Eyewitness Companions

Classical Music

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With Charles Wiffen

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“MUSIC EXPRESSES THAT WHICH CANNOT BE PUT INTO WORDS AND THAT WHICH CANNOT REMAIN SILENT.” Victor Hugo
I was first introduced by my Mother to the live performance of Classical music when I was 10 years old, at the Albert Hall in Nottingham. Sir Malcolm Sargent was conducting the Halle Orchestra, with the soloist Moura Lympany playing the Rachmaninov Piano Concerto No 2. The moment the orchestra began tuning up I was hooked and determined that music would play a vital role in my life. I played piano but it became obvious I was not cut out to be a professional musician, and so I became a music promoter. My first Classical concert was in 1970 with the London Symphony Orchestra conducted by André Previn at the New Theatre, Oxford. Since then I have been privileged to work among many musicians of the highest international calibre.

For many years I had wanted to share my passion and commitment to Classical music in book form. I first approached DK when they were developing an illustrated handbook on Shakespeare. I instantly realised there was much scope for an imaginatively illustrated reference book which covered as much of the subject as would be usefully practical. The book should inform, excite, inspire and be very accessible to Classical music lovers of all ages and levels of knowledge. Two very busy years later, I am delighted to present this book to the public. Many people have been involved with the creation of this book and I am indebted to them – it would not have happened without them. A big thanks to my dear friend Richard Havers, the Music Guru and now a major author himself, whose encouragement was vital to me; to my good friend Lady Solti; and to Dr Charles Wiffen and the many writers and academics who have collaborated on the book.

JOHN BURROWS
OBE HonRCM
Music has played a vital role in my life and from being a child in Yorkshire I was taught to love music by my father who was passionate about the value of music in our lives. Music is in my opinion the missing link between the physical and the spirit; it is also a great educator. Like my late husband, Georg Solti, I have always believed in the value of education and the knowledge that it is the only true foundation for life.

Without education, in whatever form, a child is denied a proper chance. The arts have been an integral part of my life, the theatre in all its disciplines, the visual arts, architecture, the countryside – which after all is nature’s art when you consider the music of a mountain stream or the song of a bird. Music has dominated life for me and my daughters through the great influence and accomplishments of my husband. How lucky we were to have learnt music from him. He had extraordinary dynamism, and sheer vitality. He believed that music was a vital part of human society and overwhelmingly the greatest language of communication the best possible ambassador of world peace.

He was a great inspiration to us all and he said on many occasions “My life is the greatest proof that if you have talent, determination and luck, you will make it in the end. Never give up!” Because of the Second World War his early career was interrupted and for many years without any work, life was difficult. How often he was tempted to give up. He always believed that he had a guardian angel who guided him through difficult times and with determination and hard work he really did “make it in the end”.

INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION
Georg was considered to be one of the greatest orchestral conductors of modern times and he helped shape the finest orchestras in the world. His output was astonishingly prolific, with 33 Grammy Awards and over 300 recordings. But, throughout our life together he wanted to share his music-making and teaching. I have watched with close interest the way this book has developed from its early stages of planning. Although no book can convey the extraordinary and rich aural experience that lies at the heart of music’s impact, the *Eyewitness Companion Guide to Classical Music* goes further than most in providing the reader with useful signposts and information as they begin their voyage or careers in the world of serious music.

Many books have been written for aficionados and experts, and speak only to them, in a rarified and esoteric language. Such books often alienate the beginner, the student, or those who have always wanted to enter that world, but are frightened off by the perceived elitism and old traditions. Some books merely provide the bare bones of composers biographies, dates and recordings, and make no attempt to convey the magic and the majesty, the power and the passion, and the sheer excitement of the musical experience. We are lucky to have such a rich pool of talent around us, performers and composers, who wish to share their enthusiasm and love of music. Recording, broadcasting, and the myriad means of other musical reproduction available to us today have greatly increased everybody’s access to great music. This book has been conceived for the lay person, and can be used as an authoritative ready reference, or as a beginner’s guide. Its rich array of illustrations serves to build an impression not just of each composer’s life and interests, but hopefully a glimpse of their creative aspirations, too. Over 300 pieces of music are examined in useful detail.

I hope this book will provide a useful traveller’s guide both for the initiated and for those just setting out on their voyage of musical discovery.

**LADY SOLTI**

**Lady Solti** was born and educated in Yorkshire and at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London. After a two year spell as an actress appearing at the Cambridge Arts Theatre, Reading Repertory, and the Globe Theatre, London she became a freelance broadcaster and writer with both the BBC and Independent Television. From 1960–1970 she was an announcer and presenter for BBC television, working for both news and current events programmes. Her life changed dramatically in 1964 when she interviewed maestro Georg Solti about the forthcoming production Wagner’s *Ring Cycle* at Covent Garden. This meeting resulted in their marriage when the focus of her life changed from television to the world of music. Valerie continued her career for many years as a well-known broadcaster and writer. Among many distinguished positions, Lady Solti is a Trustee of the Solti Foundation set up by Sir Georg shortly before he died with the aim of assisting young musicians throughout the world at the start of their careers.
INTRODUCING
CLASSICAL MUSIC
The basic materials of music are pitch and rhythm. Conventions in Western art music have arisen over the centuries by which composers and performers can organize and manipulate these materials. Some composers achieve memorable effects by breaking the “rules”, others by working imaginatively within them.

Musical notes are assigned different pitches, and are put together to form melodies. These may contain phrases, which can be thought of as musical sentences. Often each phrase contains as many notes as can be sung comfortably in a single breath. The simultaneous sounding of a number of different notes creates harmony. The flavour of these melodies and harmonies often results from the types of scales (or collections of notes) that are used.

If the individual notes of a composition are bricks, then the rhythm is like mortar, holding them together. Rhythm, at its most basic, is the beat of a piece of music and the metre – or time signature – the way in which the beat is grouped.

An entire piece of music can be constructed from these simple materials. It is like a building, designed by the composer according to a “form” – as with an architect’s plan. A symphony is like a castle (with its own grand structure or form), whereas a short song will have a different and less complex form (more like a modest cottage). The colour or texture of a piece of music depends on how the voices or instruments are used, and how they are combined or orchestrated.

**PITCH**

For a sound to be produced, a vibration must be set up in the air. This may result from the motion of a taut string, the skin of a drum, or the column of air within a cylinder. If the vibration is regular, it is heard as an identifiable note of a certain pitch. If the vibration is fast, the pitch is heard as high; if it is slow, it will sound low or deep. As a general rule, the longer the string or column of air, the lower the pitch. The low threshold of human hearing is about 16–20 vibrations per second, while the upper threshold is about 20,000 vibrations per second.
The lowest notes of a pipe organ range from about 20 vibrations per second (or “cycles per second”), while a piccolo can reach about 4,176 cycles. An adult choir can produce anything from 64 to 1,500 cycles.

**STANDARDIZED PITCH**
The letter-name ‘A’ is given to the pitch of 440 cycles per second, which is produced by a key just to the right of the middle of the piano keyboard (known as the note or “tone” a’). This is a standard universal measure of pitch. Without it, players would experience great difficulty adapting their instruments as they moved round the world.

**MUSICAL NOTATION**
In Western music, seven letters of the alphabet are assigned to different pitches, ranging from A to G. If you play all the white keys on the piano keyboard from one A up to the next A (eight notes) you will have covered an “octave”. This particular series of notes corresponds to a scale known as the natural minor scale. Once you reach the next A you can repeat the cycle, and will hear higher versions of the same notes. If you start from C and repeat the procedure, you will hear the scale of C major.

If the length of a string is halved, a pitch is produced which is exactly double the frequency of the original pitch and sounds eight notes (or an octave) higher. In other words, if you halve the length of a string vibrating at 440 frequencies, you will hear the pitch of 880 frequencies, which corresponds to the next (or higher) A on the keyboard.

Although there are only seven letter names, other notes (the black keys on a piano, known as sharps or flats) exist in between some of these to produce a total of 12 notes.

**INTERVALS**
The gaps between the notes are known as “intervals”, and moving from one note on the piano keyboard to its nearest neighbour covers the interval of a “semitone”. Of course, with other instruments (such as the violin) it is possible to play in between these notes;
Western music uses horizontal lines and spaces against which to plot musical notes in graphic notation. Since the 17th century, five lines have been used, comprising a “staff” or “stave”. A sign known as a “clef” is used at the beginning of each stave to indicate which line or space should be used to denote a particular note. The most common clefs are the treble (or G) and bass (or F) clefs, the former being used for higher pitches and the latter for lower pitches. Thus, a violinist would typically use the treble clef, while a double-bass player would usually use the bass clef. A pianist normally uses both, the treble clef being usually assigned to the upper half of the keyboard (played by the right hand) and the bass clef to the lower half. The diagram below shows the relationship of the piano keyboard to the treble and bass clefs.

**SHARPS AND FLATS**
These are used to raise (sharpen) and lower (flatten) a note by a semitone. The interval from, for example, G to A is known as a “tone”, while the interval from a G to G♯ is a “semitone” (the smallest possible interval on the keyboard). Although the G♯ is a raised G, it is in fact the same note as an A♭ (in other words, a lowered A).

Middle C, also written c', C above middle C, also written c'.
HARMONY AND INTERVALS

If two notes played together are separated by a consonant (harmonious) interval, the resulting sound will be pleasant or relaxing to our ears, whereas the notes of a dissonant interval clash with each other and demand to be resolved by a suitable consonance. The intervals considered dissonant have changed since the Middle Ages, but since the Classical and early Romantic eras the intervals illustrated below have been considered either consonant or dissonant.

RHYTHM AND TEMPO

Many human activities, such as running, walking, or dancing produce distinctive rhythms, which are often reproduced in music. Rhythm involves not only the positioning or spacing of notes in time, but also their duration, and both of these can be notated in Western music (see p.22). Composers can show duration in terms of sound or silence: for sound, note shapes are used; “rests”,
with corresponding values and names, are used to denote periods of silence.

The pulse (commonly known as the “beat”) is a regular unit of time around which the rhythm of a piece is organized. In a march, this would be the position in time of each footstep. The composer will decide whether the pulse should be a crotchet or a minim, or any other note value.

The speed of the pulse is the “tempo” of the work. Most composers have used Italian terms to indicate tempo. Since the early 19th century, musicians have also used metronome settings. (A metronome is a device that can be set to “tick” at varying speeds and is calibrated according to divisions of the minute – for example, 60 or 120 beats to the minute.

METRE
The metre corresponds to the grouping of the pulse. Much classical music is grouped in twos or threes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITALIAN</th>
<th>ENGLISH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grave</td>
<td>Very slowly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lento</td>
<td>Slowly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Largo</td>
<td>Broadly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larghetto</td>
<td>Rather broadly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adagio</td>
<td>Leisurely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andante</td>
<td>At a walking pace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderato</td>
<td>Moderately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allegretto</td>
<td>Fairly quickly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allegro</td>
<td>Fast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vivace</td>
<td>Lively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presto</td>
<td>Very quickly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prestissimo</td>
<td>As fast as possible</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each group is known as a “measure” or “bar” and in notation is separated by a “barline”. The metre is indicated by a “time signature”, such as 3/4. The top number shows the number of pulses or beats in a bar, while the lower number shows the value assigned to each beat. The time signature 3/4 indicates that there are three crotchet beats in a bar (typical of a dance such

NATURAL RHYTHMS
In nature, the sounds of horses cantering or of waves crashing on a beach create powerful, distinctive rhythms. Music owes much to such rhythmic sounds, not to mention more immediate rhythms, such as breathing and the beating of the human heart.
as a minuet or waltz). A march rhythm could be given the time signature 2/4, in which there would be two crotchet beats in every bar.

SCALES AND TONALITY
A scale (from the Latin scala, meaning steps) is a step-wise series of notes, usually between one note and the next note of that name an octave higher. In the West, scales may be traced back to medieval “modes”, which were based on the musical ideas of the Ancient Greeks. These eventually came to be accepted as the principal scales for all music in the 16th century: the Ionian became the “major” scale, and the Aeolian the “natural minor” scale. Traditionally the associations of the major scale are positive – sometimes joyful, sometimes triumphant; Beethoven’s “Eroica” Symphony, for example, is in the heroic key of E flat major. The minor scale is generally recognized as more sombre in mood – sometimes plaintive and sometimes tragic. The Funeral March from Chopin’s Piano Sonata No. 2 is in the key of B flat minor.

MUSICAL FORM
All musical works – however short or long – are organized within a kind of frame, known as a “form”. The
two basic forms are “binary” (two
sections, stated one after the other and
sometimes repeated) and “ternary”
(three sections, perhaps comprising
section A, followed by section B, then
section A again – musical sections or
paragraphs are often identified by
letters of the alphabet). Variants of
these are to be found in more complex
forms such as the “rondo”, “variation”,
and “sonata” forms (see glossary).

DYNAMICS
Just as the pitch or rhythm of musical
sound can be varied, so can the
volume or intensity of that sound.
In Western music, this variability
has become known as “dynamics”.
As with tempo, it is common to use
Italian terms to describe different
dynamics, all of which are relative
rather than absolute.

DYNAMICS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DYNAMICS</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pianissimo (pp)</td>
<td>Very quietly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piano (p)</td>
<td>Quietly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mezzo piano (mp)</td>
<td>Moderately quietly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mezzo forte (mf)</td>
<td>Moderately loudly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forte (f)</td>
<td>Loudly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fortissimo (ff)</td>
<td>Very loudly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

KEY TO THE “WAVEFORMS” USED IN THE BOOK

Twenty-two of the “focus” works that appear in
the book feature a “waveform” (a computerized
image of the music) which shows the acoustic
properties of a particular recording of the
work. The information shown in the waveform
relates only to that specific recording; another
performer or ensemble could have performed
the same work faster or slower, or placed
climaxs at different points. See p.512 for a list
of the recordings used to make the waveforms.

INDIAN MUSICIANS
Across the world, most cultures have their own scales,
consisting not only of different notes from those used
in the west, but of different numbers of notes.

Annotations pinpoint landmarks in the music – including
instrument entries and changes of key, mood, or tempo
Long lines indicate loud music
The design, construction, and acoustics of instruments change as musicians explore different ways of achieving what composers ask of them, and as instrument makers experiment with new materials and technologies.

In the process, some instruments become obsolete, while those that fit in with new trends become popular.

Today's symphony orchestra has its roots in 16th-century instrumental consorts (p.27) and 17th-century bands. The earliest orchestras, usually attached to a court, a church, or a theatre, varied in structure from place to place. They were often directed from the keyboard or by the principal violinist.

During the 18th century, as popular works (such as those by Haydn and Mozart) began to be played all over Europe, some standardization of the orchestra became necessary. A string section comprising violins, violas, cellos, and double basses was usually joined by two oboes and two bassoons, with the occasional addition of two horns, two flutes, two trumpets, and timpani. The clarinet became a standard member of the orchestra only at the end of the 18th century.

The 19th century saw the rise of public concerts in large halls, which necessitated louder instruments and larger orchestras. As a result, instruments changed: woodwind key systems were redesigned; the brass acquired valves; stringed instruments were adapted to enable them to project further. Larger and smaller versions of woodwind instruments, such as the piccolo, cor anglais, and bass clarinet, featured more frequently. Instruments were also added to the lower end of the brass section, with trombones and, later, tubas becoming standard members of the orchestra.

THE ORCHESTRA TODAY

The orchestra had by now more or less attained its present form, though in the 20th century a whole new range of percussion instruments became available. The Early Music revival has seen the recreation of historic styles of orchestra, but the dominant orchestral line-up remains the symphony orchestra under the direction of a conductor, with orchestras resident in most major cities throughout the world.
Early instruments

Many instruments from the past have disappeared from mainstream usage or have been replaced by modern equivalents. Over the last 50 years, however, makers and musicians have revived these instruments in an attempt to create historically informed performances. The ancestors of modern woodwinds usually have no keys, while those of the brass section include trumpets and horns without valves. Early stringed instruments, which have gut strings and lower tensions, tend to be softer in tone than their modern equivalents.

**STRINGS**

**Viols** have six or seven strings, with frets across the fingerboard. The outward-curving bow is held underhand. Some smaller viols, such as the **viola d’amore**, have additional sympathetic strings that run through the bridge and under the fingerboard. **Lutes** are plucked with the right hand and are often used as continuo instruments or to accompany singing. Some have additional bass strings known as diapasons. The **hurdy-gurdy** uses a wheel operated by a crank handle to “bow” the strings, and a small keyboard to stop the strings.

**KEYBOARDS**

The **harpsichord** is used in Early-Music ensembles as a continuo instrument, to add brilliance and rhythm to the texture. The strings, made of iron or brass, are plucked by small pieces of quill. The **virginal** and **spinet** are plucked in a similar way, while the **clavichord** uses small brass flags – tangents – to strike the strings. Clavichords are perfect domestic instruments as they are very quiet. In the **organ**, different sounds are produced by making pipes of different materials with a variety of cross-sections, and by exciting the air in the pipes in various ways, such as blowing air across a fipple (as in the recorder) or by using reeds.
The cornett was a treble instrument with open finger holes, made from a single piece of ivory or two carved pieces of wood glued together. The serpent was used as a bass instrument in military and church bands in the 18th and 19th centuries. The earliest trumpets were “natural” instruments (without valves or keys) which played a single harmonic series. Various devices were added in the 18th and 19th centuries to enable them to play more notes. Horns were also originally natural instruments, sometimes equipped with crooks to enable them to be played in different keys.

The earliest wind instruments were pipes made from wood or bone, with finger holes to change the sounding length and hence the pitch of the note produced. The shawm family are sounded by a double reed on a metal staple fitted into a “pirouette”. Shawms were popular from the 13th to the 17th century and ranged from high soprano to a low bass called a pommer. Also a double-reed instrument, the crumhorn hides its reed within a cap. Its heyday was in the 16th and 17th centuries, when it was used to accompany religious ceremonies as well as secular dances. Recorders have a fipple or whistle-style mouthpiece and holes for one thumb and seven fingers. They were widely used as solo and consort instruments before the 19th century and have re-emerged in the 20th century for teaching music in schools. Many early woodwinds were made of close-grained woods such as boxwood, but makers have also experimented with ivory, glass, and various metals.

Consorts were small groups of mixed instruments. The instruments played in a wind consort included the hautbois (ancestor of the oboe), cornett, and sackbut (ancestor of the trombone). In the 17th century, wind consorts would usually have been heard outside, often at gatherings of important people, with quieter string consorts used indoors.
Strings

The string section is the largest group in the orchestra and forms its core, and the leading voice among the strings is the violin, an instrument of extraordinary range and versatility. Orchestral violins are divided into two sections: “firsts” and “seconds”. Violins, violas, cellos, and double basses are primarily played with a bow but, like the harp, can also be plucked. The left hand is used to stop the strings in order to change their vibrating length and hence the pitch of the notes. A variety of tonal effects can be achieved by placing the bow closer to or further away from the bridge, by damping the vibrations of the bridge using a mute, or by applying different bowing techniques. Since the early 19th century, many earlier stringed instruments have been altered to increase their volume and projection.

**VIOLIN**

**Characteristics:** With four strings tuned in fifths, violins are agile and versatile, and can play two or three notes simultaneously.

**History:** Early violins were in use in Italy from the early 16th century. Cremona and Brescia became important centres of violin-making from 1550.

**VIOLA**

**Characteristics:** The alto of the family, the viola is tuned a fifth below the violin. It has a darker, richer sound than the violin.

**History:** Larger and smaller viola-type instruments were used for both tenor and alto lines from the early 16th century. Its modern role developed in the 18th century.

**CELLO**

**Characteristics:** Tuned an octave below the viola, the cello is the tenor and bass of the violin family. It is also capable of playing virtuoso passages.

**History:** Appearing in the early 16th century, cellos were made by many of the famous Cremona violin makers.
ANTONIO STRADIVARI (C.1644–1737)

Stradivari emerged from a long tradition of violin makers in Cremona. Taught by Nicolo Amati, he educated his sons in the trade, and his family workshop produced violins, violas, cellos, pochettes, and guitars. Many consider his instruments the finest ever made. Debates continue concerning the woods and varnishes he used.

HARP

Characteristics: The modern orchestral harp has 47 strings stretched between the neck and soundboard, together with seven pedals for altering the pitches of the strings. As well as playing plucked chords, the harpist can use techniques such as glissandos and harmonics to create special effects. Harps are often associated with heavenly or ethereal music.

History: Small harps existed in ancient times and are still important in many folk traditions. The modern double-action pedal harp was developed in the 18th and 19th centuries by makers such as Cousineau and Erard in Paris and London.

The strings on a harp are attached at one end to the resonator; in the violin family they run above its surface.

DOUBLE BASS

Characteristics: Although properly a member of the viols, the double bass has been adopted as the lowest-pitched voice of the violin family. There are two main styles of bow: the French, held like a violin bow, and the German, held with the hand upside-down like a viol bow.

History: Early double basses often had six strings, while many 18th-century examples had only three. Modern ones have four or five.
Woodwind

Woodwind instruments are derived from basic blown pipes and can be made from a wide variety of materials. Many produce their sound by means of a vibrating “reed”. They come in families, with larger and smaller versions of the main orchestral instrument, and are used to add a variety of colours to the orchestral sound. The standard woodwind section of the modern orchestra comprises two flutes, piccolo, two oboes, cor anglais, two clarinets, bass clarinet, two bassoons, and contrabassoon. In some works, composers may call for additional woodwind instruments, such as saxophones and smaller high-pitched clarinets.

**SINGLE REEDS**

**Characteristics:** Single reeds use a cane reed, held over a slot in the mouthpiece by a ligature and placed against the player’s lower lip. The clarinet can produce a wide variety of tone colours. The saxophone appears occasionally in the orchestra but is more common in wind and jazz bands.

**History:** Johann Christopher Denner of Nuremberg is reputed to have invented the clarinet at the beginning of the 18th century. More keys were gradually added in the 19th century.

**THEOBALD BOEHM (1794–1881)**

Born in Munich, Boehm was a professional flautist who also worked in the jewellery and steel industries. He spent over 30 years remodelling the keywork and bores of flutes, and his 1847 cylindrical flute is the pattern for most modern instruments. Boehm’s successors have applied his principles to other woodwind instruments.
Characteristics: The oboe and bassoon families have conical bores and a double reed, consisting of two pieces of shaped cane strapped together, which is held gently between the lips. The treble oboe is often given prominent melodies and requires a significant amount of air pressure to sound properly. The tenor voice of the cor anglais is popular as a solo instrument as it has a rich and sonorous quality. Forming the tenor and bass of the woodwind, the versatile bassoon has a bore which doubles back on itself. The large contrabassoon adds a deep bass to the woodwind section.

History: Both the oboe and the early bassoon first appeared in 17th-century France. While the oboe (from hautbois, meaning “high” or “loud wood”) developed from the shawm, the bassoon’s precursors were the dulcian (“sweet sounding”) and fagot (“bundle of sticks”).

Characteristics: The air in a flute is set in motion by blowing across the edge of the embouchure hole. Usually providing the top woodwind voice, the flute also has a mellow low register. The smaller piccolo can cut through the entire orchestral texture to great effect.

History: Early flutes were usually made of boxwood or ivory and had open finger holes. The keywork of the modern flute (usually made of silver) is based on a 19th-century design.
Brass

Brass instruments consist of a length of metal tubing ending in a flared bell. They use a slide mechanism or valves, which engage additional lengths of tubing to extend their range. The air column is set in motion by vibrating the lips against a cupped mouthpiece. Sound characteristics are partly a result of the width of the bore, as well as the shape and size of the mouthpiece and the bell. While they can be played subtly, brass instruments are often used for power and dramatic effect.

**FRENCH HORN**

**Characteristics:** The tubing of the modern horn is mostly conical. It usually has three or four rotary valves, operated by the left hand, while the right hand is inserted into the bell to shape the sound. Most horns are pitched in F (single) or a combination of F and B flat (double or “compensating”). Horn players sometimes specialize in playing either high or low parts.  

**History:** The natural horn was used as a signalling instrument on the hunting field. Before the advent of valves, some players used hand stopping (partly closing the bell with the right hand) to play notes outside the harmonic series, a technique that also changes the timbre of the note.

**TRUMPET**

**Characteristics:** The bore of the orchestral trumpet is partly cylindrical and partly conical. It has three valves, which lower the pitch by a semi-tone, tone, or minor third. Different-sized trumpets (C, D, and B flat are most common) are used to make higher or lower parts easier to play. Inserting various mutes into the bell alters the timbre produced.  

**History:** The early trumpet – a single length of tubing with a shallow flared bell – traditionally had a military or ceremonial function. From the late 18th century, various methods were developed to make more notes available, including the addition of crooks, slides, keys, or valves.
**Tuba**

**Characteristics:** Instruments of the tuba family (including euphoniums, sousaphones, and bombardons) have wide, conical bores and provide the bass of the brass section. Different shapes and sizes are used but the typical orchestral instrument has an upward-pointing bell, with three to six valves. The player uses a great deal of breath but less wind pressure than for smaller instruments.

**History:** First developed in Germany in the 1830s, the tuba was embraced enthusiastically by composers such as Berlioz. It had replaced its predecessor, the ophicleide (an early 19th-century invention) in most bands and orchestras by the 1870s.

**Trombone**

**Characteristics:** The cylindrical bored trombone has a telescoping slide rather than valves to change the tube length. Seven slide positions are used, each changing the pitch by a semitone. Sizes range from soprano to contrabass trombones, with the tenor and bass being the typical orchestral instruments.

**History:** When trombones, or sackbuts, first appeared in the late 15th century, they lacked the flaring bell of modern instruments. Valves were added in the 1820s, but it is the slide version that now predominates.
Percussion and keyboards

The percussion section adds rhythmic vitality and drive to the orchestra. Percussion instruments are divided into two main categories: membranophones (where a stretched membrane is struck, as with a drum) and idiophones (where an object made of resonant material is struck). Some idiophones, such as the xylophone and tubular bells, are tuned and capable of producing melody as well as rhythm. Other idiophones used frequently in orchestral works range from cymbals, triangles, and tambourines to the more exotic tam-tam (a large oriental gong), wood block, castanets, and maracas. Special sound-effect instruments, such as the whip (two wooden slats that are slapped together), sleigh bells, rattles, or sirens, can also be employed. To these, keyboard instruments, such as the piano and celesta, are often added.

**Drums**

**Characteristics:** Timpani (or kettledrums) are used in groups of two to five instruments and can be tuned by altering the skin tension using turning screws or a pedal. The snare drum is smaller and has a set of gut or metal springs stretched across its lower drum head which vibrate when the upper head is struck. The large bass drum is also double-headed and is struck using a stick with a large, soft head.

**History:** Drums came into the orchestra in the late 17th century, initially in combination with trumpets. Timpani arrived first, with other types gradually being added later.

**Idiophones**

**Characteristics:** Cymbals are made from metal and are sounded either with a stick or by clashing a pair together. Tambourines consist of “jingles” fitted in a ring of wood, over which a membrane is sometimes fitted. They can be shaken, hit, or used to play a roll. The triangle – a steel bar bent to form an equilateral triangle – is hung from a string and may be hit with one or two metal beaters. Trills are played using quick strokes inside the top corner.

**History:** Many percussion instruments originate in China or Turkey and became regular members of the orchestra in the 19th and 20th centuries.
Characteristics: The piano, developed from the harpsichord in early-18th-century Florence by Bartolomeo Cristofori, is sometimes defined as a percussion instrument since its strings are struck by hammers. While early pianos are largely made of wood and have a delicate sound, modern grand pianos have metal frames, larger hammers, and heavier strings, and can be played much more loudly. The celesta, invented in 1886 by Auguste Mustel, is a keyboard instrument in which tuned metal plates are struck by hammers.

History: Xylophones are found in many cultures, and, like tubular bells, were adopted by European composers in the 19th century. The first orchestral use of the glockenspiel is thought to be in Handel’s Saul (1739).
A common perception of classical music is that it is performed in the formal surroundings of a concert hall and usually involves a large symphony orchestra and world-famous soloists and conductors. However, classical music can just as easily be brought to life in the home or out of doors.

The professional composer whose works are performed by professional musicians for a paying audience is a relatively recent phenomenon. The idea of attending an event specifically to listen to music — rather than to hear music in the course of a church service or an entertainment at court — would have been very unusual before the 17th century. In medieval times, most sacred music was performed by monks within the Church and secular music was played and sung by wandering minstrels. Just as many early composers were anonymous, so too were most early performers.

During the Renaissance and Baroque periods, performers began to emerge from obscurity. Some of the first to achieve fame in northern Europe were organists; during his lifetime, J S Bach may have been better known as an organist than as a composer. Another group of “celebrity” performers to emerge during the Baroque period were opera singers. Some of Handel’s sopranos were notorious for their capricious demands. Once, during a particularly fraught rehearsal, the composer threatened to throw the soprano Francesca Cuzzoni from an upstairs window.

THE CONCERT

The word “concert” is probably derived from the Italian concertare (“to arrange”, or “to get together”). In the 17th century, musicians would come together to perform both privately and publicly. An early example was in Lübeck, Germany, where it became fashionable in the 1620s for a performance of secular music to follow Evensong in a public building (such as the town hall). This came to be known as Abendmusik.

Concerts were enthusiastically taken up in England at the time of the Civil War, when hardly any music was performed in churches. Musicians responded to public demand by giving...
MEDIEVAL MUSICIANS
A group of 14th-century musicians performs on a range of instruments, including drum, pipe, shawm, vielle with a curved bow, and psaltery.

concerts for which listeners paid an admission fee. Many were held in taverns such as London’s Mitre Inn.

A MUSICAL HERITAGE
Until well into the 19th century, the composer and performer were often one and the same. The performance of “old” music (composed by earlier generations) was rare until the 19th century. Until that time, almost all music heard was contemporary, often composed for specific events, whether sacred (as in the case of Bach’s Cantatas) or secular (as in that of Handel’s Music for the Royal Fireworks). It was in England that performers began to take an interest in music of the past: the Academy of Ancient Music (established in 1726) performed music by such composers as Byrd and Purcell, whereas the rival Concerts of Ancient Music (founded in 1776) performed Baroque music, including that of Handel and Corelli.

Concert life was less developed in Vienna in the 18th century than in London, and there was no hall specially intended for concerts, so musical events took place in a variety of venues there including palaces, theatres, Masonic lodges, restaurants, and public gardens.

PROFESSIONAL MUSICIANS
The music societies formed during the 18th century organized concerts in which amateur musicians could perform under the direction of professionals. The composer Telemann founded such a society in Hamburg in 1713, and another was to be found in Leipzig, directed by the Kantor of the Thomaskirche – the position held by J S Bach at the time.
of his death. The Leipzig society was named the Grosses Konzert in 1743, and by the middle of the 19th century, all its players were professionals. The organization – now the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra – still exists today.

Many local music societies (as well as a few performers) began to sell admission to a series of concerts to the public, demanding payment prior to the first of the concerts. This became known as the “subscription concert”. One of the first successful examples was that of J C Bach in London in 1765.

During the 18th and 19th centuries, concerts were long and diverse. The Gewandhaus subscription concerts would frequently contain an overture, an opera aria, an instrumental solo and a choral finale in each half, and might last for three or four hours in total. Where vocal music had been at the centre of 18th-century programmes, during the 19th century it became more accepted to perform movements from concertos and symphonies, although concerts solely of instrumental music were still rare.

The orchestra had emerged during the Renaissance period as a group of players brought together for important occasions. During the 18th century,
the modern string family replaced violins in this group and an important member was the keyboard player or “continuo” – a harpsichord, organ, or, later, piano that would play from the bass-line of the score. During the 19th century, this group became extended so that piccolos, cor anglais, trombones, tubas, and further percussion were added. The layout of orchestras has changed considerably over the years. Perhaps the most radical alteration in the course of the 20th century was the moving of the second violins next to the first violins and the cellos to the conductor’s right.

ORCHESTRA AT THE TIME OF HAYDN
The strings – not just the violins – were divided into two sections, one on either side of the leader, who sat at the piano and directed the orchestra.

THE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
The personnel and seating arrangement of the modern orchestra is now effectively standardized around the world. The picture below shows the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra with its principal conductor, Marin Alsop.

MODERN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
Since roughly the time of the Second World War, both the first and second violins have sat on the conductor’s left, facing the cellos and double basses on the right.
As orchestras became established, a “canon” or core repertoire emerged – largely works by the Viennese composers (i.e. Mozart and Beethoven) as well as opera music by composers such as Gluck and Cherubini. By the end of the 19th century, concert activity had divided into solo recitals, chamber music performances, and orchestral performances. The crossover with opera had largely disappeared, which resulted in the shorter programme lengths we have today.

THE SOLO RECITAL
Liszt was responsible for introducing the solo recital in the late 1830s. He toured Europe extensively, performing in towns and cities from Scotland to Russia. One of his innovations was that of playing from memory. In the 21st century this has become the norm for soloists, but in Liszt’s time it was considered dangerously radical.

At the same time that Liszt was establishing his reputation across Europe, a market was developing for the celebrity performer in the United States. The singer Jenny Lind, for example, drew an audience of over 7,000 at Castle Garden in New York in 1850, proving the commercial potential of America for performers...
succeeded by Liszt’s pupil von Bülow in 1887. Prestigious orchestras were established on the other side of the Atlantic by wealthy industrialists: the Philharmonic Symphony Society.

NEW ORCHESTRAS
The Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, founded in 1882, has set what many consider the finest standards in orchestral playing. Brahms’s friend Joseph Joachim was appointed its first conductor and was succeeded by Liszt’s pupil von Bülow in 1887. Prestigious orchestras were established on the other side of the Atlantic by wealthy industrialists: the Philharmonic Symphony Society.

TANGLEWOOD FESTIVAL
The Boston Symphony Orchestra has staged its summer festival at Tanglewood since 1940.

MUSIC FESTIVALS
Festivals date back to about 1715 with the first meeting of the cathedral choirs of Gloucester, Hereford, and Worcester (the Three Choirs Festival). Many great composers have inspired festivals in their memory, notably Handel (1784) and Beethoven (1845). The 20th century saw the establishment of festivals such as the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino (from 1933) and the Lucerne Festival (1938). The composers Benjamin Britten and Sir Peter Maxwell Davies established their own festivals in Aldeburgh and Orkney, respectively. American festivals include those at Aspen, Ravinia, and Tanglewood.

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of New York (later the New York Philharmonic) in 1842 and the Boston Symphony Orchestra in 1881.

WIDER AUDIENCES
In the 19th century, concert series were founded to make music available to people who could not afford to attend subscription concerts. London’s Crystal Palace concerts were a typical venture of this kind. Two free concerts were given daily throughout the 1850s.

Military bands also brought music to wider audiences. Under J P Sousa in the 1880s, the Marine Corps Band would give free weekly concerts at the White House and the Capitol in Washington. At the same time there was a great increase in the number of choral societies, especially in industrial regions such as northern England, Wales, and Germany’s Ruhr Valley.

MODERN PERFORMERS
Few 20th- or 21st-century composers have been known as performers, but Richard Strauss, Bernstein, Boulez, and others have combined the roles of conductor and composer.

Non-composing performers, however, have influenced the repertoire of their instruments profoundly. The cellist Mstislav Rostropovich worked closely with Prokofiev, Shostakovich, Schnittke, and Britten; the singer Kathy Berberian inspired Berio to compose vocal music; and the pianist David Tudor worked with John Cage and other avant-garde composers.

Many performers have chosen to specialize in certain repertoires; Artur Schnabel, for example, was known for his renditions of the Beethoven piano sonatas. Some artists, such as the cellist Pablo Casals, are celebrated for the spirituality of their playing, while performers like violinist Jascha Heifetz and pianist Evgeny Kissin are noted for their technical prowess. Others, such as the pianist Alfred Brendel, seem to combine all these qualities with an intellectual integrity. Others still – violinists Maxim Vengerov and Nigel Kennedy, for example – are noted for their panache and conviction. Flamboyant artists who have raised the public profile of their instruments include the flautist James Galway, the percussionist Evelyn Glennie, the trumpeter Håken Hardenberger, and the viola player Yuri Bashmet. Some performers have looked to the east for inspiration; the violinist Yehudi Menuhin worked with sitar player Ravi Shankar, and more recently the cellist Yo-Yo Ma has initiated an East-West collaboration through his Silk Road Ensemble.

RECORDING
Recording made music available to all. The first wax recordings, at the end of the 19th century, were dominated by opera arias by singers such as Caruso, as the voice could be reproduced much better than instrumental music.

Electric recordings began in 1925, allowing longer excerpts of works to be recorded, and the arrival of LPs in 1948 allowed many works to be presented in their entirety. Stereo was introduced in 1958 and the CD in 1983.

Some commentators, such as Canadian pianist Glenn Gould, predicted that live concerts would be superseded by recorded music, but there is now more emphasis on live performance than there has been for half a century.

A RECORDING STUDIO
The availability of so many high-quality recordings means that new recordings of standard repertoire cannot be justified by the major record labels.
THE HISTORY OF CLASSICAL MUSIC
El trigo punon en alegair o caualeu
“Early Music” refers to the repertoire from historical periods less familiar to classically trained musicians and their audiences than that of the Classical and Romantic eras. This section covers the music of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance – a vast sweep of centuries of musical ideas, developments and performance styles.

In terms of architecture, painting, and sculpture, the Renaissance can be said to have begun in 15th-century Florence. The transition between the music of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance is more difficult to identify, because musical styles developed gradually and in different ways across Europe. It is clear, however, that there were differences in the approach to musical composition as practised by the French composer Machaut in the 14th century and the Italian Palestrina in the 16th century. Works by influential composers such as Dufay and Josquin changed musical style considerably in the late 15th and early 16th centuries, so 1450 is a convenient date to separate medieval from Renaissance music. What is usually referred to as Renaissance music may be seen to end at the point where Monteverdi and his contemporaries experimented with the new “Baroque” genres of opera, sonata, and concerto at the beginning of the 17th century, although countries such as England were still in a rich period of “Renaissance” music until perhaps two or three decades later.

CHURCH MUSIC

The music that has survived is heavily weighted in favour of the sacred. Plainchant was by far the most common sort of sacred music during this entire period, and was sung in every church, monastery, cathedral, and chapel. It was monophonic music – it had just a single line of melody – and could be sung by one voice or many. Most church musicians would have been expected to commit hundreds of chants to memory as part of their musical training, even after Guido d’Arezzo developed the music stave in the 11th century.

MINSTREL PLAYING A VIELLE

This illustration is from a 13th-century illuminated manuscript, the Cantigas de Santa Maria, a collection of songs made for Alfonso X of Castile and León.
Secular monophonic music was created throughout this period, but only from the 12th century was it considered worthy of preservation in written collections. The most famous secular composers were the troubadours, trobairitz (female troubadours), and trouvères of medieval France, whose music and poetry usually expressed the ideals of courtly love. Little is known about how their music was performed, but it is possible that their songs were accompanied by the vielle, a forerunner of the violin with five strings, one of which could produce a regular drone like that of a hurdy-gurdy or bagpipe. The vielle may thus have provided just a steady drone or more complex accompaniments to a solo singer.

**POLYPHONY**

The rise of polyphonic (literally “many-voiced”) forms of composition from approximately the 12th century took place within the Church, as singers elaborated on the basic plainchant by the addition of other vocal parts on special occasions, such as Christmas or Easter. In the Cathedral of Notre-Dame in Paris, Léonin and Pérotin are credited with having written the first body of two-, three-, and four-part music to be circulated in manuscript form. By the 13th century, a large repertory of polyphony was found in major churches across Europe, and secular forms of music were also being written in more than one part. By the 15th century, polyphonic music was widespread and had become a necessary part of important religious and courtly celebrations.

**THE MOTET**

The motet was one of the most popular sacred forms during the later Middle Ages, gradually making way for polyphonic settings of the Ordinary of the Mass (the parts of the Mass that remain the same every day). The motet was developed in the 13th century in northern France. The plainchant was placed into a strict rhythmic pattern, above which there were regional variations in the chants used. Attempts were made to bring European churches into line so that all performed the same chants in the same way, but none were particularly successful.

**PLAINCHANT**

Plainchant was the musical part of the liturgy in the Christian Church. Plainchant was monophonic, a single melodic line set in one of the eight church modes (scales based on a specific combination of intervals). These melodies might be short, regular and simple, or more extensive, elaborate, and complex. The texts used for chants were religious, and in Latin or Greek. Melodies were written down only from the 9th century, and there were attempts to bring European churches into line so that all performed the same chants in the same way, but none were particularly successful.

**MANUSCRIPT SCORE**

This Flemish score of 1522 is illuminated with a painting of clerics playing music in a garden.

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**TIMELINE: EARLY MUSIC**

- **1054** Schism between Eastern Church and Church of Rome
- **1099** First Crusade: capture of Jerusalem
- **1150s** Works of Hildegard of Bingen, earliest surviving set of compositions by a named author
- **c.1200** Cathedral of Notre-Dame, Paris, completed
- **1050** Guido d’Arezzo describes the stave and uses the fingers and hand as aids to remembering music
- **1100** Rise of troubadours in southern France
- **c.1125** Léonin and Pérotin compose significant body of church music for Notre-Dame, Paris
- **c.1165–1200** Leónin and Pérotin compose significant body of church music for Notre-Dame, Paris
- **c.1200** Rise of German Minnesänger
- **1200**
were placed; these upper parts were each given a new text, resulting in a complex texture in which many different words sounded together.

**INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC**

Along with new secular forms of song in the 16th century, such as the madrigal, instrumental music rose to such a status that it was more frequently copied down than it had been in the Middle Ages. The Renaissance saw a rise in the involvement of the merchant classes in the performance of music; the invention of music printing by Petrucci in 1501 meant that music could be sold and distributed more easily, cheaply, and reliably than ever before, though much was still written down in manuscript (literally “handwritten”) form.

**MONKS SINGING**

French composers produced the first complex polyphonic settings of the liturgy. This illumination appears in a 13th-century French psalter.

Wealthy patrons of the 16th century demanded vocal and instrumental music for all sorts of musical combinations. In particular, “families” of instruments that comprised various sizes of one type of instrument (a consort of recorders, viols, or voices) flourished during the Renaissance period, though mixed or “broken” consorts of string, wind and voice were also cultivated. Dances such as the stately pavan and the galliard, a lively dance involving leaps, became enormously popular.
Secular vocal music was written in vernacular languages, and very often had an amorous subject. The madrigal rose to prominence in the 16th century and was notable for its use of subtle musical descriptions that matched the text, known as “word-painting”. Composers delighted in devising ways to set the most expressive poetic phrases to music.

COMPOSERS AND PLAYERS
During the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, those who composed music were usually employed to do something else, such as work as a priest. To compose and write down music, one had to be musically literate to some degree, especially for the composition of polyphony. People who received an education were usually either employed by the Church, living within a religious foundation such as a monastery or nunnery, or part of the nobility. During the Renaissance, the merchant classes valued an education for their sons and, to some extent, daughters. There were relatively few female composers during this period, although many anonymous pieces may in fact have been written by women, and women certainly performed music by men.

RELIGIOUS DIVISION
The Protestant Reformation of the 16th century had inevitable musical consequences, largely because the Protestant reformers destroyed as much Catholic music as possible and replaced it with new, more direct styles, particularly in England. This made extraordinary demands of English composers of the period. Thomas Tallis, for example, wrote music for four different monarchs,

THREE YOUNG WOMEN MAKING MUSIC
In this early 16th-century Flemish painting, the young women are performing “Jouissance vous donnerai” (I Will Give You Happiness), a popular song of the time.
Each of whom required music with a different religious emphasis: from the direct, Protestant settings of English texts favoured by Elizabeth I to the elaborate, Latin-texted polyphony composed for her half-sister, Mary.

The simplest post-Reformation religious polyphony involved straightforward chanting in harmony, all voices moving together in the same rhythm as one another (homophony). Other polyphonic musical forms were contrapuntal. The idea of a musical texture where voices imitated one another in counterpoint became a distinguishing feature of sacred and secular music of the late Middle Ages and Renaissance, and is perhaps most recognizable in the choral music of Palestrina and the instrumental fantasias of English consort music at the end of the period.

Although musicians found new ways to compose, using an increasingly subtle palette of rhythmic, harmonic and notational ideas, Early Music cannot be seen as a straightforward evolution from “primitive” plainchant to “sophisticated” polyphony. Fifteenth-century motets were often incredibly complex pieces of artistry, both notationally and in performance; instrumental dances in the 16th century were often delightfully simple.

**THE MUSICAL LEGACY**

In appreciating Early Music, we are limited by our ignorance of how it sounded in its original context and just what the music meant to those who sang, played, or listened to it. On the other hand, the great variety of interpretations available is testament to how much there remains to discover in this seemingly distant repertoire and the myriad ways in which we might enjoy getting to know it better.

**LUTE**

One of the most popular instruments of the Renaissance, the lute was probably introduced to Europe from Moorish Spain.
Hildegard of Bingen

**MILESTONES**

- 1112 Takes the veil at age 15
- 1136 Abbess of Disibodenberg Monastery
- c.1147 Establishes religious house near Bingen
- 1150s Lyrical poems and music, *Symphonia armonie celestium revelationum*, collected
- 1151 Writes *Ordo virtutum*, a morality play

**Notes:**

Hildegard experienced intense visions (probably due to migraine), which she recorded in her books; she became known for her prophecies and miracles.

Writer, poet, religious leader, diplomat, and composer, Hildegard’s achievements were remarkable – and unique for a woman of her time. Promised to the Church by her noble family, she spent years living in religious contemplation. Through correspondence with popes and emperors, she became a significant political and diplomatic figure and wrote extensively on medicine, science, and theology. Her contemplative and ecstatic music is comprised of single-line settings of religious texts: not plainchant, but specially composed, using frequently repeated and varied short patterns.

Léonin (Leoninus)

**MILESTONES**

- 1150s Cathedral administrator in Paris
- 1163 Construction of Notre-Dame begins
- c.1192 Ordained as a priest
- c.1200 Compilation of *Magnus liber*, a book of plainchant

**Notes:**

The only written reference to a musician named Léonin was penned more than a century after his death by an anonymous English monk, who wrote that he was “the best composer of organum for the amplification of divine service”. Léonin was a teacher, administrator, and poet who became a canon at the new cathedral of Notre-Dame de Paris. No music by him survives, but he is credited with the creation of the *Magnus liber*, the “Great Book” of chants used at Notre-Dame in the late 1100s. The book, later edited by Pérotin, laid the foundations for the idea of harmony and written-down composition.

Philippe de Vitry

**MILESTONES**

- 1310s Motets enjoy success
- c.1320 Collection of his musical theories, *Ars nova*, published
- 1331 Accompanies the Duke of Bourbon to London
- 1342 Composes motet *Petre clemens*
- 1351 Created Bishop of Meaux

**Notes:**

From 1340, Vitry was one of France’s leading intellectual figures – poet, philosopher, singer, composer, author, critic, bishop, and scholar. He travelled widely and was often involved in international relations. His motets – probably settings of his own Latin poems – enjoyed wide circulation and critical success, as did his poetry. The book of his teachings, *Ars nova*, established innovations such as the use of the minim and other short notes. Vitry may have invented the ballade, though no examples by him survive.
Pérotin (Perotinus Magnus)

Active c.1200  French  Unknown

Pérotin, the first known composer of music in more than two independent parts, is a frustratingly shadowy figure. He is mentioned in late-13th-century documents as the man who edited and improved Léonin’s *Magnus liber*, the book of music at Notre-Dame. He probably worked with the poet Philip the Chancellor, whose texts he set (in works such as *Beata viscera*), and he may have composed in the emerging genre of the motet, but very little is known about him for certain. However, Pérotin was certainly a pioneer: his two four-part settings of Latin texts have some startlingly modern-sounding touches.

John Dunstable

1390–1453  English  c.52

So great was Dunstable’s international reputation, both during his lifetime and for a long time afterwards, that he was credited with many innovations for which other English composers had been responsible. A century after his death, some writers were even erroneously labelling him the “inventor of counterpoint”. Nevertheless, Dunstable was a leading exponent of the mellifluous new English style, exploiting the smooth intervals of a third and a sixth, and his influence on continental composers was enormous. Many vocal works possibly written by him – including Mass movements, sacred Latin settings, dazzling motets, and English carols – survive, but their attribution and dating is very difficult, as little is certain about Dunstable’s career. However, it is known that he enjoyed great financial success, owning a series of properties around southern England and in London.
Guillaume de Machaut

Because he was a priest, it is perhaps surprising that Machaut’s music contains so many songs on the theme of unrequited love. His ill-fated love for a young girl – the noble Péronne – was expressed in his secular music and poetry, including Le voir dit, and his distinctive musical style includes intricate melodies and bold dissonance. However, it is his four-part Mass that has defined his reputation as a significant composer.

**MILESTONES**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<tr>
<td>1323</td>
<td>Joins service of Jean de Luxembourg, King of Bohemia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.1323</td>
<td>Possibly meets theorist and composer Philippe de Vitry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1327</td>
<td>Travels to Lithuania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1330</td>
<td>Recommended for position as canon of Verdun Cathedral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1340</td>
<td>Becomes canon of Reims Cathedral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1359</td>
<td>Reims besieged by the English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.1363</td>
<td>Composes Messe de Nostre Dame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.1363</td>
<td>Compiles a collection of music, personal letters, and poetry in his autobiographical book, Le voir dit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**LIFE AND MUSIC**

Guillaume de Machaut’s career was based in the Church, but he also worked for several secular patrons. Remarkably, his entire compositional output has been preserved. He was a great entrepreneur, passing on reliable copies of his music and poetry to noblemen and -women across Europe. Aside from his Mass, Machaut also produced an impressive collection of motets and songs, many of which take the theme of courtly love. The strict poetic structures used by authors of this period – rondeau, virelai, ballade, and lai – are all represented in his work.

**KEY WORKS**

**DE TOUTES FLOURS**

Choral

Machaut was one of the first to compose polyphonic settings of poetry in fixed forms; the song structures that were to dominate music for the next 150 years or more were established in his work. This four-part ballade is one of his finest pieces. The melody is sometimes quite chromatic, and the effect is one that Machaut seems to have enjoyed. In his verse, he compares the admired lady with beautiful flowers.

**LE LAY DE BONNE ESPERANCE**

Song

This lai is one of the pivotal lyrical interludes in Machaut’s Le voir dit, which describes the relationship between the aging poet and his beloved Péronne d’Armentieres. Here he acknowledges his debt to Hope. The 12 verses are monophonic, but they are highly sophisticated examples of this form. Machaut plays with features such as pitch, rhythm, and melody to display a level of musical craftsmanship worthy of the piece’s intricately formed poetry.
“Douce dame jolie” is a deceptively simple, monophonic (one-part) song, with verse that describes an unnamed, unattainable woman to whom the poet pledges to dedicate his life. It is written in the poetic form of the virelai, one of the “formes fixes” (the others being the rondeau and ballade) that had become popular over the preceding century. The first two notes use the same pitch, creating a feeling of insistence, before the melody dips downwards and back up again and the next two lines vary the first musical idea to new poetry. The second section of musical material raises the pitch higher than that at the opening, adding contrast.

Messe de Nostre Dame
Mass Setting
Machaut wrote only one setting of the Mass Ordinary, from which he selected the Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, Agnus Dei, and “Ite missae est” for polyphonic treatment. This music may have been designed for singing at Lady Mass — a Saturday Mass in honour of the Virgin Mary — at the Cathedral of Reims. It may have been performed regularly after its initial composition, as later copies contain some amendments to the music. Machaut’s Mass is important in the history of music because it is the earliest cyclic Mass to have survived with movements that are known to be by the same composer, and may have been the first of its kind. The idea of writing a complete set of polyphonic movements that are musically related to one another did not catch on until half a century later, in the works of Dufay and his early Renaissance contemporaries.

The first and last three movements are set in a style usually associated with the isorhythmic motet, which involves the repetition of a plainchant in long, slow notes in the tenor part, in a strict rhythmic pattern. The central movements use a more direct, chordal manner, all four voices moving more or less together. Several aspects of the ars nova, the musical style typical of Machaut’s period, are detectable. These include the use of “hocket”, where a pair of voices alternates notes of a single melody, causing a disjointed effect. The harmony sounds distinctive because of the frequent use of dissonance, when notes that clash are used to drive the music forward toward the end of a phrase.

Influences
Machaut’s surviving output dwarfs that of any of his French contemporaries, such as the doubtlessly influential Philippe de Vitry, making fair comparison problematic. His music has been used as the source material for contemporary works, such as Olivier Messiaen’s orchestral work Machaut à la manière.
Guillaume Dufay was a musician whose talents were greatly admired across Europe during his own lifetime. His compositions include examples of nearly every genre available at the time, including some of the finest early cyclic Masses, motets, and secular songs. Though he was a medieval composer, Dufay’s works anticipate the more expressive style and greater harmonic range of the Renaissance.

**LIFE AND MUSIC**

Precious little is known about Dufay’s life, and writers continue to speculate about many details of his career. However, it is known that his parents were Marie Du Fayt and an unnamed priest, and his birth was thus illegitimate. In his youth he was known as William Du Fayt, and he went on to become the most acclaimed composer of the 15th century.

**MILESTONES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1424</td>
<td>Perhaps moves to Laon, France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.1426</td>
<td>Moves to Bologna, Italy; composes “Adieu ces bons vins de Lannoys”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1428</td>
<td>Works in Rome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1435</td>
<td>Works at papal chapel in Florence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1436</td>
<td>Composes motet <em>Nuper rosarum flores</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1450s</td>
<td>Composes Missa “L’homme armé”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Around 200 of his works have survived, including eight Masses and more than 80 songs. Like many of his contemporaries, Dufay seems to have been aware not only of French compositional styles from the period (such as the works of Machaut) but also of English and Italian music.

Dufay’s early years were spent as a chorister at Cambrai Cathedral, France, where he later went on to hold higher positions of authority.

**KEY WORKS**

**MISSA “L’HOMME ARMÉ”**

**MASS SETTING**

This is probably the earliest surviving Mass based on the famous secular song “L’homme armé” (The Armed Man), and it may have inspired later examples. The cantus firmus appears in the tenor part; singers who knew the original tune would certainly have spotted it, though to modern ears it can seem carefully hidden.

**ADIEU CES BONS VINS DE LANNOYS**

**SONG**

The lyrics of this melancholy rondeau, as well as dating evidence within its manuscript source, help to build a biographical picture of Dufay’s early career. The title tells a story in itself: “Farewell to the Fine Wines of the Laonnais”. The song was written when Dufay left the town of Laon in France to take up an appointment in Bologna, Italy.

**NUPER ROSARUM FLORES**

**CHORAL**

The first performance of this motet has been chronologically linked with the dedication of Brunelleschi’s dome at the Florentine cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore in 1436. The piece is written in four parts, but with one of the upper lines dividing to produce a five-part texture at certain moments.
Gilles Binchois

1400–1460  Belgian  120

Gilles de Bin – or simply “Binchois” – was one of the three great composers of the early 1400s, alongside Dufay and John Dunstable. From a middle-class Mons family, Binchois trained as a chorister and organist, served as a soldier, and possibly visited England before joining the court at Burgundy. Unlike Dufay and Dunstable, he is not known as an innovator, but he was a great melodist, and his sacred music, ballades, and rondeaux – which sometimes have an English influence – were clearly important in his lifetime. He held various church posts and retired in the early 1450s on a generous pension.

MILESTONES

- c.1425 Joins Burgundy court
- 1428 Music begins to be copied in Italy
- 1449 Travels to Mons with Dufay
- c.1450 “Comme femme”, rondeau, composed
- 1450s Ockeghem’s Missa “De plus en plus”, a Mass based on a Binchois melody

Johannes Ockeghem

- c.1414–1497  Belgian  50

Ockeghem appears in 1443 as a fully-fledged composer of sublime, creative music. His year of birth is a mystery, though his close friendship with Binchois suggests Ockeghem wasn’t much younger. Flemish by birth, most of his work was done at the French royal court, where he was a highly esteemed and well-rewarded employee of Charles VII. He held various ecclesiastical posts and even engaged in delicate diplomatic assignments abroad – something for which his likeable, wise, honest, and generous character suited him. Ockeghem was deeply mourned at his death (and long after) by his younger colleagues, such as Josquin Desprez.

According to a contemporary, Ockeghem (shown here wearing glasses) was well known as an outstanding singer and master composer of “subtle songs, artful Masses, and harmonious motets”.

MILESTONES

- 1446 Joins court of Charles I, Duke of Bourbon
- 1450s Composes Missa “L’homme armé”, possibly his first Mass setting
- 1460 Composes the motet-chanson Déploration on the Death of Binchois
Probably born in northern Europe, Josquin worked mostly in Italy. The progress of printing increased the influence of his music. Josquin was celebrated both during and after his lifetime as one of the greatest musicians of the Renaissance period. He contributed to many genres, including motets, Mass settings, and French and Italian chansons. The widespread dissemination of his music was made possible by the invention of music printing at the beginning of the 16th century, and we now know more about Josquin’s music than about his life.

**LIFE AND MUSIC**

Josquin Desprez was a composer and singer whose skills were highly prized by the wealthiest patrons in Europe, including the d’Este family in Ferrara. He was the first composer to have had printed volumes of music entirely devoted to his work. Many aspects of Josquin’s biography are poorly documented, especially details of his early life and education. A significant problem has been the frequent misattribution of pieces to Josquin that were not composed by him. His musical style displays great melodic invention and a keenness for such techniques as canon, as well as a fondness for popular songs.

**MILESTONES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1459</td>
<td>Becomes a singer at Milan cathedral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.1475</td>
<td>Working for the King of Anjou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1480</td>
<td>May have visited Hungary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1484</td>
<td>Working in Milan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1495</td>
<td>Working at the Papal Chapel in Rome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1501</td>
<td>Petrucci publishes six chansons attributed to Josquin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1502</td>
<td>First Book of Masses published</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1503</td>
<td>Enters the service of Duke Ercole d’Este in Ferrara</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**KEY WORKS**

**MASS “PANGE LINGUA”**

**MASS SETTING**

This Mass is one of the composer’s most sophisticated and beautiful works. Its cantus firmus – a hymn in the plaintive Phrygian mode – indicates that it was written for performance on the feast of Corpus Christi, celebrated on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday.

**STABAT MATER DOLOROSA**

**CHORAL**

Josquin’s setting of the Crucifixion poem that describes Mary mourning at the foot of the Cross is written in five parts, though only four carry the text. Perhaps in honour of the composer Gilles Binchois, this motet is based on the tenor line of *Comme femme desconfortée (A Woman in Distress)*.

**PETITE CAMUSETTE**

**SONG**

A playful vocal work, this chanson, which draws on a popular melody, shows a lighter side to Josquin’s musical personality. Hidden in the six-part texture is a more formal device: the ingenious use of a canon performed by the alto and tenor parts.
Jacob Obrecht

b 1457–1505 n Dutch w c.100

Obrecht’s music has been unfairly overshadowed by that of his contemporary Josquin Desprez. However, his talent for composition is evident in his substantial output of high-quality sacred and secular music, lending some weight to the theory that he was able to compose an entire setting of the Mass Ordinary overnight. In a motet written in honour of his father, the composer referred to himself as “Orpheus Jacob”.

LIFE AND MUSIC

Obrecht spent most of his career working in churches in Bruges, Antwerp, and Bergen op Zoom, though he was eventually encouraged to move to Italy. His writing – full of long sequences and parallel motion – was more traditional than some of his contemporaries’, but was nonetheless adventurous in other ways, particularly in his treatment of cantus firmus (fixed song). Obrecht’s approach to setting texts to music remained contrapuntal, however. His work did not contribute to the new trend that was emerging in Italy during the 16th century – that music should meticulously express the actual meaning of the words. His secular works included inventive canonic pieces for instruments, and he showed his national sentiment by arranging Dutch melodies.

MILESTONES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1460s</td>
<td>Studies at University of Louvain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1484</td>
<td>Working at Cambrai Cathedral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1485</td>
<td>Leaves Cambrai to take up a position at Church of St Donatien in Bruges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1487</td>
<td>Visits Ferrara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1488</td>
<td>Composes the motet <em>Mille quingentis</em> in honour of his father, Guillermus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1494</td>
<td>Working at the Church of Our Lady in Antwerp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1496</td>
<td>Working in Bergen op Zoom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1498</td>
<td>Working in Bruges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.1500</td>
<td>Composes Mass “Super Maria zart”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1501</td>
<td>Working in Antwerp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1504</td>
<td>Returns to Ferrara to work for the d’Este ducal family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1505</td>
<td>Dies of plague in Ferrara</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

KEY WORKS

**MISSA “SUB TUUM PRAESIDIUM”**

MASS SETTING

The scoring of this Mass is unusual. After opening in only three parts, each new section of music adds another voice, until a seven-part texture is reached in the final portion of the Agnus Dei.

**SALVE REGINA**

CHORAL

This setting of the *Salve Regina* may have been performed both in church and at popular, secular festivities, perhaps with instruments. Despite its modest scoring, which allows references to the original antiphon to shine through, the texture is surprisingly rich and sonorous.

**MISSA “SUPER MARIA ZART”**

MASS SETTING

This four-part Marian Mass setting is something quite special. Lasting over an hour, its massive scale shows Obrecht’s ingenuity when working on a large canvas. It is the longest of his Mass Ordinaries to survive.

*Most of Obrecht’s professional life was spent in religious employment; 27 of his surviving works are settings of the Mass.*
Though he never held an important regular music post at a cathedral or court, Janequin’s music enjoyed popular success – his chanson “La bataille” was one of the most-performed songs of the 16th century. Trained as a priest, he held a number of poorly paid church posts, but in 1530 his song to celebrate Francois I’s entry into Bordeaux, “Chantons, sonnons, trompettes”, established his reputation as a composer. Though his music was published widely and known across Europe, Janequin suffered recurring money problems and split with his family over an unpaid loan.

Janequin’s songs often use short melodic fragments which imitate natural or man-made sounds. “Les cris de Paris” evokes the sound of Parisian street life.

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Janequin’s songs often use short melodic fragments which imitate natural or man-made sounds. “Les cris de Paris” evokes the sound of Parisian street life.

Alexander Agricola

Born Alexander Ackerman, the illegitimate son of a wealthy Dutch businesswoman, Agricola was an internationally popular composer in the 1490s. He worked in courts and churches in Italy, France, and the Low Countries, being in demand enough to name his own salary. Technically, his sacred Masses and motets, secular songs, and instrumental pieces – which show the influence of Ockeghem – are typical of the time, but his music’s intense and restless character was described by some contemporaries as “crazy and strange”.

French by upbringing, Arcadelt – after a tentative start to his career in Italy – became a leading composer of secular works. From the 1530s until Lassus arrived in the 1550s, Arcadelt’s simple, clear French chansons were highly popular. However, it was his 200-odd Italian madrigals, especially the four-part ones, which established his reputation in the 1530s: flexible, graceful, singable music that sensitively illustrated the text. The first of his five books of madrigals went through 58 editions, and was still being published in 1654.
John Taverner

1490–1545  English  c.70

Taverner was a man of great influence in England in the 16th century, both as a composer and through his work as an associate of Thomas Cromwell – Henry VIII’s chief advisor who presided over the dissolution of the monasteries. It is likely that Taverner empathized with the spirit of the Protestant reforms; one document records his shame at writing “popish ditties” – music that celebrated the Virgin Mary or Christian saints – in his earlier career.

**LIFE AND MUSIC**

As well as being a composer, Taverner worked as a singer, organist, and music teacher, and may have been politically active, too. In 1528, an investigation at Cardinal Wolsey’s college, where Taverner was choirmaster, suspected him of circulating Lutheran literature and briefly imprisoned him. If the caricatures found in a copy of one of his works are accurate, his appearance was not as becoming as the beautiful choral works that form the major part of his output, which included motets, Masses, and secular items. He wrote eight Masses in all, and the tune for the “In nomine Domini” section of his Missa “Gloria tibi Trinitas” became one of the most popular cantus firmus melodies for instrumental music in England, in a genre known as the “In nomine” in honour of Taverner’s vocal original. The opera Taverner by Peter Maxwell Davies depicts a popular account of the composer’s life.

**MILESTONES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1515</td>
<td>Missa “Gloria tibi Trinitas” composed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1525</td>
<td>Working at Tattershall Collegiate Church, Lincolnshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1528</td>
<td>Imprisoned for heresy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1530s</td>
<td>Works as agent of Thomas Cromwell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1537</td>
<td>Joins the Guild of Corpus Christi in Boston, Lincolnshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.1540</td>
<td>Composes Magnificat à 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**KEY WORKS**

**MISSA “GLORIA TIBI TRINITAS”**

**MASS SETTING**

The influence of the Missa “Gloria tibi Trinitas”, which dates to the mid-1520s, spread beyond sacred vocal music. At the “In nomine Domini” section of the Benedictus, the alto sings a freely composed melody in long, slow notes.

**MAGNIFICAT À 4**

**CHORAL**

This Magnificat, for four adult male voices, may be the latest of Taverner’s three settings. The text contains the words of the Virgin Mary at the Annunciation, and the piece may have been performed for the celebration of this feast in Boston, Lincolnshire.

Though he spent most of his time in Lincolnshire, Taverner was appointed to instruct the choristers at the newly founded Cardinal College in Oxford in 1528.
Thomas Tallis's musical career spanned the reigns of four English monarchs: Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary (a Catholic) and Elizabeth I (a Protestant). The period saw enormous shifts in religious life and compositional style. Most of Tallis’s output was for the Church, though he did write a handful of secular works. His flexibility as a composer undoubtedly ensured his survival as a leading figure in English music.

**LIFE AND MUSIC**

Tallis trained as a musician in the pre-Reformation Church. However, under a succession of rulers, he was required to write both Catholic and Anglican service music, all of which was of first quality. Brought up near Canterbury, his appointments quickly drew him to London. Tallis was a superb organist, but few of his keyboard pieces have survived. Dating his works is difficult, especially as he occasionally reworked old music for a new purpose. Well known for his florid Latin works, Tallis’s simpler, Anglican music is equally well-crafted and enjoyable to perform.

**KEY WORKS**

**O NATA LUX DE LUMINE**

Descriptor: CHORAL

Despite its Latin text, the lucid and carefully-paced word setting of *O nata lux de lumine* suggests it was composed during the reign of Elizabeth I. It appeared in *Cantiones sacrae*, a joint publication between Thomas Tallis and William Byrd, and the first collection of motets and hymns to be published in England.

In 1575 Elizabeth I granted Tallis and Byrd a 21-year joint monopoly to print music.

**IF YE LOVE ME**

Descriptor: CHORAL

Compared with the rich and complex Catholic works of the era, the style of this anthem immediately transports the listener to the heart of the Reformed liturgy of the 1540s. In two sections, the second of which is repeated, the message to keep God’s commandments is communicated through carefully paced phrasing and delicate imitation.

**LAMENTATIONS OF JEREMIAH**

Descriptor: CHORAL

Tallis wrote two settings of this emotive text for Maundy Thursday. The first uses the verses “Aleph” and “Beth”, the second “Gimel”, “Daleth”, and “Heth”. The music is rich, with gentle, overlapping melodies.
Spem in alium is perhaps Tallis’s best-known work. Some musicians have sought a numerically significant occasion for its composition, such as the 40th anniversary of the coronation of Elizabeth I, but no theory has been found that is wholly convincing. An earlier 40-part piece by Alessandro Striggio, Ecce beatam lucem, must have been an influence.

Tallis uses spatial elements by arranging the voices into eight five-part choirs, and the music can be heard to sweep around the full choir, or work with the sub-choirs singing across to one another. Spem in alium opens with a solo voice, but quickly builds as voices are layered on top of one another until the sound is rich and sonorous. The first voices gradually drop out of the texture at the same time, so the full choir does not sing together until the dramatic moment at bar 40, surely a reference to the number of parts. After this, the sound is passed, seamlessly, in reverse direction from the eighth sub-choir back to the first.

The co-ordination of 40 vocal parts, which might originally have been performed by soloists, is a major feat, particularly given the complex interplay of independent voices through much of the music. From bar 80, pairs or groups of choirs call and respond in a powerful and highly effective section, though the musical material is constantly varied. The full choir sings only four times; a dramatic rest in all parts precedes the final full-choir section that ends the work.

Laudate dominum was probably composed during the 1560s. Psalm-motets had been developed by Tallis’s contemporaries, including Christopher Tye and Robert White. The feeling of celebration is created with the opening idea, a rising phrase, in the contratenor for the word laudate (praise), imitated by the remaining voices as they enter one by one. The most important words and ideas are emphasized by repetition, such as the reiteration of the phrase Et veritas Domini manet in aeternum (And the truth of the Lord endures forever), swung between upper and lower voices before performance by the full choir. The idea of the unchanging Christian Church may hint at Tallis’s experiences of working through the troubled period of the Reformation, when many of the old Catholic traditions were erased from the new Anglican liturgy.
“The most frivolous and gallant words are set to exactly the same music as those of the Bible…”

HECTOR BERLIOZ ON THE MUSIC OF PALESTRINA
Apart from the fact that he was born in the town of Palestrina in Italy, practically nothing is known about Giovanni Pierluigi’s early history. His later career centred mainly on Rome, where he was trained and where he worked for most of his life. As far as is known, Palestrina began his musical life as organist and choirmaster in 1544 in his native city. His reputation grew and he gained his first Roman post in 1550 as a choirmaster at the Cappella Giulia, a subsidiary of the Sistine Choir. It was soon after this that he published his first book of masses. A brief spell at the Sistine Chapel itself in 1555 ended in his dismissal by the new pope, ostensibly for being married. His rejection made Palestrina fall ill, but after recovering, he gained an appointment to the post of Maestro di cappella at the basilica of St John Lateran, although it did not pay well. From 1561 to 1566 he worked at the more prestigious church of Santa Maria Maggiore, after which he enjoyed, until 1571, the patronage of the wealthy Cardinal Ippolito II d’Este. The remaining years of Palestrina’s musical career were spent back at the Cappella Giulia and his intention to return to his native Palestrina in 1593 was never realized. After members of his close family died in the outbreaks of influenza in the early 1570s, and the death of his first wife, Lucrezia, in 1580, he considered pursuing a celibate way of life, but the following year he married a fur merchant, Virginia Dormoli. This marriage ensured him a steady income and Palestrina helped Virginia’s business to flourish. Becoming a very wealthy man, he was financially able to publish 16 collections of his works.

**MUSICAL OUTPUT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Total:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Masses</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motets</td>
<td>300+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offertories</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hymns</td>
<td>71+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Sacred Vocal</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madrigals</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>650+</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Palestrina spent almost all his career working and composing for the Catholic Church in Rome, much of it for the Vatican.

Palestrina’s is perhaps the most familiar name of all late-Renaissance composers and his sacred music is widely regarded as a pinnacle of contrapuntal style, rich and flowing in its sound. Hundreds of his works survive and many of these were published during his lifetime. Although the majority of them were produced for use in religious worship, he also wrote over 100 madrigals, both secular and sacred.
Given the sacred institutions that employed him, it is hardly surprising that most of Palestrina’s output comprised music for the liturgy. His mastery of counterpoint resulted in subsequent generations using his works as a model for their own. His reputation was heightened by the composer Johann Joseph Fux’s use of his music in his treatise Gradus ad Parnassum (1725) and by 19th-century biographies that praised his music without reservation.

Palestrina’s music is characterized by elegant melodic lines in all the vocal parts, by the careful treatment of dissonance, and by a sensitivity to text-setting that foreshadows the seconda prattica of the 17th century.

While his music rarely contains overt word-painting, the meaning and accents of the Latin or Italian language are never lost. His most refined writing is to be found in his Masses, which are written in a variety of different ways; some were settings of borrowed musical material, while others were entirely freely composed. His madrigals include both secular and sacred songs.

**KEY WORKS**

**MISSA “L’HOMME ARMÉ”**

Palestrina wrote two Mass settings based on the melody “L’homme armé”, a popular song that provided the foundation for at least 40 Masses in the 15th and 16th centuries. The five-part setting dates from 1570 and the four-part Mass from 1582.

**MISSA “PAPAE MARCELLI”**

This Mass, published in 1567, takes its name from Pope Marcellus II, who held the Papacy for just three weeks in 1555. It used to be said that this Mass safeguarded the future of Catholic music, a myth that has proved difficult to dispel. The music’s sense of balance and poise is evident from the opening Kyrie. Traces of the “L’homme armé” melody can be heard in this work.

**IO SON FERITO, AHI LASO**

This five-part secular madrigal of 1561 (“Alas, I am wounded”) shows Palestrina’s skillful but understated text setting, for example, in the use of long note values to evoke the agony of parting. The scoring is varied throughout this work, which ends with long held notes in the upper and middle parts, while the other parts work the cadence around them.
**MISSA BREVIS**

**MASS SETTING**

The origin of the name *Missa brevis* (short Mass) for one of Palestrina’s finest Mass settings is unclear. It was published in 1570. After a contrapuntal Kyrie, the Gloria opens with all four parts in homophony before the parts begin to weave an imitative texture, sometimes working in pairs or trios. The new section at “Qui tollis peccata mundi” brings the parts together in a chordal texture. In the Benedictus, the three voices that open the movement are rejoined by the bass at “Osanna in excelsis”.

The second part of the Agnus Dei divides the upper part, to give a five-part texture.

**THE LAMENTATIONS OF JEREMIAH, LESSONS 1 TO 3**

**CHORAL**

Palestrina’s settings for three lessons from the Lamentations of Jeremiah were commissioned by Pope Sixtus V in 1587, and were published the following year. They replaced those of Carpentras, which had been sung by the papal choir during Holy Week for over 60 years. The opening of the first lesson of this serene setting for Maundy Thursday is chordal, but quickly moves to an imitative texture. The rhythm of the third lesson, from “Manum suam misit”, is set in perfect complement to the stresses of the Latin text, briefly using a triple metre to achieve this.

**MISSA “BENEDICTUS ES”**

**MASS SETTING**

The probable model for this six-part Mass is a motet by Josquin Desprez (1520). The Kyrie opens with a rising scalic motive that passes from voice to voice. After the first words of the Gloria are intoned, the choir enters part by part, building a contrapuntal texture. At a new section, “Qui tollis peccata mundi”, the movement becomes more reserved and penitential and closes with a relatively simple Amen. The lengthy Credo text ends with a much more elaborate and boldly dissonant “Amen”. In the Sanctus-Benedictus, the highest voice opens with long held notes, while the lower parts move in steady but more active lines. The concluding Agnus Dei is a gentle, lyrical prayer for atonement.
William Byrd

A Catholic in a Protestant land, William Byrd’s reputation as a composer was such that he avoided the serious consequences of maintaining his faith under English law. Byrd’s religious works show a polished contrapuntal technique, especially in their use of imitation. His verse anthems, motets, consort songs, and instrumental works are deeply expressive. His music rarely shows any influence of his teacher, Thomas Tallis.

Byrd is perhaps best known for his survival at the top of the establishment in Protestant England, despite his strong (and barely hidden) Catholic faith. His patrons, who included both wealthy Catholics and the “Virgin Queen”, Elizabeth I, required a wide range of music from him for use in religious services and in the home. Apart from his Anglican music, Byrd composed and published many dangerously Catholic works that must have been performed only in a domestic context. He also produced much secular music, including some of the first notable repertoire for virginals.

KEY WORKS

**AVE VERUM CORPUS**

This sequence hymn, written for the feast of Corpus Christi, opens with all four voices in stately, reverential chords. In the second section, the upper part leads with new material, to be answered by the three lower voices, reinforcing the message, before an imitative section in which the mercy of Jesus is begged.

**SUSANNA FAIR**

The biblical story of Susanna revolves around the unwanted attention that the young virgin receives from two old men in the village as she is bathing. A popular story in this period, Byrd’s setting is for voice and four viols.

**MASS FOR FOUR VOICES**

Byrd’s Masses for three and five voices seem to have been based on this four-voice setting, and all would have been performed in secret Catholic services. The music is expressive, with a marked feeling of intensity, though the words are sung with great clarity.

Byrd wrote many madrigals and songs ideal for small social gatherings. Among them is “Ye Sacred Muses”, a touching consort song in honour of his friend and colleague, Thomas Tallis.

