

## Remote Learning Packet - Week 6

*NB: Please keep all work produced this week. Details regarding how to turn in this work will be forthcoming.*

**May 4-May 8, 2020**

**Course:** Music

**Teacher(s):** Mr. Zuno [leonardo.zunofernandez@greatheartsirving.org](mailto:leonardo.zunofernandez@greatheartsirving.org)

**Weekly Plan:**

*Monday, May 4*

*Last week, we focused on Classical Composers (Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven) and you listened to some of their music. This week, we are moving on to the Romantic Period.*

Please read through this reading on the [Features of Romantic Music](#). You don't need to write a summary, but keep in mind what are the major differences between the music we have listened to recently from the Classical Period (last week). You will refer to this reading later in the week.

*Tuesday, May 5*

Please read through the following biographies. Even though these are short, they contain excellent information, so please read carefully. On Wednesday, you will select one Romantic-period composer from among Tuesday's and Wednesday's readings for your final paper. I will post recordings on Google Classroom that you can browse to determine which composer you prefer so far. Please spend some time making a good selection and pay special attention to the list of works listed in each biography.

Read today:

[Franz Schubert's biography](#)

[Robert Schumann](#)

[Clara Schumann](#)

[Felix and Fanny Menssohn](#)

*Wednesday, May 6*

On Monday, you read about features of music from the Romantic period; yesterday, you read a few biographies of Romantic composers. Today, you will read a few more and will select one composer from yesterday's or today's list for your final project. This choice will be your Romantic-period composer for your final paper. There will be more composers you will have to choose from other periods.

Read today:

[Frederic Chopin](#)

[Hector Berlioz](#)

[Franz Liszt](#)

**Please turn-in** a six-sentence paragraph describing the composer you chose for this summary. Write about why you chose this composer (was it because of his/her life story, the sound of their music, or something else?). Also, please describe which features of the Romantic style appear in his/her music most prominently. Finally, please list a work that you listened to this week from this composer from the ones I posted on GC.

*Thursday, May 7*

Watch the video I posted on letter names and set class theory and answer the questions below.

**Please turn-in** answers to the following questions:

- 1) What is the difference between adding two numbers versus adding one number to a letter. For example, if C is 0 and you add 2, what letter do you get? What would you get if you only added 1?
- 2) What do we call the interval that adds or subtracts 2 from any given number? For example, what is the interval between A-B?
- 3) Please write down the following pattern three times:  $X + 2 + 2 + 1 + 2 + 2 + 2 + 1$ . If C, or 0 is X, can you figure out the rest of the letters/numbers?

*Friday, May 8*

Please use this time to catch up on work you may have left undone this week. Please upload your assignment(s) to Google Classroom (GC), and I look forward to seeing you during our office hours. The link to that meeting is on the stream of the GC.

**\*A note about the final paper:** During Weeks 6 and 7 (this and next week), you will gather information from your listening log, listening guides, and your notes from the readings I provide. Your final project will include listening to a concert with a variety of classical music or a variety of musical selections, and you will write a paper about it. You will be expected to use the terminology provided in the weekly handouts. In the meantime, try to get good-quality notes and a strong listening log.

*If you already turned in your concert review*, you will still be expected to do all of these assignments, and your final project will be somewhat reduced.

To have a better idea of which composers belong to each of these periods, please refer to this useful [timeline](#) (composers' names are represented by green lines).

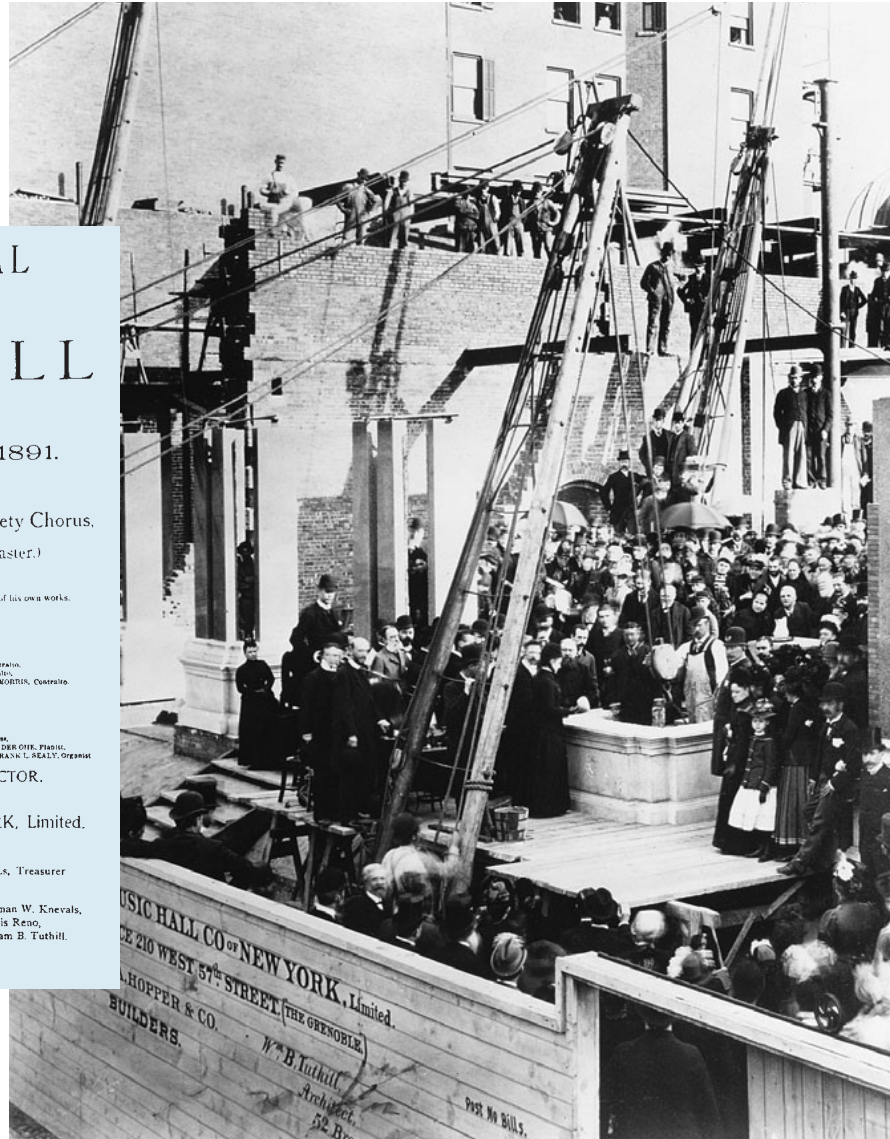
The final paper will include:

