Switzerland for a few years and they had three children, including Cosima who ultimately married German opera composer Richard Wagner (who we cover in a future module).

While at the height of his performance career, Liszt retreated from his piano soloist career to devote all his energy to composition. He moved to Weimer in 1948 and assumed the post of court musician for the Grand Duke, remaining in Weimer until 1861. There, he produced his greatest orchestral works. His position in Weimer included the responsibility as director to the Grand Duke's opera house. In this position, Liszt could influence the public's taste in music and construct musical expectations for future compositions. And he used his influential position to program what Wagner called "Music of the Future." Liszt and Wagner both advocated and promoted highly dramatic music in Weimer, with Liszt conducting the first performances of Wagner's *Lohengrin*, Berlioz's *Benevenuto Cellini*, as well as many other contemporary compositions.

While in Weimer, Liszt began a relationship with a woman who had a tremendous influence on his life and music. A wife of a nobleman in the court of the Tsar, Princess Carolyne Sayn-Wittenstein met and fell in love with Liszt on his final performance tour of Russia. Later she left her husband and moved to Weimer to be with Liszt. She assisted Liszt in writing literary works, among which included a fabricated biography by Liszt on the Life of Chopin.

While Liszt had an eventful romantic life, he remained a Roman Catholic, and he eventually sought solitude in the Catholic Church. His association with the church led to the writing of his major religious works. He also joined the Oratory of the Madonna del Rosario and studied the preliminary stage for priesthood, taking his minor orders and becoming known as the Abbé Liszt. He dressed as a priest and composed Masses, oratorios, and religious music for the church.

Still active at the age of seventy-five, he earned respect from England as a composer and was awarded an honor in person by Queen Victoria. Returning from this celebration, he met Claud Debussy in Paris then journeyed to visit his widowed daughter Cosima in Bayreuth and attended a Wagnerian Festival. He died during that festival, and even on his death bed, dying of pneumonia, Liszt named one of the "Music of the Future" masterpieces: Wagner's *Tristan*.

Liszt's primary goal in music composition was pure expression through the idiom of tone. His freedom of expression necessitated his creation of the symphonic poem, sometimes called a tone poem--a one movement program piece written for orchestra that portrays images of a place, story, novel, landscape or non-musical source or image. This form utilizes transformations of a few themes through the en- tire work for continuity. The themes are varied by adjusting the rhythm, harmony, dynamics, tempos, instrumental registers, instrumentation in the orchestra, timbre, and melodic outline, or shape. By making these slight-to-major adjustments, Liszt found it possible to convey the extremes of emotion—from love to hate, war to peace, triumph to defeat—within a thematic piece. His thirteen symphonic poems greatly influenced the nineteenth century, an influence that continues through today. Liszt's most famous piece for orchestra is the three portrait work Symphony after Goethe's Faust (the portraits include Faust, Gretchen, and Mephistopheles). A similar work, his Symphony of Dante's Divine Comedy, has three movements: Inferno, Purgatory, and Vision of Paradise. His most famous of the symphonic poems is Les Preludes (The Preludes) written in 1854.

His best known works include nineteen Hungarian Rhapsodies, Piano concertos, Mephisto Waltzes, and the Faust Symphony.

Focus Composition

Hungarian Rhapsody, No. 2

- Composer: Franz Liszt
- Composition: Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2
- Date: 1847
- Genre: The second of a set of 19 Hungarian Rhapsodies
- Performing Forces: Piano solo

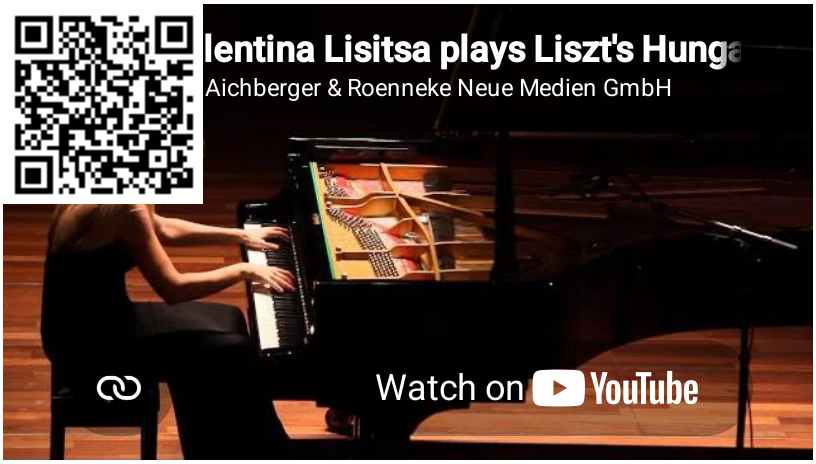
What we want you to remember about this composition:

- Widely popular, this piece offers the pianist the opportunity to reveal exceptional skill as a virtuoso, while providing the listener with an immediate and irresistible musical appeal.
- Listen to the dance rhythms and strong pulse even at the slower tempos

Other things to listen for:

- The piece begins with the “lasson,” a brief dramatic introduction that is followed by the “friska,” an energy building section that build to a tempest of sound and momentum.
- This piece was used in many animated cartoons in contemporary culture, “Tom and Jerry”, “Bugs Bunny”, “Woody Woodpecker” and several others.
- Interest in this piece is rooted in the period’s interests in “Exoticism” (music from other cultures).

Please enjoy this grand show of piano virtuosity!



We will continue our study of this long and fascinating period of music history in the next module.

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13: Song Cycles and Opera

Introduction

We will begin by looking at collections of songs that work together to tell a story that is emotionally complex, if not heavy in plot detail. Such a collection can be called a **song cycle**. A song cycle usually consists of about eight to twenty songs that use carefully crafted texts and music to present a cohesive narrative. Each song is distinct from the others and the order cannot be changed. While the term song cycle is most often applied to works from the art music world, it is valid across many genres. When a popular artist releases an album of songs that accomplish the purpose of a song cycle, however, the product is referred to as a **concept album**. The most important difference between a song cycle and concept album is that the former is most commonly conceived of with live performance in mind, whereas the latter is often developed in the studio and consumed as a recording. For this reason, a song cycle is more likely to have limited instrumentation, while producers of concept albums often have a wider variety of sound tools at their disposal. We will begin by considering a concept album that includes not only sounds but images and spoken poetry.

In the Romantic opera, Giuseppe Verdi and Richard Wagner stand out as powerful but very different voices who used the stage to explore intense emotions, larger-than-life characters, and big cultural or political ideas. Verdi, working mainly in the Italian tradition, wrote operas filled with memorable melodies and high drama, from the intimate heartbreak of *La traviata* to the grand, politically charged scenes of works like *Aida*, always giving singers music that communicates emotion directly and vividly. Wagner, by contrast, reshaped opera into what he called a "total work of art," blending music, poetry, staging, and philosophy into long, continuous music dramas that use leitmotifs—short musical ideas associated with characters, objects, or emotions—to pull listeners deep into mythical worlds, as in his Ring cycle and *Tristan und Isolde*. Although we are not focusing on his operas in this course, Hector Berlioz belongs in this conversation because he brought the same Romantic fascination with storytelling, orchestral color, and intense personal emotion into concert works such as *Symphonie fantastique* and dramatic pieces like *The Damnation of Faust*, blurring the line between symphony, opera, and theater. Thinking about Verdi, Wagner, and Berlioz together helps us hear Romantic opera not just as beautiful singing, but as a space where composers experimented with new ways of combining music, drama, and personal expression to create powerful, often overwhelming experiences for their audiences.

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13.1: Beyoncé - Lemonade

A Modern Song Cycle

On April 23, 2016, popular music star Beyoncé released her sixth album, *Lemonade*. The release was accompanied by a 65-minute film of the same name that premiered on the popular television network HBO. This album, which was influenced by a range of genres spanning from hip-hop to country, became critically acclaimed for its musical variety, while the accompanying film was admired for its astounding visual cinematography. The work as a whole has also been lauded for its unapologetic celebration of womanhood and black culture.

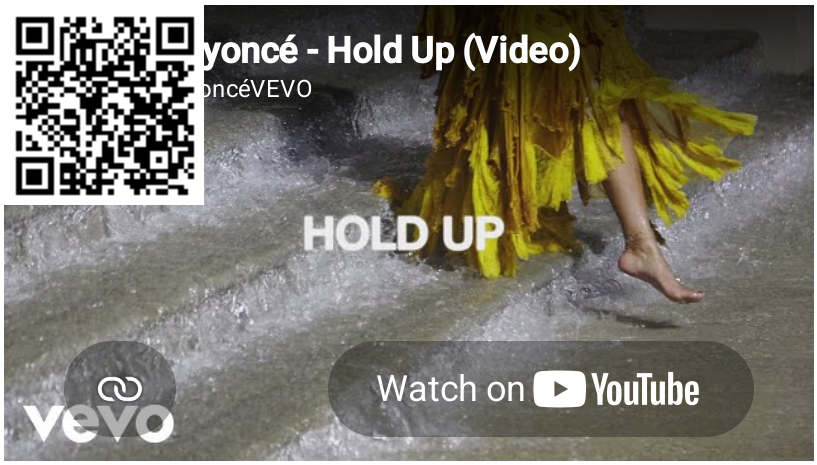


Image 5.1: Here we see Beyoncé performing onstage in 2013. Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: User "Nat Ch Villa" License: CC BY 2.0

At its center, *Lemonade* is a concept album revolving around infidelity, seemingly sparked by the infamous accounts of Beyoncé and husband Jay-Z's marital struggles. The songs, which mirror Beyoncé's personal experiences with infidelity, touch on themes such as heartbreak, revenge, and forgiveness. The accompanying film follows the singer's journey from betrayal to healing by dividing the twelve songs into separate chapters: "Intuition," "Denial," "Anger," "Apathy," "Emptiness," "Accountability," "Reformation," "Forgiveness," "Resurrection," "Hope," and "Redemption." Though the album's focus is on Beyoncé's personal healing, there is also an underlying political theme, for the album recognizes the struggles of black Americans by addressing issues such as black womanhood and police brutality. Here, we will discuss several songs and consider their visual counterparts, exploring different stages of the story's development.

"Hold Up"

One of the most noteworthy aspects of *Lemonade* is the poetry that Beyoncé recites between each song. These poems help to tie the story together and clarify dramatic details. Beyoncé's recitations include excerpts from the poems of Warsan Shire, a Somali-British poet known for writing about not only personal experiences but also the struggles of women, refugees, immigrants, and other marginalized groups of people. Throughout the recitation, listeners are confronted both with abstract images and with descriptions of the emotions that prevail in each chapter. Consider, for example, the poetry that precedes the song "Hold Up," which Beyoncé recites in eerie, whispering tones.



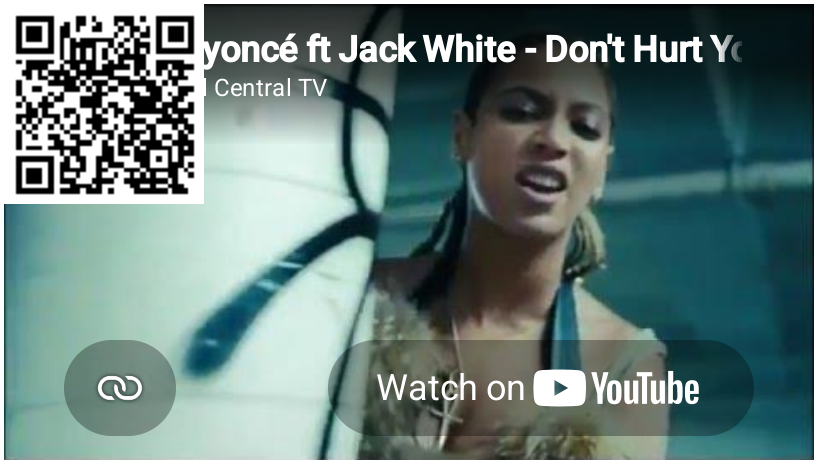
"Hold Up" from Lemonade Performance: Beyoncé (2016)

Immediately following this passage, the song "Hold Up" begins. This upbeat single reflects the "Denial" chapter of Beyoncé's journey. The song at first seems optimistic: its playful, Reggae-inspired beat and major key make the song sound like a laid-back summertime hit. The lyrics of the chorus seem to convey a positive attitude, repeating the phrase, "Hold up, they don't love you like I love you/Slow down, they don't love you like I love you." However, the verses express more negative emotions. By considering the lyrics in their entirety and noticing the duality between the verses and the chorus, the listener gets the impression that Beyoncé is fighting with her emotions, bouncing back and forth between denial and anger.

The visual aspect of the song also reveals a dichotomous nature. Beyoncé herself seems to be a visual representation of lightheartedness, dressed in a long, flowing gown of bright yellow. However, her look is meant to be a representation of Oshun, a West-African goddess of fresh waters, love, and fertility (this characterization is further emphasized in the beginning of the scene where Beyoncé emerges from a building surrounded by cascading water). Although Oshun is viewed as a benevolent deity, folktales often discuss Oshun's harsh temper when she has been wronged. Beyoncé embodies this character throughout the song, smiling playfully as she bashes windows, fire hydrants, and cars with a baseball bat.

"Don't Hurt Yourself"

In the following song, "Don't Hurt Yourself," which is performed during the chapter titled "Anger," Beyoncé leaves behind her playful nature for full-on vengeance. The song, which features rock musician Jack White (known mostly for his association with The White Stripes), has definite rock-and-roll characteristics, including heavy rhythms and distorted vocals. Beyoncé expresses her anger in the song's opening lyric: "Who the f*ck do you think I is? You ain't married to no average b*tch, boy." The mood throughout the song remains the same: angry and vengeful. Beyoncé concludes with a final warning: "If you try this sh*t again/ You gon' lose your wife."



With these lyrics, it becomes apparent that Beyonce's anger is directed toward her cheating husband. However, this song also includes one of the first instances in which Beyoncé addresses the album's other theme: the struggles of being a black American,

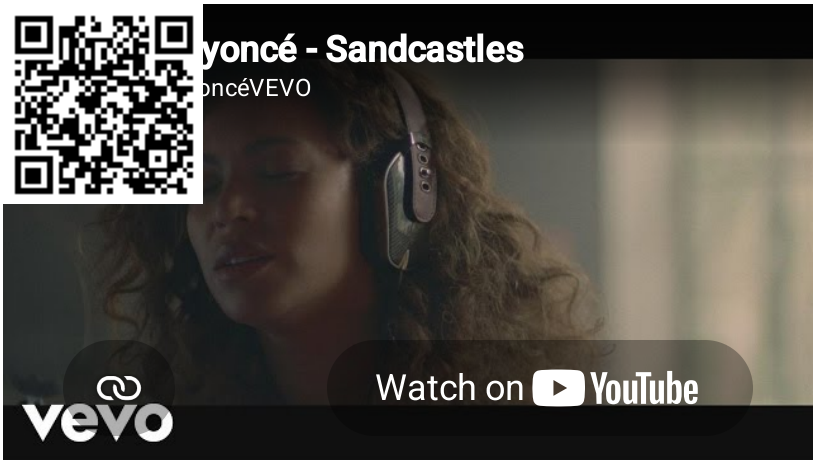
particularly a black American woman. In the middle of the first verse, Beyoncé interpolates an excerpt from Malcolm X's famous speech "Who Taught You to Hate Yourself:"

> *The most disrespected person in America is the black woman. The most unprotected woman in America is the black woman. The most neglected person in America is the black woman.*

Beyoncé's anger seems to be not only directed at her husband but also at the mistreatment of black women in America. This continues to be an underlying theme throughout the remainder of the album. For instance, in the following song, "Sorry" (one of the most popular singles from the album), the last lyric reads "you better call Becky with the good hair." There's been a lot of discourse on who "Becky" might be, but the choice of name suggests a white woman, perhaps one with generic Euro-centric looks and features. This reflects the negative stereotype that black women are less desirable than other women, and it implies that Beyoncé was cheated on because of her blackness.

"Sandcastles"

The next few songs on the album, which belong to the chapters "Apathy" and "Emptiness," exhibit various emotions, but it is with the song "Sandcastles"3 that Beyoncé arrives at the most difficult and important point in her journey: "Forgiveness." The music itself presents raw emotions, with its simple, bare piano accompaniment and expressive vocals. Beyoncé's singing style is very different in this song, her voice at times sounding shaky or raspy, reflecting the hurt that is inevitable when confronting a cheating partner. She sings of her damaged marriage, of the fights and broken hearts, yet she reveals her reluctance to walk away from it all by singing, "Oh, and I know I promised that I couldn't stay, baby/ Every promise don't work out that way." Like the music itself, the visual portion of this song is very personal, including loving scenes of Beyoncé and husband Jay-Z laughing together and embracing.



The following short song, "Forward," features English singer James Blake, who sings a heartbreaking melody. With the infidelity narrative reaching its conclusion in the previous song, this interlude pulls away from the story of Beyonce's struggles and introduces a new focus on the previously- mentioned underlying theme: the struggles of black Americans. The visual counterpart of the song features several important figures in the fight for equality and justice, including the mothers of Trayvon Martin, Eric Garner, and Michael Brown (Sybrina Fulton, Gwen Carr, and Lezley McSpadden respectively). Each woman is shown holding a photograph of her son who was killed by unnecessary violence and brutality.



Image 5.2: Beyoncé performing in 2007. Source: Wikipedia Attribution: Cornel Pex License: CC BY 2.0

The final chapters of Beyoncé's journey, "Hope" and "Redemption," feature upbeat and inspirational songs such as "Freedom" and the hit single "Formation." The powerful lyrics and gospel style of "Freedom" convey an inspirational message about continuing on in the midst of adversity. This message is not only a reflection of Beyoncé's power to move beyond her personal struggles while dealing with her husband's infidelity, it is also an anthem intended to uplift black Americans in their struggles against inequality. At the song's conclusion, there is an excerpt from a speech given by Hattie White, Jay-Z's grandmother, that elucidates the meaning of the album's title:

> *I had my ups and downs, but I always find the inner strength to pull myself up. I was served lemons, but I made lemonade.*

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13.2: Franz Schubert - The Lovely Maid of the Mill

Franz Schubert

Franz Schubert (1797-1828) lived a quiet life in Vienna, where he wrote over 600 songs for performance at intimate domestic gatherings. Although he died young, and without achieving significant fame outside of Vienna, his work became widely-known in the mid-19th century and today he is considered to be one of the finest composers of the era.

Song and National Character

Before we can look at Schubert's songs, we need to know something about the cultural context in which he was working. In the early 19th century, new ideas about national identity were in the air. Many of these ideas were rooted in the work of German philosopher Johann Gottfried von Herder, who argued that spoken language influenced an individual's character. He suggested, for example, that Germans all thought in roughly the same way because they spoke the same language, which in turn guided and structured their intellectual activity. From here, the notion that people who spoke the same language should participate in bounded, self-governing communities—nations, in fact—was not far removed.