**MILESTONES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1563</td>
<td>Appointed Master of Choristers and organist at Lincoln Cathedral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1572</td>
<td>Becomes organist at Chapel Royal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1575</td>
<td>Elizabeth I grants Byrd and Tallis patent for publishing printed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>manuscript paper and music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1575</td>
<td>Byrd and Tallis jointly publish <em>Cantiones</em>, comprising 17 pieces by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>each composer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1588</td>
<td>Publication of <em>Psalmes, sonets and songs</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1589</td>
<td>Publication of <em>Cantiones sacrae</em> and <em>Songs of Sundrie Natures</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1593</td>
<td>Buys Stondon Place near Stapleford Abbott, Essex, his home for rest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>of life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1605</td>
<td>Publishes <em>Graduali</em>, Vol 1 (Vol 2 appears in 1607)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
GREAT SERVICE
LITURGICAL
Byrd was an innovator in form and technique in his liturgical works and contributed greatly to the developing genre of the English Anthem (including the newer “verse” style with organ accompaniment), composing his widely regarded Great Service in this format. The work takes its name from its massive scale; two choirs of five voices perform in different combinations across seven movements: Venite, Te Deum, Benedictus, Kyrie, Creed, Magnificat, and Nunc Dimittis. Most of Byrd’s liturgical repertoire was written during his years at Lincoln, but this music was composed in London, probably sometime during the late 1580s. The earliest manuscript source calls it the “Long Service”. Such is the variety of musical style, vocal scoring, and approach to word-setting in the Great Service, it seems likely that some or all movements existed independently before being conflated into one composite work in the manner of J S Bach’s Mass in B Minor.

Unlike Byrd’s three Mass settings in Latin, the Great Service is in English, for use in the Anglican liturgy. During the reign of Edward VI (1547–53), Archbishop Thomas Cranmer’s Lincoln Cathedral Injunctions (1548) had commanded that composers of Anglican music should seek clarity of textual expression, “a plain and distinct note for every syllable”.

“QUI PASSE: FOR MY LADY NEVELL” KEYBOARD
The virginals were much favoured by female musicians of the middle and upper classes throughout Europe. Most of Byrd’s works for the instrument are collected in two books and the one dedicated to Lady Nevell contains this piece, “Qui passe: for my Lady Nevell” is a wonderful transformation of a piece published 34 years earlier by the Venetian composer Filippo Azzaiolo, “Chi passa per questa strada” (“Who Walks Along this Street”). Byrd re-worked the melody as a bass line, lacing the music with energetic rhythms and fast scales in both hands. The element of surprise is maintained throughout, through frequent changes between major and minor chords, and contrasting colours and textures. The effect is one of exuberant virtuosity.

FOCUS

INFLUENCES
William Byrd’s main achievement was arguably his fusion of Renaissance counterpoint with the expressive elements of English music. Since his “rediscovery” in the 20th century, his works have become great favourites with performers, who consider them the peak of British music of the Renaissance era.
Orlande de Lassus

**MILESTONES**

- c.1544 In the service of the Viceroy of Sicily
- 1553 Becomes choirmaster in Rome
- 1556 Publication of first book of chansons
- 1556 Enter Bavarian court
- 1563 Promoted to chief Kapellmeister
- 1563 Begins work on *Seven Penitential Psalms*
- 1569 Rises to the nobility
- 1574 Receives order of the Golden Spur

In his youth, Lassus travelled throughout Italy and Sicily in the service of various aristocrats. In the 1560s, when he was comfortably settled in Bavaria with a wife and children, he was the most celebrated musician in Europe. Various publishers spread his madrigals, chansons, and sacred music internationally, and he received several royal honours. His prolific and versatile output includes some of the most beautiful examples of 16th-century church choral music (alongside those of Palestrina and Victoria), such as his Mass for double choir, *Missa Osculetur me*, plus hundreds of motets, madrigals, chansons, and lieder — and even drinking ditties and comic songs — which reveal a likeable man of great humour and wit.

*Lassus composed* many celebrated works for the musicians of the Bavarian court. Here he is captured in miniature playing the spinet.

Giulio Caccini

**MILESTONES**

- 1566 Living in Florence
- 1570-76 Performs at wedding of Virginia de’ Medici and Cesare d’Este
- 1586 Began work on *Seven Penitential Psalms*
- 1586 Performs at wedding of Virginia de’ Medici and Cesare d’Este
- 1596 First performance of Caccini’s opera *Eurydice*
- 1602 Publication of *Le nuove musiche*

Like that of many of his contemporaries, Giulio Caccini’s career involved the composition, performance, and teaching of music. Though linked with the significant new genre of opera, his major musical achievement was arguably the collection of accompanied songs *Le nuove musiche*. He was among the first generation of virtuoso singers who became successful composers, and developed the new genre of opera alongside the Florentine composer Jacopo Peri. After moving from Rome to the important cultural city of Florence, Caccini’s career was financed by the wealthy Medici family. There, he became a member of the music patron Giovanni Bardi’s Camerata, a group of intellectuals interested in Ancient Greek ideals. At a wedding between members of the Medici and d’Este families, Caccini was employed to sing, dressed as an angel, as part of an elaborate mechanized performance. In his songs, Caccini developed the monodic style that was to become a pillar of the Baroque era.
Andrea Gabrieli

- **c.1510–1586** • **Italian** • **400**

Though generally thought of as “uncle of the more accomplished Giovanni Gabrieli”, one of his pupils, Andrea Gabrieli helped establish Venice’s school of home-grown composers after domination by incomers from the Netherlands. An organist at St Mark’s, he composed everything from large sacred and theatre works to songs and solo keyboard pieces, with popular success – many being republished decades after his death. Gabrieli’s posthumous Concerti formed a collection of music for Venice’s state functions.

**MILESTONES**

- **1536** Gains fame as singer at St Mark’s
- **1554** First published madrigal
- **1562** Friendship with Lassus begins
- **1566** Becomes organist at St Mark’s
- **1578** Receives hardship payment to help maintain sister’s family
- **1587** Concerti published posthumously

Hans Leo Hassler

- **1562–1612** • **German** • **50**

The Hassler family included a number of accomplished musicians, but the multilingual, cosmopolitan Hans was one of the first Germans to study in Italy, and on his return he helped to establish Italian styles and idioms in the Protestant musical world. In Venice he studied with Giovanni Gabrieli, but spent his working life back in Germany: at Augsburg, his native Nuremberg, and finally Dresden. He was known mainly as an organist and organ designer, but also wrote many beautiful sacred choral works, such as Sacrae cantiones and Sacri concentus.

**MILESTONES**

- **1586** Becomes organist at Augsburg
- **1607** Composes 52 Psalms and Christian songs for Lutheran rite

Tomás Luis de Victoria

- **1548–1611** • **Spanish** • **200**

Victoria started composing in Italy and became the greatest Spanish composer of the Renaissance. His work – all sacred music in Latin, including 20 Masses, 52 motets, and many other liturgical pieces – shows the subtlety and beauty of Palestrina, with whom he may have studied in Rome. After working in Italian churches, Victoria returned to Spain in 1587 to serve Empress Maria, widow of the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian II, as choirmaster and organist at a convent in Madrid.

Supported by wealthy patrons throughout his life, he was able to publish his works in distinguished editions – and some were performed as far away as Mexico. Although many works are poignant and mystical, their prevailing mood – especially in his motets – is positive, as he was a cheerful man with strong family ties.

**MILESTONES**

- **1560s** Serves as a chorister in Ávila
- **1565** Leaves for Rome to study for priesthood
- **1572** Writes first collection of motets
- **1575** Ordained as a priest
- **1583** Writes first Requiem Mass
- **1594** Attends Palestrina’s funeral
- **1603** Writes Officium defunctorum for funeral of Empress Maria

Victoria sang as a chorister at the cathedral in his native Ávila, also the birthplace of Saint Teresa.
Giovanni Gabrieli and his uncle, Andrea, were prolific and innovative composers during the late Renaissance period. Giovanni's polychoral works for voices and instruments, particularly those intended for performance in religious services, make use of a wide variety of acoustic textures and effects. Although much of his output is sacred and vocal, he also wrote many keyboard works and madrigals.

**LIFE AND MUSIC**

Gabrieli was born possibly in Venice, a thriving centre of musical and religious activity. He was brought up maybe by his uncle, before travelling to study with Orlando Lassus in Munich. Aside from his compositional duties, Giovanni was employed as an organist and music teacher, and his published works reflect the diversity of the requirements of his patrons in Venice and northern Europe. His most famous publications, the *Sacrae symphoniae* and *Symphoniae sacrae*, include pieces for between six and 19 separate parts. Gabrieli was renowned for his technical abilities and his keyboard works include both improvisatory toccatas and more formally structured ricercari.

**KEY WORKS**

**ANGELUS AD PASTORES**

*Motet*

The Christmas text relating to the angel and shepherds and the Nativity was set by Gabrieli as a 12-part work for two choirs of six voices.

**CANZON DUODECIMI TONI**

*Canzona*

The instrumentation of this ten-part instrumental canzona is not specified in the original published score. However, its range and character suit cornets and sackbuts very well, and often an organ is used to provide a basso continuo. It was written in the 12th mode, which was associated with victory and triumph.

**O CHE FELICE GIORNO**

*Madrigal*

This eight-part madrigal was written for performance before a noble patron in 1585, and was later revised as a Christmas motet with the new text *Hodie Christus natus est.*
Gabrieli’s sonatas and canzonas were written for instruments only, perhaps for the accompaniment of church processions. One may infer from their complex style that the musicians for whom they were written were highly accomplished, whether string, wind, brass, or keyboard players. Some parts, particularly those for higher-pitched instruments, are virtuosic. It is likely that even these pieces had a place in the most important celebrations of the Church calendar.

O MAGNUM MYSTERIUM

A relatively early motet, O magnum mysterium is one of Gabrieli’s finest pieces of music. The eight-part choir is divided into high and low voices. At the opening, the harmony is ambiguous, playing with major and minor chords, and the shifting between different tonal areas lends weight to the text, which focuses on the miracle of Christ’s birth. The majority of the motet works steadily through the text, the phrases repeated by different combinations of voices. The two choirs sing antiphonally at the words “Beata virgo” ("Blessed virgin"), and the “Alleluia”, which continues the use of cori spezzati, features a lively triple rhythm, apt for the celebration of the Christmas message. The text was set a number times during the Renaissance period, by other composers, including Tomás Luis de Victoria.
Jacopo Peri

1561–1633  Italian  50

As the composer of the first surviving opera – *Euridice* – Peri’s place in music history is assured. A musician at the Medici court, he gained a reputation as an actor, singer, and dazzling chitarrone player. In collaboration with other Florentine musicians, poets, and philosophers throughout the 1590s, Peri helped devise the idea of opera. The result was *Dafne*, for which he set the text and sang Apollo. It was a small-scale affair, performed privately in a room. *Euridice* followed, first played before an intimate royal audience to celebrate the marriage of Maria de’ Medici and Henri IV of France. Continuing to work for the Medicis, Peri became more in demand as a stage composer, and his songs were published by popular request. A slim, endearing man, he was nicknamed “Zazzerino” – a reference to his attractive, long blond hair.

MILESTONES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1579</td>
<td>Organist in Florence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1588</td>
<td>Works at Medici court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1598</td>
<td><em>Dafne</em>, opera, performed at Carnival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1600</td>
<td><em>Euridice</em>, opera, premiered 6 October</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1609</td>
<td>Song collection, <em>Le varie musiche</em>, first published</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1620s</td>
<td>Writes three oratorios and two operas in collaboration with other composers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck

c.1562–1621  Dutch  320

Sweelinck’s life was virtually all spent in Amsterdam. A civil servant, his personal life was well regulated, comfortably rewarded, and uneventful. He was known across Europe as a teacher, drawing pupils from Germany in the 1600s, and his influence on north German organ playing culminated in the music of J S Bach. A perfecter of existing forms rather than a pioneer, he wrote around 70 keyboard works, such as fantasias – which led to the development of the fugue – and toccatas. None were published in his lifetime, but they were enthusiastically copied by pupils. In contrast, his 250 vocal works, which include chansons, madrigals, and motets, were all published.

Sweelinck served as an organist at Oude Kerk in Amsterdam for over 40 years, and was renowned for his brilliant improvisations.

MILESTONES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>c.1577</td>
<td>Starts as organist at Oude Kerk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1594</td>
<td>First published work: book of chansons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1597</td>
<td>First psalm settings published</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1606</td>
<td>Portrait painted by brother Gerrit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1619</td>
<td><em>Cantiones sacrae</em>, Catholic motets for five-part choir, published</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
John Dowland

1563–1626  English  220

England’s greatest composer of lute music and songs spent much of his career on the Continent, so he can have seen little of his family in London. Though he had patronage and enormous publishing success at home, and lasting influence abroad, he struggled for appointments in England. His involvement with scheming English Catholics in Italy didn’t help his prospects, and he seems to have been a prickly, occasionally paranoid man. His *First Booke of Songs* was a bestseller and cemented his reputation. Its clever multi-directional layout, which enabled soloists or groups around a table to easily read parts singly or in combination, was a key to its success. Melancholy features strongly in his work: his bleak song “In darkness let me dwell” is remarkably dissonant and harmonically unstable.

**MILESTONES**

- 1588  Listed among the major English composers
- 1594  Leaves England to work in Germany
- 1597  *Songs or Ayres* published
- 1598  Accepts position at Danish court
- 1604  *Lachrimae*, consort music, published
- 1612  Finally employed by the English court as one of the King’s lutenists

Carlo Gesualdo

c.1561–1613  Italian  150

Prince of Venosa – and murderer? He found his wife, Maria d’Avalos, “in flagrante delicto” with the Duke of Andria – and both were assassinated. His vocal music is notorious for its remarkable dissonance. A gentleman amateur at first, he gained a professional reputation with his later madrigals. Gesualdo’s last years were spent in morbid isolation at his castle, music-making his only pleasure.

**MILESTONES**

- 1586  Marries Maria d’Avalos
- 1590  Wife and her lover murdered
- 1594  Marries noblewoman Leonora d’Este
- 1594  First book of madrigals published
- 1595  Retires to Gesualdo Castle, Avellino, outside Naples
- 1611  Three books of madrigals published

Thomas Campion

1567–1620  English  100

Campion was born into an affluent family in Essex and became a dilettante theorist, poet, and musician. After John Dowland, he was the most prolific of lute-song composers, with over 100 to his name, the lyrics of which are of outstanding literary merit. He attended Cambridge University, studied law at Gray’s Inn and medicine at Caen, but preferred socializing and cultural activities to studying. He wrote masques, poems, and five books of songs – some self-published with friends – and was much in demand to supply both texts and music for entertainments at the royal court of James I.

**MILESTONES**

- 1586  Studies at Gray’s Inn
- 1588  Works as an actor and singer
- 1601  *First Booke of Ayres* published
- 1605  Receives degree in medicine, Caen
- 1613  *Treatise on Counterpoint* published
The Baroque era saw the genesis of opera, the growth of the orchestra, and a flourishing of instrumental music, especially for the violin and keyboard. Most new fashions originated in Italy and Italian musicians dominated the field, but, by the end of the period, distinctive national styles had evolved.

The word “baroque” was originally a pejorative term for a style of architecture and art produced between the end of the 16th and the mid-18th centuries, but by the time music scholars adopted the term it had lost most of its negative connotations.

The period was one of great creativity – from Shakespeare and Cervantes in literature to Newton and Galileo in science. Music, too, blossomed. By the 1590s a new musical style had emerged in contrast to the lush polyphony of Palestrina and his contemporaries. Instead of complex intertwining parts, the new style (dubbed secon da prattica or “second practice” to distinguish it from the prima prattica of earlier Renaissance compositions) placed a solo voice or instrument above a simple accompaniment consisting of a bass line with the chords lightly filled in above it (the basso continuo, a “continuous bass”). There were usually two instruments playing the continuo – a keyboard, lute, or guitar along with a low-ranged melodic instrument such as a cello, bass viol, or bassoon reinforcing the bass line.

The term “monody” (from the Greek meaning “one song”) is used to describe this new combination of solo voice and basso continuo. Monody allowed the performer the freedom to embellish and ornament the melodic line at will, something unthinkable in the older polyphonic style.

THE BIRTH OF OPERA

This new style of singing allowed composers to convey the text clearly through a solo voice, while singers could interpret the words more dramatically. It was monody that made musical drama – opera – possible. The invention of opera
is credited to a group of Florentine musicians and poets known as the Camerata, particularly the composers Giulio Caccini and Jacopo Peri and the poet Ottavio Rinuccini, who were trying to recreate the singing style of Ancient Greek drama. This new style was first seen in intermedi – short musical dramas performed between the acts of spoken plays – but in 1598 the three collaborated on Dafne, the first true opera. Two years later, both Peri and Caccini wrote operas on the Orpheus myth, Euridice, but it was Monteverdi’s Orfeo (1607) that is seen as the true benchmark for early opera. The new art form would combine a variety of musical styles – speech-like recitative, moving arias, choral and instrumental interludes – into one large narrative structure.

The Catholic Church frowned on the “immoral” plots of some operas and banned their performance during Advent and Lent. The void was filled by another kind of dramatic vocal music: the oratorio. Operas and
oratorios both employed recitative, arias, duets, and instrumental pieces, but they were unstaged, with no costumes or sets, and naturally tended to be about biblical subjects. Comic opera was a later development, gaining ground in the 1730s. It developed from short comic pieces (intermezzi), such as Pergolesi’s *La serva padrona* (1738), performed in the intervals between the acts of serious operas.

**INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC**

Opera was not the only musical form to flourish. Major and minor courts across Europe maintained chamber ensembles as a mark of prestige. This created a demand for instrumental sonatas and concertos to entertain the noble patrons and their guests. In the sonata, the violin (which could emulate certain qualities of the singing voice) gained a whole new repertoire and generated an increased interest in its potential. This was also the age of the great violin makers of Cremona: Amati, Stradivari, and Guarneri.

The 17th century also saw the birth of the orchestra, driven in large part by the growth in opera, the size of the ensemble growing along with the visual spectacle onstage. Keyboard music (mainly for harpsichord and organ) also flourished, and virtuosi such as Johann Pachelbel and the Couperins attracted much attention in court and church circles.

**THE STAGING OF OPERA**

Opera began as a court entertainment, usually for specific private occasions such as a marriage between two noble households. Venice opened a public opera house as early as 1637 and other cities, such as Hamburg (1678), gradually followed. The high ticket prices, however, restricted attendance to the merchant classes and above. Public demand ensured that performances grew more and more spectacular. Large amounts of money were spent on lavish costumes, lighting, and staging, with special effects including airborne chariots, gods descending from the heavens by means of complex systems of ropes and pulleys, and ornate group dances.

**BAROQUE OPERA SET**

The opera *Giunio Bruto* – the first act of which was by Cesarini, the second by Caldara, and the third by Alessandro Scarlatti – was first performed in 1707.

Although the innovations of the early Baroque came out of Italy, distinctive national styles began to emerge. The Italian style was one of melodic dominance, virtuosity, and a strong sense of metre, while the French style, developed by Lully at the court of Louis XIV, was strongly influenced by dance rhythms. The German style, taken to its greatest heights by J S Bach, was a hybrid of the two, with the addition of a contrapuntal element.
“The end of all good music is to affect the soul.”

CLAUDIO MONTEVERDI
Claudio Monteverdi

More than any composer, Claudio Monteverdi defined the transition from the Renaissance style to the Baroque. Although his early madrigals reflect the lush chromatic style of the late Renaissance, Monteverdi not only embraced the simplified new style but was also its greatest advocate. His opera L’Orfeo, which explored the musical and dramatic possibilities of the new style, marked the beginning of a new era.

Monteverdi began his musical career young, publishing his first book of madrigals at age 15 and his second eight years later. At this time he was making a living performing, eventually securing a position as a lowly court musician for the Duke of Mantua. It was here that he met his wife Claudia Cattaneo, the daughter of a colleague in the string band. Although his time in Mantua was productive, Monteverdi felt undervalued as a composer, and eventually left for his home town of Cremona. A year later, he moved on to the more prestigious position of maestro di cappella at St Mark’s Cathedral in Venice. In addition to his duties there he also continued to take on outside commissions, including several from his old employer, the Duke of Mantua. He often wrote music for the annual Venetian Carnival, most notably the stage work Il combattimento de Tancredi e Clorinda for a commedia troupe in 1624. Monteverdi cultivated his relationships with wealthy patrons and with other composers (Heinrich Schütz visited in 1628–29) and enjoyed a quiet middle age until 1630, when plague and a war in Mantua rocked Venice; subsequently Monteverdi entered the priesthood. His final years were spent revising his earlier works, completing his treatise on seconda pratica, and composing new music. His final book of madrigals was published posthumously in 1651.

A prolific songwriter, Monteverdi is best known for his secular madrigals on the theme of love.
Monteverdi’s early madrigals may have been firmly in the traditional style, but by 1600 he had already begun to incorporate elements of the new, more austere style into his works, a practice which made him the target of criticism from conservative music critic Giovanni Artusi. Monteverdi responded by including a manifesto on the seconda pratica as a preface to his fifth book of madrigals in 1605. His published madrigals were already known as far as Copenhagen when he wrote his first opera, L’Orfeo, in 1607. A second opera, Arianna, followed the next year, fuelled by his grief over the loss of his wife. Arianna proved even more popular than L’Orfeo, particularly the Lament, which is the only surviving portion of the opera. Following his appointment to St Mark’s in 1613, the focus of Monteverdi’s writing shifted to sacred choral music, although he continued to write madrigals and dramatic music throughout his life, including Il Ritorno d’Ulisse in Patria (1640) and L’Incoronazione di Poppea (1642) for the new opera in Venice.

**KEY WORKS**

**LUCI SERENE E CHIARE**

**CHORAL**

This is a transitional madrigal, with elements of both the old and new styles. The five-part text setting is clear and uncomplicated; this may be in part to allow instruments to either replace or double vocal parts, as a later arrangement with basso continuo suggests. The poem “Eyes serene and clear / You inflame me” by Ridolfo Arlotti is on the subject of suffering from the pangs of love.

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**SI, CH’IO VORREI MORIRE**

**CHORAL**

Another five-part madrigal, Si, ch’io vorrei morire hides a much more earthy message. The references to dying in the text are an allusion to a much more pleasant “ending”, as supported by both other portions of the lyrics (“Ah mouth! Ah lips! Ah tongue!”) and the rather unsubtle rising and falling of the music.

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**CRUDA AMARILLI**

**CHORAL**

From the fifth book of madrigals, this five-part madrigal is more harmonically stable than Luci serene, although elements of the older polyphonic style remain. This madrigal was specifically cited by Artusi as an example of the “Imperfections of Modern Music”. The text (“Cruel Amaryllis”) is taken from Giovanni Guarini’s play Il pastor fido, a popular source for contemporary composers.
Though not his first opera, Monteverdi’s *L’Orfeo* was the first to gain broad acceptance and to popularize the elements of the *seconda prattica*. Based on the ancient Orpheus myth, the opera presents a variety of styles: “dry” and fully accompanied recitative, florid arias, choruses and instrumental interludes. Also, in keeping with the traditions of Classical Greek drama, he makes use of *deus ex machina* (“god from a machine”) in the final act.

**PROLOGUE** (16:30) Following the opening fanfare, the spirit of Music appears to introduce the tale.

**ACT ONE** (16:30) Nymphs and shepherds gather to celebrate the wedding of Orpheus and Euridice. They dance and offer up thanks to the gods.

**ACT TWO** (25:20) Orpheus is telling of his joy when a messenger arrives with bad tidings: Euridice has been killed by a snake. The assembled crowd bewail their grief, while Orpheus vows to descend to Hades to win Euridice back.

**ACT THREE** (27:00) Orpheus, guided by the spirit of Hope, arrives in the Underworld. He charms the boatman, Charon, to sleep with his song, and continues onward.

**ACT FOUR** (16:20) Won over by Orpheus’s music, Persephone begs her husband, Pluto, to release Euridice; he agrees, on the condition that Orpheus not look upon her until he has returned to the living world. He sings first of his joy and then of his growing doubts that she is following him. Hearing a noise and fearing attack by the Furies, Orpheus turns, but as he sees Euridice she fades from view.

**ACT FIVE** (16:20) Orpheus returns to Thrace to mourn. His father, Apollo, chastises him and invites him to return to “where true virtue finds its due reward, joy, and tranquillity”. They rise to the heavens on a cloud, singing.

Monteverdi’s *Vespers for the Blessed Virgin* was written during his service for the Duke of Mantua, although his duties did not include composing sacred music. In fact, the work is dedicated to Pope Paul V and was published in a volume which also included his

**FOCUS**

Monteverdi’s writings on the *seconda prattica* and his madrigals, sacred music, and operas in that style make him the most influential composer of his time. His music also shows a slow movement from modal harmonies to the key-based tonal system we use today. He also played a vital role in the creation of secular music for the general public.
Although Allegri composed and published a steady stream of sacred works throughout his lifetime, he is remembered largely for his *Miserere*, an elaborate sacred motet sung by the papal choir during Holy Week every year until 1870. The details of the work were a closely guarded secret, although a fourteen-year-old Mozart reputedly reproduced the work from memory after one hearing.

**LIFE AND MUSIC**

Allegri’s position as singer and maestro di cappella of the papal choir crowned a career which began as a boy chorister at age nine. He commenced his studies in composition with G M Nanino, the maestro di cappella at Rome’s San Luigi dei Francesi. After appointments at cathedrals in Fermo and Tivoli, Allegri returned to Rome, eventually joining the papal choir. The music that he wrote for the Sistine Chapel, unlike his previous work, was old-fashioned for the time, following in the stile antico (“ancient style”) of Palestrina, but, like that of Palestrina, demonstrating great subtlety and clarity of style. Allegri also published eight books of sacred motets in a more modern style between 1618 and 1639, which were intended for wider usage.

**KEY WORKS**

**MISERERE MEI DEUS**

*PSALM SETTING*  
12:10  
1  
2

Allegri’s famous *Miserere* and the shroud of secrecy surrounding it contain a larger story. The work itself is relatively simple, alternating between five-part and four-part choir sections separated by plainsong, and would have been performed with one singer on each part. What the Vatican did not wish to have copied were the added embellishments.

Allegri joined the choir of the Sistine Chapel as composer and singer in 1629, and remained a member until his death.

above the basic chords; whereas with other similar compositions the singers would have added their own ornaments to the written music, often changing them with each performance, the embellishments for the *Miserere* (including the haunting high C) were also written down and had to be memorized by the choir, who would have been singing in the dark. The text is taken from Psalm 51 and begins “Have mercy upon me, O God”. The psalm setting is traditionally sung as part of the Holy Week services leading up to Easter as a penitential song.
Thomas Weelkes

- **1575–1623**
- **English**
- **75**

After establishing himself as a fine madrigal composer while still a teenager, the future looked bright for Thomas Weelkes. In 1603 he held a lucrative post at Chichester Cathedral, composed fine Church music, had a wealthy wife, and his recent book of madrigals – expressive, rich, and brilliantly constructed – was one of the most important of the English tradition. However, he began to spend more time in the tavern than the church, and his personal life and quality of work went into a long decline. He was eventually dismissed from his post at the cathedral for unruly, drunken behaviour.

**MILESTONES**

- 1597 First book of madrigals published
- 1598 Organist, Winchester College
- 1600 Composes madrigals for five and six voices
- 1617 Loses position at Chichester Cathedral

Johann Jacob Froberger

- **1616–1667**
- **German**
- **100**

Froberger’s keyboard music reflects his life: cosmopolitan and well-travelled, combining Italian, French, and German elements. He was court organist in Vienna, studied with Frescobaldi in Rome, and performed throughout Europe. Froberger was an early pioneer of the keyboard suite, some examples of which have personal programmes, with subtitles such as “Plainte, written in London to dispel melancholy”, written after he had lost all his money to pirates.

**MILESTONES**

- 1634 Moves to Vienna
- 1637 Appointed court organist to Emperor Ferdinand III
- 1649 Publishes set of ricercares; starts three-year tour of Europe
- 1653 Starts work for Imperial Chapel at Regensburg
- 1656 Ricercares use new types of tuning
- 1662 Arrives penniless in London

Orlando Gibbons

- **1583–1625**
- **English**
- **c.100**

Born in Oxford and educated at Cambridge, where he sang with the King’s College choir, Gibbons worked for the Chapel Royal from 1603 until his untimely death. He was recognised as one of the finest organists of his age; as a composer he mastered all the forms and styles of his time, including consort and keyboard music, but is remembered mainly for his fine church pieces and hymn tunes. What survives of the second of his two services, and his many verse anthems such as *This is the Record of John*, contain outstanding music, full of vitality and deft counterpoint that typifies the Baroque style. Most of his secular songs were written before he was 30, and the beautiful “Silver Swan”, from the *First Set of Madrigals and Motetts*, has become well-known. So sudden was his death that he never made a will; his widow died before his estate was settled.

**MILESTONES**

- 1598 Enters Cambridge University
- 1605 Becomes Gentleman of Chapel Royal
- 1612 *First Set of Madrigals and Motetts*
- 1619 Chamber musician to James I
- 1622 *O Clap Your Hands*, 8-part anthem
- 1623 Organist and chorus master at Westminster Abbey
- 1625 Dies suddenly from brain haemorrhage

**Along with his contemporary William Byrd, Orlando Gibbons contributed to the first book to be published containing music for the virginal.**
Girolamo Frescobaldi

1583–1643  Italian  35

As the child prodigy of a rich family, the young Frescobaldi had his musical skills displayed throughout Italy. A virtuoso keyboard player, he went on to enjoy prestigious court and church posts in Ferrara, Rome, and Mantua. After turning out some early madrigals, Frescobaldi focused on keyboard music, becoming the first major composer to face the challenges of developing a musical narrative. An outstanding improviser on harpsichord and organ, he produced an imaginative body of work covering every keyboard genre of the time, while also pioneering new techniques, especially in his capriccios and toccatas. Frescobaldi’s influence was wide and long-lasting.

A virtuoso organist and imaginative improviser, Frescobaldi spent much of his musical career delighting court and Church with his keyboard skills.

**MILESTONES**

1607  Makes only trip abroad, to Flanders
1608  Becomes organist at St Peter’s, Rome
1613  Marries the mother of his illegitimate child
1627  Publishes his second *Libro di toccate* (Book of Toccata) for keyboard
1635  Publishes *Fiori musicali* (Flowers of Music), organ music for Mass

Francesco Cavalli

1602–1676  Italian  c.70

Cavalli was a close associate (and possibly pupil) of Monteverdi, on whose death he took over as the leading composer and performer in Venice. Born Francesco Caletto, he was an outstanding singer, and entered St Mark’s choir under Monteverdi, eventually becoming the organist. Early on he composed Church music (much of it lost), but after marrying into money, he turned to stage projects. Public opera was booming, and he wrote 40 or so with great success, with *Equisto*, *Giasone*, *Xerxes*, and *Erismena* being staged throughout Italy. In contrast to early academic operas, Cavalli’s were fast-paced and comic, and he developed the contrast between recitative and aria. His box-office appeal declined toward his death, but his reputation remained high.

**MILESTONES**

1616  Joins the choir of St Mark’s, Venice
1639  Stages his first opera, *Le nozze di Teti e di Peleo* (The Marriage of Teti and Peleo)
1643  Composes *Equisto*, opera
1662  Stages *Escole amante* (Hercules in Love), opera, for Louis XIV in Paris
1665  Made principal organist at St Mark’s

The daily round of religious ritual at St Mark’s inspired much of the drama and vivacity in Cavalli’s music.
Giacomo Carissimi

1605–1674
Italian
c.280

From the age of 23 until his death 46 years later, Carissimi was maestro di capella (chapel master) at Sant’Apollinare, the church of the Jesuit Collegio Germanico in Rome, renowned for its musical tradition. With his simple but effective style, he established the features of the Latin oratorio, using music as a kind of musical sermon, to vividly illustrate a religious point. He is famous, also, for having practically invented the cantata, whose text usually dealt with the pain of unrequited love. Carissimi was a prolific composer of motets and cantatas, though how prolific is hard to pinpoint, as many pieces were destroyed or lost. Though melancholy, Carissimi was a kind, well-respected man, and he supplemented his income by loaning money on generous repayment terms.

MILESTONES

- 1628 Becomes maestro di capella at Assisi
- 1630 Appointed maestro di capella at Sant’ Apollinare, Rome
- c.1650 Composes Jephtha, oratorio
- 1654 Teaches Marc-Antoine Charpentier
- 1659 Funds two college sopranos from his own pocket

The Church of Santa Maria de Apollinare
in Rome provided the inspirational setting for the first of Carissimi’s oratorios, stimulating worship through the beauty of music.

Heinrich Schütz

1585–1672
German
500

Spotted by a musician staying at the family inn, the young Schütz was encouraged to take up music, and went on to become the leading German composer of his time. After studying music in Venice, Schütz was appointed musical director at the Dresden court, where he composed for religious and political occasions. Although his huge output – mostly sacred – is strongly influenced by Italian styles, his dramatic choral works, inspired by the ideals of Martin Luther, put German music on the map. Schütz enjoyed a long and fruitful life, despite the early death of his wife and child.

At the family house in Weissenfels, Germany, the gifted young Schütz impressed a visiting musician with his precocious vocal and keyboard skills.

MILESTONES

- 1609 Studies under Giovanni Gabrieli
- 1615 Starts work at the Dresden court
- 1627 Stages the first German opera, Dafne
- 1629 Publishes his first book of Symphoniae sacrae (Sacred Symphonies)
- 1633 Starts work at the Copenhagen court
- 1636 Publishes his first Geistliche concerti (concertos for voices and instruments)
Jean-Baptiste Lully

Jean-Baptiste Lully began life as the son of an Italian miller, but, after moving to France, his rapid ascension to a prestigious position in Louis XIV’s (the Sun King) court made him the most influential composer in the history of French music. For about a quarter of a century he had almost total control over French musical life, including opera, ballet, and theatrical music, as well as music publishing.

Lully entered the French court at the age of 13 as a page and tutor, but soon joined the music establishment there. He became first a composer and then, Superintendent of the King’s Chamber Music with responsibilities including direction of the King’s prestigious string ensemble, the “24 violons du Roi”. Much of his later career was devoted to composing ballets and grand operas for the court. Lully’s death is famous: while conducting by pounding out the beat with a cane, he stabbed his toe; gangrene set in and he died soon after.

MILESTONES

1646
Taken to Paris by Chevalier de Guise as tutor to his niece, Louis XIV’s cousin

1652
Becomes ballet dancer at Louis’ court

1661
Appointed Superintendent of Music; is naturalized as a French citizen

1662
Marries Madeleine Lambert, daughter of composer Michel Lambert

1670
 Writes Le bourgeois gentilhomme

1672
Establishes Académie Royale de Musique for the performance of opera

1674
Composes Alceste, opera

1686
Composes Armide, opera

KEY WORKS

LE BOURGEOIS GENTILHOMME

COMEDY-BALLET 103:00 5  

This work came out of a renewed interest in Turkish culture in France following a rare visit to the French court by the Turkish envoy. Lully and the playwright Molière had already collaborated on other comedy-ballets – theatrical works that incorporated music and dance into the spoken drama – but it was with this work that they reached the pinnacle of the genre. The work features musical interludes between acts which, in effect, form part of the play itself. The first interlude, for example, consists of the story’s dancing tutor demonstrating ballet steps. (He teaches the “middle-class gentleman” of the title how to behave in society.)

The inclusion of music and dancing tutors in the plot allows for further blending of music, dance, and drama in one work. The style of both text and music is light-hearted and satirical, with frequent tongue-in-cheek musical references to both the Turkish style and other modern musical fashions.

Most of Lully’s operas included prologues that glorified the Sun King or the concept of kingship. Supernatural plots gave scope for lavish and ingenious stage effects.
Armide was the last of a series of lyric tragedies by Lully and his long-time librettist, Philippe Quinault. They had worked together since Lully’s first opera, *Les fêtes de l’Amour et de Bacchus* in 1672. Quinault retired after *Armide*, which premiered in 1686, although Lully wrote two more operas before his death the following year.

Based on an epic poem by Italian poet, Torquato Tasso, and set during the First Crusade, the story is that of the sorceress Armide who falls in love with her sworn enemy Renaud. Unusually for the era, the opera centres almost entirely on the title character and her conflicting emotions. The work was an immediate success and became a staple of the French repertoire.

The opera opens with a Prologue in which the goddesses Glory and Wisdom summarize the plot and (obliquely) praise the king.

**ACT ONE** Armide has captured some crusaders in Damascus, but is obsessed with Renaud whom she cannot defeat. Her obsession worsens when Renaud frees the prisoners.

**ACT TWO** Renaud assures one of the rescued crusaders that his heart is safe from Armide’s spells, but Armide send demons disguised as nymphs and shepherds to put Renaud to sleep. Armide approaches the sleeping warrior intending to kill him, but instead falls deeply in love.

**ACT THREE** Having won control over Renaud through sorcery, Armide finds herself controlled as well by her love, which cannot be returned. She implores the spirit of Hate to cure her, but when it attempts to do so she recants and sends Hate away. In spite, Hate condemns her to love eternally.

**ACT FOUR** Renaud’s companions attempt to rescue him, only to be confounded by Armide’s machinations.

**ACT FIVE** After a love scene in Armide’s magical palace, she departs. Renaud’s companions arrive and break her spell over him. Before they can leave she returns and, realizing she cannot keep Renaud, begs to be taken as a captive so that she may stay with him. Renaud, bound by Glory and Duty, refuses and leaves. Doomed by Hate’s curse, Armide leaves in a flying chariot as demons destroy her castle.

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**FOCUS**

**INFLUENCES**

As the sole composer of French opera for 15 years, Lully created a national style. His operas and opera-ballets were performed all over Europe, and inspired later composers such as Rameau and Gluck. Publication of his instrumental overtures and dance suites led to the development of the French suite genre used by Bach and Handel.
Barbara Strozzi

1619–1677 Italian 8

The adopted, possibly illegitimate, daughter of Giulio Strozzi, the respected Venetian poet, Barbara Strozzi (alias Valle) was a singer much in demand at Venice’s cultural events and meetings who became a composing professional. A student of Francesco Cavalli, she sang in many of his operas. She must also have performed her own compositions, many of which were for solo female voice on themes of love and emotional conflict. Strozzi published eight works, most after her father’s death in 1652, suggesting she had to compose for her livelihood. She never married but had four children.

Giovanni Battista Vitali

1632–1692 Italian 35

A composer, cellist, and singer, Vitali spent his life working in Italy’s vibrant court, church, and institutional music scene. His relatively modest output includes some innovative instrumental music, and his ideas – such as linking themes and keys across movements, and the use of dance rhythms in all movements – laid the foundations of the Baroque trio sonata for successors such as Arcangelo Corelli and Henry Purcell. A pioneer in music publishing, Vitali also wrote important textbooks on musical composition, such as Artifici musicali, first published in 1689.

Dietrich Buxtehude

c.1637–1707 Danish 275

Buxtehude was effectively director of music for the city of Lübeck, Germany, and such was his reputation that J S Bach walked 300 km to hear him play. Only two major collections of his work (sets of ensemble sonatas) were published in his lifetime; his music was circulated mainly in manuscript copies. Though he wrote a wide range of vocal music, including the secular cantata “Alles, was ihr tut” (All That You Do), he is now remembered for his organ works – Lutheran chorales, wide-ranging improvisatory preludes, and the ostinato pieces which inspired Bach.

He had four daughters, and a condition of employment for his successor was to marry one; Johann Mattheson, a candidate in 1703, lost interest in the job when he realised this.

Buxtehude was organist at Lübeck’s Marienkirche but also ran concert series in the church, at which sacred dramatic works were performed.
Marc-Antoine Charpentier

Unusually for a French composer of his time and talent, Charpentier never achieved a position at Louis XIV’s court. Instead, he produced a wide variety of music for theatre and Church, collaborating with the dramatist Molière and producing several Masses, motets, and sacred dramas, including his “Christmas Oratorio”. Seen as too “Italian” in his lifetime, his unique style is now coming to be fully appreciated.

LIFE AND MUSIC

Unlike his contemporary Lully, an Italian who came to epitomise French music, Charpentier was a Parisian who went to Italy to study composition, bringing back with him not only the works of Italian composers but also a unique hybrid writing style. He also enjoyed the patronage of Madamoiselle de Guise, a well-connected French noblewoman with a large private musical entourage, while his reputation as a composer of sacred music not only helped him to procure a position at the Jesuit church of Saint-Louis in Paris, followed by Sainte-Chapelle, but also won him commissions for the chapel of the Dauphin.

KEY WORKS

THE CHRISTMAS ORATORIO
FRIGIDAE NOCTIS UMBRA, H414

Charpentier wrote four short Christmas oratorios in his lifetime; this one may have been composed for his patron, Madamoiselle de Guise, in the mid-1680s. Written for six voices, two violins, and basso continuo, the work comprises seven movements beginning with an introductory prelude for instruments alone. Throughout the oratorio one can hear elements of the older polyphonic style, particularly in the central chorus, reflecting Charpentier’s Italian training.

MESSE DE MINUIT POUR NOËL, H9

Charpentier’s Midnight Mass for Christmas is quintessentially a work of light to be performed at the darkest hour. Each of the six movements, set to the text of the traditional Latin liturgy, is based on popular French carol tunes of the period (some of which may still be known to audiences today). The Mass as a whole alternates between upbeat tunes and gentle lilting melodies, reflecting the contemplation of the Christ child.
Arcangelo Corelli

Corelli, among his contemporaries, was the most famous violinist-composer of the Baroque period, and one of the most influential after Monteverdi. Although not a prolific composer – his entire output consisted of six collections – his instrumental writing was admired for its harmonic refinement and brilliance of style, and was highly influential to many composers, including Bach and Handel.

LIFE AND MUSIC

There is still very little is known about Corelli’s background, although he did spend most of his working life in Rome. There he gained the patronage of several prominent aristocratic and royal supporters of the arts, including the exiled Queen of Sweden. He was regularly employed to direct performances of operas, oratorios, and other large works, including those by Handel. Today, Corelli is primarily known for his 12 Concerti grossi that represented a new form of composition. As a violin virtuoso, he contributed to establishing modern bowing techniques and was one of the earliest performers to use double-stopping and chordal effects on the instrument. As a teacher of the violin his achievements were also outstanding, and his pupils included Francesco Geminiani and Antonio Vivaldi.

MILESTONES

1679 Becomes chamber musician to the exiled Queen Christina of Sweden
1681 First set of 12 trio church sonatas, Sonate da chiesa, Op.1, published
1687 Appointed music master to Cardinal Pamphili
1694 Composes Sonate da camera, Op. 4
1714 12 Concerto grosso, Op. 6, published

KEY WORKS

CONCERTO GROSSO, OP. 6, NO. 8

Corelli’s Op. 6 collection, published posthumously as a set of 12, are considered by many to be the epitome of the concerto grosso form. The first eight are set in “sonata da chiesa” or church sonata-style, the last of which has been dubbed the “Christmas Concerto”, largely due to Corelli’s label of “Pastorale” for the final movement, and would have been performed on Christmas Eve.

CONCERTO GROSSO, OP. 6, NO. 10

The remaining four works in the Op. 6 set are in “sonata da camera” or chamber sonata-style. Unlike the more serious sacred works, the chamber sonatas are based on dances – in this instance, an Allemande, a Corrente, and a Minuetto – preceded by a stately Preludio movement. Corelli devoted much of his life to this fine collection, and both J S Bach and Handel drew upon his popular style.
Corelli’s sonata known as “La Folia” concludes with a set of 24 variations on a simple melodic and harmonic sequence thought to have originated in Spain in the late 15th or early 16th century. However, this piece did not appear in print until 1672, in a version by Jean Baptiste Lully (Air des hautbois Les folies d’Espagne). Whether popularized by Lully, or simply a well-known tune, “La Folia” proved to be popular: between 1672 and Corelli’s “Folia” Sonata of 1700, at least 28 other works used some version of the sequence.

The basic melody and harmony are elementary, comprising two short, virtually identical phrases. It is this simplicity, along with the compelling harmonic sequence, that is the likely source of its popularity, lending itself well to variation and improvisation. The variations themselves range in tempo from adagio to vivace, building in speed and intensity through subsequent variations and then subsiding again. The accompaniment is as important as the melody, and indeed the main melody occasionally appears in the bass line, while the violin plays arpeggiated chords in accompaniment. Occasionally the harmonic structure is also modified.

Corelli, virtuoso violinist that he was, incorporates numerous coloratura violin techniques throughout, ranging from florid passagework and arpeggiation to the messa di voce, a sustained note which swells from soft to loud and then fades slowly away again. In addition to the notated ornaments, the composer leaves ample room for improvisation on the part of the individual performer; in fact, several editions of the work, published by others after the 1700 edition, claim to incorporate ornaments used by Corelli himself in performance. However, it is likely that Corelli would have preferred each performance to show off the soloist’s own inspirational flourishes, rather than slavishly mimic those of the original composer. Many editions of Corelli’s “Folia” Sonata were published in his lifetime, including an arrangement for recorder and bass.
**Johann Pachelbel**

1653–1706 German c.346

Pachelbel was one of the dominant figures of late 17th-century European keyboard and chamber music. Although chiefly known today for his Canon in D, he was well-known during his lifetime as both an organist and a prolific composer. His patron, the Duke of Saxe-Eisenach, once described him as a “perfect and rare virtuoso”, while his development of the organ chorale as a form and his myriad *Magnificat Fugues for St Sebaldus* are particularly noteworthy.

**LIFE AND MUSIC**

Pachelbel’s career is marked by a series of posts as organist at increasingly prestigious places, and by his growing influence as a teacher and composer. When work dried up at one position he moved on to the next, joining the courts at Eisenach and Stuttgart and then moving to Gotha as town organist. He was then invited by his home town, Nuremberg, to return to take up the prestigious post at St Sebaldus, where he remained until his death. Pachelbel’s organ repertoire is particularly extensive, but it is in his cantus firmus organ chorales (which feature an ornamented imitative accompaniment to the main theme) and his later fugues that his influence is greatest.

**MILESTONES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1673</td>
<td>Becomes deputy organist of St Stephen’s Cathedral in Vienna</td>
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<tr>
<td>1677</td>
<td>Becomes court organist at Eisenach</td>
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<tr>
<td>1678</td>
<td>Appointed organist at the Protestant Predigerkirche at Erfurt</td>
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<tr>
<td>c.1680</td>
<td>Composes Canon in D</td>
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<tr>
<td>1681</td>
<td>Marries Barbara Gabler</td>
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<tr>
<td>1683</td>
<td>Wife and infant son die of plague</td>
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<tr>
<td>1685</td>
<td>Marries Judith Drommer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1690</td>
<td>Joins Württemberg Court at Stuttgart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1692</td>
<td>Flees French invasion; becomes town organist at Gotha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1695</td>
<td>Invited to take up position at St Sebaldus in Nuremberg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1695</td>
<td>Starts writing <em>Magnificat Fugues</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1699</td>
<td>Writes <em>Hexachordum Apollinis</em>, harpsichord</td>
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</tbody>
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**KEY WORKS**

**CANON IN D**

In this now famous piece, three violins play the canon (each part entering with the exact same music two bars apart), while a basso continuo plays a ground, a short, simple passage of eight notes repeated over and over again: 54 times in this instance. The canon theme itself is also simple, starting with long, slow notes, then becoming quicker and more ornate as the work progresses. Although Pachelbel’s music was well-regarded in his lifetime, the little Canon in D remained relatively obscure until recently, gaining its current status as a staple of the classical repertoire only in the early 1970s. It has appeared in arrangements from full orchestra to string quartet, as a solo keyboard work, and in countless other versions including pop remixes.

Pachelbel’s *Hexachordum Apollinis*, six sets of variations for harpsichord, had a title page engraved by composer and organist Nicolaus Schurtz.
The Magnificat plays an important role in the Protestant liturgy of the vespers services, and Pachelbel wrote several different settings of the text during his lifetime. Traditionally the organ was used in this context either to play alternate verses of the chant in some form, or to play a short prelude as a means of determining the opening pitch for the singers. Pachelbel's 95 Magnificat Fugues had the latter, more utilitarian role in the daily services: to bring the singers in. He therefore produced several short fugues in each of the church modes, so that the appropriate one could be used depending on the vocal music being sung on a given day, from the primus tonus (literally “first tone”, based on C) through every note of the scale:

Magnificat Primi Toni – 23 fugues
Magnificat Secundi Toni – 10 fugues
Magnificat Tertii Toni – 11 fugues
Magnificat Quartii Toni – 8 fugues
Magnificat Quinti Toni – 12 fugues
Magnificat Sexti Toni – 10 fugues
Magnificat Septimi Toni – 8 fugues
Magnificat Octavi Toni – 13 fugues

Pachelbel used original themes in most of the fugues, although some do incorporate the standard plainchant in part or in full. Like his previous fugues based on chorales, these settings are relatively uncomplicated and are closer to preludes than the more serious fugues other northern German composers were producing. Nearly all of Pachelbel’s fugues need no use of pedals. Nevertheless, this large body of short fugues in different keys, styles, themes, and moods (from lilting and dance-like to bold with fanfare motifs) represents possibly the most impressive collection of organ music until J S Bach’s a generation later.

These works also gave Pachelbel an opportunity to experiment with equal temperament, a tuning system of which he was a proponent. In the Baroque period the different tuning systems in use meant that intervals, particularly thirds and fifths, would sound different in different keys. The equal-temperament system, in which all semitones are equal and thus all keys equal, was gaining acceptance during Pachelbel's lifetime, and would be more dramatically showcased in Bach’s The Well-Tempered Clavier.
**Heinrich Ignaz Franz von Biber**

- **1644–1704** [A] Austrian  
- **160**

In 1670, Biber, a popular violin virtuoso, was sent by his employer in Bohemia to negotiate the purchase of new violins. He never returned. Instead he took a job with the Archbishop of Salzburg. His career flourished and he rose from servant to the nobility, having performed at, and composed for, royal occasions. Biber’s picturesque and virtuosic violin sonatas include many special effects such as unusual tunings.

**MILESTONES**

- **1669** Writes *Sonata representativa*
- **1674** Composes the “Rosary” *Sonatas*
- **1677** Performs for Emperor Leopold
- **1682** Composes for Imperial Jubilee
- **1690** Emboldened by Leopold
- **1704** Dies in Salzburg: his four surviving children become notable musicians

**Alessandro Stradella**

- **1644–1682** [I] Italian  
- **309**

Of noble birth, Stradella was a singer, singing teacher, violinist, and composer. When an unknown assassin killed him in Genoa for reasons still unclear, it was the second attempt on his life. The first had been in 1677, after his reluctant marriage to Agnese, a pupil with whom he had run away. Her former lover had hired the attackers, and it caused an international incident. Throughout all the intrigue Stradella kept promoting his music, often receiving commissions from nobility. He composed his highly popular works quickly, including 170 cantatas, many operas, and the earliest known concerto-grosso-style work.

**MILESTONES**

- **1674** Composes *Vola, vola*, concerto-grosso-style serenata  
- **1678** Flees Rome for Genoa  
- **1678** *La forza dell’amor paterno* (*The Power of a Father’s Love*), opera

**Marin Marais**

- **1656–1728** [F] French  
- **650**

A shoemaker’s son, Marais learned the viol so fast that he surpassed his teacher after six months. He soon joined the Paris Opéra orchestra, moving on to a career as a pioneering viol virtuoso – known internationally for his wonderful technique and tone – and as a composer. He wrote four operas but is best known today for his imaginative instrumental music, which ranges from short, simple pieces to virtuoso experiments which use all the keys. From 1709, Marais withdrew from public life.

**MILESTONES**

- **1679** Musician at French royal court  
- **1686** Composes his first pieces for viol  
- **1706** Writes *Alcyone*, opera

**John Blow**

- **c.1648–1708** [E] English  
- **c.400**

Proud and statesmanlike, Blow rose from humble provincial origins to become the foremost musician in England by his mid-20s. He was a major figure in Restoration music and had royal posts created specially for him, including work at St Paul’s Cathedral and Westminster Abbey. His secular works include ceremonial music, and *Venus and Adonis*, the first English opera. He wrote much religious music, notably over 100 strongly melodic anthems. Of his 12 Anglican services, the one in G major is masterly.

**MILESTONES**

- **1668** Made organist of Westminster Abbey  
- **1683** Writes masque *Venus and Adonis*  
- **1685** Composes three anthems for the coronation of James II  
- **1695** Writes *Ode on the Death of Purcell*
Couperin was the most famous of a very distinguished family of musicians, and became known as “Couperin le Grand”. He was only 11 when he inherited the prestigious organist’s post at St Gervais in Paris on the death of his father, Charles. Church composer Michel-Richard Delalande took the post until Couperin could assume his duties at 18. From then on Couperin’s star continued to rise. He won an appointments to the royal court at 25 and became one of the leading teachers of harpsichord and organ of his generation. He wrote a vast amount of sublime keyboard music, including his 27 famous suites (ordres) of harpsichord music, giving many of them evocative titles. He also produced several chamber and vocal works, and some key theoretical writings. His L’art de toucher le clavecin (The Art of Playing the Harpsichord), published in 1716, was much admired by Bach, with whom he corresponded.

**MILESTONES**

- 1690 Obtains a privilège du Roi (printing licence) to publish his organ Masses
- 1693 Louis XIV appoints him as one of the four court organist-composers
- 1694 Becomes tutor to king’s children
- 1702 Ennobled as chevalier
- 1703 Publishes psalm settings for the Chappelle du Roi (Royal Chapel)
- 1713 Publishes first book of Pièces de clavecin, harpsichord pieces

**KEY WORKS**

**VINGT-CINQUIÈME ORDRE**

SOLÔ HARPSICHORD

This multi-part suite for harpsichord first appeared in print in 1730 in Couperin’s fourth book of the Pièces de Clavecin, his last published work. As with most of Couperin’s harpsichord works, these are character pieces with descriptive (and sometimes enigmatic) titles evoking images and reminiscences.

The opening work, La visionnaire (The Visionary), describes a religious fanatic, and features the dotted rhythms and ornate elaborations.

Couperin’s treatise on harpsichord-playing technique was extremely influential.

common to French music of the period. (His embellishments are always written exactly into the music, excluding performer improvisation.) La misterieuse (The Mysterious One) is a contrasting piece, more elegant and lilting, while La Monflambert – named after the wife of a local councillor, whom it might describe – is more melancholy in mood. Another shift comes in the fourth piece, La muse victorieuse (The Victorious Muse), with its triumphal flourishes in C major. Couperin finished the Ordre in a darker vein, perhaps because of his own declining health: both the title and the music of Les ombres errantes (Wandering Shades) have a pensive, almost funereal aspect.
Henry Purcell
1659–1695
English
515

Despite his relatively short life, Henry Purcell remains one of the most important English composers. His facility in writing for all genres and audiences, his popularity at court through the reigns of three different monarchs, and his vast output of court odes, theatrical music, sacred anthems, secular songs and catches, chamber music, and organ voluntaries are clear testament to his prodigious talent.

Life and Music

Henry Purcell moved in exalted Church and Court circles from an early age, becoming a chorister in the Chapel Royal at age ten, an (unpaid) member of Charles II’s musical retinue at 14, a court composer at 18, and an organist at Westminster Abbey at 20. Considering this meteoric career, perhaps it is unsurprising that Purcell produced so much music for Church and Court services, including numerous sacred choral works and odes for courtly occasions (including several “welcome songs” for Charles II and James II). Purcell also composed secular songs throughout his lifetime, and wrote dramatic musical works for the stage from 1688 onwards.

Key Works

The Fairy Queen

Semi-opera
130:00
5

Written for a stage adaptation broadly based on William Shakespeare’s play A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Purcell’s music for The Fairy Queen – with its vast amount of songs, dances, and other incidental music – raises the work from a play to a semi-opera. Dating from the prolific last few years of the composer’s life, this five-act work contains a mixture of songs, masques, ballet, marches, and incidental music interspersed with spoken dialogue.

I Gave Her Cakes

Catch
1:00

Purcell produced several secular catches (where the same music is sung by each singer in turn), some of which are quite ribald. This example, on a theme of drinking and flirting, dates from 1701.

As court composer, Purcell was called upon to write music for royal celebrations, including the coronation of Queen Mary and William of Orange in 1685.

Milestones

1669 Becomes chorister in the Chapel Royal
1677 Composes elegy What Hope For Us Remains Now He Is Gone? on the death of English composer, Matthew Locke
1679 Takes position as organist of Westminster Abbey
1680 Composes first music for the stage; marries Frances Peters
1683 Keeper of the King’s Instruments; composes first Ode for St Cecilia’s Day
1689 Opera Dido and Aeneas first performed
1691 Composes music for Dryden’s play King Arthur
1692 Composes music for The Fairy Queen, an adaptation of Shakespeare’s play, A Midsummer Night’s Dream.
Full opera was uncommon in 17th century England, so it is not surprising that Purcell composed only one, *Dido and Aeneas*, deciding to concentrate instead on incidental music for existing theatrical works. With a libretto by Nahum Tate, *Dido* owes much to the tradition of courtly masques, and in particular John Blow’s *Venus and Adonis* of 1682. The opera consists of three short acts, each comprising several brief arias, recitatives, and dances; the whole work requires barely an hour to perform. The first known performance in 1689 was at Josiah Priest’s Chelsea School for Girls, although it may have had an earlier premiere at the Royal Court; regardless, it was not performed again until 1700, five years after the composer’s death. The opera’s connection to the girls’ school can be seen in the setting of the work: apart from Aeneas and some minor roles, the cast is almost entirely female.

**ACT ONE** Following the overture, the action begins with the arrival in Carthage of Prince Aeneas, who is fleeing the fall of Troy. Dido, Queen of Carthage, knows that Aeneas is fated to found Rome, but nevertheless falls for the prince, who in turn falls for her (with the active urging of the chorus and Dido’s companion Belinda).

**ACT TWO** Dido’s nemesis, the Sorceress, is introduced, along with her minions, who give voice to their hate. They plot to trick Aeneas into leaving Carthage by sending a witch disguised as Mercury to order him to leave the city and continue his journey onwards. Aeneas has vowed to stay with Dido but cannot disobey a divine command, and he is forced to leave.

**ACT THREE** The witches gloat over their triumph, while Aeneas’s men prepare their ship for departure. Aeneas bids a difficult farewell to Dido, and then leaves. After a final broken-hearted lament, the well-known “When I am laid in earth”, Dido kills herself. The opera concludes with a mournful chorus, “With drooping wings”.

From a structural viewpoint the lament is a fine example of Purcell’s deft compositional touch; it follows the Venetian lament tradition – often seen in the work of Monteverdi – of using a simple repeated bass line with colourful variations above to great dramatic effect.

**FOCUS**

**INFLUENCES**

Purcell studied composition under John Blow (who he succeeded as organist at Westminster Abbey), Christopher Gibbons, and Matthew Locke (who he succeeded as court composer in 1677). Purcell also copied Continental styles; French dance rhythms are common in his works, and his trio sonatas are a conscious imitation of the Italian style.
Alessandro Scarlatti  
1660–1725  Italian  950

A maestro di cappella at 18, and with six successful operas performed in Rome’s aristocratic circles by 23, Scarlatti’s career had a remarkable start. He moved to Naples and by the 1690s was at the peak of his fame. By 1700 the city rivalled Venice as the leading operatic centre, but Scarlatti was by then running into money problems – partly due to his large family – and, in looking for freelance work, he often ignored his contractual duties. After problematic spells in Rome and Venice, he returned to Naples, but, despite his fine reputation, his later, more complex operas achieved only a lukewarm success. Routinely called the founder of Neapolitan opera, it seems his style was mostly pan-Italian; only one of his 110-plus operas, *Trionfo dell’onore*, is Neapolitan in music and text. He died in poverty, and is remembered as the father of the composer Domenico.

**MILESTONES**

- 1670s  Studies in Rome
- 1679  Writes *Gli equivoci nel sembiante*, opera
- 1680  *L’honestà negli amori* performed for the Queen of Sweden
- 1684  Becomes Kapellmeister in Naples.
- 1685  Domenico born
- 1706  Admitted to Arcadian Academy, Rome
- 1721  Composes the *St Cecilia Mass*

It was at the Teatro Capranica in Rome that Scarlatti produced some of his finest and most expressive operas, including *Telemaco* (1718), *Marco Attilio Regolo* (1719), and *Griselda* (1721).

Alessandro Marcello  
1669–1747  Italian  c.45

Marcello led a rich and varied life and enjoyed a successful dilettante existence. He was a prominent member of Venetian cultural life, and his main contribution to music was as an academician. He composed occasionally, and his cantatas are more interesting for their lavish publication than their musical qualities. However, his instrumental music shows an accomplished knowledge of national styles and, thanks to his Oboe Concerto – so appealing to J S Bach that he transcribed it – he has a place in composing immortality.

**MILESTONES**

- 1700  Diplomatic posts in Levant and the Peloponnesse
- 1708  Cantatas published
- 1717  Writes Oboe Concerto
- 1719  Eight books of poetry published
- 1719  Becomes head of the Accademia degli Animosi, Cremona

As well as composing music for different venues, Marcello also collected valuable keyboard and wind instruments.
Tomaso Giovanni Albinoni

1671–1751 • Italian • c.300

Due to his privileged background, Albinoni composed freelance and knew more noble patrons than he did musicians. His prolific output includes 55 operas and 59 concertos, in which he was probably the first to use the three-movement form consistently. As the eldest son of a prosperous merchant in Venice, Albinoni didn’t need to compose for a living and cultivated music more for pleasure than for profit.

He mass-produced his music but, thanks to his melodic gifts and individual style, he was as popular in his lifetime as Corelli and Vivaldi, and J S Bach used his Trio Sonatas as teaching material. But his popular fame rests on a piece he didn’t write: “Albinoni’s Adagio” was composed by Remo Giazotto around 1945; only the bass line was Albinoni’s.

MILESTONES

1694 Composes 12 Trio Sonatas, Op. 1
1705 Marries operatic soprano Margherita Raimondi
1715 Oboe Concerto, Op. 7, published
1722 Supervises I veri amici, opera, Munich
1741 Writes last work, Artamene, opera

Jeremiah Clarke

c.1674–1707 • English • 60

The “Trumpet Voluntary” familiar from wedding ceremonies, once thought to be by Henry Purcell, in fact came from a harpsichord piece by Clarke, a prominent composer in the generation just after Purcell. Clarke served as organist at the cathedrals of Winchester and St Paul’s, and at the Chapel Royal, and his output includes church music, odes, songs, and theatre music. He committed suicide in 1707, apparently after an unhappy love affair.

MILESTONES

1685 Becomes chorister at Chapel Royal
1692 Organist at Winchester College
1697 Writes Prince of Denmark’s March (“Trumpet Voluntary”)
1699 “Vicar-choral” at St Paul’s Cathedral
1700 Becomes “Gentleman-extraordinary” at the Chapel Royal
1702 Writes “Praise the Lord”, anthem, for Queen Anne’s coronation

Francesco Geminiani

1687–1762 • Italian • 80

In the 1710s, the English were highly enamoured of Italian culture and inspired by the virtuosity of Italian violinists like Geminiani, who spent his working life in England. He promoted himself as “Corelli’s pupil” and enjoyed early success with his brilliant and expressive Corelli-like Op. 1 sonatas, and even more with his Op. 3 concerti grossi. Admired mainly as a player, Geminiani performed to nobility rather than the public, and was a prominent figure in London musical circles.

MILESTONES

1714 Abandons Italy for London
1716 Composes Sonatas for Violin, Op. 1
1732 Writes concerti grossi, Opp. 2 and 3
1751 The Art of Playing the Violin published
1756 The Enchanted Forest performed, Paris
“I have heard him boast of composing a concerto faster than a copyist could write it down!”

CHARLES DE BROSSE, 1739
Antonio Vivaldi

1678–1741  Italian  811+

Vivaldi was the most celebrated of all the Italian Baroque composers, and probably one of the most prolific. In addition to his more than 500 concertos, he produced several operas, sacred vocal works (including his famous Gloria), and numerous other instrumental works, while his virtuoso violin playing earned him international fame. Like his father, he had fiery red hair, earning him the nickname “the Red Priest”.

In many respects Antonio Vivaldi’s life was as flamboyant as his music. The son of a violinist, he worked as a violinist himself while training to be a priest. In 1703 he obtained a post at the Pio Ospedale della Pietà, an institution for abandoned (though highly talented) girls, where he taught and earned his students international fame. He rapidly made a name for himself as a composer as well, and publications of his music were widely praised and emulated. In 1713, the governors of the Ospedale commissioned several sacred works from him, and he began to write operas for the Venetian stage. He travelled a great deal, writing operas for Carnival in Mantua and Rome from 1723 onwards, while in Venice the governors requested two concertos a month from him. Vivaldi soon became associated with singer Anna Giraud, who appeared in many of his operas. In 1737, during a public contracts dispute, the rumours about their relationship and his refusal to say Mass (due to asthma) caught up with him, and he was barred from Ferrara. After some opera performances fared badly, he began to lose public favour, and as a final ignominy he fell ill and died on a trip to Vienna, only to be buried in a paupers’ grave.

MUSICAL OUTPUT

| Total: 811+ |
|-------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| CONCERTOS (529+) | 38 | 38 | 1 | 452+ |
| SONATAS (85) | 11 | 18 | 6 | 50 |
| SINFONIAS (19) | | | | 19 |
| OPERAS (55) | 20 | 16 | 19 | |
| SACRED VOCAL (72) | 3 | 1 | 68 | |
| SECULAR VOCAL (51) | 1 | | 6 | 43 |
| 1678 | 1710 | 1720 | 1730 | 1741 | UNDATED |

One of the most prolific composers of his day, Vivaldi is best known for his poetic work *The Four Seasons.*
Arcangelo Corelli may have created the model for the Italian concerto but it was Antonio Vivaldi who showed what could be done with it. Vivaldi’s skill as a violinist and orchestrator can be seen in the challenging roles he gives both to the solo instruments and ensembles, and having the talented performers of the Ospedale at hand meant that he could tailor his works to specific virtuosi and combinations of instruments. His vocal works also demonstrate a deft (and prolific) touch: his sacred solo and choral works range from the energetic to the sublime and show many of the same extravagances of his instrumental writing, and his operas were briefly the toast of Rome. Apart from those published during Vivaldi’s lifetime, the vast majority of his works are undated. Indeed, many have yet to be catalogued, although the current catalogue lists more than 800 works.

**MILESTONES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1693</td>
<td>Begins studies for the priesthood</td>
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<tr>
<td>1703</td>
<td>Following ordination, takes post teaching violin at the Ospedale della Pietà, an orphanage for girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1705</td>
<td>Writes 12 Sonatas for Violin, Op. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1711</td>
<td>Publishes <em>L’estro armonico</em>, Op. 3, a collection of concerti grossi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1716</td>
<td>Appointed maestro de’ concerti at the Pietà</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1718</td>
<td>Appointed music director to the court of Mantua</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1725</td>
<td><em>Le quattro stagioni</em> (<em>The Four Seasons</em>), Op. 8, Nos. 1–4, published</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1740</td>
<td>Becomes music director to the court of Charles VI in Vienna</td>
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</tbody>
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**KEY WORKS**

**GLORIA, RV 589**

**CHORAL**  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Key</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60:00</td>
<td>12</td>
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Written for the Ospedale, Vivaldi’s Gloria contains a wealth of Baroque styles and contrasts. The opening choral annunciation is followed by a more contemplative “Et in terra pax” in B minor, which in turn is followed by a lively duet for women’s voices. The work alternates choral sections and solos throughout; after a brief reprise of the opening music, an energetic choral fugue based on an earlier Gloria by Giovanni Maria Ruggieri brings the piece to a rousing conclusion.

**NULLA IN MUNDO PAX SINCERA**

**CHORAL**  
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>13:30</td>
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The opening Larghetto may sound familiar to many listeners, having appeared in many soundtracks. The motet was written for less dramatic purposes, however; the text is a devotional prayer to Jesus and his peace. In the final Alleluia, the soprano demonstrates the type of florid virtuosity usually reserved for the strings, finishing with a flourish.

**CONCERTO FOR FLUTE, OP. 10, NO. 3, RV 428, “THE GOLDFINCH”**

**ORCHESTRAL**  
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Key</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10:00</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
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The “Goldfinch” Concerto is well known for its more overt representations of birdsong, the composer making use of an instrument for which he rarely wrote. The simple slow movement, set only for flute and continuo, is particularly fine.

The Ospedale della Pietà in Venice, with which Vivaldi was associated for much of his life, is still an orphanage today.
These four concertos for violin and orchestra are part of a set of 12 published in Amsterdam in 1725 titled Il cimento dell’armonia e dell’inventione, or The Trial of Strength Between Harmony and Invention. Unlike most of Vivaldi’s concertos, these four have a clear programme: each concerto was accompanied by an illustrative sonnet printed in the principal violin’s partbook, each on the theme of the respective season. The author of these poems is unknown, although there is some speculation that Vivaldi himself may have written them. The concertos remained popular long after Vivaldi’s death, particularly in France (where “Spring” was a favourite of the French court), and today they are some of the most recorded and performed works ever.

**CONCERTO NO. 1, “SPRING”** (ALLEGRO – LARGO – ALLEGRO, 7:30) In the Largo of “Spring”, the text tells how “the goatherd sleeps with his trusty dog beside him”; the languorous musical setting is interrupted only by the “barking” of a solo viola.

**CONCERTO NO. 2, “SUMMER”** (ALLEGRO NON MOLTO – ADAGIO/PRESTO – PRESTO, 9:15) Here the hot sun beats down on the farm labourers but a storm looms, finally breaking in the third movement in a furious hailstorm matched by an equally furious hail of rapid passagework in the orchestra and solo.

**CONCERTO NO. 3, “AUTUMN”** (ALLEGRO – ADAGIO MOLTO – ALLEGRO, 11:15) “Autumn” opens with a clomping peasant dance to celebrate the harvest and concludes with a hunt (complete with “horns, guns, and dogs”) that eventually brings down a wild stag.

**CONCERTO NO. 4, “WINTER”** (ALLEGRO NON MOLTO – LARGO – ALLEGRO, 8:30)

Finally, “Winter” describes first the shivering and chattering of teeth, then the calm moments by the fire, and finally the fierce joy of sliding on the crackling ice and hearing the whistling of the winter winds.

**INFLUENCES**

The qualities of Vivaldi’s music — concise themes, clarity of form, rhythmic vitality, homophonic texture, balanced phrases, dramatic dialogue between soloist and ensemble — directly influenced many composers including J S Bach, who transcribed several of Vivaldi’s concertos for keyboard.
Telemann was one of the most prolific composers of the Baroque period. He gained an international reputation through both the quality of his music – which always reflected the current musical fashion – and the wide dissemination of his works: his innovative German periodical Der getreue Music-Meister provided amateur musicians with instrumental and vocal pieces for domestic music-making.

### MILESTONES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1701</td>
<td>Enrols as law student at the university in Leipzig; meets Handel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1702</td>
<td>Becomes director of the Leipzig Opera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1704</td>
<td>Appointed director of the New Church in Leipzig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1708</td>
<td>Appointed Konzertmeister in Eisenach; forms friendship with J S Bach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1721</td>
<td>Becomes music director of Hamburg; composes Der geduldige Socrates, opera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1728</td>
<td>Der getreue Music-Meister first published</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1733</td>
<td>Musique de table published</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1755</td>
<td>Composes several sacred oratorios; writes theoretical works</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### LIFE AND MUSIC

After holding several Church and Court positions in Poland and Germany, Telemann was appointed music director and cantor at Hamburg in 1723, a prestigious post that he held until his death. Today he is chiefly known for his solo and trio sonatas, but his instrumental works include many orchestral suites, concertos, quartets, trios, and compositions for keyboard, and his cantatas and larger Church works number over 1,000. There are also some 50 operas, including his delightful comedy Der geduldige Socrates (The Patient Socrates).

### KEY WORKS

#### NOUVEAUX QUATUORS EN SIX SUITES

A collection of six multi-movement chamber works published in 1738 during Telemann’s visit to Paris, this set contains two concertos, two sonatas, and two balletts. While these works reflect the French style, the structure is more Italian. Unlike the trio sonatas, which were scored for four instruments, these are true quartets for three melody instruments (flute, violin, viola da gamba, or cello) and accompaniment (harpsichord).

#### MUSIQUE DE TABLE

This set of works, considered by scholars to be Telemann’s *magnum opus*, was published in three separate anthologies, each containing an orchestral suite, a trio, a quartet, a concerto for several solo instruments, a solo sonata, and a single movement piece the composer titled “Conclusion”.

In 1722, Leipzig city council failed to secure Telemann as Cantor of the Thomaskirche; the post was offered to their third choice, J S Bach.
Telemann popularized the French orchestral suite in Germany, gaining much inspiration from the works of Lully, whom he much admired. There is no standard organization for these multi-movement works, except that they open with the typical overture in the French style: a Grave slow section dominated by dotted rhythms, followed by an Allegro fugal section which leads to a return to the slower opening section. This opening movement is followed by a selection of dance movements, with the only criteria being that they are arranged to contrast with one another.

Telemann also modelled the French fashion of giving programmatic titles to the suites. With this suite he provides six programmatic movements (following the French overture) based on Cervantes’s “Knight of the Doleful Countenance” and his servant Sancho Panza.

**OVERTURE** (GRAVE-ALLEGRO-GRAVE, 5:35) The first movement follows the familiar French overture style, as described in more detail above.

**LE REVEIL DE QUIXOTTE** (ADAGIO, 2:50) *The Knight’s Awakening* characterizes our hero Don Quixote’s slow awakening through the use of long notes, pauses, and simple lyrical minuet rhythm.

**SANCHE PANCHE BERNÉ** (ALLEGRO, 1:50) This movement is an imaginative musical description of Quixote’s servant Sancho Panza through the inclusion of octave jumps, with ornamented turns, within a strict rhythm.

**LA GALOPE DE ROSINANTE / CELUI D’ÂNE DE SANCHE** (ALLEGRO, 2:15) The penultimate movement is a description of Don Quixote’s horse, Rosinante, galloping along in 3/8 time, contrasting with Panza’s donkey, whose stubbornness is reflected by pauses and dotted rhythms.

**LE COUCHÉ DE QUIXOTTE** (ANDANTE, 2:45) Telemann puts our hero to sleep in this final movement, *The Sleep of Quixote*, with a simple, lyrical melody – just the opposite of the previous movement, and returning full circle to the beginning of the story.
Jean-Philippe Rameau was not only the most important French composer of the 18th century but also an influential music theorist. His style of operatic writing ended the posthumous reign of Lully, whose model had been followed for half a century. Also a harpsichordist and organist, Rameau wrote many works for the keyboard. His highly ornamented compositions stand out as the epitome of Rococo style.

**LIFE AND MUSIC**

Rameau composed only a few small keyboard and sacred works prior to 1722, but the publication of his treatise on harmony that year marked the beginning of a productive period. His *Pièces de clavecin* were published in 1724, followed by a new theory book in 1726 and sets of keyboard works and cantatas in 1729. He wrote his first opera, *Hippolyte et Aricie*, at the age of 50. It drew the interest of Louis XV and Rameau later received several royal commissions as a result. His music is characterized by a musical dynamism that contrasts with the staidier styles of Lully – Voltaire once dubbed Rameau “our hero of the semiquavers”.

**MILESTONES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1702</td>
<td>Appointed organist of Clermont-Ferrand Cathedral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1722</td>
<td>Publishes the highly influential <em>Traité de l’harmonie</em>; settles in Paris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1726</td>
<td>Marries Marie-Louise Mangot; publishes <em>Nouveau système de musique théorique</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1733</td>
<td>First opera, <em>Hippolyte et Aricie</em>, is produced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1739</td>
<td>Premiere of <em>Dardanus</em>, opera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1736</td>
<td>Completes <em>Les indes galantes</em>, opera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1741</td>
<td>Writes <em>Pièces de clavecin en concert</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1745</td>
<td>Comedy-ballet <em>Platée</em> is premiered at Versailles for dauphin’s wedding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1754</td>
<td><em>Observations sur notre instinct pour musique</em> is published</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1764</td>
<td>Is ennobled; dies a few months later</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**KEY WORKS**

**PIÈCES DE CLAVECIN (1724)**

In this, his second set of harpsichord works, Rameau first demonstrated his characteristic florid style, with dramatic runs of scales, and rapid and complex passages that fully exploit the harpsichord keyboard. The influence of Couperin is sometimes evident, but Rameau’s athletic style takes these character pieces to a new level.

**PIÈCES DE CLAVECIN EN CONCERT**

Rameau’s final published collection of instrumental works comprises five suites of largely character pieces named after either images or tableaux (*La pantomime*, *L’indiscrète*), or after people such as society figures, students, or composers (*La Marais*, *La Forqueray*, and even *La Rameau*). Although these are ensemble pieces, the harpsichord is very much the featured instrument.

Rameau’s satirical comedy-ballet *Platée*, featuring a grotesque swamp nymph, was written for the wedding of the dauphin to a reputedly plain Spanish princess.
Despite Rameau’s characteristically frenetic compositional style, this, his first opera (or properly, tragédie en musique) is very much in the French tradition: five acts in length, with a divertissement (a dance or other spectacle) in each act, and a plot based on figures from Classical mythology or history. Nonetheless, the style of music received both enthusiastic praise and critical dismissal. Many felt its vigorous passagework was too “Italian” and ornate. This opera may have been the first work to which the term “Baroque” was applied, though this would have been meant as an insult. Ironically, 20 years later, Parisian supporters of Italian opera would accuse Rameau of not being Italian enough.