- One major work from the Baroque period. (Vivaldi through Handel)
- One major work from the Classical period. (C.P.E. Bach through Carl Maria von Weber)
- One major work from the Romantic, Late Romantic period, or 20th Century. (Rossini through John Cage)

**MUSIC FESTIVAL**  
In Celebration of the Opening of  
**MUSIC HALL**  
CORNER 57TH STREET & 7TH AVENUE,  
MAY 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9, 1891.  
The Symphony Society Orchestra,  
The Oratorio Society Chorus,  
BOYS' CHOIR OF 100. (Wenzel Raboch, Choirmaster.)  
AND THE FOLLOWING ARTISTS:  
P. TCHAIKOWSKY, the eminent Russian composer, who will conduct several of his own works.  
FRAU ANTONIA MIELKE, Soprano  
Mlle. CLEMENTINE DE VIELE, Soprano  
MRS. GERRIT SMITH, Soprano  
MRS. TH. J. TRUIT, Soprano  
MRS. ANNA LEWIS BELLU, Soprano  
MRS. KURT KRISCH, Soprano  
FRAC. SANGHE REPPER-GOFFE, Contralto  
MRS. CLARE ALVES, Contralto  
MRS. CLAPPER-MORTON, Contralto  
SIGNOR ITALO CARPENZI, Tenor  
HERB. ANDREWSON EITZEL, Tenor  
MR. THOMAS EBBET, Tenor  
HERB. THEODOR BELFJUNSEN, Baritone  
HERB. EMIL FANTER, Bass  
JUDICUNAR HEHRENS, Bass  
MR. EDWIN BUNNELL, Bass  
FRL. ADLE ANDER OIE, Pianist  
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Groundbreaking ceremony for Carnegie Hall in New York. The bearded man visible behind one of the vertical ropes is the famous railroad and steel baron Andrew Carnegie, the donor.

The gap between innovative music and a conservative concert public, which opened up in the nineteenth century, widened in the twentieth, as we shall see. Here as elsewhere, the nineteenth century set the tone for modern musical life.

### 3 Style Features of Romantic Music

Since the main artistic value in the Romantic era was the integrity of personal feeling, every genuine artist was expected to have a personal style. Many artists cultivated styles that were highly personal and even eccentric. Furthermore, Romanticism's constant striving after ever-new states of consciousness put a premium on innovation; this could be seen as an exciting breaking down of artistic barriers on the one hand, and as a heroic personal breakthrough on the other. Consequently it is harder to define the Romantic style in general than to spot innovations, novelties, and individual peculiarities.

Nevertheless, nineteenth-century composers were united by some common interests, which will be discussed below: technical interests concerning melody, harmony, tone color, and, perhaps especially, musical form. But it is important to remember that one such common interest was to sound different from everybody else.

### Rhythm: Rubato

The general Romantic tendency to blur all sharp edges found its musical counterpart in the rhythmic practice of *tempo rubato*, or just **rubato**. Rubato means that in musical performance the rhythm is handled flexibly; the meter itself may waver, or else the beat is maintained strictly in the accompaniment while the melody is played or sung slightly out of phase with it. (Literally *tempo rubato* means “robbed time”—that is, some time has been stolen from the beat.)

Rubato was practiced in the service of greater individual expressivity. Though seldom indicated in a score—indeed, no one has ever found an accurate way to indicate rubato in musical notation—its practice is documented by old recordings, made around 1900 by musicians who were close to the Romantic composers (or even by the composers themselves). Improvisation, in the sense of adding ornaments or other notes to a score, was all but abolished by the end of the nineteenth century. Let no mere performer tamper with notes which had been set down by a composer of transcendent genius! But performers of the time improvised *rhythmically*, in that they applied rubato freely to nearly every score they played.

Considered a sign of bad taste in Baroque or Classical music, at least when applied extensively, rubato is an essential expressive resource in the playing, singing, and conducting of Romantic music. A musician’s sensitivity and “feeling” depends to a great extent on his or her artistic use of rubato.

### Romantic Melody

The most instantly recognizable feature of Romantic music is its melodic style. Melody in the Romantic era is more emotional, effusive, and demonstrative than before. Often the melodic lines range more widely than the orderly, restrained tunes of the Classical era; often, too, they build up to more sustained climaxes. Melodies became more irregular in rhythm and phrase structure, so as to make them sound more spontaneous.

A fine example is the so-called Love theme of Tchaikovsky’s Overture-Fantasy *Romeo and Juliet* (page 283). It begins with a great outburst—a climax, at the very start—and then sinks down an octave and more, in melodic curves whose yearning quality grows more and more sensuous. Especially striking is the second part of the melody, where a rhythmic figure surges up in sequence, seven times in all, in preparation for a free return of the opening climax, now *ff*:

The musical score shows a melodic line in 4/4 time, key of D major. It begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The melody is characterized by a series of seven numbered sequences (1-7) highlighted in blue boxes. Sequence 1 is the opening climax. Sequences 2-7 are rhythmic figures that surge up in sequence. The score includes dynamic markings: *f*, *cresc.*, *cresc.*, *sf*, and *ff*. The final part of the score is labeled "Return of opening".

When one thinks of Romantic melody, what comes first to mind is this kind of grand, exaggerated emotionality. Some Romantic melodies are more intimate, however—and they are no less emotional for sparing the handkerchief, as it were. Each in an individual way, Romantic composers learned to make their melodies dreamy, sensitive, passionate, ecstatic, or whatever shade of feeling they wished to express.

## Romantic Harmony

Harmony was one of the areas in which Romantic music made the greatest technical advances. On the one hand, composers learned to use harmony to underpin melody in such a way as to bring out its emotionality. Romantic melody is, in fact, inseparable from harmony. In the *Romeo and Juliet* Love theme, for example, a rich new chord goes hand in hand with the warm upward scoop of the melodic line in measure 5.