During Schubert's time, neither Germany nor Austria existed in anything resembling their present forms, but the idea that communities of people who spoke a common language should constitute autonomous nations was quickly taking hold.

Herder also believed that the most authentic form of national character was to be found among those least corrupted by cosmopolitan influences—the peasants who worked the land. Before the late 18th century, impoverished rural folk were treated with contempt. It was not believed that they had anything to offer the ruling classes other than labor. Following Herder, however, they became the one true source of authentic "folk" culture, and therefore key to a nation's ability to understand itself.

Collectors began to scour the countryside for folk stories, folk poetry, folk dances, and folk songs. These were compiled and published for popular consumption. Perhaps the most famous of such collectors were the Brothers Grimm (Jacob Ludwig Karl and Wilhelm Carl), who were responsible for first recording many of the fairy tales—including Cinderella, Hansel and Gretel, Snow White, Rapunzel, and Sleeping Beauty—that have been ceaselessly told and retold around the world ever since.

All of this is important to our discussion of Schubert for two reasons. First, the elevation of the German language meant that German songs had the potential to become art. Before Schubert's time, songs were regarded as trivial popular entertainment. Schubert's songs, however, were taken seriously as cultural expression of the highest order.



Figure 13.2.1 : This posthumous portrait of Schubert was painted by Wilhelm August Rieder in 1875. Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: Wilhelm August Rieder License: Public Domain. (right) The ideas of Johann Gottfried von Herder influenced the development of a German art song tradition. Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: Anton Graff License: Public Domain.

Second, general fascination with folk culture and art influenced Schubert's approach to writing songs. He often chose texts that imitated folk poetry, or at least dealt with rural subject matter, and he frequently set these to music in a folk-like style. Although some of his music seems very simple, Schubert did not resort to the folk idiom because he lacked ability or imagination. Instead, he imitated genuine folk song to augment his storytelling.

We will see all of this influence at work in Schubert's 1824 song cycle *The Lovely Maid of the Mill*. Before turning to the story and music, however, we need to consider the setting in which the music was meant to be experienced.

Salon Culture

In the Vienna of Schubert's time, music lovers supported an economy of small, in-home concerts known as salons. A salon might be hosted by a wealthy family for the purpose of advertising their cultural and social capital. The performance would take place in the family's living room, where visitors could admire their furnishings and art. Hosting a salon was also considerably cheaper than maintaining a private orchestra, so it became the preferred means of cultural expression as Vienna's wealth slowly shifted from a small group of aristocrats to a larger middle class.

Naturally, certain types of music were preferable for salon entertainment. Only a few performers could fit in the venue at a time, and loud instruments were not welcome. A great demand arose, therefore, for solo piano music, chamber music (two to five individuals each playing their own part), and song, all of which Schubert produced in enormous quantities.



Image 5.5: This 1897 painting by Julius Schmid shows Vienna's upper classes garbed in their finest and crowded around the piano, at which Schubert himself is seated. All attention is clearly focused on the music, which is performed at intimate proximity. (Of course, Schmid was born much too late to attend a *Schubertiade*, and he was imagining the scene in question.) Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: Julius Schmid License: Public Domain

All of Schubert's songs and chamber music were conceived of with this sort of environment in mind. In fact, he became so prominent in the salon scene that a special term, *Schubertiade*, was developed to describe a salon performance that featured only his music. Salons were comparatively informal, and listeners would gather around the performers in close proximity. Paintings of salon performances show listeners in rapt attention.

This type of engagement with music was typical more generally of Schubert's era, when the public held art in high regard and believed that artists were in a position to communicate profound truths. Schubert's listeners sought not only entertainment but also enlightenment, transformation, and catharsis. *The Lovely Maid of the Mill* offered all.

Note

Content warning: the story told in The Lovely Maid of the Mill deals with self-harm, particularly suicide. If you would find this too disturbing, please reach out to the Professor for an alternative example for study.

The Lovely Maid of the Mill

The poetry for this song cycle was written by Wilhelm Müller, a prolific author of song texts. Müller was one of many German poets who looked to folk models for inspiration, and the folk-like characteristics of his verse influenced Schubert's music. Müller's collection of twenty-five poems was first published in 1820, and Schubert began setting it to music just a few years later while he was recovering from a severe bout of illness. Schubert's spirits were low at the time he embarked on this project, for he feared that he would never fully regain his health. Indeed, he never did: Schubert succumbed to his illness five years later, just as he was on the brink of achieving success outside of Vienna.

In the poems, Müller tells the story of a young journeyman miller who has completed his initial apprenticeship and set out to find employment. He walks through the woods until he finds a stream, and then follows the stream to a mill, where he does indeed find a job waiting. He also finds the miller's daughter, and falls in love with her immediately. At first, she seems to reciprocate, and he is overjoyed to have won her affection. Slowly, however, the miller begins to suspect that the girl in fact loves the hunter, who has been hanging about the mill. As his suspicion turns to certainty, the miller experiences anger, grief, and finally resignation. Having lost his true love forever, he drowns himself in the brook.

It is worth noting that Schubert and Beyonce's songs cycles have a great deal in common. Both address the suffering that can come with love, and both express the intense emotions of the wronged party. It seems that we have never told enough stories about the difficulty of navigating a romantic relationship. The nuances of each musical story, however, are unique to the time and place in which each was crafted. Beyonce tells a tale of empowerment and reconciliation, while Schubert's protagonist seems to give up in the face of a romantic predicament.

The story told in *The Lovely Maid of the Mill*, however, exhibits a variety of 19th-century values. The period extending roughly from 1815 to 1900 is referred to in the arts as the Romantic era. In the realms of both literature and music, consumers expected insight into the inner emotional lives of individuals, whether they were fictional protagonists or the creators themselves. Two of the topics addressed in *The Lovely Maid of the Mill*—love and suicide—were especially prevalent in the Romantic era, while the tale's rural setting exemplifies the Romantic interest in nature. While the story is not particularly interesting in its own terms, the music allows us to experience every nuance the protagonist's widely varying emotional states.

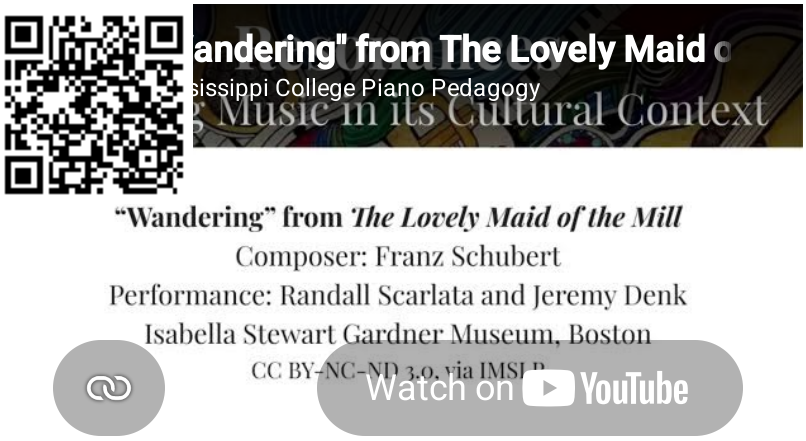
We will examine four songs: the first, the last, and two from intermediate points in the miller's emotional journey. In each case, we will look at how Schubert's musical decisions amplify and communicate the emotional and dramatic contents of the poetry.

"Wandering"

The first song is entitled "Wandering."

The poem reads as follows:

> Wandering is the miller's joy, Wandering!
>
> A man isn't much of a miller,
>
> If he doesn't think of wandering, Wandering!
>
> We learned it from the stream, The stream!
>
> It doesn't rest by day or night, And only thinks of wandering, The stream!
>
> We also see it in the mill wheels, The mill wheels!
>
> They'd rather not stand still at all and don't tire of turning all day, the mill wheels!
>
> Even the millstones, as heavy as they are, The millstones!
>
> They take part in the merry dance And would go faster if they could, The millstones!
>
> Oh wandering, wandering, my passion, Oh wandering!
>
> Master and Mistress Miller,
>
> Give me your leave to go in peace, And wander!
>
> *translated by Celia Sgroi*



"Wandering" from *The Lovely Maid of the Mill* Composer: Franz Schubert Performance: Randall Scarlata and Jeremy Denk Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston CC BY-NC-ND 3.0, via IMSLP

The textual contents, frequent word repetition, and generous use of exclamation points all paint a picture of an enthusiastic (if naive) young man. His outlook is positive and he sees nothing but joy in his future. He also indicates a clear preference for individual liberty. He is not, in other words, the type of young man who is eager to take on the responsibilities of marriage.

Schubert translates all of this enthusiasm and simplistic good nature into his music. He seems to imagine the miller's words as constituting a folk-type song, which the young man literally sings as he walks through the woods. To do so, Schubert keeps his setting (the music crafted to suit a set of words) very simple. To begin with, he creates a **strophic** song, in which each stanza of the text is set to the same music. As a result, we hear the same melody and accompaniment five times in a row. This is a standard form for European and American folk music, which is traditionally learned by ear and memorized. One can easily master the melody, which can then be used to sing a limitless amount of text. This form is also common in the Christian hymn tradition. In all of these cases, the focus is meant to be on the meaning of the words.

Schubert's strophic melody is simple and catchy. The opening melodic phrase is heard twice, as is the last, while the middle section presents an additional melody in **sequence** (that is to say, it is repeated at a different pitch level—lower, in this case). In total, therefore, this song contains three short melodic ideas, all of which are repeated either verbatim or with a minor alteration.

Schubert's melody, however, does not *quite* imitate a folk song. It is in fact fairly challenging to sing, as it contains a number of difficult leaps in the first and third sections. His piano accompaniment also walks the line between simple and sophisticated. It utilizes a straightforward pattern of arpeggiated harmonies (a technique by which the notes in a triad are played from lowest to highest and/or vice versa), none of which challenge the ear, but it is denser and more varied than one would expect in the folk tradition.

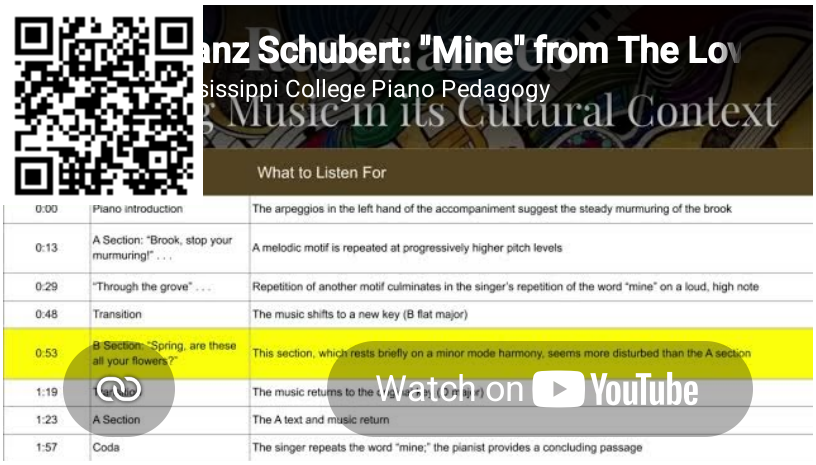
Over the course of the song cycle, however, the listener comes to realize that the piano does more than just support the singer. Schubert encourages us to hear the piano as a second storyteller. Perhaps its arpeggiated accompaniments, which are present in almost every song, represents the gurgling of the brook. When the arpeggiations are absent, it is always for a significant reason. The brook itself turns out to be a very important character. In addition to being present in many of the texts, it actually becomes the narrator for the final poem. We don't know any of this when we first hear the opening song, but in retrospect we must think twice about what the piano has to contribute.

"Mine!"

The eleventh song in the cycle is entitled "Mine!" This song marks the moment when the miller wins the heart of the girl (or so he thinks). The poem expresses his exuberance:

> Brook, stop your murmuring! Wheels, stop your thundering! All you merry woodland birds,
>
> Large and small, Stop your singing! Through the grove, In and out,
>
> Only one phrase resounds:
>
> The beloved miller's daughter is mine! Mine!
>
> Spring, are these all your flowers? Sun, can't you shine any brighter? Alas, then I must stand all alone, With the blissful word mine, Misunderstood in this vast universe.
>
> *translated by Celia Sgroi*

Schubert brings this text to life with equally joyful music. He sets a brisk tempo, and the singer rushes through the words with a sense of youthful excitement. This is most certainly not a folk song. To begin with, it is not strophic, but **through-composed**—a term used to indicate a song that pairs a unique melody with each line of poetic text instead of repeating the same melody.



"Mine!" from *The Lovely Maid of the Mill* Composer: Franz Schubert Performance: Randall Scarlata and Jeremy Denk Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston CC BY-NC-ND 3.0, via IMSLP

This song is also too complex to be perceived as a folk product. Schubert uses a ternary form (A B A), in which the first ten lines of poetry and their accompanying music constitute the A section and are therefore heard at the beginning and end of the song. The A section begins with another sequence. This time, a melodic fragment is heard at higher and higher pitch levels—an indication of the speaker's excitement. The A section ends with a rapid passage of notes that rocket to the highest pitch on the word "Mine!" The B section, apart from having a unique character, is in a different key than the A section (B-flat major instead of D major). This gives the song an added sense of wonder and delight. The piano accompaniment provides gurgling arpeggiated harmonies throughout.

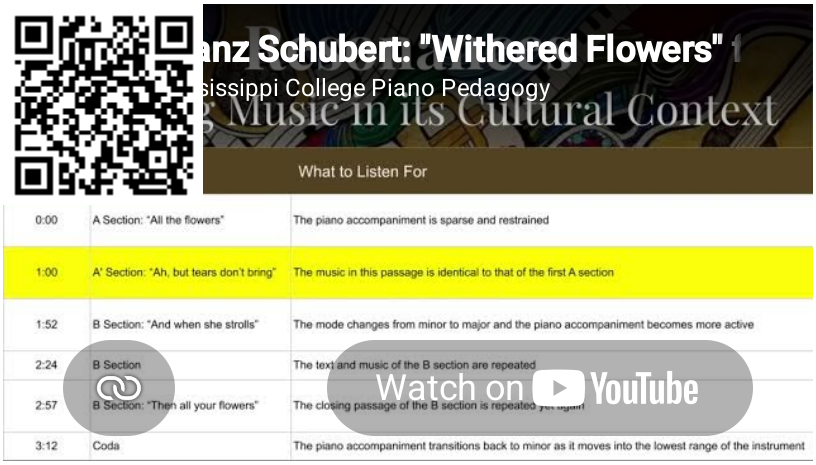
"Withered Flowers"

Next we will visit the eighteenth song, entitled "Withered Flowers." At this point, the miller has passed through various stages of suspicion and anger, and he has nearly resigned himself to his tragic fate:

> All you flowers
>
> That she gave to me, They should put you With me in my grave.
>
> Why do you all look at me So sorrowfully,
>
> As if you knew,
>
> What was happening to me?
>
> All you flowers,
>
> Why so limp, why so pale? All you flowers,
>
> What has drenched you so?
>
> Ah, but tears don't bring The green of May,
>
> Don't cause dead love To bloom again.
>
> And spring will come, And winter will go, And flowers will
>
> Grow in the grass again.
>
> And flowers are lying In my grave,
>
> All the flowers
>
> That she gave to me.
>
> And when she strolls Past my burial place And thinks to herself:
>
> He was true to me!
>
> Then all you flowers Come out, come out! May has come,
>
> And winter is gone.

translated by Celia Sgroi

The poem begins in a mournful, self-pitying vein, but the final stanzas introduce a glimmer of hope. The miller imagines a future time when his beloved, passing by his grave, will regret her cruelty. He will be dead, of course, but he will also be vindicated. The form of this poem—a series of eight stanzas—suggests a strophic setting, but Schubert provides something quite different. He sets the first three stanzas to a slow, minor-mode melody that expresses their tragic sentiment. Then he repeats that melody for the next three stanzas. For the final two stanzas, however, he shifts to the relative major (that is to say, he moves from E minor to E major) and introduces a new melody, all of which is repeated for emphasis. At the climactic phrase "May has come," the singer soars to the highest notes in his range, and the vocal music concludes on a definitively triumphant note.



"Withered Flowers" from *The Lovely Maid of the Mill* Composer: Franz Schubert Performance: Randall Scarlata and Jeremy Denk Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston CC BY-NC-ND 3.0, via IMSLP

Once again, however, we would be remiss to ignore the piano accompaniment, which is particularly striking in this example. After seventeen songs in which the piano has sparkled and bubbled, now it has suddenly gone dead. We hear only dry, sparse chords for most of the song. This accompaniment reinforces the sorrowful mood of the miller, who has given up hope. The piano comes back to life with the final two stanzas, and builds in strength as the miller gains confidence. However, the piano also foreshadows the conclusion to this story, which will not be a happy one. Although the singer ends on a triumphant, major-mode cadence, the closing passage into the piano returns to E minor as it fades away and moves into the lower ranges of the instrument. The careful listener knows that the miller's hope is false.

"The Brook's Lullaby"

The final song in the cycle is entitled "The Brook's Lullaby." The narrator is no longer the miller, who has drowned himself, but rather the brook, which promises to protect the disappointed lover and see that no more harm comes to him:

> Rest well, rest well!
>
> Close your eyes.
>
> Wanderer, you weary one, you are at home. Fidelity is here,
>
> You'll lie with me
>
> Until the sea drains the brook dry.
>
> I'll make you a cool bed On a soft cushion
>
> In your blue crystalline chamber. Come closer, come here, Whatever can soothe,
>
> Lull and rock my boy to sleep.
>
> If a hunting horn sounds From the green forest,
>
> I'll rumble and thunder all around you. Don't look in here
>
> You blue flowers!
>
> You trouble my sleeper's dreams.

Go away, depart From the mill bridge,

Wicked girl, so your shadow won't wake him! Throw in to me

Your fine scarf,

So I can cover his eyes.

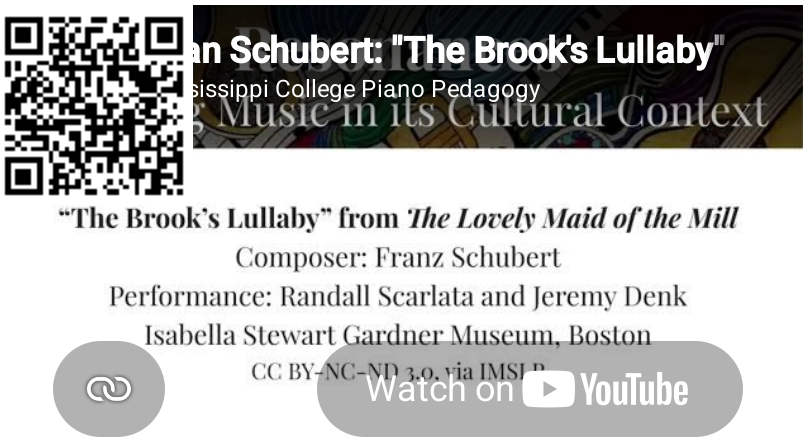
Good night, good night, Until everything wakes.