The libretto by Abbé Simon-Joseph Pellegrin is based on Racine’s play Phèdre of 1677, with elements of the tragedies of Euripides and Seneca. It concerns the incestuous love of Phèdre (Phaedra) for her stepson Hippolyte (Hippolytus). Despite the title, much of the action centres on Hippolyte’s father, Thésée (Theseus), King of Athens.

**PROLOGUE** (27:30) Diana, goddess of the chaste, pledges to protect Hippolyte and Aricie, daughter of a rival family forced by Thésée to remain chaste. Phèdre lusts after Hippolyte.

**ACT ONE** (28:30) Aricie is preparing to take her vow of chastity to Diana when Hippolyte pledges his love to her. Phèdre jealously tries to force Aricie to continue her vows, but Diana offers the young lovers her help.

**ACT TWO** (27:30) Thésée journeys to the Underworld. After a confrontation with Pluto, he leaves. The Fates prophesy that he will find anguish in his house.

**ACT THREE** (29:30) Hippolyte pledges loyalty to Phèdre, which she mistakes for a profession of love and declares hers for him. He rejects her. She seizes his sword in a suicide attempt, which Thésée, just returned, believes to be an attempted rape. He curses his son.

**ACT FOUR** (22:30) Hippolyte and Aricie plan to flee, but a monster summoned by Thésée’s curse attacks Hippolyte, who disappears, engulfed in flames. Phèdre, full of remorse, kills herself.

**ACT FIVE** (31:30) Thésée also attempts suicide, but it is revealed that Hippolyte has been saved by the gods. He and Aricie are reunited in a happy ending.
Very little is known about Domenico Scarlatti’s life, despite the vast amount that has been written about him. Much of his early life was spent travelling with his father, who managed his career closely. However, Scarlatti soon established his own name as a keyboard virtuoso and composer (one story – possibly apocryphal – tells of a performing competition between Domenico and Handel). His appointment to the household of the exiled Queen of Poland led to more prestigious positions: first at the Vatican, then at the Portuguese court, and finally at the Spanish court in Madrid, where the majority of his keyboard works were written.

KEY WORKS

SONATAS IN A MAJOR, K181, K182

Scarlatti’s keyboard sonatas have a distinctive style that is immediately recognizable, despite their extremely simple binary form. Despite the similarity of key and tempo (Allegro) and the use of repeated motives throughout, these two pieces are entirely different in character: K.181 is marked by the repetition of strikingly dissonant chords, while K.182 is more nimble and dance-like, with great leaping arpeggios.

SALVE REGINA

The Salve regina, for soprano, strings, and basso continuo, is one of Scarlatti’s earliest works, dating from the early 1700s. He presents a condensed version of the text in six short movements. Written in a variety of styles – from simple fugues to virtuosic displays of vocal dexterity – the effects range from joyous lyricism to mournful chromaticism.

Festeggio armonico celebrates the betrothal of Scarlatti’s pupil Maria Barbara to the Spanish crown prince.
Scarlatti may be best known for his 500 or more essercizi, or keyboard sonatas, but in the years before his appointment to the Spanish court he composed a variety of music, including 13 operas (now largely forgotten) and several sacred works for the maestro di cappella positions he held. Of the latter, his Stabat Mater for ten voices and basso continuo stands out as a work of great grandeur, depth of expression, and harmonic colour. Composed in Rome for the Cappella Giulia sometime between 1713 and 1719, it is thought that this work may have been intended for private devotions. The subject matter is full of pathos, describing the anguish of the Virgin Mary at the foot of the Cross; the name refers to the first line of the text “Stabat Mater dolorosa” (“There stood the Mother grieving”). The second half of the text becomes a prayer to the Virgin herself, followed by a brief prayer to Christ in the final stanzas.

The composition is divided into seven sections in contrasting styles, each section comprising one to five stanzas of the text. Scarlatti eschews the double-choir writing, which was popular in Rome at the time, in favour of using all ten voices as independent forces – often bringing solo parts to the fore against the rich contrapuntal textures. The long vocal phrases, imitative passages, use of dissonance for ornamental effect, and chromatic melodies are in many ways reminiscent of the Renaissance style of Palestrina and the prima pratica, yet there are other, more contemporary influences evident as well. He achieves moments of strong emotional contrast when chromatic counterpoint gives way to bold choral scales (“Quis est homo, qui non fleret”), and austere solo dissonances (“Quis non posset contristari”). There are operatic influences as well, as in the ornate duet on “Inflammatus et accensus” and the upbeat fugal “Amen” which concludes the work.

Interestingly, it was about the same time, or perhaps a few years later, that Alessandro Scarlatti – also working in Rome – produced his own setting of the Stabat Mater text.
“Handel understands effect better than any of us; when he chooses, he strikes like a thunderbolt.”

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART
George Frideric Handel

Handel was the consummate 18th-century artist, traveller, and entrepreneur. In his lifetime he came to represent not only a unique synthesis of German instrumental and Italian operatic writing, but also an entire era of music in England. Although largely known today for his Water Music, Music for the Royal Fireworks and Messiah, it is his dramatic works that were the focus of much of his career, and which made his name.

LIFE

Handel initially began studying law before devoting his full attention to a career in music. After a brief period at university he moved to Hamburg and an orchestral position at the opera house, where he composed his first opera (Almira). From Hamburg he travelled to Italy in 1706, and then to Hanover, where he took the position of Kapellmeister at the Electoral court. The post allowed for extensive travel and so he went to London, where Italian opera was gaining in popularity. His opera Rinaldo was a great success; although he returned briefly to Hanover he received permission to travel again to London on the condition he return within a reasonable time. He never did; instead, in 1714, his employer the Elector of Hanover succeeded to the English throne as George I, and Handel entered the service of the Royal Court. The next decade saw his fortunes rise and fall as he competed with the Italian opera and as opera itself gained and lost the interest of the public. His oratorios and other choral works, however, enjoyed more success. During the last decade of his life he suffered from declining health. He had had two strokes earlier, but in his 60s his sight began to fail irreparably. Nevertheless, he continued to compose, arrange earlier works and supervise productions until his death.

Handel became a British citizen in 1727. He wrote four anthems for the coronation of King George II that year, including “Zadok the Priest”, which has been sung at every British coronation since.

MUSICAL OUTPUT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total: 487</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CONCERTOS (57)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KEYBOARD (64)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHER INSTRUMENTAL (99)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRAMATIC (46)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SACRED (63)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SECULAR (158)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1685 1710 1720 1730 1740 1750 1759
In this 19th-century engraving, Handel and King George I of England listen to the Water Music from the royal barge on the Thames.

Handel’s operas owe much to the popular Italian style, with lyrical, virtuoso arias, dynamic string writing, and a simple, sturdy approach to harmonic progression that belies his Germanic roots. Even the most contrapuntal passages in his choral works contain a clarity not found in the works of his contemporary J S Bach.

Handel’s versatility enabled him to write for all kinds of occasion. Despite his Lutheran upbringing, he produced a number of sacred works for the Catholic Church during his time in Italy, and likewise during a brief period spent in the service of James Brydges, Duke of Chandos, he composed the “Chandos Anthems” in the English style.

Handel’s large-scale choral works are perhaps his most significant legacy. They were his most consistently successful works and enjoyed multiple revivals even in his lifetime.

**MILESTONES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1697</td>
<td>Appointed assistant organist at Halle Cathedral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1703</td>
<td>Moves to Hamburg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1706</td>
<td>Travels to Italy; composes operas and first oratorios</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1708</td>
<td>In Italy performs with an orchestra led by Arcangelo Corelli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1710</td>
<td>Appointed Kapellmeister to the Elector of Hanover (later George I)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1711</td>
<td>First trip to London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1712</td>
<td>Settles in England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1717</td>
<td>Water Music suites, HWV348–50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1720</td>
<td>Appointed musical director of Royal Academy of Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1723</td>
<td>Appointed composer of the Chapel Royal; composes Giulio Cesare, HWV17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1735</td>
<td>Esther, HWV50, first English oratorio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1742</td>
<td>Messiah, HWV56, premiered in Dublin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1749</td>
<td>Music for the Royal Fireworks, HWV351, performed in Green Park, London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1751</td>
<td>Suffers from failing sight, which leads to total blindness by 1753</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**KEY WORKS**

**GIULIO CESARE IN EGITTO, HWV17**

*Giulio Cesare in Egitto (Julius Caesar in Egypt)* premiered on 20 February 1724 at the King’s Theatre in London, at a time at which Handel’s operatic career was at a peak. It starred many of the leading Italian singers of the day, including the soprano Francesca Cuzzoni as Cleopatra and the castrati Senesino and Gaetano Berenstadt as Caesar and Ptolemy respectively. The libretto, by Nicolo Haym, portrays the various characters as strong, complex individuals, giving Handel a wide emotional range to play with.

**ORGAN CONCERTOS, OP. 4, NO. 4 IN F, HWV292**

Handel was a talented organist, and his organ concertos, originally intended to be performed between the sections of his oratorios, gave him a chance to demonstrate his virtuosity. The Op. 4, No. 4 concerto (1735) was intended for a performance of Athalia. Previous concertos had accompanied Esther, Deborah, and Alexander’s Feast.

In this 19th-century engraving, Handel and King George I of England listen to the Water Music from the royal barge on the Thames.
**FOCUS**

**WATER MUSIC, HWV348–50**

INSTRUMENTAL 45:00 3

On 17 July 1717, a royal event of unusual splendour took place on the River Thames in London. King George I and a large number of nobles travelled up the Thames from the royal palace at Whitehall to Chelsea on open river barges, serenaded by 50 musicians playing three instrumental suites composed by Handel for the occasion. The guests feasted at Chelsea until the early morning, then returned to the barges and to Whitehall to the same music with which they had arrived.

These works were mere light entertainment, yet Handel employs his usual deft touch as a composer, presenting a happy juxtaposition of traditional minuets and English country dances. The Water Music also marks the first appearance in an English orchestra of the French horn, an instrument well-suited to outdoor performance.

**SUITE 2 IN D MAJOR**

1 Overture; Allegro: Quadruple time; D major; Ternary form  
2 Alle Hornpipe; Triple time; D major; Ternary form  
3 Minuet; Triple time; D major; Ternary form  
4 Lentement; Triple time; D major; Ternary form  
5 Bourrée; Duple; D major; Binary form

In 1741 Handel received an invitation from the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland to help raise money for three major Dublin charities through performances of his music. Although Handel was in poor health at the time, he was determined to compose a new sacred oratorio for the occasion, and turned to Charles Jennens, his librettist for Saul and Israel in Egypt, for an appropriate subject. Jennens responded with a collection of Old and New Testament verses arranged into a three-part “argument” (as the librettist himself described it). The result was the best-known and best-loved of all Handel’s oratorios.

The text was not without controversy, with newspapers weighing in with debates as to its “blasphemous” nature. The finished product, however, enjoyed a very different reception, earning critical praise first in Dublin and then in London. Handel made several subsequent revisions to the work, including a version created for Thomas Coram’s Foundling Hospital in 1754. Although the work remains a perennial favourite, nowadays most Christmas performances include only the first part plus the Hallelujah Chorus from Part Two.

**MESSIAH, HWV56**

ORATORIO 142:00 16

In 1741 Handel received an invitation from the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland to help raise money for three major Dublin charities through performances of his music. Although Handel was in poor health at the time, he was determined to compose a new sacred oratorio for the occasion, and turned to Charles Jennens, his librettist for Saul and Israel in Egypt, for an appropriate subject. Jennens responded with a collection of Old and New Testament verses arranged into a three-part “argument” (as the librettist himself described it). The result was the best-known and best-loved of all Handel’s oratorios.

The text was not without controversy, with newspapers weighing in with debates as to its “blasphemous” nature. The finished product, however,
“The aim and final end of all music should be none other than the glory of God and the refreshment of the soul.”

Johann Sebastian Bach
Johann Sebastian Bach

1685–1750
German
972

During his lifetime, Johann Sebastian Bach was known mostly as an organist, and was outshone as a composer by his sons. By the end of the 18th century, however, his musical oeuvre of vocal, choral, keyboard, and instrumental works – both sacred and secular – had been rediscovered by a new and more appreciative audience who admired their unique quality and spirit. Since then his star has not stopped rising.

**LIFE**

Orphaned at age 10, Bach moved in with his brother, Johann Christoph, who taught him the organ. After studying briefly in Lüneburg, he was appointed organist at the Bonifaciuskirche at Arnstadt, though he proved quarrelsome; first he almost duelled with a student, then he angered the town consistory by overstaying his leave. Bach stayed until 1707, when he moved to Mühlhausen; in short order he married his cousin Maria, fought with his new students, and left for the ducal court in Weimar. The new post paid well and Bach thrived until internal court politics made his position untenable. He left to become Kapellmeister at the Cöthen court in 1717, although the duke had him imprisoned for a month for disloyalty. Bach’s wife died in 1720 and he married singer Anna Wilcke the next year. In 1723 he became Kantor at the Thomasschule in Leipzig, and in 1729 he became Director of the Collegium Musicum at the university. In 1737, critic Johann Scheibe criticised Bach’s music, accusing him of bombast and artificiality, but he continued to compose and perform until failing eyesight made writing difficult. Following two unsuccessful eye operations, his health deteriorated and he died three months later.

**A master of counterpoint, J S Bach composed numerous orchestral pieces, plus seminal works for cello and harpsichord.**

**MUSICAL OUTPUT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MUSICAL TYPE</th>
<th>1685</th>
<th>1710</th>
<th>1720</th>
<th>1730</th>
<th>1740</th>
<th>1750</th>
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<td>ORCHESTRAL (29)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chamber (41)</td>
<td>1 9 8 10 13</td>
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<tr>
<td>ORGAN MUSIC (260)</td>
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<td>OTHER KEYBOARD (190)</td>
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<tr>
<td>SACRED VOCAL (416)</td>
<td>7 22 166 24 9 188</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>SACRED SECULAR (38)</td>
<td>5 17 12 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 972
Bach was ultimately a pragmatic man, and much of his output relates directly to the demands of his life at the time. His early tutelage on the organ sparked his interest in the works of other north German organ composers, such as Buxtehude and Reinken (both of whom he later met). He continued to develop his organ compositions at Arnstadt and Weimar, also producing cantatas on a regular basis for chapel. In Cöthen, his courtly duties demanded more secular fare, and many of his instrumental works date from this period, including the six “Brandenburg” Concertos, the Clavierbüchlein for his new wife, Anna, and the Orgel-Büchlein.

It was as Kantor at Leipzig that Bach held the widest remit for composition. His duties included producing and directing music for civic events and for organizing music for the four main town churches, plus whatever was required for his teaching duties at the Thomasschule. His Leipzig period saw a tremendous outpouring of sacred and secular cantatas and motets for all occasions and church feasts, including five complete cycles of cantatas for the entire church year.

In contrast his instrumental writing waned until he took on the directorship of the Collegium Musicum; Bach revised several of his earlier instrumental works for their weekly concerts and produced new music as well, most notably the comic “Coffee Cantata” (until 1741 the Collegium met in Gottfried Zimmermann’s coffeehouse). Works from his final decade include the Goldberg Variations, The Art of Fugue, and The Musical Offering (the latter dedicated to Frederick the Great). His sacred writing continued as well; this period saw the composition of the Mass in B minor, the “Christmas” Oratorio, and the St Mark Passion.

Bach’s compositional style demonstrates a profound understanding of both harmonic progression and the intricacies of Baroque counterpoint; indeed, he was regarded during his life as the greatest contrapuntalist ever. His early studies in organ and composition gave him a
thorough understanding of the fugue and the dense, cerebral north German style. His interest in the Italian concerto and the French overture and dance suites came later, and were synthesized into a cohesive style.

Bach was a craftsman in both good and bad senses; his formal and harmonic structures were intricate in detail (Friedrich Nietzsche said that Bach’s music gave him a sense of “the higher order of things”), but he was often accused of being overly formalistic as well, creating complex works at the expense of emotional expression. When the lighter, more “natural” courtly style began to gain wider popularity in the 1730s, Bach’s music fell out of fashion. Ironically it was his composer sons Carl Philipp Emanuel and Johann Christian Bach who came to prominence as the leading representatives of the new style.

After Bach’s death, his music remained synonymous with the old style. However, it had its proponents, most notably Baron Gottfried von Swieten, who organized concerts of Bach’s music in Vienna. Beethoven is known to have played the “48”; one cannot hear the choral fugue in his Symphony No. 9 without speculating on Bach’s influence.

**MILESTONES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1692</td>
<td>Enters Eisenach’s Lateinschule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1695</td>
<td>Father dies; lives with brother Johann Christoph, who teaches him the organ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1700</td>
<td>Becomes chorister at Lüneburg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1703</td>
<td>Appointed violinist in court orchestra of Duke of Weimar; leaves to become organist at Arnstadt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1705</td>
<td>Walks some 215 miles to Lübeck to meet Dietrich Buxtehude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1707</td>
<td>Appointed organist at Mühlhausen; marries his cousin Maria Barbara Bach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1708</td>
<td>Becomes court organist and chamber musician (later concertmaster) to the Duke of Weimar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1714</td>
<td>Son Carl Philipp Emanuel born</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1717</td>
<td>Becomes Kapellmeister (director of music) at court of Cöthen; many of his instrumental works are written in this period, including the “Brandenburg” Concertos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1721</td>
<td>Wife dies; marries Anna Wilcke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1723</td>
<td>Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Cöthen dies. Bach’s position as Kapellmeister is terminated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1723</td>
<td>Appointed Kantor of Thomasschule, Leipzig, after Georg Telemann (the most famous composer of the day) turns down the post; the majority of his cantatas are composed in this period; produces Magnificat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1724</td>
<td>First performance of St John Passion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1729</td>
<td>Becomes Director of Collegium Musicum; first performance of St Matthew Passion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1733</td>
<td>Writes a portion of the Mass in B minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1735</td>
<td>Birth of his youngest son Johann Christian Bach (the “London Bach”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1746</td>
<td>Eyesight begins to fail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1747</td>
<td>Visits son C P E Bach in Potsdam and plays for the king, Frederick the Great; one of the works improvised during this visit becomes A Musical Offering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1749</td>
<td>Finishes Mass in B minor; completes The Art of Fugue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1750</td>
<td>Ill health leads to fatal eye operations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**A page from the second fugue of Bach’s Well-Tempered Clavier**
**KEY WORKS**

**THE WELL-TEMPERED CLAVIER, BWV 846–893**

| KEYBOARD | 255:00 | 96 |

Also known as the *48 Preludes and Fugues*, the *Well-Tempered Clavier* represents a lifetime of work by Bach. The first collection of 24 preludes and fugues dates from 1722, while the second set of 24 was finished some twenty years later. Each prelude is a freely-composed work, exploring a particular musical idea without specified form. Conversely, the fugues follow a stricter set of rules. The juxtaposition of the two adds both effective colour to the performance and a broader challenge to the performer. These may have been intended as technical exercises, but if so they remain complex, elegant pieces, exploring all areas of the keyboard.

**MASS IN B MINOR, BWV 232**

| MASS SETTING | 106:00 | 27 |

The Mass in B minor was an ongoing work; the Sanctus was written in 1724, while the Credo dates from near the end of Bach’s life. The Kyrie and Gloria are taken from a 1733 Mass dedicated to the Dresden court, and the last four movements are parody works, based on other music and added later.

**SIX SUITES FOR SOLO CELLO, BWV 1007–1012**

| SOLO CELLO | 140:00 | 36 |

Each of these cello suites has a prelude and five dance movements comprising a wide variety of styles. They are remarkably sophisticated and self-contained works, and form the foundation of the solo cello repertoire.

**CHRISTMAS ORATORIO, BWV 248**

| ORATORIO | 150:00 | 6 |

The “Christmas” Oratorio is properly a six-part cycle: six sacred cantatas to be performed on the three days of Christmas, New Year’s Day, the Sunday after the New Year and the Feast of the Epiphany. Much of the music is reworked from earlier secular cantatas which were written for the Collegium Musicum in Leipzig.
The Lutheran Passion oratorio, a sacred drama popular in Germany, already existed in the 17th century as a mixture of Lutheran chorales, strophic arias, and choruses. By the next century, composers (including Bach) had added the flair of operatic recitative and aria to the genre. Bach wrote three Passions during his career: the *St Matthew*, the *St John*, and the *St Mark*, though of these the latter has largely been lost. The first two, however, remain favourites of the choral repertoire and are frequently performed in concert during the Easter season. The *St Matthew Passion*, for double chorus, double orchestra, two organs, and soloists, is a grand work first performed on Good Friday 1727. The text is taken from the Gospel According to Matthew, chapters 26 and 27, with added recitative and aria texts by local poet Christian Friedrich Henrici. The narrative structure is thus: the Evangelist narrates the unfolding events as they occur in recitatives, with occasional lines of dialogue sung by soloists. Solos are also used for prayers and commentary on the story, as in the alto solo “Buss und Reu” (“Grief and Sin”). The chorus sometimes take a direct participatory role, presenting dialogue by the crowds in the drama, for example, and sometimes offer detached commentary or prayer, including the interjected chorales. While Bach never wrote an opera, the Passions are very much in the same theatrical vein.

**FOCUS**

**ST MATTHEW PASSION, BWV 244**

The Lutheran Passion oratorio, a sacred drama popular in Germany, already existed in the 17th century as a mixture of Lutheran chorales, strophic arias, and choruses. By the next century, composers (including Bach) had added the flair of operatic recitative and aria to the genre. Bach wrote three Passions during his career: the *St Matthew*, the *St John*, and the *St Mark*, though of these the latter has largely been lost. The first two, however, remain favourites of the choral repertoire and are frequently performed in concert during the Easter season. The *St Matthew Passion*, for double chorus, double orchestra, two organs, and soloists, is a grand work first performed on Good Friday 1727. The text is taken from the Gospel According to Matthew, chapters 26 and 27, with added recitative and aria texts by local poet Christian Friedrich Henrici. The narrative structure is thus: the Evangelist narrates the unfolding events as they occur in recitatives, with occasional lines of dialogue sung by soloists. Solos are also used for prayers and commentary on the story, as in the alto solo “Buss und Reu” (“Grief and Sin”). The chorus sometimes take a direct participatory role, presenting dialogue by the crowds in the drama, for example, and sometimes offer detached commentary or prayer, including the interjected chorales. While Bach never wrote an opera, the Passions are very much in the same theatrical vein.

**INFLUENCES**

Bach passed on a technical mastery of keyboard playing and musical form to his sons, but his music was seen as unfashionable by the end of his life. Later revivals of his music, most notably by Mendelssohn, brought new interest in his compositional style and in Baroque counterpoint in general.

**PART ONE (68:00)** The work opens with a prologue in which the chorus lament the events to come. The narrative proper begins in Bethany with Christ prophesying his own imminent crucifixion. The story then follows the biblical story of Judas’s collusion with the Pharisees, Jesus’s appeals to God, and finally the betrayal and arrest. After each section of narrative a commentary is inserted in the form of a recitative and aria or a chorale.

**PART TWO (92:00)** After another prologue, which bemoans the arrest of Jesus, the second part begins with the interrogation before Caiaphas, Peter’s denial, and the judgment by Pilate. Bach concludes the work with Jesus’s crucifixion, death, and entombment, and a final choral lament.
On Sunday 7 May 1747 (so the story goes) Bach arrived at the royal court in Potsdam and was immediately summoned to the King’s presence. Frederick the Great was an avid musician himself and often played the flute alongside his court musicians (including Bach’s son Carl Philipp Emanuel). Frederick sat at the keyboard and played Bach the “royal theme”; Bach listened and then freely improvised a three-part fugue on the same theme. The next night Bach was invited back, but was challenged to provide a six-part fugue on the same theme – a daunting task. Bach demurred, instead improvising a six-part fugue on another theme, but subsequently wrote out a similar fugue on the King’s theme. He then elaborated a series of other pieces on the same theme, including a full trio sonata for flute, violin, and continuo, had the music bound and inscribed with an extended dedication, and presented it to the delighted monarch.

The set of six varied concertos was dedicated to Margrave Christoph Ludwig of Brandenburg in 1721. The works were shelved in the Margrave’s library and lay there unplayed.

In the first concerto, Bach borrowed from his earlier “Hunt” Cantata, hence the Allegro; Quadruple time; A string ensemble

A string ensemble, featuring violinists Itzhak Perlman and Pinchas Zukerman, perform the sixth of Bach’s “Brandenburg” Concertos.

GOLDBERG VARIATIONS, BWV 988

As the story goes, during a trip to Dresden in 1741, Bach presented Count von Keyserlinck his Aria mit verschiedenen Veränderungen (Aria with Sundry Variations) for use by the resident harpsichordist in the Count’s household, one Johann Gottlieb Goldberg. Goldberg had studied with Bach as well as with Bach’s eldest son, Wilhelm Friedemann (then resident in Dresden). As Goldberg was only 14 in 1741, the story may well be apocryphal; if not, that Bach would present such a difficult work to such a young musician would be remarkable.


THE BRANDENBURG CONCERTOS, BWV 1046–1051

This set of six varied concertos was dedicated to Margrave Christoph Ludwig of Brandenburg in 1721. The works were shelved in the Margrave’s library and lay there unplayed.

CONCERTO NO. 1 (20:00) In the first concerto, Bach borrowed from his earlier “Hunt” Cantata, hence the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Allegro; Quadruple time; Harpsichord flourishes</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>Cadenza</th>
<th>Coda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alternation between full orchestra playing ritornello and solo instruments</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More harpsichord flourishes</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
a young performer implies either great
talent on Goldberg’s part or great
optimism on Bach’s. The variations
were published as Part IV of Bach’s
Clavier-Übung (Keyboard Works) collection
the next year. The 30 so-called
Goldberg Variations (plus the aria and
final reprise) are one of the most
complex sets of theme and variations
ever written. The “aria”, or main
theme, is a sarabande in two sections;
the theme, unusually, lies in the bass
line. Each of the variations follows the
same bass line and harmonic
progression in some form, albeit
often with additional notes
interjected. Bach presents a
surprising array of forms:
gigue (No. 7), fugue
(No. 10), French
overture (No. 16),
and of course
a few flashy
showpieces. As an
added level of
complexity,
every third
variation is a
canon, written
at increasingly broad intervals: in
No. 3 the second part enters one
bar later at the unison, in No. 6 the
second part enters a major second
up from the first entry, and so forth
to the interval of a ninth in No. 27.
The final variation is a quodlibet –
a contrapuntal combination of two
popular tunes set above the main
theme in the bass.

prominent horn part. The last
movement comprises a series of dances.
CONCERTO NO. 2 (11:15) The opening
movement offers in quick succession
the same solo phrase played by violin,
oboe, recorder, and trumpet.
CONCERTO NO. 3 (11:00) The first and
last movements are pure Italian-style
string ensemble writing, while the
second was notated by the composer
as just a few unornamented chords.
CONCERTO NO. 4 (13:45) Here Bach
combines a solo violin concerto with
a concerto grosso, with the violin
vying for attention with two recorders.
CONCERTO NO. 5 (19:35) The fifth
concerto marks Bach’s first use of
the transverse flute. The harpsichord
plays a prominent role throughout.
CONCERTO NO. 6 (15:00) The final work
of the collection features a string
ensemble throughout.
### Domenico Zipoli

**1688–1726** | **Italian** | **Unknown**

From 1650 to 1750 the Jesuits recruited leading musicians to work in the South American colonies. Zipoli, who studied music in Rome and joined the Jesuits there, became the most celebrated of them. Decades after his death, his naturally flowing melodies and harmonies were still played in churches and Indian villages in his adoptive Argentina. As well as oratorios and Church music, such as his *South American Mass*, Zipoli wrote concise and charming keyboard pieces. He died shortly before he was due to receive priest’s orders.

**MILESTONES**

- **1716**  
  *Sonate d’intavolatura*, collection of organ and harpsichord pieces
- **1717**  
  Sails for South America
- **1724**  
  Graduates from Jesuit college in Córdoba, Argentina
- **1732**  
  Jesuit documents record the popularity of his music in Indian villages

### Giuseppe Tartini

**1692–1770** | **Italian** | **c.350**

Unusually for his time, Tartini composed almost solely for violin, writing concertos and sonatas – including his famous “Devil’s Trill” Sonata – and resisting invitations to write operas. His early music is influenced by Corelli. Something of a mystic, he theorized about the relations between music and emotions. After gaining international fame as a violin virtuoso (his technique sharpened by three years’ practice while hiding in a monastery), he set up a highly regarded violin school.

**MILESTONES**

- **1710**  
  Marriage disapproved of; flees Padua
- **1723**  
  Performs in Prague for coronation
- **c.1727**  
  Sets up violin school in Padua
- **1734**  
- **1754**  
  First music treatise published

### Giovanni Battista Pergolesi

**1710–1736** | **Italian** | **30–80**

Pergolesi’s early death from tuberculosis, and the huge posthumous popularity of his moving *Stabat mater* in the late 18th century, raised him to almost mythical status and resulted in many works being falsely attributed to him. He was nonetheless a successful and respected composer in Naples during the rise of Italian comic opera. He wrote regularly for the theatre, his comic works in minor theatres were very popular (*Lo frate ’nnamorato*, in Neapolitan dialect, contained local folk songs), and he enjoyed royal patronage.

**MILESTONES**

- **1732**  
  Enters employment at royal chapel
- **1732**  
  Writes *Lo frate ’nnamorato*, opera
- **1736**  
  Composes *Stabat mater*

### Louis-Claude Daquin

**1694–1772** | **French** | **Unknown**

At the age of six, Daquin played before Louis XIV, and at eight conducted his own choral work *Beatus Vir*. The child prodigy went on to a brilliant career in cultured Parisian society, known as a virtuoso improviser on the harpsichord and organ. Some of his improvisations went into his *Nouveau livre de noëls*, but his few surviving other published compositions only hint at his skills. Sometimes his music shows echoes of Couperin, but often it is highly original, such as the *Trois cadences*, which uses a triple trill. His best-known work is the sprightly *Le coucou* (*The Cuckoo*) from his 1735 harpsichord book.

**MILESTONES**

- **1735**  
  *Livre de pièces de clavecin* published
- **1739**  
  Becomes organist at Chappelle Royale
- **1755**  
  Made organist at cathedral of Notre-Dame in Paris
- **1757**  
  *Nouveau livre de noëls* published
### Thomas Augustine Arne

**1710–1778** | **English** | **Unknown**

The British national anthem and “Rule, Britannia!” ensure Arne’s immortality. He wrote mostly theatre music (operas, masques, and incidental music) and books of songs. His prolific output, much of it now lost, varies in quality. Arne enjoyed huge popularity in London’s theatre land during the 1740s; he was a stage man through and through: his sister was the finest tragic actress in the country and his wife a renowned singer. Arne’s innovations included all-sung comic opera and the first use in England of the clarinet (in *Thomas and Sally*).

**MILESTONES**

- **1740** Alfred, masque, with “Rule, Britannia!”
- **1745** “God Bless our Noble King”, song
- **1760** Writes *Thomas and Sally*, comic opera

### Domenico Paradies

**1707–1791** | **Italian** | **Unknown**

Critical and popular reaction to the operas of Paradies, from *Alessandro in Persia* staged in Lucca in Italy to *Fetonte* in London, was lukewarm: Charles Burney, the music historian, described his music as ill-phrased and graceless. Nevertheless, Paradies always found work, such as supplying individual arias to various productions, although he enjoyed more success as a teacher of harpsichord and composition. His fame rests on one progressive, sophisticated set of sonatas conceived for harpsichord, the *Sonate de gravicembalo*. Mozart’s father admired these pieces, and they achieved rapid fame throughout Europe.

**MILESTONES**

- **1738** Writes *Alessandro in Persia*, opera
- **1746** Emigrates to London
- **1747** Writes *Fetonte*, opera
- **1754** Writes 12 *Sonate de gravicembalo*
- **1770** Returns to Venice

### William Boyce

**1711–1779** | **English** | **c.180**

A rival of Arne in London’s 18th-century music theatres Boyce also enjoyed national popularity with his instrumental music, songs, and secular choral works, often written in an italianate, late-Baroque style. A mild, diligent man, his music varies in quality, but his best works, such as *Solomon* or his 12 Sonatas, show technical accomplishment and a gift for melody.

**MILESTONES**

- **1736** Appointed composer to Chapel Royal
- **1742** Composes *Solomon*, serenata
- **1747** Writes 12 Sonatas for Two Violins and Bass
- **1749** Boyce Festival held in Cambridge
- **1761** Composes for George III’s coronation
- **1770s** Deafness forces him to give up work

### John Stanley

**1712–1786** | **English** | **50**

Blinded at the age of two, Stanley began studying music five years later as a diversion, but progressed so fast that by age 12 he was a church organist and by 17 was Oxford’s youngest music graduate. He was also a fine violinist, and directed concerts in London’s booming subscription scene, as well as Handel’s oratorios. Known today for his organ voluntaries, he also composed fine concertos and cantatas which move forwards from Handel to the newer, lighter “galant” sound.

**MILESTONES**

- **1742** Composes Six Concertos, Op. 2
- **1748** First set of organ voluntaries published
- **1779** Succeeds William Boyce as Master of the King’s Band
Between 1750 and 1820, composers such as Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven developed a new, simpler musical style, whose maxims – clarity, restraint, and balance – mirrored contemporary intellectual and artistic values. Almost every subsequent development in Western art music can be traced back to this period.

Among the forerunners of the Classical era were composers such as C P E Bach, Johann Quantz, and Baldassare Galuppi. Their works were a reaction against the complexity of Baroque music – its intricate polyphony, counterpoint, and ornamented melody. Instead, composers aimed for a style where a simple melody was accompanied by harmonic progressions.

The Enlightenment, with its focus on rational, human ideals, played a major part in this shift in aesthetic values. So, too, did interest in the simple elegance of Greek and Roman art and architecture, inspired in part by the discovery of the ruins of Pompeii in 1748. Socially and politically, this was a time of great change, with the effects of the Industrial Revolution and colonization creating a larger middle class keen to become consumers of the arts. At the same time, the aristocracies of Europe, suffering from the ravages of the Napoleonic Wars, were less able to support musicians, and the old patronage system started to crumble.

Professional Musicians
Traditionally, musicians employed by aristocratic courts were numbered among the servants – below the valets. However, as public concerts became more common, they were able to earn money from their performances, and publishing their compositions ensured a further income. Haydn, who was employed by the Esterházy family, was given frequent leave to travel, and towards the end of his life he had transcended his lowly position to become part of the court. Mozart, employed by the Archbishop of Salzburg, was not given the same freedoms and, resenting his servile position, moved to Vienna to become one of the very
first freelance musicians. However, the music world could not yet support such an ambition, and he suffered considerable financial hardship. When Beethoven moved to Vienna in 1794, he succeeded in gaining the support of wealthy patrons and never had to hold an official appointment.

Evolving Genres
As instrumental music became more popular than vocal music for the first time, composers had to develop ways of creating larger musical canvases that could support more intense listening. The result was the “Sonata Principle” (sometimes known as Sonata Form), a musical structure consisting of three sections. Its use became almost synonymous with the first movements not only of sonatas, but also of symphonies and indeed most instrumental music of the era. It has remained in use until the present day.

The symphony evolved from the small-scale Baroque sinfonia into an iconic art form. Usually in four movements, the symphony would start with a gripping “sonata allegro” movement, followed by a slow movement. The third movement was usually an elegant minuet, but this evolved into the scherzo, which could be humorous, or express a more ironic, elemental passion. The finale was frequently a rondo, in which repetitions of a catchy, upbeat melody were interspersed with contrasting themes.

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TIMELINE: THE CLASSICAL ERA

1750
- 1759 Voltaire’s Candide published
- 1762 First performance of Gluck’s Orfeo ed Euridice; Mozart begins touring Europe aged 6
- 1763 – Ruins of Pompeii identified
- 1764 First freelance musicians. However, the music world could not yet support such an ambition, and he suffered considerable financial hardship. When Beethoven moved to Vienna in 1794, he succeeded in gaining the support of wealthy patrons and never had to hold an official appointment.

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THE YOUNG MOZART AT THE PIANO
Between 1762 and 1767 the prodigious Mozart and his sister Nannerl toured all the main musical centres of Germany as well as Switzerland, Paris, and London.

THE SONATA PRINCIPLE
Music structured according to the “Sonata Principle” begins with an Exposition, which introduces the musical material and tends to be repeated. Two themes are usually presented, the second in a key a fifth higher than the original (tonic) key. The next section – the Development – alters the themes, frequently fragmenting them and playing them in different keys before leading the music to the third section, the Recapitulation. Here the opening themes are played again, but this time all in the tonic key. This structure allows a large span of music to be built from relatively little material with a minimum of repetition.

THE WALDSTEIN SONATA
Beethoven’s Waldstein Sonata, Op. 53, is a brilliant example of the Classical sonata form.
Other genres were also redefined. The three-movement concerto became a vehicle for just one soloist in which the ideals of balance and elegance were matched by instrumental virtuosity, while the sonata developed into a more formal composition for one or two instruments. The rise in domestic music-making created a market for new forms of chamber music, such as the string quartet – invented by Haydn – and the piano trio.

The symphony orchestra became a broadly standardized entity, smaller but not very different from the orchestra of today. With the orchestra’s fuller sound, the role of the continuo gradually died out; instead, the first violin directed the orchestra until eventually displaced by a specialist conductor. Orchestras

PERFORMANCE OF HAYDN’S CREATION
This performance of Haydn’s great oratorio was given in the festival hall of Vienna’s Old University in honour of the composer in 1808, the year before his death.

now had a far greater dynamic range. In the 1740s, the crescendos and diminuendos of the Mannheim Court orchestra, under Johann Stamitz, caused a sensation and were soon a staple of all symphonic writing.

THE OPERA
In opera, notably in the works of Gluck and Mozart, plots were now chosen for greater dramatic realism and music was written to serve the drama rather than decorate it. Gradually, Italian began to lose its dominance as important works were written in German and French.
Although lacking the musical finesse of his rivals, Gluck earned himself a place in music history with the reforms he brought to opera. Espousing a more continuous texture in which music served the poetry and drama of the libretto rather than the singer’s virtuosity, he employed vivid characterization, simple plots, and large-scale planning of music to bring universal human themes and emotions to life.

**KEY WORKS**

**LARGELY SELF-TAUGHT**

Largely self-taught, Gluck became an organist and cellist in Prague before moving to Vienna, and then Milan, where he joined an orchestra and studied composition with Sammartini, a leading symphonist. The success of Gluck’s first opera ensured commissions that took him all over Europe, but he returned to Vienna where he was appointed Kapellmeister of the Opera. He and poet Ranieri Calzabigi drew up a manifesto of operatic reform, eschewing stylized convention in favour of a symbiosis of music and drama. Starting with *Orfeo ed Euridice*, Gluck’s work permanently changed operatic norms, whilst causing some controversy, particularly in conservative Paris.

## MILESTONES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1727</td>
<td>Leaves home to study in Prague</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1735</td>
<td>Arrives in Vienna; meets Prince Melzi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1737</td>
<td>Studies under Sammartini in Milan</td>
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<tr>
<td>1741</td>
<td>Debut opera <em>Artaserse</em> is an instant success</td>
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<tr>
<td>1745</td>
<td>Presents two operas in London and befriends Handel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1748</td>
<td>Opera <em>Semiramide</em> is staged in Vienna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1750</td>
<td>Marries the heiress Marianna Bergin</td>
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<tr>
<td>1754</td>
<td>Employed at Vienna Opera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1762</td>
<td>Writes opera <em>Orfeo ed Euridice</em> (in Italian)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1764</td>
<td>Writes opera <em>La rencontre imprévue</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>1767</td>
<td><em>Aïsée</em> is premiered; it is later published with a preface on reforming opera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1774</td>
<td>Stages opera <em>Iphigénie en Aulide</em> in Paris; made kapellmeister of Vienna Opera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1779</td>
<td>Suffers a stroke and retires</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**LA RENCONTRE IMPRÉVUE**

Operatic comique style, incorporating spoken dialogue. Set in Cairo, it features a “harem escape”, a plot much in vogue in an 18th-century Vienna. Also known as *Les pèlerins de la Mecque*, this was Gluck’s last work in the opéra comique style, incorporating spoken dialogue. Set in Cairo, it features a “harem escape”, a plot much in vogue in an 18th-century Vienna. It was performed extensively in Europe and revived in Vienna in 1780, when it influenced Mozart in his writing of *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*.

**IPHIGÉNIE EN TAURIDE**

Probably Gluck’s finest work, this was written at the same time as Piccini’s opera on the same theme, splitting Paris into Gluckists and Piccinists. Its first performance in 1779 was Gluck’s greatest triumph, and much later it even inspired Berlioz to become a musician. The music is dramatic, expressive, and almost symphonic in its orchestration.
In this, the first of Calzabigi and Gluck’s “reform operas”, their aim was to conjure a “beautiful serenity”. Choosing a simple Greek tragedy in preference to the labyrinthine plots employed in opera seria, and using only three rather than six soloists, they created a work of unprecedented directness. The role of Orpheus was originally written for a castrato, but recast as a high tenor when the opera was extended and rewritten in French as Orphée for Paris in 1774. Later rearranged by Berlioz, it is now usually performed by an alto voice.

ACT ONE (36:00) Lamenting Euridice’s death, Orfeo sends away the mourning nymphs and shepherds and decides to bring her back from Hades. Cupid tells him he will succeed if he soothes the Furies with music and avoids looking at her until they are across the River Styx.

ACT TWO (44:00) At the gates of Hades Orpheus quells the Furies with his music and enters. In the Elysian Fields beyond, he finds Euridice and, with eyes averted, leads her back.

ACT THREE (40:00) Orpheus hurries on as Euridice pleads for reassurance. No longer able to refuse, he turns and she dies again. Overcome, he sings the aria “Che farò senza Euridice”, vowing to kill himself, but Cupid restores her to life amidst rejoicing.

The second of the “reform operas”, Alceste was published with a preface that declared Gluck’s new principles of opera. The opera was altered considerably for Paris, but the original Italian plot is described below.

ACT ONE (50:00) King Admetus is dying while his Queen, Alceste, makes sacrifices at the temple. The oracle declares that he will live if someone will take his place. Alceste offers herself. Admetus discovers why he has returned to health and vows to die himself instead.

ACT TWO (60:00) In the Grove of Death the orchestra imitates the sounds of the night. Calling upon the Underworld, she insists on her sacrifice providing she can bid her family farewell. Admetus issues threats and lamentations, but when he threatens suicide, Apollo restores Alceste to life.
Possibly the most important composer of his generation, C P E Bach bridged the gap between the Baroque style of his father, J S Bach, and the Classical style of Haydn and Mozart. The main exponent of the *empfindsamer Stil*, an expressive musical style, he also developed the sonata, and was renowned as a keyboard player whose *True Art of Keyboard Playing* is the major treatise on 18th-century music.

**LIFE AND MUSIC**

The second son of J S Bach, C P E Bach studied with his father until appointed court harpsichordist to Frederick II of Prussia. Although poorly paid, Bach composed, taught, and performed at the courts of Berlin and Potsdam for some 30 years before leaving to succeed his godfather, Georg Philipp Telemann as Kantor and music director in Hamburg. Opportunity now abounded and Bach became responsible for 200 performances a year at five churches and started to write non-secular vocal music. The bulk of his works are, however, instrumental.

**KEY WORKS**

**SIX PRUSSIAN SONATAS**

Bach’s first published works, dedicated to Frederick II, were written not for the harpsichord, but for the much quieter and more sensitive clavichord, which could better express the subtle, but intensely emotional, nuances inherent in the *empfindsamer Stil*.

Among more than 150 of Bach’s works in this form, each of these sonatas is written in three movements: fast, slow, and very fast.

**SYMPHONY IN E FLAT MAJOR, WQ179**

Among the last of the eight “Berlin” Symphonies, this piece clearly reflects the new Classical style, with its light homophonic (rather than complex polyphonic) effects. The symphony opens with an arresting movement, followed by a particularly sensitive Larghetto, and closes with a jaunty finale, showcasing the horns.

*An autographed score* from C P E Bach’s notebook (1714–1788). Original scores can offer invaluable insights into his intentions and views on performance.
Bach modelled his first major choral piece on his father’s Magnificat (BWV 243). Although adapting the same key and text, he achieved rather more homophonic and melodic effects. Scored for trumpets, drums, flutes, oboes, horns, and strings, with four vocal soloists, it is one of the few major choral pieces to be written after J S Bach and before Haydn.

**GLORIA PATRI** (3:00) With full orchestra and chorus, musical material from the first movement is repeated.

**SICUT ERAT** (5:00) The glorious closing fugue anticipates Mozart’s Requiem.

**FLUTE CONCERTO IN G MAJOR, WQ169**

One of five flute concertos adapted from Bach’s keyboard compositions, this piece is perhaps the most virtuosic.

**FIRST MOVEMENT** (ALLEGRO DI MOLTO, 10:50) After a vigorous opening with some “sighing” motifs, the flute enters with music of a much gentler nature.

**SECOND MOVEMENT** (LARGO, 8:50) The strings set the scene for a pleading slow movement, while the flute responds with long, rhetorical phrases culminating in a tender cadenza.

**THIRD MOVEMENT** (PRESTO, 5:00) In this elegant finale of some rhythmic verve, the flautist has frequent opportunities to relish the highly virtuosic writing.

**MAGNIFICAT IN D MAJOR, WQ215**

MAGNIFICAT (3:00) Opening with a full chorus, this spirited movement alternates choral and orchestral parts.

**QUIA RESPEXIT** (6:50) This lyrical soprano solo with string accompaniment encapsulates Bach’s expressive style.

**QUIA FECIT MIHI MAGNA** (4:00) After a strong and direct opening, the tenor solo takes a virtuosic and agile role.

**ET MISERICORDIA** (7:00) With its lovely harmonies and quiet drama, this movement is very forward-looking.

**FECIT POTENTIAM** (4:00) For the first time since the start, the trumpets return to characterize this powerful bass solo.

**DEPOSUIT POTENTES** (7:50) A duet for tenor and alto, this movement is based on that of J S Bach’s Magnificat.

**SUSCEPIT ISRAEL** (5:00) A haunting and slightly Baroque solo for alto.

**INFLUENCES**

When Carl Czerny went to study with Beethoven, he was immediately required to purchase C P E Bach’s *True Art of Keyboard Playing*. Perhaps now better known than any of his music, it codified contemporaneous musical style and established technical norms — including fingering — which underpinned most later keyboard playing.
1718 Appointed court oboist in Dresden
1719 Specializes in the flute
1727 Adds a second key to the flute
1739 Begins making flutes
1741 Starts work for Frederick II of Prussia
1752 Publishes *On Playing the Tranverse Flute*

**Johann Adolf Hasse**

- **1699–1783**
- **German**
- **1,600**

In the mid-1700s, Hasse’s operas – staged in high-quality productions, and tailored to individual singers – made him famous throughout Europe. His emphasis on beauty rather than complexity paved the way for the Classical style. Fêted by the nobility and royalty of Vienna, Naples, Paris, London, and Berlin, he was also admired by both J S Bach and Mozart. One of Alessandro Scarlatti’s last pupils in Naples, he went on to serve for 30 years as musical director at the Dresden court, where music flourished. Hasse’s vast output, very often composed at speed, includes 63 operas, 90 cantatas, and 80 flute concertos written for Frederick II of Prussia.

**MILESTONES**

- 1730 *Artaserse*, opera, performed in Venice
- 1730 Marries famous Italian mezzo-soprano, Faustino Bordoni
- 1731 *Cleofide*, opera, performed in Dresden; it impresses J S Bach
- 1742 *Lucio Papiro*, opera, staged in Dresden

**Hasse staged lavish productions** at the Dresden Semperoper, often with the help of the librettist Pietro Metastasio.

**Johann Joachim Quantz**

- **1697–1773**
- **German**
- **c.600**

The son of a blacksmith, Quantz started learning music at the age of only 11. After training in Italy, France and England, he switched from the oboe to become one of the first professional flute players in Europe. A star member of the Dresden orchestra, he was spotted by the future Frederick II of Prussia, whom he went on to serve for over 30 years as a hard-worked but richly rewarded flute teacher, maker, composer and performer. Quantz’s massive output, mostly for Frederick, includes 300 flute concertos and 235 flute sonatas, of variable quality, but all craftsmanlike. His book on the flute made him famous throughout Europe.

**MILESTONES**

- 1718 Appointed court oboist in Dresden
- 1719 Specializes in the flute
- 1727 Adds a second key to the flute
- 1739 Begins making flutes
- 1741 Starts work for Frederick II of Prussia
- 1752 Publishes *On Playing the Tranverse Flute*

**A keen flautist,** Frederick II of Prussia performed for his courtiers under the expert guidance of his tutor, Johann Quantz.
Johann Wenzel Anton Stamitz

1717–1757  Czech  150

The Classical symphony developed at intensely musical centres, such as the Electoral Court at Mannheim in Germany, where Stamitz served as violinist, composer, and musical director. A star contributor, he brought international fame to the orchestra with its impeccable and dynamic renderings of his symphonies. Although he wrote countless concertos, he is famous for his 58 surviving symphonies, which established the four-movement pattern and the Classical style. Four other members of the Stamitz family, including his sons, Carl and Johann (Anton), became prominent musicians.

**MILESTONES**

- 1741  Works at the court of Mannheim
- 1750  Serves as musical director at Mannheim
- 1754  Enjoys a season in Paris
- 1755  Publishes Orchestral Trios, Op. 1

Leopold Mozart

1719–1787  German  c.550

The father of Wolfgang Amadeus, Leopold was a noted court composer and violin teacher. Despite supporting his gifted son – as teacher, agent, and editor – he found time to pursue his own career. Haughty and hard to please, he was nevertheless a man of wit and wisdom who wrote copious concertos, symphonies, serenades, and church music, but probably not the “Toy” Symphony often credited to him.

**MILESTONES**

- 1743  Becomes court violinist at Salzburg
- 1756  Publishes popular violin tutor
- 1747  Marries Anna Maria Pertl
- 1757  Becomes court composer at Salzburg
- 1769  Writes Symphony in G major, G16, “New Lambach” (New Lambach)
- 1778  Wife dies on tour with Wolfgang

François-Joseph Gossec

1734–1829  Belgian  160

Gossec started his career as a court employee and ended up as the foremost musical representative of the French Revolution. A farmer’s son, he had come to Paris as a protégé of Jean-Philippe Rameau, and worked for both private and court orchestras while composing comic operas, with mixed success. However, he became a key musician in Paris after founding the Concert des Amateurs, an independent orchestra, before directing the renowned Concerts Spirituels and organizing the École Royale. During the Revolution, he resigned his post at the Opéra and wrote pro-Revolutionary works. Though overshadowed by other composers, he stimulated a revival of instrumental music in dance-dominated France.

**MILESTONES**

- 1751  Becomes a chorister at Antwerp
- 1754  Composes Symphony No. 1
- 1766  *Les pêcheurs (The Fishermen)*, opera, first performed
- 1770  Founds the Concert des Amateurs
- 1773  Directs the Concert Spirituel
- 1795  Appointed Professor of Composition at the Paris Conservatoire

French rebels stormed the Bastille in Paris in 1789, inspiring Gossec to create dramatic instrumental works celebrating the Revolutionary ideals.
“My Prince was always satisfied…and I was in a position to improve, alter, and be as bold as I pleased.”

FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN, ON HIS EMPLOYER, PRINCE NICOLAUS
Franz Joseph Haydn

Born in the Baroque era, and still alive when Beethoven composed his “Pastoral” Symphony, Haydn was a key figure in the evolution of the Classical style. Writing a vast oeuvre within the protective confines of the Esterházy court, and establishing the standard forms of the symphony, sonata, and string quartet, he emerged as an international musical figure who both influenced Mozart and taught Beethoven.

Possessing a fine singing voice, Haydn received elementary music training as a choirboy, but when his voice broke he had to earn a meagre living from performing in ensembles and teaching children. He continued his studies by reading treatises, until the singer Nicola Porpora helped him to hone his compositional skills. He was introduced to a number of influential people, and became Count Morzin’s music director in 1759. On the strength of his Symphony No. 1, Haydn was appointed Vizekapellmeister at the court of one of the richest and most influential Hungarian families, the Esterházys, and by 1766 had taken full responsibility for their music. Composing new instrumental works for the twice-weekly concerts, as well as for festivities, church, and theatre, he developed his skills unmolested by market forces. When Prince Nicolaus died in 1790, Haydn’s music had already been published all over Europe. An invitation from the impresario J P Salomon to present new works in England swiftly followed, and during two extended stays Haydn amassed a fortune, and was awarded a doctorate from Oxford University. He was recalled to the Royal Court in 1795, following the accession of Prince Nicolaus’s grandson, and remained active as a composer in Vienna until 1803.

The music of Haydn is full of bold effects, but also has an intimate lyricism, as can be seen in his greatest work, The Creation.

MUSICAL OUTPUT

| Total: 1,195 |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| SYMPHONIES (108) | 2               | 42              | 27              | 24              | 13              |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |
| OTHER ORCHESTRAL (65) | 2               | 26              | 10              | 11              | 13              |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |
| CHAMBER (707) | 105             | 104             | 43              | 286             | 249             |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |
| SOLO INSTRUMENTAL (101) | 31              | 35              | 18              | 17              |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |
| OPERA (25) | 1               | 1               | 3               | 3               |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |
| CHORAL (88) | 4               | 14              | 12              | 1               | 53              | 4               |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |
| SONG (101) | 2               | 4               | 36              | 49              | 10              |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |

1732 1749 1760 1770 1780 1790 1800 1809
Mostly self-taught and largely cut off at court from mainstream music, Haydn later suggested that this very isolation had forced his originality upon him. While his oeuvre includes practically every genre of music, from folk-song arrangements to opera, it is through his innovations in instrumental music that Haydn had the greatest influence. Although frequently referred to as the “father of the symphony”, he did not invent the form, but his 108 works in the genre pioneered its evolution, from a three-movement Baroque overture for fewer than 20 players to the dramatic four-movement form for as many as 60, which became the Classical period’s finest legacy. Equally influential in the development of the instrumental sonata, he guided its transformation from the lightweight divertimento into a work of far greater gravitas which, modelled on the structure of the concerto, included a substantial slow movement. Haydn’s finest achievement, however, was in the creation of a new medium: the string quartet. Whereas orchestral works had sometimes been performed by four players, and some pieces had been composed for the same combination with the accompaniment of a continuo part, Haydn established a genre in which each instrument was equal and independent.

**MILESTONES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1740</td>
<td>Becomes a choirboy at St Stephen’s Cathedral, Vienna</td>
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<tr>
<td>1753</td>
<td>Starts to work as accompanist to singer Nicola Porpora</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1759</td>
<td>Composes Symphony No. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1760</td>
<td>Marries Maria Keller, but they later separate after an unhappy marriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1761</td>
<td>Becomes Vizekapellmeister at the court of Esterházy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1762</td>
<td>Assumed date for String Quartet No. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1765</td>
<td>Composes Cello Concerto No. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1772</td>
<td>First performance of “Farewell” Symphony, No. 45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1791</td>
<td>First visit to England, where he remains for 18 months; composes six symphonies including “Surprise” Symphony, No. 94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1792</td>
<td>Meets and starts teaching Beethoven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1794</td>
<td>Returns to England for a further 18 months; composes “English” Sonata, and is commissioned to write oratorio <em>The Creation</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1795</td>
<td>Returns to the court of Esterházy, where he focuses on church music, writing six Masses in the following years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1796</td>
<td>Composes Trumpet Concerto for Anton Weidinger’s new keyed trumpet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1798</td>
<td>First performance of <em>The Creation</em> is given in Vienna and is an immediate success; composes “Nelson” Mass</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Haydn composed many operas for the Italian opera company employed by Prince Nicolaus at his sumptuous pleasure palace at Esterháza.
Rediscovered in 1961, Haydn’s Cello Concerto No. 1 immediately joined its brother, the Cello Concerto No. 2, in the standard repertoire. It shows Baroque tendencies in its reiteration of passages for full orchestra (ritornellos), while its mood is Rococo. On a grand scale throughout, the outer movements demand considerable agility and stamina, while the slow movement was composed to showcase the Esterházy cellist’s beautiful tone.

“NELSON” MASS  
 MASS SETTING  
 Originally titled Mass in Straitened Times, the subsequent sobriquet was probably coined when Haydn met Lord Nelson in 1800. Lacking woodwind and horns, following their disbandment at court, the work has a unique sound for the period.

INFLUENCES  
 Although he was a musician’s musician, after his death in 1809 Haydn’s music was frequently dismissed as inferior to that of Mozart and a mere precursor to Beethoven’s compositions. However, it has rightly been said that few music innovations in the century following Haydn’s death could not be traced back to his works.
Having decided not to move to England, Haydn returned to Esterhaza in 1795, where his duties were now far lighter, and his international fame made him more of a trophy than a servant. No longer composing sonatas and symphonies, he turned once again to the more private medium of the string quartet, distilling the experiments of a long career into eight final works that demonstrate his total mastery over the genre which he had himself invented.

**FOCUS**

**STRING QUARTET NO. 63, “SUNRISE”, OP. 76, NO. 4**

CHAMBER 22:00

The spacious improvisatory violin ascending over a single chord that opens this piece led to comparisons with a sunrise, giving the work its nickname. The later passages have an expansiveness that is almost Romantic.

**FIRST MOVEMENT** (ALLEGRO CON SPIRITO 8:00)

The spacious improvisatory violin ascending over a single chord that opens this piece led to comparisons with a sunrise, giving the work its nickname. The later passages have an expansiveness that is almost Romantic.

**SECOND MOVEMENT** (ADAGIO 6:00)

A serene meditation with subtle interplay between the instruments, this movement, in the tradition of all the greatest chamber music, removes the listener from all that is mundane.

**THIRD MOVEMENT** (MENUETTO, ALLEGRO 4:00)

Exuding charm and jovial good humour, the Minuet leads into a folk-like Trio, featuring a droning bass over a fragmented minor-key melody.

**FINALE** (ALLEGRO MA NON TROPPO 4:00)

At first deceptively amiable and laconic, even perhaps reminiscent of English folk song, the pace of the finale

The string quartet, in which each instrument plays an equal part, was Haydn’s greatest achievement.

**SYMPHONY NO. 104 IN D MAJOR “LONDON”**

ORCHESTRAL 26:30

Twelve of Haydn’s later symphonies are known collectively as the “London” Symphonies. This was his final work in the series – and in the genre. Taking advantage of a far larger orchestra than he was used to in Vienna, this work features some of his most majestic music.

**FIRST MOVEMENT** (ADAGIO , ALLEGRO, 8:05)

After a solemn introduction in the minor key, the main theme of the Allegro is surprisingly lyrical. This is swiftly usurped by faster, more exuberant music that makes frequent use of trumpets and drums.

**SECOND MOVEMENT** (ANDANTE, 7:45)

After the charmingly poised opening melody, the sudden entry of the full orchestra is a real surprise. After this

The string quartet, in which each instrument plays an equal part, was Haydn’s greatest achievement.
changes drastically towards the end, concluding the quartet with an effervescent flourish.

**THE CREATION ORATORIO**

After hearing performances of Handel’s oratorios in London, Haydn was inspired to write a similarly large-scale biblical work. *The Creation* was commissioned by Johann Salomon, who presented an English libretto based on the book of Genesis, which Haydn had had translated into German. The piece was an immediate success in both England and Germany, and became Haydn’s most performed work.

**PART ONE (36:00)** The opening representation of chaos is possibly the most extraordinary music of the period. Conjuring timelessness, Haydn juxtaposed seemingly incongruous ideas, allowing harmonies to meander until, with a blaze of glory, the chorus sings, “Let there be light.” The music then introduces each act of the Creation with a recitative, followed by one or more lyrical commentaries and concluded by the chorus in a hymn of praise.

**PART TWO (37:00)** Continuing with the “fifth day”, Haydn achieves a remarkable musical depiction of the poetry of Genesis, most particularly of the animals, from the roaring of tigers to the gentle pastorality of cows, and even the “sinuous worm”.

**PART THREE (26:00)** The first humans, Adam and Eve, praise God and the act of Creation before a choral fugue brings the work to a glorious end.

The Hungarian conductor Antal Dorati has recorded all of Haydn’s symphonies.

**FOURTH MOVEMENT**

**FINALE: SPIRITOSO (6:15)** Claimed both as a traditional Croatian folk tune and as a London street seller’s cry, the earthy melody used in the final movement brings Haydn’s career as a symphonist to a joyful end.

The Hungarian conductor Antal Dorati has recorded all of Haydn’s symphonies.
### Johann Christian Bach

**1735–1782**  
**German**  
**c.360**

The most versatile and cosmopolitan of J S Bach’s composing sons, “the London Bach” composed operas in Milan before moving to England and becoming music master to the royal family. He helped establish the Classical era, partly with music in the new lighter style – especially his symphonies and piano concertos – and also with the acclaimed public concerts he organized with the celebrated harpsichord player Carl Friedrich Abel, taking musical emphasis away from the church and into the concert hall. After enjoying financial success, fame, and respect, his reputation faded: his concerts lost money, he was defrauded, and he suffered a long and debilitating chest illness.

**Concerts performed** at the Hanover Square Rooms in London, featuring many fashionable musicians, were popular in the 18th century.

### MILESTONES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1760</td>
<td>Becomes cathedral organist in Milan</td>
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<tr>
<td>1762</td>
<td>Moves to London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1763</td>
<td>Writes variations on <em>God Save the King</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>1764</td>
<td>First Bach–Abel concerts performed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1768</td>
<td>Plays first piano solo in public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.1781</td>
<td>Composes Symphonies for Double Orchestra, Op.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Johann Albrechtsberger

**1736–1809**  
**Austrian**  
**750**

Many, including his friend Mozart, considered Albrechtsberger one of the world’s greatest organists. He was also a prolific composer, writing keyboard pieces, church compositions with fine oratorios, and a range of other works, including a curious *Concerto for Jew’s Harp*. As a composition teacher, known for his skill in counterpoint, he was in great demand. One of his pupils was Beethoven, whose later fugues reflect Albrechtsberger’s enthusiasm for the form.

### MILESTONES

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<tr>
<td>1772</td>
<td>Becomes court organist, Vienna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1790</td>
<td>Publishes popular textbook: <em>Fundamentals of Composition</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1793</td>
<td>Kapellmeister at St Stephen’s, Vienna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1794</td>
<td>Tutors Beethoven</td>
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### Karl Ditters von Dittersdorf

**1739–1799**  
**Austrian**  
**c.200**

A prolific composer of more than 100 symphonies, 40 concertos, as well as several comic operas, Karl Ditters (ennobled in 1773 with the title “von Dittersdorf”) mainly wrote accessible, craftsmanlike music in the popular genres of the time, spanning the development of the Viennese Classical style. He held various court appointments and was a virtuoso violinist, gaining considerable celebrity through performing his own concertos.

### MILESTONES

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1764</td>
<td>Writes Mass for Frankfurt coronation of Archduke Joseph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1786</td>
<td><em>Doktor und apotheker</em>, opera, performed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1786</td>
<td>Composes twelve symphonies based on Ovid’s <em>Metamorphoses</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1795</td>
<td>Sacked by Schaffgotsch, Prince of Breslau; awarded meagre pension</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Giovanni Paisiello

1740–1816  Italian  180

The most popular opera composer of the late 1700s was not Mozart but Paisiello, a Neapolitan whose reputation brought him lucrative posts with Catherine the Great, Napoleon, and the King of Naples. Over 30 of his operas were successes. His light, rhythmic style and melodic turns of phrase, as in his The Barber of Seville (the first opera setting of the story), influenced Mozart’s The Marriage of Figaro and Don Giovanni, as well as Rossini, Bellini, and Donizetti.

MILESTONES

1776  Works for Catherine II in St Petersburg
1782  Writes The Barber of Seville, opera
1789  Composes Nina, opera
1802  Works for Napoleon in Paris

Jean Paul Martini

1741–1816  French  150

Born in Germany, Martini established a successful career as a court musician in France. There he adapted shrewdly to the changing regimes throughout the Revolution, first directing concerts for the Queen, later writing music for Napoleon’s marriage, and finally writing for the restored Royal Chapel. At best a minor innovator, Martini’s melodic operas had mixed success, but L’amoureux de quinze ans, written in 1771, enjoyed considerable popularity, while his highly regarded church music combined old forms with modern theatricality, and his chansons, such as “Plaisir d’amour”, were influential. In 1800 he became professor of composition at the Paris Conservatoire.

MILESTONES

1783  Writes Le droit du seigneur, opera
1793  “Prière pour le Roi”, political song
1814  Composes Scene héroïque pour Napoléon

Luigi Boccherini

1743–1805  Italian  c.600

After studying in Rome and gaining acclaim as an outstanding cello virtuoso in Italy, Boccherini toured Europe to seek his fortune. Following success in Paris, he was invited to Madrid to be court chamber composer to the Infante Don Luis. There he wrote quintets – for his cello with Don Luis’s existing quartet. Though still popular in Paris, Boccherini – who saw both wives and several of his children die – was dogged by illness and bad luck in his last years, and died in obscurity and poverty in a tiny apartment.

MILESTONES

1757  Studies in Rome
1767  Success in Paris; publishes his first chamber music
1770  Starts work for Don Luis
1771  Writes String Quintet in E major
1786  Appointed court composer for Friedrich Wilhelm II of Prussia
1800  Lucien Bonaparte becomes patron

“There is perhaps no instrumental music more ingenious, elegant, and pleasing than his quintets”, Charles Burney wrote of Boccherini in 1770.
Carl Stamitz

Son of Johann, head of the renowned Mannheim orchestra, Carl Stamitz was a violinist who became a prolific composer of lyrical, flowing orchestral music. He wrote 50 symphonies, around 25 symphonies concertante, and over 60 concertos. He went to Paris to work as a court composer, performing at the Concerts Spirituels and publishing his music. He then worked around Europe, spending three years in London, where he worked with J C Bach. After a period at the court of William V, Prince of Orange, and more travelling, he ended up as music director and teacher at Jena University. But there was unhappiness: all his children died in infancy, his debts mounted, and his ambitious plans (even attempts at alchemy) came to nothing.

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MILESTONES

- 1762: Gains position as second violin in Elector of Mannheim's court orchestra
- 1770: Moves to Paris; begins concert career as virtuoso of violin and viola d’amore
- 1778: Holds own benefit concert in London
- 1780: Goes to work in The Hague
- 1790: Goes on working visit to Russia
- 1795: Moves to Jena

Domenico Cimarosa

Shortly after leaving composition classes, Cimarosa burst onto the scene with his comic opera *Le stravaganze del conte* in Naples. After that, his 60 light, elegant operas, mostly comic, with witty and lively ensembles, were staged all over Europe. He also wrote chamber music in a Mozart-like style. When Napoleon occupied Naples in 1799, Cimarosa – then organist at the royal chapel – wrote a song of praise which was sung at the burning of the royal flag – only to see the king re-take the city and throw him in jail. His reputation saved his head, but he was exiled and died soon after in Venice.

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MILESTONES

- 1772: *Le stravaganze del conte*, opera, premiered
- 1780: *L’Italiana in Londra* staged at La Scala
- 1787: Visits court at St Petersburg
- 1792: *Il matrimonio segreto*, opera, staged while Kapellmeister in Vienna for two years
- 1793: Returns to Naples; accepts royal post
Largely forgotten today, Clementi was one of the first piano virtuosos. He codified his intimate knowledge of the new instrument in *Gradus ad Parnassum*, a seminal work of 19th-century piano teaching consisting of 100 piano studies. Also a successful publisher and piano manufacturer, he was much celebrated in his lifetime and was buried in Westminster Cathedral, where his epitaph reads, “The father of the pianoforte”.

**LIFE AND MUSIC**

A child prodigy, Clementi was “bought” from his Italian father at the age of 13 and taken to a wealthy household in the southwest of England, where he occupied himself entirely with studying the harpsichord for seven years. Moving to London in 1774, he became England’s pre-eminent keyboard player, but after two European tours and a piano “duel” with Mozart, he retired from the concert stage and concentrated on teaching. Clementi subsequently founded a music-publishing and piano-manufacturing firm, travelling extensively to establish it, and secured the publishing rights to several of Beethoven’s compositions. However, it is for his virtuosic and dramatic piano sonatas, which certainly influenced Beethoven, that he is remembered.

**KEY WORKS**

**PIANO SONATA IN F SHARP MINOR, OP. 25, NO. 5**

Amongst the finest of Clementi’s 64 piano sonatas, this dramatic work was certainly written for the concert stage rather than the drawing room. Although pianistically varied, its mood is unusually dark, and with all three movements in the minor mode, this is an intense and brooding work of considerable pathos.

Abandoning traditional two-movement sonatas, Clementi initiated three-movement forms.

**GRADUS AD PARNASSUM**

Published in three volumes between 1817 and 1826, this comprehensive collection of didactic pieces, ranging from finger exercises to fugues, studies, sonata movements, and character pieces, was the result of a long lifetime’s experience playing the newly invented piano. Meaning “Steps to Parnassus” (the abode of the Muses), it was highly regarded and widely used throughout the 19th century, and was parodied by Debussy in his *Children’s Corner* piano suite.
Antonio Salieri

1750–1825  Italian  c. 350

When the Viennese court composer F. L. Gassmann saw Salieri’s talent in Venice, he took him to Vienna to complete his training. Once there Salieri blossomed, proved adept at making the right friends (such as Emperor Joseph II), and was a major contributor to Viennese musical life from 1770 to 1820. Many of his operas – rich, theatrical, and combining German power and Italian sweetness – enjoyed great success in Italy (the comedies), Paris (the tragedies), and across Europe. His later operas had a lukewarm reception and he devoted himself to teaching. Salieri’s relationship with Mozart – contrary to myths created by Pushkin’s play *Mozart and Salieri* (1831) and Peter Schaffer’s film *Amadeus* (1984) – was no more than respectful rivalry.

MILESTONES

- 1779  Writes *La scuola de’gelosi*, comic opera
- 1781  *Der Rauchfangkehrer*, singspiel, published
- 1784  Composes *Les Danaïdes*, opera
- 1788  Writes *Axur re d’Ormus*, opera, with Lorenzo da Ponte
- c. 1804  Concentrates on writing sacred music

Salieri wrote his opera *Europa riconosciuta* (*Europa Revealed*) for the grand opening of Theatre Alla Scala, Milan, in 1778. It includes several arias of great brilliance.

Luigi Cherubini

1760–1842  Italian  300

After a modest early career in Italy and London, Cherubini moved to Paris, becoming a dominant figure in the music world as a conductor, publisher, composer, and teacher. His music – especially in his successful Revolution-era operas – could be self-expressive, dramatic, and dark. He adroitly rode changing circumstances, both stylistic (mixing comic and serious styles) and political (he wrote a piece celebrating Louis XVI’s execution, then one praising his memory). After 1816 he wrote almost exclusively religious music.

Beethoven called Cherubini the greatest living composer, but his reputation faded after his death, possibly due to lack of a clear national identity.

MILESTONES

- 1780  Produces his first opera, *Quinto Fabio*
- 1786  Arrives in Paris
- 1791  Composes *Lodoïska*, opera, and achieves first international success
- 1797  *Medee*, opera, published
- 1815  Superintendent of French royal chapel
- 1822  Director of Paris Conservatoire
- 1836  Writes Requiem in D minor

Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres admired the music of Cherubini and, in recognition of his many talents, painted *Luigi Cherubini and the Lyric Muse* in 1842.
Samuel Wesley

- **1766–1837**
- **English**
- **c.430**

Wesley was a child prodigy who became something of a maverick celebrity in London music circles: he never held court appointments or official posts, but made a haphazard living as a teacher and writer, and as an organist known for his extraordinary improvisations. Most of his output is Latin church music, combining old and new styles. Attacks of depression, as well as a costly divorce, hindered his career.

**MILESTONES**

- 1774: Composes *Ruth*, oratorio, aged eight
- 1799: Writes *The Death of Abel*, oratorio
- 1802: Symphony in B published
- 1813: Becomes regular organ soloist at Covent Garden, London
- 1817: Institutionalized after jumping out of a window

Franz Xaver Süssmayr

- **1766–1803**
- **Austrian**
- **c.160**

Known today as the composer who completed Mozart’s Requiem, Franz Süssmayr – whose limitations are highlighted clearly next to Mozart’s work – was nevertheless a craftsmanlike composer who enjoyed considerable stage success in Vienna. Songs from his popular Magic Flute-like *Der Spiegel von Arkadien* were sung in cafés and taverns, and circulated in pirate copies. He held various institutional posts and wrote in many national styles – French and Italian comic idioms, Italian opera seria, and popular German forms – and his melodic gifts were at their best in his solos, duets, and trios. He was Kapellmeister of Vienna’s National Theatre from 1794 until his death.

**MILESTONES**

- 1791: Copyist and pupil of Mozart
- 1799: *Solimann II*, singspiel, published
- 1802: Writes *Il noce di Benevento*, ballet

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Jan Ladislav Dussek

- **1760–1812**
- **Czech**
- **c.280**

Something of an early Romantic, Dussek was fêted from London to St Petersburg as a touring piano virtuoso and composer. His accomplished concertos and sonatas sold very well, and in many ways are more harmonically adventurous than Mozart’s, or even Beethoven’s. However, they have been surprisingly neglected since his death. A piano innovator, he first placed the instrument sideways to improve the audience’s view, and worked with a manufacturer to extend the keyboard.

Dussek played before Marie Antoinette in Paris, and during the French Revolution fled to London. Forced to leave England after a publishing failure, he went on to lead a wild and reckless life, following his patron the Prince of Prussia into battle. In his final years he returned to Paris.

**MILESTONES**

- 1786: Moves to Paris; meets Marie Antoinette and Napoleon
- 1790: First known performance in London
- 1797: Piano works increase in complexity
- 1800: Flees London for Hamburg
- 1806: Writes *Elégie harmonique sur la mort du Prince Louis Ferdinand de Prusse*, sonata

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Jan Ladislav Dussek

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- **c.430**

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**MILESTONES**

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- 1802: Writes *Il noce di Benevento*, ballet
“We cannot despair about mankind knowing that Mozart was a man.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

1756–1791 | Austrian | 655

Probably the most prodigious musician ever born, Mozart’s early tours around Europe not only made him famous, but familiarized him with many musical styles that he synthesized in his own cosmopolitan works. Unique in musical history for his accomplishment in all forms and genres and possessed of an astonishing compositional fluency, he was the first important composer to attempt to establish a “freelance” musical career.

LIFE

The son of a gifted musician, Mozart’s first musical experiences were hearing his child-prodigy sister, Nannerl, at her lessons. His own gifts soon surpassed hers and, proud of their accomplishments, their father gave up his career to promote their talents before the astounded royalty and cognoscenti of Europe. Despite extensive tours, Mozart composed and studied continually, but, by 1772, no longer a child-prodigy, he had to settle for the realities of a court appointment, where his social status was between the valets and the cooks. Never happy at the small court of Salzburg and convinced of his own musical superiority, Mozart attempted to obtain other positions, but, failing so to do, left to become one of music’s first “freelance” professionals. Arriving in Vienna in 1781, he married Constanze Weber and started to give concerts, publish music, and receive commissions, particularly for operas. Over the next ten years he wrote over 200 works and consolidated his reputation, but had to give piano lessons, take in boarders, and borrow money to maintain the lifestyle he desired. His death was probably from rheumatic fever. He was buried in a mass grave according to Viennese custom, without mourners, whilst obituary notices unanimously hailed his greatness.

Although his greatest love was opera, Mozart was the most brilliant pianist of his age. He took the piano concerto to new heights of richness and virtuosity.

MUSICAL OUTPUT

| Total: 655 |
| SYMPHONIES (59) | 16 | 30 | 4 | 5 | 4 |
| OTHER ORCHESTRAL (78) | 7 | 9 | 28 | 28 | 14 |
| CHAMBER (176) | 15 | 40 | 33 | 29 | 59 |
| OTHER INSTRUMENTAL (119) | 22 | 14 | 6 | 17 | 35 | 25 |
| OPERAS (23) | 3 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 9 |
| CHORAL (95) | 13 | 19 | 17 | 16 | 30 |
| SONGS (105) | 9 | 4 | 16 | 22 | 54 |

1756 1765 1770 1775 1780 1785 1791
The range of Mozart’s musical output is extraordinary, and it has well been said that no other composer has been equally accomplished in so many different media, but it is his operas that hold the key to his essential style. Building on the operatic reforms of Gluck, Mozart combined vivid vocal characterization and supreme melodic gifts with an emphasis on orchestral expressivity and colour to achieve a far more dramatic conception than had previously been encountered. The resulting depictions of character, psychology and human interaction evince a subtle complexity which blurred the lines between opera seria and opera buffa, particularly in the three operas written with Italian poet, Lorenzo Da Ponte, as librettist: The Marriage of Figaro, Don Giovanni and Così fan tutte. Mozart also wrote several operas in German, of which The Magic Flute has been the most enduringly popular. It combines joyous tunes with noble choruses and includes the tour-de-force coloratura aria of the Queen of the Night.