On the other hand, harmony was savored for its own sake, and composers experimented freely with new chord forms and new juxtapositions of chords. These, it was found, could contribute potently to those mysterious, sinister, rapturous, ethereal, or sultry moods that Romantic composers sought to evoke.

**Chromaticism** is a term for a style that liberally employs all twelve notes of the chromatic scale (see page 27). Romantic composers pursued chromaticism to a greater extent than Baroque and Classical ones, in order to expand the expressive range of both their melodies and their harmony. If you look closely at the *Romeo and Juliet* theme, you will find nearly all twelve notes of the chromatic scale included—something that seldom if ever happens in earlier music. Chromaticism was carried furthest in the nineteenth century by Richard Wagner, and further yet by the early twentieth-century modernists.

## The Expansion of Tone Color

While tone color had been treated with considerable subtlety by the Viennese Classical composers, the Romantics seized on this aspect of music with particular enthusiasm. For the first time in Western music, the sheer sensuous quality of sound assumed major artistic importance on a level with rhythm, melody, and musical form.

So it is no accident that all instruments went through major technical developments during the nineteenth century—the piano not least. As orchestral instruments reached their present-day forms, the orchestra was expanded, soon reaching its present standard makeup. The chart below for a typical Romantic orchestra, when compared with the Classical orchestra chart on page 162, shows how the ranks of the brass, woodwind, and percussion sections were filled out:

A TYPICAL ROMANTIC ORCHESTRA

STRINGS	WOODWINDS	BRASS	PERCUSSION
First violins (12–16 players) Second violins (12–16) Violas (8–12) Cellos (8–12) Basses (6–10)	2 Flutes 1 Piccolo 2 Oboes 1 English horn 2 Clarinets 1 High E $\flat$ clarinet 1 Bass clarinet 2 Bassoons 1 Contrabassoon	4 French horns 2 Trumpets 3 Trombones 1 Bass tuba	3 Timpani Bass drum Snare drum Cymbals Triangle Tubular bells
<i>Note: Each string section is sometimes divided into two or more subsections, to obtain richer effects.</i> 2 Harps			Piano



The increased chromaticism of nineteenth-century music spawned this bizarre experimental harp, which is really two harps, crisscrossed, to accommodate all the notes of the chromatic scale.

What such charts cannot show, however, are the ingenious new *combinations* of instruments that were now investigated. Composers learned to mix instrumental colors with something of the same freedom with which painters mix actual colors on a palette. The clear, sharply defined sonorities of the Classical era were replaced by multicolored shades of blended orchestral sound.

Romantic composers and audiences alike were fascinated by the symphony orchestra, and for the first time conductors came to the fore—conductors wielding batons. In earlier times, orchestras had simply followed the first violinist or the continuo player, but now they needed experts to control and balance out those special blended effects. The orchestra also became increasingly important in nineteenth-century opera. Major opera composers, such as Weber, Meyerbeer, and Wagner, specialized in orchestral effects that sometimes even threatened to put the voices in the shade. If today, when one thinks of classical music, the symphony orchestra comes to mind almost automatically, that is a holdover from the Romantic nineteenth century.

## 4 Program Music

**Program music** is a term for instrumental music written in association with a poem, a story, or some other literary source—or even just a highly suggestive word or two. While program music was certainly not new in the Romantic era, it gained new importance and prestige, for program music answered the general Romantic demand for transcending inter-art boundaries. Instrumental music could be made even more expressive, many felt, by linking it to poetry and ideas.

The term *program music* is sometimes restricted to music that tells or at least traces a story, the story being the “program.” In 1829, at the premiere of his *Fantastic Symphony*, the composer Hector Berlioz actually handed out a pamphlet containing his own made-up program, and the music of the symphony behaves like a narrator a good deal of the time. From the weird shrieks and groans at the start of the symphony’s last movement, through the riotous welcome of the heroine, to the final frenzied round dance, we are treated to musical events that follow the events of the story step by step (see page 257).

Another type of program music adopts a different strategy. Instead of telling a story, it attempts to capture the general flavor of a mood associated with some extramusical condition, concept, or personality. The single word *nocturne*, as the title for a whole genre of such compositions by Frédéric Chopin, is enough to set up expectations of nighttime romance—and the music does the rest (see page 250). In short piano pieces, Schumann drew portraits of his friends (and even of himself) including fellow composer Chopin (see page 249).

Program music sparked a great debate in the nineteenth century, a debate that still goes on. Does the music *really* illustrate or represent the program? Suppose the music is played without listeners being given the program—could they tell it from the music? Shouldn’t the music make complete sense on its own terms, even if we grant that the program provides an added dimension to it?

But the point is that the Romantics did not *want* to be without the program. They did not necessarily *want* the music to “make sense on its own terms.” And it seems they were prepared to live with this apparent inconsistency: On the one hand, they revered purely instrumental music as the highest form of art; on the other hand, they embraced program music, music that is less “pure” because it mixes in nonmusical elements.



More and more complex orchestras required conductors, and conductors required batons. Before sticks came into use, the German opera composer Carl Maria von Weber (see page 262) seems to have used a tight scroll of paper (a score?).

## 5 Form in Romantic Music

Individual spontaneity was an important goal of the Romantic movement. And if there was any area in which the composer wanted to seem particularly free and spontaneous, it was the area of musical form. The music should bubble out moment by moment, irrepressible and untrammelled, like churning emotion itself. But composers faced a problem: how to control that spontaneity? They had to provide their music with enough sense of coherence so that listeners could follow it.

In their approach to musical form, nineteenth-century composers broke with Classical norms. They wanted each work of art to express its individuality in its form as well as its style (melody, harmony, timbre, etc.). They distrusted conventional, standardized forms just as they flouted society's other conventions. Even when they followed forms such as sonata form, rondo, and so on, they tended to follow them so loosely that it gets to be a matter of opinion whether they are doing so at all. Themes tend to blend into one another, and there is much less of the neat, clear cadencing of Classical music.

Some Romantic compositions deliberately break down the boundary between music and nonmusical silence. Robert Schumann's song "Im wunderschönen Monat Mai" (page 243) begins hesitantly, as though already in the middle of a transition; we feel we have just begun hearing music that started long ago. Instead of ending with a decisive cadence, the song comes to a questioning dissonance, then—silence. The vague, atmospheric quality at the start and the suggestion of infinity at the end are typically Romantic.