Sleep away your joy, sleep away your pain. The full moon rises,

The mist departs,

And the sky above, how vast it is!

translated by Celia Sgroi



"The Brook's Lullaby" from *The Lovely Maid of the Mill* Composer: Franz Schubert Performance: Randall Scarlata and Jeremy Denk Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, BostonCC BY-NC-ND 3.0, via IMSLP

For this final song, Schubert again provides a strophic setting, full of repeating melodic fragments. This time, however, he is imitating not a folk song but a lullaby. The melody is gentle and calming. It consists mostly of stepwise motion, and it is free of dramatic leaps and exciting runs. It *almost* sounds like a real lullaby, but not quite. Once again, Schubert makes things a bit too complicated by moving from E major to A major for the middle section, and by introducing a flatted pitch near the end that suggest E minor. The result is a particularly passionate lullaby with a hint of sadness.

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13.3: Music of Hector Berlioz

Romanticism in France

Hector Berlioz (b. 1803-1869) was born in France in La Côte-Saint-André, Isère near Grenoble. His father was a wealthy doctor and planned on Hector's pur- suing the profession of a physician. At the age of eighteen, Hector was sent to study medicine in Paris. Music at the Conservatory and at the Opera, however, became the focus of his attention. A year later, his family grew alarmed when they realized that the young student had decided to study music instead of medicine.

At this time, Paris was in a Romantic revolution. Berlioz found himself in in the company of novelist Victor Hugo and painter Delacroix. No longer receiving financial support from his parents, the young Berlioz sang in the theater choruses, performed musical chores, and gave music lessons. As a young student, Berlioz was amazed and intrigued by the works of Beethoven. Berlioz also developed interest in Shakespeare, whose popularity in Paris had recently increased with the performance of his plays by a visiting British troupe. Hector became impassioned for the Shakespearean characters of Ophelia and Juliet as they were portrayed by the alluring actress Harriet Smithson. Berlioz became obsessed with the young actress and also overwhelmed by sadness due to her lack of interest in him as a suitor. Berlioz became known for his violent mood swings. Some modern scholars suspect he may have been bipolar or suffering from some other mental illness.

In 1830, Berlioz earned his first recognition for his musical gift when he won the much sought-after Prix de Rome. This highly-esteemed award provided him a stipend and the opportunity to work and live in Paris, thus providing Berlioz with the chance to complete his most famous work, the *Symphonie Fastastique*, that year.

Upon his return to Rome, he began his intense courtship of Harriet Smithson. Both her family and his vehemently opposed their relationship. Several violent and arduous situations occurred, one of which involved Berlioz's unsuccessfully attempting suicide. After recovering from this attempt, Hector married Harriet. Once the previously unattainable matrimonial goal had been attained, Berlioz's passion somewhat cooled, and he discovered that it was Harriet's Shakespearean roles that she performed, rather than Harriet herself, that really intrigued him. The first year of their marriage was the most fruitful for him musically. By the time he was forty, he had composed most of his famous works. Bitter from giving up her acting career for marriage, Harriet became an alcoholic. The two separated in 1841 Berlioz then married his long time mistress Marie Recio, an attractive but average singer who demanded to perform in his concerts.

To supplement his income during his career, Berlioz turned to writing as a music critic, producing a steady stream of articles and reviews. He successfully utilized this vocation as a way to support his own works by persuading the audience to accept and appreciate them. His critical writing also helped to educate audiences so they could understand his complex and innovative pieces. As a prose writer, Berlioz wrote *The Treatise on Modern Instrumentation and Orchestration.* He also wrote '*Les Soirées de l'Orchestre'* (Evenings with the Orchestra), a compilation of his articles on musical life in nineteenth-century France, and an autobiography entitled *Mémoires.* Later in life, he conducted his music in all the capitals of Europe, with the exception of Paris. It was one location where the public would not accept his work; the Paris public would read his reviews and learn to welcome lesser composers, but they would not accept Berlioz's music. As over the years Berlioz saw his own works neglected by the public of Paris while they cheered and supported others, he became disgusted and bitter from the neglect. His last final work composed to gain acceptance by the Parisian audiences was the opera *Béatrice et Bénédict* with his own libretto based upon Shakespeare's *Much Ado about Nothing*. But the Parisian public did not appreciate it. After this final effort, the disillusioned and embittered Berlioz composed no more in his seven remaining years, dying rejected and tormented at the age of sixty-six. Only after his death would France appreciate his achievements.

His operas include *Benvenuto Cellini*, *Le Troyens*, *Béatrice et Bénédict*, *Les francs-juges (incomplete)*, *Grande Messe des morts (Requiem)*, *La damnation de Faust*, *Te Deum*, and *L'enfance du Christ*.

His major orchestral compositions include *Symphonie fantastique*, *Harold en Italie*, *Romeo et Juliette*, *The Corsair*, *King Lear*, and *Grande symphonie funèbre et triomphale.* Berlioz is credited for changing the modern sound of orchestras.

Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique* is important for several reasons: it is a program symphony, it incorporates an *idée fixe* (a recurring theme representing an ideology or person that provides continuity through a musical work), and it contains five movements rather than the four of most symphonies.

Listening Guide

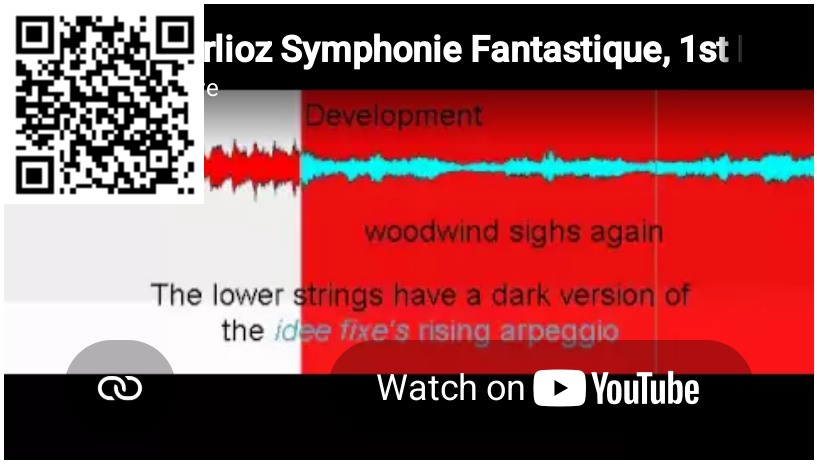
- Composer: Hector Berlioz
- Composition: Symphonie Fantastique, Op.14: 1st movement Reveries – Passions
- Date: 1830
- Genre: Symphony, First movement
- Form: Sonata form
- Performing forces: large Romantic symphony orchestra

What we want you to remember about this composition:

- The largo (slow) opening is pensive and expressive, depicting the depression, the joy, and the fruitless passion Berlioz felt. It is followed by a long and very fast section with a great amount of expression, with the *idée fixe* (a short recurring musical theme/motive associated with a person, place or idea) indicating the appearance of his beloved.
- The title for the movement is “Dreams, Passions.” It represents his uneasy and uncertain state of mind. The mood quickly changes as his love appears to him. He reflects on the love inspired by her. He notes the power of his enraged jealousy for her and of his religious consolation at the end.

Other things to listen for:

Berlioz is known for being one of the greatest orchestrators of all time. He even wrote the first comprehensive book on orchestration. He always thought in terms of the exact sound (tone or timbre) of the orchestra and the mixture of individual sounds to blend through orchestration. He gave very detailed instructions to the conductor and individual performers in regards to articulations and how he wanted them to play. Listen to the subtleties and nuance of the performance. Berlioz left little up to chance since he was so thorough in his compositions.



Performed by the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Yan Pascal Tortelier

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13.4: Music of Guiseppe Verdi

Romantic Opera in Italy

Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901) succeeded early Romantic Giacomo Rossini as the most important Italian opera composer of his day. Living during a time of national revolution, Verdi's music and name become associated with those fighting for an Italy that would be united under King Emmanuel. A chorus from one of his early operas about the ancient enslaved Hebrews would become a political song for Italian independent fighters. His last name, V.E.R.D.I. would become an acronym for a political call to rally around King Emmanuel. Although Verdi shied away from the political limelight, he was persuaded to accept a post in the Italian parliament in 1861.

As was the case with many sons of nineteenth-century middle-class families, Verdi was given many and early opportunities to further his education. He began music instruction with local priests before his fourth birth- day. Before he turned ten, he had become organist of the local church, and he continued music lessons alongside lessons in languages and the humanities through his adolescence. He assumed posts as music director and then in 1839 composed his first opera. Like his predecessor, Rossini, Verdi would prove to be a prolific com- poser, writing 26 operas in addition to other large-scale choral works. Like Rossini's music, Verdi's music used recitatives and arias, now arranged in the elaborate scena ad aria format, with an aria that contained both slower cantabile and faster cabaletta. Verdi, however, was more flexible in his use of recitatives and arias and employed a much larger orchestras than previous Italian opera composers, resulting in operas that were as dramatic as they were musical. His operas span a variety of subjects, from always popular mythology and ancient history to works set in his present that participated in a wider artistic movement called *verismo*, or realism.

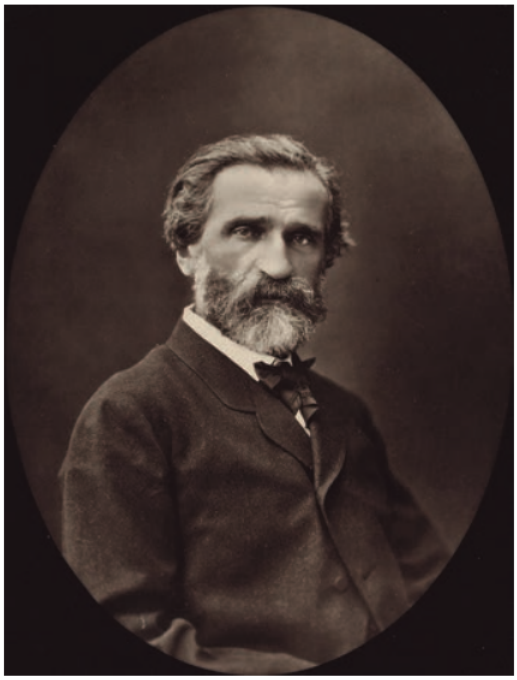


Figure 13.4.1: Giuseppe Verdi by Ferdinand Mulnier. Source: Wikimedia

Focus Composition:

Verdi, Excerpt from *La Traviata* (1853)

A good example of his operatic realism can be found in *La Traviata,* or *The Fall- en Woman* (1853). This opera was based on a play by Alexandre Dumas. Verdi want- ed it to be set in the present, but the censors at La Fenice, the opera house in Venice that would premiere the opera, insisted on setting it in the 1700s instead. Of issue was the heroine, Violetta—a companion-prostitute for the elite aristocrats of Parisian society—with whom Alfredo, a young noble, falls in love. After wavering over giving up her independence, Violetta commits herself to Alfredo, and they live a blissful few months together before Alfredo's father arrives and convinces Violetta that she is destroying their family and the marriage prospects of Alfredo's younger sister. In response, Violetta leaves Alfredo without telling him why and goes back to her old life. Alfredo is angry and hurt and the two live unhappily apart. A

consumptive, that is, one suffering from tuberculosis, Violetta declines and her health disintegrates. Alfredo's father has a crisis of conscience and confesses to his son what he has done. Alfredo rushes to Paris to reunite with Violetta. The two sing a love duet, but it is soon clear that Violetta is very ill, and in fact, she dies in Alfredo's arms, before they can go to the church to be married. In ending tragically, this opera ends like many other nineteenth-century tales.



Figure 13.4.2: *La Traviata*: Scene 1 by Carl Henning Lutzow d'Unker. Source: Wikimedia

Verdi wrote this opera mid century with full knowledge of the Italian opera before him. Like his contemporary, Richard Wagner, Verdi wanted opera to be a strong bond of music and drama. He carefully observed how German opera composers such as Carl Maria von Weber and French Grand Opera composers such as Giacomo Meyerbeer had used much larger orchestras than had previous opera composers, and Verdi himself al- so employed a comparably large ensemble for *La Traviata*. Verdi also believe in flexibly using the operatic forms he had inherited, and so although *La Traviata* does have arias and recitatives, the recitatives are more varied and lyrical than before and the alternation between the recitatives, arias, and other ensembles, are guided by the drama, instead of the drama having to fit within the structure of recitative-aria pairs. A good example is "La follie...Sempre libera" from the end of Act I in which Violetta debates whether she is ready to give up her independence for Alfredo. Although at the end of the aria it seems that she has decided to remain free, Act II begins with the two lovers living happily together, and we know that the vocal injections sung by Alfredo as part of Violetta's recitative and aria of Act I have prevailed. This piece is also a good example of how virtuoso opera had gotten by the end of the nineteenth century. Earlier Italian opera had been virtuoso in its use of ornamentation. Verdi, however, required a much wider range of his singers, and this wider range is showcased in the scene we'll watch. Violetta has a huge vocal range and performers must have great agility to sing the melismas in her part. As an audience, we are awed by her vocal prowess, a fitting response, given her character in the opera.

- Composer: Verdi
- Composition: "Follie" and "Sempre libera" from La Traviata
- Date: 1853
- Genre: recitatives and aria from an opera
- Form: alternates between singing styles of accompanied recitative, with some repetition of sections
- Nature of Text:
- libretto by Francesco Maria Piave; Please find a translation of the whole libretto hereLinks to an external site..

VIOLETTA
Folly! Folly! Ah yes! From joy to joy,
forever free, I must pass
madly from joy to joy.
My life's course shall be
forever in the paths of pleasure.
Whether it be dawn or dusk,
I must always live. Ah!
Gaily in the world's gay places,

ever seeking newer joys, *etc.*

ALFREDO
Love is the very breath
of the universe itself.

VIOLETTA
Oh! My thoughts have to seek new joys.
Oh! My thoughts. My thoughts.

Performing Forces: soprano (Violetta), tenor (Alfredo), and orchestra

What we want you to remember about this composition:

- The virtuoso nature of Violetta's singing
- The subtle shifts between recitative and aria, now less pronounced than in earlier opera
- A large orchestra that stays in the background

Other things to listen for:

- Alfredo's more lyrical melody in distinction to Violetta's virtuosity

This video should begin at 2:24, just as Alfredo--who is outside--is singing about how enraptured he is by love. Violetta's aria starts soon after with "Madness. madness!" That's the "Follie, Follie!"



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13.5: Music of Richard Wagner

Romantic Opera in Germany

If Verdi continued the long tradition of Italian opera, Richard Wagner provided a new path for German opera. Wagner (1813-1883) may well have been the most influential European composer of the second half of the nineteenth century. Never shy about self-promotion, Wagner himself clearly thought so. Wagner's influence was both musical and literary. His dissonant and chromatic harmonic experiments even influenced the French, whose music belies their many verbal denouncements of Wagner and his music. His essays about music and autobiographical accounts of his musical experiences were widely followed by nineteenth-century individuals, from the average bourgeois music enthusiast to philosophers such as Friedrich Nietzsche. Most disturbingly, Wagner was rabidly anti-Semitic, and generations later his writing and music provided propaganda for the Nazi Third Reich.

Born in Leipzig, Germany, Wagner initially wanted to be a playwright like Goethe, until as a teenager he heard the music of Beethoven and decided to become a composer instead. He was particularly taken by Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and the addition of voices as performing forces into the symphony, a type of composition traditionally written for orchestra. Seeing in this work an acknowledgement of the powers of vocal music, Wagner set about writing vocal music. Coming to age during a time of rising nationalism, Wagner criticized Italian opera as consisting of cheap melodies and insipid orchestration unconnected to its dramatic purposes, and he set about providing a German alternative. He called his operas music dramas in order to emphasize a unity of text, music, and action; and declared that they would be *Gesamtkunstwerk*, or "total works of art." As part of his program, he wrote his own librettos and aimed for what he called unending melody: the idea was for a constant lyricism, carried as much by the orchestra as by the singers.

Perhaps most importantly, Wagner developed a system of what scholars have come to call Leitmotivs. Leitmotivs, or "guiding motives," are musical motives that are associated with a specific character, theme, or locale in a drama. Wagner integrated these musical motives in the vocal lines and orchestration of his music dramas at many points. Wagner believed in the flexibility of such motives to reinforce an overall sense of unity within his compositions, even if primarily at a subconscious level. Thus, while a character might be singing a melody line using one leitmotiv, the orchestration might incorporate a different leitmotiv, suggesting a connection between the referenced entities.



Figure 13.5.1: Richard Wagner by Cäsar Willich. Source: Wikimedia

Here's a fun video on leitmotive (can also be spelled "leitmotifs") that uses film music for some examples. There's information about Wagner starting around 2:10, if you want to skip to that. I think it's worth watching the whole thing, if you have the time.



Wagner also designed and built a theatre for the performance of his own music dramas. The Festival Theatre in Bayreuth, Germany was the first to use a sunken orchestra pit, and its huge backstage area allowed for some of the most elaborate sets of Wagner's day. It was here that his famous cycle of music dramas, *The Ring of the Nibelungen*, was performed, starting in 1876. *The Ring of the Nibelungen* consists of four music dramas with over fifteen hours of music. Wagner took the story from a Nordic mythological legend that stems back to the Middle Ages. In it, a piece of gold is stolen from the Rhine River and fashioned into a ring, which gives its bearer ultimate power. The cursed ring changes hands, causing destruction around who- ever possesses it. Eventually the ring is returned to the Rhine River, thereby closing the cycle. Into that story, which some may recognize from the much later fiction of J. R. R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*, Wagner interwove stories of the Norse gods and men. Wagner's four music dramas trace the saga of the king of the gods, Wotan, as he builds Valhalla, the home of the gods, and attempts to order the lives of his children, including that of his daughter, the valkyrie warrior Brünnhilde.

Focus Composition:

Conclusion to *The Valkyrie* (1876)

In the excerpt we'll watch from the end of *The Valkyrie*, the second of the four music dramas, Brünnhilde has gone against her father, and, because Wotan cannot bring himself to kill her, he puts her to sleep before encircling her with flames, a fiery ring that both imprisons and protects his daughter. This excerpt provides several examples of the *Leitmotivs* for which Wagner is so famous. Their presence, often subtle, is designed to guide the audience through the drama. They include melodies, harmonies, and textures that represent Wotan's spear, the god Loge—a shape shifting life force that here takes the form of fire—sleep, the magic sword, and fate.