Mozart also wrote a substantial amount of solo vocal and choral music, ranging from the short motet Ave Verum Corpus, a piece of utterly serene beauty, to the dazzlingly spirited Exsultate, jubilate for soprano and orchestra. Of his large-scale choral works, the Missa solemnis and the Requiem (both unfinished) show him in serious, darker mood, interleaved with sections of exultation or grandeur. Mozart’s symphonies, concertos, and chamber works show a particular attention to instrumental colour. His peers were frequently amazed by the way he matched experimental combinations of instruments, such as those in the Quintet for Piano and Winds (oboe, clarinet, bassoon, and horn) and the Kegelstatt Trio (clarinet, viola, piano) with subtleties of orchestration.

Mozart wrote Die Entführung aus dem Serail in German for Leopold II’s Imperial Court Burgtheater (below) in Vienna.
particularly in the use of wind instruments, the latter helping to establish the clarinet as a regular in the orchestra. His refinement of the concerto, especially the piano concerto, brought the genre to a new level of sophistication, establishing it as no less important than the symphony, which had far-reaching effects in the 19th century. In 1782, he began a period of concentrated piano concerto writing. The 15 (Nos. 11–25) he produced by the end of 1786 became ever more symphonically rich and pianistically virtuosic. Mozart had written most of his symphonies in his youth, but his last, the “Jupiter”, was the summation of his symphonic development, ending with undiluted orchestral brilliance.

Composed in already well-established forms, Mozart’s music is seldom regarded as revolutionary, but contemporaneous audiences certainly found some of his work difficult to appreciate, particularly in its startling contrasts, complexity, and sometimes dissonant harmony. Having assimilated the major European musical styles as a boy, his mature work allied a fusion of Italian lyricism, French brilliance and Middle-European compositional processes with a very natural sense of symmetry, which has come to be regarded as the epitome of Classical refinement.

MILESTONES

1761 Composes Andante, K1a, Allegro, K1b
1764 Composes Symphony No. 1, K16
1767 Travels to Vienna and catches smallpox
1768 Singpiel Bastien und Bastienne is staged
1772 Appointed Konzertmeister at Salzburg
1773 Fails to gain post in Vienna; composes many string quartets, symphonies, and motet Exsultate, Jubilate
1778 “Paris” Symphony performed in Paris; his mother dies there; writes Concerto for Flute and Harp, Piano Sonata, K 310
1779 Becomes court organist; composes Coronation Mass, Sinfonia Concertante
1780 Receives commission from Munich for Idomeneo, opera; rehearses it there
1781 Idomeneo is a success; leaves his post to become freelance musician in Vienna
1782 Marries Constanze Weber; opera Die Entführung aus dem Serail is acclaimed
1784 Gives series of public concerts for which composes Piano Concertos Nos. 14–19
1785 Composes Piano Concerto No. 21
1786 Opera The Marriage of Figaro, produced; composes Piano Concertos Nos. 23–25, Kegelstatt Trio, “Prague” Symphony
1787 Visits Prague twice: Figaro is success; “Prague” Symphony and Don Giovanni premiered, composes Eine kleine Nachtmusik
1788 Severe money problems: starts borrowing; composes his three greatest symphonies (Nos. 39, 40, 41), three piano trios, and “Coronation” Piano Concerto
1789 Travels to Dresden, Leipzig, Potsdam, and Berlin trying to obtain post or commissions; composes Clarinet Quintet
1790 Opera Così fan tutte premiered in Vienna; gives concerts in Germany
1791 Premiere of La Clemenza di Tito in Prague; opera The Magic Flute is success in Vienna; Clarinet Concerto; begins Requiem, which is left incomplete at his death

Mozart fell in love with Constanze Weber in 1781 and married her in 1782. Of their six children, only two survived.

Mozart became a Freemason in Vienna (above) in 1784. The influence of their ideology is strongly felt in his sensationally successful comic opera The Magic Flute.
PIANO SONATA NO. 8, K310
SOLO PIANO  16:30  3
Mozart wrote this sonata in Paris at the time of his mother’s death. It is amongst the finest piano works of the early Classical period. One of only three minor-key sonatas in his output, its drama is immediate in the orchestral textures of its opening. A restrained slow movement lulls the listener before the dark pathos of the finale.

SYMPHONY NO. 38, “PRAGUE”, K504
ORCHESTRAL  30:00  3
Following the success of The Marriage of Figaro in Prague, Mozart introduced this symphony there in 1787. Unusually formed of only three movements, it opens in a dark, majestic mood, which is immediately dispelled by the arrival of the faster main body of the music. An expressive slow movement balances the lively finale, in which, to the delight of the piece’s first audience, Mozart used a theme borrowed from The Marriage of Figaro.

STRING QUARTET NO. 19, “DISSONANT”, K465
CHAMBER  30:30  4
This is one of six quartets that Mozart dedicated in 1785 to Haydn, whose recent Op. 33 quartets had brought the form to a new level of sophistication. Mozart’s equally finely wrought response seems effortless in its mastery of Haydn’s innovations, but according to the composer was “the fruit of long and laborious endeavour”. This, the last of the set, is named after its surprisingly dissonant introduction, which gives way to work of a graceful charm.

CLARINET CONCERTO, K622
ORCHESTRAL  28:00  3
Mozart first met Anton Stadler in 1783 and, immediately taken by his virtuosity on the newly invented clarinet, they formed a friendship which inspired the “Kegelstatt” Trio, the Clarinet Quintet, and this lyrical concerto. Mozart capitalized on the clarinet’s mellifluous tone quality, especially in the operatically inspired slow movement. Conducting the Viennese premiere was Mozart’s final public appearance.
DON GIOVANNI, K527

OPERA 174:00 5

Asked to write an opera for Prague after the success of *The Marriage of Figaro*, Mozart decided on the story of Don Juan. Notable for the vivid musical depiction of characters and emotions, and just as serious in emotion as it is comic in plot, it is still considered to be among the greatest operas ever composed.

OVERTURE AND ACT ONE (92:00) After the dramatic, brooding overture, Don Giovanni appears, masked and pursued by Donna Anna, whom he has been seducing. Her father, the Commendatore, insists on a duel, but is killed. She asks her betrothed, Don Ottavio, to swear vengeance. Don Giovanni now tries to seduce another woman, but has to escape when he recognizes her as Donna Elvira, a former mistress. Alone, Leperello lists Don Giovanni’s catalogue of conquests. At wedding preparations in a village, Don Giovanni woos Zerlina, the bride, with the aria “Là ci darem mano”. Elvira, Anna, and Ottavio arrive, thus thwarting this and other seduction plans.

ACT TWO (82:00) Exchanging clothes with Leperello, Don Giovanni tries to seduce Elvira’s maid while Leperello entices Elvira away. Zerlina’s fiancé, Masetto, and some peasants appear, all after Don Giovanni’s blood. They, together with the other protagonists, capture Leperello, who has to reveal his identity. Later, Don Giovanni finds him alone in a cemetery. The funerary statue of the Commendatore suddenly starts speaking and the Don flippantly invites it to supper. Meanwhile, Anna sings one of Mozart’s most celebrated arias, “Non mi dir, bell’idol mio”, to Ottavio. Finally, at supper, Elvira begs Giovanni to mend his ways, but he refuses. The statue appears and drags him down to Hell, leaving the others to ponder the moral of the tale.

PIANO CONCERTO NO. 21, K467

ORCHESTRAL 25:00 3

This is one of Mozart’s six 1785–86 concertos, probably performed at his subscription concerts in Vienna. With some of the most complex piano writing of the time, even Mozart’s father commented that “the new concerto is astonishingly difficult”.

FIRST MOVEMENT (ALLEGRO MAESTOSO, 13:00) The martial quality inspired by the trumpets and drums at the opening is dispelled by the piano, which leads a rather independent life, even initiating this and other seduction plans.

SECOND MOVEMENT (ANDANTE, 6:00) Silencing the brass and percussion, Mozart mutes the strings to give this lyrical movement its intimate colour.

THIRD MOVEMENT (ALLEGRO VIVACE ASSAI, 6:00) Ending in high spirits, this movement exudes a rustic charm, while requiring extreme virtuosity from the soloist.

INFLUENCES

While always noted for its formal beauty and elegance, Mozart’s music was usually dismissed in the century after his death as an historically interesting precursor to Beethoven’s. Only more recently, as an antidote to Romanticism and Modernity, has his name become a byword for musical perfection.
One of several divertimenti and serenades written for social occasions, *A Little Night Music* is scored for only strings and may even have been intended as a quintet. Originally in five movements, a second minuet was later removed from the manuscript.

**FIRST MOVEMENT** *(ALLEGRO, 5:45)* With its two sharply contrasting themes, the opening of Mozart’s most famous work is actually an extremely compact sonata-principle movement.

**SECOND MOVEMENT** *(ROMANZE, 5:45)* This effortlessly poised movement is given a mysterious quality by its darker middle section.

**THIRD MOVEMENT** *(MENUETO, 2:00)* The infectious rhythmic lilt of the minuet is here offset by the charmingly elegant Trio that follows it.

**FOURTH MOVEMENT** *(RONDO, 3:00)* Heard five times in this brief movement, the joyfully appealing principal theme never outstays its welcome.

The “grey messenger” who commissioned Mozart’s final work was actually an emissary for Count Walsegg-Stuppach, who wished to perform the Requiem in memory of his wife and required anonymity because he wished to pass the work off as his own. Mozart started it in good spirits, but his health began to fail and he

Mozart wrote his last three symphonies without a commission, or any prospect of performance, in the summer of 1788. This, his last, probably received its nickname when Haydn showed it to his British impresario, Salomon, in 1791, and it was subsequently published with the title. As a tribute to Mozart after his death, Haydn quoted the theme from the slow movement in his Symphony No. 98.

**FIRST MOVEMENT** *(ALLEGRO VIVACE, 12:25)*

After a brief opening, there is a pause before the themes are repeated, with more subtle touches and varied moods.

**SECOND MOVEMENT** *(ANDANTE CANTABILE, 9:35)*

The peaceful string theme is interrupted by loud chords and
became obsessed with the idea that he was writing it for his own death. Death did indeed strike when the work was far from complete. His widow, needing the outstanding half of the fee to support their family, asked Mozart’s assistant, Franz Xaver Süssmayr, to complete it.  

**INTROITUS** (5:20) The only section which Mozart had fully scored dispenses with horns, flutes, and oboes in order to give the much darker orchestral sonorities which characterize the work’s solemnity.  

**KYRIE** (3:00) Reminiscent of Bach and Handel’s religious music, the Kyrie is an inexorable fugue culminating in a unison chorus.  

**SEQUENZ** (20:10) Divided into six sections, the music explores the terror of divine judgement in the gripping “Dies Irae”, reasures as the solo trombone weaves gracefully around the “Tuba Mirum”, and ends in the moving sadness of the “Lacrimosa”.  

**OFFERTORIUM** (8:50) The restless “Domine Jesu Christe” is balanced by the otherworldly prayer of the “Hostias”.  

**SANCTUS** (1:50) This is a majestic setting, ending with a short fugue on “Hosanna”. Here and in the next two movements, Süssmayr had no sketches by Mozart from which to work.  

**BENEDICTUS** (5:20) Reminiscent of operatic quartets, the soloists join in this hymn of praise, which concludes with a fugue for full chorus.  

**AGNUS DEI** (9:50) Süssmayr’s reworking of music from the opening Introitus results in a most effective setting for the finale of this piece. The music from the Kyrie section of the requiem mass brings the “Lux Aeterna” to its measured conclusion.

surprising harmonic changes, but, in spite of this, melody prevails throughout the movement.  

**THIRD MOVEMENT** (MENUETTO–ALLEGRO 5:50)  
The rather courtly, serious Minuet contrasts with a quirky Trio which, from its very beginning, continually threatens to come to an end.

**FOURTH MOVEMENT** (FINALE 9:00)  
In one of the most extraordinary symphonic movements ever written, Mozart presents and combines five different themes. In the brilliant, electrifying coda all five are reintroduced and heard together.  

*The “Jupiter” is now recognized as one of Mozart’s greatest symphonies, but it was never played during his lifetime.*
“Keep your eye on him; one day he will make the world talk of him.”

MOZART, ON HEARING THE 17-YEAR OLD BEETHOVEN
Ludwig van Beethoven
 Ø 1770–1827  🔴 German  📜 398

The supreme iconic figure of Western music, Beethoven established the popular concept of the artist, who, separate from society, transcends personal tragedy to achieve his goal and becomes a hero. Calling himself a “Tondichter”, or “poet in sound”, his music mirrored his beliefs in the prevailing spirit of individualism by emphasizing personal expression over traditional form, and thus paved the way for musical Romanticism.

LIFE

Showing early musical talent, Beethoven was given a thorough music grounding by the Bonn court organist, Christian Gottlob Neefe, and was soon acting as his deputy. Aged 17, he left for Vienna to further his studies, but returned within weeks when he discovered his mother was dying. Impressed by his music, Haydn then invited him to study in Vienna. There, Beethoven was soon invited into aristocratic circles, where the beauty and virtuosity of his playing, and his compositional prowess won him many patrons who subsequently became dedicatees of his works. However, by 1802 he realized that his growing deafness would become total and, while staying in the village of Heiligenstadt, wrote a letter detailing his desperate unhappiness. Overcoming the crisis, he returned, determined to “seize Fate by the throat”, and launched himself into an unprecedented period of creativity which bore many of his most famous works. By 1812, his deafness had engendered further depression and isolation and a lapse in creativity, but his final years, in a spirit of resignation, brought forth his most spiritual and exalted music. Suggestions that he died with a fist raised, though appropriate, are possibly apocryphal, but his death was mourned by the whole of Vienna.

MUSICAL OUTPUT

| SYMPHONIES (8) | 2 | 6 | 2 | 1 |
| OTHER ORCHESTRAL (31) | 2 | 8 | 12 | 7 | 2 |
| CHAMBER (92) | 4 | 43 | 24 | 13 | 8 |
| OTHER INSTRUMENTAL (101) | 7 | 46 | 30 | 7 | 11 |
| OPERAS (1) | 1 |
| CHORAL (77) | 9 | 9 | 26 | 33 |
| SONGS (87) | 2 | 35 | 27 | 20 | 3 |

Total: 398
Beethoven’s compositional battles were hard fought, with certain works spending many years in laboured gestation. Once fully formed, however, the majority of them were instantly successful. The growing middle class enjoyed his music’s immediacy, power, and dramatic virtuosity, while the cultural elite was equally impressed by the thorough absorption and subsequent transcending of 18th-century musical styles.

Although Beethoven’s output is usually divided into three periods, a fourth, before his arrival in Vienna, should also be considered, as by then he had already composed a number of vocal and chamber works and a very accomplished set of variations for piano. These early works are all catalogued with “WoO” numbers (Werke ohne Opus – works without opus). His early reputation and fame rested on his phenomenal gifts of improvisation at the keyboard – which some said were even greater than Mozart’s – and it is therefore natural that most of his early compositions are for piano.

Beethoven’s usually designated “early” period began after his arrival in Vienna in 1792 at the age of 22. There he assimilated – and then began to transform – the sonata principle from a balanced, arch-like structure to a more dynamic, urgent form, where the recapitulation (the third section after the exposition and the development sections) is a culmination rather than a repetition. At first tending towards exploration and elaboration of the initial musical ideas – and preferring four movements to the customary three – Beethoven’s solo piano works were highly successful. But, as his accomplishment grew, his compositions – including the Op. 18 string quartets, three piano concertos, two symphonies, and the *Pathétique* and “Moonlight” piano sonatas – became more expressive and concentrated. The *Pathétique* sonata, with its French name meaning “passionate” or “emotional” (given to it by Beethoven himself), is regarded as his first masterpiece.

Beethoven’s “middle” period dates from 1803 – the year after he realized the seriousness of his growing deafness and rejected suicide in favour of giving the world, he said, “all the music I felt was within me”. In 1808, Beethoven was granted an annuity for life by his pupil and friend, the Habsburg Archduke Rudolf of Austria.
His decision was of unimaginable significance. From this time, his music took on a new, heroic style whose dimensions, range, and power were a watershed in music history. Its first manifestation was the epic “Eroica” Symphony, a work of colossal energy and, at 50 minutes, the longest that had thus far been written, revealing new developments of the symphonic form. Beethoven’s new “symphonic ideal” was applied to all genres and resulted in a torrent of productivity. From this period come four more symphonies, the Violin Concerto, Piano Concertos Nos. 4 and 5, and an opera, Fidelio. However, his increasing isolation through deafness marked the change into his “late” period. By 1813 Beethoven was exploring more intimate modes of expression, often emphasizing the lyrical and veiled. With an increasing fondness for variation and fugue (such as in the Diabelli Variations), and further experimentation with sonata forms – which resulted in three final piano sonatas of great intellectual and expressive depth – his music left the Classical world of Haydn and Mozart behind and entered the Romantic era. His Missa solemnis and Symphony No. 9 were also innovative, combining symphonic and choral writing “from the heart” as never before.

In 1827, Beethoven fell ill with dropsy and pneumonia. He died in March and some 10,000 people attended his funeral.

**Milestones**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1778</td>
<td>First public performance in Cologne</td>
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<tr>
<td>1781</td>
<td>Takes lessons in organ and violin</td>
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<tr>
<td>1783</td>
<td>Composes Three Sonatas, WoO 47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1787</td>
<td>Studies briefly in Vienna with Mozart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1792</td>
<td>Returns to Vienna to study with Haydn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1795</td>
<td>First public concert in Vienna: performs Piano Concerto No. 1 in B Flat, Op. 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1799</td>
<td>Publishes Pathétique Piano Sonata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800</td>
<td>Symphony No. 1 and Septet performed in Vienna; composes Piano Concerto No. 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1801</td>
<td>Ballet Prometheus is successfully staged; publishes “Moonlight” Piano Sonata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1802</td>
<td>Depressed by failing hearing, writes Heiligenstadt Testament; composes Symphony No. 2 and Kreutzer Violin Sonata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1804</td>
<td>Completes “Eroica” Symphony; composes “Waldstein” Piano Sonata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1805</td>
<td>Opera Fidelio premiered, but withdrawn after three performances owing to Austrian occupation of Vienna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1805</td>
<td>Composes “Appassionata” Piano Sonata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1806</td>
<td>Completes Violin Concerto, Symphony No. 4, Razoumovsky Quartets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1808</td>
<td>Symphonies Nos. 5 and 6, Piano Concerto No. 4, and Choral Fantasy premiered together in four-hour concert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1809</td>
<td>Writes “Emperor” Piano Concerto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1811</td>
<td>“Archduke” Trio written</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1812</td>
<td>Completes Symphonies Nos. 7 and 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1814</td>
<td>Revised Fidelio produced successfully; his final appearance as pianist in “Archduke” Trio is disastrous owing to his deafness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1816</td>
<td>Granted custody of his nephew, Karl – leads to legal battle with sister-in-law; writes song cycle An die ferne Geliebte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1818</td>
<td>Is sent Broadwood piano from London; “Hammerklavier” Piano Sonata completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1822</td>
<td>Finishes Piano Sonata No. 32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1823</td>
<td>Completes Mass in D (Missa solemnis) and Diabelli Variations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1824</td>
<td>Finishes “Choral” Symphony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1826</td>
<td>Writes String Quartet Op. 130</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Beethoven tried many cures for deafness. This is one of the hearing aids he used late in his life.
Beethoven dedicated this piece to Rudolphe Kreutzer, a famous violinist living in Paris, perhaps because he was considering a visit there even though he had composed it for British violinist George Bridgetower. Avoiding the piano-centred style of his previous works in the genre, here there is a real equality in the virtuosity of the two instruments; indeed, the score bore the subtitle “written in a molto concertante style, as though a concerto”.

Beethoven dedicated more than 20 works to Archduke Rudolph, but, as one of the finest piano trios ever written and with its grand manner, this richly deserves its aristocratic sobriquet. It was the work Beethoven chose for his last public appearance as a pianist in 1814.

Although the five country scenes, including a vivid storm, were inspired by Beethoven’s love of nature, he emphasized that this was “more the expression of feeling than tone-painting”. The symphony was first given in December 1808 at an epic concert which included the premieres of the Symphony No. 5, Piano Concerto No. 4, and Choral Fantasy.

At the time the most “symphonic” and longest piano concerto ever written, Beethoven’s final work in this genre was nicknamed the “Emperor” by the composer J B Cramer in response to its grandeur. Unusually starting with flourishes for piano, it also broke with tradition by dispensing with an improvised cadenza in favour of an already written one. Too deaf to perform it himself, Beethoven had it premiered by his pupil Carl Czerny. It was instantly hailed as a masterpiece.

The Heiligenstadt Testament is the letter Beethoven wrote to his brothers (but never sent) in the village of Heiligenstadt, where he contemplated suicide at his deafness in 1802.
INFLUENCES
The first composer to establish a freelance career from the outset, Beethoven’s refusal to be subservient to aristocratic patrons marked the change in the role of the musician from servant to autonomous cultural arbiter, and thus created a model of aspiration followed by almost every subsequent Classical musician.

FOCUS

VIOLIN CONCERTO, OP. 61
ORCHESTRAL 4:45:15

The score for this concerto was finished only two days before the first performance, and was virtually read at sight. Not an immediate success, Beethoven arranged it for piano, but the original became popular after the 13-year-old Joseph Joachim performed it in London with Mendelssohn in 1844.

FIRST MOVEMENT (ALLEGRO MA NON TROPPO, 25:45) Beethoven developed Mozart’s concerto style on an unprecedented scale in this movement, unusually giving prominent roles to the timpani and woodwind.

SECOND MOVEMENT (LARGHETTO, 10:00) Beginning with an ethereal set of variations accompanied by muted strings, the movement ends with a brief cadenza which leads directly into the finale.

THIRD MOVEMENT (RONDO, ALLEGRO, 9:30) A cheerful and traditional ending, with only a brief moment of Beethovian pathos in the minor key, concludes this eloquent work.

SYMPHONY NO. 9, “CHORAL”, OP. 125
ORCHESTRAL 6:45:00

Possibly the most iconic work of Western music, the “Choral” still stands as a colossus against which all subsequent symphonies have been judged. Having first wanted to set Schiller’s “Ode to Joy” in 1793, Beethoven was eventually commissioned to write the work in 1822 by the London Philharmonic Society. It was first performed in Vienna in 1823.

FIRST MOVEMENT (ALLEGRO MA NON TROPPO, UN POCO MAESTOSO, 16:00) Opening mysteriously, this settles into a dark and forceful sonata style. Among many surprises is a fortissimo repeat of the opening bars in the major key at the recapitulation.

SECOND MOVEMENT (MOLTO VIVACE, 16:00) Beethoven creates a large-scale movement from very economic and energetic material. After experimenting with timpani as a feature in the Violin and “Emperor” concertos, here he gives them a major role.

THIRD MOVEMENT (ADAGIO MOLTO E CANTABILE, 14:00) This sublime adagio is actually two sets of variations on two alternating themes. Two startling interruptions for the new valved horn come near the end.

FOURTH MOVEMENT (PRESTO, ALLEGRO, 23:00) Fragments of earlier movements are heard before instruments, then voices, settle on Schiller’s “Ode to Joy” celebrating the universal brotherhood of mankind in a hitherto unprecedented choral addition to a symphony.

Beethoven used several verses of poet and dramatist Friedrich Schiller’s 1785 Ode to Joy (An die Freude) in his “Choral” Symphony.

INFLUENCES
The first composer to establish a freelance career from the outset, Beethoven’s refusal to be subservient to aristocratic patrons marked the change in the role of the musician from servant to autonomous cultural arbiter, and thus created a model of aspiration followed by almost every subsequent Classical musician.
This work was commissioned by the Russian prince, Nicholas Galitzin. The finale was originally what is now known as Beethoven’s *Grosse Fuge*, Op. 133, but he replaced it with the shorter present Allegro after the premiere.

**FIRST MOVEMENT** *(ADAGIO MA NON TROPPO, ALLEGRO, 14:00)* In this sonata-form movement, Beethoven explores aspects of both the Adagio introduction and the subsequent Allegro, uniting the disparate elements only in the short development and coda sections.

**SECOND MOVEMENT** *(PRESTO, 2:00)* In this very brief Scherzo the first violin takes the lead in the humorous Trio section. It also includes a number of very surprising chromatic scales.

**THIRD MOVEMENT** *(ANDANTE CON MOTO MA NON TROPPO, POCO SCHERZOSO, 6:00)* Not quite a slow movement, this sunny music is more in the spirit of a divertimento.

**FOURTH MOVEMENT** *(ALLA DANZA TEDESCA, ALLEGRO ASSAI, 3:00)* Although lyrical, with its rhythmic lilt and regular pulse, the rustic German origins of this music are never far away.

**FIFTH MOVEMENT** *(CAVATINA, ADAGIO MOLTO ESPRESSIVO, 8:00)* A cavatina is an operatic song in simple style. Certainly the first violin retains the simple, operatic-style melody throughout, but Beethoven’s almost too-intimate expression of feeling is far removed from the world of the stage. Perhaps most extraordinary is the unsettling middle section, marked “beklemmt” (“oppressed”) in the score.

**SIXTH MOVEMENT** *(ALLEGRO, 9:00)* Having replaced the *Grosse Fuge* ending, Beethoven did not live to see this, his shorter, but very stark and gripping alternative performed.

In his final years, Beethoven concentrated on the intimate medium of the string quartet, redefining its boundaries and creating his most sublime works.

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**PIANO SONATA IN F MINOR, “APPASSIONATA”, OP. 57**

In this sonata, composed in 1804–05, Beethoven brought piano virtuosity to a new level of complexity, powerfully fusing it with his new, heroic style. Although the subtitle was not his own (it was added by the publisher), Beethoven seems to have approved of it. This violent, impassioned piece was one of his favourite works in the genre.

**FIRST MOVEMENT** *(ALLEGRO ASSAI, 9:00)* Using the keyboard almost as an orchestra, Beethoven elicited a new kind of musical drama in this movement with its sudden changes in volume, register, and pace.

**SECOND MOVEMENT** *(ANDANTE CON MOTO, 6:20)* Starting with a chordal theme, this calm movement develops into a series
For his only opera, Beethoven set the story of an old French libretto, *Léonore, ou L’amour conjugal*, which reflected his belief in the triumph of free will, liberty, and human goodness. He revised *Fidelio*, as he renamed it, twice over ten years and wrote another three overtures. The first three *Leonora* overtures are often performed alone.

**OVERTURE AND ACT ONE (78:00)** Jaquino, a prison gatekeeper, wants to marry Marcellina, but she loves Fidelio, who works for the jailer, Rocco, her father. However, Fidelio is really Leonora, a woman in disguise looking for her husband, Florestan. The prison governor is indeed holding him illegally. His decision to murder Florestan to avoid ministerial criticism is overheard by Leonora, who decides to rescue her husband.

**ACT TWO (46:00)** In his cell, Florestan muses on his fate. As Leonora and Rocco enter, he asks for food and she recognizes her husband. The governor then enters to kill Florestan, but she holds him off with a pistol. The minister’s arrival ensures Florestan’s freedom and the townspeople rejoice as the corrupt governor is arrested.

The British pianist John Ogdon (1937–19) gave many highly original and moving interpretations of Beethoven’s piano music. Forceful outburst leading into a relentless finale in which the music is kept reined in, however, until the explosive coda and the abrupt and violent ending.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2nd Variation</th>
<th>3rd Variation</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Exposition</th>
<th>Development</th>
<th>Recapitulation</th>
<th>Repeat of Development/Recapitulation</th>
<th>Coda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Syncopated theme in top part</td>
<td>Return of theme in original form</td>
<td>Imitation between parts</td>
<td>Build-up in speed and intensity</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Johann Nepomuk Hummel

1778–1837  Austrian  c.450

A prodigy who, like Mozart, toured Europe as a boy, Hummel was idolized as a composer and fêted as Europe’s greatest pianist. A warm person whose business acumen helped secure better copyright laws for composers and more financial security for his family, he wrote all types of music (except symphonies, deferring to Beethoven) in a polished late-Classical style. His best-selling folk songs for the Scottish publisher George Thomson show how well he wrote for the market.

MILESTONES
1804  Becomes Konzertmeister at the court of Prince Nikolaus Esterházy
1810  Mathilde von Guise, opera, staged
1819  Kapellmeister at Weimar court
1828  Piano tutor sells out in days

Antonín Reicha

1770–1836  Czech  c.260

Though his operas never found success, Reicha’s instrumental works, often exploring aspects of technique, were eventually published and widely performed. His good reputation as an author on music theory led to a professorship at the Paris Conservatoire, and it was as a teacher, rather than as a prolific composer, that he became best known. He befriended Haydn and Beethoven, and both Berlioz and Liszt admired his forward-looking ideas. Reicha’s wind music was popular, and his colourful quintets proved models of the genre.

MILESTONES
1794  Teaches music in Hamburg
1803  Composes 36 Fugues
1818  Professor at the Paris Conservatoire

John Field

1782–1837  Irish  70

By the age of 18, Field was an established piano virtuoso on the London concert scene. When he visited St Petersburg with his teacher, Muzio Clementi, he was so at home in the artistic and aristocratic milieu that he remained in Russia. There, he developed a distinctive style of piano playing (Chopinesque, but pre-Chopin), while also pioneering the nocturne, of which he wrote 16. Field’s name spread across Europe, and as a teacher he was influential. By the 1830s, however, his music had fallen out of fashion. After an outrageous, Byronesque lifestyle of excess – quite unlike his serene music and delicate performing style – his health rapidly declined.

MILESTONES
1792  First public performance in Dublin
1793  Field’s family sets up home in London
1803  Visits St Petersburg, Russia
1811  Composes Piano Concertos Nos. 1-3
1812  Writes Nocturnes Nos. 1-3
1822  Setstle in Moscow
1832  Visits London

The moonlit Thames, shrouded in mist, conveys the serene mood of Field’s atmospheric nocturnes.
One of the most celebrated musicians of his time, Spohr’s instrumental compositions were favourably compared with those of Beethoven – and admired both by his peers – such as Mendelssohn, Schumann, and Chopin, and by the later Romantics Brahms and Tchaikovsky. A virtuoso violinist considered second only to Paganini, he also achieved great success as a teacher, his *Violin Tutor* being widely read.

**LIFE AND MUSIC**

From a musical family, Spohr started his career as a court chamber musician at Brunswick before touring throughout Germany as a virtuoso violinist. Appointed Konzertmeister at Gotha, he began to compose, and also became one of the first conductors to use a baton. After further touring with his harpist wife and public success with two operas, he finally settled in Kassel, where, as Kapellmeister, he wrote more operas and symphonies for orchestra, presented works by Bach and Wagner, and taught violinists from all over Europe. Heavily influenced by Mozart, his music combines Classical forms with early Romantic modes of expression.

**MILESTONES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1799</td>
<td>Embarks on first concert tour to Hamburg; joins the Brunswick court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1805</td>
<td>Becomes Konzertmeister at Gotha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1806</td>
<td>Marries harpist Dorette Scheidler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1813</td>
<td>Directs Theatre an der Wien</td>
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<tr>
<td>1816</td>
<td>Writes Violin Concerto No. 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>1822</td>
<td>Appointed Kapellmeister at Kassel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1826</td>
<td>Composes Six Songs, Op. 72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1836</td>
<td>Marries pianist Marianne Pfeiffer</td>
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<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>Composes Symphony No. 6</td>
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</table>

Spohr, a consummate performer and natural showman, delighted his friends and family at his lively musical gatherings with his virtuoso technique and Romantic panache.

**KEY WORKS**

**SYMPHONY NO. 6 IN G MAJOR, “HISTORIC”, OP. 116**

Wishing to satirize grand opera, Spohr wrote each of the first three movements of this symphony as a pastiche of earlier musical styles and periods (1720, 1780, and 1810) whilst parodying the music of his contemporaries in the finale.

**SIX SONGS, OP. 72**

As a teacher, Spohr advocated a vocal approach to playing the violin, and he clearly loved writing songs, turning out more than 90. In the six songs here, Spohr sets a variety of Romantic poetry and an “exotic” Persian love sonnet with great passion and broad lyricism.

**VIOLIN CONCERTO IN A MINOR, OP. 47**

Of his 15 concertos and numerous solo works for the instrument, this is one of Spohr’s few violin works still heard today. Written for performance in Italy, in the form of a vocal scene, its use of several operatic formulae in one instrumental movement made it an instant success.
The Romantic movement emerged at the end of the 18th century in art and literature, and somewhat later in music. The Romantics rejected the confines of Classical convention; for them, originality was of paramount importance. They celebrated the emotional and the instinctive, and looked towards nature for inspiration.

Beethoven cast a long shadow over the 19th century. The emotional power of his music made him the chief precursor of what we now label Romanticism. His lifetime coincided with a watershed in history: the French Revolution of 1789 had been the most visible expression of the rights of the individual in the 18th century. Despite the oppressive regimes of the post-Napoleonic period, the Romantic cult of the individual flourished, along with an increasing awareness of the rights of nations to govern themselves and take pride in their own culture. In this climate of self-expression, women came nowhere near to winning equal rights, but a few were able to become composers and publish their works – Clara Schumann and Fanny Mendelssohn being the most celebrated examples.

Some music of the Romantic period was characterized by the virtuoso performer – for example, Liszt. A parallel trend was for intimate music intended for the salon – such as the shorter works, or “miniatures”, of Chopin and Schumann. There lies a conflict here between the public character of many of the great Romantic solo and orchestral works and the solitude of such works as Schubert’s song cycle Winterreise.

PAST AND FUTURE
The Romantic era was one of extremes, with composers not only looking back to the past but also abandoning classical conventions and experimenting with new and daring harmonic language and form. This progressive style is especially evident in Berlioz’s Symphonie fantastique, with its extraordinary narrative of desire and destruction, or in Liszt’s Sonata in B minor of 1852, with its snake-like one-movement form, or in the strange
themes, from the songs of Schubert to 20th-century works such as Richard Strauss’s “Alpine” Symphony and Vaughan Williams’ “Sea” Symphony.

With constant theorizing about the direction music should take, it is not surprising that the Romantic era was one of bitter disputes. One of the

CONNECTIONS
Whereas musicians of earlier periods had tended to concentrate on their craft alone, the Romantics blurred the lines between disciplines: Berlioz and Schumann both published criticism as well as music; Weber wrote a novel; Liszt wrote essays on a wide range of interests; and Wagner wrote his own libretti as well as the music for his operas. Romantic composers therefore frequently referred to ideas beyond music itself – for example, landscape and nature became important

THE SPIRIT OF ROMANTICISM
This painting of a solitary wanderer by Caspar David Friedrich (c.1818) embodies the mood evoked by many early Romantic composers.

TIMELINE: THE ROMANTIC ERA

1827 Schubert composes great song cycle 
Wintertüre in year before his death

1832 Chopin gives first Paris concert

1834 Schumann founds the review Neue Zeitschrift für Musik

1839 Berlioz’s dramatic symphony Romeo and Juliet

1840 Marriage of Schumann to Clara Wieck

1848 Revolutions across Europe

1845 Schumann champions music of the young Brahms

1840s Liszt tours the length and breadth of Europe to wild adulation

BERLIOZ CONDUCTING
The Romantics were often mocked for their style and excesses, in the case of Berlioz (pictured here in an 1846 cartoon) the vast orchestras required to perform his works.

harmonies of the same composer’s quasi-impressionistic late piano pieces, such as Nuages gris.

The Romantic period can claim to have “rediscovered” music from the past. When in 1829 Mendelsohn organised a performance of J S Bach’s St Matthew Passion, he unlocked a great treasure trove of music which was revived in the next few decades. Not only did this alert musicians and audiences to the significance of Bach’s own music, but it also encouraged musicians to perform music of the past and composers such as Brahms to use its materials and forms.
most celebrated feuds was that between the followers of Brahms and those of Wagner. Brahms was seen by his partisans as a traditionalist, while Liszt and Wagner were believed by their supporters to represent the musical future. In fact, Brahms’s musical language was at times highly adventurous, just as Wagner often looked to the past (most clearly in the music of *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*).

**MUSIC IN THE HOME**

If there is one instrument that symbolizes the Romantic period, it is the piano. Most Romantic composers composed not only concert music for the instrument but also music intended for amateur use. A measure of the political and social changes of the time was that far more homes now owned a piano. There was a consequent demand for music that could be played in the home, and many orchestral and operatic works were arranged for the piano.

**A LIVING LEGACY**

Music from the Romantic era has remained perenniually popular with listeners. It continues to be enjoyed for its richness of melodic and harmonic invention, its poignancy and grandeur, as well as its extra-musical associations. Many late-20th-century composers have adopted certain characteristics of Romantic style – for example, in his score for the film *Star Wars*, the composer John Williams used music in a Romantic symphonic style to represent the future. The American composer John Adams could likewise be called a neo-Romantic with regard to his great orchestral works, such as *Harmonielehre*. Romanticism survives in our time.

**LITERATURE AND ROMANTIC MUSIC**

Literature substantially influenced music during the Romantic period, from Berlioz’s use of Byron in *Harold in Italy* to Schubert’s settings of the poets Heine and Goethe to Schumann’s references to novels by Jean Paul and E T A Hoffmann in his piano works. Hoffmann’s strange stories also inspired Offenbach’s *The Tales of Hoffmann* and Tchaikovsky’s *Nutcracker Suite*, and he voiced the feelings of many Romantics when he asserted that “Music is the most Romantic of all the arts – in fact, it might be said to be the sole purely Romantic one.”

**HERO OF THE AGE**

The English poet Byron inspired the Romantic movement across Europe.
Niccolò Paganini

1782–1840  Italian  c.250

Paganini’s total mastery of the violin, demonic charisma, and personal mystique created the benchmark for the Romantic virtuoso. Most of his well-crafted and imaginative music, including a large body of chamber works, is now seldom heard. However he influenced a generation of composers – including Liszt, Chopin, and Schumann – to use instrumental virtuosity as an essential expressive element in their music.

LIFE AND MUSIC

Paganini’s talent was rigorously nurtured by his father, who forced him to practise obsessively, depriving him of food and water when he faltered. Thus acquiring an extraordinary facility, it was surprisingly not until 1809, after a long period as a court musician, that he became a travelling virtuoso. Even after a triumphant debut in Milan, he continued to tour Italy sporadically, launching his career as an international artist only at the age of 46 – mesmerizing audiences across Europe, and amassing great wealth. His spectacular music showcased an undreamed-of virtuosity, giving rise to rumours that his playing relied on diabolical intervention.

MILESTONES

1794  Gives first public performance
1795  Goes to Parma to study violin and composition
1796  Returns to Genoa to practise
1801  Leads an orchestra in Lucca
1805  Believed to have completed 24 Caprices
1809  Leaves Lucca to become a “free artist”
1813  Debut at La Scala, including Le Streghe; gives 11 more concerts in Milan
1817  Composes Violin Concerto No.1
1820  Six Sonatas for Violin and Guitar, Op. 3
1828  Gives 14 concerts in Vienna
1829  Tours throughout Germany
1831  Numerous concerts in Paris and UK
1833  Promotes Berlioz’s Harold in Italy
1834  Settles in Parma; health deteriorates

KEY WORKS

VIOLIN CONCERTO NO. 1

Believed to have been written in 1817, this extremely popular work was premiered in 1819, and was always a show-stopper for Paganini. Opening with a theatrically expectant orchestral introduction rather reminiscent of the Italian operas of Rossini, the violin entry is virtuosic, but ultimately vocally inspired, and frequently lyrical. The tragic and operatic slow movement reminds us that Paganini was equally renowned for his ability to move as to dazzle, which he does with high chords, brilliant runs, and “ricochet bowing” in the finale.

SIX SONATAS FOR VIOLIN AND GUITAR, OP. 3

Paganini’s substantial output of chamber music frequently includes the guitar – upon which he was an accomplished performer – although in these six sonatas the guitar part is relatively simple, tending to accompany the more extrovert violin. Each work opens with a tender or passionate slow section before embarking on a spirited conclusion, often including a set of variations. Paganini dedicated these romantic sonatas to his first love, Eleanor Quilici.
Although Paganini had probably composed his caprices by 1805, he guarded their secrets closely, publishing them only in 1820, when he provocatively dedicated them “to the artists”, knowing that few, if any, of his contemporaries would be able to play them. Each is a mini-masterpiece, exploring a different aspect of violin technique, and together they provide an almost complete compendium of the instrument’s possibilities. Requiring a hand that is both large and flexible to encompass their technical difficulties, few performers have played them complete, but their influence goes well beyond the violin; Liszt and Schumann were inspired to write piano transcriptions of some of them, and the theme of the final caprice has been used for famous works by composers as diverse as Brahms, Rachmaninov, Lutoslawski, and Andrew Lloyd Webber.

After four years as a travelling virtuoso, Paganini finally felt prepared to make his debut at La Scala in Milan. At the ballet, he heard the melody of Süssmayr’s *Le streghe* (The Witches) and decided to capitalize on its immense popularity by writing a set of variations. After a majestic orchestral introduction, the violin enters, teasing the audience with a simple, gracious melody which is not the expected theme. Only after a repeat of this section does the actual witches’ tune begin, but again performed quite unassumingly, raising expectation even further before the first variation, where the fireworks finally begin. The listener is then subjected to a rollercoaster ride demonstrating Paganini’s astounding techniques. Audiences were incredulous on hearing the work and rumours soon spread that its composer was in league with the devil.
Carl Czerny

A pupil of Beethoven and teacher of Liszt, Czerny is known to modern pianists for his technical exercises; though he wrote hundreds of works in all genres, few are played today. He was renowned as a performer of Beethoven’s piano works (and knew them all by heart), but, put off by the prospect of long concert tours and unwilling to play to the gallery, he didn’t pursue a career as a virtuoso. He concentrated instead on teaching – which he did for 12 hours a day for more than 20 years – and composing, with great financial success. Thanks to Czerny, modern scholars know a great deal about performance practice of the early 19th century. An only child who never married, Czerny devoted most of his time to teaching. His book of piano lessons is still in widespread use today.

MILESTONES

1800 First public performance in Vienna
1801 Taught piano by Beethoven
1805 Cancels concert tour
1821 Teaches the young Liszt
1836 Retires from teaching
1839 Writes Complete Theoretical and Practical Pianoforte School, piano exercises

Saverio Mercadante

Mercadante, born an illegitimate child, rose from poverty to be an opera composer of international fame by the 1830s, with successes in Italy, Spain, and Vienna. As director of the Naples Conservatory from 1840 he promoted the Neapolitan school of composition, and later turned towards writing instrumental music. He learned from other’s successes (Meyerbeer’s in Paris, for example) and his own mistakes, and rode turbulent changes in musical styles and international politics to enjoy great popularity and eventually financial comfort in his lifetime, only to slip into obscurity after his death.

MILESTONES

1813 Composes Flute Concerto No. 2
1833 Becomes maestro di cappella at Novara Cathedral
1837 *Il giuramento*, opera, performed
1862 Becomes totally blind

Franz Adolf Berwald

The startling originality and modern-sounding harmonies of Berwald’s music met with little enthusiasm in his lifetime; he had more success running a pioneering orthopaedic institute. Marriage, and small triumphs in Vienna, inspired him again, but back in Sweden he ended up running a glassworks. His music – bold, cheerful, and generous, like the man – has since established him as Sweden’s first major composer.

MILESTONES

1812 Violinist in court orchestra
1835 Abandons composing for orthopaedics
1845 Symphony No. 3 (unperformed)
1855 Piano Concerto (unperformed)
1862 *Estrella de Soria*, opera, finally performed
Carl Loewe

- **1796–1869**
- **German**
- **c.200**

After studying theology and philology at Halle University, Loewe settled in the town of Stettin, Germany, in 1820. He established a reputation as a song composer and fine baritone singer and travelled widely, performing in England, Scandinavia, France, and Germany. Loewe’s music was fairly conservative, though his accompaniments could be adventurous, and he frequently set music to folk myths, supernatural tales, and historical themes. He wrote operas, but with little success, and though reasonably popular in Germany after his death, he is now overshadowed by other composers – Loewe’s setting of Goethe’s ballad “Erlkönig”, for example, was one of his early successes, but Schubert’s more cohesive setting of the same text is far more often heard today.

MILESTONES

- **1824** *Balladen*, song collection, published
- **1834** First performance of *Die drei Wünsche*, opera
- **1837** Tours Germany
- **1847** Performs at court in London
- **1864** Falls into a coma for six weeks
- **1866** Asked to resign posts at Stettin due to health concerns

Loewe made Stettin in Germany his home town for more than 45 years, and he served there as professor, music director, and organist.

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Fanny Mendelssohn

- **1805–1847**
- **German**
- **c.500**

Fanny Mendelssohn was born into a liberal, talented, and cultured Jewish family, but her father, while encouraging her private musical activities, strongly discouraged publication or public performance. So she played the piano in a flourishing private salon in Berlin, for which she wrote her lyrical, traditional, and well-crafted pieces. She is also known to have played then-unfashionable composers such as J S Bach and Handel. Though she was a significant influence on her brother Felix, contributing musically to his oratorio *St Paul*, he still overshadows her; only two dozen of her pieces were published, and reviving her music is difficult as most of her manuscripts are in private collections. Her premature death from a stroke devastated Felix, who never really recovered.

MILESTONES

- **1829** Marries Prussian court painter Wilhelm Hensel
- **1838** Only public concert: her brother Felix’s Piano Concerto No. 1
- **1840** *Das Jahr*, piano pieces, composed
- **1842** Mother dies; takes over the direction of the Mendelssohn family home
- **1846** Composes Piano Trio, Op. 11

Fanny Mendelssohn’s piano cycle *Das Jahr* is a musical journal of an idyllic year spent travelling through Italy in 1839.
“Schubert’s life was one of inner, spiritual thought, and was seldom expressed in words but almost entirely in music.”

FRANZ ECKEL, SCHUBERT’S FRIEND FROM CHILDHOOD
Franz Schubert

Franz Schubert 1797–1828 Austrian 1,009

One of music’s greatest melodists, Schubert’s tragically short life is constantly belied by his optimistic music. Achieving compositional maturity by the age of 17, his vast output evinces astounding fluency allied to an extraordinarily rich and varied musical imagination. The epitaph on his tombstone reads, “The art of music here entombed a rich possession, but even fairer hopes. Franz Schubert lies here.”

LIFE

Born into a musical family, Schubert showed a precocious talent for the violin and piano. By the age of ten he was studying harmony and the following year became a chorister at the Court Chapel in Vienna, where he studied composition with Salieri, who had also taught Beethoven. Leaving in 1813, he was already an accomplished composer, having written numerous works, including a symphony, and even started an opera, but following his father’s wishes he became a school teacher. Schubert continued to compose, however, and eventually he felt confident enough to give up school teaching, although he did become music teacher to the Esterházy family, who had formerly employed Haydn. Still not well known in Vienna, Schubert was in considerable financial difficulty, and when he caught syphilis in 1822 his unhappy situation threw him into despair. However, his creativity continued undiminished and by 1825 he was published and becoming known in Vienna – even the dying Beethoven requested a meeting. He gave his only public concert in 1828, but by the end of the year his health had deteriorated markedly, and he died on 19 November. His estate was valued at 63 gulden, while his unpaid bills amounted to nearly 1,000 gulden.

Many of Schubert’s songs and solo works were first performed by the composer at evening parties hosted by his cultured and influential friends.

MUSICAL OUTPUT

<table>
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<td>372</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>77</td>
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</table>

Total: 1,009
Whether to place Schubert’s music within the context of the Classical or Romantic period has always been a topic of contention. Certainly subjective in its emotions, his work is far more dependent on the hedonism of melody for its own sake than that of Haydn, Mozart, or Beethoven, and is more adventurous. Sacrificing the Classical tenets of balance in favour of spontaneous imagination, his music, however, invariably displays Classical forms and, with the exception of the songs, is almost entirely missing any external allusion or descriptive title. While formerly considered Romantic, perhaps influenced by the changing fortunes in his personal life, more recent commentators have placed his work alongside Beethoven’s in historical context. His huge output includes sacred and choral works, orchestral music including overtures and nine symphonies, over 70 chamber music works, and works for piano including 21 sonatas and some 60 works for piano duet. However, he was first known for his songs. Schubert was the central figure in the creation of the German art-song, or Lied. Frequently combining the very greatest poetry with accompaniments made possible by advances in piano design, his imagination was able to capture in music both the essential mood and the detail of the narrative. Furthermore, by setting narrative poetry cycles, he developed the genre to create the song cycle. It is therefore rather surprising that his many works for the stage are still almost unknown.

### MILESTONES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1802</td>
<td>Studies violin with his schoolmaster father and piano with his brother</td>
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<tr>
<td>1808</td>
<td>Accepted as chorister at the Court Chapel, where he becomes a pupil of Antonio Salieri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1813</td>
<td>Completes Symphony No. 1, D82; starts work on an opera; commences teacher-training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1814</td>
<td>“Gretchen am Spinnrade”, D118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1815</td>
<td>Becomes a schoolmaster; composes Symphonies No. 2 and No. 3, and the song “Erlkönig”, D328, which in his lifetime becomes his best-known work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1816</td>
<td>Completes Symphony No. 5, D485, and more than 100 songs, including “Der Wanderer”, D493</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1818</td>
<td>Gives up school teaching and becomes music teacher to the Esterházy family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1819</td>
<td>Spends summer in Steyr; commissioned to write the “Trout” Quintet, D667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1822</td>
<td>Contracts syphilis; writes the “Unfinished” Symphony, No. 8, D759, and the “Wanderer” Fantasy, D760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1823</td>
<td>Admitted to Vienna hospital; composes song cycle Die Schöne Müllerin, D795</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1827</td>
<td>Torch-bearer at Beethoven’s funeral; composes first part of Winterreise, D911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1828</td>
<td>Public concert receives no press due to the arrival in Vienna of Paganini; completes “Great” Symphony No. 9, D944 and Winterreise, D911</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Known for his love** of the vine, Schubert enjoyed visiting the village of Grinzing near Vienna to sample the heuriger, the first wines of autumn.

**The evening concerts** where Schubert and his Bohemian friends performed their new music have since become known as “Schubertiads.”
At his death, little of Schubert’s music had been published, except for a number of songs and some mature works. Its slow dissemination in the 19th century limited its influence, as harmonic turns – surprisingly advanced for the 1820s – appeared commonplace at their first hearing 40 years later.

**SYMPHONY NO. 9, THE “GREAT”, D944**

Visiting Schubert’s brother in 1828, Schumann discovered this symphony, and sent it to Mendelssohn, who premiered it the following year. Nicknamed the “Great” for its size (Schumann wrote of its “heavenly length”), its Classical form and proportions encompass a Romantic lyricism and richness of harmonic and orchestral colour that bridge the gap between Beethoven and Bruckner.

**“WANDERER” FANTASY, D760**

The most outwardly virtuosic of Schubert’s piano works, this one-movement fantasy consists of four distinct but dovetailed sections. Drawing on the theme of his own song “Der Wanderer”, the outer sections explore its rhythm, while the melody inspires a series of variations in the second movement.

**PIANO SONATA NO. 21, D960**

Seldom performed in the 19th century, Schubert’s last sonata has become an iconic work to post-war pianists. Its grand and spacious structure, leading the listener from resignation through contemplation to affirmation, is an optimistic journey which belies the fact that Schubert was to die only two months after its completion.

**STRING QUARTET NO. 14, “DEATH AND THE MAIDEN”, D810**

Schubert’s earlier macabre song – where Death appears to a maiden disguised as her lover – gave this quartet both its title and the theme for its second movement. Written after the composer became aware of his ruined health, this sombre drama mirrors Schubert’s despair.

**DIE SCHÖNE MULLERIN, D795**

Setting words by Wilhelm Müller, this song cycle tells the story of an apprentice miller who falls in love and, racked with infatuation and jealousy, drowns himself. The graphic depiction of his emotions is reflected by the flowing mill stream, which sings him a lullaby at the end of the work.

In his death, little of Schubert’s music had been published, except for a number of songs and some mature works. Its slow dissemination in the 19th century limited its influence, as harmonic turns – surprisingly advanced for the 1820s – appeared commonplace at their first hearing 40 years later.
PIANO QUINTET, “DIE FORELLE” ("THE TROUT"), D667
CHAMBER d 42:20 p 5 e
Schubert’s early masterpiece adds a
double bass, rather than the more usual
second violin, to the piano-quartet
ensemble. With its unquestioned joy
and natural simplicity, this piece has
an irresistible appeal.
FIRST MOVEMENT (ALLEGRO VIVACE, 13:20)
With the double bass providing
a sonorous foundation, the piano
doesn’t need to provide a bass line
here, and so is frequently used as
a purely melodic instrument.
SECOND MOVEMENT (ANDANTE, 7:00) A
gentle dialogue between instruments
which, threatening to come to an end
in mid-movement, is immediately
repeated in its entirety in a different key.
THIRD MOVEMENT (SCHERZO: PRESTO, 4:00)
Brisk and vigorous, with a number of
humorous silences as well as sudden
changes of dynamic and register, the
Scherzo third movement is tempered
by a wistful Trio section.
FOURTH MOVEMENT (ANDANTINO, 8:30)
The “extra” movement which gives the
work its name is a set of variations on
Schubert’s 1817 song “Die Forelle”. In
increasingly inventive variations, each
instrument gets the melody in turn,
and the movement ends with a fully
collaborative reprise of the opening.
FIFTH MOVEMENT (ALLEGRO GIUSTO, 9:30)
Surprising juxtapositions of elegance
and rustic vitality; and the odd false
ending, gives the work a mercurial if
slightly unsatisfying conclusion.

WINTERREISE, D911
SONG CYCLE 73:00 24 sv
Winterreise was written as Beethoven
lay dying in Vienna. After he had
been given nearly 60 of Schubert’s
songs to look over, Beethoven insisted
on meeting the young composer. They
met one week before his death, and
Schubert subsequently became a torch-
bearer at the great composer’s funeral.

SYMPHONY NO. 8 IN B MINOR, “UNFINISHED”, D759
ORCHESTRAL 24:30 2
The “Unfinished” Symphony, written
in 1822, was not heard until the
manuscript was rediscovered and
performed in 1865. Sketches exist for
a third movement, quashing theories
that Schubert thought the work
complete. It is actually the most
complete of a number of unfinished
As with *Die Schöne Mullerin*, this song cycle is set to poetry by Wilhelm Muller, this time his *Posthumous Papers of a Travelling Horn Player*, where a traveller journeys out of town, dwelling on memories of an unfaithful lover. Poetically, the songs explore the psychological journey as much as the actual one, charting the loneliness of the protagonist through desolate winter scenery.

Musically, the hypnotic rhythms of the sparse accompaniments form a desolate background to the subdued melancholy of the vocals. Schubert’s genius lay in providing infinite variety within this unity of mood – 24 vivid shades of grey.

*Winterreise* drew ambivalent responses at first. Schubert’s friends recalled that “We were quite dumbfounded by the sombre mood of the songs. Schubert replied merely with the words ‘I like these songs more than any, and they will come to please you too’; he was right, and we were soon thrilled by the impact of these melancholy songs.”

symphonies by the composer.

**FIRST MOVEMENT** *(ALLEGRO MODERATO, 14:00)*

It has been suggested that the dark turmoil of this movement mirrors Schubert’s state of mind when he found out that he had contracted syphilis. Unlike the “Wanderer” Fantasy of the same period, this is introverted music, with each of the principal themes being introduced as quietly as possible. The movement is marked by passages of gentle lyricism interrupted by fierce outbursts.

**SECOND MOVEMENT** *(ANDANTE CON MOTO, 10:30)* The music of the second movement repeatedly tends towards agitation. Until the last few moments of the ethereal coda, it never quite recaptures the serenity of the opening. Even the beautiful clarinet melody is usurped by its syncopated string accompaniment.

2

Andante con moto; Triple time; E major; Ternary form

Coda A B A B Coda

13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24

Horns and bassoons announce first theme, answered by strings

Second theme, played by solo oboe in major key

Second theme in C sharp minor, played by solo clarinet with string accompaniment

Return of first theme, played by horns

Second theme, in A minor, played by solo oboe

Silvery violin melody links statements of first theme

Return to E major for last return of opening theme
“Every composer knows the anguish and despair occasioned by forgetting ideas which one has no time to write down.”

HECTOR BERLIOZ
Hector Berlioz

\[ \text{1803–1869} \, \text{French} \, \text{124} \]

Little appreciated in France during his lifetime, Berlioz’s music and life embodied Romantic ideals perhaps more than any other composer, apart from Liszt. His startlingly original imagination, grandiose conceptions, and extraordinary skill in orchestration brought a new pictorialism to music. The first major composer who was not an instrumental performer, Berlioz became one of the first modern conductors, as well as a perceptive critic.

**LIFE**

Expected to become a doctor like his father, Berlioz received only a rudimentary early music training and, lacking a piano, had to study harmony in secret from treatises. In Paris, his medical studies succumbed to frequent visits to the Opéra and private musical study and, against his parents’ wishes, he enrolled at the Conservatoire. There he heard Beethoven’s symphonies and read Goethe’s *Faust*, but his most formative experience was attending performances of Shakespeare, where his passion for the Bard was eclipsed only by his obsession for the leading lady, Harriet Smithson. Her initial rejection inspired the *Symphonie fantastique*, but they were later married for nine disastrous years. Winning the Conservatoire’s highest award, the Prix de Rome, did little to increase acceptance of his music, and in spite of a generous gift from Paganini, Berlioz turned to music journalism to support himself, where his erudite but acerbic wit did little to endear him to his peers. A third career beckoned when, unhappy with performances of his works, he started to conduct them himself, and then found himself in demand as an international conductor. For the following 20 years he toured extensively, and wrote some of his most important operatic and choral works.

**MUSICAL OUTPUT**

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Unaccomplished as an instrumentalist, Berlioz instead made the orchestra his instrument. Eschewing the popularity of chamber and solo works, he expressed his intense personality in dramatic and often epic orchestral, operatic, and choral forms. His works blurred formal boundaries by frequently incorporating programmatic elements, as in the operatic choral symphony *Romeo and Juliet* and the symphonic concerto *Harold in Italy*. More revolutionary still was his use of orchestration. Not afraid to employ huge forces and newly-invented instruments, and to redistribute players around the hall, even off-stage, he was able to paint both subtler and more blazing colours than had previously been imagined. His melodies fall naturally, avoiding the regular beat and stylized ornamentation of Italianate music, while his harmony encompasses surprising dissonances for dramatic ends. As he wrote in his memoirs, “The ruling characteristics of my music are passionate expression, intense ardour, rhythmical animation, and unexpected turns”.

Berlioz based his magnum opus, *Les Troyens*, on Virgil’s *Aeneid*, completing both libretto and music in two years. The first two acts depict the story of the Trojan Horse, and the remainder, Dido and Aeneas in Carthage. He finished the work in 1858 and it was first performed in 1863 as two separate operas, as is often the case nowadays.

Berlioz first saw Harriet Smithson in 1827 when she played Ophelia in *Hamlet* by Shakespeare. He finally met her in 1832. They married in 1833.

Berlioz’s forceful and vivid setting of the Requiem, with its massive orchestra including 12 horns, 16 timpani, and four brass ensembles, immerses the listener in the drama of the text. Commissioned by the government for performance in the church of Les Invalides in Paris, Berlioz later said, “If I were threatened with the destruction of all my works but one, I would beg mercy for the *Grande messe des morts*.”

Originally composed for single voice and piano, Berlioz orchestrated these settings of poems by Théophile Gautier in 1856 for multiple soloists. Varying from the joyful “Villanelle” to the despairing “L’île inconnue”, the light but exquisitely coloured orchestration paved the way for similar works by Richard Strauss and Mahler.
SYMPHONIE FANTASTIQUE, OP. 14
ORCHESTRAL 56:00 p 5 o

Inspired by Beethoven, Berlioz decided to become a symphonist himself. This work became a Romantic autobiography about his obsession with Harriet Smithson, who is musically portrayed by an idée fixe. His concert notes described a young musician of great sensibility and imagination, in despair because of hopeless love. Opium plunges him into a heavy sleep accompanied by weird visions.

DREAMS AND PASSIONS (16:00) Ranging from calm and melancholy to passion and despair, the artist recalls the time before love, then its delirious effect, and religious consolation.

A BALL (6:00) A brilliant and sumptuous waltz halts dramatically as the beloved’s theme is heard once again.

SCENE IN THE COUNTRY (17:00) Off-stage players depict far-off shepherds piping. The melancholy artist almost achieves tranquillity, but the beloved is recalled and distant thunder sounds.

MARCH TO THE SCAFFOLD (7:00) To rasping brass and winds, the artist is condemned to death for his beloved’s murder. We hear her plaintive theme, the blade drops and crowds cheer.

DREAM OF A SABBATH NIGHT (10:00) Grotesquely parodied, the beloved joins the devilish orgy while the ancient plainchant “Dies Irae” is intoned, surrounded by tolling bells.

TE DEUM, OP. 22
CHORAL 47:00 6

Written to be heard in church, Berlioz described this piece as being not only the ceremonial hymn of thanksgiving usual in a Te Deum, but also an offering of prayers whose humility and melancholy contrast with the majesty of the hymns. His placing of the orchestra and chorus (including a large children’s choir) at the opposite end of the church to the organ was essential to the musical effect. Berlioz also re-ordered the traditional text to control the overall tension of the work. As well as the six choral movements, there are two instrumental movements – originally designed for ceremonial purposes – which are not always included in modern performances.

FOCUS

SYMPHONIE FANTASTIQUE

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DREAMS AND PASSIONS

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INFLUENCES

Apart from the Symphonie fantastique, Berlioz’s works were seldom heard until the 1880s, when they were revived in France as an antidote to Wagner. Only after the 1950s did his music become widely disseminated, although logistical difficulties still prevent regular performances of some of his works.
**Johann Strauss Sr**

1804–1849  Austrian  251

Founder of the “Strauss Waltz Dynasty”, Johann Strauss Sr helped to take the waltz – then a traditional Austrian folk dance – out of the village tavern and into Europe’s finest ballrooms. He was famous for the rhythmic verve of his music and the finesse of his conducting, but his music has been eclipsed by the more memorable melodic gifts of his sons. He is now principally known for the stirring *Radetzky March*.

**LIFE AND MUSIC**

Of humble origins, Strauss learnt to play the violin in his teens whilst apprenticed to a bookbinder, spending the evenings performing traditional dances in local taverns. Following the lead of Carl Maria von Weber’s 1819 piano piece *Invitation to the Dance*, he expanded the Viennese waltz into a chain of dances framed by an introduction and coda, and was soon presenting these works with his own orchestra. A six-year contract to play at the prestigious Sperl dance hall consolidated his fame, and he was soon in demand at ballrooms across Europe. In addition to some 150 waltzes, he composed a number of other fashionable dances.

**KEY WORKS**

**BELIEBTE ANNEN POLKA, OP. 137**

DANCE  1:50  1  

Brought to Vienna from Bohemia in 1839, the lively polka was the newest dance craze. Strauss wrote the *Beloved Anna Polka* for his wife, a few months before she sued for divorce.

**LORELEY RHEINKLÄNGE, OP. 154**

DANCE  5:40  1  

The *Echoes of the Rhine Lorelei* was one of Strauss’s most popular waltzes, and was performed to great acclaim in 1844 by his son Johann Strauss Jr, who went on to steal his father’s crown.

**KUNSTLERBALL TANZE, OP. 150**

DANCE  6:20  1  

This archetypal waltz was performed at the 1843 Artists’ Ball. Following a grand introduction, five linked waltzes are then briefly recalled in a coda.

**MILESTONES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<td>1819</td>
<td>Joins Joseph Lanner’s small band</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1824</td>
<td>Becomes conductor of Lanner’s second orchestra, attempts first waltzes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1825</td>
<td>Marries Maria Anna Streim; forms own orchestra; Johann Strauss Jr born</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1829</td>
<td>Takes up residency at the Sperl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1837</td>
<td>Composes <em>Cachucha Galop</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1838</td>
<td>Plays for Queen Victoria of England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1842</td>
<td>Writes <em>Beliebte Annen Polka</em>, Op. 137; Maria Anna sues for divorce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1846</td>
<td>Appointed first ever Royal and Imperial Hofballmusikdirektor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1848</td>
<td>Composes <em>Radetzky March</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1849</td>
<td>Dies of scarlet fever, aged 45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The fruitful partnership between Strauss (violinist on left) and Joseph Lanner (violinist on right) began with a small band of Viennese musicians in 1819.
On 31 August 1848, to celebrate the Austrian army’s victory over an Italian revolutionary uprising at Custozza, an open-air victory festival was held in Vienna. The concert was dedicated to the 82-year-old Commander-in-Chief of the Imperial Austrian army, Count Radetzky von Radetz, and a special march had been commissioned from Strauss to celebrate the occasion.

On the afternoon of the victory concert the piece had still not been composed. However, with the help of his colleague Philipp Farbach Sr, an eminent flautist who frequently assisted the composer with his orchestration, the Radetzky March was completed in around two hours and played to great acclaim that very evening. The march quickly became a Habsburg anthem, ensuring frequent performances and eventually bestowing immortality on a composer whose other works posterity has judged ephemeral.

The march actually incorporates two popular Viennese melodies which would have been very familiar to its first audiences. The outer, martial sections include a common street-song, while the more gentle trio section features one of the previous season’s most popular dance melodies.

In 1837, the Austrian ballerina Fanny Elssler performed “the cachucha” – a Spanish dance then very popular in Paris – for the audience of the Viennese Court Opera. After three performances of this “lascivious” dance, Vienna caught “cachucha fever”.

Strauss was quick to realize the financial potential of the situation and promptly wrote this hair-raising galop to take advantage of the craze. An inscription by the composer Adolf Müller on the original manuscript shows the work had an even faster genesis than the Radetzky March: “This galop was composed by Johann Strauss one hour before the start of the ball, copied by the copyist, performed without rehearsal, received extraordinary applause, and was repeated three times.”

The main section of the galop and the coda feature a castanet accompaniment to original melodies from the cachucha dance, while the central trio section is original Strauss.
“A Romantic who felt at ease within the mould of Classicism.”

CELLIST AND CONDUCTOR PABLO CASALS
Felix Mendelssohn

1809–1847  German  321

One of the most naturally gifted and accomplished musicians in the history of music, Mendelssohn preserved Classical ideals of harmony and form. As such he was admired by conservative music lovers for his charm, craftsmanship, and picturesque imagination, particularly in staid Victorian drawing rooms, but his music was eclipsed as soon as the public fully embraced the ideals of Romanticism.

LIFE

Born into a wealthy, cultured family, Mendelssohn had the finest private education available. His musical training was so thorough that it included the hiring of orchestras to try out his compositions. Felix showed talents not only as a violinist, pianist, organist, composer, and conductor, but also in fine art and poetry, and in his teens he became a protégé of Goethe. One of the first musicians to be fully aware of musical history, at the age of 20 he conducted the second-ever performance of Bach’s St Matthew Passion, leading to the 19th-century Bach revival. As he later recalled, “It was a Jew who restored this great Christian work to the people” (the Mendelssohns had actually converted to Christianity in 1816). There followed three years of travel and concert-giving. His love of all things British drew him back for ten lengthy visits to England and Scotland. He returned to conducting posts in Düsseldorf and then Leipzig, where he conducted the Gewandhaus orchestra. Here he established the now universal concept of programming both historical and modern works. Following the death of his sister Fanny, also a gifted pianist and composer, Mendelssohn suffered a series of strokes, and died at the age of 38.

Until his sister Fanny’s death, Mendelssohn’s life was relatively free of torment, struggle, or frustration, a fact which is mirrored in his sunny, cheerful music.

MUSICAL OUTPUT

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Mendelssohn’s style does not fit easily with other Romantic music, and it has been suggested that he could be called Neo-Classical. He drew on the fugal technique of Bach, the textures and clarity of Mozart, and the orchestration of Beethoven. By his mid-teens, his style, as evinced by the A Midsummer Night’s Dream overture, had crystallized. Unlike his radical contemporaries, Mendelssohn used well-established forms, adapting them to his needs, but retaining their underlying principles. Neither sensuous nor flamboyant, his natural melodic gifts were always coupled with the very highest levels of craftsmanship. Where his music is specifically Romantic is in its use of extra-musical stimuli. Literary, artistic, and geographical inspiration drew forth the best from his picturesque imagination, and descriptive, rather than psychological, imagery informs much of his finest work.

MILESTONES

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<td>1821</td>
<td>First visit to Goethe</td>
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<td>1823</td>
<td>Grandmother gives him a score of J S Bach’s St Matthew Passion</td>
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<td>1825</td>
<td>Octet, Op. 20, is published</td>
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<td>1826</td>
<td>Overture to A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Op. 21; attends Hegel’s course on aesthetics</td>
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<td>1829</td>
<td>Conducts St Matthew Passion, first visit to England and Scotland</td>
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<tr>
<td>1832</td>
<td>First volume of Lieder Ohne Worte (Songs Without Words), Op. 19</td>
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<td>1835</td>
<td>Director of Leipzig Gewandhaus</td>
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<td>1837</td>
<td>Marries Cécile Jeanrenaud</td>
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<tr>
<td>1839</td>
<td>Conducts first performance of Schubert’s “Great” Symphony No. 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>1841</td>
<td>Conducts first performance of Schumann’s Symphony No. 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>1842</td>
<td>Variations Sérieuses, Op. 54; premiere of the “Scottish” Symphony</td>
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<tr>
<td>1844</td>
<td>Violin Concerto, Op. 64, is published</td>
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<tr>
<td>1846</td>
<td>First performance of Elijah, Op. 70</td>
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KEY WORKS

LIEDER OHNE WORTE

PIANO SOLO ♫ 48 ♩

The elegant Lieder ohne Worte, or Songs Without Words, were the province of the drawing-room before the concert hall. Played by almost every amateur, they greatly enhanced Mendelssohn’s popularity in England.

VARIATIONS SÉRIEUSES, OP. 54

PIANO SOLO ♫ 11:00 ♩ 1 ♩

Composed for an album of works by various composers, including Chopin, the proceeds of which were to go towards erecting a monument to Beethoven at Bonn in Germany, Mendelssohn’s Variations Sérieuses is certainly the most substantial of the offerings.

Without doubt his finest piano work, the yearning theme can be heard in almost every one of the 17 variations, offset by the great variety of moods, textures and harmonies.

“SCOTTISH” SYMPHONY, OP. 56

ORCHESTRAL ♫ 36:30 ♩ 4 ♩

The last of Mendelssohn’s symphonies, the “Scottish” Symphony was written 13 years after his first visit to Scotland in 1829, which also inspired his Hebrides Overture (also known as “Fingal’s Cave”). The theme of the Scherzo is akin to Scottish folk melodies; further Highland allusions are subjective.

Mendelssohn’s Wedding March was first officially used at the wedding of the Princess Royal of Great Britain in 1858.
This famous and popular concerto in E minor was the last of Mendelssohn’s orchestral works, and the last of his three violin concertos. The composer was too ill to conduct his friend Ferdinand David at the premiere, and was replaced by the Danish composer Niels Gade. The work was innovative in a number of ways, and the piece’s three movements are played without interruption.

**FIRST MOVEMENT**
(Alegro molto appassionato, 11:00) Flying in the face of convention, Mendelssohn allowed the violin to present the memorable opening theme before the orchestra. This move influenced the majority of composers who followed him. He also moved the cadenza forward from the end of the movement, presumably to allow the tension to subside before the seamless entry of the second movement accompanied by the bassoon.

**SECOND MOVEMENT** (Andante, 8:00) A simple “song without words” with a more agitated central section, this slow movement gives the soloist nothing to hide behind but his own tone, intonation, and musical imagination.

**THIRD MOVEMENT** (Allegro non troppo, 6:00) Opening with its own fanfare, here all our Mendelssohnian expectations of gossamer-light fantasy are fulfilled with effervescent virtuosity.

**A MIDSUMMER NIGHT’S DREAM, OP. 21, 61**

This suite is Mendelssohn’s most popular work. The overture and incidental music come from opposite ends of Mendelssohn’s life, but use much of the same musical material.

**OVERTURE** (Allegro di moto, 12:00) Originally written at the age of 17 for piano duet, Mendelssohn orchestrated this precocious answer to the magic of Shakespeare’s play the following year for a public performance. Opening with chords to depict the procession of Oberon and Titania, we are swiftly immersed in the scurrying fairy world. A touching melody describes the lovers, while a rustic dance for the “mechanicals” is interrupted by frequent donkey brays.

**INCIDENTAL MUSIC** (23:00) Commissioned by the King of Prussia in 1842, four of the eight pieces were conceived as entr’actes (music between acts), most famously the fleeting fairy Scherzo. Also set are two songs, “You Spotted Snakes” and “Through This House Give Glimmering Light...” for soprano, mezzo, and chorus. Finally, the ubiquitous Wedding March first saw the light of day here.

**INFLUENCES**
Numerous musicians over the past two centuries have been admirers of the work of Mendelssohn, but few, if any, can be said to have been influenced by it. However, Mendelssohn’s part in the great 19th-century Bach revival turned a cult into a popular movement whose effect on subsequent generations is impossible to overestimate.
“After playing Chopin, I feel as if I had been weeping over sins that I had never committed, and mourning over tragedies that were not my own.”

OSCAR WILDE, 1891
Frédéric Chopin

1810–1849

Poly

219

Exiled by revolution, abandoned by his mistress, dying of consumption, but always elegantly dressed, the frail image of Chopin fulfils all the stereotypes of the Romantic artist. The first poet of the piano, his music was immediately popular and has always transcended the vagaries of fashion. A national hero, his music announced the liberation of his native Poland and still accompanies international statesmen to their graves.

LIFE

Exiled from Poland by the Russian capture of Warsaw in 1831, Chopin made his home and his name in the piano capital of the world – Paris. There his reputation was based as much on the finesse and poetry of his playing as on his extraordinary keyboard facility. An inveterate snob with exquisite manners, Chopin was soon the toast of aristocratic circles. Preferring private performances in the salons of Parisian nobility to the strain and artistic compromises of courting the general public, he also developed a very lucrative career teaching ladies of aristocratic birth. Fastidious about his dress, he was something of a dandy, noting to a friend “You think I am making a fortune? Carriages and white gloves cost more, and without them one would not be in good taste”. In 1836 Liszt introduced him to George Sand, the novelist who had outraged Paris with her cigar-smoking and trouser-wearing. A nine-year relationship followed, during which Chopin wrote the majority of his most important works, starting with the Preludes, completed during the couple’s stay in Majorca. However, his health began to wane, and following the couple’s separation in 1847, it deteriorated rapidly and he wrote almost no more music. Following an extended visit to England and Scotland in 1848, he died the following year in Paris. 3,000 people attended his funeral.

MUSICAL OUTPUT

| Total: 219 |
| CONCERTOS (8) |
| PIANO MUSIC (194) |
| OTHER INSTRUMENTAL (5) |
| SONGS (14) |

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<th>1825</th>
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</tbody>
</table>
MUSIC

All of Chopin’s music includes a piano, and most of it is for that instrument alone. His works seem to have sprung fully formed onto the page. Notation was simply the last stage of a process of improvisation at the keyboard, and it was not unusual for a work to evolve further after publication.

His early music was written for his own concerts, and is fairly typical of the virtuoso material of the day, but after giving up the concert platform he found his unique voice, and every single work is a masterpiece. A simple, melodic style was refined and extended in numerous miniatures written primarily for his pupils, while virtuosity was sublimated into lofty drama in the more complex, large-scale concert works. Chopin was particularly drawn to dance forms – the waltz is evident in many works – but it was with the mazurka and the polonaise that he was able to assert his true, Polish identity.

KEY WORKS

SONATA IN B FLAT MINOR, “FUNERAL MARCH”, OP. 35

Immediately plunging the listener into a maelstrom of desperation, even the more lyrical second theme exudes a hopeless pathos. The repeat is sometimes omitted by performers, rather shortening the passionate first movement. With its driving rhythms and chaste trio, the second movement is a very Beethovenian scherzo. The third movement contains the most famous funeral march ever written. The focal point of this sonata, it predates the rest of the work by two years. The enigmatic fourth movement, with its stream of eerie, unharmonized notes, inspired Anton Rubinstein to imagine “night winds sweeping over churchyard graves”.

PRELUDES, OP. 28

There is a breathtaking variety in these 24 pieces, perhaps the most forward-looking of all Chopin’s music. Exploring every key, they are full of harmonic surprises and enigmatic melodies. Among the many later composers inspired by the Preludes were Debussy and Rachmaninov.