Yet the music had to avoid real formlessness if it was to hold the attention of an audience. Once again, for romantic composers the problem was how to create the impression of spontaneous form while at the same time giving the listener some means of following the music. They developed a number of interesting and characteristic solutions.

### Miniature Compositions

While many Romantic compositions last for about as long as works from the eighteenth century, special classes of music arose with quite different dimensions.

First, composers cultivated what we will call **miniatures**, pieces lasting only a few minutes—or even less. Mostly songs and short piano pieces, these were designed to convey a particularly pointed emotion, momentary and undeveloped. In this way the composer could commune with the listener intensely but intimately, as though giving him or her a single short, meaningful glance. The meaning might well be hinted at by a programmatic title.

Though short pieces were also written in earlier times, of course—think of minuet movements in classical symphonies—usually they were components of larger units, where their effect was balanced by other, longer movements. Romantic miniatures, though they were often published in sets, as we will see, nevertheless were composed so as to stand out as individuals in their own right, apart from their sets. Miniatures for piano were sometimes given general titles, such as Schubert's *Impromptus* (Improvisations) and Brahms's *Capriccios* (Whims). Sometimes they masqueraded as dances, like Chopin's *Mazurkas* (a Polish dance). Often they were given more suggestive, programmatic titles: *Years of Pilgrimage* by Franz Liszt; *Spring Song* by Felix Mendelssohn; *To a Wild Rose* by Edward MacDowell, America's leading late Romantic



The man has put down his violin to sit with the woman at the piano; we can imagine the four-hand music they are playing, perhaps, but we cannot see their faces. This picture catches both the intimacy and privacy of the Romantic miniature and also its characteristic location, the middle-class living room.

composer. Schumann was something of a specialist in such titles: *The Poet Speaks*, *Confession*, *The Bird as Prophet*, and—*Why?*

In miniatures the problem of musical form was not so much solved as bypassed. They are over before the listener begins to wonder where the music is going, what the next effect will be.

### Grandiose Compositions

Another Romantic tendency was diametrically opposed to the miniatures. Many composers wrote what may be called grandiose compositions—larger and larger symphonies, cantatas, and so on, with more and more movements, increased performing forces, and a longer (sometimes much longer) total time span. For example, Hector Berlioz's symphony *Romeo and Juliet* of 1839 lasts for nearly an hour and a half. (Haydn's Symphony No. 95 lasts twenty minutes.) Starting with an augmented symphony orchestra, Berlioz added soloists and a chorus in certain of the movements and a narrator between them, and then threw in an off-stage chorus for still other movements. In the field of opera, Richard Wagner's *The Nibelung's Ring* is a work that goes on for four evenings with a huge orchestra including specially invented instruments, a cast of thirty, and fifteen separate stage sets (see page 272).

The total effect of these grandiose compositions was laced with poetry, philosophical or religious ideas, story lines, and (in operas) dramatic action.



Caricature of Hector Berlioz Leading an Orchestra in 1846. Color engraving. The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, NY, U.S.A.



The grandiose compositions of the nineteenth century occasioned many cartoons—amusing enough, but not in the last analysis friendly to the advanced music of the time. Here it is Berlioz who is lampooned.

Listeners were impressed, even stupefied, by a combination of opulent sounds, great thoughts, powerful emotions, and sheer length.

These works met what we have called the problem of musical form in their own way. The bigger the work, the bigger the problem, but to help solve it composers could draw on extramusical factors—on the text of a vocal work, or the program of an instrumental one. Music could add emotional conviction to ideas or stories; in return these extramusical factors could supply a rhyme and reason for the sequence of musical events—that is, for the musical form.


## The Principle of Thematic Unity

An important general principle developed by Romantic composers was that of thematic unity. There was an increasing tendency to maintain some of the same thematic material throughout whole works, even (or especially) when these works were in many movements.

In nineteenth-century symphonies and other such works, several different levels of thematic unity can be distinguished:

7 Most obviously, themes from one movement may come back literally and quite clearly in other movements. We have already heard this happen in Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, when the scherzo theme returns in the last movement.

7 In other compositions, new *versions* of a single theme are used at important new points in the music, either later in the same movement or in later movements. While these new versions are really nothing more than variations of the original theme, this procedure differs fundamentally from Classical theme and variations form (see page 174). In Classical variation form, the theme is an entire tune, and the variations follow one another directly. In the new Romantic procedure, the theme is (generally) much more fragmentary than a tune, and the new versions of the theme appear at irregular intervals.

The term **thematic transformation** is used for this variation-like procedure in Romantic music, whereby short themes are freely varied at relatively wide and unpredictable intervals of time. A precedent for it can be traced to works such as Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, where the  motive of the first movement is evoked freely in each of the later ones. In Wagner's *The Valkyrie*, a storm theme from the orchestral Prelude is transformed into a theme associated with the exhausted and gloomy Siegmund.

7 In still other nineteenth-century pieces, we hear themes with even looser relationships among them. Clearly different, they nonetheless seem to exhibit mysterious inner similarities—similarities that seem to help unify the music, though they are too shadowy to count as transformations in the Romantic definition, let alone as variations in the Classical style. Wagner's operas are famous for such themes.

Of all the levels of thematic unity employed by nineteenth-century composers, this last is the most typical of all. Vague similarity rather than clear likeness, suggestion rather than outright statement, atmosphere rather than discourse, feeling rather than form: All these go to the heart of Romanticism. We cannot appreciate Romantic music fully if we approach it in too literal a frame of mind. In much of this music, the special spontaneous form of the individual piece, as distinct from standard forms such as sonata form and rondo, is tied to the principle of thematic unity. Listening to Romantic music requires ears that are not only attentive but also imaginative, exploratory, and more than a little fanciful.

► Study the Flashcards and Quizzes for Chapter 16 at [bedfordstmartins.com/listen](http://bedfordstmartins.com/listen)

## Franz Schubert (1797–1828)

Schubert was the son of a lower-middle-class Viennese schoolmaster. There was always music in the home, and the boy received a solid musical education in the training school for Viennese court singers. His talent amazed his teachers and also a number of his schoolmates, who remained devoted to him throughout his career. Schubert began by following in his father's footsteps as a schoolteacher, without much enthusiasm, but soon gave up teaching to devote all his time to music.