Let's talk about the important leitmotivs that appear in this opera. Here is a video where some kind soul has put them all together (with simplified notation on screen) so you can see and hear what's happening. The descriptions of the most important motifs for the excerpt we are going to hear appear below. I will put in parentheses when the theme can be heard in this video:



The first motive heard in the video you will watch is Wotan's Spear. (8:02 in the above video) The spear represents Wotan's power. In this scene, Wotan is pointing it toward his daughter Brünnhilde, ready to conjure the ring of fire that will both imprison and

protect here. Representing a symbol of power, the spear motive is played at a forte dynamic by the lower brass. Here it descends in a minor scale that reinforces the seriousness of Wotan's actions.

Wotan commands Loge to appear and suddenly the music breaks out in a completely different style. Loge's music—sometimes also referred to as the magic fire music—is in a major key and appears in upper woodwinds such as the flutes. Its notes move quickly with staccato articulations suggesting Loge's free spirit and shifting shapes. (It's at 8:23 in the video above.)

Depicting Brünnhilde's descent into sleep, Wagner wrote a chromatic musical line that starts high and slowly moves downward. We call this phrase the Sleep motive (not in the video). After casting his spell, Wotan warns anyone who is listening that whoever would dare to trespass the ring of fire will have to face his spear. As the drama unfolds in the next opera of the tetralogy, one character will do just that: Siegfried, Wotan's own grandson. He will release Brünnhilde using a magic sword. The melody to which Wotan sings his warning with its wide leaps and overall disjunct motion sounds a little bit like the motive representing Siegfried's sword.

One final motive is prominent at the end of *The Valkyrie*, a motive which is referred to as Fate. It appears in the horns and features three notes: a sustained pitch that slips down just one step and then rises the small interval of a minor third to another sustained pitch (heard at 2:53 in the video above).

Now that you've been introduced to all of the leitmotivs in the excerpt, follow along with the listening guide. As you listen, notice how prominent the huge orchestra is throughout the scene, how it provides the melodies, and how the strong and large voice of the bass-baritone singing Wotan soars over the top of the orchestra (Wagner's music required larger voices than earlier opera as well as new singing techniques). See if you can hear the Leitmotivs, there to absorb you in the drama. Remember that this is just one short scene from the midpoint of the approximately fifteen-hour-long tetralogy.

Start the video a little before 10:05, which is just about when you hear the Wotan's spear motif. Wotan has put Brünnhilde to sleep and he lays her shield on her chest before walking up to call Loge and the fire to surround her.



Nature of Text:

(He looks upon her and closes her helmet: his eyes then rest on the form of the sleeper, which he now completely covers with the great steel shield of the Valkyrie. He turns slowly away, then again turns around with a sorrowful look.)

(He strides with solemn decision to the middle of the stage and directs the point of his spear toward a large rock.)
Loge, hear! List to my word!
As I found thee of old, a glimmering flame,

as from me thou didst vanish,
in wandering fire;
as once I stayed thee, stir I thee now! Appear! come, waving fire,
and wind thee in flames round the fell!

(During the following he strikes the rock thrice with his spear.)

Loge! Loge! appear!

(A flash of flame issues from the rock, which swells to an ever-brightening fiery glow.)
(Flickering flames break forth.)

(Bright shooting flames surround Wotan. With his spear he directs the sea of fire to encircle the rocks; it presently spreads toward the background, where it encloses the mountain in flames.)

He who my spearpoint's sharpness feareth shall cross not the flaming fire!

(He stretches out the spear as a spell. He gazes sorrowfully back on Brünnhilde. Slowly he turns to depart. He turns his head again and looks back. He disappears through the fire.)

(The curtain falls.)

Wagner, Richard. *Die Walküre*. [English Transl. By Frederick Jameson; Version Française Par Alfred Eernst]. Leipzig: Eulenburg, 1900. Print. Eulenburgs kleine Partitur-Ausgabe.

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14: Music and Nationalism

Introduction

Music, as we have said many times, does not exist in a vacuum. Elements of class, race, politics, national identity, and other things are wrapped up in musical pieces, even if the composers/performers/listeners do not explicitly seek them out. This chapter, however, is going to look at music that reflects the national identities of its creators, or that is a product of a specific political system.

Nationalism

Nationalism, found in many genres, is marked by the use of folk songs or nationalist themes in operas or instrumental music. Nationalist composers of different countries include Russian composers such as Modest Mussorgsky, Alexander Borodin, and Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov (members of the “Kuchka”); Bohemian composers such as Antonin Dvorak and Bedřich Smetana; Hungarian composers such as Liszt; Scandinavian composers such as Edvard Grieg and Jean Sibelius; Spanish composers such as Enrique Granados, Joaquin Turina, and Manuel de Falla; and British composers such as Ralph Vaughn Williams.

Composers looked to their native as well as **exotic** (from other countries) music to add to their pallet of ideas. Nationalism was expressed in several ways:

- songs and dances of native people
- mythology: dramatic works based on folklore of peasant life (Tchaikovsky’s Russian fairy-tale operas and ballets)
- celebration of a national hero, historic event, or scenic beauty of country

We talk about the rise of nationalism in music as a reflection of political shifts happening in Europe and the U.S. The focus on the music of Western music we saw in the Classical and early Romantic period is now spreading further afield. To this end, we talk about nationalism in the music of Czech composers Bedrich Smetana and Antonin Dvorak. We also discuss the nationalistic work of American composer, John Philip Sousa. We will also talk about Tchaikovsky, who chose to avoid nationalistic trends in Russia in favor of a more generically European style.

One note: Some of the work we will study is **program music**. Although we have examples of program music that go back very far (you may remember Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* from 121, if you took that class), program music became extremely important and popular in the Romantic period. We looked at Berlioz's program piece, *Symphonie Fantastique* in the last module. But let's make sure we understand what it is. According to one of our texts: "Program music is instrumental music that represents something outside of music, such as the words of a poem or narrative or the sense of a painting or idea. A composer might ask orchestral instruments to imitate the sounds of natural phenomenon, such as a babbling brook or the cries of birds. Most program music carries a descriptive title that suggests what an audience member might listen for." Hopefully that's clear, and it bears repeating that program music, its instrumental, which means there are no lyrics or sung/spoken words. The representation of non-musical things must be achieved only with musical instruments.

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14.1: Music of Bedřich Smetana

Music of Bedřich Smetana

Bedřich Smetana (b. 1824-1884) was born in Litomsyl, Bohemia while under Austrian rule (now the Czech Republic). Smetana was the son of a brewer and violinist and his father's third wife. Smetana was a talented pianist who gave public performances from the age of six. Bohemia under Austrian rule was politically very volatile. In 1848 Smetana aligned himself with those seeking independent state- hood from Austria. After that revolution was crushed, Prague and the surrounding areas were brutally suppressed—especially those areas and people suspected of being sympathetic to Bohemian nationalism. In 1856, Smetana left for Sweden to accept a conductorship post. He hoped to follow in the footsteps of such music predecessors as Liszt. He thus expresses his admiration, "By the grace of God and with His help, I shall one day be a Liszt in technique and a Mozart in composition." (taken from his diary, 23 January, 1845.)

As a composer, Smetana began incorporating nationalist themes, plots, and dances in his operas and symphonic poems. He founded the Czech national school after he left Sweden and was a pioneer at incorporating Czech folk tunes, rhythms, and dances into his major works. Smetana returned to Bohemia in 1861 and assumed his role as national composer. He worked to open and establish a theatre venue in Prague where performances would be performed in their native tongue. Of his eight original operas, seven are still performed in native tongue today. One of these operas, *The Bartered Bride*, was and is still acclaimed. Click here to see a performance of the Overture to *The bartered Bride*. He composed several folk dances, including polkas for orchestra. These polkas incorporated the style and levity of his Bohemian culture. Click here to hear his Louisa's Polka.

Smetana also is known for composing the cycle of six symphonic poems entitled *My Fatherland* (*Má vlast)*. These poems are program music, representing the beautiful Bohemian countryside, Bohemian folk dance and song rhythms, and the pageantry of Bohemian legends. The first of these symphonic poems is called *Má vlast* (My Fatherland) and is symbolic program music representing his birthplace. To see a performance of the entire work, please click to view this YouTube video.

Focus Composition: *Vltava*, (*The Moldau*)

The second of the six symphonic poems, *Vltava*, (*The Moldau*) is recognized as Smetana's greatest orchestral work. The preface to the original score states:

> *The Moldau represents an exceptional expression of patriotic or nationalistic music. The musical poem reflects the pride, oppression, and hope of the Bohemian people. . . .*
>
> *Two springs pour forth in the shade of the Bohemian Forest, one warm and gushing, the other cold and peaceful. Their waves, gaily flowing over rocky beds, join and glisten in the rays of the morning sun. The forest brook, hastening on, becomes the river Vltava (Moldau). Coursing through Bohemia's valleys, it grows into a mighty stream. Through thick woods it flows, as the gay sounds of the hunt and the notes of the hunter's horn are heard ever nearer. It flows through grass-grown pastures and lowlands where a wedding feast is being celebrated with song and dance. At night wood and water nymphs revel in its sparkling waves. Reflected on its surface are fortresses and castles—witnesses of bygone days of knightly splendor and the vanished glory of fighting times. At the St. John Rapids the stream races ahead, winding through the cataracts, heaving on a path with its foaming waves through the rocky chasm into the broad river bed— finally. Flowing on in majestic peace toward Prague—finally. Flowing on in majestic peace toward Prague and welcomed by time-honored Vysehrad (castle). Then it vanishes far beyond the poet's gaze.*



Figure: A panoramic view looking north-west across the Vltava River to Prague Castle and the Charles Bridge by User “Diliff.” Source: Wikimedia.



- Composer: Bedřich Smetana (1824-1884)
- Composition: The Moldau (Vlatava)
- Date: 1874
- Genre: Symphonic poem
- Form: Symphonic Poem (Tone Poem)
- Performing Forces: piccolo, two flutes, two oboes , two clarinets, two bassoons, four French horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, triangle, cymbals, harp, strings

What we want you to remember about this composition:

- *The Moldau (Vlatava)* is a programmatic symphonic poem portraying the story of the main river in Bohemia as it flows through Smetana’s homeland countryside. Each section portrays a different scene, often contrasting, that the river encounters.
- This piece is a good representation of Czech nationalism and also of a romantic setting of nature.
- The composer wrote the work following a trip he took down the river as part of a larger cycle of six symphonic poems written between 1874 and 1879 entitled *Má Vlast* (*My Country* or *My Fatherland*).

Listening Guide

0:00 - Two Springs (Source of the river). Flutes begin with a flowing/rippling melodic passage soon joined by the clarinets. The harp and strings (pizzicato) are heard periodically.

1:06 - Rippling notes moves to lower strings that lead to the main river theme.

1:16 - The River Theme. Violins present the river theme in a minor key (e minor). Melody moves step-wise with running-note accompaniment in strings. Repeated.

1:31 - River theme repeated.

1:46 - Melodic answer to the river theme.

2:11 - The river theme is expanded (note the triangle with orchestral crescendos).

2:18 - Return of the River theme.

2:35 - Answer to the River theme.

2:52 - Expansion/elaboration of river theme.

3:01 - Return of the River theme.

3:20 - Forest Hunting Scene. French horns and trumpets, hunting calls.

4:10 - Rippling continues (in strings); dies down to gently rocking motion. Transition to next section (strings). Repeated notes in strings lead to rustic folk tune, staccato in strings and woodwinds.

4:38 - Peasant Wedding. Strings present a dance-like tune (polka). Closes with repeated single note in strings

6:15 - Moonlight: Dance of Water Nymphs. Woodwinds, sustained tones.

6:35 - Flute passage (similar to opening of work). Rippling figures in flutes; muted string theme with harp, punctuated by French horn; brass crescendo, fanfare

7:02 - Muted violins in high register with a legato melody.

9:06 - Intensification

9:29 - Violins present the river theme. Played in the minor mode.

10:17 - River theme reappears in the major mode

10:29 - St. John's Rapids. Full orchestra, fortissimo. Brasses, timpani roll, piccolo, cymbal crashes.

12:09 - River theme, Full orchestra, Loudest dynamic/volume. The River at its Widest Point.
Full orchestra, river theme in major key. Faster tempo.

12:45 - The Ancient Castle. The brasses and woodwinds portray Vyšehrad, the ancient castle in a hymn-like melody. Slow then Accelerates

14:05 - River Dies Away, Strings slow down, lose momentum

Final cadence - Two forceful closing chords.

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14.2: Music of Antonín Dvořák

Music of Antonín Dvořák

Antonín Dvořák (b. 1841-1904) was born in a Bohemian village of Nelahozeves near Prague. Following in Smetana's footsteps, Dvořák became a leading com- poser in the Czech nationalism music campaign. Indeed, Dvořák and Smetana are considered the founders of the Czech national school. Dvořák, at the age of sixteen, moved to Prague. As a young aspiring violinist, Dvořák earned a seat in the Czech national Theater. Dvořák learned to play viola and became a professional violist; for a time in his career, he performed under Smetana. Dvořák became recognized by Brahms who encouraged Dvořák to devote his energy to composing. Early in his career he was musically under the German influence of Beethoven, Brahms, and Mendelssohn. Later, however, Dvořák explored his own culture, rooting his music in the dances and songs of Bohemia. Indeed, he never lost touch with his humble upbringing by his innkeeper and butcher father.



Figure 14.2.1: Antonín Dvořák by Unknown. Source: Wikimedia

Dvořák's compositions received favorable recognition abroad and reluctant recognition at home. From 1892 to 1895, Dvořák served as director of the National Conservatory in the United States. During this time his compositions added American influences to the Bohemian. He fused "old world" harmonic theory with "new world" style. Very interested in American folk music, Dvořák took as one of his pupils an African-American baritone singer named Henry T. Burleigh who was an arranger and singer of spirituals. Click here to hear Harry T. Burleigh sing the spiritual "Go Down Moses." Dvořák's admiration and enthusiasm for the African-American spiritual is clear. He said he was convinced that these melodies could become "the foundation of a serious and original school of composition, to be developed in the United States."

The spirituals, along with Native American and cowboys songs, interested Dvořák and influenced his compositions for years to come. His love for this American folk music was contagious and soon spread to other American composers. Up until this point, American composers were under the heavy influence of their European counterparts. Dvořák's influence and legacy as an educator and composer can be traced in the music of Aaron Copland and George Gershwin. Although he gained much from his time in America, Dvořák yearned for his homeland to which he returned after three years away, resisting invitations from fellow composer, Johannes Brahms to relocate in Vienna. Dvořák desired the more simple life of his homeland where he died in 1904, shortly after his last opera, *Armida*, was first performed.

Music For Orchestra

During his lifetime, Dvořák wrote in various music forms, including the symphony. He composed nine symphonies in all, with his most famous being the ninth, which has the subtitle, *From the New World* (1893). (Sometimes people just call it "The *New World* Symphony.) This symphony was commissioned by the New York Philharmonic who premiered it in New York on December 16,

1893, the same year as its completion. The symphony was partially inspired from a Czech translation of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's poem Hiawatha. We will study one movement of this symphony in detail below.

Some of Dvořák other important works include a cello concerto for solo instrument and orchestra, a violin concerto, and a lesser known piano concerto. Dvořák received recognition for Romance for solo violin and orchestra and Silent Woods for cello and orchestra. These two pieces make significant contributions to the solo repertoire for both string instruments.

Dvořák also composed several piano duets that he later orchestrated for symphony orchestra. They include his ten Legends, two sets of Slavonic Dances, and three Slavic Rhapsodies. His overtures include *In nature's realm*, *My Home*, *Carnival*, *Hussite*, and *Othello*. He also composed a polonaise Scherzo capriccioso and the much admired Serenade for Strings. His symphonic poems poems include *The World Dove*, *The Golden Spinning-Wheel*, and *The Noonday Witch*.

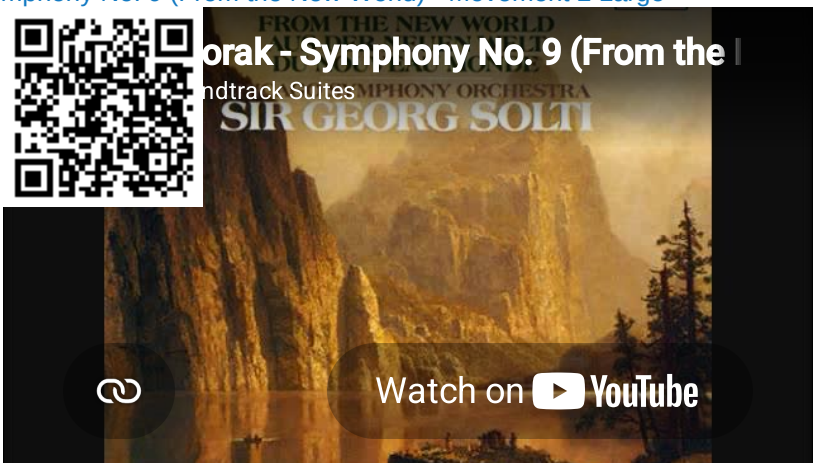
Dvořák many contributions to the field of chamber music include fourteen string quartets. No 12, the "American" Quartet, was written in 1893, the same year as the *New World Symphony*. Also from the American period, Dvořák composed the G major Sonatinas for violin and piano whose second movement is known as "Indian Lament." Of the four remaining found Dvořák piano trios, the Dumky trio is famous for using the Bohemian national dance form. His quintets for piano and strings or strings alone for listening enjoyment are much appreciated, as are his string sextet and the trio of two violins and viola, Terzetto.

From 1870 to 1903, Dvořák wrote ten operas. The famous aria 'O Silver Moon', 1900) from *Rusalka* is one of his most famous pieces. Dvořák wrote many of his operas with village theatres and comic village plots in mind—much the same as Smetana's *The Bartered Bride*. Other opera were based upon Czech legend.

Several of Dvořák's choral works were composed for many of the amateur choral societies such as those found in Birmingham, Leeds, and London in England. The oratorio *St. Ludmilla* was composed for such societies, as were settings of the Mass, Requiem Mass, and the Te Deum which was first performed in 1892 in New York. Earlier choral works and settings, such as Stabat Mater and Psalm CXLIX, were performed in Prague 1879-1880.

Dvořák composed several songs, including the appreciated set of Moravian Duets for soprano and contralto. The most famous of his vocal pieces is the "Songs My Mother Taught Me" which is the fourth in the Seven Gypsy Songs, opus 55, set.