Chopin completed the Preludes in this cell in an abandoned monastery in Majorca in January, 1839.
Originally named after the barcarole sung by Venetian gondoliers, the barcarolle was probably first popularized as a musical form outside its native city by travellers returning from the Grand Tour. Beloved by Romantic audiences for its gentle evocations of love, it was soon appropriated by composers for solo and operatic vocal works, perhaps most famously in Offenbach’s *The Tales of Hoffmann*.

The form also became associated with the piano, as Mendelssohn, Liszt, and Fauré penned a number of fine examples, but none is more celebrated than Chopin’s. His last major work, it was premiered by the composer at his last recital in Paris in 1848. Although it was written not long before his final estrangement from George Sand, it shows no signs of melancholy. Featuring an almost continuous lilting rhythm, the bass conjures the ebb and flow of the water, while the rich harmony supplies the scene’s shimmering, shifting colours. Two long alternating melodies evoke the vocal origins of the genre, evolving from beautiful simplicity to sublime radiance. Foreshadowing the music of Alexander Scriabin over 40 years later, the complex harmonies of the coda create one of the most extraordinary moments in the piano repertoire.

**FOCUS**

**PIANO CONCERTO NO. 2 IN F MINOR, OP. 21**

Chopin wrote his piano concertos to launch the virtuoso career that he later found so distasteful.

**FIRST MOVEMENT** (Maestoso, 11:00) After the first performance in 1830, Chopin wrote: “The first Allegro of my concerto, which relatively few could grasp, called forth applause, but it seems to me that people felt they had to show interest and pretend to be connoisseurs”.

**SECOND MOVEMENT** (Larghetto, 8:00) Inspired by his feelings for Constantia Gladkowska, Chopin wrote that the slow movement “belonged” to her. With its distinctive harmony, poetic lyricism, and ornate decoration it stands in sharp relief to other concertos of the period.

**THIRD MOVEMENT** (Allegro Vivace, 7:15) Virtuosic yet always elegant, the finale pays tribute to the mazurka of Polish folk music. The horn call that ushers in the exciting coda was a great surprise to early audiences.
“I am affected by everything that goes on in the world... and then I long to express my feelings in music.”

ROBERT SCHUMANN
Robert Schumann

Born 1810–1856  German  268

Schumann’s deep and sensitive musicianship makes little attempt to play to the gallery, instead drawing the listener into the composer’s remote and enigmatic inner world. Perhaps the most elusive composer of the Romantic period, his music is at turns fanciful, introspective, and bombastic. Daringly original, and frequently impractical, he captured, as no other did, the innocent spirit of early German Romantic literature.

LIFE

Obsessed equally by music and literature as a boy, though receiving no thorough education in either, Schumann was persuaded by his mother to become a lawyer. Whilst studying in Leipzig he heard Paganini play, and decided instead to become a musician. Enrolling with a local piano teacher, Friedrich Wieck, whose 11-year-old daughter, Clara, was already a piano prodigy, he gave up his law studies and moved into Wieck’s home. When he injured his hand, allegedly in an attempt to strengthen his fingers, but probably as a result of a cure he was taking for syphilis, he gave up hope of a concert career and devoted himself to composition. In 1834, as editor of a new music journal, the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, he brought the music of the young Chopin and Brahms to popular attention.

In spite of their age gap, Clara and Robert fell in love, exchanging their first kiss in 1835. Her father banned the liaison, but they took him to court, and were eventually married in 1840. They started a large family (seven children survived), but Schumann, in whose family mental illness ran, started to suffer badly from depression. In 1854 he attempted suicide by throwing himself into the River Rhine. Rescued, he entered an asylum where he died.

**MUSICAL OUTPUT**

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<th>CONCERTOS (6)</th>
<th>PIANO MUSIC (90)</th>
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<th>OPERA (2)</th>
<th>CHORAL (38)</th>
<th>SONGS (86)</th>
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By turns whimsical, fantastic, and grotesque, Schumann’s music is the apotheosis of Romanticism, rich in literary allusions.
Between 1830 and 1840 Schumann published several piano masterpieces. Happiest when capturing moods and ideas in the white heat of inspiration, he showed a love of miniatures, and grouping several together around a common musical or conceptual theme, he created the Romantic piano suite. He was less accomplished in the structuring of large-scale movements. Of his more expansive piano works, only the Fantasy in C makes a lasting impression. Following in the footsteps of Schubert, he then focused on the art song, completing 19 song cycles in one year alone. Chamber music, largely ignored by his contemporaries, was his next target. It drew forth some of his finest mature work, including three string quartets and works for piano and strings. He also penned four symphonies, which are among the most impassioned symphonic music of their time.

**SYMPHONY NO. 3, “RHENISCH”, OP. 97**

In 1850 Schumann moved to the Rhineland and wrote this symphony as a tribute to its beauty. The work is unusually structured, and there is an extra, slow movement, powerfully inspired by the grandeur of a ceremony Schumann witnessed at Cologne Cathedral.

**CARNIVAL, OP. 9**

One of Schumann’s most popular works, this suite suggests a ball, with fleeting movements describing the real and imaginary people in Schumann’s life, as well as characters from the commedia dell’arte, such as Pierrot and Harlequin. It is richly diverse, even though many movements are based on the same four-note theme.

**PIANO QUINTET, OP. 44**

In 1842 Schumann took Liszt’s advice and wrote a series of chamber works, a genre then unfashionable, ending with the Piano Quintet. It was the first important work for this medium, and blended a demanding piano part with quasi-orchestral string writing. It paved the way for the piano quintets of Brahms, Franck, and Dvořák.
Dedicated to Liszt, the superlative 1838 Fantasy in C was originally Schumann’s tribute to Beethoven. At a time when he was forbidden to see his beloved Clara, the lines by the poet Friedrich von Schiller that preface the work were certainly intended for her eyes: “Through all the sounds of Earth’s mingled dream, lies one quiet note for the secret listener.”

This impassioned and kaleidoscopic outpouring finds little peace even in the earthbound central interlude. Only at the end do we achieve tranquillity, when Schumann quotes a song from Beethoven’s An die ferne Geliebte. It is no coincidence that its opening words are “Take then these songs, my love.”

An overwhelmingly extrovert march whose infectious drive is produced by an almost constant stream of asymmetric rhythms even in the graceful middle section. In the maniacally exuberant leaps of the final pages, joy is unconfined. “It makes me hot and cold all over,” Clara wrote.

A calm, slow movement unusually ends the piece. Schumann’s mercurial nature manifests itself in a vast musical landscape suggesting both serene peace and utter despair.

For Schumann it was a small step from writing cycles of piano music such as Carnaval, where moods are swiftly captured, to distilling the essence of a poem in a song. Until 1840 he claimed that song was an inferior medium to instrumental music and ignored it, but once he had started, before the year was out he had written more than 150 individual songs.

The song cycle Dichterliebe (A Poet’s Love) explores the journey from the joy of new love, through failure, to renunciation. The setting of Heinrich Heine’s frequently bitter words is quietly compelling yet heart-rending in its lyrical pathos. Equally striking is his use of the piano; no longer an “accompanist”, it is an equal partner, which sets the scene and then adds to and comments upon the narrative. In the majority of the songs, Schumann adds a piano postlude, in which he sums up the mood, most poignantly at the end of the cycle, where he reflects on all that has passed. It is astounding that Schumann completed this entire masterpiece in only nine days.
“My mind and fingers have worked like two damned ones. Unless I go mad, you will find an artist in me.”

THE 21-YEAR-OLD LISZT IN A LETTER TO A FRIEND, 1832
By the age of 12, Liszt had already performed throughout Europe, but ill health and religious contemplation during his late teens saw him withdraw from public life. Only after hearing Paganini did he return to the piano, dazzling listeners with the unprecedented complexity of his music. Fame and fortune followed, but in 1835 he shocked Paris by eloping with the already married Countess Marie d’Agoult. Living in Switzerland and Italy they had three children, while Liszt concentrated on composition. Returning to the platform in 1838, he established the prototype of the modern concert pianist by performing from memory and giving the first solo recitals (indeed inventing the term). For eight years he toured extensively, but by 1847 he longed to settle and marry his new lover, Princess Carolyne Sayne-Wittgenstein. He became Kapellmeister at the court of Weimar, where until 1861 he wrote or revised most of his important works and taught the next generation of great pianists. However, when the Vatican stopped the annulment of the Princess’s previous marriage, and following the deaths of two of his children, Liszt again sought solace in the Church. He became an abbé, but continued to compose, teach, and perform without income until his death.

FRANZ LISZT

Franz Liszt
짓보 1811–1886 헝가리어

Liszt can truly be said to have been the central figure of the Romantic movement. As a young man he set Europe on fire with his astonishing pianistic gifts. He slowly gained recognition as a composer, developing the potential of the piano and the role of the pianist. As famous for his life as for his music, he worked tirelessly to promote the work of his colleagues, and to teach subsequent generations of pianists and composers.

LIFE

By the age of 12, Liszt had already performed throughout Europe, but ill health and religious contemplation during his late teens saw him withdraw from public life. Only after hearing Paganini did he return to the piano, dazzling listeners with the unprecedented complexity of his music. Fame and fortune followed, but in 1835 he shocked Paris by eloping with the already married Countess Marie d’Agoult. Living in Switzerland and Italy they had three children, while Liszt concentrated on composition. Returning to the platform in 1838, he established the prototype of the modern concert pianist by performing from memory and giving the first solo recitals (indeed inventing the term). For eight years he toured extensively, but by 1847 he longed to settle and marry his new lover, Princess Carolyne Sayne-Wittgenstein. He became Kapellmeister at the court of Weimar, where until 1861 he wrote or revised most of his important works and taught the next generation of great pianists. However, when the Vatican stopped the annulment of the Princess’s previous marriage, and following the deaths of two of his children, Liszt again sought solace in the Church. He became an abbé, but continued to compose, teach, and perform without income until his death.

MUSICAL OUTPUT

| SYMPHONIES (14) | 9      | 5      |
| CONCERTOS (9)  | 1 2 6  | 95     |
| PIANO MUSIC (410) | 15 90 93 63 70 63 84 |
| OTHER INSTRUMENTAL (82) | 1 3 12 22 19 25 |
| OPERA (5)      | 1 23 20 33 19 13 |
| CHORAL (106)   | 2 40 26 20 19 12 |
| SONGS (119)    | 1811 1824 1835 1845 1855 1865 1875 1886 |

Total: 749
MUSIC

As a young virtuoso writing piano music to astound the public, Liszt’s early works were showpieces that took piano technique to new heights of difficulty. Liszt incorporated virtuosity as an essential dramatic element of his music. However, his knowledge of the piano’s evolving capabilities bore fruit in his transcriptions of operatic and symphonic music. Particularly in the symphonies of Beethoven and Berlioz, he found ways to transform the piano into a substitute orchestra. Following his retirement from concert life, he studied composition intensively. He became a true composer, whose harmonic language influenced Ravel and Wagner. This period produced his most important works, not only piano pieces, but also two symphonies and 12 symphonic poems, a genre he invented. In his final years, Liszt’s experiments foreshadowed the music of the 20th century in its unstable harmonies and sparse textures.

**FAUST-SYMPHONIE, S108**

*ORCHESTRAL 71:00 3 p ocv*

Liszt wrote this work in 1854, having been introduced to Goethe’s play *Faust* by Berlioz in 1830. The three movements depict the main characters: Faust, Gretchen, and Mephistopheles. The work ends with the addition of a tenor soloist and male chorus, for a setting of Goethe’s “Chorus Mysticus”.

**TRANSCENDENTAL ÉTUDES, S139**

*PIANO SOLO 12*

Exploring the possibility of orchestral sounds at the piano, this monumental cycle opened new doors, requiring pianists to use not just their fingers, but also their arms, shoulders, and backs to master the necessary combination of speed and power.

**SONATA IN B MINOR, S178**

*SOLO PIANO 27:00 1 s*

Hearing the Sonata in B minor for the first time, Wagner wrote to Liszt “The Sonata is beautiful beyond compare; great, loveable, deep, and noble, just as you are.” The work’s single movement encompasses the diverse movements of earlier sonatas. It is built on five themes, which are transformed and combined during the drama, in a way foreshadowing Wagner’s technique of *Leitmotif*. It remains a monolithic work of the piano repertoire.

**MILESTONES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1821</td>
<td>Studies with Beethoven’s pupil, Carl Czerny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1822</td>
<td>First public concert in Vienna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1831</td>
<td>Hears Paganini play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1833</td>
<td>Transcribes Berlioz’s <em>Symphonie fantastique</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1835</td>
<td>Elopes with Countess Marie d’Agoult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1839</td>
<td>Returns to concert platform, travelling extensively for eight years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1847</td>
<td>Meets Princess Carolyne Sayn-Wittgenstein; retires to Weimar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1853</td>
<td>Composes Sonata in B Minor, S178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1857</td>
<td>Premiere of <em>Faust-Symphonie</em>, S108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>Moves to Rome, composes <em>Mephisto Waltz, No. 1</em>, S110/514</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1865</td>
<td>Takes minor orders of the Catholic Church, becoming an abbé</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Long after retiring from public performance, Liszt would treat listeners to private recitals at his house in Weimar – now a museum devoted to the composer.
**PIANO CONCERTO NO. 1, S124**

**ORCHESTRAL** 18:20

Once one of the most popular works in the piano repertoire, Liszt’s Piano Concerto No. 1 belongs to the unabashed virtuoso pianist. Now heard infrequently, suffering in part from its brevity, it was premiered in 1855 with Berlioz conducting and Liszt himself at the piano.

**FIRST MOVEMENT** (ALLEGRO MAESTOSO, 5:15)

Pianist and orchestra vie for attention with abrupt musical interjections in this kaleidoscopic movement.

**SECOND MOVEMENT** (QUASI ADAGIO, 4:30)

Simply the greatest nocturne Chopin never wrote. After presenting the exquisite melody, the piano destroys the mood, only to melt away as an accompaniment for the woodwinds.

**THIRD MOVEMENT** (ALLEGRETTO VIVACE, 4:20)

Liszt’s novel use of the triangle in this Scherzo drew much derision. The soloist’s role gradually changes from one of restrained virtuosity to that of unchallenged protagonist.

**FOURTH MOVEMENT** (ALLEGRO MARZIALE ANIMATO, 4:15)

In a controlled series of gear changes, themes are brought back as pulses are inexorably raised.

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**MEPHISTO WALTZ NO. 1, S110/514**

**ORCHESTRAL/SOLO PIANO** 10:00

Written first for orchestra and then arranged for piano, the programme for this work comes from Austrian poet Nikolaus Lenau’s *Faust*, which differs from Goethe’s play. In Lenau’s version, Faust and Mephistopheles arrive at a tavern where, seeing a black-eyed beauty, Faust is overcome with reticence. Bored with the rustic music, Mephistopheles plays a diabolical waltz on the violin which inspires Faust and his inamorata to dance, and disappear into the woods…

A spectacular and daring concert piece, the devilish outer sections are tempered by a seductive core, where the score explains that “they sink into the ocean of their own lust”.

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**INFLUENCES**

Whilst Liszt’s codification of the possibilities of the piano influenced nearly every piano composer who followed him, only a few of his less important works were heard with any regularity after his death. Only in the 1960s was his music reassessed and given its rightful place in the musical pantheon.
Michael William Balfe

1808–1870 | Irish | c.300

A fine operatic baritone who impressed Rossini, Balfe found overnight success as a ballad opera composer in London with *The Siege of Rochelle* in 1835. His lasting fame as a composer rests on *The Bohemian Girl*, a huge box-office hit in London, and the only British opera of the 19th century to win an international reputation. In the 1850s Balfe toured Europe and was feted by Johann Strauss and, after further success in London, enjoyed a comfortable retirement at his country estate.

MILESTONES

1825 Sings at La Scala in Milan, Italy
1827 Appears as Figaro in Rossini’s *The Barber of Seville* in Paris
1843 Opera *Le puits d’amour* succeeds in Paris; *The Bohemian Girl* performed

Adolf von Henselt

1814–1889 | German | 65

Henselt made a rapid reputation as a composer of piano works; his studies, which were published regularly for more than 50 years across Europe, stretched technique on the instrument to new possibilities. He also found international fame as a Romantic-style virtuoso, and was a friend of the Schumanns and Liszt. Henselt was, however, a reluctant performer, and instead became a highly respected music editor and teacher in Russia.

MILESTONES

1838 Start of career in St Petersburg, where he teaches the royal family
1839 Composes Two Nocturnes, Op. 6
1847 Piano Concerto, Op. 16, published
1854 Ballade, Op. 31, composed for piano

Charles Valentin Alkan

1813–1888 | French | c.100

Born Charles Henri Valentin Morhange, one of six Jewish children who all went on to become musicians, Alkan was a child prodigy, having his first compositions for piano published at age 14. During his youth he was a close friend of Chopin and Liszt, but over time he became reclusive and often disappeared for long spells. His concert appearances before 1873 were few, and although they established him as a virtuoso pianist, he preferred not to play his own compositions. His music is original, brilliant, and often hugely demanding – his Op. 39 includes a full “symphony” and “concerto”, but scored for unaccompanied piano.

MILESTONES

1819 Enrolled in Paris Conservatoire
1838 *Le Chemin de Fer*, Op. 2, for piano
1847 25 Preludes, Op. 31, published
1857 Compiles 12 Études in all the Minor Keys, Op. 39
1860s Disappears from public life
1873 Reappears to give concerts

Enrolled in the Paris Conservatoire at age six, Alkan won many prizes for his piano playing there, one of the most prestigious being the Conservatoire first prize for piano, which he won at age 11.
Henry Litolf
- **1818–1893**
- French
- 160

Primarily a performer and conductor, Litolf composed throughout his career. His four surviving piano concertos, No. 4 being the most popular, are grand and sweeping. His solo piano music – highly colourful, improvisatory, and ostentatious – reflected his life. Born in London to a French prisoner of war, from the age of 17 he toured Europe as a concert pianist. In 1851 he gave up performing and settled in Brunswick, Germany, where he bought a music publishing firm. He was soon travelling again, finally moving to Paris, where he spent the rest of his life.

**MILESTONES**

- 1849 Became citizen of Brunswick
- 1852 Piano Concerto No. 4 published
- 1858 Finally settles in Paris

Charles François Gounod
- **1818–1893**
- French
- c.500

With his use of elegant harmonies and graceful melodies – such as in his enormously successful opera *Faust* – Gounod was a huge influence on Massenet, Bizet, and Saint-Saëns. A devout Catholic, he wrote 21 Masses, over 100 songs, and 12 operas. In the 1870s he sat out the Franco-Prussian War in England, where he began a relationship with a married woman, Georgina Weldon. Tiring of the public scandal which ensued, Gounod eventually returned to Paris alone.

**MILESTONES**

- 1852 Conducts Orphéon Choral Society
- 1858 Composes *Faust*, opera
- 1867 *Roméo et Juliette*, opera, performed
- 1886 *Mors et vita*, oratorio, performed for Queen Victoria in London

Henry Vieuxtemps
- **1820–1881**
- Belgian
- 80

Vieuxtemps was an eminent violin virtuoso and composer from an early age. He was adulated from America to Russia, and went on to write many brilliant chamber violin pieces and seven violin concertos. With up-to-date Romantic symphonic frameworks, these pieces filled a gap between the elegant, but old-fashioned, Classical works and the flashy showpieces of Paganini, and enjoyed great popularity in his lifetime.

**MILESTONES**

- 1828 First performs in Paris
- 1833 Tours Germany and Austria
- 1834 Meets Paganini in London
- 1840 Composes Violin Concerto No. 1
- 1846 Works for the Tsar in Russia
- 1861 Violin Concerto No. 5 composed
- 1871 Professor at Brussels Conservatory

Joachim Raff
- **1822–1882**
- Swiss
- c.250

Raff’s career was set in motion in the 1840s with support from Mendelssohn and Liszt (who often helped him out of financial difficulties). Following an appointment at the Weimar court, he independently produced much of his enormous output, which is extremely diverse. In the 1860s and 1870s, he was highly regarded as both a composer and a teacher – but accusations of quantity rather than quality, and arguments with employers, clouded his last years, and his reputation has since waned.

**MILESTONES**

- 1851 Composes *König Alfred*, opera
- 1856 Locates to Wiesbaden from Weimar
- 1864 Symphony No. 1
- 1871 Symphony No. 3, “Im Walde”
- 1878 Director of Frankfurt Conservatory
One of the great pianists of the 19th century, Clara Schumann (née Wieck) was among the first artists to present challenging programmes, of the highest musical quality, from memory. Both her husband, Robert, and close friend Brahms sought her music advice throughout their lives. Some of her own works were also highly regarded in her lifetime, but she believed that “a woman must not desire to compose”.

**LIFE AND MUSIC**

Under her father’s tuition, Clara Wieck became a great pianist, championing the music of Chopin, Schumann, and Brahms. She received widespread praise for her technique and bold repertoire, and for her thoughtful interpretations and pianistic singing tone, but marriage to Schumann, against her father’s wishes, and numerous pregnancies curtailed her career. After Schumann’s death she resumed touring and teaching, and also edited his music. Originally composing showpieces for her own concerts, her attitude to composition became increasingly ambivalent, and she wrote nothing after 1854. Clara’s best work shows imagination and craftsmanship, but lacks melodic individuality. Her intimate friendship with Brahms is generally believed to have been platonic.

**MILESTONES**

- **1828** First public performance in Leipzig; meets Robert Schumann
- **1835** Composes Piano Concerto, Op. 7
- **1838** Appointed Kammervirtuosin to the Austrian court
- **1839** Writes 3 Romances, Op. 11
- **1840** Marries Robert Schumann
- **1844** Tours Russia
- **1846** Piano Trio, Op. 17 published
- **1853** Writes Songs from Jucunde, Op. 23
- **1854** Husband enters mental asylum
- **1856** Husband, Robert Schumann, dies; first of 16 concert tours to England
- **1878** Appointed head of piano faculty, Hoch Conservatory, Frankfurt
- **1891** Last public performance

**KEY WORKS**

**PIANO TRIO, OP. 17**

Although she regularly played chamber music, this was Clara’s first attempt at composing in the genre, and became her most frequently performed work. The instrumental writing encompasses a broad range of moods, from the rhythmically whimsical scherzo to the controlled tension of the Finale’s fugato, which elicited the praise of Mendelssohn.

When Robert Schumann first heard Clara’s charming Romances he wrote, “I can hear that we are destined to be man and wife. You complete me as a composer.”

**SONGS FROM JUCUNDE, OP. 23**

Set to simple texts by the little-known Austrian poet Hermann Rollet, these vivid settings are probably Clara’s finest work; the six songs, including “Geheimes Flüstern hier und dort” (“Secret Whisperings”), explore popular Romantic themes, such as love, melancholy, and mystery. Enjoying quite distinct roles, the piano and vocal lines frequently surprise the listener with quirky melodic and harmonic twists seldom heard in her output.
Franck’s rejection of the frivolous and spectacular music of his contemporaries, in favour of symphonic and instrumental forms of high seriousness, strongly influenced successive generations of French composers. A late developer compositionally, his finest works – notable for their rich Wagner-inspired harmonies, innovative structures, and noble lyricism – were all written in his final years.

**LIFE AND MUSIC**

Franck toured Belgium as a pianist at the age of 11, but in maturity concentrated on composition. He later attracted considerable fame as an organist, and was subsequently appointed professor of the organ at the Paris Conservatoire, where his lofty music ideals inspired a group of young composers, including d’Indy and Dukas.

A deeply religious man, he composed numerous sacred works, but his true legacy lies in the orchestral, keyboard, and chamber works written in the last years of his life. Harmonically rich, but based on traditional forms, these include some of the greatest French music of the Romantic period.

**KEY WORKS**

**PRELUDE, CHORALE, AND FUGUE**

Solo Piano  
18:40  3

Franck’s organ-loft is never far away from this noble work. The improvisatory Prelude leads directly into a chaste Chorale, where the octave bass line imitates the organ’s pedals. From this emerges the implacable Fugue, which climaxes with the return of the theme from the Chorale, before ending joyfully in the major key.

**VIOIN SONATA**

Duo  
27:00  4

Written as a wedding gift for Franck’s countryman, the violinist Eugene Ysaïe, this is one of the most popular

Romantic violin sonatas. Arranged over four very different movements, Franck uses his own innovation, known as cyclic form, to unify the whole by bringing back the transformed opening theme in subsequent movements.

**VARIATIONS SYMPHONIQUES**

Orchestral  
15:40  1

Often regarded as Franck’s masterpiece, this set of six variations and a Finale form one of the most beautiful and compact piano concertos in the repertoire. Ranging from melancholy lyricism to glittering elegance, the solo part is sufficiently restrained to allow the piano and orchestra to be fully equal partners.

**MILESTONES**

- 1837 Enrols at the Paris Conservatoire
- 1846 First performance of a large-scale work, biblical oratorio *Ruth*
- 1848 Marries actress Félicité Desmousseaux
- 1861 Appointed organist at Sainte-Clothilde Church, Paris
- 1862 First important work, 6 Pièces, organ
- 1880 First performance of Piano Quintet, and *Les Béatitudes*, oratorio
- 1884 *Prelude, Chorale, and Fugue* published
- 1885 Writes *Variations symphoniques*
- 1886 Composes Violin Sonata in A major
“Bruckner! He is my man!”

RICHARD WAGNER
Anton Bruckner

Anton Bruckner was an important figure in the development of the symphony. Although a Romantic composer, he made use of, and expanded, Classical structures such as sonata form in his symphonies, and he was particularly influenced by the work of Wagner. Bruckner was also an organist, and in addition to the composition of nine symphonies, he produced a number of instrumental and sacred choral works.

LIFE

Born in Ansfelden, Austria, in 1824, Bruckner was largely self-taught as a composer. He was very dedicated and also worked as an organist, often practising for 12 hours a day. His first job as an organist was at St Florian’s Monastery near Ansfelden in 1851, and he later went on to Linz Cathedral, where he worked from 1856 to 1868. He was a very religious man and his first surviving work is the Requiem Mass, written in 1849. Bruckner was from a peasant background and he had a strong provincial accent that was looked down upon in cosmopolitan Vienna. He was also a rather solitary figure and was reluctant to explain or discuss his music with others. However, his musical outlook was very modern for its time, and he took on many of the harmonic innovations of Wagner, a move that was held against him by many critics loyal to the more conservative figure of Brahms. His three Mass settings and Symphony No. 1 were all written during his tenure at Linz, and in 1868 he became court organist and a teacher at the Vienna Conservatory. He went on to write eight more symphonies, in addition to a number of other sacred works and substantial pieces for organ, piano, and choir. His Symphony No. 9 was left incomplete on his death in 1896.

### MUSICAL OUTPUT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SYMPHONIES (10)</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OTHER INSTRUMENTAL (2)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAMBER (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KEYBOARD (6)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHORAL (16)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 36
Bruckner’s music in many ways bridges the stylistic gap between early and late Romantic music, paving the way for major later figures such as Mahler and Sibelius. In his symphonies he relied on many Classical structures (including sonata form) and Baroque techniques, but he expanded the length and harmonic range of themes and the extent of their development. Bruckner’s music is particularly unusual for the long durations of its sections and movements, although this allowed him to achieve a great subtlety in form, with many sections containing a number of related subsections. This, together with an often gradual rate of change, lends the music its famous transcendent or “otherworldly” quality. Bruckner’s international reputation has grown enormously in recent decades and his works are particular favourites of many conductors and orchestras.

**MASS NO. 1 IN D MINOR**

This Mass has quite symphonic proportions and the accompanying orchestra has a prominence reminiscent of Mozart and Haydn. Another principle that Bruckner took from the Classical era is that of cyclic form, and here themes from earlier movements are used in the Agnus Dei, the final movement. Inspired by Wagner’s *Tannhäuser*, this work represents Bruckner’s first piece as a fully mature composer.

**SYMPHONY NO. 3**

This work is often known as Bruckner’s “Wagner” Symphony. The earliest version (of 1873) contained a number of quotations of Wagner’s music and many remained in the published score of 1890. Two extra-musical ideas also appear in this piece. The first is the slow, dance-like theme in the Adagio that was written as an elegy for Bruckner’s mother. The other concerns his view of the opposing factors of life. The humourous Polka and solemn Chorale recall an evening that he spent in Vienna when he heard dance music issuing from the house where the architect Schmidt lay in his coffin.

**MILESTONES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1837</td>
<td>Sent to St Florian’s Monastery near Ansfelden; becomes choir boy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1849</td>
<td>Requiem Mass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1851</td>
<td>Organist at St Florian’s Monastery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1856</td>
<td>Organist at Linz Cathedral, Austria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>Makes first concert appearance as composer at Linz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1864</td>
<td>Composes Mass No. 1 in D minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1865</td>
<td>Hears <em>Tristan und Isolde</em> in Munich; becomes devoted Wagnerian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1866</td>
<td>Mass No. 2 in E minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1866</td>
<td>Writes Symphony No. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1867</td>
<td>Mass No. 3 in F minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1868</td>
<td>Becomes court organist and teacher at the Vienna Conservatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1873</td>
<td>Symphony No. 3 first performed in Vienna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1887</td>
<td>Composes Symphony No. 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>Receives honorary doctorate from the University of Vienna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>Dies while working on Symphony No. 9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bruckner studied at the Augustinian Abbey Church of St Florian, Austria, as a boy and he went on to become organist there in 1851.
This piece, Bruckner’s last, has a quality of isolation and intense spirituality that is not present in his other works. The chromaticism and dissonance are further heightened by the lack of an affirmative ending (the work is unfinished), which contributes to its dark and foreboding quality.

**FIRST MOVEMENT** (FEIERLICH, MISTERIOSO, 23:30)

Literally meaning “ceremonious” or “dignified”, the verbal direction of “Feierlich” captures the essence of the grand unfolding of this large-scale movement. It has an unusual ending, being in neither a major nor a minor key.

**SECOND MOVEMENT** (SCHERZO: BEWEGT, LEBHAFT; TRIO: SCHNELL, 10:15)

The Scherzo reasserts the original key of D minor, but it has an unsettled, menacing quality. Its insistent, driving rhythm contrasts with sudden areas of light diversion. The Trio retains some of the mood of the Scherzo but has an additional sinister quality to it.

**THIRD MOVEMENT** (ADAGIO: LANGSAM, FEIERLICH, 26:45)

Echoing Wagner and anticipating Mahler, this movement’s opening theme has a searching quality, finally settling in the movement’s key of E major, by way of unrelated keys such as D major. This expansive opening echoes the wide span of the first movement.

**TE DEUM**

This work of 1884 shares many qualities with Bruckner’s Masses of the 1860s and was one of his favourite pieces. The Latin title is taken from the first line of the text “Te Deum laudamus” (“We praise thee, o God”). The work is scored for the forces of solo soprano, contralto, tenor, and bass, a four-part choir, orchestra, and optional organ.

**TE DEUM LAUDAMUS** (6:30) The opening ostinato theme provides a driving motion also found in the Mass in F minor and the Symphony No. 9.

**TE ERGO** (3:00) This movement begins with a lyrical tenor solo, contrasting with the dynamic first movement.

**AETERNAC FAC** (1:30) Scored for the full chorus, without soloists, this section (“Aeterna fac cum sanctis tuis in gloria numerai”, or “Make us to be numbered with Thy saints in glory everlasting”) re-establishes the opening drama.

**SALVUM FAC** (7:00) Here the composer once again establishes a calm, slow movement, accompanied by very sparing use of the orchestra, before launching into a forceful development section that uses the original motive from the beginning.

**IN TE, DOMINE** (5:15) This final movement opens with the four soloists together before the grand entrance of the chorus, which by way of a very inventive canonic section reminiscent of Mozart leads the work to its triumphal conclusion.

**FOCUS**

**INFLUENCES**

Bruckner’s historical position is of great importance. Incorporating the thematic developments of Liszt and the harmonic boldness of Wagner with the Classical principles of Haydn and Mozart, he laid the groundwork for many later figures. Schoenberg’s early style owes a lot to Bruckner via his teacher, Mahler.
“Without craftsmanship, inspiration is a mere reed shaken in the wind.”

Johannes Brahms
Johannes Brahms

Born to a poor family in Hamburg, Brahms showed early promise as a musician. From around the age of 13, however, he made extra income for the family by playing in bars and houses of ill repute. Attempting to make a career as a pianist, in 1853 Brahms toured with the violinist Eduard Reményi and during the trip he made three of the most important acquaintances of his life: the violinist Joseph Joachim, the composer Robert Schumann, and the latter’s wife, Clara, herself a renowned pianist. Schumann was so impressed with Brahms’s compositions that he wrote a glowing article proclaiming him to be Beethoven’s heir. This gave Brahms’s career an immediate boost, but heaped expectation upon him. When Schumann suffered a breakdown the following year, Brahms went to Düsseldorf to help Clara and her family. He fell deeply in love with her, and the nature of their relationship after Schumann died has been a source of great speculation. They were undoubtedly intimate friends, and Brahms entrusted Clara with the first reading of many of his greatest works. Brahms was famously abrasive and often made tactless remarks; however, this hid a sensitive and thoughtful character who could be very generous with his time (and money), and inspired great loyalty from his friends.

Though the music of Brahms was rooted in the Classicism of past masters, its expressive and gigantic nature was Romantic at its core.

MUSICAL OUTPUT

| SYMPHONIES (4) |  |  |  |  |
| CONCERTOS (4) | 1 | 2 |  |
| CHAMBER (17) | 4 | 5 | 4 | 4 |
| PIANO MUSIC (24) | 10 | 4 | 6 | 4 |
| OTHER INSTRUMENTAL (15) | 2 | 2 | 5 | 6 |
| CHORAL (39) | 17 | 6 | 9 | 7 |
| SONGS (32) | 5 | 9 | 9 | 9 |

Total: 135

| 1833 | 1853 | 1863 | 1873 | 1883 | 1897 |

Brahms is a towering figure in 19th-century music, perhaps the last great composer in the Classical tradition. Once regarded as the unfashionable antithesis of Wagner and Liszt, his music has proven itself to be not only powerfully affecting, but also an important influence on the development of 20th-century music. A sometimes difficult, uncompromising man, he composed masterpieces in all genres except opera.
Brahms is often considered to be the last great composer in the Germanic Classical tradition, which stretches back through Beethoven, Mozart, and Haydn to Bach. At a time when the trend in composition was towards programmatic music, Brahms pointedly refused to see himself as a “modern” composer. Instead, he stuck to the Classical forms used by the masters and often spoke of the pressure he felt composing in their shadow. This dichotomy between Brahms’s Classicism and the “progressive” music of Wagner, Liszt, and Bruckner has (for better or worse) become a key theme in 19th-century music history. But, as Schoenberg first showed in a now infamous essay titled “Brahms the progressive”, Brahms’s music was nonetheless extremely innovative. The key to his innovation is the so-called “developing variation”, the constant reworking of small fragments of musical material as a composition progresses. This is epitomized in late works such as the Clarinet Quintet, in which virtually every note can be seen as deriving from the opening bar. This style of writing paved the way for music in which every aspect of a composition arises from the same thematic cell. For all this, it is the sound of Brahms’ music that has assured its place in history. Rarely rhetorical, it is frequently described as “autumnal” – passionate and romantic, yet controlled, refined, and infused with melancholy.

**MILESTONES**

1845 Studies piano with Otto Cossel and theory with Edward Marxsen

1853 Concert tour with Reményi; meets Joachim and the Schumanns; Robert Schumann writes a glowing review

1854 Schumann institutionalized; Brahms moves to Düsseldorf to help Clara

1857 Composes Piano Concerto No.1, Op. 15

1863 Director of the Vienna Singakademie

1867 Composes *Ein Deutches Requiem*, Op. 45

1868 Settles permanently in Vienna

1872 Conductor of the Vienna Gesellschaftskonzerte

1876 Premiere of Symphony No. 1, Op. 68

1877 Symphony No. 2, Op. 78

1878 Violin Concerto, Op. 77

1881 Piano Concerto No. 2, Op. 83

1883 Symphony No. 3, Op. 90

1885 Symphony No. 4, Op. 98

1887 Writes Double Concerto for Violin and Cello, Op. 102

1889 Awarded freedom of the city of Hamburg

1890 String Quintet, Op. 111, which he vows will be his final work


1896 Clara Schumann dies; composes *Vier Erste Gesange*, Op. 121

**The influence of violinist Joseph Joachim** led Brahms to include Hungarian folk rhythms in some of his work. Joachim also introduced Brahms to the Schumanns.

Brahms spent his adolescence in and around the docks of Hamburg, where he made money in taverns and brothels performing piano tricks for the locals.
SYMPHONY NO. 1, OP. 68
ORCHESTRAL 50:00 4

Brahms had often spoken of hearing the “footsteps” of Beethoven behind him, and this self-imposed expectation is perhaps the reason it took him so long to write his first symphony (he began the work in 1862, but did not complete it until 1876). Immediately dubbed “Beethoven’s Tenth”, its lineage is plain to hear, but it is an epic and individual work.

VARIATIONS ON A THEME BY HANDEL, OP. 24
SOLO PIANO 27:00 27

Like Beethoven before him, Brahms was attracted to the variation form and wrote several sets of variations on themes from other composers. The “Handel Variations”, based on an air from one of Handel’s keyboard suites, are perhaps his most appealing.

PIANO QUARTET NO. 1, OP. 25
CHAMBER 40:00 4

Brahms appeared as pianist in the premiere of his first piano quartet, the first time he had presented himself as such to a Viennese audience. A stormy, passionate, and youthful work, it displays typical Brahmsian hallmarks, particularly in the way that material is derived from the opening 4-note figure.

SYMPHONY NO. 4, OP. 98
ORCHESTRAL 42:00 4

Perhaps lacking the melodic appeal of his earlier symphonies, this work has a rugged charm that epitomizes Brahms’s own character. A critic once described hearing the first movement as akin to “being beaten by two very clever men”.

VIER ERSTE GESANGE, OP. 121
SONG 20:00 4

Brahms’s contribution to the Lieder tradition is often overlooked, if only because his legacy is so significant elsewhere. In fact Brahms wrote a great many songs, of which the Four Serious Songs, composed as a response to the death of Clara Schumann, are perhaps his most affecting.

VIOLIN CONCERTO, OP. 77
ORCHESTRAL 38:00 3

Brahms wrote this concerto for his great friend Joseph Joachim. It is a large-scale work, ferociously difficult for the violin soloist.

INFLUENCES

In one sense, Brahms was the last “Classical” composer, even in his own time viewed by some as an anachronism. Composers such as Dvořák and Reger were directly influenced by his music, although his indirect influence on the development of 20th-century music, through the advocacy of Schoenberg, is perhaps more significant.

Many of the piano works of Brahms, from the solo pieces to the concertos, have been performed or recorded by the young Russian pianist Evgeny Kissin.
On completing the String Quintet No. 2 in 1890, Brahms resolved to retire from composition. However, inspired by the playing of clarinettist Richard Mühlfeld the following year, he wrote both the Clarinet Trio and the Clarinet Quintet. The Quintet has come to be seen as his very finest chamber work.

**FOURTH MOVEMENT** *(CON MOTO, 8:00)*

After the dark and unsettled theme is explored in five variations, the opening phrase from the first movement makes a dramatic and unexpected return, giving a sense of finality.

**SYMPHONY NO. 3, OP. 90**

The most compact of his symphonies, and perhaps the most immediately accessible, in Brahms’s lifetime the popularity of his Symphony No. 3 was such that the composer took to describing it as “unfortunately over-famous”.

Although Brahms was seen as old-fashioned by admirers of Wagner and Liszt, he was highly regarded by many of his peers.

**EIN DEUTSCHES REQUIEM, OP. 45**

*A German Requiem*, first performed in its complete form in 1868, made Brahms’s reputation in Vienna, and remains one of his most consistently popular works. Rather than use the standard Requiem texts, Brahms chose his own passages from the Lutheran Bible, avoiding reference to Christianity and – notably – omitting the Last Judgement entirely. Although a believer, he was not overtly religious, and later said that he would have liked to replace the word “German” with “Human” in the title. This has led some writers to suggest that the real motivation for the work was an expression of his pain at the deaths of his mother and of Robert Schumann.

**PART SIX AND SEVEN**

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*“Denn wir haben hier keine bleibende Statt”* *(“For here have we no continuing city”). Andante; Quadruple time; C minor: Quasi-fugal form*

Second section (Vivace) starts with choir and full orchestra

Sopranos enter

Choir accompanied by basses and cellos, playing pizzicato

Timpani roll followed by baritone solo

Timpani announce baritone solo

Third section (Allegro) is a fugue. Altos begin, accompanied by clarinets and followed by sopranos, basses, and finally tenors

**FOCUS**

**CLARINET QUINTET, OP. 115**

*CHAMBER* 36:00  |

On completing the String Quintet No. 2 in 1890, Brahms resolved to retire from composition. However, inspired by the playing of clarinettist Richard Mühlfeld the following year, he wrote both the Clarinet Trio and the Clarinet Quintet. The Quintet has come to be seen as his very finest chamber work.

**FIRST MOVEMENT** *(ALLEGRO, 12:00)*

All the melodic material in this sonata-form movement stems from the opening theme, presented by the two violins.

**SECOND MOVEMENT** *(ADAGIO, 12:00)*

The Adagio begins with a peaceful clarinet melody. The central section is a remarkable imitation of Hungarian folk music, with wild arpeggios.

**THIRD MOVEMENT** *(ANDANTINO – PRESTO NON ASSAI, MA CON SENTIMENTO, 4:00)*

The third movement begins as an intermezzo, but quickly reveals itself to be a lively sonata-form movement based on a scurrying figure introduced by the violins.

**FOURTH MOVEMENT** *(CON MOTO, 8:00)*

After the dark and unsettled theme is explored in five variations, the opening phrase from the first movement makes a dramatic and unexpected return, giving a sense of finality.

**SYMPHONY NO. 3, OP. 90**

The most compact of his symphonies, and perhaps the most immediately accessible, in Brahms’s lifetime the popularity of his Symphony No. 3 was such that the composer took to describing it as “unfortunately over-famous”.

Although Brahms was seen as old-fashioned by admirers of Wagner and Liszt, he was highly regarded by many of his peers.

**EIN DEUTSCHES REQUIEM, OP. 45**

*BIBLICAL SETTING* 70:00  |

*A German Requiem*, first performed in its complete form in 1868, made Brahms’s reputation in Vienna, and remains one of his most consistently popular works. Rather than use the standard Requiem texts, Brahms chose his own passages from the Lutheran Bible, avoiding reference to Christianity and – notably – omitting the Last Judgement entirely. Although a believer, he was not overtly religious, and later said that he would have liked to replace the word “German” with “Human” in the title. This has led some writers to suggest that the real motivation for the work was an expression of his pain at the deaths of his mother and of Robert Schumann.

**PART SIX AND SEVEN**

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*“Denn wir haben hier keine bleibende Statt”* *(“For here have we no continuing city”). Andante; Quadruple time; C minor: Quasi-fugal form*

Second section (Vivace) starts with choir and full orchestra

Sopranos enter

Choir accompanied by basses and cellos, playing pizzicato

Timpani roll followed by baritone solo

Timpani announce baritone solo

Third section (Allegro) is a fugue. Altos begin, accompanied by clarinets and followed by sopranos, basses, and finally tenors
FIRST MOVEMENT (ALLEGRO CON BRIO, 10:00) As is so common with Brahms, the key to the whole movement is in the first few bars. The majestic first theme has been seen by some critics as a direct reference to Schumann’s Symphony No. 3.

SECOND MOVEMENT (ANDANTE, 8:00) The simple folk-like theme of the second movement spoke to Clara Schumann of “worshippers kneeling about their little forest shrine”.

THIRD MOVEMENT (POCO ALLEGRETTO, 6:00) One of Brahms’s most beautiful creations, the heart-wrenching theme appears first on cello before returning after the sombre Trio section, now on the French horn.

FOURTH MOVEMENT (ALLEGRO, 9:00) The Finale begins in brooding fashion before more animated development leads eventually to a quiet, satisfying close, replete with ghostly hints of the first movement’s opening theme.

A German Requiem contains some of the composer’s most haunting and poignant music. The fourth part, “Wie schön sind deine Wohnungen” (“How Lovely are thy Dwellings Fair”) is the emotional core of the work, with the remaining six parts forming a huge arch structure around it. The final part, “Selig sind die Toten” (“Blessed are the Dead”), recalls material from the first to give a sense of closure. By making use of choral fugues (in the second and sixth parts), Brahms deliberately evokes the spirit of Bach’s sacred choral works.
“I am Russian in the completest possible sense of that word.”

TCHAIKOVSKY IN A LETTER TO MME VON MECK, 1878
Tchaikovsky’s intensely emotional music combines many influences in an individual style: Russian folk song with Western European technique; nationalism with a deeply personal agenda; the bombastic with the haunting and beautiful. The effects of the composer’s homosexuality on his music and the mystery surrounding his death still cause speculation and controversy, but his music remains perennially popular.

**LIFE**

A sensitive and highly strung boy, Tchaikovsky was born into a large middle-class family in provincial Russia. After law school in St Petersburg, he became a civil servant, studying music privately but showing only average ability. However, he left his job to concentrate on music at St Petersburg Conservatory, and during five years under Anton Rubinstein his technique progressed rapidly. He moved to Moscow to teach and enjoyed celebrity in artistic and homosexual circles. At the age of 37 he entered into a platonic marriage of convenience with an infatuated student, Antonina Milyukova, but the effects that this had on his emotional state and his ability to compose were so destructive that they separated after two months. For the next 14 years Tchaikovsky corresponded with Nadezhda von Meck, a wealthy widow and lover of his music, who became his financial supporter (though by mutual agreement they intentionally never met). Nevertheless, by his early 50s Tchaikovsky was ill, depressed, and facing his own mortality. The official version of his death was that he absent-mindedly drank unboiled water and died of cholera, while a recent theory suggests he poisoned himself on pain of exposure for a homosexual scandal, but neither idea is very convincing.

**MUSICAL OUTPUT**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>MUSICAL OUTPUT</th>
<th>Total: 159</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ORCHESTRAL (47)</td>
<td>8 15 12 7 5</td>
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<td>CHAMBER (7)</td>
<td>1 3 2 1</td>
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<td>PIANO MUSIC (31)</td>
<td>5 12 6 2 6</td>
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<td>DRAMATIC (25)</td>
<td>1 11 4 4 5</td>
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<td>VOCAL (49)</td>
<td>7 14 11 8 9</td>
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1840 1850 1860 1870 1880 1890 1893
Critics were divided by Tchaikovsky’s early work (his Violin Concerto and Piano Concerto No. 1 received very unfavourable reviews), but it was clear from the beginning that he could write “masterpieces” (such as his Symphony No. 6 and The Queen of Spades). Some of his music seems to reflect his life: in Eugene Onegin, the fifth of his ten operas, the “Letter scene” has Tatyana declaring her love to Onegin by letter, just as Antonina did to Tchaikovsky (though Onegin declines). Following on, the despair at Fate in his Symphony No. 4 is a commentary on his state of mind during the disastrous marriage that resulted, whereas his freewheeling orchestral suites evoke his sense of freedom during the travelling years after his separation. However, this idea is all too easy to overplay. The influence of Schumann and Beethoven, as well as Glinka, can be heard in Tchaikovsky’s orchestral music, and there is often a strong sense of a psychological programme in which motto themes undergo transformation (as in the last three symphonies); he also made extensive use of folk tunes (especially in his Symphony No. 2, the “Little Russian”). His Violin Concerto and the first of his three concertos for piano are familiar showpieces that stretch the performer to the limit, while his three ballets – Swan Lake, The Sleeping Beauty, and Nutcracker – show off his trademark lusciously-scored melodies.

MILESTONES

1865 Appointed professor of harmony at new Moscow Conservatory
1866 Symphony No. 1, Op. 13, composed
1869 Voyevoda, Op. 3, opera, produced; Fatum, Op. 77, for orchestra, performed; begins Romeo and Juliet overture
1873 Symphony No. 2, Op. 17, performed in Moscow to great success
1874 The Oprishnik, opera, produced; String Quartet No. 2, Op. 22, and Piano Concerto No. 1, Op. 35, composed
1875 Piano Concerto No. 1, Op. 23, premiered in Boston, US; Symphony No. 3, Op. 29, premiered in Moscow
1876 Begins correspondence with Nadezhda von Meck
1877 Swan Lake produced; begins Symphony No. 4 and Eugene Onegin; starts eight years of international travel
1878 Violin Concerto, Op. 35, composed; Symphony No. 4 and Eugene Onegin, Op. 24, completed
1880 1812 Overture, Op. 49, written
1881 Violin Concerto, Op. 35, premiered in Vienna, to terrible reviews
1890 The Sleeping Beauty produced in St Petersburg; The Queen of Spades, Op. 68, composed, premiered triumphantly; Souvenir de Florence, Op. 70, composed
1892 The ballet Nutcracker, Op. 71, produced

The Bolshoy Zal (Great Hall) in the Moscow Conservatory, where Tchaikovsky was made Professor of Harmony in 1865.
The “Solemn Overture” was composed in 1880 for the consecration of Moscow’s Cathedral of Christ the Saviour, built in thanks for the Russian victory over Napoleon in 1812.

**VIOLIN CONCERTO, OP. 35**

Denounced as “unviolinistic” by early players and “stinking music” by critics, this noble, virtuosic showpiece injects Russian passion into the “Euro-style” concerto with hugely successful results.

**PIANO CONCERTO NO. 1, OP. 23**

Ukrainian folk themes, French song, a grand opening tune that promptly disappears, occasionally inexpert piano writing – it seemed an unsuccessful mix to potential performers, but proved another winner after its triumphant premiere.

**SOUVENIR DE FLORENCE, OP. 70**

The unusual scoring – two violins, two violas, two cellos – gave Tchaikovsky problems, but he ended up producing a lyrical and warm masterpiece. Despite the title (recalling his Italian holidays), the work is richly Russian in character.

Rudolf Nureyev made his debut in the West performing *The Sleeping Beauty*. Written in 1889, it was Tchaikovsky’s first successful ballet.

Tchaikovsky acknowledged that *Nutcracker* was twee compared to *The Sleeping Beauty*, but his setting of Hoffman’s fairy tale has proved better box office, thanks to effects such as the Sugar Plum Fairy’s celesta.

Tragedy is literally on the cards in this rich, dense masterpiece, which hints at Mozart, Bizet, Orthodox music, Russian folksong, French song, and more, yet remains a cohesive, powerful whole.

Tchaikovsky’s dark, despairing farewell – possibly an attempt to confront his demons – was prophetically named “Pathétique” by his brother Modest. The second movement’s love “waltz” has an undanceable five beats.

Tchaikovsky greatly encouraged the young Rachmaninov, but his heartfelt style soon became old-fashioned outside Russia as composers looked for a more radical language. However, his popularity with audiences has remained consistent: many of his works are cornerstones of the Romantic repertoire, constantly performed and recorded.
Completed in 1878, and based on a verse novel by Pushkin, this story of a bored, Byronic young aristocrat’s desultory and damaging love affairs constantly reminds us that “real life is not like a novel”; yet its “Letter Scene” eerily reflects the composer’s own personal struggles at the time. Themes (including pre-Revolutionary Russia, town versus country, social convention, and death of inspiration) abound in this enduring opera, which in many ways is “about” Tatiana, the only character who grows, rather than the superficial, irredeemable Onegin.

**ACT ONE** (65:00) Russia, c.1820. Eugene Onegin, having inherited his uncle’s country estate outside St Petersburg,
is introduced by his poet friend Lensky to the Larin sisters: the flighty Olga, and the brooding, novel-reading Tatiana. Tatiana declares her love for Onegin by letter, but he brushes her off. **ACT TWO** (40:00) Onegin, provoking his hot-headed friend takes Lensky’s beloved Olga to a ball. A duel inevitably results, in which Onegin kills Lensky. **ACT THREE** (35:00) Onegin falls in love with Tatiana, who is now married to his cousin Prince Gremin. She still loves him but stays with her husband, suspecting that her attraction is now only as a challenge.

**SWAN LAKE, OP. 20**

After its unsuccessful Moscow premiere in 1877, *Swan Lake* was revised in 1895, two years after Tchaikovsky’s death. That version, with choreography by Petipa and Ivanov, to a tighter libretto by Tchaikovsky’s brother Modest (complete with happier ending), is the basis of the ballet we know today.

**ACT ONE** (50:00) At the royal palace, Prince Siegfried celebrates his coming-of-age. Various dances entertain the party to now-familiar themes, and a flight of swans appears, marked by the main oboe melody of the ballet. **ACT TWO** (30:00) At a moonlit lakeside, Siegfried and friends are hunting swans, denoted by the oboe melody. However, one swan – Odette – tells him she is a woman, turned into a swan by the evil magician Rotbart. **ACT THREE** (45:00) At the royal castle, Siegfried has to choose a wife at a ball, entertained by various dances. He thinks he sees Odette there, but she is actually Odile, Rotbart’s daughter. Siegfried dances with her and nominates her as his bride, spelling doom for Odette. **ACT FOUR** (15:00) Back at the lake, Odette is about to die – but Siegfried battles with Rotbart, breaks the spell and is reunited with her, as the swan theme triumphantly reappears.

**THIRD MOVEMENT** (SCHERZO, 6:00) After the lament of the second movement recedes, the sprightly scherzo features pizzicato strings alternating with blocks of jaunty woodwind and brass in a good-natured jumble.

**FOURTH MOVEMENT** (ALLEGRO CON FUOCO, 10:00) A hectic, clattering theme is contrasted with variations on a Russian children’s song about hopeful brides (“In the field a little birch tree stood”), evidently a reference to Antoninina. The work ends in boisterous determination.
“The symphony must be like the world. It must embrace everything.”

GUSTAV MAHLER, 1907
Gustav Mahler

1860–1911  Austrian  18

Known chiefly as a conductor in his short lifetime, (he directed the Vienna Opera for ten years), Mahler composed in his spare time. His large-scale songs with orchestra and nine epic, intense, emotionally exhausting symphonies (plus beginnings of a tenth) are among the most recorded and performed of the repertoire. He is now seen as a link between the 19th-century Austro-German tradition and 20th-century Modernism.

LIFE

Mahler was born to a large German-speaking Jewish family in Bohemia, factors which made him feel a lifelong outsider. His father was a rough but successful man in the liquor trade. Mahler’s musical talent showed early: he gave local recitals at ten and, at 15, he entered the Vienna Conservatory, soon winning prizes for piano and composition. Gradually he developed an international reputation as a conductor as he progressed – despite quarrels with authority en route – through Kassel, Prague, Leipzig, Budapest, and Hamburg, before spending ten years at the Vienna Opera and finally four in New York. An innovator in opera presentation, especially in Wagner, he was a demanding conductor, disliked by some musicians and respected by others. He suffered institutional anti-Semitism, despite converting nominally to Catholicism in Vienna. At 41, he met 22-year-old Alma Schindler and married her four months later, ordering her to give up her composing ambitions to raise the two daughters she soon produced. However, one died aged six. That year, Mahler was diagnosed as having a serious heart condition, drastically curtailing his beloved walking, swimming, and cycling. Alma’s affair in 1910 with the architect Walter Gropius (whom she eventually married) destroyed Mahler, who was now enjoying recognition as a composer. Six months later he contracted a serious blood infection from which he died.

MUSICAL OUTPUT

Total: 18

| SYMPHONIES (10) | 1 | 2 | 5 | 2 |
| CANTATAS (1) | 1 |
| SONGS (7) | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 |

| 1860 | 1880 | 1888 | 1897 | 1907 | 1911 |

Successful in his career because of his driving ambition, Mahler exacted the highest standards of music-making in both himself and others.
Apart from lost student chamber works, Mahler’s output is virtually all symphony and song; though an outstanding opera conductor, he completed none of the three he started. His style is late Romantic, but he expanded the orchestra both in sound and size (his Symphony No. 8 requires 1,000 participants). However, what marks out a Mahler symphony is more theatrical: the feeling of many voices at work and a sequence of events. There is often an atmosphere of tension and fin-de-siècle angst contrasted with love and joy; Mahler consulted with Freud, and a strong psychoanalytical – some say self-pitying – aspect runs through much of his music. Sarcasm, parody, and irony abound in Mahler’s mix of the sublime and the ridiculous, which may explain the popularity of his symphonies in the “knowing” era of the late 20th century.

**MILESTONES**

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<tr>
<td>1875</td>
<td>Enters Vienna Conservatory</td>
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<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>First conducting experience; completes cantata <em>Das klagende Lied</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>1884</td>
<td>Starts Symphony No. 1</td>
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<td>1888</td>
<td>Music director, Budapest opera; starts Symphony No. 2</td>
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<td>1891</td>
<td>Starts conducting at Hamburg</td>
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<td>1897</td>
<td>Starts at Vienna Hofoper</td>
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<td>1901</td>
<td>Begins Symphony No. 5; meets Alma Schindler</td>
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<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>Marries Alma; finishes Symphony No. 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>Song cycle <em>Kindertotenlieder</em> first performed</td>
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<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>Begins Symphony No. 8, the “Symphony of a Thousand”</td>
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<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>Daughter Maria dies; takes post at Metropolitan Opera, New York</td>
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<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td>Completes song-symphony <em>Das Lied von der Erde</em></td>
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<td>1910</td>
<td>Finishes Symphony No. 9; learns of Alma’s affair</td>
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**SYMPHONY NO. 8**

**ORCHESTRAL**

75:00 p 2 ovc

The “Symphony of a Thousand” (1,030 performers were needed to play in its 1910 premiere) is a tribute to enlightenment and divine love, orchestrated for eight solo singers, massive choir, and large orchestra. The first part is a setting of Latin religious texts; the second is set to the conclusion of Goethe’s drama *Faust*.

**SYMPHONY NO. 9**

**ORCHESTRAL**

70:00 p 3 ovc

Like Beethoven and Bruckner, Mahler died jinxed on nine numbered symphonies; his last – in many ways an extension of *Das Lied von der Erde* – was finished in 1910 and not performed until after he died.

**KINDERTOTENLIEDER**

**SONG CYCLE**

25:00 p 5 ovc

Grimly prophetic of the death of Mahler’s own daughter, *Songs for Dead Children* – possibly his finest song cycle – is a setting for baritone voice of poems by Friedrich Rückert, who lost two children, and is contemplative rather than dramatic.

Mahler was conductor at the Vienna Opera from 1897 to 1907, a significant achievement considering this appointment’s reputation as a stressful and demanding position.
Symphony No. 5

Mahler met Alma while composing this symphony. Its five movements progress from tragedy to triumph.

**First Movement** (Trauermarsch, 22:00) A funeral march, introduced by a baleful fanfare, is punctuated by two trios.

**Second Movement** (Stürmisch Bewegt, 14:00) Marked “with utmost vehemence”, this is a musical battleground which ends in inconclusive mystery.

**Third Movement** (Scherzo, 18:00) Mahler wrote of “dancing stars” in this generally cheerful movement, with some poignant central passages of pizzicato strings and twilight mood.

**Fourth Movement** (Adagietto, 10:00) The Adagietto is Mahler’s most popular work – often played as a stand-alone piece. As with much of his symphonic writing, it is related to his earlier songs. Mahler apparently sent the score of the Adagietto to Alma as a musical love letter.

**Fifth Movement** (Rondo-Finale, 16:00) The Adagietto theme is powered up in a brilliant finale that combines academic prowess with good spirits and zest for life.

Das Lied von der Erde

The Song of the Earth is a symphony-like work based on translations of ancient Chinese poems and set for two solo singers and orchestra. Filled with sadness and longing yet ultimately uplifting, simple yet profound, and achingly beautiful, it is possibly Mahler’s greatest piece. It was premiered six months after his death.

**Das Trinklied vom Jammer der Erde** (8:00) A powerful lament (“dark is life, dark is death”), challengingly high for the tenor, that seeks solace in wine.

**Der Einsame im Herbst** (10:00) Autumnal and despairing, the score is marked “ragging and weary”, with small-scale and muted sounds.

**Von der Jugend** (3:00) A polished and miniature celebration of youth, with stylized “Chineseness”.

**Von der Schönheit** (8:00) A delicate and poised portrayal of girls gathering flowers, longing for passing horsemen.

**Der Trunkene im Frühling** (5:00) “The Drunken Man in Spring” is woken from his post-binge sleep to find a bird announcing the new season.

**Der Abschied** (31:00) “The Farewell” takes us from chilly funereal gloom to the world waking up again, as it always does, in renewal and ecstasy.

Influences

Mahler’s works fell into obscurity after his death, partly because of opposition in Hitler’s Germany to Jewish musicians, but became very popular in the last third of the 20th century. The dramatic and multi-layered nature of his symphonies can also be found in those of Dmitri Shostakovich.
“There is no such thing as Abstract music; there is good music and bad music. If it is good, it means something.”

RICHARD STRAUSS
Richard Strauss

1864–1949  German  189

Richard Strauss began his career composing songs and symphonic poems, and ended it as the greatest opera composer of his day. His career, which rarely escaped controversy, spanned the last days of the Austrian Empire and the whole of Hitler’s Nazi Germany, in which the composer allowed himself to become embroiled. His masterpieces are his orchestral tone poems, his songs, and his great operas.

LIFE

Richard Strauss was born in Munich, the son of a horn-player in the court orchestra. He began composing at six, and studied music privately, but did not attend a conservatory. He became assistant to Hans von Bülow in Meiningen, then travelled to Italy and later worked in Munich at the Opera. He married a general’s daughter, the soprano Pauline de Ahna, who inspired many of his songs, which they performed together. His early operas, Guntram and Feuersnot (Fire Emergency) were not as successful as his tone poems, and Salome and Elektra caused an international scandal. The latter brought him together with the poet Hugo von Hofmannsthal: the two were to collaborate on five further operas. In 1908, the successful Strauss built himself a large villa at Garmisch in Germany. He conducted widely and also held a post as conductor of the Berlin Royal Opera, resigning from this in 1918 to become joint director of the Vienna Opera the next year. When the Nazi party came to power in 1933 Strauss was appointed president of the Reichsmusikkammer, though he lost the post two years later because of his collaboration with the Jewish librettist Stefan Zweig. Strauss spent much of World War II in Vienna, then returned to Garmisch, where he died in 1949.

The early tone poems of Strauss, such as Also Sprach Zarathustra, are works on a grand scale, full of flamboyant, dramatic gestures.

MUSICAL OUTPUT

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Total: 189</th>
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<tr>
<td>SYMPHONIES (4)</td>
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<td>CONCERTOS (10)</td>
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<td>OTHER ORCHESTRAL (38)</td>
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<td>OTHER INSTRUMENTAL (34)</td>
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<td>OPERAS (17)</td>
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<td>VOCAL (82)</td>
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1864 1870 1880 1890 1900 1910 1920 1930 1940 1949
Strauss’s early career as an orchestral conductor gave him enormous knowledge of the potential of the post-Wagnerian symphony orchestra, and he expanded this still further, using unusual timbres and combinations of instruments for the vivid and original characterizations of his great tone poems. The success of Don Juan established his reputation, and he built on it with Till Eulenspiegel, Also Sprach Zarathustra, Don Quixote, and Ein Heldenleben. His earliest attempts at opera were not successful, but Salome (and the scandal it caused with its New Testament subject and its libretto based on Oscar Wilde’s play) gave him a new reputation as an opera composer. Elektra pushed the boundaries of operatic music, and many reacted against its dissonances and the huge, blatant waltz tune of its Finale. Waltzes, too, run all through his next work, Der Rosenkavalier, in homage to his namesake and to the city of Vienna, where it is set. His later collaborations with Hugo von Hofmannsthal brought about philosophical works such as Die Frau ohne Schatten. After Hofmannsthal’s death, Strauss turned to Stefan Zweig and other librettists for his final operas, written first in the shadow of World War II, and then during the war itself. Strauss mourned the bombed-out theatres of Europe in Metamorphosen, but a chance meeting with an American soldier inspired one of his greatest instrumental works, the Oboe Concerto. The Four Last Songs were his last musical testament.

The villa in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany, where Strauss spent the final years of his life. He moved here after several years of exile in Switzerland.

**MILESTONES**

1875  Studies theory with Meyer
1881  Symphony No. 1 and String Quartet No. 1 performed in Munich
1884  Symphony No. 2 performed in New York
1885  Becomes assistant conductor to Hans von Bülow in Meiningen
1887  Aus Italien performed in Munich
1889  Becomes third conductor at Weimar Opera
1890s Series of tone poems establishes his reputation as a composer; Also Sprach Zarathustra, Op. 30
1894  Marries soprano Pauline de Ahna
1898  Conductor of Berlin Opera
1904  Visits US and performs Symphonia Domestica, Op. 53
1905  Writes Salome, Op. 54
1909  Elektra, Op. 38, produced
1910  Writes Der Rosenkavalier, Op. 59, with von Hofmannsthal
1912  Ariadne auf Naxos, Op. 60, performed
1919  Die Frau ohne Schatten, Op. 65, produced in Vienna
1933  Nazi government appoints him director of the Reichsmusikkammer
1935  Removed from post due to his collaboration with Jewish librettist Stefan Zweig
1938  Operas Friedenstag, Op. 81, and Daphne, Op. 82, produced
1943  Writes Metamorphosen, a “poem for 23 strings”
1947  Visits London and conducts own works

Soprano Pauline de Ahna, Strauss’s wife, as Elsa in Wagner’s opera Lohengrin.
**ALSO SPRACH ZARATHUSTRA, OP. 30**

TONE POEM  
35:00  p 1  o

Strauss based this piece, *Thus Spoke Zoroaster*, on Friedrich Nietzsche’s philosophical prose poem of the same title. Zarathustra (Zoroaster) is Nietzsche’s ideal thinker, a leader of humanity. Strauss wrote the piece between 1895 and 1896, and conducted its first performance in Frankfurt. The film *2001: A Space Odyssey* brought its majestic opening bars to many new listeners.

**ARIADNE AUF NAXOS, OP. 60**

OPERA  
120:00  p 2  o

Strauss collaborated with Hugo von Hofmannsthal on a reworking of Molière’s comedy *Le bourgeois gentilhomme*, to be performed with an operatic and vaudeville entertainment after the play. This six-hour show was not a success, but some years later Strauss and Hofmannsthal rewrote the piece, adding a Prologue in which Molière’s comedy is hinted at and the situation is set up. Ariadne, lamenting the loss of Theseus on Naxos, is interrupted by Zerbinetta and her troupe of clowns, who try to cheer her up, before Bacchus arrives to take Ariadne with him to everlasting bliss.

**SALOME, OP. 54**

OPERA  
105:00  p 1  o

Strauss’s *Salome* is a setting of Hedwig Lachmann’s German translation of Oscar Wilde’s play. The opera was first performed in Dresden in 1905, and was a great success throughout Europe. It tells the biblical story of how Herodias’s daughter Salome persuaded King Herod to give her the head of Jokanaan, John the Baptist.

The acclaimed African-American soprano Leontyne Price made her debut as Ariadne at the San Francisco Opera in October 1977.

**INFLUENCES**

Strauss outlived his age of late Romanticism, and though he had taken on much of what had been discovered by Stravinsky and other avant-garde composers, his late work still remains tonal and late-19th century in its harmonic language. Only now is it becoming clear how much influence his work has had on post-War composers.
FOUR LAST SONGS

Strauss wrote his *Vier letzte Lieder* (*Four Last Songs*) in 1948, and although they were not his last songs, they were among his last major compositions. The first three poems are by Hermann Hesse, and the last is by Joseph von Eichendorff. All four poems have an atmosphere of elegy, as the composer bids farewell to the world. Hesse himself is said to have been surprised by the project, and when he first heard the songs he claimed that they were “virtuoso, refined, full of well-crafted beauty, but lacking in core, merely an end in themselves” — though he admitted to having heard them only on the radio.

**BEIM SCHLAFENGEHEN** (4:00) In the first song, “On Retiring to Rest”, the poet, wearied by the day, is asking to be taken in by the starry night like a tired child. His hands and mind cease from working, and his five senses drift off into slumber. The soul hovers around the body, living on “in night’s magic circle”.

**FRÜHLING** (5:00) In “Spring”, the poet dreams of springtime, with its trees, blue skies, and birdsong, then sees it unfold in all its beauty.

**SEPTEMBER** (6:00) At the other end of the year, the garden is in mourning, and summer comes to its end. The leaves fall as summer closes its eyes to rest.

**IM ABENDROT** (9:00) This, the most moving of the four songs, sets words by Eichendorff’s “In the Evening Glow”. Now it is clear that Strauss is once again addressing his wife, Pauline, as they go hand in hand into the twilight, the larks still singing overhead as they go.

**DER ROSENKAVALIER, OP. 59**

Strauss and his librettist Hugo von Hofmannsthal invented *Der Rosenkavalier* (*The Knight of the Rose*) as a fantasy of 18th-century Vienna at the time of the Empress Maria Theresa.

**EIN HELDENLEBEN, OP. 40**

The title of this tone poem translates as *A Hero’s Life* and the hero is Strauss himself, portrayed as a man of high ideals, surrounded by enemies.

**PART ONE: THE HERO** (5:00) The first subject, the Hero’s theme, makes it clear from the start that he is a noble character, a lively, confident individual, but not without a gentle side.
ACT ONE  (75:00)
The heroine, the Marschallin – also called Marie Therese – is having an affair with young Octavian while her husband is away hunting. Her cousin, Baron Ochs von Lerchenau, interrupts their dalliance with a demand that she should provide a Knight of the Rose to present a silver rose to his fiancée, Sophie.

ACT TWO  (60:00) Octavian is chosen for the task and delivers the rose to Sophie, who immediately falls in love with him, and vice versa. When Sophie then refuses to marry Baron Ochs, Sophie’s snobbish father, von Faninal, tries to placate him, while Octavian fights the Baron and plots to have him disgraced.

ACT THREE  (60:00) Octavian, dressed as Mariandl, seduces Baron Ochs in a tavern of ill repute. They are interrupted, and the Marschallin and Sophie come to break up the fracas. The Marschallin recognizes the depths of Sophie’s feelings for Octavian, and gracefully gives up her lover to the younger woman.

PART TWO: THE HERO’S ADVERSARIES (4:00) The Hero’s enemies (Strauss’s critics) are portrayed as dull and petty-minded. They are contrasted with the Hero and his lofty, high-minded ambitions.

PART THREE: THE HERO’S COMPANION (14:00) This is a portrait of Strauss’s loving but capricious wife, Pauline.

PART FOUR: THE HERO’S DEEDS OF WAR (8:00) The Hero does battle to overcome his rivals in art and love.

PART FIVE: THE HERO’S WORKS OF PEACE (7:00) In this section, Strauss quotes from a number of his own earlier musical works.

PART SIX: THE HERO’S RETIREMENT FROM THE WORLD AND FULFILMENT (13:00) The Hero retires from the world of action (something Strauss never did) and spends his time in contemplation. In the conclusion, his life-force asserts itself once more.

Horns and strings

The last part of Ein Heldenleben acts as a coda to the whole work
The 19th century provided the most popular of all operas – Verdi’s *La traviata*, Rigoletto, and *Aïda*, Wagner’s Ring Cycle, Bizet’s *Carmen*, and Puccini’s *La bohème*. The popularity of these works is based on their universal themes, the huge emotions they generate, and the mastery of their writing for voice and orchestra.

The years between the death of Mozart in 1791 and the arrival of Rossini on the scene two decades later were comparatively barren for opera. Europe was too preoccupied with the Napoleonic Wars to have money to spare for this extravagant art form. 1813, when Rossini had his first great successes, was also the year in which two of the greatest Romantic opera composers, Verdi and Wagner, were born. Each revolutionized opera and polarized its enthusiasts into what even today can be – though should not be – two opposing camps.

Romantic opera covers over a century of composition. Up until World War I, Europe enjoyed a long period of relative peace, during which the revolutions of 1848 were a significant political upheaval. These involved Wagner directly (he was exiled for his participation in the Saxony riots) and several other composers indirectly.

**INTERNATIONAL APPEAL**

The other revolution to affect the century was the industrial one. By mid-century, railways criss-crossed Europe and steamships plied the Atlantic, allowing composers, singers, and conductors to embark on the international careers that all now accept as the norm. Verdi travelled to Russia, Dvořák to the USA, Tchaikovsky to England (to pick up a doctorate), and Puccini to his eventual death in a Brussels hospital. The soprano Adelina Patti, greatest of bel canto singers, retired to a castle in south Wales; the tenor Enrico Caruso made his greatest name in New York; and the Russian bass Chaliapin sang to audiences in Paris and London. In a century of nationalism, opera was a truly international art form.

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*BALLET SCENE FROM ROBERT LE DIABLE BY DEGAS*

Giacomo Meyerbeer was the most successful exponent of French *grand opéra*. What his works lacked in musical inspiration they made up for in spectacle.
Opera often springs from literary origins. Plays, epics, novels, and histories have always inspired librettists and composers, and 19th-century Romantic opera took its inspiration from a particular set of writers. Shakespeare’s plays, Sir Walter Scott’s novels, Goethe’s Faust, and Schiller’s historical tragedies all became sources for opera librettos.

Another great source of Romantic inspiration were the legends and poems of medieval Europe. Rossini took the old Swiss tale of William Tell for his last and possibly greatest opera, whereas Wagner drew on the great medieval German epics Tristan und Isolde, the Nibelungenlied, and Parzifal.

**POWERFUL EMOTIONS**

In Italy, Rossini’s use of Romantic plots, often melodramatic and improbable, inspired his two immediate successors, Donizetti and Bellini, who took Romanticism still further. Donizetti drew on Sir Walter Scott for Lucia di Lammermoor, while Bellini told tales of Druid priestesses in Norma and of sleepwalking girls in La sonnambula. In each of these operas the central figure is that great Romantic icon, the damsel in distress.
Lucia in her bloodstained nightgown and Norma in her priestess’s robes are among the most hauntingly dramatic heroines in all theatre, spoken or sung.

Verdi made further revolutions in the writing of opera. His earliest works told stirring tales of nationalism and heroism (Macbeth, Ernani, Nabucco), while in his middle period, in works such as Rigoletto, he examined the relationship between parent and child, portraying vulnerable heroines with uncomprehending, overbearing fathers.

Verdi’s successors, Mascagni, Leoncavallo, and Puccini, added the new element of “verismo” or realism to their operas, telling stories in music that were none the less Romantic for being drawn from everyday life.

**OPERA BEYOND ITALY**

The great Russian composers, from Glinka to Tchaikovsky, all produced operas, usually on Russian themes. In France, Parisian grand opéra employed huge stage sets, vast orchestras and choruses, and prodigious solo voices, with Meyerbeer the dominant composer. Offenbach wrote in the rival form of opéra comique, concluding his career with a masterpiece of Romantic opera, The Tales of Hoffmann. Other French works that have lasted well include Bizet’s Carmen, Gounod’s Faust, and Massenet’s Cendrillon.

In Germany the first great Romantic opera was Weber’s Der Freischütz, based on a folk tale set in the forests of Bohemia. Weber had learned much from his studies of Beethoven, and brought a new richness of orchestration to his score. Der Freischütz inspired Wagner, who decided that the German world needed its own form of music drama, and proceeded to invent it, writing both words and music. Richard Strauss followed the unfollowable Wagner, producing Romantic works until well into the 20th century. He was the last of the great Romantic composers.

**BEL CANTO**

The great vocal tradition of 19th-century Italian opera was bel canto, which simply means “beautiful singing”. The three great bel canto composers were Rossini, Bellini, and Donizetti, and their works have been criticized by some for putting ornamented melodic line and florid coloratura embellishments before the job of telling a story. Two of the finest early exponents were Giulia Grisi (1811–69) and Giuditta Pasta (1797–1865). Later stars included Jenny Lind (1820–87) and Adelina Patti (1843–1919), who left a number of recordings, but these were made when she was past her vocal best.

**JENNY LIND**

The Swedish-born soprano won acclaim for the naturalness of her performances.
Carl Maria von Weber was a composer, conductor, and pianist whose opera *Der Freischütz* marked the beginning of German Romantic opera. The huge success of *Der Freischütz* liberated German opera from the Italian influences that had bound it until then, and showed how a nationalist style of opera could be founded on folk tunes and folk tales. Weber was admired by Beethoven and influenced his disciple, Wagner.

**LIFE AND MUSIC**

Carl Maria von Weber was the son of a town musician who set up his own opera company, with which the young Weber spent much of his childhood on tour. He studied with Abbé Vogler, an eminent teacher and music director at several German Electors’ courts, and worked under Joseph Haydn’s brother Michael. At 17 Weber took up the post of Kapellmeister at the theatre in Breslau (Bratislava). Eventually appointed Kapellmeister in Dresden, Weber spent his life touring ceaselessly as a conductor to promote his own and other composers’ music. He died in London at only 39, a few weeks after the premiere of his final opera, *Oberon*, succumbing to the tuberculosis that had undermined his health for years. Apart from his operas, he is noted for his brilliant clarinet works.