Schubert was an endearing but shy and unspectacular individual who led an unspectacular life. However, it was the sort of life that would have been impossible before the Romantic era. Schubert never married—it is believed he was gay—and never held a regular job. He was sustained by odd fees for teaching and publications and by contributions from a circle of friends who called themselves the Schubertians—young musicians, artists, writers, and music lovers. One of the Schubertians, Moritz von Schwind, who became an important painter, has left us many charming pictures of the group at parties, on trips to the country, and so on (see page 240).

It was an atmosphere especially conducive to an intimate musical genre such as the lied. Schubert wrote nearly seven hundred lieder and many choral songs. For a time he roomed with a poet, Johann Mayrhofer, who provided him with gloomy texts for about fifty of them.

But it's unfortunate that Schubert's wonderful songs have tended to overshadow his symphonies, sonatas, and chamber music. Starting out with Classical genres, Schubert in his very short lifetime transformed them under the influence of Romanticism. He never introduced himself to Beethoven, even though they lived in the same city; perhaps he instinctively felt he needed to keep his distance from the overpowering older master. It speaks

much for Schubert that he was able to write such original and powerful works as the “Unfinished” Symphony, the so-called *Great* Symphony in C, and others, right under Beethoven's shadow. (We listened to the beginning of the “Unfinished” Symphony in Unit I; see page 13.)

A few of Schubert's instrumental works include melodies taken from his own songs: the popular *Trout* Quintet, the String Quartet in D Minor (*Death and the Maiden*), and the *Wanderer* Fantasy for piano.

Schubert died in a typhoid fever epidemic when he was only thirty-one. He never heard a performance of his late symphonies, and much of his music came to light only after his death.

Our portrait shows Schubert around the time he wrote *The Erlking*.

**Chief Works:** Lieder, including the song cycles *Die schöne Müllerin*, *Winterreise*, and *Schwanengesang*, “The Erlking,” “Gretchen at the Spinning Wheel,” “Hedgerose,” “Death and the Maiden,” “The Trout,” and hundreds of others ■ “Character” pieces for piano; waltzes ■ Symphonies, including the “Unfinished”—Schubert completed only two movements and sketches for a scherzo—and the *Great* Symphony in C ■ Piano sonatas; *Wanderer* Fantasy for piano ■ Four mature string quartets; a string quintet; the genial *Trout* Quintet for piano and strings (including double bass)

**Encore:** After “The Erlking,” listen to the “Unfinished” Symphony and songs from *Winterreise*.



## The Song Cycle

A **song cycle** is a group of songs associated by a common poetic theme or an actual story. For the words of the songs, composers either found whole coherent groups of poems to set, or else made their own selections from a larger collection of a poet's work. Schubert, who wrote two great song cycles relatively late in his career, was able to use ready-made groups of poems published by a minor Romantic poet named Wilhelm Müller: *Die schöne Müllerin* (The Fair Maid of the Mill) and *Winterreise* (Winter Journey).

The advantage of the song cycle was that it extended the rather fragile expression of the lied into a larger, more comprehensive, and hence more impressive unit. It was, in a sense, an effort to get beyond “miniaturism,” even while composing miniatures. The unity of such larger units, however, is always loose. The individual songs can often be sung separately, as well as in sequence with the rest of the cycle.

## Robert Schumann (1810–1856)

Robert Schumann's father, a bookseller and writer, encouraged the boy's musical talent and started him studying the piano at the age of six. When his father died, his mother wanted him to go into law; he attended the University of Leipzig, but finally persuaded her to let him pursue the career of a piano virtuoso. He had to give this up, however, after an injury sustained when he tried to strengthen his fingers with a mechanical device.

Besides his musical talent, Schumann had a great flair for literature, no doubt inherited from his father. When he was only twenty-three, Schumann founded a magazine to campaign for a higher level of music, *Die Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* (*The New Music Journal*—it is still being published). For several years he wrote regular music criticism, often couched in a fanciful romantic prose style. For example, he signed some of his reviews with the names “Florestan” or “Eusebius,” representing the opposite (but both thoroughly romantic) sides of his character—the impetuous side and the tender, dreamy side. He encouraged fledgling composers such as Chopin and (later) Brahms.

Schumann's piano works—among his most important music—are mostly “character pieces,” often with imaginative titles, and occasionally signed “Eu.” or “Fl.” at the end. They are arranged in loosely organized sets, with titles such as *Butterflies*, *Scenes from Childhood*, and *Carnaval*.

Schumann fell in love with Clara Wieck, the daughter of his piano teacher; at the age of fifteen she was already a famous pianist. Thanks to her father's fanatical opposition—he did not think Robert was a very savory character—they had to wait until she was twenty-one (minus one day) before getting married, in 1840. A

charming outcome of the marriage was that Robert, whose early compositions were almost all for piano, suddenly started to write love songs for Clara. Nearly one hundred and fifty songs were composed in this so-called song year.

A little later, he also turned to the composition of larger works: concertos, symphonies, chamber music, choral music, and one opera. Thereafter he worked as a teacher and conductor, but his withdrawn personality made him less than successful. Schumann suffered from mood swings and had experienced breakdowns in his youth, and now he began to show tragic signs of insanity. In 1854, tormented by voices, hallucinations, and loss of memory, he tried to drown himself in the river Rhine and was committed to an asylum. He died two years later.



**Chief Works:** Sets of miniatures for piano, among them *Scenes from Childhood*, *Album for the Young*, *Papillons* (Butterflies), and *Carnaval* ■ Songs (lieder) and song cycles: *Woman's Life and Love*, *Dichterliebe* ■ Piano Fantasy (a free sonata); Piano Concerto and the first important concerto for cello; four symphonies ■ Chamber music: a quintet and a quartet for piano and strings ■ An opera, *Genoveva*; incidental music to Byron's *Manfred* and Goethe's *Faust*; choral works

**Encore:** After *Dichterliebe* and *Carnaval*, listen to the Piano Concerto in A Minor.

## CLARA SCHUMANN

“Der Mond kommt still gegangen”  
(The moon has risen softly) (1843)



This lied is another perfect Romantic miniature, in spite of the cliché-filled poem, with its moonlight, its dreams of love, and its downhearted lover. Both melody and piano accompaniment are very plain, but the slightly unusual chords chosen by Schumann create a unique pensive mood. The form, too, is simple: modified strophic form, A A A'. Some modification, however slight, had to occur in stanza 3, where the poem's speaker, catching sight of the lit-up windows in the house, registers his excitement by crowding his poetic lines with extra words and extra syllables—which require extra notes.