Focus Composition: Symphony No. 9 (From the New World) - Movement 2 Largo



Listening Guide

- Composer: Antonin Dvorak
- Composition: From the New World, Symphony 9, movement 2 Largo
- Date: 1893
- Genre: Symphony
- Performing Forces: Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Sir George Solti, conductor

What we want you to remember about this composition:

- The theme. The "coming home theme" is said to possibly be from a spiritual or a Czech folk tune. It is introduced in what some call the most famous English horn solo. This is the musical notation for that theme and that solo:

musical notation of the English horn solo.

Other things to listen for:

- The weaving of these very beautiful but simple melodies. Listen to how “western American” the piece sounds at times. The influence of American (western, spirituals, and folk) had a profound influence on Dvorak’ compositions.
- Theme 1 begins at 0:45 (notation above)
- Theme 2 starts at 5:34
- Theme 3 starts at 8:10

You are encouraged to listen the entire symphony. For more information and a narrative guided tour of the Symphony no. 9 “From the New World”, go to the Khan Academy where you will find videos walking you through each movement of the symphony. Click here to see the first part of the video, and the following parts can be accessed from this page.

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14.3: Music of Pyotr Tchaikovsky

Trends in Russia

Nationalistic music was very popular in Russia in the second half of the nineteenth century. There was a group of five composers who exemplified this trend, and they are known as the "Mighty Five" or the "Mighty Handful" (they never called themselves this, by the way.) These composers drew upon Russian folk music as the basis for their style, and most of them were self-trained in music and had other primary jobs. Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, for example, was an officer in the Russian Navy, while Alexander Borodin was also a chemist. They glorified the music of the people and their own humble origins, and they rejected the norms of formal European music education. Please read more about this group at their Wikipedia page.

Music of Pyotr Tchaikovsky

In opposition to this nationalistic trend in Russia, Pyotr (Peter) Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893) chose to follow a more European style. Some of his music had some Russian elements (we will be discussing one of these works below), but primarily, his style was a mix of European influences. He was born in Votinsk, a small mining town in Russia. He was a son of a government official, and started taking piano at the age of five, though his family intended him to have a career as a government official. His mother died of cholera when he was fourteen, a tragedy that had a profound and lasting effect on him. He attended the aristocratic school in St. Petersburg called the School of Jurisprudence and, upon completion, obtained a minor government post in the Ministry of Justice. Nevertheless, Pyotr always had a strong interest in music and yearned to study it.

At the age of twenty-three, he resigned his government post and entered the newly created Conservatory of St. Petersburg to study music. From the age of twenty-three to twenty-six, he studied intently and completed his study in three years. His primary teachers at the conservatory were Anton Rubinstein and Konstantin Zarembe, but he himself taught lessons while he studied. Upon completion, Tchaikovsky was recommended by Rubinstein, director of the school as well as teacher, to a teaching post at the new conservatory of Moscow. The young professor of harmony had full teaching responsibilities with long hours and a large class. Despite his heavy workload, his twelve years at the conservatory saw the composing of some of his most famous works, including his first symphony. At the age of twenty-nine, he completed his first opera Voyevoda and composed the Romeo and Juliet overture. At the age of thirty-three, he started supplementing his income by writing as a music critic, and also composed his second symphony, first piano concerto, and his first ballet, *Swan Lake*.

The reception of his music sometimes included criticism, and Tchaikovsky took criticism very personally, being prone as he was to depression. These bouts with depression were exacerbated by an impaired personal social life. In an effort to calm and smooth that personal life, Tchaikovsky entered into a relationship and marriage with a conservatory student named Antonina Ivanovna Miliukova in 1877. She was star struck and had fallen immediately and rather despairingly in love with him. His pity for her soon turned into unmanageable dislike to the point that he avoided her at all cost. Once in a fit of depression and aversion, he even strolled into the icy waters of the Moscow River to avoid her. Many contemporaries believe the effort was a suicide attempt. A few days later, nearly approaching a complete mental breakdown, he sought refuge and solace fleeing to his brothers in St. Petersburg. The marriage lasted less than a month.

Side note: Biographers of Tchaikovsky have put forth that he was homosexual (based on evidence in letters and other documents), and this has been a topic of discussion for some time. While this label has no bearing on the value or quality of his work, it is likely that Tchaikovsky would have tried to hide this aspect of his life, due to the social constraints around homosexuality in 19th-century Russia. If Tchaikovsky was closeted, it would help explain the social difficulties and stress he endured, would have exacerbated his depression, and would have certainly contributed to the failure of his marriage.



Figure 14.3.1: Pyotr Tchaikovsky by Nikolai Dmitriyevich Kuznetsov. Source: Wikimedia

At the breakup of his relationship, Tchaikovsky received a lifeline from a kind, wealthy benefactress who admired his music and who became his sponsor. Her financial support helped restore Tchaikovsky to health, freed him from his burdensome teaching responsibilities, and permitted him to focus on his compositions. His benefactor was a widowed industrialist, Nadezhda von Meck, who was dominating and emotional and who loved his music. From her secluded estate, she raised her eleven children and managed her estate and railroads. Due to the social norms of the era, she had to be very careful to make sure that her intentions in supporting the composer went towards his music and not towards the composer as a man; consequently, they never met one another other than possibly through the undirected mutual glances at a crowded concert hall or theater. They communicated through a series of letters to one another, and this distance letter-friendship soon became one of fervent attachment.

In his letters to Meck, Tchaikovsky would explain how he envisioned and wrote his music, describing it as a holistic compositional process, with his envisioning the thematic development to the instrumentation being all one thought. The secured environment she afforded Tchaikovsky enabled him to compose unrestrainedly and very creatively. In appreciation and respect for his patron, Tchaikovsky dedicated his fourth symphony to Meck. He composed that work in his mid-thirties, a decade when he premiered his opera *Eugene Onegin* and composed the 1812 Overture, and the Serenade for Strings.

Tchaikovsky's music ultimately earned him international acclaim, leading to his receiving a lifelong subsidy from the Tsar in 1885. He overcame his shyness and started conducting appearances in concert halls throughout Europe, making his music the first of any Russian composer to be accepted and appreciated by Western music consumers. At the age of fifty, he premiered *Sleeping Beauty* and *The Queen of Spades* in St. Petersburg. A year later, in 1891, he was invited to the United States to participate in the opening ceremonies for Carnegie Hall. He also toured the United States, where he was afforded impressive hospitality. He grew to admire the American spirit, feeling awed by New York's skyline and Broadway. He wrote that he felt he was more appreciated in America than in Europe.

While his composition career sometimes left him feeling dry of musical ideas, Tchaikovsky's musical output was astonishing and included at this later stage of his life two of his greatest works: *The Nutcracker* and *Iolanta*, both of which premiered in St. Petersburg. He conducted the premiere of his sixth symphony, Pathétique, in St. Petersburg as well, but received only a lukewarm reception, partially due to his shy personality. The persona carried over into his conducting technique that was rather reserved and subdued, leading to a less than emotion-packed performance by his orchestra.

A few days after the premiere, while he was still in the St. Petersburg, Tchaikovsky ignored warnings against drinking unboiled water, warnings due to the current prevalence of cholera there. He contracted the disease and died within a week at the age of fifty-three years old. Immediately upon his tragic death, the Symphonie Pathétique earned great acclaim that it has held ever since.

In the nineteenth century and still today, Tchaikovsky is among the most highly esteemed of composers. Russians have the highest regard for Tchaikovsky as a national artist. Igor Stravinsky stated, “He was the most Russian of us all!” Tchaikovsky incorporated the national emotional feelings and culture—from its simple countryside to its busy cities—into his music, although in ways that are arguably more subtle than the ways used by the Mighty Five. Along with some Russian influences, such as Russian folk song, Tchaikovsky enjoyed studying and incorporating German symphony, Italian opera, and French Ballet. He was comfortable with all of these disparate sources and gave all his music lavish melodies flooding with emotion.

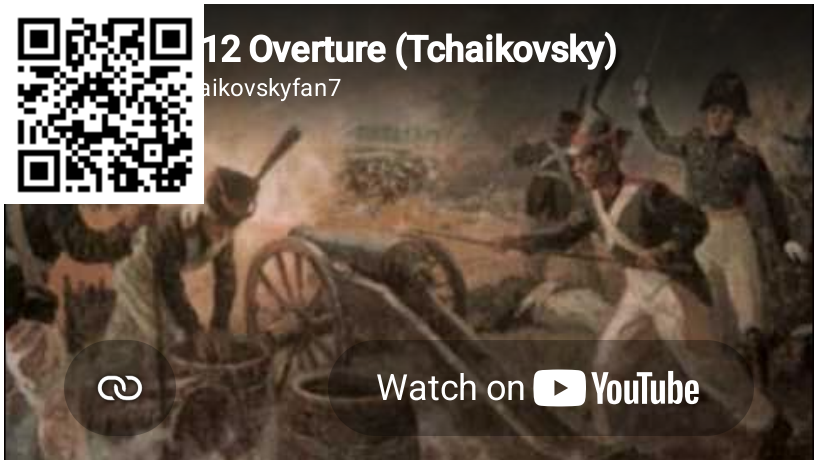
Tchaikovsky composed a tremendously wide spectrum of music, with ten operas including *Eugene Onegin*, T*he Maid of Orleans*, *Queen of Spades*, and *Iolanta*; internationally-acclaimed ballets, including *Swan Lake*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, and *The Nutcracker*; six symphonies, three piano concertos, various overtures, chamber music, piano solos, songs, and choral works.

Focus Composition: 1812 Overture

- Composer: Pyotr (Peter) Ilyich Tchaikovsky (b. 1840-1893)
- Composition: *1812* Overture
- Date: 1882
- Genre: Symphonic Overture
- Form: Two-part overture—Choral and Finale
- Performing Forces: Large orchestra, including a percussion section with large bells and a battery of cannons

What we want you to remember about this composition:

- The piece depicts preparation for war, the actual conflict, and victory after the war is ended. It is quite descriptive in nature.
- Tchaikovsky’s *1812 Overture* is one of the most famous and forceful pieces of classical music. The *1812 Overture* is particularly famous for its epic finale.
- It was made famous and mainstream to the public in the United States through public concerts on July 4th by city orchestras such as the Boston Pops.
- Though the piece was written to celebrate the anniversary of Russia’s victory over France in 1812, the piece’s finale is very often used for American 4th of July during fireworks displays. (In Los Angeles, the Hollywood Bowl usually plays this piece during their "Fireworks Spectacular.")



0:00-2:14 - The Russian hymn “Spasi, Gospodi, Iyudi Tvoya” (“O Lord, Save Thy People”) is performed in the strings.

2:14-3:36 - The music morphs into a more suspenseful style creating tension of possible upcoming conflict.

3:46-4:45 - Snare drums set a military tone as the overtures theme is introduced. Listen how the rhythms line up clear and precise.

4:45-6:39 - An energetic disjunctive style portray an attack from the French. Brief motives of La Marseillaise, the French national anthem are heard. The energy continues to build. The tension diminishes.

6:39-8:10 - A reference to a lyrical section is heard contrasting the previous war scene.

8:10-8:55 - A traditional folkdance tune “U vorot” (“At the gate”) from Russia is introduced into the work.

8:55-10:26 - The energetic conflicting melodies are reintroduced depicting conflict.

10:26-11:31 - The lyrical peaceful tune is reintroduced twice.

11:31-12:05 - The French Marseillaise motive appears again in the horns.The tension and energy again build.

12:05-12:56 - Percussion and even real cannons are used to depict the climax of the war conflict. This followed by a musical loss of tension through descending and broadening lines in the strings.

12:56-13:59 - The Russian Hymn is heard again in victory with the accompaniment of all the church bells in celebration commemorating victory throughout Russia.

13:59-14:11 - The music excels portraying a hasty French retreat

14:11-15:09 - The Russian anthem with cannons/percussion overpowers the French theme, The church bells join in again symbolic of the Russian victory.

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14.4: Music of John Philip Sousa

John Philip Sousa, (b. Nov. 6, 1854-1939) was born in Washington, D.C. to a father, John Antonio Sousa, who played trombone in the U.S. Marine band and a mother, Maria Elisabeth Trinkaus, of Bavarian descent. The young Sousa was raised in a very musical environment and began studying voice, violin, piano, flute, baritone, trombone, and alto horn when his peers were just beginning first grade.

Sousa was an adventurous young man. At the young age of thirteen, he unsuccessfully tried to run away to join a circus band. Immediately after this episode, his father enlisted him in the Marines as a band apprentice in the Marine Band. There he remained until he reached the age of twenty, complementing his Marine Band training in music by studying composition and music theory with the locally highly acclaimed orchestra leader, George Felix Benkert. During these early years with the Marine Band and under the music mentorship of Benkert, Sousa composed his first piece, *Moonlight on the Potomac Waltzes.*



Figure 14.4.1: John Philip Sousa by Elmer Chickering. Source: Wikimedia

Upon his honorable discharge from the Marines in 1875, the twenty-one year old Sousa began performing on violin and touring. While playing violin, Sousa performed under the baton of Jacques Offenbach at the Centenary Exhibition in Philadelphia and Sousa's music later showed Offenbach's influence. While playing the violin in various theater orchestras, Sousa learned to conduct, a skill he would use for the remainder of his career. This period of Sousa's career eventually led to his conducting Gilbert and Sullivan's *H. M. S. Pinafore* on Broadway in New York. In 1879, while conducting in Broadway, Sousa met Jane van Middlesworth whom he married in December of that year. About a year later,

Sousa assumed the leadership post of the Marine Band with the couple moving to Washington, D.C. Sousa conducted the Marine Band for the following twelve years, under the presidential administrations of Rutherford Hayes, James Garfield, Grover Cleveland, Chester Arthur, and Benjamin Harrison. Sousa composed and performed repertoire at the request of these presidents and their respective first families.

In 1895, Sousa successfully debuted his first opera. In 1886, *The Gladiator*, using his most recognizable music form of the march, received national recognition from military bandleaders. Two years later, he dedicated his newly composed march *Semper Fidelis* to the officers and men of the Marne Corps; that piece now is traditionally known as the "official" march of the Marine Corps.

The Marine Band made its first recordings under Sousa's leadership. The phonograph had just recently been invented, and the Columbia Phonograph Company, seeking a military band to record, selected the Marine Band. They first released sixty recording

cylinders and, within the decade, recorded and released for sale more than 400 different titles. These recordings made Sousa's marches and their performance by the Marine Band among the most popular to be recorded.

Having achieved stardom, the Marine Band went on two limited but successful tours in 1891-92. After completing these tours, promoter David Blakely convinced Sousa to resign his post to organize a civilian concert band. Sousa did so, forming the New Marine Band which was a concert rather than a marching band. After receiving criticism from Washington for using the word "Marine" in the title of his civilian band, Sousa eventually dropped it from its name. The new band's first performance was on September 26, 1892 in Stillman Music Hall in Plainfield, New Jersey. Two days prior to the concert, acclaimed bandmaster, Patrick Gilmore, died in St. Louis. Eventually nineteen former musicians from Gilmore's band joined Sousa's band. The names of many of these nineteen musicians are still recognized today, including Herbert L. Clark on cornet and E. A. Lefebre on saxophone.

While conducting this new band, Sousa also continued to compose music. When vacationing in Europe with his wife in 1896, he received news that David Blakely had died. The couple immediately departed for home. During this time travelling back to the United States, Sousa wrote his most famous composition, *The Stars and Stripes Forever.*

From 1900 to 1910, the Sousa band toured extensively. Tours included performances in the United States, Great Britain, Europe, South Africa, Australia, Cana- da, New Zealand, Hawaii, and the South Pacific in the Canary Islands. These performances and tours contributed to Sousa's band's reputation as the most admired American band of its time.

After WWI, Sousa continued to tour with his band and became a champion and advocate for music education for all children; he also testified for composer's rights before Congress in 1927 and 1928. His success won him many titles and honorary degrees. Other successes included his serving as guest speaker and conductor for the Marine Band in Washington, D.C. in 1932, performing *The Stars and Stripes Forever.* Later that same year, following a rehearsal of the Ringgold Band in Reading, Pennsylvania, the seventy-seven year old Sousa passed away.

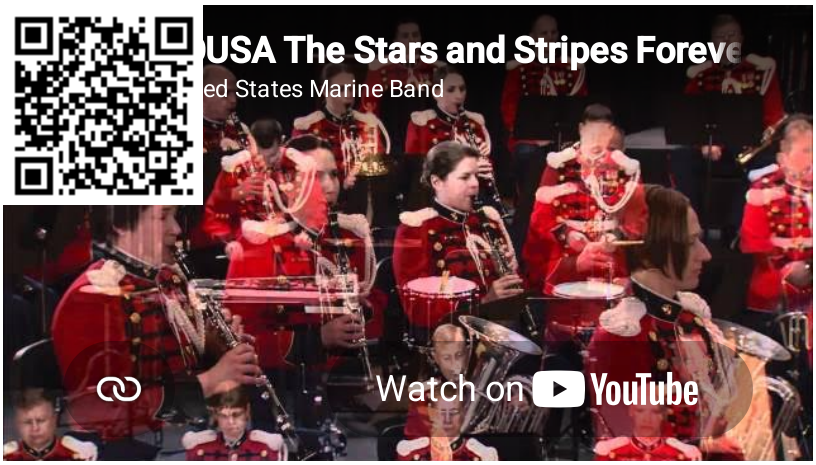
Sousa had composed 136 marches, many on the fly in preparation for a performance in the next town. Sousa's best known marches include *The Stars and Stripes Forever*, *Semper Fidelis*, *The Washington Post*, *The Liberty Bell*, *Daughters of Texas*, *The Thunderer*, *King Cotton*, and *Manhattan Beach*. Click here for the President's Own United States Marine Band playlist of marches, including many by Sousa.

Sousa also wrote ten operas, including *El Capitan*, *The Queen of Hearts*, *The Smugglers*, and *Desiree*, as well as a series of music suites and seventy songs. Besides writing music, he authored several articles and letters to the editors on various subjects and wrote three novels, *The Fifth String*, *Pipedown Sandy*, and *The Transit of Venus*. *Marching Along* was his comprehensive autobiography.

A sign of his continuing fame, dedications and recognitions to the Sousa name include: a memory dedication of the newly-built 1939 Pennsylvania Avenue Bridge across the Anacostia River in Washington D.C., renaming of the of the Marine Barracks band hall in his honor in 1974, and many others. In 1987, *The Stars and Stripes Forever* march was designated as the national march of the United States. Sousa became known as the "March King."