**KEY WORKS**

**OBERON**

*Oberon*, Weber’s last opera, is a setting of an English libretto by James Robinson Planché and it was first performed in London in 1826 at Covent Garden. Weber overcame the difficulties of Planché’s unpromising, convoluted text about the elf-king Oberon, the Caliph of Baghdad, his daughter Rieza, and Charlemagne, and wrote an opera that contains some of his best music, especially the inspired overture.

**CLARINET CONCERTO NO. 1 IN F MINOR**

Weber wrote beautifully for the clarinet in *Der Freischütz*, but his knowledge and love of the instrument is shown in his two clarinet concertos and one concertino of 1811. The First Concerto has long been a favourite with concertgoers and clarinettists alike, and illustrates Debussy’s remark that Weber achieved his sound by “scrutinizing the soul of each instrument”.

**MILESTONES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>1804</td>
<td>Appointed Kapellmeister at Breslau</td>
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<tr>
<td>1807</td>
<td>Composes his two symphonies</td>
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<tr>
<td>1811</td>
<td>Composes his two clarinet concertos</td>
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<tr>
<td>1813</td>
<td>Appointed director of Prague Opera</td>
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<tr>
<td>1817</td>
<td>Made court Kapellmeister, Dresden</td>
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<tr>
<td>1821</td>
<td><em>Der Freischütz</em> a huge success in Berlin</td>
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<td>1823</td>
<td>Completes <em>Euryanthe</em>, opera</td>
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<tr>
<td>1826</td>
<td>Completes <em>Oberon</em>, opera</td>
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DER FREISCHÜTZ

Weber set Der Freischütz (The Freeshooter or The Marksman) to a libretto by Johann Friedrich Kind based on a set of ghost stories. The overture opposes C major with C minor, setting up the world of goodness and light (major) against that of evil and darkness (minor). Hunting-horn calls are heard alongside Weber’s favourite low clarinet, setting the atmosphere of Bohemian forest life and the black magic of the Wolf’s Glen. The evocation of the glen is a superb example of tonal scene-painting.

ACT ONE (50:00) The opera is set in Bohemia in the 17th century. The forester Max wants to win Agathe’s hand in a shooting match. Caspar, in league with the devil Samiel, persuades Max to accept his help in casting a magic bullet to ensure success.

ACT TWO (55:00) Agathe is full of dread about the shooting match. Max and Caspar go to the Wolf’s Glen, summon up Samiel and cast seven bullets – but the last is dedicated to the devil.

ACT THREE (45:00) Agathe is shocked by a gift of a funeral wreath instead of her wedding wreath. Max, down to his last magic bullet, shoots at a dove, but hits Caspar, who falls dying. Max confesses his involvement with Samiel, is pardoned, and marries Agathe.

EURYANTHE

Weber’s “grand heroic-romantic opera in three acts” was commissioned by the Kärntnertortheater in Vienna as a result of the success of Der Freischütz. With one of the most ludicrously implausible plots in all opera (which is quite an achievement), it has not been performed as often as deserved by its superb music – a continuous flow without spoken word.

ACT ONE (60:00) The scene is 12th-century France. Lysiart has made a bet with Adolar that he can make his beloved Euryanthe unfaithful. Eglantine, also in love with Adolar, tells her rival Euryanthe to tell the tale of Adolar’s murdered sister, Emma. Euryanthe welcomes Lysiart to the castle.

ACT TWO (45:00) Eglantine and Lysiart steal a poisoned ring from Emma’s tomb and use it to prove that Euryanthe loves Lysiart, not Adolar, who loses his bet and forfeits his lands.

ACT THREE (60:00) Adolar takes Euryanthe to a mountain gorge, intending to kill her. He cannot bring himself to do so, and leaves her to die of exposure. King Louis VI and his huntsmen rescue her and bring her back to the castle, where Adolar learns of Lysiart’s deception. Lysiart stabs Eglantine to death and is then led to the dungeons; Adolar and Euryanthe are reunited and marry.
Ferdinand Hérold

- **Born:** 1791
- **Died:** 1833
- **Nationality:** French
- **Wife:** c.160

After lessons from his father, a pianist and composer, Hérold attended the Paris Conservatoire, performed his piano works in public, and won the Prix de Rome in 1812. But it was as a composer of masterful comic operas in the French style that he gained renown. His La jeunesse de Henry V was a success in Naples, where he served as pianist to Queen Caroline. A year after returning to Paris in 1816, he produced his opera Les rosières, the first of many resounding successes, punctuated by failures, mainly down to poor librettos. His ballets are also innovative in using new music, rather than old melodies. Shortly before the premiere of his last (and hugely successful) opera, Le pré aux clercs, he died prematurely from chronic tuberculosis.

**MILESTONES**

- 1812 Wins the Prix de Rome
- 1813 Teaches royal princesses in Naples
- 1817 Les rosières, opera, premiered
- 1826 Marie, opera, staged
- 1827 Marries Adèle Élie Rollet; becomes choirmaster at the Paris Opéra
- 1828 La fille mal gardée, ballet, premiered
- 1831 Zampa, opera, staged in Paris

The roguish pirate Zampa is flung to his death by the avenging spirits of his former bride, Alicia, in the final scene of Hérold’s enormously popular Zampa.

Jules Massenet

- **Born:** 1842
- **Died:** 1912
- **Nationality:** French
- **Wife:** c.450

Massenet’s early career followed the regulation path for a French composer in the 19th century. After studies with Ambroise Thomas at the Paris Conservatoire, he won the Prix de Rome, then spent three years in Italy before returning home to break into the Paris opera scene in 1866. Success came gradually as Massenet honed his technical skills. Although he staged his first opera in 1867, a decade passed before he achieved his first real success with Le roi de Lahore. Lasting fame came in 1884 with Manon, an international hit that established him as France’s leading opera composer. Now in control of his career, he continued producing successful, internationally staged operas, such as Werther, without needing to update his deft style. As a teacher at the Paris Conservatoire, he was admired for his meticulous, but kind, easy-going nature, apparently preferring family life to parties.

**MILESTONES**

- 1863 Wins the Prix de Rome
- 1866 Returns to Rome and marries
- 1877 Le Roi de Lahore, opera, first success
- 1878 Becomes professor of composition at Paris Conservatoire
- 1884 Manon, opera, a huge success
- 1885 Writes Le Cid, opera, after Corneille
- 1892 Werther, opera, after Goethe, staged

In the bleak finale to Massenet’s blockbuster, Werther, Charlotte despairs at the suicide of her true love, Werther.
Giacomo Meyerbeer

**1791–1864**  
**German**  
**c.285**

A German composer who settled in France, Meyerbeer developed and dominated French Grand Opéra, the new epic and historic style that would influence the Romantics, from Verdi to Wagner. Although massively extravagant in scale, effects, casts, and costs, Meyerbeer’s lavish melodramas are now being revived and recorded, graphically illustrating their spectacular and fashionable appeal in his day.

**LIFE AND MUSIC**

Born Jakob Liebmann Beer to a Jewish family in Berlin, Giacomo Meyerbeer Italianized his first name, and added “Meyer” to his second on receiving a legacy from a relative. A child prodigy on the piano, he performed in public from the age of seven. Nurturing a passion to compose, he turned out some disastrous oratorios until, inspired by Gioachino Rossini’s operas in Italy, he produced *Il crociato in Egitto*, an instant hit in both Venice and Paris, where he settled. After a fallow patch during a spate of family tragedies in the 1820s, Meyerbeer experimented with the new style of Grand Opéra – epic in scale, drama, and effects – which he effectively invented with *Robert le Diable*. This and a run of similar box-office hits established him as a master of the genre.

**MILESTONES**

- 1810: Studies counterpoint with Abbé Vogler at Darmstadt in Germany  
- 1815: Visits Italy to study vocal writing  
- 1817: Produces his first Italian opera, *Romilda e Costanza*, in Padua  
- 1826: *Il crociato in Egitto*, opera, staged  
- 1831: *Robert le Diable*, opera, a huge hit  
- 1836: *Les Huguenots*, opera, premiered  
- 1837: Starts composing *L’Africaine*, opera  
- 1842: Becomes Generalmusikdirektor (music director) in Berlin  
- 1849: *Le prophète*, opera, premiered  
- 1854: *L’étoile du nord*, opera, staged  
- 1862: Represents German music at London’s Great Exhibition  
- 1865: Posthumous premiere of *L’Africaine*  

**KEY WORKS**

**ROBERT LE DIABLE**

- **OPERA**  
- **240:00**  
- **5**  
- **á á**

Famous for its scandalous chorus of dancing nuns, its evocative orchestration, and brilliant writing for voice, *Robert le Diable* was the first product of a fruitful collaboration between Meyerbeer and the librettist Eugène Scribe. It tells the tale of the 13th-century Duke Robert of Normandy, whose love for Isabella saves his soul from the diabolic machinations of his demon father, Bertram.

*Le prophète*, one of Meyerbeer’s most dramatic and bombastic operas, is famous for its stunning light effects and explosive finale.

**LES HUGUENOTS**

- **OPERA**  
- **240:00**  
- **5**  
- **á á**

Meyerbeer’s moving opera explores the intense religious conflict that erupted in massacre on St Bartholomew’s Day in 1572, when the Protestant minority of Huguenots were ruthlessly slaughtered by the Catholic majority. The historic drama is intensified by the fated love between a Protestant and Catholic, Raoul and Valentine, both doomed to die in the futile bloodbath. Tuneful, luscious, and inventive, it is probably Meyerbeer’s finest opera for voices, displaying his melodic talents.
Rossini was the son of Pesaro’s town horn player and his wife, a singer. He entered Bologna Conservatory in 1806 and, by 1813, when he was 21, he had written ten operas, which had all been staged in northern Italy. In that year, he wrote *Tancredi*, his first important opera seria. He was the first composer to write opera without recitative, so creating an uninterrupted flow of music. He went on to write for theatres in Milan, Venice, Rome, and Naples, and in 1824 moved to Paris where he wrote five further operas, culminating in *William Tell*. Then Rossini stopped writing operas and composed only very occasionally for his remaining 38 years. His operatic Stabat mater dates from 1842 after a 12-year composing gap.

**MILESTONES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1813</td>
<td>Operas <em>Tancredi</em> and <em>L’italiana in Algeri</em> produced in Venice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1814</td>
<td>Engaged as music director for the two opera houses in Naples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1822</td>
<td>Marries Isabella Colbran, soprano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1823</td>
<td>Composes <em>Semiramide</em>, opera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1824</td>
<td>Made director of <em>Théâtre Italien</em> in Paris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1829</td>
<td>Writes <em>Guillaume Tell</em>, his last opera</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**KEY WORKS**

**TANCREDI**

*Tancredi* is based on Voltaire’s play of the same name and on an episode in Tarquino Tasso’s epic poem of 1581, *Jerusalem Liberated*. In Syracuse during the Crusades, Tancredi returns from exile to find that his beloved Amenaida is about to marry Orbazzano. Amenaida’s letter to Tancredi is intercepted, and she is accused of colluding with the Saracens. Tancredi fights to defend her name and then defeats the Saracens. *Tancredi* is a mezzo-soprano role and *Tancredi* has some of Rossini’s finest writing for this voice.

**LA CENERENTOLA**

Rossini’s take on the Cinderella story is full of satire and wit. *Cenerentola*, rejected by her stepfather and stepsisters, is protected by Alidoro, a philosopher, and falls in love with Prince Ramiro, who arrives disguised as his valet Dandini. Dandini, disguised as the Prince, wins over the family. The real Prince can then marry his beloved.

*A brilliant comic opera, Rossini’s *La Cenerentola*, seen here in performance in London, also has some genuinely emotional scenes.*
Rossini set Cesare Sterbini's libretto, based on the first of Beaumarchais's Figaro plays *Le barbier de Séville (The Barber of Seville)* in 1816 and wrote the music, it is said, in 13 days. The play had been set to music before, and the supporters of the most popular setting, by Paisiello, caused a riot at the first night of Rossini's rival version in Rome.

**ACT ONE** (90:00) Count Almaviva, disguised as the student Lindoro, has his heart set on Rosina, Dr Bartolo's ward. The doctor wants to marry her and keeps her under lock and key, but Almaviva enlists Figaro, barber and factotum, to insinuate himself into the house. Bartolo has heard a rumour from Rosina's music teacher, Don Basilio, about certain plots, but is not smart enough to stop Almaviva entering first as a regimental horse doctor, and then as a music teacher for Rosina.

**ACT TWO** (75:00) After many confusions and revelations, Figaro smuggles a notary into the house and, before Dr Bartolo can do anything about it, Almaviva and Rosina are married.

The overture to *William Tell* is perhaps Rossini's most famous work. Based on Schiller's play about the Swiss patriot, Wilhelm Tell, Rossini's opera was his first – and last – work in the style of French Grand Opéra with its grandiose sets, huge choruses, and ballets, bound together by Swiss alphorn melodies.

**ACT ONE** (60:00) Tell helps to rescue a fugitive from the Austrian army of occupation. Arnold, in love with the Habsburg princess, Mathilde, promises to join Tell's resistance army.

**ACT TWO** (60:00) Mathilde declares her love to Arnold. He learns that the Austrians have murdered his father.

**ACT THREE** (60:00) Mathilde and Arnold part. The Austrian governor, Gesler (bass), forces Tell to shoot an apple from his son Jemmy's head. Tell sings his great aria “Sois immobile”, and successfully fires the arrow, but he is imprisoned and sentenced to death.

**ACT FOUR** (45:00) Tell escapes and kills Gesler with an arrow. Arnold and his army capture Gesler's stronghold and restore Switzerland to freedom.
The celebrated buffo bass singer Signor Lablache played the quack Doctor Dulcamara in a 19th-century production of Donizetti’s opera L’elisir d’amore.

LIFE AND MUSIC

Donizetti was born into a poor family in Bergamo and studied with the great teachers Simon Mayr and Padre Mattei. He often produced four operas a year, writing in the widest variety of styles, though most of his works are based on historic or fictional figures. He made his name in Rome with Zoraida di Granata, and the success of Anna Bolena in Milan allowed him to concentrate on tragic opera, though he continued to write comedies. After working in Paris and Vienna, in 1844 he began to show symptoms of paralysis and insanity, brought on by syphilis, and returned to Bergamo, where he was nursed by his nephew and friends, dying there in 1848.

KEY WORKS

**MARIA STUARDA**

Based on Friedrich von Schiller’s tragic play Maria Stuart, Donizetti’s opera is set in England in 1567. Elizabeth has imprisoned Mary, Queen of Scots, but is jealous of Mary’s love for her own favourite, the Earl of Leicester. Leicester persuades Elizabeth to meet Mary, who begs for mercy. Elizabeth rejects her plea, and Mary turns on Elizabeth. Elizabeth signs Mary’s death warrant and makes Leicester witness her execution.

**DON PASQUALE**

Written for the four great bel canto singers of the Théâtre-Italien, this late opera buffa tells the tangled tale of Don Pasquale’s intrigue to disinherit his rebellious nephew Ernesto while Dr Malatesta schemes to marry Ernesto to the widow Norina.

MILESTONES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1806</td>
<td>Begins studies with Mayr in Bergamo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1815</td>
<td>Studies with Padre Mattei in Bologna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1818</td>
<td>Enrico di Borgogna produced in Venice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1822</td>
<td>Zoraida di Granata successful in Rome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>Anna Bolena commissioned by La Scala opera house; first international success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1832</td>
<td>Composes L’elisir d’amore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1834</td>
<td>Composes Maria Stuarda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1835</td>
<td>Composes Lucia di Lammermoor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840s</td>
<td>Composes for the Paris Opera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>La fille du régiment and La favourite written for Paris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1843</td>
<td>Composes Don Pasquale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1844</td>
<td>Begins to suffer symptoms of syphilitic paralysis and insanity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1846</td>
<td>Enters a sanatorium in Ivry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR**

This opera is Donizetti’s masterpiece. It is based on *The Bride of Lammermoor*, a novel by Sir Walter Scott. Donizetti used extraordinary orchestral effects (including a glass harmonica in the original scoring of Lucia’s mad scene, later replaced by a flute), but the opera is most remarkable for his scoring for coloratura soprano in Lucia’s scenes and arias. After years of neglect, the opera has returned to the repertoire in the last 50 years and is now as popular as it was when it was first composed.

**ACT ONE** (45:00) Scotland, the late 16th century. Lucia Ashton is in love with the family’s enemy, Edgardo Ravenswood. Edgardo returns her love and, despite Lucia’s fear of her brother Enrico’s wrath, the couple exchange rings.

**ACT TWO** (40:00) Enrico forges a letter which persuades Lucia of Edgardo’s unfaithfulness; in her distress, Lucia agrees to marry Arturo Bucklaw, an ally of her brother. 

**ACT THREE** (50:00) Driven mad by her grief at losing Edgardo, Lucia murders Arturo and appears in a bloodstained nightgown in one of the most famous mad scenes in all opera. The music, evoking Lucia’s wandering mind, returns to themes from earlier in the opera, highlighting her former happiness. Lucia kills herself, and Edgardo, heartbroken at the news, stabs himself to death.

**INFLUENCES**

Verdi learned much from Donizetti, and Puccini was also to benefit from the example of Donizetti’s gift for melodic invention and the use of unusual instruments (such as the glass harmonica in *Lucia di Lammermoor*) to characterize scenes. Berlioz, too, admired Donizetti, in spite of the fact that his works monopolized opera in Paris for a decade.

**L’ELISIR D’AMORE**

Ranking alongside the comedies of Rossini, *The Elixir of Love* is one of the most enduring comic creations of the bel canto era. Felice Romani wrote the libretto, based on a text by Eugene Scribe, itself based on Silvio Malaperta’s play *Il filtro* (*The Philtre*). *L’elisir d’amore* was first performed at the Teatro Canobbiana, Milan, in 1832.
Vincenzo Bellini, with Rossini and Donizetti, was one of the three great composers of Italian bel canto opera. In his short life he wrote ten operas, many of which have remained in the repertoire. His reputation rests on the long-breathed, beautifully lyrical lines he gave to his singers, as well as on the great vocal agility his music demanded. His masterpiece, Norma, contains the supreme bel canto aria in the repertoire.

Bellini was born in Catania, Sicily, and educated in Naples at the San Sebastiano Conservatory, where he studied under Zingarelli. His first opera, Adelson e Salvini, was given in concert in 1825. He was immediately commissioned to write an opera for the prestigious San Carlo opera house in Naples, and soon after won another commission – Il pirata – for the even greater La Scala in Milan. Bellini followed this success (in Paris as well as in Italy) with I Capuleti e i Montecchi, in which Romeo’s part is written for female mezzo voice. La sonnambula, Norma, and I puritani followed, by which time Bellini had moved to Paris. He died there, tragically young.

I CAPULETI E I MONTECCHI

The plot of The Capulets and the Montagues came not from Shakespeare, but from his source, a novel by Matteo Bandello. Bellini’s libretto was by Felice Romani, who wrote seven in all for him. This opera displays several aspects of Bellini’s style: dance-like rhythms in triple time, solo instrumental introductions to arias, and instrumental passages in parallel thirds.

LA SONNAMBULA

La sonnambula (The Sleepwalker) tells the story of Amina, who, accused of having an affair, is proved innocent when the villagers witness her walking in her sleep. The aria “Ah! non credea mirarti” in the sleep-walking scene is one of Bellini’s most beautiful long-phrased melodies.
The most famous aria in *Norma* is the priestess heroine’s great invocation to the moon, “Casta Diva” (“Chaste Goddess”). Long believed impossible to perform as Bellini intended, it was revived by soprano Joan Sutherland, who did much to rediscover the great bel canto roles of Bellini and Donizetti. The opera, to a libretto by Romani, was based on a tragedy of 1831 by French playwright Alexandre Soumet.

**ACT ONE** (90:00) The setting is Gaul under Roman occupation. Norma, daughter of Oroveso, high priest of the Druids, wants to avoid the war her father desires against the Romans because she is in love with the Roman proconsul, Pollione. She already has two children by him. However, he is having an affair with her best friend, Adalgisa (also her acolyte), who confesses this to Norma.

**ACT TWO** (70:00) Adalgisa wants Pollione to go back to Norma. He refuses and is sentenced to death, but Norma offers herself, instead, as a sacrifice to her tribe and gives up her children. She mounts her own funeral pyre, where she is joined by a repentant Pollione. The role of Norma is one of the most demanding in the whole soprano repertoire, but it is now frequently performed and *Norma* is acknowledged as one the greatest bel canto operas.

Bellini’s last opera, *I puritani (The Puritans)* is based, at some distance, on Sir Walter Scott’s novel *Old Mortality*. It is set during the English Civil War.

**ACT ONE** (70:00) In Cromwellian Plymouth, King Charles I’s widow, Enrichetta, is being held in a fortress, whose Puritan governor, Gualtiero, has promised his daughter Elvira in marriage to Riccardo. But Elvira is in love with a Royalist, Arturo. A plan to allow Enrichetta to escape leads Elvira to believe that she has a rival, and she goes mad.

**ACT TWO** (40:00) Arturo, having played a pivotal part in the royal escape plan, is put under sentence of death if he returns to the Royalist ranks.

**ACT THREE** (30:00) A Puritan victory leads to a general amnesty. When Arturo is released, Elvira regains her sanity and is reunited with her lover.

Giulia Grisi, a great bel canto soprano, first created the role of Elvira. Bellini took his cue from the military theme and setting to fill the opera with marches and martial music, in addition to some of his sweetest melodic invention for Elvira herself. *I puritani* was first performed in Paris in January 1835 at the Théâtre-Italien, only a few months before Bellini’s tragically early death.
“Verdi... has bursts of marvellous passion. His passion is brutal, it is true, but it is better to be impassioned in this way than not at all.”

GEORGES BIZET IN A LETTER, 1859
Giuseppe Verdi was born in the village of Le Roncole, Busseto, near Parma, in 1813, the same year as Richard Wagner. His father was an innkeeper, his first music teacher was the church organist, and his first patron was a local grocer who was prepared to pay for him to study at the Milan Conservatory. Unable to enter the Conservatory because of his inadequate piano technique, he studied privately for two years, then returned to Busseto and married his patron’s daughter. His first opera, Rocester, has been lost, but his next, Oberto, was performed at La Scala, Milan. Verdi lost his wife and his two children within two years of each other and, grief-stricken, was about to give up composing when he was commissioned to write Nabucco. The opera’s theme of national independence inspired him, and its great chorus, “Hebrew Slaves”, became an anthem for the Italian Risorgimento movement for unification. After years of composing an opera a year, he achieved financial independence by the late 1840s, bought a farm, and settled down with the singer Giuseppina Strepponi, whom he eventually married. Verdi was elected to the first Italian parliament after independence was declared in 1860. He wrote operas for St Petersburg, Paris, and Cairo, and then waited 16 years before another composer, Boito, provided him with librettos for his two final operas, Otello and Falstaff.

The operas of Verdi were generally based on historical or literary figures and settings; his love stories invariably ended in tragedy.

### MUSICAL OUTPUT

| OPERA (28) | 1 | 14 | 8 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| VOCAL (11) | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 4 |
| INSTRUMENTAL (3) | 1 | 1 | 1 |

Total: 42

1813 1830 1840 1850 1860 1870 1880 1890 1901
Verdi’s early operas, like Macbeth, Ernani, and Nabucco, took themes of national independence and used choruses as the “voice of the people”, making powerful political statements. His soloists were given highly taxing roles, such as Lady Macbeth, Elvira, and Abigaille, which heightened the dramatic effect of arias and ensembles.

In his middle years, Verdi’s dramatic skills developed and his orchestration grew increasingly subtle. Rigoletto and La traviata took realistic plots and set them with great lyrical beauty and emotional depth.

In his old age, after Aida, Verdi returned to his beloved Shakespeare for his last two operas, in which his vocal writing, especially in Otello, shows power and expression beyond anything he had written before.

### MILESTONES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1839</td>
<td>Oberto produced at La Scala, Milan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1842</td>
<td>First great success, Nabucco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1847</td>
<td>Macbeth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1849</td>
<td>Buys a farm at Sant’ Agata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1851</td>
<td>Rigoletto premiered in Venice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1852</td>
<td>Il trovatore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1853</td>
<td>La traviata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1858</td>
<td>Un ballo in maschera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>Elected deputy in the first Italian parliament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1869</td>
<td>Soprano Giuseppina Strepponi becomes his second wife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>Aida performed in Cairo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1874</td>
<td>Composes Requiem in memory of the writer Alessandro Manzoni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1884</td>
<td>Arrigo Boito persuades him to resume writing operas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1887</td>
<td>Otello performed at La Scala, Milan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892</td>
<td>Composes Falstaff</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### KEY WORKS

#### MACBETH

**OPERA** 150:00  
Verdi’s librettist Piave took some liberties with Shakespeare’s tragedy (the three witches become an entire female chorus), but Verdi’s opera tells the story in a skillful, moving way. Lady Macbeth’s sleepwalking scene is one of Verdi’s finest, with its spectral orchestration for high strings and its high-lying vocal line that disappears to a mere thread of voice. It was Maria Callas who helped to rediscover the role and brought Macbeth back into the permanent repertoire.

#### LA TRAVIATA

**OPERA** 120:00  
Verdi courted the disapproval of the Venetian censors when he chose to set Alexandre Dumas’s play La dame aux camélias. The story is of the courtesan Violetta and her love for Alfredo, which is thwarted by Alfredo’s father, Germont, who tells Violetta to leave his son for the sake of his sister. Dying of consumption, Violetta does as he asks, only to be reconciled with her lover and die in his arms.

#### REQUIEM

**MASS SETTING** 140:00  
Verdi wrote his Requiem in 1874 in memory of the great Italian novelist Manzoni. The setting of the Latin Mass for the dead includes many highly operatic effects (like the trombone in “Tuba mirum”). The fiery “Dies irae” is one of his most dramatic choruses.
When Rigoletto was performed in Cairo to celebrate the opening of the Suez Canal, the Khedive of Egypt was so impressed that he commissioned Aïda to be staged in his newly completed opera house. The opera was given its first performance on 24 December 1871.

**ACT ONE** (40:00) Aïda is an Ethiopian slave to Amneris, daughter of Ramphis, the Pharaoh. She is in love with the Egyptian general Radamès, who is sent to lead the Egyptian army against Ethiopia.

**ACT TWO** (30:00) Rigoletto comes looking for Gilda, but when he finds her, she has already been disgraced.

**ACT THREE** (35:00) Rigoletto pays the assassin Sparafucile to murder the Duke, but Sparafucile’s sister, Maddalena, who is in love with the Duke, persuades him to kill someone else instead. Gilda substitutes herself for the Duke, and is fatally wounded. Rigoletto takes a sack that he believes to contain the Duke’s body and finds, instead, his dying daughter.

**ACT FOUR** (35:00) Ramphis discovers this betrayal. Radames is condemned to be walled up alive in a tomb, where Aïda joins him. They die together.
“If one has not heard Wagner at Bayreuth, one has heard nothing!”

GABRIEL FAURÉ IN A LETTER, 1884
Richard Wagner

Richard Wagner reinvented opera as music drama. His aim was to create a “Gesamtkunstwerk”, a unified work of art combining poetry, drama, music, song, and painting. In writing the music dramas of his maturity, he wrote both text and music, and superintended staging and performance as his own director and conductor. He built the Festspielhaus in Bayreuth as a fitting home for his Ring cycle and his last great work, Parsifal.

Life

Wagner was born in Leipzig, and was educated in Dresden and at the Thomasschule, Leipzig, studying literature as intensively as he studied music. He was appointed choral conductor at Würzburg in 1833, and then took conducting posts at Lauchstädt and Magdeburg. He married an actress, Minna Planer, but their marriage was strained by Wagner’s extravagance and infidelities. After working in Riga, he went to Paris, living from hand to mouth, then returned to Dresden where he was appointed court opera conductor. In Dresden he studied German epic poetry, gaining the subjects for the rest of his life’s work. His participation in the Dresden uprising of 1849 led to his exile. In Switzerland he wrote several essays, including the important Opera and Drama and the anti-Semitic tract Jewishness in Music. Wagner visited London and Paris, and continued to travel until permitted to return to Saxony in 1862. The turning point in his fortunes came when King Ludwig II of Bavaria invited him to Munich and became his patron, allowing Wagner to stage Tristan und Isolde, conducted by Hans von Bülow. Wagner fell in love with von Bülow’s wife, Cosima, and fathered two children with her before Minna’s death allowed them to marry. In Bayreuth, Wagner built a house and a theatre, the Festspielhaus, where he staged the Ring cycle. He completed his final opera, Parsifal, in 1882, and died in Venice in 1883.

Musical Output

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SYMPHONIES (1)</th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OTHER ORCHESTRAL (15)</td>
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<tr>
<td>OTHER INSTRUMENTAL (14)</td>
<td>6 2 3 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPERAS (13)</td>
<td>3 3 3 1 2 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 43

One of the most influential composers of all time, Wagner changed the course of both opera and Classical music in general.
Wagner inherited an art of German opera that had been developed by Mozart, Beethoven, and Weber. He transformed it into his own definition of music drama, a unified work that combined poetry and music, the two being conceived together. Wagner’s early operas, up to *Rienzi*, were influenced by the trends of the day, especially French Grand Opéra. From *The Flying Dutchman* onwards, through *Lohengrin* and *Tannhäuser*, Wagner found his own unique musical language. Central to his new style of composition was the idea of the *Leitmotiv*, or leading motive, a musical theme linked to a specific character, symbol, or concept that recurred throughout the work. By the time he completed the *Ring* cycle, this had become a system of melody, harmony, and counterpoint that derived all its materials from a simple chord or opening phrase. At the same time, Wagner experimented with modulation and the key system, discovering ways of moving seamlessly to the remotest of keys with enormous emotional effect. Wagner’s mastery of the orchestra (he invented the art of the modern conductor, invented new instruments such as the Wagner tuba, and discovered new timbres and combinations of instrumental sound) reached the height of its development in *Tristan und Isolde*. His understanding of the voice allowed him to write roles of huge length and complexity that were still singable, and which were able to penetrate the heaviest of orchestral textures. With *Parsifal*, Wagner brought the art of his music drama to a point which, at the time, seemed likely to remain unsurpassable.

**MILESTONES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1841</td>
<td>Completes <em>Der fliegende Holländer</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1842</td>
<td>Opera <em>Rienzi</em> produced in Dresden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1843</td>
<td><em>Der fliegende Holländer</em> produced in Dresden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1845</td>
<td><em>Tannhäuser</em> produced in Dresden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1849</td>
<td>Participates in revolution in Dresden; flees to Weimar, then Zurich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1854</td>
<td>Completes <em>Das Rheingold</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1856</td>
<td>Completes <em>Die Walküre</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1857</td>
<td>Completes first part of <em>Siegfried</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1859</td>
<td>Completes <em>Tristan und Isolde</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1863</td>
<td>Falls in love with Cosima, Liszt’s daughter and Hans von Bülow’s wife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1864</td>
<td>King Ludwig II of Bavaria, Wagner’s passionate admirer, pays his debts and subsidizes his subsequent career</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1865</td>
<td><em>Tristan und Isolde</em> produced in Munich, conducted by Hans von Bülow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1866</td>
<td>Wife Minna dies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1867</td>
<td>Completes <em>Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>Completes second part of <em>Siegfried</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1872</td>
<td>Building of Bayreuth Festspielhaus begins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1874</td>
<td>Builds villa, Wahnfried, in Bayreuth; completes <em>Götterdämmerung</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1876</td>
<td>Bayreuth theatre opens; <em>Ring</em> cycle first performed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1882</td>
<td><em>Parsifal</em> performed at Bayreuth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**KEY WORKS**

**DER FLIEGENDE HOLLÄNDER**

*Oper* 135:00 p 3

_The Flying Dutchman_ was Wagner’s first attempt at reinventing opera. It has no distinct arias, and everything that happens, whether on the stage or in the pit, is there to enhance the drama. The Flying Dutchman himself is a man doomed to sail the seas alone until he finds the love of a true woman, which will save his soul.

**TANNHÄUSER**

*Oper* 180:00 p 3

Based on a poem by Ludwig Tieck, _Tannhäuser_ received its first, not very successful, performance at Dresden in 1845. Its hero, Tannhäuser, returns to Germany from the realms of the goddess Venus and competes in a song contest for the hand of Elisabeth, his old love. Singing of the joys of the flesh rather than the spirit, Tannhäuser is banished. The pair are eventually reunited in death.

**LOHENGRIN**

*Oper* 210:00 p 3

Based on a German epic poem, and first performed in Weimar in 1850, _Lohengrin_ tells of the rivalry between Telramund and Lohengrin over the succession to the dukedom of Brabant and the love of Elsa. Lohengrin’s famous swan (on which he arrives to meet Elsa) turns out to be Gottfried, the missing heir to the dukedom.

**PARSIFAL**

*Oper* 250:00 p 3

As usual, Wagner wrote his own libretto for _Parsifal_, based on the epic poem by Wolfram von Eschenbach. Set in Arthurian times, it tells the story of the Grail knights. Their wounded king can only be cured by a “pure fool, wise through compassion”. Parsifal arrives, and proves to be both a fool and pure. He fights the evil Klingsor, restores the holy spear to the Grail castle, and leads the rite of the Holy Grail.

_The operas of Wagner_ work best on a massive scale, such as in this production of Parsifal, which, as is not unusual, makes use of massive sets and a large cast.

**INFLUENCES**

Wagner’s influence on subsequent composers was incalculable. His innovations transformed the harmonic language of the 19th century and helped bring about the abandonment of the system of tonality. Poets and novelists from Verlaine and T S Eliot to Thomas Mann and Marcel Proust referred directly to his inspiration.
DER RING DES NIBELUNGEN
OPERA CYCLE [885:00] [4] [o] [c] [v]

In its full form Der Ring des Nibelungen, Wagner’s most ambitious masterpiece, is actually a complete opera festival in itself, taking place over three days and a preliminary evening.

DAS RHEINGOLD (1 ACT, 150:00) ‘The dwarf Alberich steals the Rhinemaidens’ gold to make a magic ring. The giants, Fafner and Fasolt, agree to exchange Freia – the goddess whose golden apples keep the gods young – for the gold Alberich has gained through the power of the Ring. They then demand the Ring in addition to the gold. Fafner kills Fasolt, taking the Ring.

DIE WALKÜRE (3 ACTS, 225:00) The two mortal children of the god Wotan, Siegmund and Sieglinde, fall in love. Sieglinde’s husband kills Siegmund, although Brünnhilde the Valkyrie tries to protect him. Sieglinde is pregnant with Siegfried, the saviour of the gods. To punish Brünnhilde for trying to save Siegmund, Wotan puts her to sleep on a rock ringed with flames.

SIEGFRIED (3 ACTS, 265:00) Siegfried, the son of Siegmund and Sieglinde, succeeds in forging his father’s shattered sword. He goes to Fafner’s lair (the giant is now a dragon), and, killing Fafner, gains the Ring. Finding Brünnhilde on her rock, he wakes her with a kiss.

GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG (PROLOGUE AND 3 ACTS, 255:00) Siegfried, in love with Brünnhilde, gives her the Ring, but his enemies Günther and Hagen give him a drugged potion. He brings Brünnhilde, with the Ring, from her rock. Hagen

TRISTAN UND ISOLDE
OPERA [255:00] [3] [o] [c] [v]

Wagner’s epic music drama of love and death, written in 1857–59, was first performed in Munich in 1865.

ACT ONE King Marke’s henchman Tristan is returning to Cornwall with the Irish princess Isolde, Marke’s betrothed. Isolde’s first husband died at Tristan’s hand, and although she nursed the wounded Tristan, she now hates him for what he did. She orders her servant Brangäne to prepare a poison, but Brangäne substitutes a love potion. Each drink it, expecting death, but instead fall in love.

ACT TWO While Marke is away on a night-time hunt, arranged by the treacherous Melot, who is also in love with Isolde, the lovers meet for an extended tryst. Tristan and Isolde

PRELUDE AND LIEBESTOD (FROM ACT THREE)

First section (yearning) Second section (passionate) Third section (dying away)

Prelude

Cellos and basses play last phrase

Cello states first theme (love motive), which is answered by woodwind

Entry of cellos with second theme

Oboes and clarinets enter

Entry of third theme in strings

Climax, then music begins to slow down
express their passion in powerful, erotically charged music, but daylight comes, the hunting party returns, and Tristan is mortally wounded by Melot.

**ACT THREE**  The dying Tristan, who has been taken back to Kareol, his castle in Brittany, by the faithful Kurwenal, waits for Isolde to come to him. She comes, followed by King Marke, but Tristan dies in her arms. As she sings the “Liebestod”, an astonishing Wagnerian tour de force, in which eternal love is consummated by death, Isolde is transfigured, then dies herself.

Wagner's music makes it clear from the start that the doomed love of Tristan and Isolde can lead to no other end but death.
Léo Delibes arrived in Paris from the provincial town of Saint-Germain-du-Val at the age of 12, after his father had died. While still a boy, he sang in the choir at La Madeleine and in the Opéra chorus. He studied organ and composition at the Paris Conservatoire and, at 17, became organist at Saint Pierre de Chaillot at the same time as working as an accompanist at the Théâtre Lyrique, where he began composing operettas. In 1865 he became chorus master at the Paris Opéra, and was eventually appointed professor of composition at the Paris Conservatoire. His last opera, Kassya, was unfinished at his death, and was completed by Massenet.

**KEY WORKS**

**LES FILLES DE CADIX**  
**CHANSON**  
05:00  
1  
Delibes’s most popular song sets words by Alfred de Musset. It has been recorded by many of the world’s greatest sopranos. Delibes uses the popular Spanish style in setting this song about girls and boys returning from seeing the bullfight and dancing the bolero.

**SYLVIA**  
**BALLET**  
90:00  
3  
First performed in 1876, to a libretto by Barbier and de Reinach, and with choreography by Mérante, Sylvia – the story of a nymph of Diana – is a ballet on a pastoral theme. Its dances include “Fauns and Dryads”, an Ethiopian dance, a bacchanal, and the march and cortege of Bacchus.

**MILESTONES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1848</td>
<td>Begins to study organ and composition at the Paris Conservatoire; taught by Adolphe Adam, theatre composer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1853</td>
<td>Accompanist at Théâtre Lyrique</td>
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<tr>
<td>1855</td>
<td>Writes <em>Deux sous de charbon</em>, operetta</td>
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<td>1855</td>
<td>Deputy chorus master at Paris Opéra</td>
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<tr>
<td>1866</td>
<td>Enjoys success with <em>Le source</em>, ballet, co-written with Louis Minkus</td>
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<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>Premiere of <em>Coppélia</em>, ballet</td>
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<tr>
<td>1873</td>
<td>Composes <em>Le roi l’a dit</em>, opera</td>
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<tr>
<td>1876</td>
<td>First performance of <em>Sylvia</em>, ballet</td>
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<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>Writes <em>Jean de Nivelle</em>, opera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1882</td>
<td>Composes <em>Le roi s’amuse</em>, suite of six dances: incidental music for play by Victor Hugo</td>
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<tr>
<td>1883</td>
<td><em>Lakmé</em>, opera, first performed in Paris</td>
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</table>
LAKMÉ
OPERA d 155:00 p 3 ocv
Lakmé’s libretto was based on a novel by Pierre Loti. Set in 19th-century India, it describes the hatred of the Brahmin priests for the British soldiers who suppressed their religion. The elegance of Delibes’s melodies, and the exoticism of the opera’s setting, have made Lakmé a lasting favourite with singers and audiences alike. The role of Lakmé, with its coloratura display of the soprano voice, has drawn many great sopranos to interpret it. The “Flower Duet” in Act One, between Lakmé and her servant Mallika, is one of the most popular of all duets for soprano and mezzo.

ACT ONE (50:00) Two army officers, Gérald and Fréderic, are in a sacred Brahmin grove where they see Lakmé, the daughter of the Brahmin Nilakantha, and Gérald falls in love with her. Nilakantha swears vengeance on the trespassers.

ACT TWO (60:00) Nilakantha makes Lakmé sing the “Bell Song”, to lure Gérald into his sight. Lakmé warns Gérald that her father wants to kill him, but he risks venturing into a procession, where he is wounded.

ACT THREE (45:00) Lakmé nurses Gérald, but Fréderic calls his comrade to return to his post. When Lakmé realizes Gérald is going to leave her, she takes poison and dies.

COPPÉLIA
BALLET d 90:00 p 2 ocv
The German fantasy writer E T A Hoffmann wrote many stories that inspired operas and ballets. Coppélia, a ballet with a libretto by Nuittier, is one of these. Premiered at the Paris Opéra in 1870, it was one of the first ballets to include national dances. Delibes visited Hungary and returned with the famous csárdás, the Hungarian national dance, which he wrote into the score.

ACT ONE (45:00) Dr Coppélius has made a mechanical doll, Coppélia, and passes her off as his daughter. Franz and Swanilda are engaged, but Swanilda thinks that Franz is captivated by Coppélia when he picks up a book the doll has dropped. When Swanilda finds Coppélius’s door key, she leads her friends inside to talk to Coppélia. Franz also goes into the house to return Coppélia’s book.

ACT TWO (45:00) Swanilda and her friends find Coppélia, and are shocked to discover that she is only a doll. There are other dolls in the house, and they play with them until Coppélius chases them away – all except Swanilda. Coppélius drugs Franz and attempts to transfer his life-force to the doll, but Swanilda, disguised as Coppélia, jumps up and runs off to marry Franz.
LIFE AND MUSIC

The son of a singing teacher, Bizet was a child prodigy who read music at four, played the piano at six, entered the Paris Conservatoire at nine, and composed an accomplished symphony at 17. Although he produced some passable Italianate operas in the 1950s, real success did not come until 1863 with his sensual and melodic Les pêcheurs de perles. A fallow patch followed before Bizet turned out a string of instrumental successes, such as Jeux d’enfants, and started work on a new opera, Carmen. But, shocked by its raw realism, the first critics reacted coolly, disappointing Bizet, who died before it became a box-office hit.

KEY WORKS

L’ARLÉSIENNE, SUITE NO. 1

Bizet’s enchanting orchestral suite, based on the incidental music that he wrote for Alphonse Daudet’s play L’Arlésienne (The Girl from Arles), proved to be even more popular than the play.

SYMPHONY IN C MAJOR

Bizet’s first and possibly finest orchestral score, produced while still in his teens, was based on Charles Gounod’s Symphony in D. Although unoriginal, it is a fresh and delightful piece with beautiful melodies; but it could not be enjoyed until 1935, as the score disappeared for 80 years.

JEUX D’ENFANTS SUITE, OP. 22

A brilliant pianist, Bizet wrote this charming suite, based on children’s games, for piano duet, from which he later orchestrated five movements as the Petite suite d’orchestre in 1872.

Georges Bizet

1838–1875  French  c.120

A precocious but short-lived talent, Bizet devoted the best part of his brief but creative life to opera, for which he wrote his greatest music. Although acclaimed at his death as a concert composer, it was for his avant-garde opera Carmen that he is now remembered. With Carmen, he changed the course of French opera, setting a style in lifelike drama and sensual music that reached its peak decades later.

MILESTONES

1847 Studies at the Paris Conservatoire under Jacques Halévy
1855Writes Symphony in C major
1856Befriends Charles Gounod
1857 Wins the Grand Prix de Rome; Le docteur miracle, operetta, staged
1858Studies in Rome
1860Returns to Paris
1863Les pêcheurs de perles, opera, premiered
1867La joie fille de Perth, opera, staged
1869Marries Halévy’s daughter, Geneviève
1871Djamileh, one-act opera, premiered
1872Commissioned to write L’Arlésienne, incidental music, staged at Vaudeville
1875 Carmen, opera, premiered in Paris
LES PÊCHEURS DE PERLES

Bizet’s first operatic hit, achieved in his 20s, never enjoyed Carmen’s success, but still attracts audiences. Although written to an appalling libretto, its charm lies in its melodic music, sensual undertones, and exotic atmosphere, evoked by lively rhythms and spicy harmonies. The appealing vocal score, inspired by Bizet’s mentor, Charles Gounod, also helps to enthrall listeners, with such sweet, memorable songs as “Au fond du temple saint”.

ACT ONE (45:00) A fishing crew choose Zurga as their chief. He and his friend, Nadir, recall the time when they fell for the same woman, Leila, but avoided conflict by letting her go.

ACT TWO (30:00) Leila, now a priestess, arrives by boat to bless the fishermen. Nadir recognizes her as the woman he once loved, and reveals his passion. Learning of their love, the high priest Nourabad condemns them to death.

ACT THREE (25:00) Leila is led to her death, but Zurga relents and torches the camp, letting the lovers escape.

CARMEN

Bizet’s Carmen, the first realistic opera, shocked the first audiences with its lifelike characters, sensual passions, and graphic on-stage murder. Set to a libretto by Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy, the plot was inspired by Prosper Merimée’s short novel about a passionate Spanish gypsy.

ACT ONE (60:00) Soldiers arrest Carmen for assaulting a fellow worker at the cigarette factory in Seville. She escapes by seducing Don José, one of the guards, who is then imprisoned.

ACT TWO (40:00) At Lillas Pastia’s bar, Carmen attracts the bullfighter Escamillo. When Don José is released, she persuades him to desert the army and join a band of smugglers.

ACT THREE (40:00) Don José, Carmen, and the smugglers march through the night. Carmen foretells her own death. Escamillo follows, fights Don José, and just escapes with his life.

ACT FOUR (20:00) In Seville, Carmen goes to the bullfight to watch her new lover, but Don José confronts and kills her.
“I shall feel [the story] as an Italian, with desperate passion.”

GIACOMO PUCCINI
Giacomo Puccini  

Giacomo Puccini was born in Lucca, Tuscany, into the fifth generation of a family of church musicians. His father died when Puccini was only five, but the position of organist at the church of San Martino was kept open for him until he was old enough to step into his father’s shoes. However, a performance of Verdi’s *Aïda*, which he saw in Pisa in 1876, convinced him that his true vocation was opera. He took up the position of church organist at the age of 19, but in 1880 went to study at the Milan Conservatory. When the publisher Sonzogno launched a competition for a one-act opera, Puccini entered *Le Villi*, which failed to win. Sonzogno’s rival, Giulio Ricordi, commissioned another opera from Puccini, *Edgar*, and after its failure another, more successful: *Manon Lescaut*.

From that point on, Puccini devoted his life to writing opera, with country pursuits such as shooting and fishing as his recreations. In 1891, he bought a beautiful estate on a lake near Lucca. He was by then living with a married woman, Elvira Bonturi, whom he was unable to marry until the death of her husband. The relationship seems to have been a tempestuous one. In 1909, a servant killed herself after Elvira accused her of having an affair with Puccini.

During the writing of his last opera, *Turandot*, Puccini fell ill with throat cancer, and died while undergoing medical treatment in Brussels, leaving his masterpiece incomplete.

**MUSICAL OUTPUT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>1858</th>
<th>1870</th>
<th>1880</th>
<th>1890</th>
<th>1900</th>
<th>1910</th>
<th>1920</th>
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<td>ORCHESTRAL (4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>INSTRUMENTAL (7)</td>
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<tr>
<td>OPERA (12)</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>VOCAL (15)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
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**Total: 38**

The operas of Puccini are based on passionate stories of love, revenge, and betrayal.

**LIFE**

Puccini was born in Lucca, Tuscany, into the fifth generation of a family of church musicians. His father died when Puccini was only five, but the position of organist at the church of San Martino was kept open for him until he was old enough to step into his father’s shoes. However, a performance of Verdi’s *Aïda*, which he saw in Pisa in 1876, convinced him that his true vocation was opera. He took up the position of church organist at the age of 19, but in 1880 went to study at the Milan Conservatory. When the publisher Sonzogno launched a competition for a one-act opera, Puccini entered *Le Villi*, which failed to win. Sonzogno’s rival, Giulio Ricordi, commissioned another opera from Puccini, *Edgar*, and after its failure another, more successful: *Manon Lescaut*.

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During the writing of his last opera, *Turandot*, Puccini fell ill with throat cancer, and died while undergoing medical treatment in Brussels, leaving his masterpiece incomplete.
Puccini’s genius for melodic invention, his love for the pairing of soprano and tenor voices, and his gift for picking theatrically effective plots established him as the most popular of all opera composers. His Romantic lyricism is in the tradition of 19th-century Italian opera, but he took up 20th-century ideas of bitonalism and dissonance from Stravinsky and others.

Throughout his career, his taste for the exotic led him to incorporate music from the widest of sources, from the Roman matins bells in Tosca to the Japanese melodies in Madama Butterfly (supplied by a friend) and the Wild West tunes of La fanciulla del West. In Turandot he went even further, using pentatonic and whole-tone scales to evoke a mythical China, and adding tuned percussion to an already rich orchestral palette.

### Turandot

Turandot was Puccini’s last opera. He fell ill while composing the last act, and died without completing it. In ancient China, Princess Turandot has declared that she will marry the prince who can answer her three riddles. Anyone who fails will be beheaded. Prince Calaf declares that he wants to face the test. He answers correctly, but she refuses to marry him. He proposes that she should guess his name by morning; if she does, she can behead him. Turandot orders her servants to torture the name from Calaf’s servant, Liù, who is in love with her master. Liù dies, and Turandot learns from her example what it means to love.

### Tosca

Victorien Sardou wrote the melodrama Tosca as a vehicle for the great actress Sarah Bernhardt. Puccini turned it into a spectacular opera, its title role a magnificent vehicle for singers like Maria Callas. Its three acts are set in Rome, in the Church of Sant’Andrea della Valle, where the painter Cavaradossi helps the fugitive Angelotti; the Palazzo Farnese where the villainous Scarpia has his torture chamber; and the Castel Sant’Angelo, where Tosca flings herself from the parapet.
MADAMA BUTTERFLY

Puccini saw David Belasco’s play about a Nagasaki geisha and her American naval officer lover, Madame Butterfly, and decided to turn it into an opera. Belasco’s play was based on a short story by John Luther Long, which was itself based on an incident witnessed by his sister, Jennie Correll, a US missionary working in Nagasaki.

ACT ONE (60:00) Pinkerton, an American naval officer, arranges to marry Madame Butterfly, a Nagasaki geisha. The marriage is attended by her family, the bride is deeply in love, but for Pinkerton his vows mean nothing.

ACT TWO (50:00) Pinkerton has sailed back to the USA, and Butterfly, who has had a son by him, awaits his return. When her servant Suzuki suggests Pinkerton may never come back, Butterfly sings the aria “Un bel di” (“One fine day”). She sees his ship entering Nagasaki bay. Butterfly, her son, and Suzuki wait all night for Pinkerton’s arrival.

ACT THREE (30:00) The American consul tells Suzuki that Pinkerton has remarried. Pinkerton and his wife come to collect the child. On realizing the truth, Butterfly kills herself.

LA BOHÈME

Puccini and his librettists, Illica and Giacosa, based La bohème on Henry Murger’s Scènes de la vie de Bohème.

ACT ONE (40:00) Rodolfo the poet, Marcello the painter, and two other Bohemian friends share a Paris garret. It is Christmas Eve. They burn pages from Rodolfo’s manuscript to keep warm. Mimì, a neighbour, knocks at the door. Rodolfo falls in love with her.

ACT TWO (20:00) The four friends and Mimì are at the Café Momus. Marcello joins up with a former girlfriend, Musetta, a singer, who tricks her current lover, the elderly Alcindoro, into paying the bill.

ACT THREE (30:00) Rodolfo is jealous of Mimì’s infidelities, and at the same time feels they cannot continue living together in poverty, because she is dying of consumption.

ACT FOUR (30:00) The dying Mimì returns to the garret. The friends go off to buy her what comforts they can. They return to find Mimì dying in Rodolfo’s arms.

FOCUS
Otto Nicolai

1810–1849  
German  
235

Surviving a traumatic childhood, during which he supported himself as an itinerant pianist, Nicolai studied in Berlin and made valuable contacts. His early career alternated between Italy (where his Italian-style operas *Enrico II* and *Il templario* made him an overnight sensation) and Vienna (where he eventually settled after fleeing a broken engagement in Italy). He gained respect as an innovative conductor at Vienna’s Philharmonic Concerts and as a craftsmanlike, if eclectic, opera composer clearly influenced by Bellini, Weber, and others. But he found a distinctive voice in his enduring comic masterpiece *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, a new style of opera, in German, which was premiered to a quiet reception two months before his premature death.

MILESTONES

- 1834: Becomes an organist in Rome
- 1840: Writes *Il templario* (*The Templar*), opera
- 1841: Appointed principal conductor of Hofoper, Vienna’s opera house
- 1842: Appointed conductor of the Philharmonic Concerts in Vienna
- 1849: Premieres *Die lustigen Weiber von Windsor* (*The Merry Wives of Windsor*), operetta

Nicolai produced his comic opera *The Merry Wives of Windsor* in 1849 at the Berlin Opera, two years after becoming the chief conductor there.

Louis James Alfred Lefébure-Wély

1817–1869  
French  
c.200

An extraordinary organist whose virtuosity with the pedals inspired César Franck and Charles Alkan, Lefébure-Wély is primarily remembered as an organ composer, though he also wrote symphonies, piano pieces, and stage and chamber works. He succeeded his father as church organist at 15 and, after studies at the Paris Conservatoire, held the major posts of organist at La Madeleine, and then St Sulpice. Always in demand as a harmonium recitalist in France and abroad, and for concerts inaugurating new organs, his popularity helped to establish wide appreciation of the French Romantic organ, especially the fabulous instruments built by Cavaillé-Coll.

MILESTONES

- 1831: Succeeds father as organist at St Roch
- 1835: Wins first prize for organ at Paris Conservatoire
- 1847: Appointed organist at La Madeleine
- 1850: Awarded the Légion d’Honneur

Lefébure-Wély built himself a successful career as the official organist at three of the most important churches in Paris, including that of Saint-Rochs, shown here in 1840, which was his first appointment.
Jacques Offenbach

Jacques Offenbach created the French operetta. Many of his works have never left the repertory, with *La belle Hélène* and *Orphée aux enfers* (*Orpheus in the Underworld*) among the most popular ever written. But he also wrote one masterpiece of grand opera, *The Tales of Hoffmann*, left unfinished at his death. Set in Germany and Venice, it includes a gondola scene with the famous Barcarolle.

**LIFE AND MUSIC**

Offenbach was born near Cologne in Germany, the son of the cantor at the city’s synagogue. He studied in Paris, becoming a brilliant cellist and playing in the Opéra-Comique orchestra. In 1853 he began writing operettas. He then became theatre manager of the Théâtre Comte, which he renamed the Bouffes Parisiens. His light-hearted musical style, inventive in its melodies and enhanced by his choice of witty librettists as his collaborators, epitomized the style of the French Second Empire, while at the same time satirizing its excesses. He wrote more than 90 operettas, but also worked for many years on his grand opera, *Les contes d’Hoffmann* (*The Tales of Hoffmann*). He died before finishing it, but it was completed and orchestrated from Offenbach’s sketches by Ernest Guiraud.

**MILESTONES**

- 1833 Begins studies at Paris Conservatoire
- 1849 Appointed conductor at Théâtre Français in Paris
- 1853 Begins composing operettas
- 1858 *Orphée aux enfers*, operetta, premiered
- 1855 Takes over Théâtre Comte
- 1864 Premieres of *Der Rheinnixen*, opera, in Vienna; *La belle Hélène*, operetta, Paris
- 1866 Writes *La vie parisienne*, operetta
- 1867 Writes *Robinson Crusoe*, operetta
- 1868 Writes *La Péichole*, operetta
- 1869 Writes *Princesse de Trébizonde*, operetta
- 1876 Moves to US; returns to Paris 1878
- 1880 Dies in Paris
- 1881 *Les contes d’Hoffmann*, opera, begun in 1877, given first performance

**KEY WORKS**

**ORPHÉE AUX ENFERS**

**OPERETTA** 2165:00

This is a send-up of Greek mythology and a satire of French Second Empire society and its pretensions. Though openly caricatured in it, Napoleon III praised Offenbach for the piece. In the plot, Orpheus and Eurydice have each started affairs. Eurydice’s new boyfriend, Pluto, takes her down to the Underworld, but Public Opinion forces Orpheus to get her back. The operetta ends with the *Galope infernal*, Offenbach’s famous Cancan.

**LES CONTES D’HOFFMANN**

**OPERETTA** 240:00

Although Offenbach’s last and greatest work is essentially quite dark and has much rich melody, it also offers moments of humour. Based on three tales by E T A Hoffmann, its prologue, three acts, and epilogue follow Hoffmann’s love affairs with Olympia, Antonia, and Giulietta. The Giulietta act, set in Venice, begins with the celebrated Barcarolle.

*Offenbach’s Cancan* is the most famous rendition of an Algerian dance popularized in the 1830s.
Johann Strauss Jr studied the violin against his father’s wishes, and soon gained a reputation as a fine violinist, conductor, and composer. Throughout his career his output was prolific; he composed 15 operettas as well as popular polkas and waltzes, such as The Blue Danube. Strauss’s superb operetta Die Fledermaus premiered in 1874, and within a year had been performed all over the world. Admired by Brahms and Liszt, he was considered to be the master of light music and became the most famous of the Strauss family.

**KEY WORKS**

**TALES FROM THE VIENNA WOODS**

_Waltz_ 13:00 o 1 a

_Geschichten aus dem Wienerwald_, written a year after _The Blue Danube_, was one of the most celebrated waltzes of the 19th century. Strauss’s waltzes epitomized the essence of Viennese high society during the twilight years of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

**THE BLUE DANUBE**

_Waltz_ 8:00 o 1 a

The full title of Strauss’s most famous waltz is _An der schönen blauen Donau_ (On the beautiful blue Danube). Written as a concert waltz in 1867, he later included it in his operetta _Indigo and the Forty Thieves_. Brahms admired the waltz’s elegance and vivacity so much that he wished he had written it himself. Strauss’s waltzes became so fashionable that they soon spread from the ballrooms of Vienna to the rest of Europe, and _The Blue Danube_ is still one of the most frequently performed works in the Classical repertoire.

*Although Strauss wrote such wonderful dance music, he always maintained he was unable to dance himself.*
The story of *Die Fledermaus* begins with a practical joke that took place three years before the opening scene. After a costume ball, Dr Falke is left by his friend Eisenstein to walk home through the city, drunk and alone, in his bat costume. Johann Strauss Jr wrote his three-act Komische Operette *Die Fledermaus* to a libretto by Carl Haffner and Richard Genée, who based their text on a French farce, *Le réveillon*, by Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy. It was Strauss’s third operetta, following *Indigo und die vierzig Räuber* and *Carneval in Rom*. Composed in a mere six weeks, it was first performed at the Theater an der Wien, Vienna, on 5 April 1874. Strauss was said to have composed this enjoyable comic operetta to take the minds of the Viennese off the Black Monday stock-market crash of 1873. The work soon entered the international repertory, and by the 1890s was treated as an opera and was produced in the world’s major houses. In 1894, an especially celebrated production was staged at Vienna’s Hofoper with the composer conducting.

**ACT ONE** (50:00) Falke invites Eisenstein, who is on his way to prison, to a ball at Prince Orlovsky’s.

**ACT TWO** (50:00) At the ball, Eisenstein flirts first with his disguised housemaid, Adele, and then with his wife, Rosalinde (also in disguise, and herself having an affair with Alfred).

**ACT THREE** (30:00) When they all meet up in the prison the misunderstandings are resolved – it was all the fault of Orlovsky’s champagne.

**DER ZIGEUNERBARON**

Operetta  120:00  3  

Written ten years after *Die Fledermaus*, *The Gypsy Baron* is Johann Strauss’s other enduringly successful operetta. It was written to a libretto by Ignatz Schüchter, and was first performed on 24 October 1885 in Vienna.

**ACT ONE** (40:00) In Banat, Hungary, in the 18th century, Baron Sándor Barinkay finds that his estates have been settled by gypsies. Zsupán, a wealthy pig-farmer, thinks Sándor would make an ideal son-in-law. However his daughter, Arsena, has her heart set on Ottokar, the son of her governess Mirabella.

**ACT TWO** (45:00) The gypsy Sáffi wins Sándor’s love, and is revealed to be a wealthy princess descended from the last Pasha of Hungary.

**ACT THREE** (35:00) Sándor’s fortunes are restored. Arsena marries Ottokar, and they are blessed by the Baron. They all live happily ever after.
Franz von Suppé

1819–1895  Austrian  c.200

Von Suppé drily insisted that his successful style came about by accident, when his poor knowledge of German misled him into setting a yodelling song sentimentally in the style of Donizetti. Nevertheless, his first theatre score in 1841 triumphed. During spells as Kapellmeister at the Theater an der Wien and the Carltheater, he conducted many historic performances of opera and wrote a succession of stage scores. He went on to become the first master of Viennese operetta — Das Pensionat was his first success, and Boccaccio was the work he considered his best. His light, fluent, and flexible music is most familiar now in overtures to operettas such as Light Cavalry.

MILESTONES

- 1819  Born in Spalato (now Split, Croatia)
- 1834  Writes first comic opera, Der Apfel
- 1835  Moves to Vienna
- 1841  Score to the play Jung lustig triumphs
- 1846  Poet and Peasant, incidental music
- 1860  Composes Das Pensionat, operetta
- 1866  Writes Light Cavalry, operetta

Edward Jones’s promise as a gifted student of composition at the Royal Academy was amply fulfilled. Music for productions of Shakespeare at the Globe Theatre, where he was musical director, established his reputation, and he was soon besieged by commissions for concert works. He wrote operettas in the “Old English” style, such as Merrie England, though the appeal of Gilbert-and-Sullivan-esque music was diminishing. His elegant, warm, and romantic music — cosmopolitan yet always English — enjoyed both popularity and high regard (Elgar was an admirer). A meticulous conductor, German was also in demand to direct his own music.

MILESTONES

- 1885  Te Deum wins a prize at the Royal Academy of Music, London
- 1888  Becomes music director of the Globe Theatre, London
- 1902  Merrie England, operetta, performed
- 1904  Writes Welsh Rhapsody, symphonic suite
- 1907  Composes Tom Jones, operetta
- 1928  Knighted for his services to music
Sir Arthur Sullivan

Sir Arthur Sullivan, together with W S Gilbert, invented the Savoy Opera, and their names became inseparable. Gilbert and Sullivan’s operettas parodied operatic convention and ridiculed the pomposities of British officialdom (even in the guise of Japanese in *The Mikado*). But Sullivan longed for recognition as a serious composer, and wrote many instrumental, choral, and operatic works.

**LIFE AND MUSIC**

Arthur Sullivan was the son of an Irish bandmaster and an Italian mother. An enthusiastic chorister at the Chapel Royal, he published his first composition at the age of 13. After studying in London at the Royal Academy of Music, and then at the Leipzig Conservatory, he wrote cantatas and symphonies before writing his first comic operetta, *Cox and Box*. In 1871, Sullivan met the playwright, W S Gilbert, and began a collaboration that lasted until the pair famously quarrelled about a new carpet at the Savoy Theatre in 1889, only reuniting to write two final operettas. In the meantime, Sullivan had written his one opera, *Ivanhoe*, which he hoped would establish his reputation. This, however, rests firmly with the comic operettas he wrote with Gilbert.

**MILESTONES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1854</td>
<td>Chorister at the Chapel Royal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1856</td>
<td>Studies at the Royal Academy of Music, London</td>
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<tr>
<td>1862</td>
<td>Establishes reputation with incidental music for <em>The Tempest</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>1866</td>
<td>Writes <em>Cox and Box</em>, operetta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1876</td>
<td><em>Trial by Jury</em>, first successful collaboration with Gilbert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1878</td>
<td>Composes <em>HMS Pinafore</em>, operetta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1879</td>
<td><em>The Pirates of Penzance</em> produced</td>
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<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>Richard D’Oyly Carte opens at the Savoy Theatre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1883</td>
<td>Receives a knighthood</td>
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<tr>
<td>1884</td>
<td>First performance of <em>The Mikado</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>Writes <em>The Gondoliers</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>Writes <em>Ivanhoe</em>, his only opera</td>
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**KEY WORKS**

**HMS PINAFORE**

*Operetta* 105:00 2 2 6

Filled with sea-shanties and nautical airs, *HMS Pinafore* is a satire on the British class system and its embodiment in the Royal Navy. Sullivan rose to the challenge of Gilbert’s intricate metres and patter-songs with a lively, bustling score, setting the story of *The Lass that Loved a Sailor*.

*The Mikado*, first produced in 1885, ran at the Savoy Theatre for 672 performances.

**THE MIKADO**

*Operetta* 135:00 2 2 6 6

Gilbert and Sullivan were at their most imaginative in *The Mikado* – their longest-running show. Although making fun of British bureaucracy, the operetta is set in the mythical Japanese town of Titipu, where the strolling minstre Nanki-Poo (the Mikado’s son) is courting Yum-Yum, the ward of the Lord High Executioner. The wit of Sullivan’s music is demonstrated by his ability to incorporate a genuine Japanese tune, an English madrigal, and a Bach fugue in his score.
Engelbert Humperdinck

Engelbert Humperdinck emerged from the shadow of Wagner, his mentor and friend, to invent a new style of German opera, based on fairy tales. Humperdinck assisted Wagner on \textit{Parsifal}, and learned a great deal from him about orchestration and vocal writing, but he discovered his own original voice in his use of simple children’s songs, especially in his masterpiece \textit{Hänsel und Gretel}.

**LIFE AND MUSIC**

Engelbert Humperdinck was born in Siegburg in 1854 and studied architecture in Cologne before being encouraged to change his discipline to composition, piano, and cello. He continued his studies in Munich, winning prizes with his early compositions, including the Mendelssohn Prize, which took him to Naples. There he befriended Wagner, who brought him to Bayreuth as his assistant. Humperdinck contributed a small section to \textit{Parsifal}, but this was later rejected. His sister then encouraged him to write \textit{Hänsel und Gretel} as an entertainment for his children. This and \textit{Königskinder (Royal Children)} established his reputation as an opera composer.

**MILESTONES**

- 1876 Wins Mozart Scholarship, allowing him to study in Munich
- 1879 Writes \textit{Humoreske} for orchestra
- 1881 Wins Meyerbeer Prize of 7,600 marks. Goes to work for Wagner in Bayreuth
- 1893 Opera \textit{Hänsel und Gretel} premiered
- 1897 Retires from teaching to devote himself to full-time composition
- 1910 Opera \textit{Königskinder (Royal Children)} premiered in New York

**KEY WORKS**

**HÄNSEL UND GRETEL**

Humperdinck’s \textit{Hänsel und Gretel} was premiered in Weimar by Richard Strauss, who called it “original, new, and authentically German”. German audiences, such as this one in Berlin in 1895, took it to their hearts.

In \textit{Hänsel und Gretel}, Hansel and Gretel, alone at home, play games. Their mother returns, scolds them, and sends them to pick strawberries in the forest. They get lost and fall asleep. They wake to find a gingerbread cottage. Its owner, a witch, tries to fatten Hansel for dinner, but Gretel bundles her into the oven and frees the gingerbread children.
Franz Lehár was for 20th-century Viennese operetta what Johann Strauss Jr had been for the 19th century. Lehár made his name as a composer of waltzes, then began writing operettas for the two leading Viennese theatres. *Die lustige Witwe (The Merry Widow)* made his fame in Europe and the US, as well as his fortune, and he went on to write many more operettas, operas, and film scores.

**KEY WORKS**

**DIE LUSTIGE WITWE**

*Operetta* 150:00  

The libretto for this still crowd-pulling operetta was adapted from *The Embassy Attaché*, a play by Henri Meilhac. Lehár used a larger orchestra than was usual for operettas. The music is a heady mix of Balkan folk dance, Parisian cabaret, and Viennese waltz. The operetta tells the story of a young “merry widow”, Hanna, whose banker husband left her a fortune. To stop her marrying a foreigner, Count Danilo is sent by the Pontevedrian Ambassador to woo her. He does so. Her money thus stays in Pontevedro, rescuing her from bankruptcy.

**DAS LAND DES LÄCHELNS**

*Operetta* 135:00  

*The Land of Smiles* was so successful that it spawned a craze for “Merry Widow” corsets, hats, and cocktails. Lehár’s income enabled him to buy this elegant villa in Bad Ischl in 1912.

**LIFE AND MUSIC**

Franz Lehár was the son of a military bandmaster and studied at the Prague Conservatory. He then led army bands, while starting his career as a composer with an unsuccessful grand opera, *Kukulka*. His waltz *Gold and Silver* was popular enough to allow him to leave band life and compose more for the stage. In 1902 he had two operetta premieres in Vienna, followed by his greatest success, *The Merry Widow*. His operetta career then flourished, but declined during World War I. Working with the tenor Richard Tauber, he found new success with *Frasquita* and *Paganini*, culminating in *The Land of Smiles*. Under the Nazis, he was forced to retire (his wife was Jewish), but his work was still performed.

**MILESTONES**

- 1890 Conducts army bands for 12 years
- 1902 Writes concert waltz *Gold and Silver*; *Wiener Frauen*, operetta, is a success
- 1905 Has enormous, immediate success with operetta *The Merry Widow*
- 1920 Begins writing for Richard Tauber
- 1929 Writes operetta *The Land of Smiles*
- 1934 Writes a full-scale opera, *Giuditta*

*The Merry Widow* was so successful that it spawned a craze for “Merry Widow” corsets, hats, and cocktails. Lehár’s income enabled him to buy this elegant villa in Bad Ischl in 1912.
During the 19th and early 20th centuries, as modern nation states emerged, music for many composers became a means of asserting their national identity. Other composers included in this section were not actively nationalists, but their music nevertheless reflects their countries or regions of origin.

Much of the music of the Baroque and Classical periods has a style that cannot easily be pinned down to a single country; styles and forms were international. In the 19th century, however, musicians began to define themselves in terms of their nationalities as well as the styles or genres in which they worked.

European politics in the 19th century was dominated by nationalist movements. These were of two main kinds. There were peoples united by a common language, such as the Italians and Germans, whose aim was to form a single nation state, while other peoples – for example, the Hungarians, Czechs, and Irish – were subject to foreign rule and sought autonomy or independence. Music, along with language and literature, became a means of expressing their aspirations.

The most clear-cut example of musical nationalism, however, did not emerge in a country ruled by an oppressive empire. Russia was itself a great empire, but historically had been made to feel culturally inferior to Western Europe. European music had been imported into Russia by and for the aristocracy; the only truly Russian music was that of the folk tradition.

**RUSSIAN NATIONALISM**

The catalyst for change in Russia was Mikhail Glinka. His opera *A Life for the Tsar* was similar to Rossini in style, but recalled the Russian folk melodies he had heard in his childhood.

The so-called “group of five”, who emerged in the middle of the 19th century, took Russian nationalism much further. Balakirev composed a symphonic poem *Russia* and Borodin wrote *In Central Asia*. A third member of the group, Mussorgsky, was not a formally trained musician; unfamiliar with Western harmonic progressions,
Revolutions in Italy, across the Habsburg Empire, and in Paris he composed music that made full use of Russian folk harmonies. Later Russian composers, such as Rimsky-Korsakov, also made use of folk melodies and influenced future generations of composers, including Glazunov and Stravinsky.

**THE HABSBURG EMPIRE**

Czech nationalist composers were less virulently anti-Western than their Russian counterparts. Their aim was to affirm their cultural difference from the Austrian Habsburg Empire, which had ruled Bohemia and Moravia for centuries, suppressing Czech language and culture. Smetana, Dvořák, and Janáček all contributed to the development of their country’s national musical style. *Má Vlast*, Smetana’s cycle of symphonic poems, is not only a portrait of the Czech landscape, but also an evocation of Czech culture and history. The section *Tábor and Blaník* includes a Czech Hussite chorale, “Those who are Warriors of God”. Hungary’s situation differed from that of Czechoslovakia as its folk music had been represented (or misrepresented) by Romantic...
composers, such as Liszt, Brahms, and Joachim. It was only in the 20th century that Bartók and Kodály began to collect Hungarian folk music more systematically and make use of it in a more authentic way.

FURTHER AFIELD
Political and cultural links between Germany and Scandinavian countries took some time to loosen; Denmark's Niels Gade, for example, spent much time studying and subsequently conducting in Leipzig. It was left to Nordraak and Grieg (who also studied in Leipzig) to create a distinctive Norwegian art music.

Grieg's *Peer Gynt Suite* was written as incidental music for Ibsen's play about the eponymous adventurer. In Finland, the music of Sibelius has nationalist tendencies only in that it quotes Finnish folk music.

In North America, most art music of the 19th century ignored folk material, although MacDowell's *Indian Suite* uses American Indian melodies. Charles Ives was a more distinctively American composer, and his quotations of music from his own environment provide a highly evocative if individual picture of his childhood in New England. Later on Aaron Copland would create a highly recognizable American music, partly by appropriating rustic styles such as the “hoedown” in *Appalachian Spring*.

A revival of folk music in Spain coincided with that in Britain in the early 20th century. Composers such as Granados and Albéniz in Spain and Vaughan Williams in England used the folk music of their respective countries in similar nostalgic ways.

FOLK MELODIES
Just as languages and dialects differ from each other, so folk melodies have distinctive and often immediately recognizable characteristics. Different cultures tend to use different kinds of intervals in their melodies, which give them a particular flavour. In the case of the Jewish Klezmer music of Central and Eastern Europe, for example, this is a particularly exotic flavour. The use of rhythm in folk music also differs greatly from one culture to another, just as it does in spoken language.

NORWEGIAN FOLK DANCING
In the late 19th century, musicians, painters, and social historians across Europe were enthusiastic recorders of vanishing regional folk traditions.
Glinka is widely regarded as the father of Russian music and produced the first successful Russian national opera. Rejecting traditional German forms and harmony in favour of music developed from folk-like melodies, his works display rhythmic exuberance, quasi-oriental chromaticism, and vivid clarity of orchestral textures, which epitomize a Russian sound that inspired successive generations of composers.

LIFE AND MUSIC

From a wealthy family, Glinka only dabbled in music until his late 20s, when he established himself as a pianist in Milan. Subsequent musical studies in Berlin were cut short by the death of his father, and he returned home to start work on his opera *A Life for the Tsar*. Its success established him as Russia’s pre-eminent composer. However, his next opera, *Ruslan and Lyudmilla*, was less well received, although musically more important. Travels to Paris and Madrid – including a meeting with Berlioz, who conducted his music – inspired him to write the orchestral showpieces which now eclipse his many fine vocal and instrumental works.

KEY WORKS

**OVERTURE TO RUSLAN AND LYUDMILLA**

This arresting overture to Glinka’s most important work vividly sets the scene for Pushkin’s fantastical fairy tale. Written during rehearsals for the first performance of the opera, its infectious rhythmic vitality has kept it in the repertoire even though the opera itself is seldom heard outside Russia.

**VALSE FANTASIE**

Performed at Glinka’s memorial concert, the *Valse Fantasie* started life in 1839 as a piano piece. The composer later created a sumptuous orchestration of this chain of waltzes, establishing a model for later Russian composers. *The Valse Fantasie* certainly influenced symphonic waltzes in the ballets of Tchaikovsky and Prokofiev.

**CAPRICCIO BRILLANTE**

After a slow, fanfare-like introduction, Glinka’s effective *Capriccio* turns into an orchestral showpiece based on a traditional Spanish melody, also found in Liszt’s *Rapsodie Espagnol* of the same year. The only product of Glinka’s sojourn in Madrid, its extensive use of castanets amply justifies its alternative title, the “First Spanish Rhapsody”.

KEY WORKS

**MILESTONES**

1824  Appointed under-secretary at Ministry of Communications until 1828
1830  Arrives in Milan; meets Mendelssohn, Bellini, and Donizetti
1833  Studies in Berlin for five months
1834  Returns to Russia; starts work on *A Life for the Tsar*, first successful Russian opera
1835  Marries Mariya Petrovna Ivanova; she remarries bigamously six years later
1836  First performance of *A Life for the Tsar*
1837  Appointed Kapellmeister of the Imperial Chapel
1844  First production of opera *Ruslan and Lyudmilla* arouses admiration of Liszt
1848  Composes Kamarinskaya, orchestral work
A LIFE FOR THE TSAR

A celebration of nationalist fervour, this opera was originally titled *Ivor Susanin* after its tragic hero, but was renamed in honour of Tsar Nicholas I, to whom it was dedicated. When staged in Soviet times, the title reverted and the libretto was altered to expunge references to the Tsar.

**OVERTURE AND ACT ONE**

(48:00) In a Russian village Ivan Susanin’s daughter is about to marry Sobinin, who has returned from fighting the Poles and allays fears of a conquest of Moscow. Susanin approves the wedding only when he hears that a new Romanov Tsar has been crowned.

**ACT TWO**

(29:20) A messenger interrupts celebrations at the Polish court to tell the King that the Russians are fighting back under their newly crowned Tsar, whom the Poles decide to capture.