There is an obvious, banal way of setting such crowded lines: See page 248, in the Listen box. But instead Schumann very skillfully pulls the words out of phase with the musical phrases, achieving beautiful rhythmic

## Clara Wieck (Clara Schumann) (1819–1896)

Clara Wieck was the eldest child (she had two younger brothers) of a highly ambitious music teacher named Friedrich Wieck (pronounced *Veek*). Wieck had his own piano method, and he determined to make Clara a leading pianist. By the age of fifteen she was widely known as a prodigy. Like most virtuosos of the time, she also composed music to play at her own concerts: variations on popular opera arias, waltzes, a piano concerto.

Robert and Clara Schumann figure in what must be music's greatest love story. Still, there seems to have been just a little friction between them because she was so much better a pianist; she, on her part, felt diffident about composing under his shadow, though he did encourage her to some extent, and they published one song cycle jointly, containing music by both of them. Clara often wrote songs to give Robert on his birthdays. The last of these is dated 1853, the year before he was committed to an insane asylum.

Even before that, Robert's depression and instability made life difficult for Clara. She continued her career as best she could, but more and more she had to take care of the family. During the 1848 revolution in Leipzig, for example, it was up to her to get the five Schumann children out of town (three more were born later).

Things were difficult in another way when Robert died. At the age of thirty-seven, after losing the husband whom she loved and revered, Clara found herself more than half in love with his twenty-two-year-old protégé Johannes Brahms (see page 292). It is not known which of them withdrew from the relationship. They remained close friends; Brahms was a lifelong bachelor, and she did not remarry.

Today we tend to regret that Clara decided to give up composing, for she left enough good pieces to make us wish there were more. But she knew it would have been an uphill battle, given the common nineteenth-century view that important music couldn't be written by a woman. With children to support, she can hardly be blamed for concentrating instead on activities that had already earned her admiration and respect—and a good living: concertizing and teaching.

Clara Schumann went on to further establish herself as one of Europe's leading pianists and a much-sought-after pedagogue. She concertized and toured widely. Brahms (who always asked her to critique his new compositions) was just one in the eminent circle of her friends and associates. Outliving Robert by forty years, Clara became a major force in late nineteenth-century music.



**Chief Works:** Miniatures for piano, with names such as *Romances* and *Soirées musicales* (Musical Evenings); songs ■ A piano concerto and a trio for piano, violin, and cello ■ *Piano Variations on a Theme by Robert Schumann* (Brahms wrote a set of variations on the same theme)

**Encore:** After “Der Mond,” listen to *Romances* for piano and the Piano Concerto.

matches for some of the extra words: slower for *drunten* (down), livelier for *funkeln* (light—literally, sparkle), and very slow for *still* (silently):



St. 1: <sup>1</sup>The moon has ri - sen soft - ly <sup>2</sup>With gleaming rays of gold, <sup>3</sup>Be - neath its shin - ing splendor <sup>4</sup>The wea - ry earth's at rest.  
St. 2: <sup>1</sup>And on the drifting breez - es <sup>2</sup>From man - y faith - ful minds <sup>3</sup>Endearing thoughts by the thousand <sup>4</sup>Waft down on those who sleep.



St. 3: <sup>1</sup>Und drun - ten im Ta - le, da funkeln <sup>2</sup>Die Fenster von Lieb - chens Haus; <sup>3</sup>Ich a - ber blikke im Dunkeln <sup>4</sup>Still . . .  
<sup>1</sup>And down in the val - ley, a light can <sup>2</sup>Be seen in my loved - one's house; <sup>3</sup>But I keep staring, in darkness, <sup>4</sup>Silently etc.

And three things help make the climactic word *Liebchens* (loved one) radiant: the new long high note, the new harmony, and the expansive phrase (five bars in place of four). Schumann's piano postlude adds a wistful minor-mode after-taste. As with many great lieder, music here far transcends the words:

This happens in Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, in which the next-to-last scene has Don Giovanni carried off to hell by the statue of the murdered Commandant (see page 196). The otherworldly music associated with the statue is first heard in the opera's overture, even before the curtain has gone up. Lively, effervescent music follows; but the serious undertone of Mozart's opera is already loud and clear at the start of the work's overture.

### The Concert Overture: Felix Mendelssohn

A further step, conceptually, was the **concert overture**, never intended to be followed by a stage play or an opera—never intended, indeed, for the theater. Robert Schumann wrote an overture to *Hermann und Dorothea*, by Goethe, which is not a play but an epic poem. Hector Berlioz wrote overtures to literary works of various kinds: plays (Shakespeare's *King Lear*), long poems (*The Corsair* by Lord Byron, a special hero for the Romantics), and novels (*Waverley* by Sir Walter Scott).

Probably the best-known and best-loved concert overtures are by Felix Mendelssohn. He wrote his concert overture to Shakespeare's *A Midsummer*



Public composer and private composer: Felix Mendelssohn and his sister Fanny

### Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847)

**F**elix Mendelssohn may be the only great composer who has ever come from an upper-class family, a family of converted Jews who were in banking. Their home was a meeting place for artists and intellectuals over generations. Felix and his sister Fanny were brought up with music and every other advantage that came with a life of privilege. (Felix also became a fine amateur painter.)

By the time he was fifteen Felix was conducting the family orchestra in his own music. He went on to a stellar career, not only as an enormously successful composer but also as a pianist, organist, conductor, educator—he founded the Leipzig Conservatory of Music—and even as a musicologist. His performance of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* was a landmark in the revival of “early music.”

This action was typical, for from the start Mendelssohn showed a great respect for, even deference toward, the classics. His music never goes as far as, say, Schumann or Chopin in acceding to Romantic tendencies, but always keeps a firm foundation of Classical technique.