Focus composition: The Stars and Stripes Forever by John Philip Sousa (1896)

- Composer: John Philip Sousa
- Composition: The Star and Stripes Forever
- Date: 1896
- Genre: March
- Performing Forces: large military band



What we want you to remember about this composition:

- It is the official National March of the United States

Other things to listen for:

- After the march introduction, the sections of the march are called strains and then a trio section.
- The trio sections often have a contrasting section traditionally called a dogfight strain. These often are representative of a traditional silent movie battle scene. The “fight scene” is staged between the different sections of the band (upper and lower voices, brass against the woodwind, brass, woodwind and percussion).
- The complete form unfolds as follows: (Intro) aabbcdcdc

For a further discussion of the Military March form, please see this video (beginning at 1:50 - playback should automatically begin there):



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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

15: The Twentieth Century and Beyond

Learning Objectives

1. Demonstrate knowledge of historical and cultural contexts of the twentieth century through today
2. Recognize musical movements that occurred during the twentieth century
3. Aurally identify selected music of the twentieth century, making critical judgments about its style and uses

15.1: Introduction and Historical Context- 1900 to today
15.2: Expressionism and Serialism
15.3: Primitivism and Neoclassicism
15.4: Minimalism and the American Style
15.5: The Late Twentieth Century
15.6: Chapter Summary

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15.1: Introduction and Historical Context- 1900 to today

General Notes on 20th Century Art Music

Music, like the other arts, does not occur in a vacuum. Changes brought on by advances in science, and inventions resulting from these advances, affected composers, artists, dancers, poets, writers, and many others at the turn of the twentieth century. Inventions from the late Romantic era had a great impact on economic and social life in the twentieth century. These inventions included the light bulb, the telephone, the automobile, and the phonograph. Thomas Edison invented the phonograph in 1877 and patented it in 1878. While researching means to improve the telegraph and telephone, Edison developed a way to record sound on tinfoil-coated cylinders. He would speak into a mouthpiece and the recording needle would indent a groove into the cylinder. The playing needle would then follow the groove, and the audio could be heard through a horn speaker (in the shape of a large cone). Edison improved his invention and formed the Edison Speaking Phonograph Company to market the invention. Edison's phonograph had an especially great influence on the spread of music to larger audiences; he also advertised the device's usefulness for dictation and letter writing, recording books for the blind, recording and archiving family members' voices, music boxes, toys, and clocks that verbally announce the time with prerecorded voices. In 1917, such audio phonograph devices were purchased by the U.S. Army for $60 each and used to make troops feel closer to home during World War I.

What defines twentieth-century music? Clearly, the twentieth century was a time of great upheaval in general, including in music. The sense of rapid change and innovation in music and art of this period is a reflection of the dramatic changes taking place in the world at large. On a political level, the twentieth century was one of the bloodiest and most turbulent periods in history. While wars are a constant throughout all of human history, the global nature of twentieth-century politics resulted in conflicts on a scale never before seen; World War II alone is widely regarded as the deadliest conflict in human history in terms of total deaths, partly due to advancements in technology such as machine guns, tanks, and eventually the atom bomb.

It's no surprise that music of this period mirrored the urgency and turmoil in the world at large. For many composers, the raw emotion and sentimentality reflected in the music of the nineteenth century had grown tiresome, and so they began an attempt to push the musical language into new areas. Sometimes, this meant bending long-established musical rules to their very limits, and, in some cases, breaking them altogether. One of the by-products of this urgency was fragmentation. As composers rushed to find new ways of expressing themselves, different musical camps emerged, each with their own unique musical philosophies. We now categorize these musical approaches with fancy terms ending in "-ism," such as "primitivism," "minimalism," "impressionism," etc. We will discuss many of these individual movements and techniques as well as address what makes them unique, but before we do this, let's first talk about those things that most (but not all) music of the twentieth century has in common.

Melody

One of the ways in which composers deviated from the music of the nineteenth century was the way in which they constructed melodies. Gone were the singable, sweeping tunes of the Romantic era. In their place rose melodies with angular shapes, wide leaps, and unusual phrase structures. In some cases, melody lost its status as the most prominent feature of music altogether, with pieces that featured texture or rhythm above all else.

Harmony

The most obvious difference between twentieth-century music and what pre- ceded it is the level of harmonic dissonance. This is not a new phenomenon. The entire history of Western music can be viewed in terms of a slowly increasing acceptance of dissonance, from the hollow intervals of the Middle Ages all the way to the lush chords of the nineteenth century. However, in the twentieth century the use of dissonance took off like a rocket ship. Some composers continued to push the tolerance level for dissonance in the context of standard tonal harmony. One example is through the use of **polytonality**, a technique in which two tonal centers are played at the same time. Some composers sought to wash their hands of the rules of the past and invented new systems of musical organization. Often, this resulted in music that lacked a tonal center, music that we now refer to as **atonal**. Some com- posers such as Igor Stravinsky even tried their hand at more than one style.

Rhythm

In preceding centuries, music was typically relegated to logical, symmetrical phrases that fell squarely into strict meters. That all changed at the dawn of the twentieth century. Igor Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* famously undermined the au- dience's expectation of the role of rhythm by abandoning strict meter for rapidly changing time signatures. Instead of the steady familiar time signatures containing three or four beats, Stravinsky peppered in measures containing an odd number of beats such as five or seven. This

created a sense of unease in the audience by removing something from the music that they had previously taken for granted: a steady and unwavering sense of meter. In America, the rhythmic innovations of ragtime and jazz influenced both Western art music and popular music from that time on. Especially important was the use of syncopation, which was addressed in the first chapter.

Texture and Timbre

As memorable melodies and traditional harmonies began to break down, some composers looked to new tonal colors through the use of new instruments such as **synthesizers**, instruments that electronically generate a wide variety of sounds. In other cases, traditional instruments were used in nontraditional ways. For example, John Cage famously composed piano pieces that called for objects such as coins and tacks to be placed on the strings to create unique effects.

The Role of Music

Music has had many roles throughout history. The music of Josquin helped enhance worship. The works of Haydn and Mozart reflected the leisurely life of the aristocracy. Opera served as a form of musical escapism in the daring and ambitious works of composers such as Wagner. In the twentieth century, music began to move away from entertainment into the realm of high art. Composers sought to challenge the listener to experience music in new ways and in some cases to reevaluate their fundamental notions of what music is. This sense of revolution was not limited to music; it was also taking place throughout the art world. As we discuss the many "-isms" in music, we will see direct parallels with the visual arts.

Compositional Styles: The "-isms"

Near the beginning of the twentieth century, numerous composers began to rebel against the excessive emotionalism of the later Romantic composers. Two different styles emerged: the Impressionist style led by Claude Debussy and Maurice Ravel, and the atonal Expressionist style led by Arnold Schoenburg. Both styles attempted to move away from the tonal harmonies, scales, and melodies of the previous period. The impressionists chose to use new chords, scales, and colors while the expressionists developed a math-based **twelve-tone** system that attempted to completely destroy tonality.

Impressionism

The two major composers associated with the Impressionist movement are Claude Debussy and Maurice Ravel. Both French-born composers were searching for ways to break free from the rules of tonality that had evolved over the previous centuries. **Impressionism** in music, as in art, focused on the creator's impression of an object, concept, or event. The painting labeled Image 7.1, by the French impressionist painter Claude Monet, suggests a church or cathedral, but it is not a clear portrait. It comprises a series of paint daubs that suggest something that we may have seen but that is slightly out of focus.

In the painting labeled Image 7.2, we see how Monet distilled a scene into its most basic elements. The attention to detail of previous centuries is abandoned in favor of broad brushstrokes that are meant to capture the momentary "impression" of the scene. To Monet, the objects in the scene, such as the trees and boats, are less important than the interplay between light and water. To further emphasize this interplay, Monet pares the color palate of the painting down to draw the focus to the sunlight and the water.



Figure 15.1.1: *Rouen Cathedral: The Portal (Sunlight)* by Claude Monet. Source: Met Museum

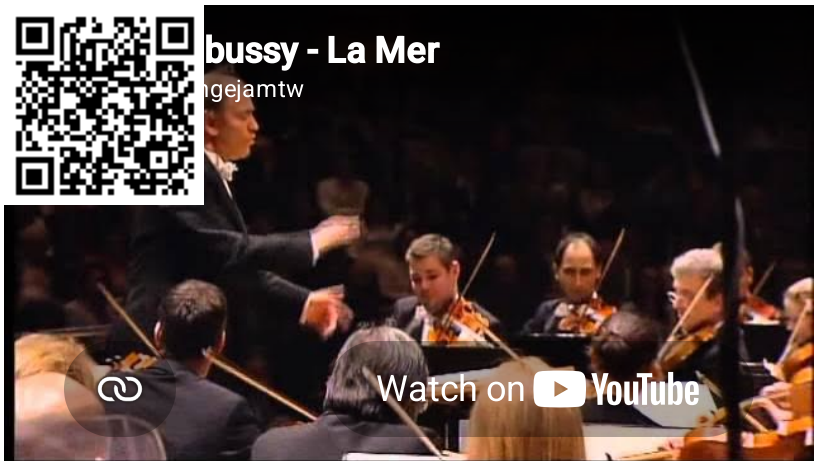


Figure 15.1.2: *Impression, soleil levant* (Impression Sunrise) by Claude Monet. Source: Wikimedia

Similarly, Impressionist music does not attempt to follow a "program" like some Romantic compositions. It seeks, rather, to suggest an emotion or series of emotions or perceptions.

Listen to the example of Debussy's *La Mer* (The Sea) linked below. Pay particular attention to the way the music seems to rise and fall like the waves in the sea and appears to progress without ever repeating a section. Music that is written this way is said to be "**through-composed**." The majority of impressionist music is written in this manner. Even though such music refrains from following a specific program or story line, *La Mer* as music *suggests* a progression of events through- out the course of a day at sea. Note that Debussy retained the large orchestra first developed by Beethoven and used extensively by Romantic composers. This music, unlike the **Expressionism** we will visit next, is tonal and still uses more traditional scales and chords.

Debussy, *La Mer*



Impressionist composers also liked using sounds and rhythms that were unfamiliar to most Western European musicians. One of the most famous compositions by Maurice Ravel is entitled *Bolero*. A Bolero is a Spanish dance in three-quarter time, and it provided Ravel with a vehicle through which he could introduce different (and exotic, or different sounding) scales and rhythms into the European orchestral mainstream. This composition is also unique in that it was one of the first to use a relatively new family of instruments at the time: the saxophone family. Notice how the underlying rhythmic pattern repeats throughout the entire composition, and how the piece gradually builds in dynamic intensity to the end.

Maurice ravel, *Bolero*

Please watch this video on YouTube, which disallows embedding in this page.

Unlike composers such as Bach, Ravel was not born into a family of musicians. His father was an engineer, but one who encouraged Ravel's musical talents. After attending the Paris Conservatory as a young man, Ravel drove a munitions truck during World War I. Throughout all this time, he composed compositions of such lushness and creativity that he became one of the most admired composers in France, along with Claude Debussy. His best known works are the aforementioned *Bolero*, Concerto in D for Piano, *La valse*, and an orchestral work entitled *Daphnes et Chloé*.

Daphnis et Chloé was originally conceived as a ballet in one act and three scenes and was loosely based on a Greek drama by the poet Longus. The plot on which the piece is based concerns a love affair between the title characters Daphnis and Chloé. The first two scenes of the ballet depict the abduction and escape of Chloé from a group of pirates. However, it is the third scene that has become so immortalized in the minds of music lovers ever since. "Lever du jour," or "Daybreak," takes place in a sacred grove and depicts the slow build of daybreak from the quiet sounds of a brook to the birdcalls in the distance. As dawn turns to day, a beautiful melody builds to a soaring climax, depicting the awakening of Daphnis and his reunion with Chloé.

After the ballet's premiere in June of 1912, the music was reorganized into two suites, the second of which features the music of "Daybreak." Listen to the recording below and try to imagine the pastel colors of daybreak slowly giving way to the bright light of day.



Focus Composition: Ravel's *Daphnis and Chloé*

Listening Guide

- Composer: Maurice Ravel
- Composition: Daphnis and Chloe, Suite No. 2: “Lever du jour”
- Date: 1913
- Genre: Orchestral Suit
- Form: Through-composed
- Performing Forces: orchestra/chorus

0:00 - Murmuring figures depicting a brook. Woodwinds, strings and harps, with more instruments entering periodically. Languid and flowing. Tonal, with ambiguous key centers and lush harmony typical of much Impressionistic music.

0:52 - Sweeping melody reaches first climax, and then dies down slowly. Strings over murmuring accompaniment.

1:09 - Strings and clarinet enter with song-like melody. Melody over murmuring strings.

2:13 - Chorus enters while strings continue melody. Melody over murmuring strings and “Ah” of chorus.

3:13 - Sweeping melody enters in strings to a new climactic moment. Full Orchestra.

4:05 - Chorus enters for a final climactic moment, then slowly dies away. Full Orchestra and Chorus.

4:58 - Clarinet takes over repeating melody and the piece slows to a stop. As the piece comes to an end, the texture becomes more sparse with fewer instruments.

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15.2: Expressionism and Serialism

Expressionism

While the Impressionist composers attempted to move further away from romantic forms and romantic harmony, some Expressionist composers succeeded in completely eliminating harmony and tonal melody (melody based on a particular key) from their music. The resultant sounds were often not very melodically and harmonically pleasant to hear and, as a result, the Expressionist style of music did not (and still does not) appeal to the majority of audiences. The name of this style period can be confusing for some. The Expressionist period was not a time when composers sought to express themselves emotionally in a romantic, beautiful, or programmatic way. Due to the nature of the sounds produced by the system of composition described below, Expressionism seems more appropriate for evoking more extreme, and sometimes even harsh, emotions. Using this experimental style of writing, composers such as Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951) attempted to intentionally eliminate what we call tonality; music that is based on scales and the progression (movement) of chords from one to another.



Figure 15.2.1: The Scream by Edvard Munch. Source: Wikimedia

In Edward Munch's famous painting, *The Scream*, we see an excellent example of the parallel movement of expressionism taking place in the visual arts. Expressionists looked inward, specifically to the anxiety they felt towards the outside world. This was in stark contrast to the impressionists, who looked to the beauty of nature for inspiration. Expressionist paintings relied instead on stark colors and harsh swirling brushstrokes to convey the artist's reaction to the ugliness of the modern world. Abstract Expressionism took this concept to a greater extreme, by abandoning shape altogether for pure abstraction. This style is typified by the works of the American painter Jackson Pollock. Please look at the Wikipedia page for Pollock's painting *Autumn Rhythm (Number 30)*.



Figure 15.2.2: No.5 by Jackson Pollock. Source: Wikimedia.

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Arnold Schoenberg

Many of the early works of Austrian-born Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951) exemplified an expressionistic musical style. He is most famous for his experiments with atonality, that is, music without a tonal center. His music was highly dissonant and sounded quite radical when compared to earlier music, which utilized dissonance only as a means to eventually return to the stasis of consonance. However, Schoenberg saw dissonance not as a means to an end, but as the end itself. His music invited the listener to revel in various levels of dissonance, and many listeners were never able to adjust.

Born in Austria, and of Jewish descent, Schoenberg was already composing by the age of nine. While in his teens, he studied composition with the Austrian composer and conductor Alexander Zemlinsky. In 1901 he moved to Berlin where he was befriended and mentored by the German composer Richard Strauss. Three years later in 1903, Schoenberg returned to Austria and began a long association with the renowned composer Gustav Mahler who became one of his strongest supporters.

In 1909, Schoenberg composed the first complete work that completely did away with tonality. This piano composition was one of three that together are listed as his Opus 11 and was the first piece we now refer to as being completely atonal (without tonality). Schoenberg's most-important atonal compositions include: Five Orchestral Pieces (1909), *Pierrot Lunaire* (1912), *Die Jakobsleiter* (*Jacob's Ladder* - begun in 1917 but never finished), *Die glückliche Hand* (*The Lucky Hand* - 1924), and *Erwartung* (*Expectation* - 1924) for soprano and orchestra.

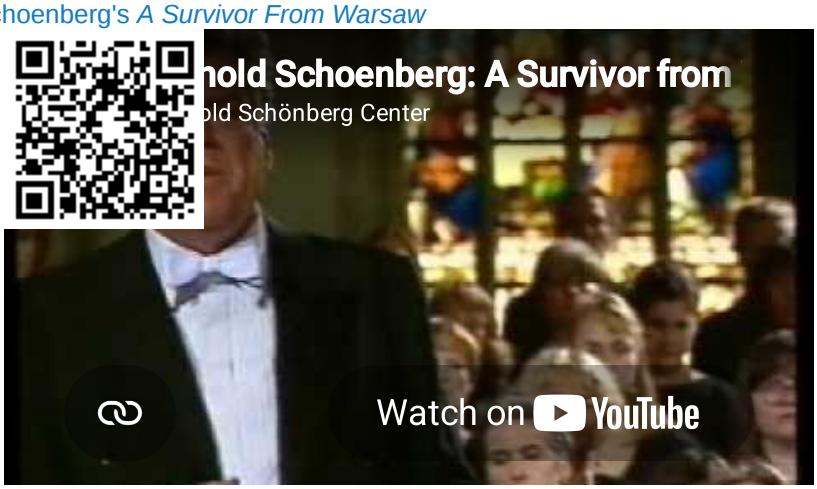
Schoenberg famously developed a system whereby the twelve notes of the chromatic scale were randomly organized into scale units that he called the **twelve-tone** row. These rows could then be further "serialized" (organized in random fashion) by a number of different techniques. This idea of assigning values to musical information is called **serialism**. In 1921 Schoenberg composed his Piano Suite opus 25, the first composition written using the 12-tone method. Each 12-tone composition is built from a series of 12 different pitches that may be arranged in a number of different ways. The original row may be played forward, backwards (retrograde), upside down (inverted), and backwards and inverted (retrograde inversion). All of the melodies and harmonies in a 12-tone piece must be derived in some way from the original row or from fragments of the original row.

In 1925 Schoenberg was hired by the Prussian Academy of Arts in Berlin to teach composition, and he would most likely have continued his career as teacher and composer in Europe were it not for the rise of the Nazi party and their subsequent persecution of European Jews. In 1933 he was released from the Academy and moved first to Paris and then to Boston. In 1934 he settled in California and held teaching positions first at the University of Southern California (1935-36) and then the University of Central Los Angeles (1936-44).

After immigrating to the United States, Schoenberg reconnected with the Jewish faith he had abandoned as a young man. The sadness he felt because of the personal accounts of the horrible treatment experienced by so many Jews during World War II led to his composition of A Survivor from Warsaw, which was composed for orchestra, male chorus, and narrator. The piece was completed in September 1947 and the entire piece is built on a twelve-tone row. This important work is Schoenberg's dramatization of a tragic story he heard from surviving Polish Jews who were victims of Nazi atrocities during World War II. Schoenberg created

a story about a number of Jews who survived the war by living in the sewers of Warsaw. Interestingly, among Schoenberg's many and very specific performance instructions is the request that the narrator not attempt to sing his part throughout the performance.