**ACT THREE**

(63:40) During the wedding Polish soldiers arrive and demand to know the Tsar’s hiding place. Susanin leads them in the wrong direction and his stepson, Vanya, rides to warn the Tsar. Sobinin and a group of peasants follow Susanin to attempt his rescue.

**ACT FOUR**

(48:00) Sobinin and his band are camped at night in the freezing forest, whilst Vanya warns the Tsar. In the morning the Poles realize they have been tricked and beat Susanin to death.

**EPILOGUE**

(20:40) The Russian people celebrate in Moscow whilst Susanin’s family mourns. The opera ends with a hymn to the Tsar.

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**KAMARINSKAYA**

Inspired by meeting Berlioz, Glinka started writing orchestral works with a nationalist character. The last of these, *Kamarinskaya*, proved highly influential – Tchaikovsky believed that the Russian symphonic school was “all in Kamarinskaya, just as the whole oak is in the acorn”. Based entirely on two Russian melodies, the work begins, after a brief introduction, with a slow, traditional bridal-song repeated three times with different accompaniments. A lively dance tune (kamarinskaya) follows on the violin, and is repeated 13 times in increasingly complex orchestral combinations. Then the music slows to reintroduce the bridal song, but the kamarinskaya soon returns for 21 more variations.

Glinka’s Kamarinskaya was the first important Russian work to have been based entirely on folk music.
Alexander Borodin

1833–1887 | Russian | 21+

One of the “mighty handful” of Russian nationalists, Borodin was perhaps the most overtly Romantic, turning out highly charged music, full of choral and orchestral colour. Essentially a “Sunday composer”, with a full-time career as a chemist, he left a small but polished oeuvre. His Symphony No. 2 displays a peerless mastery of technique, while *Prince Igor* remains a landmark of Russian opera.

**LIFE AND MUSIC**

Born in St Petersburg, Borodin was the illegitimate son of a Georgian prince who registered the child under the name of a servant. Although Borodin excelled from childhood in both science and music, he chose a career in chemistry. While practising as a professor and researcher at the Academy of Medico-Surgery in St Petersburg, he composed in his spare time. Although he admired Schumann, it was his compatriot Mily Balakirev – with whom he studied in 1863 – who had the most dramatic influence on his style. Of the “mighty handful”, Borodin was perhaps most able to assimilate Russian folk style with the European symphonic tradition. Due to professional commitments, his output was small but accomplished, including symphonies, songs, and chamber music.

**MILESTONES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>Enters the Academy of Medico-Surgery in St Petersburg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1856</td>
<td>Qualifies in medicine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1859</td>
<td>Specializes in chemistry in Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>Joins the “mighty handful”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1863</td>
<td>Studies composition with Balakirev; marries Ekatarina Protopopova</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1869</td>
<td>Symphony No. 1 premiered unsuccessfully</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1872</td>
<td>Lectures at the School of Medicine for Women, St Petersburg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1876</td>
<td>Writes Symphony No. 2 in B minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td><em>In the Steppes of Central Asia</em>, tone poem, staged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td><em>Prince Igor</em>, opera, premiered posthumously at St Petersburg</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**KEY WORKS**

**PRINCE IGOR**

**OPERA** | 240:00 | 5 | 6

Eighteen years in composition, and only completed posthumously by Rimsky-Korsakov and Glazunov, *Prince Igor* is Borodin’s best-known work. Set in 12th-century Russia, it depicts the imprisonment of a Russian prince by an invading Tartar tribe, the Polovetsians. A notable feature is Borodin’s unusual handling of the chorus, which functions almost as a separate character in the drama. The thrilling Polovetsian dances that conclude the second act are often performed on their own in concert.

**SYMPHONY NO. 2**

**ORCHESTRAL** | 26:00 | 4

As Borodin worked concurrently on *Prince Igor* and his Symphony No. 2, the two share many musical parallels. This powerful, mature, and concise piece, full of Borodin’s rhythmic drive and exuberance, is perhaps the best example of Russian nationalist music allied to Classical principles of form.
Mily Alexeyevich Balakirev

1837–1910
Russian

The driving force behind the Russian nationalist “school” of music, Balakirev formed, guided, and inspired the “mighty handful”, a circle committed to the nationalist cause. His own career was punctuated by periods of inactivity, but he produced some striking works in an unmistakably Russian idiom. A complex, irascible character, he could inspire lasting loyalty in friends and pupils, but also made many enemies.

LIFE AND MUSIC

After receiving early musical training from his mother, Balakirev was spotted by the wealthy music patron Alexander Ulibishev, who sent him to St Petersburg to meet Mikhail Glinka. Enthusiastic about musical nationalism, Balakirev gathered a circle of kindred spirits, known as the “mighty handful”, including Cui, Mussorgsky, Borodin, and Rimsky-Korsakov. A difficult and single-minded idealist, he brooked no opposition and antagonized many. Overwrought and overworked, he suffered a nervous breakdown in 1871, withdrew from public life, and turned to mysticism, before emerging again in 1883 when he was appointed to the Imperial Chapel.

MILESTONES

1847 Studies music in Moscow
1855 Moves to St Petersburg
1861 Writes incidental music for King Lear
1862 Founds the Free School of Music
1869 Islamey, fantasy, composed
1871 Suffers breakdown; turns to mysticism
1872 Works for the Warsaw railway
1882 Tamara, symphonic poem, staged
1883 Director of the Imperial Chapel
1908 Writes Symphony No. 2 in D minor

The concerted force of the “mighty handful” changed the course of Russian music, creating a distinctive Russian style that successfully merged Classical forms with Russian folk idioms.

KEY WORKS

TAMARA

TONPOEM 20:00 1

Regarded as Balakirev’s greatest work, Tamara is based on a poem by Mikhail Lermontov that relates the story of an alluring siren who entices a traveller into her lair with her seductive song. After a night of passion, all is silent in the morning as the traveller’s corpse swirls past in the tide of the river. Although Balakirev is not overtly descriptive, the plot can be discerned in the music. A quiet timpani roll evokes the fairy-tale atmosphere, while Tamara’s voice is heard in the sinuous woodwind figure.

ISLAMEY

SOLO PIANO 9:00 1

Balakirev originally conceived Islamey as a study for his tone poem Tamara, but although the two are similar, Islamey has no dark undercurrents. Rather, it is an exuberant showpiece, good-humoured and entertaining, yet immaculately crafted. Typical of Balakirev’s Russian style, it combines classical virtuosity with exotic modes, chromatic harmonies and oriental motifs. Russian Tartar folk style emerges in the opening obsessive ostinato figure, inspired by a Caucasian dance which gave the work its name.
LIFE AND MUSIC

Despite being a prodigy at the piano, Mussorgsky initially joined the army, but resigned his commission in 1858 for a life of “meaningful endeavour”. Taking a job in the civil service he began to work on a symphony and an opera, but these came to nothing. For the rest of his life a combination of unsettled personal circumstances, a nervous temperament, and serious alcoholism contrived to limit his creative endeavours. Of the Russian “Mighty Handful”, Mussorgsky’s music is perhaps the most rough-hewn, earthy, and immediate.

MILESTONES

- 1852 Enters Imperial Guard Cadet School
- 1861 Forced to work family estate following emancipation of the serfs
- 1865 First serious alcoholic episode
- 1867 Writes St John’s Night on the Bare Mountain
- 1872 Composes The Nursery (song cycle)
- 1874 Revised version of Boris Godunov; Sunless (song cycle); Pictures at an Exhibition
- 1875 Songs and Dances of Death (song cycle)

ST JOHN’S NIGHT ON THE BARE MOUNTAIN

A dramatic musical portrait of the witches’ Sabbath, held in the mountains near Kiev.

KEY WORKS

SALAMMBÔ

Opera Unfinished

Between 1863 and 1866, Mussorgsky was living in an artists’ commune with five other men. In these creative surroundings, he worked on the libretto and music for an opera, Salammbô, based on Flaubert’s tale of the siege of Carthage. However, by 1865 his drinking was beginning to get the better of him, and he never completed the work. Some of the music from Salammbô has survived and is still performed, including the fine choral piece Chorus of Priestesses.

SUNLESS, AND SONGS AND DANCES OF DEATH

While they are not as well known as his instrumental works, for many commentators it is Mussorgsky’s songs that are his true masterpieces. The musical language is direct and unadorned, emotional without being overwrought or melodramatic. But perhaps most striking are the protagonists in his songs – not the fanciful lovers and poets of the lieder tradition, but the old, insane, poverty-stricken, and desperate.
Identifying the “real” Boris Godunov is not straightforward. Mussorgsky produced two complete versions during his lifetime, the second in response to the opera’s initial rejection from the Maryinsky Opera.

To compound the problem, Rimsky-Korsakov famously took upon himself the task of smoothing Mussorgsky’s characteristically abrasive orchestration. His version is colourful and attractive, and was popular for many years. Nevertheless, it is now broadly agreed that Rimsky-Korsakov’s alterations do little to enhance the work. Mussorgsky aimed to portray life in its true colours, and this is reflected in his music. As a consequence, Boris Godunov is now usually performed in one or other of its original versions.

The opera is based on a story by Alexander Pushkin concerning the eponymous King’s murderous accession to the throne. Musically, the most important innovation in the opera lies in Mussorgsky’s use of the speech patterns of Russian language as the basis for his music. Rather than setting dialogue to pre-composed melodies, Mussorgsky’s vocal lines follow the pitch and rhythm of spoken Russian. This gives the opera a sense of “reality”, as characters appear to converse with each other in a manner that the Russian audience would immediately have recognized.

1873 saw the sudden death the artist Viktor Hartmann. The following year an exhibition of his works took place and Mussorgsky, who had been a close friend, saw an opportunity to write a musical tribute. This impressive work for piano opens with a Promenade, which recurs several times; with its steady pulse, but alternating tempo, it seems to suggest a viewer wandering around the gallery, pausing to inspect pictures more closely. The remaining 11 pieces are vivid interpretations of the individual paintings. The breadth of Mussorgsky’s musical inspiration is unparalleled, conjuring images that range from playful to eerie or majestic. Pictures at an Exhibition is better known these days in Ravel’s colourful orchestration from 1922, which, although an impressive interpretation, lacks something of the original’s intensity and earthiness.
Rimsky-Korsakov was a friend of Mily Balakirev and member of the “mighty handful”, a group of five composers led by Balakirev who aimed to develop an authentically Russian art music. Rimsky-Korsakov’s music, much of it based on themes from Russian folklore, is justly renowned for its brilliant, colourful orchestration. He was later important as a teacher and counted Prokofiev and Stravinsky among his pupils.

**LIFE AND MUSIC**

Following his elder brother into the navy, Rimsky-Korsakov began composing a symphony in his final year at naval college after making the acquaintance of Balakirev. This proved impossible to complete while at sea, and by the end of his three-year tour of duty he had almost resolved to give up music altogether. On returning to shore, however, he was persuaded to finish the symphony and, after its successful premiere, decided on a switch of career. A committed nationalist, Rimsky-Korsakov wrote 15 operas on Russian themes and used folk melodies in many of his instrumental compositions. He had an instinctive mastery of the orchestra, although, arguably, his handling of large-scale form does not compare with that of contemporaries such as Borodin.

**KEY WORKS**

**SYMPHONY NO. 1**

*César Cui described Rimsky-Korsakov’s Symphony No. 1 as the first Russian symphony. Whilst not literally true, it was certainly the first to make explicit use of Russian folk themes – very clear in the slow movement.

**RUSSIAN EASTER FESTIVAL OVERTURE**

This is based on three melodies from the *Obikhod*, the Eastern Orthodox Church hymnal. In the colourful music, Rimsky-Korsakov tried to evoke images of ancient pagan rituals suggested by the Easter celebrations. Oddly, Tsar Alexander III disliked it and banned it from any concert he attended.

**LE COQ D’OR**

*Rimsky-Korsakov’s final opera, *The Golden Cockerel*, is perhaps his finest. Based on a story by Pushkin, its fairytale setting belies a sharp political satire. As ever, the work brims with attractive melody and radiant scoring.*

**MILESTONES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>Meets Balakirev; starts Symphony No. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1865</td>
<td>Symphony No. 1 premiered by Balakirev</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>Leaves navy to study music full-time</td>
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<tr>
<td>1887</td>
<td>Composes <em>Capriccio Espagnol</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td>Composes <em>Sheherazade</em> and <em>Russian Easter Festival Overture</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>Completes Borodin’s opera <em>Prince Igor</em> with Glazunov</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>Orchestrates Mussorgsky’s opera <em>Boris Godunov</em></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Like many Russian composers and artists, Rimsky-Korsakov was fascinated by the Islamic cultures over Russia’s borders, using them as a source of inspiration and an “exotic” reference. *Sheherazade* is a large-scale suite in four movements. It is based on the tale of *The Thousand and One Nights* in which a young woman changes a cruel sultan’s character by recounting stories.

Whilst Rimsky-Korsakov was especially drawn to four of the stories, to which the four movements of his work correspond, *Sheherazade* is not strictly descriptive. (He was initially persuaded to include programmatic titles for each of the movements, but later withdrew them.) Neither is it symphonic, in the sense of containing extensive development of themes. Rather, Rimsky-Korsakov described it as a “kaleidoscope of fairy-tale images and designs of Oriental character”, in which the music attempts to capture the mood of each story. Certain melodies recur throughout the work, however, notably the austere theme that opens the first movement – associated with the Sultan – and the sinuous solo violin melody heard shortly afterwards, representing Sheherazade herself.

Spanish music was popular with Russian composers as part of the general interest in the exotic, and Rimsky-Korsakov’s enduringly popular *Capriccio Espagnol* is based on themes drawn from a volume of Spanish folk melodies. The main musical ideas are a morning, an evening, a Gypsy dance, and an Asturian song. In a sense, the work is Rimsky-Korsakov *par excellence* – limited musical argument, but brilliant orchestral colour. He emphasized that it should be thought of as a piece for orchestra rather than an orchestration of a piece that could otherwise stand alone.

Rimsky-Korsakov taught several important composers, including Prokofiev and Stravinsky. However, his major influence is in his mastery of orchestration – his treatise on the subject has become the standard reference work, and many composers have imitated (but few bettered) his handling of musical colours.
One of the very few 19th-century pianists who could stand comparison with Liszt, Anton Rubinstein (brother of Nikolai) was also outstanding as a teacher and conductor. He toured Europe as a child virtuoso, and then as a mature artist known for his huge repertoire and remarkable stamina (in the US he played 215 recitals in under nine months). He was also twice director of the St Petersburg Conservatory. He composed prolifically – and lucratively, thanks to his fame – but many of the grandiloquent pieces he composed can feel glib and superficial. However, his opera *Demon* was a huge success, with the great Russian bass Fyodor Chaliapin often in the title role, and his *Melody in F*, Op. 3, No. 1, proved lastingly popular.

**MILESTONES**

1848 Becomes chamber virtuoso to Grand Duchess Helena Pavlovna, Russia
1864 Composes Piano Concerto No. 4
1871 *Demon*, opera, published
1871 Conducts Philharmonic Concerts in Vienna
1872 Tours US with Henryk Wieniawski

The founding of St Petersburg Conservatory put the city on a par with Vienna, London, Paris, and Berlin, and soon attracted world-famous musicians to Russia.

Born into a highly musical family, Liadov never completed any large-scale works. Talented but rather lazy, he was expelled from Rimsky-Korsakov’s composition classes for non-attendance, idled his summers away at his wife’s country house, and neglected Diaghilev’s commission

**MILESTONES**

1878 Starts teaching at St Petersburg Conservatory
1890 Composes *Pro starinu*, piano ballade
1897 Commissioned to collect folk songs by Imperial Geographical Society

Liadov described *Baba Yaga* (1904) as a “tone picture after a Russian fairytale” and used a large orchestra, including a xylophone, to create sounds of the forest and other atmospheric effects.
A craftsman in the Russian academic vein rather than an original genius, Ippolitov-Ivanov’s style and technique changed little throughout his career, taking the form of folk song-based nationalism with an Oriental twist and, after the Revolution, hints of Uzbek, Kazakh, Turkmen, or Arabic music. His popular Caucasian Sketches shows the influences of Georgia, where he lived for a few years, teaching and conducting.

Sergey Liapunov

- **1859–1924**
- Russian
- **80**

Liapunov’s modest composing success didn’t come until he was in his 40s, and then mainly thanks to encouragement and promotion from his friend Balakirev. In addition to conducting, Liapunov toured as a pianist and wrote with a complete understanding of the instrument. His best pieces were the works for piano, such as the Liszt-influenced *12 Transcendental Studies*, and his piquant songs, such as “The Mountain Peaks”.

**MILESTONES**

1893 Commissioned to collect folk songs
1905 Finishes *12 Transcendental Studies*, Op. 11, for piano
1910 Professor at St Petersburg Conservatory
1913 Composes Prelude and Fugue in B minor, Op. 58, for piano

Mikhail Ippolitov-Ivanov

- **1859–1935**
- Russian
- **80**

A craftsman in the Russian academic vein rather than an original genius, Ippolitov-Ivanov’s style and technique changed little throughout his career, taking the form of folk song-based nationalism with an Oriental twist and, after the Revolution, hints of Uzbek, Kazakh, Turkmen, or Arabic music. His popular Caucasian Sketches shows the influences of Georgia, where he lived for a few years, teaching and conducting.

**MILESTONES**

1884 Conductor of Imperial Opera, Tiflis
1893 Professor at Moscow Conservatory
1894 Caucasian Sketches, orchestral suite
1895 Writes Armenian Rhapsody, symphony
1900 Composes *Assia*, opera
1934 Publishes memoirs: *Fifty Years of Russian Music*

Anton Stepanovich Arensky

- **1861–1906**
- Russian
- c.80

Arensky was made a professor at the Moscow Conservatory immediately on graduating with a gold medal from St Petersburg, having studied composition under Rimsky-Korsakov. He went on to teach Rachmaninov and Scriabin. An eclectic composer, influenced by Chopin, Tchaikovsky, and Mendelssohn, among others, he worked unusual rhythms into his lyrical and sentimental music. As well as writing operas, he also composed church music, songs, symphonies, and elegant piano pieces. Arensky’s last years were spent successfully as a composer, pianist, and conductor, but were blighted by his addictions to alcohol and gambling.

**MILESTONES**

1888 Directs Russian Choral Society
1894 Composes Piano Trio No. 1
1891 *A Dream on the Volga*, opera, published
1895 Becomes Director of Imperial Chapel, St Petersburg
1900 Composes *Egyptian Nights*, ballet

Arensky, seen here in his workroom, is best known for his charming, elegant, and melodically inventive Piano Trio No. 1 in D minor.
Alexander Scriabin

1872–1915 • Russian • c.200

Original to the point of eccentricity, Scriabin ranks among the 20th century’s most important composers for the piano, and was one of its greatest musical innovators. In the later years of his short life, an all-consuming interest in mystical philosophy pervaded every aspect of his world. As his beliefs became ever more bizarre, so he pushed the boundaries of harmony and performance to their limits.

LIFE AND MUSIC

After setting out as a concert pianist, Scriabin injured his right hand, which put a temporary halt to his performing career but gave him more time to compose. Scriabin’s early pieces, almost exclusively for the piano, show a clear affinity with the Romantics, with many works in characteristically Chopin-esque forms. In later years, however, Scriabin became increasingly interested in Helene Blavatsky’s “theosophy”. These beliefs came eventually to dominate his thinking about music, which in turn pushed his musical language in radically new directions. Nevertheless, he retained a curious reliance on classical formal principles.

MILESTONES

1888 Studied at Moscow Conservatory
1896 Composes 24 Preludes, Op. 11; Piano Concerto, Op. 20
1898 Professor of Piano at the Moscow Conservatory
1903 Writes Piano Sonata No. 4, Op. 30
1907 Poem of Ecstasy, Op. 54, symphonic poem
1909 Composes Prometheus, Op. 60, symphony
1909 Moves to Brussels for two years
1911 Writes Piano Sonata No. 7, Op. 64 (“White Mass”)
1913 Composes Piano Sonata No. 8, Op. 66 (“Black Mass”)
1913 Writes Piano Sonata No. 9, Op. 68 (“Black Mass”)
1915 Dies 27 April in Moscow, leaving The Mysterium unfinished

KEY WORKS

PIANO CONCERTO

Orchestral • 28:00 • 3

The Piano Concerto of 1896, Scriabin’s first orchestral score, was well received by audiences and attracted him a degree of early fame. With distinct echoes of Chopin and Rachmaninov (a student friend of Scriabin’s) it stands as a fascinating contrast with his more extraordinary later works.

SONATA NO. 9, “BLACK MASS”

Solo Piano • 09:00 • 1

After Scriabin described his Sonata No. 7 as the “White Mass”, the ninth was soon dubbed the “Black Mass”. Whereas the former work is radiant, even joyous, the latter is among his most dark, knotty works, emphasizing the dissonant minor-ninth interval and ending with a grotesque march.

THE MYSTERIUM

Multimedia • 7 DAYS

The Mysterium was left incomplete – Scriabin had barely begun work on it before his sudden death. Sketches indicate a seven-day long multimedia spectacle intended for performance in the Himalayas. Scriabin believed that this performance would act as a purification ritual, leading to the rebirth of the world.
PROMETHEUS – THE POEM OF FIRE

Prometheus – The Poem of Fire is the last of Scriabin’s five symphonies, and one of the last pieces he composed before his death. It takes as its basis the Greek myth in which Prometheus defies Zeus to give mankind command of fire. For Scriabin, symbolism operated at every level in the work, from the so-called “mystic chord”, on which much of the harmony is derived, to the specification of a wordless, white-robed chorus. Moreover, the work was intended to be an early – perhaps the first – example of multimedia performance. Scriabin wrote a complete part for “Tastiera per Luce” (“keyboard of lights”), which would flood the performance space with different coloured light according to which combination of keys was pressed.

Considered for its purely musical merits, Prometheus is a striking work, and contains many moments of sensuous orchestration and bold, otherworldly harmony.

PIANO SONATA NO. 4, OP. 30

Scriabin’s oeuvre consists in large part of piano works – he wrote many hundreds of preludes, études, and impromptus. Central to these is the series of ten sonatas, which began in 1892 in the sound world of Rachmaninov and Chopin and ended in 1913 with a work that is on the very verge of atonality. Sonata No. 4 was composed during a summer of extraordinary productivity for Scriabin, in which he completed some 40 piano pieces.

FIRST MOVEMENT (ANDANTE 3:50)

The first movement demonstrates some of Scriabin’s most sensuous writing. It is based on one theme, introduced delicately and developed through a series of unexpected harmonic shifts.

SECOND MOVEMENT (PRESTISSIMO VOLANDO 4:50)

The second movement explodes into life with a buoyant theme. A more lyrical second subject follows, then develops into a reintroduction of a theme from the first movement.

After a recapitulation and coda, the sonata closes with a virtuosic flourish.

Scriabin was profoundly influenced by Helene Blavatsky’s Theosophical Movement and, while in London, he visited the room in which she died in 1891.
“Only one place is closed to me, and that is my own country – Russia.”

RACHMANINOV IN AN INTERVIEW FOR THE MUSICAL TIMES, 1930
Sergei Rachmaninov

1873–1943  Russian  96

A highly praised conductor and outstanding pianist whose many recordings show his crisp technique, unostentatious approach, and outstanding clarity, Rachmaninov was also the last major composer of the great Russian late-Romantic tradition. Most of his music was written before 1917, when he left Russia never to return; appropriately, some of his symphonies and piano concertos radiate passionate yearning or nostalgia.

LIFE

After his father squandered the family fortune, Rachmaninov’s parents moved from a country estate to a crowded St Petersburg flat. His education was disrupted by their separation, so he was sent to the Moscow Conservatory. He boarded with his piano teacher in a severe routine of all-day practice, starting at 6:00 am, and graduated with the highest possible marks for his composition and playing. His career started well: the opera Aleko was successfully premiered, and he enjoyed Tchaikovsky’s support. But a calamitous performance of his Symphony No. 1 (under an allegedly drunk Glazunov) drew savage reviews; for three years he could not face composing, and turned to conducting, with increasing success. However, a hypnotist doctor and musician, Nikolai Dahl, persuaded him to compose again. The Piano Concerto No. 2 was among the excellent works he now steadily produced. His reputation as composer, conductor, and performer grew. By his 40s he had toured the US, Russia, England, and Europe, but he lost his country estate in the Revolution and fled to Scandinavia. He spent his last 25 years in the US and Europe, working, touring, recording, and publishing music. Growing ill health made him cancel a concert tour, and he died of cancer aged 69.

MUSICAL OUTPUT

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Total</th>
<th>1873</th>
<th>1892</th>
<th>1901</th>
<th>1918</th>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>CHAMBER (11)</td>
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<td>PIANO MUSIC (29)</td>
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<td>9</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>SONGS (19)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
MUSIC

The piano figures prominently in Rachmaninov’s output, both solo and with orchestra. His orchestral works include three symphonies, and he wrote over 80 lyrical songs. There is little chamber music, and his three operas suffer from unpromising librettos. His choral work Vespers shows his liking for religious chant. His music up to the critically mauled Symphony No. 1 is energetic and highly competent, if sometimes derivative (the Tchaikovsky-ish opera Aleko, for instance). But when he started composing again after his years of self-doubt, Rachmaninov’s style developed significantly into the now-familiar sweeping melodies, subtly and richly scored – for example, in the long, seamless lines of the Piano Concerto No. 2 or Symphony No. 2. Among the few works he wrote after leaving Russia are the Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, Symphony No. 3 and Piano Concerto No. 4.

KEY WORKS

VESPERS, OP. 37
CHORAL 50:00 🎵 15 🎩

Also known as the All-Night Vigil or Solemn Vespers, this is Rachmaninov’s setting of the service that takes place in Orthodox churches before important festivals. Nine of the pieces are based on traditional chants, with Rachmaninov’s harmonies and variations. The central section is No. 9, the story of the Resurrection.

RHAPSODY ON A THEME OF PAGANINI, OP. 43
ORCHESTRAL 25:00 🎵 26 🎪

After his troubled Fourth Concerto had a lukewarm reception, this – his final concerto-style work – proved a great success. Based on Paganini’s familiar Caprice No. 24, it is a set of variations that ingeniously combines the lyrical with the brilliant, and spontaneity with organization.

PIANO CONCERTO NO. 3, OP. 30
ORCHESTRAL 40:00 🎵 3 🎪

The whole of this tightly structured piece comes out of the bare, twisting opening theme. Large in scale and emotional range, it shows Rachmaninov’s skill in writing long and beautifully phrased themes. It premiered in New York in 1909.

MILESTONES

1891 Composes Piano Concerto No. 1
1892 Graduates as composer; prelude in C sharp minor, Op. 3, No. 2, composed
1893 Successful premiere of Aleko
1897 Disastrous premiere of Symphony No. 1; takes conducting post
1899 First international appearance, London
1900 Consults psychologist Dr Dahl; receives auto-suggestive therapy to deal with nervous breakdown
1901 Piano Concerto No. 2 composed, dedicated to Dr Dahl
1902 Marries cousin Natalia Satina
1908 Symphony No. 2 premiered
1910 Now an established composer-conductor-pianist; tours US
1917 Flees Russia on outbreak of Revolution
1918 Decides to live in US
1919 Makes his first recording; continues to record with Ampico for ten years
1934 Writes Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini
1936 Symphony No. 3 completed

Rachmaninov’s Piano Concerto No. 2 became famous when it was used to great effect in David Lean’s 1946 film Brief Encounter.
PIANO CONCERTO NO. 2, OP. 18
ORCHESTRAL 35:00 3 os

The endlessly flowing lyricism of Rachmaninov’s first and most enduring success – the happy result of his confidence-building sessions with Dr Dahl – has inspired direct and indirect use in pop music and films.

**FIRST MOVEMENT:** (MODERATO, 11:00) Eight ominous piano chords introduce a sombre first theme, contrasted with the more optimistic second; a strident, martial short figure is repeated as a device to link the two.

**SECOND MOVEMENT:** (ADAGIO SOSTENUTO, 12:00) An aching theme, sparsely woven between piano, solo winds, and strings, flows with a gentle sadness that seems to have no relief in sight.

**THIRD MOVEMENT** (ALLEGRO SCHERZANDO, 12:00) After a bustling start, two minutes or so in comes the nostalgic and sincere theme that brought Rachmaninov worldwide fame, played on oboe and violas and then taken up by piano. The theme recurs in more impassioned forms before the determined but unsettled finish.

SYMPHONY NO. 2, OP. 27
ORCHESTRAL 55:00 4

After the success of his Concerto No. 2, Rachmaninov produced this, possibly his greatest orchestral work, to complete his comeback after the disasters of his first attempt at a symphony. Most of his works were composed in his idyllic country estate, Ivanovka, but the spacious No. 2 came from his time in Dresden.

**FIRST MOVEMENT** (LARGO, 19:00) A low, sombre motto theme opens this broad movement. It turns into flowing and resolute, but tragic, long melodies, with sunnier sections and some impassioned climaxes.

**SECOND MOVEMENT** (ALLEGRO MOLTO, 9:00) A vigorous and bright movement, sparklingly orchestrated, containing a trademark yearning theme, and with an unexpectedly subdued finish.

**THIRD MOVEMENT** (ADAGIO, 14:00) Sumptuous, classic Rachmaninov that goes straight into a long-breathed, poignant clarinet melody against quietly intimate strings, and builds to some magnificently surging, almost triumphant, emotion with a tranquil finish.

**FOURTH MOVEMENT** (ALLEGRO VIVACE, 13:00) A bustling and vivacious rounding-off of a remarkable work.

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INFLUENCES
Rachmaninov’s music was considered outdated and emotionally clichéd after his death by some, and has had little influence on Western composers (though Shostakovich’s Piano Concerto No. 2, for example, has a Rachmaninov-like slow movement). However, his reputation is now secure as the last of a great line.
Alexander Glazunov

1865–1936  Russian  c.150

Glazunov was an important figure in early-20th-century Russian music: he taught Shostakovich and helped Rimsky-Korsakov complete Borodin’s opera Prince Igor, which had been unfinished on the latter’s death. Glazunov’s own compositions, whilst popular in their day, were conservative – a likeable but unchallenging blend of Germanic Classical with a somewhat outmoded Russian nationalism.

LIFE AND MUSIC

Glazunov studied with Rimsky-Korsakov, and his Symphony No. 1 was performed when he was just 16. Much of his adult life was spent as professor, and then director, of the St Petersburg Conservatory, and it was here that he had his most lasting influence as mentor to the “new” Russian school of composers. He was remembered as a strict teacher with a genuine concern for his students, but whose unabashed conservatism could jar with their progressive ideas; he famously walked out of the premiere of his student Sergei Prokofiev’s Symphony No. 1.

Co-written with Rimsky-Korsakov, Glazunov’s Cleopatra was performed by the Ballets Russes in typically exotic costumes.

Glazunov’s compositions were highly polished, if slightly backward-looking. He achieved the most successful balance of Russian and European elements of any composer of the nationalistic school, led by Balakirev. Many of Glazunov’s works were premiered by Balakirev.

KEY WORKS

THE SEASONS
BALLET  60:00  15
Written for the Russian Imperial Ballet, The Seasons is perhaps the last work in the Russian Classical ballet tradition before Stravinsky changed the genre forever. It is rarely danced, but has become Glazunov’s most popular concert work: charming, inventive, and well scored.

VIOLIN CONCERTO
ORCHESTRAL  20:00  3
Glazunov’s Violin Concerto was written for violinist Leopold Auer, and later taken up by the brilliant Jascha Heifetz (a former pupil of Auer’s), whose advocacy is chiefly responsible for its continued popularity. The first section develops a beautiful melody with strongly Russian overtones, before an extended cadenza links to the virtuosic finale.

SYMPHONY NO. 5
ORCHESTRAL  35:00  4
This is the most popular of Glazunov’s symphonies. Although clearly derivative, particularly of Mendelssohn in the Scherzo and of Tchaikovsky in general, it is a good example of his blending of Russian themes with Classical forms.
Henryk Wieniawski

A child violin prodigy with a concert career, Wieniawski became the great international violin virtuoso of his time after playing his own Concerto No. 1 in Leipzig. He went on to teach at the St Petersburg Conservatory and composed many of his best works there. His music, like his playing, combined Paganini-like technique, Romantic expansiveness, and Slavonic emotion. His two concertos are often played.

MILESTONES
1843 Admitted to Paris Conservatoire
1853 Composes Violin Concerto No. 1
1860 Settles in St Petersburg
1862 Composes Violin Concerto No. 2
1872 Tours US with Anton Rubinstein; exhaustion and onset of heart trouble
1875 Goes to teach in Brussels for two years

Moritz Moszkowski

At age 17, Moszkowski, a piano prodigy, was teaching at the Berlin Conservatory. However, nerves cut short his early, glittering concert career, and he concentrated instead on composition. Sales of his melodic piano works then made him wealthy. He settled in Paris, where he was in demand as a teacher, and married the composer Cécile Chaminade’s sister. Later, his fortunes declined: his wife and daughter died, his music became unfashionable, and he lived and died alone in poverty.

MILESTONES
1873 Debut as pianist, Berlin
1897 Settles in Paris; height of fame
1898 Writes Piano Concerto, Op. 59
1914 Bankrupted during World War I
1921 Friends hold benefit concert in US

Josef Suk

Suk was Dvořák’s favourite composition pupil at Prague Conservatory. At 18 he joined the renowned Czech Quartet as second violinist and played over 4,000 concerts with it. After his Serenade for Strings was published (on Brahms’s recommendation), he became a leading Czech composer. Suk was most at home in instrumental music, but, unlike Dvořák, was uninfluenced by folk. His style developed from lyrical Romanticism to a more complex, individual language with a masterful sense of colour. His Asrael Symphony is one of his finest works.

MILESTONES
1885 Begins study at Prague Conservatory
1892 Composes Serenade for Strings
1898 Marries Otilka, Dvořák’s daughter
1906 Composes Asrael Symphony
1917 Ripening, tone poem, tells his life story
1922 Appointed professor of composition at Prague Conservatory
1933 Retires from Czech Quartet

Suk’s emotional Asrael Symphony, named after the Angel of Death, was written to express his grief at the death of his wife in 1905 and of Dvořák in 1904.
The music of Bedrich Smetana has become synonymous with Czech nationalism and greatly influenced later generations of composers, including Dvořák. A native of Bohemia (then controlled by Austria), Smetana wrote several operas and a magnificent cycle of symphonic poems depicting his homeland. His musical style, while clearly of the Romantic tradition, is attractively melodic and direct.

**LIFE AND MUSIC**

Smetana worked first in Prague and then Gothenburg, with moderate success, as a pianist and composer. By 1861, his nationalist sentiments compelled him to return to Prague. Unlike many “nationalist” composers, Smetana made comparatively little use of folk melodies. Rather, he wrote operas and programmatic pieces based explicitly on Czech stories and places – his own colourful and dramatic musical voice thus came to embody Czech music. Smetana led a difficult life – his first wife and three of four daughters died, and he contracted a syphilitic infection that led to deafness and the acute tinnitus that drove him to his death in a mental asylum.

**KEY WORKS**

**SIX CHARACTERISTIC COMPOSITIONS, OP. 1**

*SOLO PIANO*  
22:30  6

Struggling to make ends meet, in desperation Smetana sent his recently completed *Six Characteristic Compositions* to Franz Liszt, with a dedication and a plea for financial aid. While Liszt was unable to help financially, he was impressed with the work and sent it to his publisher. Although Smetana made no money, praise from such an esteemed figure gave him confidence.

**STRING QUARTET NO. 1**

*CHAMBER*  
28:00  4

Subtitled “From my Life”, this quartet ends dramatically on a piercing note held by the violin – a direct musical representation of Smetana’s tinnitus.

**THE BRANDENBURGERS OF BOHEMIA**

*OPERA*  
165:00  3

First performed at the Prague Provisional Theatre in 1866, Smetana’s first patriotic opera is notable not only because it made his name in Prague (winning the Prague opera competition) and marked the beginning of his most productive period, but also because it was his first extended composition to be based explicitly on Bohemian subject matter.
The Bartered Bride was Smetana’s second opera and his first attempt at a comedy, written – he later claimed – “to spite those who accused me of being Wagnerian” after the altogether more serious Brandenburgers of Bohemia. First staged in 1866, hot on the heels of Brandenburgers, Smetana soon revised the work, adding a number of popular Czech numbers, such as drinking songs and polkas. It is an engaging love story, and all the characters are given specific musical features, such as key signatures, which are maintained throughout the opera. The final version was staged in 1870.

Má Vlast (My Country) is an enormous cycle of six symphonic tone poems – with expansive melodies and dramatic rhythms – which Smetana wrote between 1872 and 1880. Dedicated to the city of Prague, it stands unmatched in the classical canon as a profound statement of nationalism.

Vyšehrad (13:00) This first tone poem, cast in a more or less straightforward sonata form, refers to episodes from Czech history.

Vltava (11:00) Vltava traces the progress of the river from its source high in the Sumava mountains, through the forests and rural villages into Prague. Smetana makes reference here to folk songs as a means of depicting locations.

Sárka (10:00) Sárka is the name of a Bohemian warrior-woman who, in legend, led an army of maidens to claim vengeance against her unfaithful lover.

From Bohemian Fields and Groves (12:00) This poem is a musical description of Smetana’s beloved homeland, the countryside, and the rural people.

Tábor (12:00) Named after an ancient town in south Bohemia, this tone poem is based on a stirring choral piece, “Ye who are God’s Warriors”.

Blaník (13:00) The final poem in the cycle tells of how the valiant Hussites marched to save their land. The choral melody from Tábor returns, but now transformed into a march interspersed with the sounds of shepherds piping.
“I should be glad if something occurred to me as a main idea that occurs to Dvořák only by the way.”

JOHANNES BRAHMS
Of all the 19th-century nationalists, Dvořák was perhaps the most successful in absorbing elements of national folk music into a sophisticated Classical idiom. Hailed as a champion of Slavic music, Dvořák also spent several years in America, where his ideas about national music had a profound impact on a generation of composers. His substantial output includes ten operas, nine symphonies, and much chamber music.

LIFE

Dvořák’s father was an innkeeper and butcher in a village outside Prague, and the young Dvořák was destined for the same trade. However, he showed promise as a viola player and after studying at the Prague Organ School he took a position with the Bohemian Provisional Theatre Orchestra. During this period he was also composing in a style increasingly influenced by the nationalist music of Smetana, who conducted the theatre orchestra for a time. Dvořák was awarded a Ministry of Education stipend for composition in 1875, by a panel that included Brahms. A couple of years later, he won it again; Brahms was once more one of the judges, and was now sufficiently impressed with Dvořák’s compositions to recommend them to his publisher. Through this connection, Dvořák’s name became widely known across Europe over the next decade, and he gained a strong following in England, where he conducted a series of concerts. His fame now firmly established, in 1891 he was invited to become Director of the National Conservatory of Music in New York. Dvořák attacked this new role with gusto, and composed a series of works betraying the more or less explicit influence of American folk music. He returned to Prague in 1895, and lived there until his death.

A quiet, deeply religious ruralist at heart, Dvořák was never happier than in the countryside of his native Bohemia.

MUSICAL OUTPUT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>1841</th>
<th>1860</th>
<th>1870</th>
<th>1880</th>
<th>1890</th>
<th>1900</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SYMPHONIES (8)</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>OPERAS (10)</td>
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<tr>
<td>VOCAL (47)</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td><strong>Total: 188</strong></td>
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</table>
The Bohemian Polka was one of Dvořák’s popular Slavonic Dances.

**MUSIC**

Dvořák is often compared with Brahms, no doubt in part because the two became good friends and were great admirers of each other’s music. Dvořák wrote some of his greatest works in the Classical forms of the symphony, piano trio, and string quartet, of which Brahms is regarded as a master. Both had an interest in folk music, although in Brahms’s case this was not the music of his native country but of the Hungarian gypsies he had heard as a boy.

Dvořák’s musical temperament was rather different from that of Brahms. He never felt a weight of expectation from composing in the shadow of Beethoven. Even so, some of Dvořák’s symphonies, especially the mighty No. 7, rank among the finest in the genre. Much has been made of Dvořák’s capacity for incorporating Bohemian folk music into Classical models, in works such as the “Dumky” Piano Trio, Op. 90. By the standards of the time, he was not progressive in terms of harmony or form, but his lyrical melodies – Bohemian in style, but rarely, if ever, taken from actual folk music – are wholly distinctive.

**KEY WORKS**

**SYMPHONY NO. 7, OP. 70**

If the No. 9 is Dvořák’s best-known symphony, the No. 7 is in some ways perhaps the best. Written for the London Philharmonic Society, it is a sombre, even tragic work, less obviously influenced by folk music than the other late symphonies.

**SLAVONIC DANCES, OP. 46, 72**

Dvořák wrote his first Slavonic Dances at the instigation of Simrock, the publisher who had made a commercial success of Brahms’s Hungarian Dances. Perhaps to maximize the potential market, versions for piano duet and for orchestra were written. The pieces are not based on folk melodies but are unmistakably in the folk music style.

**STABAT MATER, OP. 58**

Based on the medieval Latin poem depicting Mary’s grief at Christ’s crucifixion, the mammoth Stabat Mater was begun in 1876 after the death of Dvořák’s daughter Josefa. He then laid it aside, but was moved to complete it some years later, after the death of two more daughters. This was the first of his works that Dvořák conducted in England, a country where he established a long-lasting reputation and great affection for his music.

**MILESTONES**

1857 Attends organ school in Prague
1866 Joins Bohemian Provisional Theatre Orchestra
1873 Cantata Hymnus, Op. 30, performed
1874 Brahms recommends Dvořák to the publisher Simrock
1877 Stabat Mater, Op. 58, completed
1878 Slavonic Dances, Book 1, Op. 46
1885 Symphony No. 7, Op. 70
1892 Director of the National Conservatory of Music in New York
1893 Symphony No. 9, Op. 95, “From the New World”
1900 Rusalka, Op. 114
1901 Returns to Prague and becomes director of Conservatory
This concerto has become a central work in the repertoire of the cello. Dvořák wrote it originally for his friend the cellist Hanus Wihan, but they fell out after Wihan made changes to the solo part and added two elaborate cadenzas, which Dvořák refused to include in the final version. Wihan eventually declined the premiere, which was given instead to Leo Stern.

**FIRST MOVEMENT** (ALLEGRO, 12:00) A lengthy orchestral introduction presents the main themes of the work before the soloist enters. Various development follows, before a radiant, full-orchestra rendition of the lyrical second theme and a triumphant close in B major.

**SECOND MOVEMENT** (LARGO, 12:30) The woodwind presents the expressive main theme before being joined by the soloist. A central section follows, quoting from a song Dvořák wrote in 1887.

The main theme finally returns, this time led by the French horns.

**THIRD MOVEMENT** (SCHERZO, 8:30) The thrilling Scherzo was based on material from Dvořák’s abandoned opera *Hiawatha*.

**FOURTH MOVEMENT** (ALLEGRO CON FUOCO, 11:30) This combines themes from earlier in the work with march-like music to produce a thrilling climax.
Janáček is amongst the most significant opera composers of the 20th century. A late developer in composition, he was nearly 50 before he completed his first successful opera, *Jenufa*, and all of his best-known works date from after this time. Perhaps more than any other nationalist composer, aspects of his native folk music were a fully integrated part of his compositional voice.

### LIFE AND MUSIC

After studying in Prague, Janáček moved to Brno, where he founded an organ school and made his living as a teacher. While dabbling in composition in a broadly late-Romantic idiom, he studied Moravian folk song and began to develop the idea that melodic lines should reflect the rhythms and pitch of Czech speech. This concept gave rise to the modal harmonies and seemingly disjointed, repetitive phrases of his mature style. In 1917, Janáček became infatuated with Kamila Stösslová and a copious correspondence followed. Their relationship remained unconsummated, but she inspired many of his late works, notably the opera *Káta Kabanová*.

#### KEY WORKS

**JENUFA**

Operatic: 120:00  3  

This was Janáček’s first full-blown attempt to write music according to his theory of “speech melody”. First staged in Brno in 1904, it was later greatly reorchestrated (at the insistence of Karel Kovarovic, director of Prague Opera) and presented successfully in Prague. This was to prove a pivotal moment in Janáček’s career.

Janáček’s entertaining opera *The Cunning Little Vixen* was inspired by animal stories in a cartoon strip.

**GLAGOLITIC MASS**

Mass setting: 40:00  8  

Janáček composed a large body of choral music, of which his masterpiece is the *Glagolitic Mass*. Almost certainly never intended for liturgical use (Janáček was a confirmed atheist) it can instead be seen as a statement of Slavic nationalism. The title refers to the alphabet used to write Old Church Slavonic. A thrilling, dramatic work, with outbursts of brass and strong rhythms, the Mass contains a notably virtuosic organ solo before the orchestral close.

### MILESTONES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1874</td>
<td>Attends Prague Organ School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>Becomes founding director of Brno Organ School (later Brno Conservatory)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1887</td>
<td>Writes first opera, <em>Sárka</em>, but rights to libretto are refused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1894</td>
<td>Begins work on <em>Jenufa</em>, opera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1894</td>
<td><em>Jenufa</em> performed for the first time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916</td>
<td>Revised version of <em>Jenufa</em> premiered in Prague to great acclaim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917</td>
<td>Meets 25-year-old Kamila Stösslová</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>Opera <em>Káta Kabanová</em> receives premiere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923</td>
<td>Completes opera <em>The Cunning Little Vixen</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>Composes <em>Sinfonietta</em> and <em>Glagolitic Mass</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>Writes opera <em>From the House of the Dead</em>, staged 1930, two years after his death</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
With a long-standing interest in Russian literature and culture, Janáček based his last opera (to his own libretto) on Dostoevsky’s novel *The House of the Dead*, though the result is more a series of vignettes than a single story. After Janáček’s death, parts of the score of Act III were found. Two of his pupils, believing the opera unfinished, “completed” it, adding a more uplifting finale and substantially changing the orchestration. It is now thought that Janáček’s sparse orchestration and bleak ending were deliberate, and the opera is usually performed as originally written.

**ACT ONE**
Goryanchikov is brought to a Siberian prison camp. He is interrogated and flogged. Other prisoners tease an eagle with a broken wing, then tell stories about their lives.

**ACT TWO**
Goryanchikov teaches a Tatar boy, Alyeya, to read and a priest dispenses Easter blessings. The prisoners put on two plays. Alyeya is attacked and wounded by a prisoner.

**ACT THREE**
In the prison hospital Alyeya recovers and a prisoner dies. Goryanchikov and the eagle – now recovered – are released to freedom.

Janáček’s last orchestral work, and probably his best known, grew out of an initial idea to write a series of fanfares for a gymnastic competition in Brno. However, it developed into an exuberant tribute to the town he had lived in since his student days, with each movement (after the initial fanfare) portraying a part of it.

**FANFARE (ALLEGRO–ALLEGRO–MAESTOSO)**
The Sinfonietta is notable for its bold inclusion of 12 trumpets. Nine of the them are heard here in chorus.

**THE CASTLE (ANDANTE–ALLEGRO)**
In reality a prison, this building is depicted by a sprightly, slightly sinister dance against a lyrical theme led by strings.

**THE QUEEN’S MONASTERY (MODERATO)**
Beginning as a nocturne, the music builds to a dramatic climax, then disappears as quickly as it began.

**THE STREET (ALLEGRO)**
The bustle of a Brno street is announced by a trumpet fanfare which is then taken up in complex counterpoint by the orchestra.

**THE TOWN HALL (ANDANTE CON MOTO)**
The most developed movement builds towards a climax: the 12 trumpets are finally heard together in a thrilling recapitulation of the opening fanfare.
Carl Goldmark

1830–1915  🇭🇺 Hungarian  🇭🇺 c.60

Largely self-taught, Goldmark established himself as a composer during his 30s, while conducting, teaching, and writing reviews in Vienna. His eclectic musical style incorporated elements of Hungarian folk and Jewish culture (his father was a cantor). His exotic opera Die Königin von Saba (The Queen of Sheba) was a triumph in Vienna and later staged worldwide. His later works were more modest successes, but he became a noted musical figure in Budapest and Vienna, and a good friend of Brahms.

MILESTONES
1858 Organizes concert of own works
1860 Composes String Quartet, Op. 8
1875 Opera Die Königin von Saba premiered
1876 New orchestral work Rustic Wedding, Op. 26, receives great popular acclaim

Ernő von Dohnányi

1877–1960  🇭🇺 Hungarian  🇭🇺 c.120

Dohnányi was the most important Hungarian musical figure of the 20th century. By his mid-20s he was the greatest composer-pianist after Liszt. After ten years teaching in Berlin he returned home and reformed Hungary’s musical life through teaching, conducting, radio, and concerts. His lyrical, vibrant works often show humour (his Variations on a Nursery Rhyme are often played), and his chamber music is particularly successful.

MILESTONES
1920 Performs all Beethoven’s piano works
1928 Head of piano and composition at Hungarian Academy in Budapest
1930s Struggles against Nazi influences
1944 Composes Symphony No. 2
1949 Setstle in US as composer-pianist at Florida State University

Bohuslav Martinu

1890–1959  🇨🇿 Czech  🇨🇿 383

Martinu was such a good violinist that his home town funded him at Prague Conservatory. Expelled for laziness, he moved to Paris, where he became recognized as a composer. Blacklisted by the Nazis for pro-Czech activities, he fled to the US, but later returned to Europe. His large output shows influences from Renaissance to jazz, using springy rhythms and themes generated from small fragments.

MILESTONES
1923 Studies in Paris with Albert Roussel
1934 Writes Piano Concerto No. 2
1938 Composes String Quartet No. 5
1941 Flees to US as refugee
1942 Moves to Switzerland
1943 Writes Hölderlin-Lieder, voice and piano
1943 Writes opera Der Kaiser von Atlantis (The Emperor of Atlantis) satirizing Hitler
1944 Dies at Auschwitz

Viktor Ullmann

1898–1944  🇨🇿 Czech  🇨🇿 70

The career Ullmann was building in Prague as a freelance composer, teacher, journalist and broadcaster was cut short by Nazi anti-Jewish policies when he was sent to Terezín concentration camp. In two years of extraordinary musical life there, he directed the Studio for New Music, wrote reviews, performed, and composed satisfying and accessible music for concerts for prisoners, many being excellent musicians. Ullmann died at Auschwitz; his manuscripts were saved.

MILESTONES
1898 Born Teschen (now Český Těšín in the Czech Republic)
1933 Writes Schönberg Variations for orchestra
1942 Sent to Terezín by the Nazis
1943 String Quartet No. 3 composed
1943 Writes Holderlin-Lieder, voice and piano
1943 Writes opera Der Kaiser von Atlantis (The Emperor of Atlantis) satirizing Hitler
1944 Dies at Auschwitz
Max Bruch

1838–1920

German

Bruch was an important figure in 19th-century German musical life, both as a composer and a conductor. He is chiefly remembered for his melodic Violin Concerto No. 1, although he also composed much choral music and several operas. Conservative by nature, Bruch believed music should be tuneful and accessible, and vehemently opposed the innovations of contemporaries such as Richard Strauss and Max Reger.

LIFE AND MUSIC

Bruch was born in Cologne and received his first music lessons from his mother. A musical prodigy, his Symphony No. 1 was premiered when he was just 14. After study in Frankfurt, he returned to teach in Cologne and began to establish himself as a composer and, chiefly, conductor. Various posts followed, including three years at the Liverpool Philharmonic Society, before he became professor of composition at the Berlin Academy in 1891. Bruch’s straightforwardly Romantic idiom was essentially backward-looking, especially when compared with that of his later contemporaries. However, he had an undoubted gift for melody, and his best works, including his Symphony No. 3 and his famous Violin Concerto No. 1, make up for in beauty what they might seem to lack in depth.

KEY WORKS

VIOLIN CONCERTO NO. 1

This concerto, in G minor, is Bruch’s best-known work, and one of the most popular violin concertos in the repertoire. The first movement is an extended dialogue between soloist and orchestra which flows without pause into the second, an idea Bruch adapted from Mendelssohn. The famous Adagio shows Bruch’s lyrical gift at its finest and Kol Nidrei, with its richly emotional cello part, was inspired by the Jewish prayer sung on the eve of Yom Kippur.

KOL NIDREI

Written for solo cello and orchestra, this piece was written in Liverpool and premiered there by the cellist Robert Hausmann. Based on a Jewish prayer, Bruch’s setting is remarkable for the cello’s evocation of an anguished baritone human voice.

MILESTONES

1863 Produces Die Loreley, the second and most enduring of his three operas
1866 Writes Violin Concerto No. 1
1867 Appointed director of court orchestra at Schwartzburg-Sondershausen
1880 Appointed conductor of the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra
1881 Composes Kol Nidrei, orchestral work; marries the singer Clara Tuczek
1883 Conductor of the Breslau Orchesterverein; extensive US tour
1891 Becomes professor of composition at Berlin Academy; keeps post until 1910
1893 Honorary doctorate from Cambridge
1898 Begins two years as conductor of Scottish Orchestra
Joseph Rheinberger

- **1839–1901**
- **German**
- **200**

Rheinberger’s lavish talents as organist and composer, but primarily as a teacher, saw him progress quickly from student to professor at the Munich Conservatory, and he received many honours through a long and successful career. His wife was a poet, and he set many of her works – amongst his large output of orchestral, chamber, and vocal music – which were masterfully crafted in traditional styles. His work is most familiar to organists and Catholic choirmasters, with the 20 organ sonatas among his finest achievements. He is also remembered for his fine church music, which includes numerous Masses and three Requiems.

As organist and choral conductor at St Michael’s Church in Munich from 1860–66, Rheinberger composed many richly-textured sacred works.

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Alexander von Zemlinsky

- **1871–1942**
- **Austrian**
- **c.70**

Zemlinsky was known chiefly as an excellent conductor and as a champion of Czech music. He held various posts in Vienna, Prague, and Berlin, before fleeing from the Nazis to New York. As a composer, his relatively traditional music was more successful in his early career than later on, when it was eclipsed by his pupils’ modernism – he taught Berg, Schoenberg (his brother-in-law), and Webern. The intense, emotional quality of much of his music (such as in *Die Seejungfrau*) reflects his rejection by Alma Schindler, another of his pupils, in favour of Mahler. In his last years, Zemlinsky had to turn to composing hackwork to make ends meet. He suffered a series of strokes and died almost forgotten.

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### MILESTONES

**Rheinberger**

- **1851** Moves to Munich to study
- **1859** After 100 unreleased pieces, publishes his Op. 1
- **1867** Becomes a professor; marries Franziska von Hoffnaass
- **1869** Writes *Der Tümers Töchterlein*, opera
- **1894** Ennobled
- **1898** Composes Mass in F, Op. 190

**Zemlinsky**

- **1896** Opera *Serena* wins major prize
- **1903** *Die Seejungfrau*, symphonic fantasy
- **1921** *Der Zwerg*, opera, performed
- **1923** Composes his *Lyric Symphony*
- **1924** Conducts premiere of Schoenberg’s *Erwartung*
- **1938** Flees to New York

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The rise of the Nazi Party in Germany, in 1933, forced Zemlinsky to move to Vienna. In 1938, after the Anschluss, he emigrated to the US along with many other Austrian Jews.
Hugo Wolf

1860–1903  Austrian  c.350

One of the greatest masters of Lieder, Wolf composed some 300 songs, developing and extending the tradition of Schubert and Schumann. A committed disciple of Wagner, his use of *Leitmotiv* – and his complete integration of music and text – transformed the Lied into a truly dramatic form. Wolf’s music was very much affected by the depressive episodes from which his suffered throughout his life.

**LIFE AND MUSIC**

After briefly attending the Vienna Conservatory, Wolf scraped together an impecunious existence until he secured a job as music critic for the *Wiener Salonblatt* in 1884. There he made a name for himself with caustic writing, an ardently pro-Wagnerian stance, and an implacable antipathy towards Brahms. From 1887 he resolved to compose full-time, and in the following nine years produced all of his most significant works. Eventually overcome by the mental illness that had dogged his adult life, he died in an asylum aged just 42. His musical significance rests on his songs, which are characterized by an unusual affinity with the poetic text and an intensity of emotional expression redolent of large-scale dramatic forms, such as opera or symphony.

**MILESTONES**

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<td>1875</td>
<td>Attends the Vienna Conservatory – dismissed in 1877</td>
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<td>1870s</td>
<td>Contracts syphilis</td>
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<td>1880</td>
<td>Composes <em>Italian Serenade</em> for string quartet</td>
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<td>1883</td>
<td>Writes <em>Penthesilea</em>, symphonic poem</td>
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<td>1884</td>
<td>Becomes critic for <em>Wiener Salonblatt</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>1887</td>
<td>First songs published</td>
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<td>1889</td>
<td>Writes settings of <em>Goethe</em> (51), <em>Mörike</em> (53), and <em>Eichendorff</em> (20)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>Writes <em>Spanisches Liederbuch</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>Composes <em>Italienisches Liederbuch</em> (vol. 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td><em>Der Corregidor</em>, opera, performed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>Writes <em>Italienisches Liederbuch</em> (vol. 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1897</td>
<td>Mental breakdown, leading to terminal illness; committed to asylum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**KEY WORKS**

**GOETHE LIEDER**

Schubert made extensive settings of Goethe, and by choosing to set the same poet, Wolf consciously aligned himself with the great Lieder tradition. The Goethe songs date from Wolf’s most productive period and typify his mature style. The texts were given prominence, and were thus acknowledged as the inspiration for his music.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Wolf’s admiration for literature is shown by his setting of texts by many great poets from Shakespeare to Mörike.

**SPANISCHES LIEDERBUCH**

For the Spanish songs, Wolf chose German translations of Spanish texts from the 17th and 18th centuries. He allowed his musical imagination free reign to capture the Mediterranean character of the texts, and the resulting songs are filled with dance rhythms and pseudo-guitar figuration. Admired for this colourful, evocative, and inspiring Spanish collection, Wolf was perceived, in certain quarters, to be one of the finest songwriters of his time.
Despite being a prolific and wide-ranging composer, Reger’s music has failed to capture audiences’ imaginations. At its best, it has the authority of Brahms, allied with more progressive harmony; at its worst, it can seem dense, dry, and harmonically wayward. Much admired by his professional colleagues, Reger was nonetheless a difficult character who made many enemies and aroused strong opinions.

**LIFE AND MUSIC**

Reger led an unremarkable life. After studying with the great musicologist Reimann, he gained a post at the Leipzig Conservatory, where he remained until his death. He was famously hard-living and hard-drinking, partaking of everything (some would say composition included) to excess. Reger’s music can arguably be seen as the missing link between Brahms and Schoenberg as, like them, he venerated Bachian counterpoint. Often, however, the density of his contrapuntal writing and incessant shifts of harmony make his music hard to follow. His orchestral music can often feel almost impenetrable, but his large volume of chamber works is perhaps his most significant contribution to the concert repertoire.

**KEY WORKS**

**VARIATIONS AND FUGUE ON A THEME BY J A HILLER**

Among the more approachable of Reger’s orchestral works, this set of 11 variations and a fugue is based on a theme from Johann Adam Hiller’s stage work *Der Aerndtkranz*. Somewhat akin to a longer, more austere version of Brahms’s *Academic Festival Overture*, the work nonetheless bursts with invention and elaborate scoring.

Arnold Böcklin’s *The Isle of the Dead* inspired Reger to compose his orchestral *Four Böcklin Tone-Pictures* in 1913.

**INTRODUCTION, PASSACAGLIA AND FUGUE IN E MINOR**

Of all Reger’s output, the works he composed for organ, most of which were written before he was 25, have established the most secure position in the repertoire. Indeed, in some quarters he is regarded as the most significant organ composer since Bach. The organ was the perfect medium for Reger to indulge his passion for counterpoint, as is well illustrated in this monumental work, commissioned by the city of Breslau.
Franz Schmidt

1874–1939  Austrian  50

A highly regarded and much-honoured pianist, cellist, conductor, and teacher in Vienna, Schmidt also found time to compose some impressive, large-scale works. These often show a Hungarian influence (he was from a Hungarian-speaking German family), as well as Classical-Romantic accomplishment and, in the fine works for organ, the influence of J S Bach. Schmidt’s life was not easy: he battled against poor health all his life, his mentally ill first wife was murdered by the Nazis, and his daughter, commemorated in his Symphony No. 4 (his last), died shortly after birth. It was his symphonies that earned him most fame, although his opera Notre Dame from which he drew an orchestral gypsy-style intermezzo, was also an international success.

MILESTONES

- 1901 Starts teaching at Vienna Conservatory
- 1904 Completes Notre Dame, opera
- 1930 Composes Variationen über ein Husarenlied (Variations on a Hussar Song), orchestral
- 1932 Composes Symphony No. 4
- 1937 Completes Das Buch mit sieben Siegeln (The Book with Seven Seals), oratorio; composes Solemn Fugue for organ

Schmidt's oratorio The Book with Seven Seals, composed between 1935 and 1937, was the only vocal work he completed apart from his two operas. It is inspired by biblical visions of the Last Judgement.

Sigfrid Karg-Elert

1877–1933  German  c.150

Karg-Elert’s life was unusual: he married the daughter of the woman who had borne him an illegitimate son. His musical life was also unusual: despite being a talented pianist, he specialized in composing for the then popular art-harmonium, developed in France in the late 19th century. From 1924, he gave weekly radio harmonium recitals from his house in Leipzig. He also composed many works for organ, which were influenced by Impressionism and historical polyphonic styles. Popularity in England (a festival of his organ music was held in London) then made him unpopular in Germany. Short of money, he toured the US, but disastrously.

MILESTONES

- 1906 Composes Konzertstücke, harmonium
- 1910 Completes 66 Chorale Improvisations for organ
- 1912 Composes Sonata No. 2, harmonium
- c1918 Destroys 20 works in an artistic crisis
- 1919 Becomes professor at Leipzig
- 1930 Karg-Elert Festival held in London

An excellent organist, Karg-Elert also composed extensively for the harmonium. Among his best-known works are 33 stylistic studies inspired by the styles of composers as diverse as Palestrina and Schoenberg.
Fritz Kreisler

A violin virtuoso of legendary sweet tone, expressiveness, and natural ability, Kreisler was a child prodigy who won the Paris Conservatoire’s Gold Medal at 12. His virtuoso career – which lasted nearly 50 years – was disrupted by spells of fighting in World War I, fleeing the Nazis, and a traffic accident in 1941. Best known for his evocative, rich-toned performances of the Brahms and Beethoven violin concertos, he also gave the first recital of Elgar’s Violin Concerto. An accomplished composer, too, he produced an operetta, a string quartet, and a variety of solos. More surprisingly, Kreisler proved also to be an imaginative hoaxer, admitting in 1935 that many of the 18th-century violin solos that he had “discovered”, apparently by names such as Gaetano Pugnani or François Francoeur, had in fact been written by him. Not all critics were amused. But his dazzling, attractive forgeries continue to appeal to violinists and audiences, and they are frequently performed, though now are firmly attributed to Kreisler.

Hanns Eisler

After receiving free lessons from Schoenberg in the 1920s, Eisler discovered Marx, and became a committed communist. Dissatisfied with new music, he wrote strongly political songs, theatre, and cabaret music, and film scores in an easily understood, yet clever style. In the 1930s, playwright Bertolt Brecht became a lifelong friend and collaborator. When Hitler came to power, Eisler’s work was banned and he was exiled. He fled to the US, where he wrote songs and film music, including the score for Fritz Lang’s Hangmen Also Die. In the 1940s he fell foul of McCarthyism, and was deported to East Germany, where he wrote music for stage and film.

**MILESTONES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1882</td>
<td>Enters Musikverein Konservatorium</td>
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<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>Tours the US before medical studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>Starts his virtuoso career in Berlin</td>
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<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>Performs Elgar’s Violin Concerto</td>
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<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>Fights for Austria in World War I</td>
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<tr>
<td>1919</td>
<td>Writes <em>Apple Blossoms</em>, operetta</td>
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<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>Admits to compositional hoaxes</td>
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<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>Becomes US citizen</td>
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**MILESTONES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1923</td>
<td>Composes Piano Sonata No. 1, Op. 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>Teaches music in Berlin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>Writes <em>Die Massnahme</em>, music for stage</td>
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<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>Composes the “German” Symphony</td>
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<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>Deported from the US</td>
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<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>Writes <em>Aufstehen aus Ruinen</em>, East Germany’s national anthem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>Schweiß in zweiten Weltkrieg, for stage</td>
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**During America’s “Red Scare”,** Eisler fell victim to the infamous witch-hunts spear-headed by Joe McCarthy (centre). Tried by the House Un-American Activities Committee, Eisler was found guilty and deported.
Despite composing countless large-scale stage works, Orff’s fame rests almost entirely on just one, the hugely successful Carmina Burana. But perhaps his most lasting legacy lies in his innovative attitude to music education. Realizing the intrinsic relationship between music and movement, Orff stressed the value of playful participation, particularly through the use of voice and percussion.

**LIFE AND MUSIC**

Orff was born, raised, and educated in Munich, where in 1924 he co-founded a school for gymnastics, music, and dance. His hands-on approach emphasized direct experience and active participation, particularly through the use of voices and simple percussion instruments. Orff’s own music reflects Stravinsky’s influence and a passion for Classical texts. Striving for a musical language that would engage the listener’s primitive impulses, Orff’s sound-world is filled with pulsing rhythms, percussion, and direct vocal expression, achieving a powerfully visceral and sensual appeal.

**MILESTONES**

- **1912** Attends Munich Academy of Music
- **1914** Leaves Academy to join army
- **1924** Co-founds the Günther School (with Dorothee Günther)
- **1930** Writes Music for Children, Vol. 1
- **1937** Carmina Burana, cantata, premiered
- **1943** Antigone, opera, performed
- **1950** Appointed professor of composition at Munich High School for Music
- **1961** Founds Orff Institute, in Salzburg, providing courses for music teachers

**KEY WORKS**

**CARMINA BURANA**

Conceived for the stage, but more often performed as a concert oratorio, Carmina Burana is a setting of old German texts found at Benediktbeuern Monastery. However, its subject matter is rather less than holy, as the work’s subtitle, Cantiones profanae, implies. For instance, Bibunt Omnes, which closes the central section, is a drinking song. The passage most often played on film is the evocative finale O Fortuna, now one of the best-known pieces of 20th-century classical music.

**MUSIC FOR CHILDREN**

Whilst not strictly part of his serious output, Orff’s Das Schulwerk, Musik für Kinder (Schoolwork, Music for Children) ranks with Carmina Burana as his most significant and lasting contribution. Written for very young children to play with simple percussion instruments, Orff’s musical “schoolwork” shows his flair for and theory of teaching music.

The panoramic stage pageant Carmina Burana, famous for its infectious rhythms and arresting vocals, enjoyed instant and phenomenal success.
Edvard Grieg

 وإذا 1843–1907  🇳🇴 Norwegian  🎵 c.80

Grieg is undoubtedly Norway's greatest composer and is responsible, together with Sibelius and Nielsen, for putting Scandinavia on the musical map. His exploration of Norway’s folk music, and collaborations with Norwegian writers, helped him to develop a style that was unmistakably nationalist in spirit. Generally more comfortable with smaller-scale forms, he wrote many songs, piano pieces, and chamber works.

LIFE AND MUSIC

After studying in Leipzig, Grieg moved to Copenhagen to develop his career as a pianist. It was there that he met the young Norwegian composer Rikard Nordraak, who emphasized to him the need for a distinctive Norwegian music. On his return to Norway, Grieg began studying traditional folk music, and elements of this gradually pervaded his own romantic musical language. Sometimes derided as a miniaturist, it is nonetheless true – with the notable exception of the majestic Piano Concerto – that his best work is found in his lyrical songs, or his exquisitely crafted instrumental pieces.

KEY WORKS

LYRIC PIECES

SOLO PIANO 🎶 66 🎵

Grieg wrote ten volumes of “Lyric Pieces” for solo piano between 1867 and 1901. These delightful miniatures, full of references to traditional dance music, nature, and nationalist sentiment, show Grieg’s art at its finest. They became a lucrative source of income for Grieg in his later years.

HOLBERG SUITE

ORCHESTRAL 🎵 19:00 🎵 5 🎵

Originally composed for piano, the Holberg Suite is now better known in its orchestrated version. Sometimes cited as an early example of musical Neo-Classicism, Grieg’s charming score is a pastiche of a French dance suite that was popular in Ludvig Holberg’s time.

MILESTONES

1858 Studies in Leipzig
1863 Moves to Copenhagen
1865 Composes Violin Sonata, No. 1, Op. 8
1866 Moves to Christiania (now Oslo)
1867 Marries Nina Hangerup, his first cousin
1868 Writes Piano Concerto in A minor
1874 Awarded a national artists’ grant; moves back to Bergen
1876 Writes music for Henrik Ibsen’s drama Peer Gynt, Op. 23
1880 Becomes conductor of the Harmonien Orchestra in Bergen
1884 Holberg Suite, Op. 40 (piano version)
1895 Composes Haugtussa, Op. 67

Hauagtussa, Op. 67  🎵 30:00 🎵 8 🎵

Haugtussa is a song cycle to poems by Arne Garborg, and one of many works that Grieg wrote for his wife Nina to sing. Telling the story of a simple shepherdess and her ill-fated love affair, Grieg’s delightful settings evoke images of the Norwegian countryside.

Peer Gynt tells the story of a young rogue who travels the world in search of fortune and fantastical adventures.
As a student in Leipzig, Grieg heard Schumann’s Piano Concerto, and his own concerto owes a clear debt to that work. Another influence was Liszt, who saw the work in manuscript and reportedly impressed the composer by playing it perfectly at sight. Premiered to great success in Copenhagen, the concerto is now among the most popular in the repertoire.

**FIRST MOVEMENT** *(ALLEGRO MOLTO MODERATO 12:00)* The opening bars of the Piano Concerto must be one of the most instantly recognizable in all Classical music – above a roll of timpani, the piano enters with a dramatic sequence of descending octaves. The remainder of the movement is a compressed sonata form, with a passionate cadenza appearing before the close.

**SECOND MOVEMENT** *(ADAGIO 6:00)* This lyrical movement is deceptive in its simplicity, disguising a sophisticated command of harmony.

**THIRD MOVEMENT** *(ALLEGRO MODERATO MOLTO E MARCATO 9:00)* Full of virtuosic writing for the soloist, the concerto’s finale is its most distinctively Norwegian movement, with references to folk dances and even imitations of the hardanger (a Norwegian instrument).

Based loosely on Norwegian fairy tales, *Peer Gynt* was originally written as an extended prose-poem; however, its popularity led Ibsen to produce a stage version in 1876.

Grieg’s two *Peer Gynt* suites were drawn from 23 short pieces he composed as incidental music for the play’s first production. For Grieg, a master of the miniature, incidental theatre music was an ideal form – the perfect medium for his memorable short character pieces.

Among the eight pieces that comprise the two suites, three have become especially well known. *Morning Mood*, which opens the first suite, sets a beautiful rocking melody to a backdrop of woodwind bird calls. *In the Hall of the Mountain King* is a tongue-in-cheek depiction of the Troll King’s lair, with a tentative theme gradually accelerating into grotesque dance. *Solveig’s Song*, the final movement of the second suite, is based around a typically lyrical melody for strings with harp accompaniment.

Influences

Grieg has come to be somewhat marginalized in the history of Classical music. Nonetheless, his most important influence was surely on the French composers of the early 20th century. Ravel said that – besides Debussy – there was “no composer to whom I feel a closer affinity”. Today, his work is returning to critical favour.
Carl Nielsen

1865–1931  Danish  c.120

Nielsen was one of the most important symphonic composers of the 20th century, and certainly the most famous Danish composer in history. He developed a highly individual compositional voice, at times romantic and passionate, at others aggressive and almost atonal, but always highly charged. In addition to six symphonies, he wrote three concertos, two operas, quartets, and a popular wind quintet.

LIFE AND MUSIC

Despite a rural upbringing as one of 14 children, Nielsen learned piano, violin, and trumpet. After studying at the Copenhagen Conservatory, he became a violinist in the Danish Royal Theatre Orchestra. Somewhat shielded from the European mainstream, and receiving little formal compositional training, his music developed along a highly individual path. His harmony, whilst essentially tonal, remains unique; he often created tension by using keys in opposing blocks, the work finishing in the “winning” key. The idea of struggle was central to his music, often explicitly so, as in his Symphony No. 5 where the drummer is instructed to improvise, as if to drown out the orchestra.

KEY WORKS

SYMPHONY NO. 1

ORCHESTRAL  33:00  4

This symphony gives the first example of Nielsen’s “progressive tonality”. A struggle between G minor and G major leads eventually to the work’s conclusion in the latter key, despite opening in the former. One reviewer described the sound of the symphony as “a child playing with dynamite” and the work is now seen as an important forerunner to Nielsen’s later musical development.

MASKARADE

OPERA  80:00  3

Nielsen’s comic opera shows a less familiar side of his music. Written extremely quickly, it is a glorious comedy of social conventions with an inspired, if somewhat chaotic, score. Still hugely popular in Denmark, it has been somewhat neglected elsewhere.

MILESTONES

1884  Attends Copenhagen Conservatory
1886  Joins Royal Theatre Orchestra as second violinist
1894  Writes Symphony No. 1
1901  Saul and David, opera, performed
1902  Composes Symphony No. 2, “The Four Temperaments”
1908  Becomes conductor of the Royal Theatre Orchestra
1911  Symphony No. 3, “Sinfonia espansiva”
1916  Appointed professor at Royal Danish Conservatory; writes Symphony No. 4, “The Inextinguishable”
1922  Composes Symphony No. 5
1925  Writes Symphony No. 6, “Semplice”
1928  Clarinet Concerto premiered
SYMPHONY NO. 4, “THE INEXTINGUISHABLE”

Orchestral 37:00 p 4 o

Probably Nielsen’s most popular symphony, this work’s curious title refers not to the symphony itself, but rather to the “elemental will of life”, which, like music, is inextinguishable. Nielsen recognized his Symphony No. 4 as the beginning of a new, “organic” phase in his composition – the development of a direct musical language that was not programmatic, but which gave the appearance of growing naturally and spontaneously of its own volition (for the first time, the four movements are linked together). It was written at a difficult time for Nielsen: his marriage was on the rocks and he had resigned from the Copenhagen Opera. Also there is no doubt that World War I had an impact on the symphony, especially in the musical battle between two sets of timpani in the final movement.

FIRST MOVEMENT (ALLEGRO 12:00) The first movement pits an insistent triplet theme, introduced in counterpoint between wind and strings, against a radiant second subject in thirds.

SECOND MOVEMENT (POCO ALLEGRO 5:00) The second movement is a pastoral, led by the woodwind in a manner that is at once almost naively folk-like and yet oddly unsettled.

THIRD MOVEMENT (POCO ADAGIO QUASI ANDANTE 10:30) The slow movement begins with a brooding theme on unison violins, punctuated by timpani beats and joined in a sparse counterpoint by the violas and cellos. A solo violin introduces a warmer theme before emphatic woodwind restatements of the opening material build to a stormy climax.

FOURTH MOVEMENT (ALLEGRO – GLORIOSO – TEMPO GIUSTO 9:30) The finale is a dramatic duel between two timpanists, positioned at either side of the stage.

This delightful work – based on Ærla Saga – describes the passage in which Gunnar Hlidarende dreams of being pursued by wolves. Low strings open the work with a dreamy melody over a pedal bass. After a chorale on the brass, accompanied by ostinato figures on the strings, a slightly faster section is led by the woodwind. Technically the most remarkable, the central section is a sequence of overlapping cadenzas for six instruments that enter one at a time and are left to play at their own tempo before being brought to a halt by the entry of the strings. A final passage of muted trumpet fanfares brings the work to a gentle conclusion.

WHILST his earliest works show the clear influence of Beethoven and Brahms, Nielsen’s unique mature style sets him apart. Few later composers have tackled the Classical symphony with such originality and vigour; along with Sibelius and Mahler, Nielsen may be thought to have had the last word on the subject.
### Johan Svendsen

**MILESTONES**

- **1876** Composes Symphony No. 2, Op. 15
- **1877** Norwegian Rhapsodies published
- **1881** Writes Romance for violin and orchestra

**About Johan Svendsen**

After an early career as a virtuoso violinist, Svendsen turned to composing. His music – which shows a natural mastery of large, traditional forms – complements that of his good friend and compatriot Grieg. However, he was also in such demand as a conductor that he composed little of importance after moving to Copenhagen in 1883. Although his style is Romantic, it contains elements of Norwegian folk music. Only two of his symphonies survive; in 1882 the manuscript of the third was burned in a jealous rage by his American wife, from whom he was later divorced.