One of Mendelssohn's most significant fields of activity was the concert overture, an early genre of Romantic program music, discussed above. In his lifetime he was admired even more for his oratorios *St. Paul* and *Elijah*, and for popular sets of piano miniatures he called *Songs Without Words*. His Violin Concerto and “Italian” Symphony are special favorites.

### Fanny Mendelssohn (1805–1847)

**F**anny Mendelssohn, Felix's older sister, was also a highly prolific composer. The siblings were always very close; music was one of their bonds, for Fanny showed as much talent as her brother. Married to a painter named Wilhelm Hensel, she devoted herself to weekly concerts at the Mendelssohn home in Berlin, for which she composed music of all kinds, including even oratorios.

However, Fanny's music did not pass beyond the threshold of the Mendelssohn mansion. Only a small percentage of it found its way into print, at the end of her short life. Fanny is often seen as a victim of patriarchal society and of the general refusal in the past to take women composers seriously. Like Mozart's sister Nannerl, she watched as her younger brother built a great career while she was expected—indeed, conditioned—to put motherhood and family first, music second. But we should remember that unlike other successful women composers of the nineteenth century—from Louise Farrenc (1804–1875) to Clara Schumann (1819–1896) to Cécile Chaminade (1857–1944) and Ethel Smythe (1858–1944)—Fanny Mendelssohn belonged to the upper class. Few members of this class, male or female, had ever pursued public careers in the arts. They didn't need the rat race. Workaholic Felix was an exception.

Fanny's sudden death at age forty-one devastated Felix, and hastened his own death only six months later.

## Frédéric Chopin (1810–1849)

Chopin was born near Warsaw, where his father, a Frenchman who had emigrated to Poland and married a Polish lady, ran a private school for young gentlemen. In this atmosphere Fryderyk—later he adopted the French form Frédéric—acquired his lifelong taste for life in high society. Provided with the best teachers available, he became an extraordinary pianist. There are many reports of the exquisite delicacy of his playing, and his miraculous ability, as it seemed at the time, to draw romantic sounds out of the piano.

Furthermore, his set of variations on Mozart’s “Là ci darem la mano” (see page 197), written when he was seventeen, was already an impressive enough composition to earn a rave review from Robert Schumann.

Chopin settled in Paris, where he found ready acceptance from society people and from other artists and intellectuals, such as the novelist Honoré de Balzac and the painter Eugène Delacroix, who produced the famous portrait of the composer shown here. Chopin made his way as a fashionable piano teacher and by selling his music to publishers. The facts that he was Polish and that Poland was being overrun by Russia at that time seem to have made him even more glamorous to the French. Among Chopin’s piano miniatures are over fifty Mazurkas and sixteen Polonaises, which are stylized Polish dances.

Chopin was a frail and fastidious personality. Though he sometimes played in public, he truly disliked the hurly-burly of concert life and preferred to perform for select audiences in great houses. More than any other of the

great composers, he restricted his work to music for *his* instrument, the piano. Even his works that combined orchestra with piano—two concertos and a few other works—were all from his pre-Paris days.

The major event of his personal life was his ten-year romance with Aurore Dudevant, an early feminist and a famous novelist under the pen name George Sand. (They were introduced by Liszt, who wrote an admiring book about Chopin after his death.) The relationship was a rocky one; Sand sketched some unkind scenes from their life together in one of her novels. After the affair broke up in 1847, Chopin’s health declined with his spirits. He toured England and Scotland unhappily in 1848 and died the next year, aged thirty-nine, of tuberculosis, a major killer in the nineteenth century.

**Chief Works:** Character pieces for piano: Preludes (including the “Raindrop” prelude), Nocturnes, Études, Ballades, Waltzes (including the “Minute” waltz), and Polish Mazurkas and Polonaises ■ Three piano sonatas, including one with a famous funeral march as the slow movement ■ Two piano concertos ■ A cello sonata; a few Polish songs

**Encore:** Listen to the Nocturne in D-flat Major, the Fantasy-Improromptu, and the Ballade in G Minor.



rhythm, partly from the Romantic turns of harmony, and partly from the pianistic decorations of the melodic line. We have seen decorated melodies before, but Chopin’s have an almost liquid quality, caused partly by chromaticism—by the free use of all the notes of the chromatic scale, as in this fragment:



Romantic form contributes to the Romantic effect. Chopin avoids sharp demarcations and literal returns; the music seems to grow spontaneously, in an almost improvisational way. The main tune, A (a a' b), does not really end, but gives way to plaintive sounds emerging out of nowhere, which surge up to a moment of real passion. Then the return of the tune (a'') is fragmentary—though in a way more intense—and the whole is capped by an unexpected and delicious little coda. Free rhythm in the performance (rubato) mirrors the freedom of form.

“That’s not your own fingering, is it?” he asked, in his melodious little voice. ‘No, Liszt’s,’ I said. ‘Ah, that one has ideas, I tell you!’ And Chopin began to try this fingering. ‘But one could go down the whole keyboard this way like a crayfish scuttling back to his stream. It is perfect, your fingering! I shall use it!’”

*Reminiscence by a student of Chopin, 1859*

## Hector Berlioz (1803–1869)

No other great composer has survived so unpromising a beginning to reach so unhappy an end as Hector Berlioz. Berlioz grew up in a country village in France and received a spotty musical education; he played the guitar and the flute, and as a hypersensitive child learned as much from reading books and scores as from his teachers. His father, a doctor, sent him to medical school in Paris. But, as Berlioz told it, he was so horrified when he got to the dissecting room, where rats were nibbling at the scraps, that he leaped out of the window and went to the Paris Conservatory of Music instead.

The anecdote is typical of his emotional and utterly Romantic personality. Berlioz thought the unthinkable in music; his grandiose program symphonies had simply no precedent and were not matched in ambition until the time of Gustav Mahler, about 1900. His imagination for orchestral tone color was extraordinary.

Like all other Romantic composers, he was inspired by literary models, including especially Shakespeare—his *Lélio* is a meditation on *Hamlet*, and his opera *Béatrice et Bénédicte* is taken from *Much Ado about Nothing*—and Virgil. *The Trojans* (1858), his huge two-part opera derived from Virgil's *Aeneid*, was seldom performed until modern times, but it is now regarded as his masterpiece.

