

## Mu21

### Romantic Period

#### Outline

Words in **bold** are ones you with which you should be well familiar. In the case of composers, know something of their lives and the types of music they composed or for which they are best remembered. In the case of genres, forms, etc., know why it is important and, where applicable, know what types of changes it experienced during the 19<sup>th</sup> century – especially if it existed in earlier times.

#### “Romantic Classicists”

**Schubert**

**Mendelssohn**

**Schumann**

**Brahms**

**Lied** (Song) or **Lieder** (Songs) - especially Schubert, Schumann, Brahms

**Strophic, modified strophic, through-composed**

**Symphony**

Concerto

Chamber Music

Sonata

Trio, Quartet, Quintet

Choral Music - except Schumann

Requiem – in the case of Brahms

Program Overture/Symphony

#### The French (native and adopted)

**Berlioz**

**Chopin**

**Liszt**

**Berlioz**

**Program Symphony, Opera**

Virtually no chamber music, concertos, songs, piano music

**Symphonie fantastique (idée fixe); Damnation of Faust**

Berlioz as orchestrator, literary figure

**Chopin**

**Dance-derived: Mazurka, Polonaise, Waltz etc.**

**Pedagogic & Concert: Etude, Prelude, Nocturne, Ballade**

Very little music not involving piano

**Liszt**

**Piano**

Sonata (1)

**Many dance-derived, pedagogic and concert genres** in common with Chopin

**Transcriptions** (symphonies, opera highlights, overtures)

**Orchestra**  
**Tone Poems**

**Nationalists**

Russians

**Mussorgsky** (and the other members of The Five: Borodin, Rimsky-Korsakov, Cui, Balakiev) – you don't need to memorize their Names but need to know who they are

Piano Works - "**Pictures at an Exhibition**" - best known

Orchestral Works

Mussorgsky, Rimsky, Borodin - Tone Poems

Rimsky, Borodin - Symphonies

Opera - Borodin's "**Prince Igor**", Mussorgsky's "**Boris Gudonov**"

**Tchaikovsky** (not generally considered among true "nationalists")

Symphony, Opera, Ballet

Eastern Europeans

**Dvorak & Smetana**

Symphonies

Dvorak: 7th, 8th & 9th ("New World")

Tone Poems

Smetana: "Ma Vlast"

Piano Music, Chamber Music, Opera

Scandinavian

**Grieg**, Sibelius, Berwald

English

**Vaughan-Williams**, Delius, Elgar

Spanish

**Albeniz**, Granados, de Falla

American

**Gottschalk**

**Opera**

Germany

**von Weber**

**Wagner**

Early operas: Der Fliegende Holländer (The Flying Dutchman), Lohengrin, Tannhäuser

"**Der Ring des Niebelungen**": "Das Rheingold", "Die Valkür", "Siegfried", "Götterdämmerung"

Later works: "Tristan & Isolde", "Die Meistersingers", "Parsifal"

Italy

Bel Canto: **Rossini**, Donizetti & Bellini

**Cavatina & Cabaletta**

**Verdi**

"Verismo" composers: Leoncavallo (Pagliacci); **Puccini** ("**La Boheme**",

**“Madame Butterfly”**, Tosca, Turandot)

France

Meyerbeer

**Bizet**

**“Carmen”**

### **Some matters pertaining to musical elements in Romantic music**

Be wary of the notion that Romantic music is “more expressive” than earlier music or that musical instruments, harmony, form etc. “developed further” in the Romantic period (Machlis falls into this trap on more than one occasion). Instruments, harmony and form, along with all other components or parameters of music evolved - they didn’t necessarily all “improve.” These are very subjective and difficult issues.

Composers during the 19th century dotted their music with far more “instructions” than previously (“dolce”, “cantabile” etc.) That doesn’t mean the composer or performer composed or played more heart-felt or sweeter music; the musical language was just different.

Harmony became more chromatic - more use of non-diatonic notes; modulations to unrelated keys; more frequent changes of tonal center. Composers used major and minor side by side with much greater frequency, often shifting between the two.

Melodies became longer; used a wider range and more dynamics.

Form was expanded and, in many cases (symphonies, concertos etc.) pieces became longer. Well into the 19th century, composers still followed 18th century formal principals (albeit expanded) - sonata-allegro, compound ternary, rondo and variation form still widely used. A variety of new forms and genres appeared - smaller forms for solo piano (nocturne, ballade); dance-derived pieces (waltz, mazurka); and a couple of new genres for orchestra - tone poem and program symphony; the Lied became a vitally important new genre and was cultivated throughout the 19th and 20th centuries.

Instrumentation expanded as new instruments were invented and old ones were developed. The orchestra of the late-18th century, generally 35-40 players, expanded to as many as 100. The modern symphony orchestra now numbers 100-110 players for large 19th- and 20th-century works.

Amateur music-making became an important pastime as more publishers came into existence and new printing processes made music more affordable. Musical instruments also became cheaper. Societies for amateur musicians and periodicals and journals devoted to music proliferated.

Nationalism became an all-important musical issue among non-mainstream composers (those outside Germany, Italy, France). The effects on music of nationalism were profound.

During the last third of the century, harmony became so chromatic in the hands of some composers (Wagner & Liszt, later Verdi, Puccini) that the concept of tonality was thrown into question. From 1860 - 1910 “tonality” as a means of unifying (holding music together) became less and less reliable.