Focus Composition: Schoenberg's *A Survivor From Warsaw*



LISTENING GUIDE

- Composer: Arnold Schoenberg
- Composition: A Survivor from Warsaw
- Date: 1947
- Genre: 12-tone composition for small orchestra, male chorus, and narrator
- Form: through-composed
- Nature of Text: Narration of Germans' treatment of Jews in Warsaw during WWII
- Performing Forces: orchestra, male chorus, and narrator

0:35 - Trumpet introductory fanfare built from 12-tone row. Trumpets, snare drum, clarinets. Irregular rhythmic figures built from 12-tone row. 12-tone chordal structures built from 12-tone row.

0:46 - Cellos enter with rhythmic motif. Brief melodic motifs move between cellos, woodwinds, trumpets, and strings. Rhythms are derived from the 12-tone row and are irregular. 12-tone based chordal structures continue throughout piece.

1:21 - Narrator enters. Instrumentation and dynamics are altered to match rise and fall of phrases in narration.

3:09 - Narration. Bass drum begins a steady pulse with snare drum and xylophone irregular rhythms as drama in narration increases.

3:19 - Narration switches to German. Narrator begins to shout in German.

3:38 - Narration switches back to English. Strings play tremolo in background.

4:05 - Narration becomes more introspective. Strings become more lyrical to underscore change in story.

6:19 - Male chorus. Men begin to sing the Jewish prayer Shema Yisroel accompanied by strings. Brass and woodwinds are used as interjections throughout this section.

7:52 - Brass continue to play as chorus ends. Brass and strings build to big climactic moment and conclude piece at 8:01.

Alban Berg

Schoenberg's ideas were further developed by his two famous students, Alban Berg and Anton Webern. Together, the three came to be known as the Second Viennese School, in reference to the first Viennese School, which consisted of Hadyn, Mozart, and Beethoven. Born in Vienna, Alban Berg began studying with Schoenberg at the age of 19 and soon became known for his unique compositional style, which fused post-romantic concepts with Schoenberg's cutting edge twelve-tone techniques. Heavily influenced by Richard Wagner, Berg held on to techniques such as the leitmotif and sought to couch his harmonic ideas in tried-and-true forms such as the sonata and fugue. Although he composed many famous pieces, such as his Violin Concerto and his unfinished opera Lulu, he initially made his fame with Wozzeck, an opera based on the drama Woyzeck by German playright Georg Buchner. Berg served during World War I, and much of Wozzeck was composed in 1917, during a period of leave from the

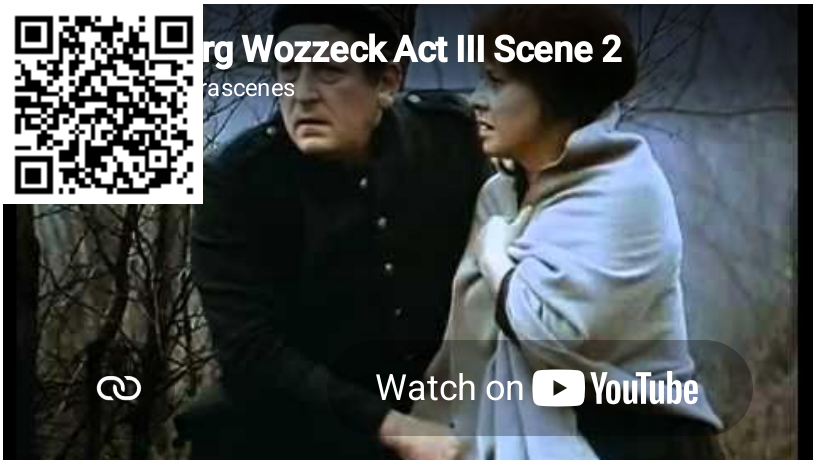
Austro-Hungarian Army. The opera consists of three acts, each with five scenes organized around the variations of a musical idea, such as the variations of a theme, a chord, or a rhythmic pattern. Berg himself adapted the libretto from Buchner's original play.

Focus Composition: Berg's *Wozzeck*

> **Note**
>
> The story of this opera has some disturbing elements including murder, abuse, domestic violence, mental illness. If this is an issue, please contact the professor for an alternative assignment.

The story of the opera centers on the title character Wozzeck. Like the main character in many romantic operas, he is a tragic figure. However, whereas the operas of the nineteenth century often depicted gods and mythical figures, the story of Wozzeck is couched in a sense of realism and addresses the type of societal problems that Berg may himself have encountered during World War I, problems such as apathy and human cruelty. The character of Wozzeck is that of a pitiful and unremarkable soldier who is tormented by his captain and used for and subjected to medical experiments by a sadistic doctor. Wozzeck, who is often given to hallucinations, eventually goes mad and kills his love interest, Marie, who has been unfaithful. The opera ends after Wozzeck drowns trying to clean the murder weapon in a pond and wading out too far.

We focus on Act 3, Scene 2, the scene in which Wozzeck kills Marie. The scene features a variation on a single note, namely B.



LISTENING GUIDE

- Composer: Alban Berg
- Composition: *Wozzeck*
- Date: 1924
- Genre: Opera
- Form: variation on a single note
- Nature of Text: Wozzeck and Marie walk by a pond. Wozzeck stabs Marie with a knife.
- Performing Forces: orchestra, singers

0:00 - Instrumental introduction evoking a low, and ominous feeling.

0:24 - Wozzeck and Marie enter. Marie wishes to leave. A syrupy melody in the strings reflects Wozzeck's pleas to Marie to sit down.

0:45 - Marie leaps up, saying, "I must go!" and low ominous notes play underneath as Wozzeck lures her back.

2:06 - A sweet melody in the strings evokes the line by Wozzeck "What sweet lips you have, Marie."

2:57 - Wozzeck says, "Those who are cold shiver no more. You will not shiver in the morning dew," fortelling Marie's death. She asks what he means and the music ceases creating a tense silence.

3:40 - The music begins to build as Wozzeck prepares to kill Marie.

4:07 - The music echoes Wozzeck word by word as he says, "No one, Marie! If not me, then no one!" After the act is done, the orchestra dies down to a single note and Wozzeck exclaims, "Dead!":

5:00 - Orchestral interlude

This opera is perhaps one of the best examples of the extreme emotions taken on by Expressionist works. Its subject matter is dark and disturbing and the music that accompanies the actions is likewise unsettling and hard to hear.

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15.3: Primitivism and Neoclassicism

Igor Stravinsky

The brilliant composer Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971) was truly a cosmopolitan figure, having lived and composed in Russia, France, Switzerland, and the United States. His music influenced numerous composers, including the famed French composition teacher Nadia Boulanger. Stravinsky caused quite a stir when the ballet entitled *The Rite of Spring* premiered in Paris in 1913. He composed the music for a ballet that was choreographed by Vaslav Nijinsky, and it was so new and different that it nearly caused a riot in the audience. The orchestral version (without the dancing) has become one of the most admired compositions of the twentieth century.

Stravinsky's use of "primitive" sounding rhythms to depict several pagan ritual scenes makes the term "primitivism" seem appropriate. (From our 21st century viewpoint, this is debatable, obviously.) Use the listening guide below to follow Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*. To view the original choreography, see the video in the beginning of the module.

Focus Composition: Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*

LISTENING GUIDE

- Composer: Igor Stravinsky
- Composition: Rite of Spring, Sacrificial Dance
- Date: 1913
- Genre: Ballet music
- Form: Specific passages accompany changes in choreography
- Performing Forces: Full orchestra

This video is age restricted and only available on YouTube. Please view it directly on YouTube.

Listen for the flute playing repeated patterns at 0:00. Listen for the various entrances of muted trumpets (0:22), violins (0:45), and French horns (0:56). Various groups play a fanfare-like theme. Pay attention to the use of silence, and the restatement of music already presented.

Neoclassicism

In the decades between World War I and World War II, many composers in the Western world began to write in a style we now call Neoclassicism. When composing in a neoclassic manner, composers attempted to infuse many of the characteristics of the classic period into their music, incorporating concepts like balance (of form and phrase), economy of material, emotional restraint, and clarity in design. They also returned to popular classical forms like the Fugue, the Concerto Grosso, and the Symphony.

Numerous well-known composers incorporated neoclassic techniques and philosophy into their compositions. Stravinsky was among them, and his ballet entitled *Pulcinella* (1920) is an early example of neoclassical style. It was based on music that Stravinsky originally thought was written by the Baroque composer Giovanni Pergolesi. Music historians later deduced that the compositions were actually written by contemporaries of Pergolesi and not by Pergolesi himself. Stravinsky borrowed specific themes from these earlier works and combined them with more modern harmonies and rhythms. Listen to how in some sections the music closely approximates the style and sounds of Baroque composers, while in other sections it sounds much more aggressive, primitive, and modern.

If you would like to sample Stravinsky's *Pulcinella*, please view this performance directly on YouTube.

Béla Bartók

One composer who was able to combine elements of neo-Classicism with the traditions of his homeland was Béla Bartók (1881–1945). Bartok was born in Nagyszentmiklós, Hungary and was an important figure in the music of the early twentieth century. A noted composer, teacher, pianist, and ethnomusicologist, he was appointed to a position in the Royal Academy of Music in Budapest in 1907 and worked there until 1934. Along with his friend and colleague Zoltán Kodály, Bartók enthusiastically researched and sought out the music of Hungarian peasants, and both composers transcribed the music they found for piano, as well as using it as inspiration for their own original compositions.

In addition to Hungarian folk music, Bartók's style was also influenced by the Romantic music of Strauss and the Hungarian composer Franz Liszt. He was also influenced by Debussy's impressionism and the more modern music of Igor Stravinsky and

Arnold Schoenberg. As a result of all of these influences, his music was often quite rhythmic, and it incorporated both tonal and chromatic (moving by half-steps) elements. Bartók composed numerous piano works, six string quartets, and an opera titled *Duke Bluebeard's Castle*, as well as a ballet entitled *The Wooden Prince* (1916), and a pantomime entitled *The Miraculous Mandarin* (1919). His string quartets and his Concerto for Orchestra have become part of the standard repertoire of professional performing groups around the world.

Focus Composition: Bartók's Concerto for Orchestra – Movement Five

LISTENING GUIDE

- Composer: Béla Bartók
- Composition: Concerto for Orchestra – Movement Five "Finale"
- Date: 1944
- Genre: Orchestral composition featuring all of the different sections of the orchestra
- Form: Concerto in five movements – this is the fifth movement only
- Performing Forces: Full Orchestra



This video recording should start right at 26:09, which is the beginning of the 5th movement.

Things to listen for: powerful entrances of the French horns; fast scales in the strings; brass fanfares; quick melodies in the woodwinds (flutes, oboes); imitative passages for the woodwinds (almost like a fugue at 27:34).

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15.4: Minimalism and the American Style

Minimalism

Minimalism is a movement that began in New York during the 1960s, and it stands in stark contrast to much of the music of the early twentieth century. Minimalists composers sought to distill music down to its fundamental elements. Minimalist pieces were highly consonant (unlike the atonal music of earlier composers) and often relied on the familiar sounds of triads. Instead of featuring rhythmic complexity, minimalist composers established a steady meter. And, unlike twelve-tone music, which avoided repetition at all costs, minimalist composers made repetition the very focus of their music. Change was introduced very slowly through small variations of repeated patterns, and, in many cases, these changes were almost imperceptible to the listener. Arguably the most famous two composers of the minimalistic style were Stephen Reich (b.1936) and Philip Glass (b.1937). Glass composed pieces for small ensembles comprised of wind instruments, voices, or organ, while Reich's music often featured various percussion instruments.

But minimalism wasn't confined to the realm of music. In Barnett Newman's (1905-1970) painting, *Voice of Fire* (1967), we see that many of these same concepts of simplification applied to the visual arts. Minimalist painters such as Newman created starkly simple artwork consisting of basic shapes, straight lines, and primary colors. This was a departure from the abstract expressionists such as Jackson Pollack in the same way that Steve Reich's compositions were a departure from the complexity of Arnold Schoenberg's music. Steve Reich's Music for 18 Musicians is a composition featuring eleven related sections performed by an unorthodox ensemble consisting of mallet instruments, women's voices, woodwinds, and percussion. Section VII below is constructed of a steady six-beat rhythmic pattern that is established at the beginning of the piece. Over this unfaltering rhythmic pattern, various instruments enter with their own repeated melodic motifs. The only real changes in the piece take place in very slow variations of rhythmic density, overall texture, and instrumental range. All of the melodic patterns in the piece fit neatly into a simple three-chord pattern, which is also repeated throughout the piece. Most minimalistic pieces follow this template of slow variations over a simple pattern. This repetition results in music with a hypnotic quality, but also with just enough change to hold the listener's interest.



Figure 15.4.1: Voice of Fire by Barnett Newman. Source: Wikimedia

Focus composition: Reich's *Music for 18 Musicians*



LISTENING GUIDE

- Composer: Steve Reich
- Composition: Music for 18 Musicians (section VII)
- Year: 1976
- Genre: Minimalist Composition comprising eleven sections
- Performing Forces: orchestra

0:00 - Six-beat motif repeated by marimbas, mallet percussion, pianos and shaker. Steady meter is established throughout the piece. Only the texture changes. Single tonic minor chord.

0:20 - Strings, woodwind and voices enter with repeated motif, creating a more dense texture. Mallet percussion, pianos, shaker, strings, women's voices and clarinets

0:40 - Vibraphone enters, voice, woodwind and string parts begin to change, rising and becoming more dense. Underlying three-chord motif is established and repeated.

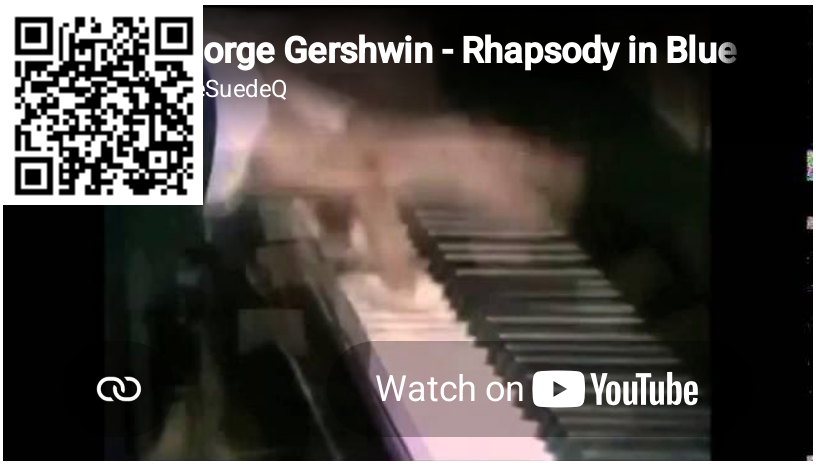
3:05 - Piece has reached its apex. From here the string, voice, and woodwind melody slowly descends and becomes less rhythmically dense.

3:40 - Piece returns to original texture of mallet instruments. Mallet percussion, pianos, and shaker with simple closing melody played by vibraphone. Returns to single minor chord.

The American Style

Jazz is a uniquely American style. American orchestral composers were becoming aware of jazz in the early twentieth century, and George Gershwin (1898-1937) was no exception. Gershwin was a brilliant talent who dropped out of school at the age of fifteen to begin a professional career playing piano in New York's "Tin Pan Alley." After several years of success as a performer and composer, he was asked by the famous band leader Paul Whiteman to compose a work that would help raise people's perceptions of jazz as an art form. The resulting work, *Rhapsody in Blue*, combines the American blues style with the European symphonic tradition into a brilliant composition for piano and orchestra. Listen to how beautifully Gershwin combines these elements via the link below.

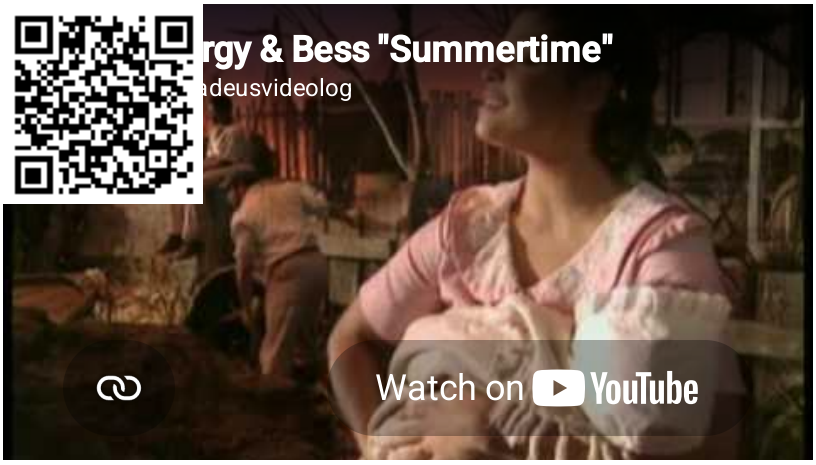
Focus Composition: Gershwin, *Rhapsody in Blue* (1924)



In addition to Rhapsody in Blue, George Gershwin is also known for his opera, *Porgy and Bess*. Although not a true opera in the strict sense of the term (Gershwin dubbed it a “folk opera”), the piece is considered one of the great American operatic works of the century. The story is set in a tenement in Charleston, South Carolina. Based on DuBose Heyward’s novel *Porgy*, the opera incorporated classically trained black singers to depict the tragic love story between the two main title characters. Gershwin based the music for the opera on elements of folk music, referring to southern black musical style such as the blues and spirituals. Drawing on the nineteenth century opera tradition, Gershwin made use of leitmotifs to rep- resent people or places. Near the beginning of the opera, we hear the famous aria “Summertime,” which depicts the hot, hazy atmosphere in which the story is set.

Focus Composition: George Gershwin – “Summertime"

(Lana del Rey has a couple of connections to this song. Check out Lanapedia for more infoLinks to an external site..)



Like Gershwin, American born Aaron Copland (1900-1990) was instrumental in helping to define a distinct American sound by combining his European musical training with jazz and folk elements. As an early twentieth-century composer, Copland was active during the Great Depression, writing music for the new genre of radio, the phonograph, and motion pictures. El Salon Mexico (1935), Fanfare for the Common Man (1942), and Appalachian Spring (1944) are three of Copland’s most famous works. He won a Pulitzer Prize for his music for the ballet Appalachian Spring and was also an Oscar-winning film composer. Appalachian Spring is a ballet depicting a pioneer wedding celebration in a newly-built farmhouse in Pennsylvania. It includes the now well-known Shaker song Simple Gifts.