Berlioz had two wretched marriages, the first to the Irish Shakespearean actress Harriet Smithson, who is immortalized as the *idée fixe* in the *Fantastic Symphony*. In spite of suffering from constant ridicule from the musical establishment on the one hand, and terrible health on the other, Berlioz managed through sheer force of his impetuous personality to get most of his enormous compositions

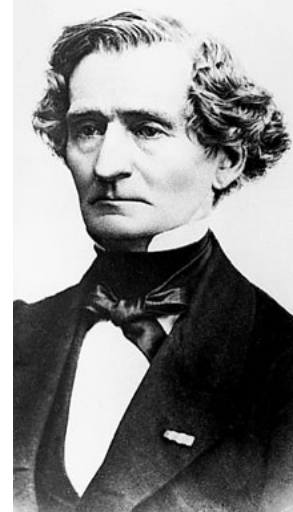
performed and to gain a good measure of recognition in musically conservative Paris.

Throughout his life, he was obliged to support himself with musical journalism, at which he was a master; his *Memoirs* is one of the most delightful books ever written about music. He also wrote very important treatises on orchestration and conducting. One of the first great conductors, Berlioz toured extensively to promote his own music, especially in Germany, where he was welcomed in progressive circles. In his last years he dragged himself to Russia for conducting gigs—he said his pain stopped when he was on the podium.

His last years were spent in physical pain and depression. After 1862 he listened to little music and composed none. Berlioz died in Paris in 1869.

**Chief Works:** Program symphonies: *Fantastic Symphony*, *Harold in Italy*, *Romeo and Juliet* ■ Concert overtures: *The Corsair*, *The Roman Carnival* ■ Operas: *Benvenuto Cellini*, *The Trojans* (after Virgil's *Aeneid*) ■ Oratorios: *The Damnation of Faust*, *The Childhood of Christ* ■ A great Requiem Mass for orchestra, chorus, and four brass bands

**Encore:** After the whole *Fantastic Symphony*, listen to the program symphony *Harold in Italy* and the overture *The Corsair*. Read the *Memoirs*.



or a scherzo, but a waltz, the most popular ballroom dance of the nineteenth century. The *idée fixe*, transformed into a lilting triple meter, first appears in the position of the trio (B in the A B A form) and then returns hauntingly in a coda.

**Third Movement: Scene in the Country** (Adagio) Invoking nature to reflect human emotions was a favorite Romantic procedure. The “pastoral duet” is played by an English horn and an offstage oboe (boy and girl, perhaps?). At the end, the English horn returns to the accompaniment of distant thunder sounds, played on four differently tuned timpani. Significantly, the oboe can no longer be heard.

In this movement the *idée fixe* returns in a new, strangely agitated transformation. It is interrupted by angry sounds swelling to a climax, reflecting the anxieties chronicled in the program.

**Fourth Movement: March to the Scaffold** (Allegretto non troppo) This movement has two main themes: a long downward scale (“gloomy and wild”) and an exciting military march (“brilliant and grand”), orchestrated more like a football band than a symphony orchestra. Later the scale theme appears

### MOVEMENT 2

He encounters his beloved at a ball, in the midst of a noisy, brilliant party.

### MOVEMENT 3

He hears two shepherds piping in dialogue. The pastoral duet, the location, the light rustling of trees stirred gently by the wind, some newly conceived grounds for hope—all this gives him a feeling of unaccustomed calm. But *she* appears again . . . what if she is deceiving him?



## Franz Liszt (1811–1886)

There are some important composers whose music we unfortunately have to pass over in this book because of space limits. In this box and the one on page 253, we give the biographies of three of them, together with some account of their roles in the history of Romantic music.

Franz Liszt learned music from his father on the Hungarian estate of the princes Esterházy, whom Haydn had once served. At age eleven, the boy gave his first piano concert in Vienna, where he met Beethoven. He later settled in Paris, home of another great émigré pianist-composer, Chopin.

Liszt's dashing looks and personality and his liaisons with married noblewomen—Countess d'Agoult and, later, Princess Sayn-Wittgenstein—dazzled Europe as much as his incredible pianistic technique. No one had heard such virtuosity. He drew crowds like a modern rock star and cultivated a lifestyle to match.

After his relationship with d'Agoult came to a stormy end in 1839, Liszt spent a few years giving sensational concerts all over Europe. Tiring of concert life, he then took a position as conductor and director of the theater at Weimar, in Germany, where there was still a court that supported the arts in the old eighteenth-century manner. There he wrote his most radical and influential music.

Like many other Romantic composers, Liszt was a writer of note, as well as a musician. He was a strong advocate of the music of Richard Wagner; the two men learned much from each other. Both friend and foe linked Wagner's "music dramas" with Liszt's symphonic poems as "Music of the Future." In his personality, however,



Liszt's phenomenal virtuosity as a pianist inspired many a cartoonist. The sword here refers to his many decorations; he has a halo because he had turned to religion and become an unordained priest. "The Abbé Liszt" was known to break, if not pianos, piano strings, and this helped ruin one Viennese piano maker (Graf).

Liszt was as magnanimous as Wagner was self-centered and devious.

Liszt really had two major careers. The first, at Paris, his career as a fantastic piano virtuoso, underpins a musical ideal that is still alive and well in music conservatories today. It left a mass of fiercely difficult piano music, including the *Transcendental Études* (the name says it all!) and the popular *Hungarian Rhapsodies*—important early products of nationalism in music (see page 286).

Liszt's second career, at Weimar, focused on orchestral music: program symphonies and symphonic poems. We take up these genres on pages 254 and 283.

## 3 Early Romantic Program Music

The lied and the character piece for piano—the two main forms of early Romantic miniature compositions—were intimately tied up with nonmusical, usually poetic, ideas. Furthermore, in a work such as Schumann's *Carnaval*, the various piano portraits are juxtaposed in such a way as to hint at their interaction—hint, that is, at a shadowy story line. Poems, stories, and nonmusical ideas in general were also associated with large-scale instrumental pieces.

As we have seen, *program music* is a term used for instrumental compositions associated with poems, stories, and the like. Program music for orchestra grew up naturally in opera overtures, for even in the eighteenth century it was seen that an overture might gain special interest if it referred to moods or ideas in the opera to come by citing (or, rather, forecasting) some of its themes.