

Romantic Period

1820 – 1900

Society- rise of middle class: large concert halls, opera houses, large orchestras and choirs

Melody- longer, less-balanced and restrained

Harmonies: more *chromaticism* (notes outside the scale) and *modulation* (changes of key)

Rhythm and tempo- more flexibility (changes of tempo- called *rubato*)

Texture- wider spacing of harmony, thicker textures

Technology- improvements to instruments (range and volume), invention of new instruments (brass- tuba, valved trumpet and horn)

Form- much less interest in structure, more emphasis on emotion and expression

Romantic spirit expressed in shorter pieces (songs and piano pieces) and much longer pieces (massive works for orchestra and long operas)

Romantic song

Lied (song), *Lieder* (songs)

Mostly short, based on existing poetry.

Form for songs

Strophic- two or more verses of poetry, each verse set to exactly the same music

Through-composed: there is little repetition of music

Song cycle- collection of songs

Franz Schubert

Erlking (through-composed)

Frederic Chopin- composer of much piano music

Franz Liszt

Performer as public hero, superstar

Short piano pieces (usually a one-part or three part form i.e. "A" or "ABA", occasionally Theme and Variations)

Orchestral music for ballet- a series of short pieces (ballet movements), often ABA or Rondo

Symphonies in the Romantic period

Tchaikovsky- Russian composer

Wrote 7 symphonies and a number of ballets

Symphony No. 4, 4th movement (out of four)- form is like Classical sonata-allegro, themes are developed, but many musical characteristics are Romantic

Hector Berlioz- French composer

Symphonie Fantastique (“Fantasy Symphony”)- 5th movement (out of five)

Program music- inspired by story, poem, painting, etc.

Tone poem, Symphonic poem. (is *not* a poem) program work for orchestra, usually in one movement. The form is based on the story or the program.

Nationalism-

Smetana- Six tone poems called *My Fatherland*, one of which is called “Moldau.”

Pictures at an Exhibition by Mussorgsky- each movement depicts a painting or design

Romantic opera

Public opera house all over Europe

Serious opera (some comedies were written but the Romantic operas still performed today are mostly serious)

Larger orchestras

Breakdown of the separate number format

Continuous flow of music (no separate recitatives)

Recurrence of musical ideas

Giuseppe Verdi

“La donna e mobile” from *Rigoletto*

Richard Wagner

Brünhilde's Immolation scene from *Die Götterdämmerung* from *Ring of the Nibelung*
Use of *leitmotiv* (musical theme associated with a person, place, object, concept, etc)

Wrote his own words (*libretto*), supervised every other element of production

Ring of the Nibelung (based on Norse mythology)
Four operas

Style and characteristics

Huge orchestra
Continuous flow of music
Constant recurrence of musical material, especially the *leitmotiv*

Giacomo Puccini

La Bohème (The Bohemians)

Like Wagner, continuous flow of music, recurrence of musical themes throughout opera, but in *La Bohème* Puccini focused on everyday, believable characters