Focus Composition: Copland, Appalachian Spring (1944)

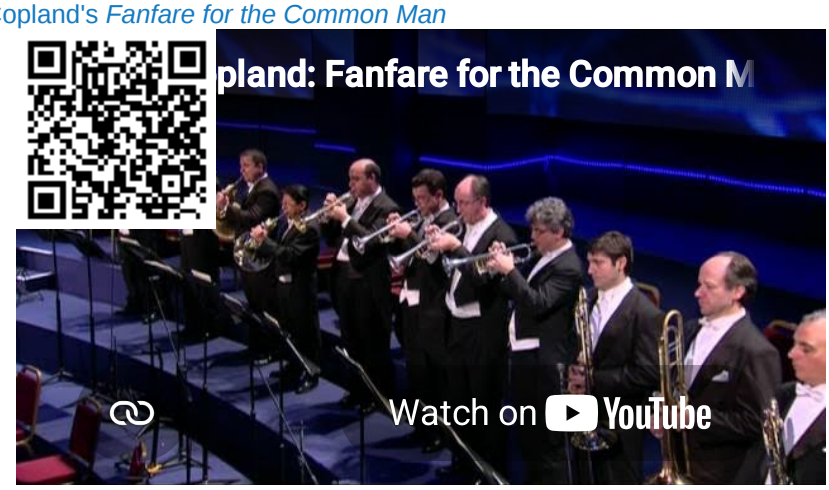


You can see the ballet itself in the video I included at the beginning of this module, as well as a performance of hoedown from the ballet *Rodeo* (1942).

One of the ways in which Copeland was able to capture the sense of vastness of the American landscape was through his use of certain harmonic intervals, that is, two notes played together, which sound "hollow" or "open." These intervals, which are called "perfect 4ths" and "perfect 5ths," have been used since medieval times, and were named so due to their simple harmonic ratios. The result is music that sounds vast and expansive. Perhaps the best example of this technique is found in Copland's famous *Fanfare for the Common Man*.

While fanfares are typically associated with heralding the arrival of royalty, Copland wanted to create a fanfare that celebrated the lives of everyday people during a trying time in American history. The piece was premiered by the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra on March 12, 1943 at the height of World War II. To this day, no other piece stirs up patriotic emotions like *Fanfare for the Common Man*. It has been used in countless movies, television shows, and even military recruitment ads. The piece came to define Copland's uniquely American compositional style and remains one of the most popular patriotic pieces in the American repertoire.

Focus Composition: Copland's *Fanfare for the Common Man*



LISTENING GUIDE

- Composer: Aaron Copland
- Composition: *Fanfare for the Common Man*
- Date: 1942
- Genre: Fanfare
- Performing Forces: brass and percussion sections of symphony orchestra

Things to listen for:

Opening crash, bass drum and timpani, the perfect 4th and perfect 5th intervals that feel open and expansive, contrasting melody in the clarinet, final climactic chord.

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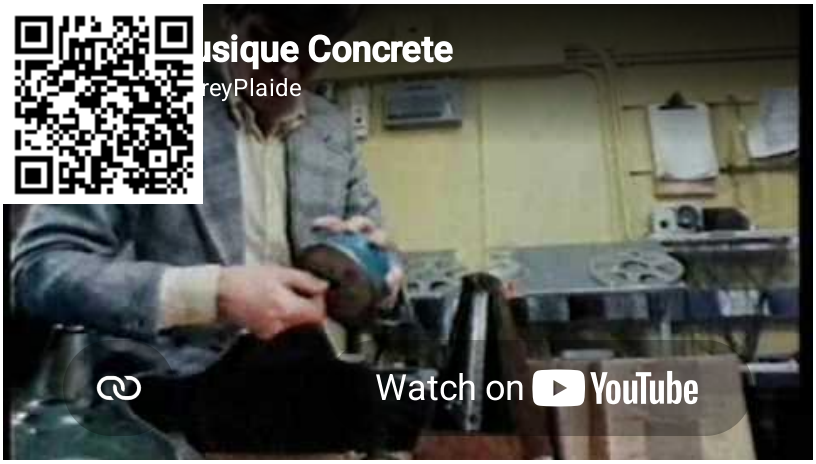
15.5: The Late Twentieth Century

The Late 20th Century

Modern electronic inventions continue to change and shape our lives. Music has not been immune to these changes. Computers, synthesizers, and massive sound systems have become common throughout the western world. In this unit, we will touch on some of the important trends that started in the 1940s and 1950s and continue to the present. We will also look at an important genre, movie music!

Musique Concrète

Musique concrète (a French term meaning “concrete music”) is a type of electro-acoustic music that uses both electronically produced sounds (like synthesizers) and recorded natural sounds (like instruments, voices, and sounds from nature). Pierre Schaeffer (in the 1940s) was a leader in developing this technique. Unlike traditional composers, composers of musique concrète are not restricted to using rhythm, melody, harmony, instrumentation, form, and other musical elements. The video below offers an excellent narrative on musique concrète.



Below you can hear one of Pierre Schaeffer’s musique concrète compositions.

Pierre Schaeffer, Études de bruits (1948)

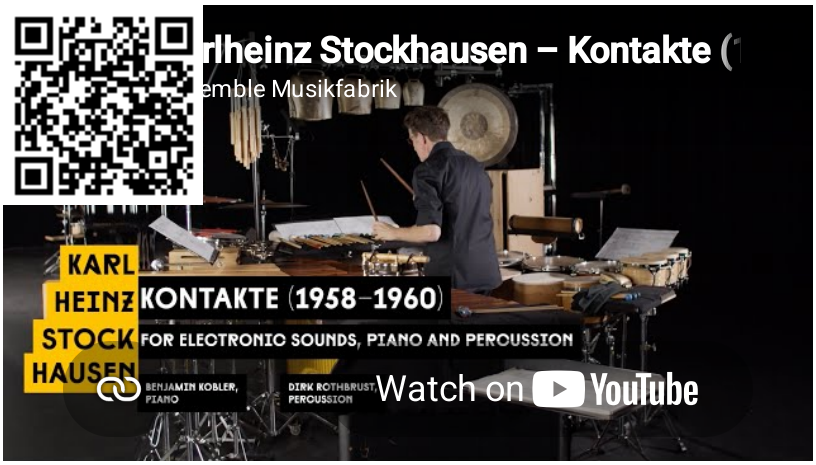


Elektronische Musik

Elektronische Musik (German term meaning “electronic music”) is composed by manipulating only electronically-produced sounds (not recorded sounds.) Like Expressionism, both musique concrète and elektronische Musik did not last long as popular techniques. Karlheinz Stockhausen was a leader in the creation of elektronische Musik.

The video below is to an example of elektronische Musik.

Stockhausen: Kontakte (electronic version complete) features electronic sounds, piano, and percussion:



Laptop Orchestras

With the development of laptop computers, a new wave of interest has sprung up world-wide in electronic music of all types. Musicians can now easily link laptops together to form ensembles; they can also link laptops in other locations, even around the globe. Software is being developed that allows for all types of musique concrète and elektronische musik compositions and combinations. The Princeton Laptop Orchestra is a leader in this area of experimental composition and performance.

Princeton laptop orchestra

Here is a video on this unique musical collective:



Film Music

[One more plug for MUSIC 118: Film Music Appreciation. If this is your area of interest, come and take this class next time it's offered.]

Although modern audiences may no longer visit the local symphony or opera house on a regular basis, they do visit the local movie theater (or at least watch movies streaming...). In this way, symphonic music lives on in our everyday lives in the form of music for film, as well as for television shows, commercials, and video games.

More than any other form of media in the twentieth century, film has made an indelible mark on our culture. The first known public exhibition of film with accompanying sound took place in Paris in 1900, but not until the 1920s did talking pictures, or “talkies,” become commercially viable. Inevitably, part of the magic of film is due to its marriage with music. After opera, film music was the next step in the evolution of music for drama. In fact, film music follows many of the same rules established by the nineteenth-century opera and before, such as the use of overtures, leitmotifs, and incidental music. Many of the most famous themes in the history of film are known throughout the world in the same way that an aria from a famous opera would have been known to the mass audiences of the previous century. For example, many of us know main themes from Star Wars or the opening theme to Game of Thrones?

Unlike the music of forward-thinking twentieth-century composers such as Schoenberg and Webern, music for film is not designed to push musical boundaries; instead, it draws on compositional devices from across the vast history of Western music. Music for a film depicting a love story might rely on sweeping melodies reminiscent of Wagner or Tchaikovsky. A science fiction movie might draw on dense note clusters and unconventional synthesized sounds to evoke the strangeness of encountering beings from another world. A documentary might feature music that is emotionally detached, such as the twentieth-century minimalistic style of Phillip Glass. It all depends on what style best complements the visuals.

The following example is one of the most famous melodies in cinema history, the main theme from *Star Wars*, composed by John Williams. Because *Star Wars* tells a story in a galaxy far, far away, its music should logically sound futuristic, but director George Lucas opted for an entirely different approach. He asked the film's John Williams to compose something romantic in nature so as to ground the characters of this strange universe in something emotionally familiar. Williams achieved this goal by creating a musical landscape deeply rooted in the style of Wagner, especially in his use of heroic themes and leitmotifs. Listen to the example below and pay special note to the sense of adventure it evokes.

Focus Composition: John William music for *Star Wars* (main theme)



LISTENING GUIDE

- Composer: John Williams
- Composition: Star Wars Main Title
- Date: 1977
- Genre: Motion Picture Score
- Performing Forces: orchestra

0:00 - Opening Fanfare: Use of perfect fourths to evoke heroism. Orchestral: trumpets and brass. Triplet figures create a sense of excitement. Opens on a loud tonic chord to convey strength.

0:08 - Main Theme. High brass alternating with strings. Heroic march. Strong tonal center.

1:11 - Transition to space battle music as Imperial Star Destroyer looms over a smaller ship. Ascending strings followed by lone flute solo and stabbing brass notes Floating time followed by jarring triplet figures. Moves towards dissonance to create sense of impending danger.

2:03 - Battle Music: Melody spells out a diminished chord, evoking conflict. Low brass takes over melody. Faster march creates a sense of urgency. Minor key depicts danger.

2:14 -Main theme returns. Melody switches to the French horns. Heroic march. Returns to major key.

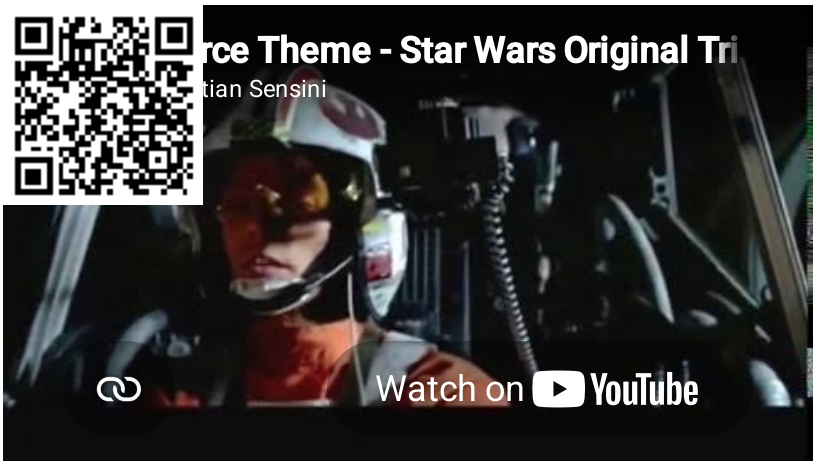
3:19 - Leia's Theme. Sweeping romantic melody in strings. Slow moving tempo. Lush romantic chords.

4:06 - Main theme returns

4:39 - Battle theme returns

5:17 - Closing Section (Coronation Theme). Full Orchestra. Slow and majestic. Ends on a strong tonic chord.

We talked about leitmotifs in our chapter on nineteenth-century music. The music of *Star Wars* relies heavily on this technique, and most of its characters have their own unique themes, which appear in different forms throughout the movies. Perhaps one of the most famous of these leitmotifs is the “Force Theme.” The link below is a compilation of the various uses of this theme throughout the original trilogy. This doesn't even take the other two trilogies into account, but the Force theme appears in those films as well.

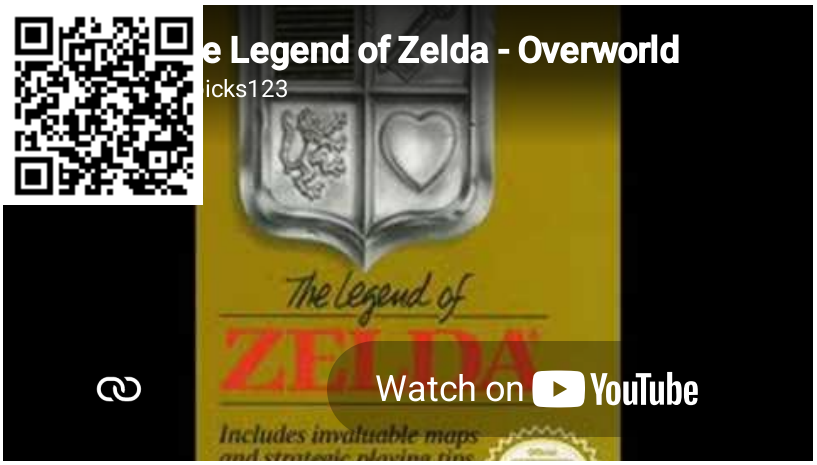


Music for New Media

Although the movies continue to flourish in the twenty-first century, new technologies bring new media, and, with it, new music. One of the fastest growing examples of new media comes in the form of video games. The music of the first commercially-available video games of the 1970s was rudimentary at best. Fast-forward to the twenty-first century, and video games feature complex and original musical backdrops which complement incredibly realistic graphics and game play. These games require a cinematic style of music that can adapt to the actions of the player.

Listen to the example below from the original for the Nintendo Entertainment System. Early video game music is not unlike the music of the Renaissance in that it was limited to polyphony between a small number of voices. The original NES system put significant restraints on composers, as it was only possible to sound three to four notes simultaneously, and a great deal of effort was put into getting as rich a sound as possible within these constraints. Listen below to the two versions of the main Zelda theme (called the “Overworld Theme”). Conceived by ac- claimed video game composer Koji Kondo, it is one of the most famous video game themes of all time. This theme has been featured in almost all of the Legend of Zelda games. Notice how the composer uses imitative polyphony to create the illusion of a full texture. Notice also the piece’s similarity to Ravel’s Bolero, which we heard earlier in this chapter. Kondo originally planned to use his own arrangement of Ravel’s Bolero as the main theme for the game. However, in the end he chose to write instead an original piece with similar characteristics. Notice that both are built on a steady repeated percussive pattern.

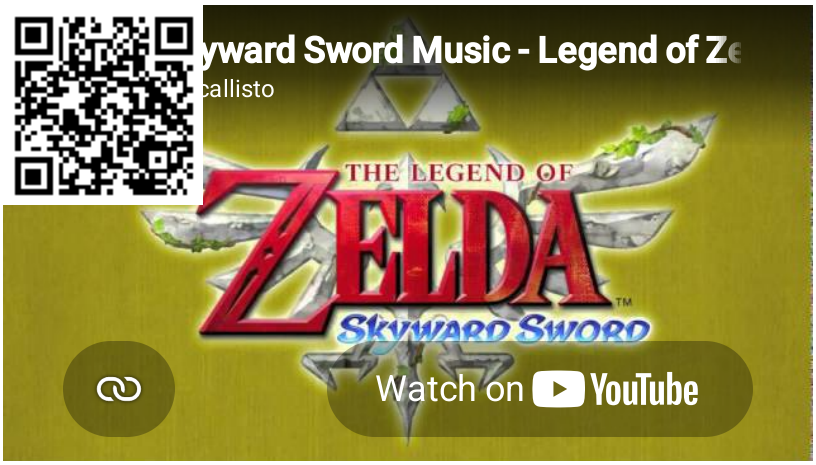
Focus Composition: Kondo's Legend of Zelda (Overworld Theme)



- Composer: Koji Kondo
- Composition: The Legend of Zelda (Overworld Theme)

- Date: 1986
- Genre: Video Game Music
- Performing Forces: electronic sounds

The second version of the theme is a testament to the advances made in the technological capabilities of video game music. An updated arrangement of the theme from Nintendo's 2011 release, The Legend of Zelda: Skyward Sword, it features the "Overworld Theme" in the game's credits sequence. If you didn't know this music belonged to a video game, you could imagine it as a soundtrack to a blockbuster adventure movie.



- Composer: Koji Kondo
- Composition: The Legend of Zelda (Overworld Theme)
- Date: 1986 (2011 arrangement)
- Genre: Video Game Music
- Performing Forces: orchestra

Summary

In this chapter we examined the Impressionist style of music and its two main composers, Ravel and Debussy. We also looked at a new approach to harmony and composition developed by Schoenberg, Berg, and others that became known as Expressionism. We then briefly touched on the style called primitivism and the music of Igor Stravinsky and examined the Neoclassicism of Stravinsky and others. We saw how the minimalist composers sought to create music from its most fundamental rhythmic and melodic elements, returning to the consonant sounds of triads and the strict application of steady meter. We then discovered the unique- ly American, yet contrasting styles of Aaron Copland and George Gershwin—Copland creating an American symphonic style and Gershwin creating a style which incorporated jazz music. We learned that musique concrète was a combination of recorded and electronic sounds and that the German composer Karlheinz Stockhausen was the leader in elektronische Musik. We learned about the Princeton University Laptop Orchestra. Finally, we looked at music for motion pictures and at one of the most recent developments in electronic and digital entertainment: music for video games. We looked at a lot of 20th century music, but didn't even get to talk in any real way about jazz, popular music, musical theater, rock, disco, funk, or hip hop. Luckily, we offer stand-alone classes that teach about many of these styles. If you are interested, please consider broadening your knowledge by taking some of these classes with us!

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15.6: Chapter Summary

In this chapter we examined the Impressionist style of music and its two main composers, Ravel and Debussy. We also looked at a new approach to harmony and composition developed by Schoenberg, Berg, and others that became known as Expressionism. We then briefly touched on the style called primitivism and the music of Igor Stravinsky and examined the Neoclassicism of Stravinsky and others. We saw how the minimalist composers sought to create music from its most fundamental rhythmic and melodic elements, returning to the consonant sounds of triads and the strict application of steady meter. We then discovered the unique- ly American, yet contrasting styles of Aaron Copland and George Gershwin—Copland creating an American symphonic style and Gershwin creating a style which incorporated jazz music. We learned that *musique concrète* was a combination of recorded and electronic sounds and that the German composer Karlheinz Stockhausen was the leader in *elektronische Musik*. We saw that the Princeton University Laptop Orchestra is an important leader in laptop computer ensembles. Finally, we looked at music for motion pictures and at one of the most recent developments in electronic and digital entertainment: music for video games.

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Glossary

Sample Word 1 | Sample Definition 1

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