### Fredrik Pacius

**MILESTONES**

- **1828** Violinist, court orchestra, Stockholm
- **1834** Settles in Helsinki
- **1848** Writes “Our Country”, patriotic song
- **1852** The Hunt of King Charles, opera
- **1887** Composes Loreley, opera

**About Fredrik Pacius**

After moving to Helsinki to lecture at the university, Pacius became a central figure in Finnish musical life. Whilst organizing concerts and conducting choirs, he wrote pieces in the style of Mendelssohn and Louis Spohr that include a string quartet, a violin concerto, songs, stage music, and the beginnings of a symphony. His singspiel Kung Karls jakt (*The Hunt of King Charles*) was his most important work, and his patriotic song “Vårt Land” (“Our Country”) was adopted as Finland’s national anthem.

### Armas Järnefelt

**MILESTONES**

- **1892** Sister Aino marries Sibelius
- **1903** Becomes director of Helsinki opera
- **1904** Writes Berceuse for small orchestra
- **1907** Conductor of Royal Opera, Sweden; composes Praeludium for small orchestra
- **1910** Takes Swedish nationality
- **1932** Returns to Finland

**About Armas Järnefelt**

Järnefelt’s working life was spent in Finland and Sweden. After studies in Helsinki, Berlin, and Paris, he held various significant posts as opera and court conductor in Stockholm before returning to Finland. He was especially well known for his interpretations of Sibelius, who was his brother-in-law, and gave the first Swedish performances of works by Mahler and Schoenberg. Järnefelt’s main fame as a composer rests on two lyrical pieces for orchestra: *Praeludium* – from music for the drama *The Promised Land* and *Berceuse*. He also wrote choral works, piano music, and film scores in a Romantic style, often with evocative Finnish titles.
Christian August Sinding

Though now a rather distant second to Grieg, Sinding was very much the “other” Norwegian Romantic composer in his lifetime. He went to Leipzig to study violin, but quickly proved to be an adept and prolific composer, writing rich, strong music clearly influenced by Wagner and Liszt. He stayed in Germany for many years, financed by the Norwegian government, and was also professor of composition at the University of Rochester, New York, for two years. Perhaps because of the Romantic density and heaviness of his music, his work declined in popularity after his death; however, the well-known piano piece The Rustle of Spring is often heard in recitals and found on CD.

MILESTONES
1856–1941 ⚽ Norwegian ⚽ c.150

Christian August Sinding

NATIONAL SCHOOLS – SCANDINAVIAN

Selim Palmgren

Palmgren is best known for his evocative, wide-ranging, and graphic piano music: he wrote five concertos (No. 2 being an international success at the time) and more than 250 solo pieces. The works show a strong sense of mood and imagery: a fine pianist, Palmgren knew first-hand how to exploit the instrument’s possibilities. After an early career conducting the Finnish Students’ Choral Society, he concentrated on performing and toured widely across Europe and the US. For the last 15 years of his life he taught at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki.

MILESTONES
1878–1951 ⚽ Finnish ⚽ c.500

MILESTONES
1907 Composes 24 Preludes, piano
1913 Piano Concerto No. 2, “Virta” (“The River”), completed

MILESTONES
1874 Studies at Leipzig Conservatory
1884 Composes Piano Quintet, Op. 5
1889 Piano Concerto, Op. 6, published
1890 Writes Symphony No. 1, Op. 21
1896 The Rustle of Spring, Op. 36, No. 6
1898 Writes Violin Concerto No. 1, Op. 45
1912 Composes The Holy Mountain, opera

Rikard Nordraak

Sent to business school in Copenhagen at 15, the young Nordraak studied music instead and became an ardent member of the new national movement in art. He founded Euterpe – a society to promote Scandinavian composers – with his friend Grieg. His simple, economical music includes Norway’s national anthem, “Ja, vi elsker dette landet” (“Yes, We Love This Land”). Nordraak was still developing as a composer when he met his premature death, but his influence on Grieg makes him a seminal figure in Norwegian music.

MILESTONES
1859 Joins New Norwegian Society
1860 Writes Four Dances for piano, Op. 1
1864 “Ja, vi elsker dette landet” first sung, 17 May
1865 Maria Stuart i Skotland, incidental music, published
1866 Contracts tuberculosis and dies

MILESTONES
1842–1866 ⚽ Norwegian ⚽ 25

Rikard Nordraak

Selim Palmgren

b 1878–1951 n Finnish w c.500

Selim Palmgren

b 1856–1941 n Norwegian w c.150
“I have more skill, but he is greater.”

RICHARD STRAUSS ON SIBELIUS
Jean Sibelius

1865–1957  Finnish  134

Sibelius ranks alongside Mahler and Carl Nielsen as one of the most important symphonists of the 20th century. His earlier, often fervently nationalist works were in a late-Romantic idiom, but in later years he developed a highly original musical language characterized by slow-moving harmony and distinctive, sometimes stark orchestration. Sibelius composed a number of tone poems based on Nordic subjects.

LIFE

Born into a Swedish-speaking family, Sibelius went to Helsinki to study law, but soon abandoned this in favour of full-time music study at the Helsinki Music Institute (now the Sibelius Academy). He befriended the composer Ferruccio Busoni, who encouraged him to seek further experience in Europe. After two years in Berlin and Vienna, Sibelius returned to Finland in 1892, taking a position at the Institute. Success came almost instantaneously with the vast symphonic poem *Kullervo*. Based on a character from Finnish mythology, it was a bald statement of nationalism at a time when Finland was itself a Grand Duchy under Russia’s control. The Finnish cultural establishment took to Sibelius immediately, and his native fame was assured from that point on. However, it was not until his Symphony No. 1 (1899) that he began to achieve international recognition.

In 1904, unable to concentrate on composition in Helsinki, he built a house in the country and lived there for the rest of his life. Around this time his mature style began to emerge, less overtly patriotic and more concerned with “pure” music. The next 20 years were the most productive of Sibelius’s life, although, after the bleak tone poem *Tapiola* in 1926, he wrote little in his final three decades.

MUSICAL OUTPUT

<table>
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<tr>
<td>SYMPHONIES (7)</td>
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<tr>
<td>PIANO (36)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>CHORAL (25)</td>
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</table>

An austere, unsmiling, yet good-natured and humorous man, Sibelius found inspiration in the nature and landscape of his native Finland.
Finland had no significant tradition of art music before Sibelius, and so it is no surprise that his major early influence was Tchaikovsky. Most of the works up to the Violin Concerto (1903) are conspicuously late Romantic and somewhat Russian in tone, their individuality coming more from their overtly nationalist programme than any unusual musical characteristics. Gradually, however, Sibelius’s view of music – especially symphonic music – began to change. This is best illustrated by an oft-quoted conversation he had with Mahler, when the latter visited him in Helsinki in 1907. Discussing the most important aspects of a symphony, Sibelius admired “severity of style and the profound logic that creates an inner connection between all the motifs”. Mahler countered to the contrary that “the symphony must be like the world. It must embrace everything.” For Sibelius, the symphony was an organic form, growing naturally from its opening bars. It is not fanciful to hear the increasing influence of Finnish natural life in the rugged, starkly beautiful music of his late works.

Many of Sibelius’s music refers to stories from Finnish mythology collected in the Kalevala, such as the story of Lemminkäinen’s mother in his Lemminkäinen Suite.

**MILESTONES**

- 1886: Studies in Helsinki; befriends Busoni
- 1889: Begins studies in Europe
- 1902: Symphony No. 2, Op. 43, composed
- 1904: Moves out of Helsinki
- 1907: Meets Mahler in Helsinki; composes Symphony No. 3, Op. 52
- 1914: Honorary doctorate from Yale
- 1923: Composes Symphony No. 6, Op. 104
- 1924: Symphony No. 7, Op. 105, composed
- 1926: Composes symphonic poem Tapiola, Op. 112

**KEY WORKS**

**KULLERVO, OP. 7**

*Kullervo* is not normally counted as one of Sibelius’s symphonies, but it is certainly symphonic in scope. A huge work, this tone poem takes as its text portions of the *Kalevala* – an epic poem compiled by the writer Elias Lönnrot from Finnish folk sources – which was itself a cornerstone of the burgeoning 19th-century Finnish nationalist movement.

**SYMPHONY NO. 4, OP. 63**

This piece was written in 1911, during a period of personal difficulty for Sibelius. Still convalescing from an operation to remove a throat tumour, he was under pressure to compose from his new publisher. The symphony contains some of his most difficult, stark music, and was described even by the composer himself as a “psychological” work.

**TAPIOLA, OP. 112**

*Tapiola* is the god of the forest in the *Kalevala*, and Sibelius’s *Tapiola* is a symphonic poem depicting his dark, magical kingdom. This late work is a fine example of Sibelius’s organic approach to composition; most of the material evolves directly from the murky opening theme.
In 1899, Sibelius wrote music to accompany a series of patriotic tableaux depicting events in Finnish history, exhibited as part of the Press Celebrations and intended as a statement of Finnish nationalism. Parts of the work were performed in concert later in the year, and the stirring finale, originally titled “Finland Awakes”, soon became popular with audiences. The following year Sibelius revised the work as a stand-alone concert version. 

_Symphony No. 5, Op. 82_

Orchestral 3:00

Originally written in 1915 and presented as part of his 50th birthday celebrations, Sibelius was unhappy with performances of this symphony and immediately set about revising it. The now familiar version appeared in 1919, having been altered in significant respects, most especially in the collapsing together of the first two movements. This piece remains probably Sibelius’s most popular and accessible symphony, a good-natured work that stands in total contrast to the stark, brooding Symphony No. 4.

**First Movement** (Tempo Molto Moderato – Largamente – Allegro Moderato 13:00) An opening section scored for wind, horns, and drum presents the main theme, which is subsequently developed before a toccata-like section brings the movement to a grandiose close.

**Second Movement** (Andante Molto, quasi Allegretto 8:00) The Andante is a set of variations on a simple, pastoral theme presented after a short introduction.

**Third Movement** (Allegro Molto 9:00) The finale is one of the most exciting movements in Sibelius’s symphonic oeuvre. Its second main theme, played by the horn, was likened by one critic to Thor swinging his hammer.

In stylistic terms, Sibelius’s influence on later composers is difficult to gauge since – along with the Danish composer Carl Nielsen – he represents the very end of a long tradition. However, his impact on Scandinavian music in general, and Finnish music in particular, was inestimable, as was his contribution to the development of the tone poem.
“There is music in the air. All you have to do is take as much as you require.”

EDWARD ELGAR
One of the constants of Elgar’s life was his love for the countryside of his native Worcestershire and the Malvern Hills. He and his family returned many times to this part of England, where he had spent his early career as a freelance musician, regularly travelling the countryside to visit his piano pupils. It was one of these pupils, Caroline Alice Roberts, whom he later married and who gave him much of the encouragement he needed to concentrate more fully on composition. Despite initial difficulties in gaining national recognition as a composer, Elgar soon built up a solid reputation during the 1890s based on a series of choral works for festival performance. It was his “Enigma” Variations, however, that truly cemented his national reputation as a composer. Following this success, his other works were hugely anticipated: the masterly oratorio The Dream of Gerontius, the two symphonies, and the concertos for violin and cello, all of which confirmed his place at the forefront of British music. He often cast himself as an outsider due to his lack of academic training, his social status as the son of a shopkeeper, and his deep Roman Catholic faith in a largely Protestant society. Elgar was an extremely private man, never happier than when spending time with family or friends.

Edward Elgar
1857–1934
For many, Elgar will always be associated with the imperial optimism of the late Victorian and Edwardian ages. Yet, his works – like the man himself – are more complex than their bluff exterior often suggests. His music encompasses not only the outwardly confident tone of his grand public works, but also the intimate, spiritual outpourings of a deeply sensitive musician. He wrote relatively little after the death of his wife in 1920.

LIFE

Elgar would often take music manuscripts from his father’s music shop into the countryside to study them, which forged his strong association between music and nature.

MUSICAL OUTPUT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1857</th>
<th>1880</th>
<th>1890</th>
<th>1900</th>
<th>1910</th>
<th>1920</th>
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<td>CHAMBER</td>
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<td>CHORAL</td>
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Total: 79
A largely self-taught composer, Elgar absorbed elements of style from many different sources. There is a pervasive element of chromaticism in his music that adds colour and unexpected, yet innovative, turns of phrase. This fluid musical language allowed him, for example, to move easily between depictions of heaven and hell in *The Dream of Gerontius*, yet conversely also provided one of the biggest stumbling blocks for musicians attempting first performances of his works.

Elgar was also a consummate master of orchestration, having learnt his skills as a young man in his role as a jobbing musician. Many of his scores, such as the *Pomp and Circumstance Marches* and other public and ceremonial works, are full of the opulent, Edwardian textures for which he is best known. Other works, however, like the poignant miniatures in the *Serenade for Strings*, demonstrate his subtle understanding of the intimate in music.

### KEY WORKS

**THE DREAM OF GERONTIUS, OP. 38**

*Oratorio* 95:00  2  6

Based on Cardinal Newman’s 1861 poem, *The Dream of Gerontius* portrays the death of an old man and his journey to rebirth in the next world. With its intensely moving operatic solos and imposing choruses depicting devils and angels, it has now become a regular fixture in the British choral repertoire.

**POMP AND CIRCUMSTANCE MARCH, OP. 39, NO. 1**

*Orchestral* 6:00  1

This ebullient and optimistic march (1901) was an immediate success. Its central section was later used by Elgar in his *Coronation Ode* of 1902 to the words of “Land of Hope and Glory”.

**SYMPHONY NO. 2, OP. 63**

*Orchestral* 56:00  4

Elgar’s joyous second symphony shows the composer in all his moods: noble, introverted, quixotic, and confident. The expansive second movement is particularly imposing.

**VIOLIN CONCERTO, OP. 61**

*Orchestral* 54:00  3  6

Composed at the same time as the Symphony No. 2, the Violin Concerto is itself symphonic in conception. Elgar’s work demonstrates his subtle appreciation of the violin and develops a true musical partnership between soloist and orchestra.

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*English cellist Jacqueline du Pré (1945–87) won fame for her performances of Elgar’s Cello Concerto. Her life was tragically cut short by multiple sclerosis.*
**FOCUS**

**VARIATIONS ON AN ORIGINAL THEME (“ENIGMA”), OP. 36**

Orchestral 30:00 15

Elgar brought an unusual personal touch to his variations, using his original theme as a prism through which can be glimpsed his “friends pictured within”. Over the course of 14 variations, Elgar provides musical character sketches of authors and poets (Richard Baxter Townshend in variation III, Richard Penrose Arnold, V), local dignitaries (William Meath Baker, IV; architect-pianist Troyte Griffith, VII), close friends (the calmness of Winifred Norbury, VIII; the delicate laugh of Dora Penny, X), and of course musicians (amateur pianist Hew David Steuart-Powell, II; violinist Isabel Fitton, VI; Hereford Cathedral organist George Robertson Sinclair, XI; amateur cellist Basil Nevinson, XII). In the case of Sinclair, the music is not a portrait of the man himself, but of the organist’s bulldog, Dan.

The most heartfelt variations describe Elgar’s wife, Caroline Alice Elgar (I); his publisher, August Jaeger (IX), whose majestic and brooding variation goes under the pseudonym of “Nimrod”, the hunter; and himself (XIV, forming the finale).

**CELLO CONCERTO, OP. 85**

Orchestral 27:00

**FIRST MOVEMENT** (ADAGIO – MODERATO, 7:15)

The last major composition that Elgar completed opens with an anguished statement on the cello, momentarily soothed by the clarinet. A subtle, lilting melody gains in intensity to become the main theme, taken up by the soloist and orchestra in turn. Even the lighter moments in the second subject are haunted by the inevitable return of the opening.

**SECOND MOVEMENT** (LENTO – ALLEGRO MOLTO, 4:15) Querulous semiquavers and light, staccato orchestration mark the brief, elusive Scherzo.

**THIRD MOVEMENT** (ADAGIO, 4:45) The cello takes centre stage in this almost continuous elegy.

**FOURTH MOVEMENT** (ALLEGRO – MODERATO – ALLEGRO, MA NON TROPPO, 10:45) The march-like main theme gives way to the cello’s passionate ruminations. The anguished statement from the first movement reappears briefly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Crescendo/Diminuendo</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Key</th>
<th>Ritardando</th>
<th>Dynamics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Adagio – Moderato; E minor; Ternary form</td>
<td></td>
<td>Second theme</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Lento – Allegro molto; G major; Scherzo form</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Adagio; B flat minor; Ternary form</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Allegro – Moderato – Allegro, ma non troppo; E minor; Sonata form</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

First theme played by strings, then soloist
Cello is accompanied only by strings, clarinets, bassoons, and horns
Cadenza
Heart-rending phrase from third movement
Introduction from first movement

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*Adagio – Moderato; E minor; Ternary form
Lento – Allegro molto; G major; Scherzo form
Adagio; B flat minor; Ternary form
Allegro – Moderato – Allegro, ma non troppo; E minor; Sonata form

---

First theme played by strings, then soloist
Cello is accompanied only by strings, clarinets, bassoons, and horns
Cadenza
Heart-rending phrase from third movement
Introduction from first movement
### Sir Charles Stanford

**1852–1924** | **Irish** | **c.300**

At the Royal College of Music, in London, Stanford taught many future English composers. His religious music is familiar to Anglican churchgoers, and he also enjoyed success in Europe and the US, particularly with his *Irish Symphony*, which Mahler conducted in New York. His style is light and lyrical and definitely “British”, though his love of Ireland is revealed in his use of folk melodies. Stanford’s beautiful setting of Mary Coleridge’s “The Bluebird” is a well-known choral piece.

| MILESTONES |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1879 | Writes Service in B |
| 1883 | Professor of composition at RCM |
| 1887 | Composes Symphony No. 3, “Irish” |
| 1896 | *Shamus O’Brien*, opera, performed |
| 1910 | Writes “The Bluebird”, part-song |

### Sir Granville Bantock

**1868–1946** | **English** | **250**

In between teaching at Birmingham University, travelling widely, and promoting the work of other composers, Bantock composed prodigiously: often works for large orchestra, but also brass band, choral, chamber, and piano pieces, and children’s songs. Though popular in his lifetime, his music has since fallen out of favour. It is characterized by uncomplicated harmonies and pseudo-Oriental or Celtic subjects. His tone poem *Fifine at the Fair* (1901) and overture *Pierrot of the Minute* are sometimes heard.

| MILESTONES |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1908 | Writes *Pierrot of the Minute*, overture |
| 1915 | Composes *Hebridean Symphony* |
| 1924 | The Seal Woman, Celtic folk opera |
| 1928 | *Pagan Symphony* performed |
| 1933 | Writes *Prometheus* for brass band |

### Sir Hubert Parry

**1848–1918** | **English** | **c.200**

Parry’s stirring Blake setting “Jerusalem”, written in 1916, is one of the most familiar pieces of music in England, and shows his imaginative, craftsmanlike style. Educated, in the upper-middle-class way, at Eton and Oxford, Parry was a musical amateur working in insurance until he was almost 30. However, he rose to become a major figure in the revitalizing of English music: as a scholar working on the new *Grove Dictionary of Music*; as a professor at the Royal College of Music (and later at Oxford University); and as a highly accomplished composer. His first major success was the cantata *Blest Pair of Sirens*, which established him as one of England’s leading composers and resulted in a string of commissions – plus a knighthood and baronetcy. Although an avowed agnostic, he produced some of Britain’s finest sacred choral music.

| MILESTONES |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1877 | Leaves Lloyd’s of London |
| 1880 | *Prometheus Unbound* performed |
| 1883 | Professor of music history at RCM |
| 1887 | Composes *Blest Pair of Sirens*, cantata |
| 1888 | *Judith*, oratorio, performed |
| 1898 | Receives knighthood |
| 1900 | Becomes professor of music at Oxford |
| 1908 | Created a baronet |
| 1916 | Writes *Songs of Farewell* |
Ethel Mary Smyth

1858–1944  English  c.100

Born into a military family, Smyth was a battler: a persistent champion of women’s causes, and of her own vigorous, ideas-filled works. Against her parents’ wishes, she studied music in Leipzig, where she gained private and public success with early pieces. Back in England, “E.M. Smyth’s” orchestral works impressed critics, but she struggled to have her operas staged. Germany premiered many, but World War I closed that avenue. A prominent member of the suffrage movement, Smyth had intense love affairs with women of note. She gained official recognition in her 60s – as conductor, broadcaster, writer, and campaigner, as well as for her revived music – but sadly, deafness stopped her composing.

Roger Quilter

1877–1953  English  c.125

Trained in Germany, but English in style, Quilter was a shy, cultured, and well-travelled man from a moneyed family, with a wide circle of artistic friends. He was known in England as a songwriter – many of his works were performed by the major singers of the early 1900s. However, frequent illness meant composing was more difficult than seemingly effortless results suggest. His wealth may have diminished when he was blackmailed about his homosexuality, but he had used it generously to help Jewish friends flee Austria before World War II.

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor

1875–1912  English  c.160

The son of a black father, from Sierra Leone, and a white English mother, Coleridge-Taylor fought racial prejudice all his life, but musically enjoyed great respect – from Elgar among others – and popularity: his *Hiawatha’s Wedding Feast* was England’s most-performed choral work for ten years. His accomplished, sweetly Romantic style became unfashionable after his premature death from pneumonia, but is now enjoying a small revival.

**MILESTONES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>Studies violin at RCM</td>
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<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>Writes <em>Hiawatha’s Wedding Feast</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>1903</td>
<td>Becomes professor of composition at Trinity College, London</td>
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<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>Compose 24 <em>Negro Melodies</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>Tours US; meets President Roosevelt</td>
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<td>1907</td>
<td>Writes <em>Thelma</em>, opera</td>
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Frederick Delius

1862–1934  English  c.120

Although Delius spent the majority of his life abroad, he is generally remembered as a quintessentially English composer who wrote evocative and timeless orchestral tone poems. The mountainous wilderness of Scandinavia, the tropical orange plantations of Florida, and the delicate beauty of rural France all find a place in the haunting and harmonious music of this truly cosmopolitan composer.

LIFE AND MUSIC

Enamoured of music from a very young age, it soon became clear that, despite the wishes of his family, Frederick Delius was not destined to become a businessman, but would make music his life’s work. Studying in Leipzig, and eventually settling in France, Delius produced a succession of outstanding orchestral works – particularly in the first decade of the 20th century – which show the influence of Wagner and Grieg. In later years, Delius’s music was championed by the conductor Sir Thomas Beecham, even as his debilitating illness made it necessary for him to dictate his final works through his amanuensis, Eric Fenby.

KEY WORKS

BRIGG FAIR – AN ENGLISH RHAPSODY

ORCHESTRAL  19:00  1  

Introduced to the Lincolnshire folk song “Brigg Fair” by his friend Percy Grainger, Delius used it as the basis of a series of orchestral variations.

IN A SUMMER GARDEN

ORCHESTRAL  15:00  1  

Inspired by Delius’s own charming garden in Grez-sur-Loing, this evocative work even has a central episode to represent the gentle River Loing. The piece is dedicated to the composer’s wife – painter and avid gardener Jelka Rosen.

VIOLIN SONATA NO. 3

DUO  3  

This was one of Delius’s last works, and was completed with the assistance of his amanuensis, Eric Fenby. It was first played to the composer by the celebrated British violinist May Harrison, accompanied by pianist and composer Arnold Bax.
A MASS OF LIFE

One of Delius’s most ambitious works, this choral masterpiece was completed in 1905 and is a wholly secular affirmation of humanity – although even here there are moments of unease and despair. The text was carefully compiled by Delius and the German conductor Fritz Cassirer from Friedrich Nietzsche’s *Also Sprach Zarathustra*. Together they selected a balanced sequence of 11 soliloquies that were particularly well suited to Delius’s musical temperament. It is a huge and vigorous work with powerful choral writing and some imaginative orchestration, particularly in the evocative “Night Song”.

THE WALK TO THE PARADISE GARDEN

This piece began life as an intermezzo in Delius’s opera *A Village Romeo and Juliet*, which was based on a short story by the Swiss writer Gottfried Keller. Like the Shakespearean tragedy, the story tells of two families at odds over the rights to a piece of land between their farms. Despite the farmers’ enmity, their children, Sali and Vreli, begin to meet in secret, and eventually fall in love. The purpose of the intermezzo was to smooth the transition between scenes for a Berlin production of the opera in 1907, and represented Sali and Vreli making their way to the Paradise Garden, a run-down inn that stood on the disputed piece of land. Delius’s music captures the very essence of the opera as the two leading characters come to terms with their hopeless situation of forbidden love. Although the opera is seldom performed now, the intermezzo is a popular favourite of the concert hall.

ON HEARING THE FIRST CUCKOO IN SPRING

Written for small orchestra, this is one of two pieces composed by Delius between 1911 and 1912, the other being *Summer Night on the River*. In each work, the composer’s colourful orchestration is strikingly suggestive of a pastoral idyll in France that appealed strongly to the English imagination; the subtle rhythms and instrumentation create a benign sense of rural tranquillity. As its title clearly implies, *On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring* is liberally interspersed with the call of the cuckoo, represented in the ensemble by the clarinet. The piece also introduces a Norwegian folk song, “In Ola valley, in Ola dale”, which Delius found in a collection published by Grieg as *Norske Folkeviser*. 
“What we want in England is real music, even if it be only a music-hall song.”
RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS IN THE VOCALIST, 1902
Ralph Vaughan Williams

Although born into an affluent, professional family and educated both at Cambridge and London’s Royal College of Music, Vaughan Williams firmly believed that music was for everyone. A socialist at heart, his dedication to music at all levels led him to devote his energies not only to the sophisticated high art of the symphony, but also to the simple beauty of everyday music like folk song and church hymns. He is often credited with leading the English “pastoral” school of composers and it is true that some of his works, such as The Lark Ascending, the English Folksong Suite, and Fantasia on “Greensleeves” are infused with this style. He was, however, a Londoner and an urbanite, and scores for his symphonies and film music are as challenging and sophisticated as those of any 20th-century European composer.

Despite his prolific output, Vaughan Williams’s creativity matured slowly. He was highly critical of his works, revising them until he was absolutely satisfied, and often shared sketches with his great friend Holst, whom he trusted to give honest opinions on his current music projects. An acknowledged agnostic, he nevertheless used Christian themes and morality as the basis for many works, including his opera The Pilgrim’s Progress, based on Bunyan’s novel.

Musical Output

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total: 82</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SYMPHONIES (9)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CONCERTOS (9)</td>
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<td>OTHER ORCHESTRAL (24)</td>
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<td>CHAMBER (8)</td>
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<td>OPERAS (11)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHORAL (21)</td>
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</table>

LIFE

Although born into an affluent, professional family and educated both at Cambridge and London’s Royal College of Music, Vaughan Williams firmly believed that music was for everyone. A socialist at heart, his dedication to music at all levels led him to devote his energies not only to the sophisticated high art of the symphony, but also to the simple beauty of everyday music like folk song and church hymns. He is often credited with leading the English “pastoral” school of composers and it is true that some of his works, such as The Lark Ascending, the English Folksong Suite, and Fantasia on “Greensleeves” are infused with this style. He was, however, a Londoner and an urbanite, and scores for his symphonies and film music are as challenging and sophisticated as those of any 20th-century European composer.

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Vaughan Williams’s study at the Royal College of Music with Hubert Parry, Charles Villiers Stanford, and Charles Wood provided him with a thorough foundation in contemporary German music. His own compositional voice, however, was also inspired by the music of earlier traditions, such as the simplicity and directness of English folk songs and the modal music he encountered while editing *The English Hymnal* in 1904. He blended these elements with other styles and techniques – such as 16th-century polyphony and harmony, Baroque counterpoint, and the delicacy of French orchestration learnt from Ravel – into his own musical language in his mid-30s. During his long life, Vaughan Williams composed in almost every genre and was still active in his 80s when the creativity of many similarly long-lived composers had long since dried up.

**KEY WORKS**

**THE LARK ASCENDING**

| ORCHESTRAL | 15:00 | 1 |

Taking George Meredith’s poem as the inspiration for this one-movement work for violin and orchestra, Vaughan Williams created exquisitely beautiful music that draws upon the contours of English folksong. Weightless cadenzas for the violin that disappear into the distance act as both prologue and epilogue. It was written in 1914 and revised in 1920.

**MASS IN G MINOR**

| MASS | 24:00 | 5 |

This complete setting of the Mass for solo quartet and unaccompanied chorus makes use of the seamless, sinuous technique of 15th-century polyphony much admired by Vaughan Williams. It was first used liturgically by Sir Richard Terry and the choir of Westminster Cathedral.

**SINFONIA ANTARTICA**

| ORCHESTRAL | 39:00 | 5 |

Based on material used for his score to the film *Scott of the Antarctic* (1949), this work shows Vaughan Williams the orchestrator at his best. Peppered with colourful percussion of all kinds, the Sinfonia portrays the stormy and changeable world of the Antarctic.

*Vaughan Williams used* a vibraphone in his Symphony No. 8. Invented in the US at the beginning of the 20th century, it was used mainly by jazz musicians.
There are few works in the repertoire that are so arresting and can match the depth of sonority found in Vaughan Williams’s *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis*. Composed for double string orchestra and solo quartet, it is based on the third tune in the Phrygian mode, “Why fum’th in fight?”, that Thomas Tallis contributed to Archbishop Parker’s Psalter of 1567. Vaughan Williams first encountered the melody when editing *The English Hymnal*.

Written in one continuous movement, the *Fantasia* begins quietly as Tallis’s melody is picked out in pizzicato notes by the lower strings against an ethereal, sustained note in the violins. The theme is soon taken up by the larger ensemble with a fuller accompaniment before more intimate sections in which members of the solo quartet take elements of the theme, weaving independently against each other between interpolations from the larger ensemble in the manner of a concerto grosso.

### SYMPHONY NO. 5

**FIRST MOVEMENT** *(PRELUdio, MODERATO)*

Scored for a smaller orchestra than Vaughan Williams had used previously, this symphony uses musical material the composer had earmarked for his (then incomplete) opera based on Bunyan’s *The Pilgrim’s Progress* that had occupied him for almost 40 years.

**SECOND MOVEMENT** *(SCHERZO, PRESTO)*

The brief Scherzo passes quickly, yet demonstrates that Vaughan Williams’s studies in orchestration with Ravel were hugely influential, with chorale-like moments for the brass and muted strings supporting a delicate and light texture peppered with ubiquitous cross-rhythms.

**THIRD MOVEMENT** *(ROMANZA, LENTO)*

It is only in the Romanza that the composer allowed parallels to be drawn with the music for *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, since it uses material destined for the scenes portraying “The House Beautiful” in the opera. As the true heart of the symphony, the music is heartfelt, expansive, and wistful.

**FOURTH MOVEMENT** *(PASSACAGLIA, MODERATO)*

The final movement, a joyous ending to a meditative work, is cast in the mould of a Passacaglia with its static, repeating ground bass while the other instruments provide rhythmic and melodic interest above.

### INFLUENCES

One of the most important English composers of the 20th century, Ralph Vaughan Williams made a huge contribution to the development of classical music. Benjamin Britten owes him a particular debt, as does Gustav Holst and numerous film composers, including Jerry Goldsmith.
Mainly remembered as the composer of *The Planets*, Gustav Holst was a true musical eclectic. He approached every composition from a fresh angle and drew his inspiration from sources as diverse as astrology, English folk song, Sanskrit poetry, Algerian melodies, and the poetry of Thomas Hardy. He was also a natural teacher with an ability to inspire the minds of children and adults alike.

**LIFE AND MUSIC**

Like his lifelong friend Ralph Vaughan Williams, Holst studied composition at the Royal College of Music with Charles Stanford, a leading figure in the 19th-century renaissance of British music. After working as a trombonist and repetiteur, Holst became director of music at St Paul’s Girls’ School and also taught adults at Morley College, both in London. At the root of his music – mainly composed during the school holidays – is rhythm, and many of his works are based on ostinato patterns. His colourful harmonic style blends traditional tonality with inventive combinations of chords and spare, open intervals, giving his music a truly distinctive voice within his era.

**KEY WORKS**

**THE HYMN OF JESUS**

This joyous and popular work combines Latin plainsong chants with Holst’s hallmark irregular rhythms, colourful harmony, and lush orchestration to portray the text from the Apocryphal Acts of St John, translated by the composer from the original.

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**BALLET MUSIC FROM THE PERFECT FOOL**

The popular ballet music from Holst’s one-act comic opera is now regularly featured in concert programmes. It is split into three dances, one each for the Spirits of Earth, Water, and Fire. These are conjured by a wizard evoked by a trombone. Earth has a low bass tune, Water a stately dance, and Fire a lively caper.

**Salisbury Plain** was the inspiration for the Egdon Heath Thomas Hardy described in his novel *The Return of the Native*. In turn, this inspired Holst to write his austere tone poem *Egdon Heath*, considered one of his best works.
THE PLANETS
ORCHESTRAL SUITE
Not so much a portrayal of the planets as celestial bodies as of the human traits they embody, Holst’s astrologically inspired orchestral suite has always enjoyed great popularity.

MARS, THE BRINGER OF WAR (ALLEGRO, 7:00)
Mars opens with a menacing five-beats-in-a-bar ostinato over which music surges in waves through the orchestra with rising intensity before a sudden and abrupt ending.

VENUS, THE BRINGER OF PEACE (ADAGIO, 8:00)
In stark contrast to Mars, the mood of Venus is one of sensuous longing. Harps and woodwind solos emphasize the goddess’s gentleness.

MERCURY, THE WINGED MESSENGER (VIVACE, 4:00)
Quicksilver reactions and sparkling agility characterize Mercury, a brief and light scherzo movement.

JUPITER, THE BRINGER OF JOLLITY (ALLEGRO GIOCOSO, 8:00)
While depicting the majesty of this heavenly giant, the orchestra also emphasizes Jupiter’s jovial spirit. The central, broad sweep of melody was later used for the popular hymn “I vow to thee, my country”.

SATURN, THE BRINGER OF OLD AGE (ADAGIO, 9:00)
Beside the heartiness of Jupiter, the senility of Saturn is pulled into sharp focus. Tired, repeated patterns and heavy chords add weight to a solemn dirge on the brass.

URANUS, THE MAGICIAN (ALLEGRO, 6:00)
Beginning with four striking brass notes that act as Holst’s musical calling card, this movement shows the quirky and changeable nature of the human spirit.

NEPTUNE, THE MYSTIC (ANDANTE, 7:00)
As he reaches the outer edges of the solar system and the human psyche (Pluto had not yet been discovered), Holst allows mysterious harmonies and a wordless, off-stage chorus of female voices to fade into nothingness.

ST PAUL’S SUITE
ORCHESTRAL
This joyful, four-movement work was composed for the young string players of the school at which Holst taught for most of his life.

JIG (VIVACE 3:00)
The main theme is first played in unison by the upper strings.

OSTINATO (PRESTO, 1:00)
Based on a repeating pattern heard high in the violins, this movement is a light-footed scherzo.

INTERMEZZO (ANDANTE CON MOTO – VIVACE, 4:00)
A broad, lingering melody is interrupted twice by a frantic melody that Holst heard on a visit to Algeria.

FINALE: THE DARGASON (ALLEGRO, 3:00)
The finale takes us firmly back to London as two old English melodies, “The Dargason” (a dance tune) and “Greensleeves”, are combined in the finale to the suite.
A pianist and composer in equal measure, Ireland originally trained as a performer, but gravitated towards composition in his teens. His mature musical voice is distinctive among British composers, reminiscent of the impressionistic style developed in France by Debussy and Ravel. Although he wrote for orchestral and chamber forces, Ireland’s main compositional legacy is for his own instrument, the piano.

**LIFE AND MUSIC**

Having spent eight years studying at the Royal College of Music in London from his early adolescence, it is unsurprising that Ireland devoted most of his life to teaching, performance, and composition. His works often have a real sense of place that reflects the inspiration he found in the countryside and his enduring association with county of Sussex and the Channel Islands. Ireland was particularly drawn to the verse of English poets, such as Alfred Edward Housman and Thomas Hardy. Ireland’s thorough compositional training under Charles Stanford is reflected in his detailed and disciplined craftsmanship and his ear for tonal colour.

**KEY WORKS**

**SONATINA**

*SOLO PIANO*  
10:00  
3  

It is possible to hear Ireland himself as pianist in this delicate work. A masterly Moderato opening is followed by a deeply sombre Lento, culminating in a bubbling and rhythmic Rondo.

**PIANO CONCERTO IN E FLAT MAJOR**

*ORCHESTRAL*  
26:00  
3  

When Ireland heard the young pianist Helen Perkin play Prokofiev’s Third Piano Concerto in 1930, he was so struck by her skill that he adapted his own Piano Concerto, making alterations to accommodate her small hands.

Cast in the traditional three-movement concerto format, it still remains true to Ireland’s characteristic, delicate style.

**A LONDON OVERTURE IN B FLAT MAJOR**

*ORCHESTRAL*  
12:00  
1  

Adapted from a comedy overture for brass, this orchestral version retains comic notes. A slow start leads to the main melody, based on a bus conductor’s cry of “Piccadilly!”

**MILESTONES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1893</td>
<td>Studies piano at the Royal College of Music; loses both parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>Becomes organist at St Luke’s, London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>Composes <em>Phantasie Trio</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td>Violin Sonata No. 1 wins the Cobbett Prize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917</td>
<td>Writes <em>The Forgotten Rite</em> for orchestra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>Composes Piano Sonata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>Sonatina for piano premiered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>Writes Piano Concerto in E flat major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>Writes <em>A London Overture</em> in B flat major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td><em>These Things Shall Be</em>, for orchestra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.1947</td>
<td>Film score for <em>The Overlanders</em> released</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ireland took great delight in the English countryside, absorbing its mellow colours, soft tones, and lyrical sounds, which emerged in his music.
Arnold Bax

\[1883–1953\] English \(c.300\)

Early in his studies, Bax’s imagination was fired by the work of the Irish poet W B Yeats, whose Celtic verse and imagery provided the inspiration for some of the composer’s most exquisite and atmospheric tone poems, such as *The Garden of Fand* and *Tintagel*. The breadth of his output, rivalling that of the recently acclaimed Vaughan Williams, has put Bax and his music back on the map.

**LIFE AND MUSIC**

Coming from an affluent family, Bax always had his own private income and never had to earn his living through teaching or performing. Once he had discovered his affinity for W B Yeats and his *The Celtic Twilight*, Bax’s music developed rapidly, and he also published his own novels under the pseudonym Dermot O’Byrne. His atmospheric tone poems, written during World War I, evoke the magic of nature, reflecting the Romantic mood of Richard Strauss and the impressionistic style of Debussy. By contrast, the lush, evocative music of his seven symphonies – each with three, rather than the more usual four, movements – incorporates the clarity and counterpoint he learned from Sibelius.

**MILESTONES**

1893 Taken to concerts at the Crystal Palace, Sydenham, by his father
1900 Enrolls at the Royal Academy of Music
1910 Visits Russia
1917 Writes *November Woods*, tone poem
1919 Composes *Tintagel*, tone poem
1922 Writes Symphony No. 1
1937 Receives knighthood
1939 Symphony No. 7 premiered

**KEY WORKS**

**THIS WORLDES JOIE**

Choral \[10:00\]

This piece for unaccompanied choir, from 1923, takes its words from a 14th-century English prayer. The music builds from wistful homophonic textures in the first verse to passionate counterpoint underpinned by an insistent ostinato that is silenced only by the final note.

**TINTAGEL**

Orchestral \[15:00\]

This confident, evocative orchestral tone poem captures the powerful, elemental nature of the rough sea off the coast of Tintagel in Cornwall, set against the Arthurian story of Tristram and Iseult. It quotes briefly from Wagner’s staged version of the legend and also mirrors Bax’s passion for the pianist Harriet Cohen, whom he had met in 1912.

**SYMPHONY NO. 6**

Orchestral \[40:00\]

It is hard to choose just one of the seven symphonies that Bax wrote between 1922 and 1939, but No. 6, from 1934, and dedicated to the conductor Adrian Boult, is a model of focused musical thought showing Bax at his peak.
George Butterworth
1885–1916  English  15
In the English folk song revival of the early 1900s, no one set A E Housman’s lyrical poetry to music better than Butterworth, depicting the English countryside with haunting simplicity. A popular man, Butterworth was also a renowned folk dancer and collected folk songs. In World War I he received a Military Cross for bravery in battle shortly before his death, and left a tiny output of high quality and unfulfilled promise.

MILESTONES
1906  Starts collecting folk songs
1911  Writes *A Shropshire Lad*, six songs
1912  Composes *Bredon Hill*, songs, and *Shropshire Lad*, rhapsody
1913  *Banks of Green Willow*, idyll, orchestra
1914  Joins Durham Light Infantry
1916  Killed in action, Somme, 5 August

Arthur Bliss
1891–1975  English  200
In some ways a natural successor to Elgar, whom he knew at Cambridge, Bliss wrote music that reflected his warm and outgoing personality. He served in World War I, and wrote his choral symphony *Morning Heroes* as a heartfelt tribute to those who died. Mixing modern and Romantic ideas, he skilfully matched his music to the purpose or the players, from brilliantly orchestrated, dramatic work for the ballet *Checkmate* to simple pieces suitable for amateur choirs or brass bands.

MILESTONES
1922  Composes *Colour Symphony*
1935  Writes *Things to Come*, film score
1953  Master of the Queen’s Musick
1969  Composes music for the investiture of Prince Charles

Gerald Finzi
1901–1956  English  50
Finzi lived simply with his artist wife in rural Hampshire, and an individual, but English, accent runs through much of his music. When setting words, such as Hardy’s verse, he captured the essential atmosphere perfectly. His songs for piano and voice work beautifully, though he was neither a singer nor an accomplished pianist. Hospitable, yet introspective, Finzi was also a notable scholar and researcher, and his amateur orchestra promoted many new composers and performers.

MILESTONES
c.1926  Writes *Dies natalis*, cantata
1930  Teaches at Royal Academy of Music
1938  *Intimations of Immortality*, choral work
1949  Writes Clarinet Concerto, Op. 31
1956  Composes Cello Concerto, Op. 40

Peter Warlock
1894–1930  English  125
Philip Heseltine was educated at Eton but received only an informal musical education. He enjoyed a lasting creative friendship with Delius, though his other relationships were often difficult, and he won public acclaim for the solo songs he wrote under the pseudonym Peter Warlock. A great admirer of early English music, he edited over 500 works, and set many songs in an idiosyncratic style, with influences from medieval music to Bartók.

MILESTONES
1911  Meets Delius
1918  Involved in occult in Dublin
1920  Edits *The Sackbut*, controversial music magazine
1922  Writes *The Curlew*, song cycle
c.1926  *Capriol Suite*, orchestra, published
1930  Dies in gas-filled flat, possibly suicide
Edouardo Lalo

- **1823–1892**
- **French**
- **c.70**

Lalo’s robust and inventive compositions impressed few people for most of his life. He worked as a teacher and violinist, playing in a string quartet and writing overlooked chamber music and an unperformed opera. But in his 50s, when his colleague Sarasate played Lalo’s violin concerto and *Symphonie espagnole* (his most popular work today), his reputation grew, and other orchestral works were performed to great acclaim.

### MILESTONES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Milestone</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1839</td>
<td>Abandons home to study in Paris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.1850</td>
<td>Writes two piano trios</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1873</td>
<td>Composes <em>Symphonie espagnole</em>, violin and orchestra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1882</td>
<td><em>Namouna</em>, ballet, performed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1887</td>
<td>Symphony in G minor published</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td><em>Le Roi d’Ys</em>, opera, triumphs at Opéra-Comique</td>
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</table>

In 1888 Lalo’s opera *Le Roi d’Ys* was performed seven years after its composition. It was popular and brought him the success he had hoped for.

Félix-Alexandre Guilmant

- **1837–1911**
- **French**
- **100**

It was inevitable that an outstanding organist such as Guilmant would settle in Paris, with its magnificent Cavaillé-Coll organs. As an energetic organ recitalist across Europe and America, known for his precision and clarity as well as his versatility in managing unfamiliar organs, he popularized and broadened the repertoire, exploring the work of both forgotten early composers and his gifted contemporaries. Guilmant succeeded Widor as organ professor at the Paris Conservatoire, and his compositional output includes eight attractive sonatas.

### MILESTONES

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Milestone</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>Becomes organist at Sainte-Trinité</td>
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<tr>
<td>1875</td>
<td>Composes Organ Sonata No. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>Organ Sonata No. 7 published</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cécile Chaminade

- **1857–1944**
- **French**
- **400**

Polished, colourful, witty, and typically French, Chaminade’s music — much of it piano pieces or mélodies — was highly saleable. Popular in both England and the US, recognition in France was slower, and she often had to battle against negative perceptions of female composers. A large proportion of her 400 works were published in her lifetime, but her late-Romantic style faded in popularity after her death.

### MILESTONES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Milestone</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>Writes Piano Trio No. 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td>Composes <em>Callirrhé</em>, ballet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892</td>
<td>Makes her London debut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td><em>Concertstück</em>, Op. 40, published</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>Tours US to financial success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>First woman composer to be awarded the Légion d’Honneur</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Camille Saint-Saëns

1835–1921  French  420

A composer, pianist and organist, as well as being erudite in other fields, Saint-Saëns was one of the most significant French cultural figures of the 19th century. His long life and music career encompassed the Romantic era and its transition into the modern age. He acted as a vital bridge between the French light-opera tradition and the new Romantic dawn of Wagner, while advocating a Classical renaissance.

LIFE AND MUSIC

As a child prodigy, Saint-Saëns was hailed as the French Mozart. Classically inclined, but an admirer of Liszt and Wagner, he was influential in promoting new French music, although he rejected its later developments. His style was admired for its technical fluency, clarity of form, and sober elegance, but also charged with superficiality. However, there is much imagination, charm and melodic inspiration in his vast and versatile output, which includes symphonies, concertos, chamber works for often unusual combinations, organ music, operas, secular and sacred vocal music, and songs.

KEY WORKS

DANSE MACABRE

SYMPHONIC POEM  7:30  1

Saint-Saëns’s most famous symphonic poem is a quintessential blend of fantastical imagination and Classical rigour. At midnight, skeletons (depicted by xylophones, used for the first time in Classical music) emerge from their graves to dance in a churchyard.

SYMPOHY NO. 3, “ORGAN”

ORCHESTRAL  36:00  2

Saint-Saëns’s most ambitious symphonic work initiated a renaissance of this genre in France. Evolving rather than transforming the traditional four-movement form, it has two long movements, each in two sections. The organ appears in the second movement.

MILESTONES

1846  Official debut as solo pianist
1851  Enters Paris Conservatoire
1857  Appointed organist at La Madeleine; retains prestigious post for 20 years
1867  Writes Les noces de Prométhéé, cantata, his first success
1868  Composes Piano Concerto No. 2
1871  Co-founds National School of Music
1875  Composes Danse macabre
1877  Opera Samson et Dalila premiered
1880  Composes Violin Concerto No. 3
1886  Composes “Organ” Symphony and Carnival of the Animals
1915  Goes on triumphant American tour

VIOLIN CONCERTO NO. 3 IN B MINOR

ORCHESTRAL  29:00  3

This fine French violin concerto deftly combines heroic themes, lyrical poetry, and swashbuckling virtuosity – a masterly fusion of varied influences.

Saint-Saëns’s lifelong interest in lepidoptery began in childhood. His musical talents were also evident early on: he started composing at five.
This opera was promoted by Liszt, who organized its 1877 premiere in Weimar, but its biblical subject was balked at by the French public until 1892. Its novel combination of a grand symphonic style and memorable set pieces drew criticism from reactionary quarters, but made it much loved by a wider public.

Samson exemplifies the dual tendencies of the composer’s style, the oratorio-like first act suggesting the influence of Bach and Handel, while the more dramatic and lyrical second and third acts are in line with the tradition of Meyerbeer and Gounod.

**ACT ONE** (47:00) Refusing to worship the Philistines’ deity, Dagon, Samson leads a Hebrew uprising. Despite warnings, he is seduced by the beguiling Dalila.

**ACT TWO** (42:00) The Philistine high priest orders Dalila to extract from Samson the secret of his strength. She appeals to Samson to put love above his god or people, and to confide his secret to her. He refuses at first, but is then persuaded to follow her into her house. Dalila allows the Philistine soldiers to enter.

**ACT THREE, SCENE ONE** (11:00) Samson turns a treadmill in prison, blinded and shorn.

The Hebrews lament the betrayal of his people and their God for a woman.

**SCENE TWO** (25:00) At the bacchanalia in the temple, Samson is taunted by the high priest and Dalila. Samson pleads with God to restore his strength and brings the temple crashing down.

**LE CARNAVAL DES ANIMAUX**

Saint-Saëns did not design his “Grand Zoological Fantasy” for general performance. In fact, worried that it might compromise his reputation as a serious composer, he banned it from concerts altogether, excepting the 13th movement, “The Swan”. The ban was only lifted by a provision in his will. A royal lion, hens and cocks, tortoises, an elephant, kangaroos, an aquarium, birds, donkeys, pianists (told to play like beginners), fossils, and a swan are all described in *The Carnival of the Animals* before a rousing finale. The work includes joking references to other composers’ music and his own *Danse macabre*. “The Aquarium” and the finale are especially popular with the public, and the cello melody in “The Swan” is one of the most famous in all Classical music.
Gabriel Fauré

1845–1924  French  c.255

Unlike his mentor, Saint-Saëns, Fauré singularly succeeded in staying in tune with the artistic developments of his times, whilst retaining his own highly distinctive Romantic essence. Composer of a famous Requiem and widely regarded as master of the French song, he also created a very fine body of chamber and piano music. His gift for melody has tended to obscure the introspective, impassioned depth of his music.

The son of a country schoolmaster, Fauré was a protégé of Saint-Saëns’s and took over from him as organist of the Church of La Madeleine in Paris. Prevented by financial struggles from composing regularly, his success was long in coming. While not obviously revolutionary, the stylistic independence that made him adaptable to the huge musical changes of his time also provoked the antagonism of reactionary peers. However, he was surprisingly made director of the Conservatoire and became venerated as the grand old man of French music. His musical spirit evolved from the sensuality of his youth to a darker, then a more forceful, and eventually a sparser style.

**KEY WORKS**

**PELLÉAS ET MÉLISANDE**

Incidental Music  20:30  PV  5  C

Fauré was commissioned to set incidental music for the English premiere of Maeterlinck’s Symbolist play of 1892, *Pelléas et Mélisande*, while Debussy was working on his own operatic version of it. The quasi-fairy tale concerns Princess Mélisande’s doomed love for her husband’s younger brother. Fauré’s resulting suite is considered to be his orchestral masterpiece.

**CLAIR DE LUNE**

Song  2:30  PV  1  C

This most celebrated of all Fauré’s songs, initiating his association with Verlaine’s poems, is imbued with the characteristic melancholy of his darkest period. The independence between voice and piano, and the importance given to the latter, were absolutely novel in their time.

**MILESTONES**

- 1861 Becomes Saint-Saëns’s piano student
- 1871 Participates in foundation of the Société Nationale de Musique
- 1875 Composes Piano Sonata, Op. 13
- 1876 Composes Violin Sonata No. 1
- 1877 Made choirmaster at La Madeleine
- 1887 “Clair de lune”, Op. 46, No. 2, song
- 1893 Completes *La bonne chanson*, song cycle
- 1896 Becomes composition teacher at Paris Conservatoire
- 1898 Composes *Pelléas et Mélisande*, suite
- 1900 Completes Requiem
- 1903 Experiences early signs of deafness
- 1905 Made director of Paris Conservatoire
- 1913 *Penelope*, opera, premiered
- 1921 Writes Nocturne No. 13, for piano
Fauré's most famous work was composed in stages and has existed in slightly different versions. Initial elements of its composition may be traced back to 1877. Work on the Requiem itself started in 1887, “for no reason at all…for pleasure, if I dare say so,” he commented. Its complete, seven-movement version was completed only in 1892, but just for a small, intimate orchestra. The full symphonic score was finally published in 1900.

Fauré’s conception imbues the sober majesty of the Requiem form with a uniquely uplifting spirituality. Faced with criticism that, as a Mass for the dead, his work was not weighty enough, he responded, “It has been described as a lullaby of death. But that is how I perceive death: like a joyful deliverance, an aspiration to the bliss of the hereafter, rather than a painful experience.”

The opening Introit et Kyrie and Offertoire movements are closer to the sombre mood one expects, but the Sanctus and Pie Jesu elevate the music towards ethereal realms. The great soprano solo of the Pie Jesu and the soprano voices in the choir were intended for children’s voices. The Agnus Dei follows in a similar vein, but takes a dramatic turn that sets up the Libera Me, where the baritone solo imparts a darker and more tragic mood. These contrasts between light and gravity are resolved by the celestial In Paradisum, its extended, floating phrase one of the most spiritually blissful moments in music.

Fauré found his ideal poetic model for his melodies in the work of Paul Verlaine, setting nine of his poems in this song cycle. The free treatment of the poetic material, the expressive outpouring for the voice and the prominence of the piano, seemed alien to the mélodie genre and disconcerted many listeners. However, the cycle was soon recognized as the most open and richest expression of Fauré’s bold and fiery nature.

Inspired by his liaison with Emma Bardac, later Debussy’s second wife, Fauré organized the poems to chart the journey of this love, described in the second song, as “towards paradise”. He also created a musical unity by organizing the cycle around five recurrent themes, often stated by the piano, four of which are rejoined in the last song. The first appears in the opening, setting the overall mood of rapt happiness. Occasional moods of anxiety, especially in the fourth and fifth songs, give way to the depiction of a summer’s-day wedding. The motif of a singing lark in the last song heralds the return of spring.
Henri Duparc

1848–1933 French 25

Perhaps no composer’s place in history is assured by such a small output as Duparc’s with his 14 remaining songs. His reputation as the finest representative of the French mélodie genre, along with Fauré, rests on just a few songs in a life plagued by illness. An obsessive perfectionist, he destroyed most of what little else he produced, and an extreme neurasthenic condition gradually left him blind and paralyzed.

**MILESTONES**

- **1867** Produces his first composition
- **1868** Writes first songs, including “Chanson triste”, “Soupir”, and “Le galop”
- **1869** Writes “Au pays où se fait la guerre”
- **1871** Writes “La vague et la cloche”, song; participates in the founding of the Société Nationale de Musique
- **1873** Composes Poème nocturne for orchestra
- **1874** Composes Lénore, symphonic poem
- **1879** Song “Le Manoir de Rosemonde”
- **1880** Song “Sérénade florentine”
- **1882** Composes “Phidylé”, song, and Benedicat vobis Domine, motet
- **1883** Writes songs “Lamento”, “Testament”
- **1884** Composes “La vie antérieure”, song
- **c.1886** Begins work on an opera, Roussalka

**KEY WORKS**

**CHANSON TRISTE**

| SONG | 3:00 | 1 |

This is one of three songs remaining from Duparc’s first set of five, and was later orchestrated by the composer. Supported by a flowing accompaniment, the meltingly beautiful melody is shaped over a vast vocal range. It is one of his most passionate songs and shows complete maturity in its purity of design and characteristic delicacy.

Henry Duparc’s song “Phidylé” is a setting of a poem by Leconte de Lisle. Its long-spun melody rises to a radiant climax.

**LE MANOIR DE ROSEMONDE**

| SONG | 2:45 | 1 |

This most darkly dramatic song, reminiscent of Schubert in its obsessive rhythmic impulses, fully reveals the tortured undercurrents of Duparc’s art.

**LA VIE ANTÉRIEURE**

| SONG | 4:40 | 1 |

One of two settings of poems by Baudelaire, Duparc’s last existing work seems eerily imbued with a sense of finality. Its majestic eloquence shifts to an elegiac mood that is intensified by the piano’s fading close.

**LIFE AND MUSIC**

Originally set for a career in law, Duparc was swayed towards music by César Franck, who considered him his most gifted pupil. Duparc was a friend and admirer of Saint-Saëns, who introduced him to Liszt and Wagner. His poetic intensity, in part inspired by Wagner (whom he nonetheless did not seek to copy) and encapsulated in his phrase “I wish to be moved”, was tempered by a taste for simplicity. It found its ideal context in the setting of songs, to which Duparc largely devoted himself. He wrote most of these for voice and piano, but some he later orchestrated. He nurtured plans for theatrical works, but a strange neurasthenic condition left him unable to compose after 1884. Blind and paralyzed for many years, he immersed himself in an increasingly mystical existence.

- **1867** Produces his first composition
- **1868** Writes first songs, including “Chanson triste”, “Soupir”, and “Le galop”
- **1869** Writes “Au pays où se fait la guerre”
- **1871** Writes “La vague et la cloche”, song; participates in the founding of the Société Nationale de Musique
- **1873** Composes Poème nocturne for orchestra
- **1874** Composes Lénore, symphonic poem
- **1879** Song “Le Manoir de Rosemonde”
- **1880** Song “Sérénade florentine”
- **1882** Composes “Phidylé”, song, and Benedicat vobis Domine, motet
- **1883** Writes songs “Lamento”, “Testament”
- **1884** Composes “La vie antérieure”, song
- **c.1886** Begins work on an opera, Roussalka
D’Indy was a conservative figure whose music school, the Schola Cantorum, rivalled the Paris Conservatoire with considerable success. A pupil of César Franck, whom he idolized, d’Indy was not admired by modernists who wanted to re-establish a tradition of pure French music free from any hint of the academic. He had some success as a composer in his day, but his compositions are nowadays seldom played.

Born into a military family, d’Indy never shed his reputation as a conservative musician. Parental pressure forced him to study law, but he tenaciously continued musical activities during his 20s. In his 30s he began to achieve acclaim, first with the cantata *Le chant de la cloche* (*The Song of the Bell*) and then with the *Symphonie sur un chant montagnard français* (*Symphony on a French Mountain Air*), both reflecting his interest in French folk song and its revival. The re-editing of past French music was another passion, for example the operas of Rameau. His teaching was based on the study of music history, while his compositions centred on Teutonic musical structure.

D’Indy and his followers, Déodat de Sévérac and Joseph Canteloube, inspired a revival of folk song in France in parallel with a similar trend in Britain led by Vaughan Williams.

**KEY WORKS**

**SYMPHONY ON A FRENCH MOUNTAIN AIR**

This piece by d’Indy is also called *Symphonie cévenole*, reflecting its inspiration in the folk music of the Cévennes region of central France. It uses the device of colouristic change rather than thematic development for its effect.

**L’ÉTRANGER**

D’Indy’s most successful opera was first staged in 1903 in Brussels. He wrote his own libretto for it about a stranger arriving in a closed community. Though shot with modernism, the music still leans towards 19th-century techniques.

**MILESTONES**

- 1875: Graduates from Paris Conservatoire
- 1885: Wins Grand prix de la ville de Paris for cantata *Le chant de la cloche*
- 1885: Made secretary of Société Nationale de Musique promoting French music
- 1886: Writes *Symphonie cévenole*
- 1905: Writes *Jour d’été à la montagne*
- 1920: Marriage to much younger second wife inspires late-flowering creativity

Recalling *La mer* by Debussy, *A Summer’s Day in the Mountains* attempts to capture a whole day’s experiences in the three movements of a quasi-symphony. It depicts the passage of time between dawn and nightfall and has brilliantly evocative orchestration. A late flowering of Impressionism, it has been overshadowed by the works of Debussy and Ravel.
Chabrier could be considered an early Impressionist: he was admired by Debussy and Ravel, and was a friend of Manet. Gathering material for his most famous orchestral piece, *España*, he worked like a “plein-air” painter, noting down dance melodies and castanet rhythms from the streets of Andalucia, and subsequently transforming them through kaleidoscopic scoring for a large orchestra.

Chabrier came from the Auvergne, and was pressed into studying law by his father. Although he spent 20 years as a civil servant, he managed to produce several comic operas during this time. He also became notorious for his alcohol-inspired improvisations in the bars and cafés of Paris. An ardent Wagnerian, he was moved to tears when he heard the love theme of *Tristan und Isolde* in 1880. As a result of this experience, and of his growing success during the 1870s, he resigned from his administrative position to dedicate himself to music. There followed his most productive period during which he wrote music in all genres.

**KEY WORKS**

**ESPAÑA**

*España* is a collage of Spanish dances collected in the streets of Andalucia. A precursor of Ravel’s *Boléro*, it orchestrates the dances in a highly characteristic way. Chabrier described it as a “piece in F and nothing more”. Stravinsky and Poulenc were particular fans.

**PIÈCES PITTOREQUES**

Chabrier’s longest set of piano pieces incorporates elements of popular music, some impressionistic pieces – for example “Sous bois” (“In the Woods”) – and French regional folk dances that evoke his Auvergnat roots. They also contain some music in the “antique” style, reworking Baroque minuets, a technique that was later used by both Ravel and Debussy.

**MARCHÉ JOYEUSE**

Originally written as a two-part piano work in 1883, Chabrier orchestrated the two as a pastorale and march in 1888. Further revision resulted in the version that is frequently performed today.
Charles-Marie Widor

1844–1937  French  c.100

Born in Lyon to a family of organ builders, Widor quickly gained a reputation as an organist in the French provinces. In his mid-20s, he replaced Lefebure-Wély at St Sulpice in Paris, where he remained for 64 years, still performing in his 90s. He also taught organ and composition at the Paris Conservatoire, but his thorough Germanic schooling (his own teacher had come from a line extending back to Bach) led to clashes with the more Gallic, contemporary Fauré. Widor wrote many ballets, operas, songs, and orchestral works, but his greatest compositional achievement were the magnificent ten Symphonies for Solo Organ, which vary from the austere and demanding No. 7 and No. 8 to the popular Toccata – the finale from No. 5 – a familiar component of wedding ceremonies.

MILESTONES

- 1870: Becomes organist at St Sulpice, Paris
- 1872: Writes Organ Symphonies Nos. 1–4
- 1880: Composes La korrigane, ballet
- 1887: Writes Organ Symphonies Nos. 5–8
- 1891: Succeeds César Franck as organ professor at the Paris Conservatoire
- 1896: Succeeds Théodore Dubois as professor of composition

Ernest Chausson

1855–1899  France  c.75

Growing up amid salon culture and in financial comfort, Chausson dabbled at writing and drawing, and qualified as a barrister, but then decided to become a musician, inspired by hearing Wagner in Germany. His talents impressed his teacher Massenet, and his reputation as a composer grew in Parisian musical circles through his 30s as he abandoned Wagner for a more intimate, exotically flavoured personal style. After writing Poème, his most popular work today, he started to refine his style, but died in a cycling accident, aged 44. However, as secretary of the Société Nationale de Musique for ten years, he did much to encourage French contemporary music.

MILESTONES

- 1877: Sworn in as barrister; writes first song
- 1879: Studies under Massenet
- 1882: Writes Viviane, symphonic poem
- 1883: Marries (five children)
- 1885: Finishes Le roi Arthur, opera, after ten years
- 1896: Writes Poème for violin and orchestra

Chausson led a quiet life shared between his family and his salon, which drew figures such as Ysaye and Debussy. Here Debussy plays a piano duet with Mme Chausson.
“It is unnecessary for music to make people think… it would be enough if it made them listen.”

CLAUDE DEBUSSY, 1900
Claude Debussy

Emerging as a radical innovator from within the conservative French music scene of the late 19th century, Debussy virtually single-handedly changed the course of European musical development. By dissolving traditional rules and conventions into a new language of unsuspected possibilities in harmony, rhythm, form, texture, and colour, he created a rich body of work that would leave an indelible imprint on 20th-century music.

LIFE

Overcoming his simple background and his family’s lack of affinity for music, Debussy entered the prestigious Paris Conservatoire at the age of 12. Early aspirations for a career as a concert pianist were unfulfilled, however, and his non-conformist tendencies were frowned upon. Although he was awarded the Grand Prix de Rome for composition in 1884, his earliest published works met with little success. Very much self-educated, Debussy travelled across Europe, absorbing the Oriental cultures that were being increasingly revealed to Westerners, and coming into contact with the leading artistic figures of the day. From 1892, his music started to attract wider attention, although it was not for another decade that the significance of his ground-breaking ideas became fully recognized. Debussy was also an outspoken music critic, writing under the pseudonym Monsieur Croche (Mr Quaver). He had to endure trials in his private life, including financial struggles, the distancing of many friends after he left his first wife for the woman who would become his second, and a long battle with cancer. Debussy died just a few months prior to the end of World War I, by then an internationally celebrated composer.
MUSIC

It was apparent early on that Debussy conceived music in a novel way, but it took him time to assimilate and crystallize his ideas. His *Prélude à l’après-midi d’un faune* marked the definitive spreading of his wings: thereafter, he took every genre—orchestral, vocal, piano, and chamber music—to new realms. His ability to perpetually build on his innovations and to renew himself creatively could leave even his most ardent followers confused. Though he has been called an Impressionist, Debussy’s allusions to many idioms and movements, always masterfully integrated, are stamped with an individuality and inventiveness that defy all categorization. His interest in contemporary as well as ancient artistic currents, and in foreign, often exotic influences (including Spain and the Orient), reflected his insatiable curiosity and abhorrence of repetition.

**KEY WORKS**

**ESTAMPES**

Of these three works, “Pagodes” reflects the influence of Javanese gamelan music, “La soirée dans Grenade” evokes sultry Andalusia, and “Jardins sous la pluie” echoes the keyboard styles of Bach and Chopin. The three distinct pieces are united by their stylized clarity and economy, inspired by the prints—in particular from Japan—that the title refers to.

**SONATA FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO**

Debussy’s final composition, and the last piece he performed, is the third of a projected series of six chamber works. In a kaleidoscopic array of moods and idioms, these three brief movements display a broad variety of styles.

**PRÉLUDE À L’APRÈS-MIDI D’UN FAUNE**

Debussy’s first major orchestral experiment was, notwithstanding its striking novelty, immediately hailed as a masterpiece. Its escape from formal rigour and its highly imaginative orchestral colours heralded the dawn of a new age for classical music. The seductive flute theme is contrasted by another melody that is the culminating expressive point of the work.
Debussy's largest purely orchestral work consists of three symphonic sketches of seascapes. It is the closest thing to a symphony that he ever composed.

DE L’AUBE À MIDI SUR LA MER (8:30) This section charts the morning progression of the sun, from the first glimpses of light, and its rise to its zenith.

JEUX DE VAGUES (7:00) Part two explores the manifold perspectives of the sea through the play of light on the water (the rise and fall of waves, shimmering surfaces, the rush of the surf).

DIALOGUE DU VENT ET DE LA MER (9:00) Part three reiterates fragments of the first section, and depicts the dramatic interaction of wind and water.
Gabriel Pierné

1863–1937  French  c.150

After winning the Prix de Rome for his cantata *Edith*, Pierné spent three years in Italy before returning to Paris to teach. He succeeded César Franck as organist at St Clotilde, but from his 40s he built a career as a composer-conductor. Pierné absorbed the styles of the time into his own balanced but individual language, and was always aware of his French cultural heritage. His charming, refined music covers all forms and genres.

**MILESTONES**

- 1882  Wins the Prix de Rome in Paris
- 1890  Becomes organist at St Clotilde
- 1907  Writes *Les enfants à Bethléem*, oratorio
- 1910  Takes over as principal conductor at the Concerts Colonne in Paris
- 1917  Writes Piano Quintet
- 1923  *Cydalise et le chèvre-pied*, ballet, staged

Louis Vierne

1870–1937  French  c.70

Blind at birth, but given limited vision by an operation at six, Vierne became an outstanding organist and composer. A teaching assistant at the Paris Conservatoire, he was also organist at Notre-Dame for 37 years. Composed in enlarged symbols on huge sheets of paper, Vierne’s six dazzling, wide-ranging symphonies for organ (inspired by the Cavaillé-Coll organs) are among the instrument’s finest and most-played works. Vierne’s later life was plagued by despair, illness, grief, and hardship; he died of a heart attack in mid-recital at Notre-Dame.

**MILESTONES**

- 1899  Writes Organ Symphony No. 1
- 1900  Becomes organist at Notre-Dame
- 1926–7  Pieces de Fantaisie, Vols. 1–4, organ

Reynaldo Hahn

1874–1947  French  c.150

Hahn’s songs powerfully evoke the cultured Paris salon around 1900, a milieu the composer knew well. Born in Venezuela to a German father, he came to Paris as a child, and by 16, having found fame with his charming songs (set to poems by Paul Verlaine), was moving in the city’s artistic circles, eventually working as critic, composer, and singer. Although he wrote much incidental music, as well as ballets, operas, and operettas, he is best remembered for his songs. Hahn was a lover and lifelong friend of Marcel Proust, and his music is often about memories, such as the operetta *Ciboulette*, set in 19th-century Paris. Hahn fought for France in World War I, but was banned by the Nazis in World War II. He returned after the occupation to direct the Paris Opéra.

**MILESTONES**

- 1885  Enters the Paris Conservatoire
- 1890  Writes *Chansons grises*, songs
- 1909  Takes French nationality
- 1931  Writes Piano Concerto No. 2
- 1934  Becomes music critic for *Le figaro*
- 1935  *Le marchand de Venise*, opera, staged
- 1945  Directs the Paris Opéra

The darling of the beau monde, Hahn delighted Parisian society with his lyrical songs. A friend of Sarah Bernhardt (right), he was a star guest at her Belle Île parties.
An intense perfectionist, Dukas composed scrupulously but slowly, turning out just a handful of choice, immaculately crafted pieces, much admired by Debussy. Among the most celebrated are the orchestral fantasy The Sorcerer’s Apprentice, popularized by Disney’s Fantasia; the widely acclaimed opera Ariane et Barbe-bleue; and the ballet La Péri, which established Dukas as a major modern composer.

LIFE AND MUSIC
A Parisian, Dukas was born into a musical family and made a career not only as a composer but also as a major music critic on the Gazette des Beaux Arts and other journals. Although his first attempts at opera failed, his Ariane et Barbe-bleue, set to a text by the Belgian Symbolist Maurice Maeterlinck ranks among the most important French pieces of the early 20th century. Dukas’s output was inhibited by his constant self-criticism: he destroyed much of his own work before dying. Piano pieces, such as the “Rameau Variations” and the Piano Sonata, still remain in the repertoire of specialists, as do many of the orchestral pieces. Dukas’s broad-based teaching should not be forgotten, either, affecting such influential figures as Jean Alain, Maurice Duruflé, and Olivier Messiaen.

KEY WORKS

ARIANE ET BARBE-BLEUE

Dukas’s dramatic and spirited opera recounts the story of the serial polygamist Bluebeard, who imprisoned his first five wives. It was an instant hit, due in part to the exotic orchestrations symbolizing the wives’ bright jewels. Equally vivid is the driving, dynamic narrative, and choral folk song, evoking the actions and feelings of the busy townsfolk.

THE SORCERER’S APPRENTICE

Based on Goethe’s ballad about an enchanted broom, Dukas’s tone poem can be ingenious, as he portrays the zealous antics of the broom sometimes amusingly but always tunefully, with jovial interjections from the woodwind.

MILESTONESTES

1871 Enrolls at the Paris Conservatoire
1888 Wins second prize in the Prix de Rome for his cantata, Veléda
1891 Polyeucte, overture, staged in Paris
1892 Reviews Wagner’s Ring in London, embarking on a career as music critic
1896 Composes Symphony in C major
1897 The Sorcerer’s Apprentice, tone poem for orchestra, premièred
1899 Writes Piano Sonata in E flat minor
1902 Variations on a Theme by Rameau, the “Rameau variations”, premièred
1907 Ariane et Barbe-bleue, opera, staged
1910 Teaches at the Paris Conservatoire
1912 Poème dansé La Péri, ballet, premièred
1926 Teaches at the École Normale
An eccentric figure of enormous importance in French music and admired by Debussy and John Cage, among others, Satie described himself as a “medieval musician who had wandered by mistake into the 20th century”. His early piano pieces are now popular classics and his later ballets for the Ballets Russes and Swedish Ballet are masterful collaborations between choreographers, designers, and costumiers.

**LIFE AND MUSIC**

Satie never embraced tradition. Like Chabrier, his youthful idol, he played the piano in cabarets, and popular music was important in his often irreverent compositions. Many had unusual titles: there is a *Bureaucratic Sonata* and some *Pieces in the Form of a Pear*, written in response to an accusation that his music was formless. In the 1890s he founded the Metropolitan Church of Jesus Christ the Conductor, associated with a mystical movement known as the Rose+Croix. In 1905 he enrolled as a returning learner in Vincent d’Indy’s Schola Cantorum and was a model pupil. He secured fame after World War I with his ballet commissions.

### MILESTONES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1878</td>
<td>Enters Paris Conservatoire and hates it</td>
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<tr>
<td>1887</td>
<td>Takes up bohemian lifestyle in Montmartre; publishes <em>Sarabandes</em> for piano – first characteristic work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td>Composes <em>Gymnopédies</em> for piano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>Ravel performs some of Satie’s pieces at Société Musicale Indépendante.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>Publishes <em>Sports et divertissements</em>, piano pieces, in facsimile of own handwriting</td>
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<tr>
<td>1917</td>
<td>Collaborates with Cocteau, Massine, and Picasso on <em>Parade</em>, ballet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>Composes <em>Socrate</em>, symphonic drama</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### KEY WORKS

#### GYMNOPÉDIES

**SOLO PIANO**

These piano pieces have become Satie’s most celebrated work. Orchestrated by Debussy and arranged by many others, the dreamy, dismembered waltzes are easy to play, and have a magic rarely matched.

#### SOCRATE

**TEXT SETTING**

Considered to be the apex of his work, here extracts from Plato are set in a bare, simple style which inspired the modernist group known as Les Six, to which Satie was something of a father-figure.

#### PARADE

**BALLET**

Satie’s fullest ballet score, the music contains a typewriter, the siren of the *Titanic*, and a *bouteillophone* – a set of bottles played by a Chinese conjuror.

#### FURNITURE MUSIC

**SOLO PIANO**

Satie’s great statement, which would now be called conceptual art, is music for a concert interval: a short phrase played over and over again. It is surpassed only by his 24-hour-long, repetitious *Vexations*.

In *Entr’acte* by film maker René Clair, Satie and French painter and designer Francis Picabia load a cannon in slow motion. The film was conceived by Picabia for showing during the interval of Satie’s ballet *Relâche*. 
Albert Roussel
1869–1937  French  100

After a stint in the navy, Roussel decided on a career in music at the unusually late age of 25. Despite not having enjoyed the widespread attention it deserves, his output is considered by many to be the finest French music to have been written between the wars. It shows Roussel's subtle and highly personal absorption of diverse styles, together with a great atmospheric sensitivity and rhythmic drive.

LIFE AND MUSIC

Having resigned his naval commission to devote himself to music, Roussel was still studying when his early compositions caught the music world's attention around 1906. His training with the conservatively inclined Vincent d'Indy, traces of Debussy's influence, and exotic musical ideas gained from travels to India and Southeast Asia in 1909 are reflected in the first period (1898–1913) of his creative output. After World War I, he gradually left these early influences behind. The works of his mature period (1926–37), which show an increasing interest in chamber music, are often described as Neo-Classical. They have a new, austere mood with strong Stravinsky-like rhythms and innovative harmonies.

MILESTONES

- 1894: Leaves navy; begins music studies
- 1902: Begins 12 years' teaching at Schola Cantorum in Paris
- 1909: Travels to India and Indochina
- 1913: Writes Le festin de l'araignée, ballet
- 1918: Completes opera-ballet Padmâvatî
- 1930: Composes Symphony No. 3
- 1931: Composes Bacchus et Ariane, ballet
- 1935: Completes Symphony No. 4, his last

Roussel's opera-ballet Padmâvatî successfully combined his own style with Indian modes that he heard during his travels in India and Southeast Asia.

KEY WORKS

SYMPHONY NO. 3
ORCHESTRAL  22:15  4

This bright and vigorous work, shaped in a conventional four-movement form, breathed new life into a genre that had seemed in decline.

BACCHUS ET ARIANE
BALLET  36:15  2

Composed in 1930, this ballet has a rhythmic vitality and melodic inspiration that make it a worthy successor to Debussy's and Ravel's works in the genre. Roussel adapted each of the two acts into an orchestral suite, the second suite being one of his more popular works.

LE FESTIN DE L'ARaignée
BALLET  32:00  2

The Spider's Banquet, Roussel's best-known work and his first masterpiece, shows traces of Debussy's influence. The plot of this ballet is set in a garden, where a spider, preparing to feast on insects caught in its web, is killed instead by a praying mantis.

These costumes were designed for one of the first performances of Le festin de l'araignée.
Maurice Ravel

1875–1937  French  88

Following in Debussy’s path, Ravel established a distinctly French style that broke away from Romantic conservatism. A blend of sober refinement and luxuriant exoticism, his work is characterized by exquisite craftsmanship: Stravinsky described him as “the most perfect of Swiss clockmakers”. This has sometimes obscured the moving quality of his melodies and the troubled undercurrents of his music.

LIFE AND MUSIC

Faced at first with a reactionary establishment, Ravel soon came to be recognized as the most significant French composer of the early 20th century after Debussy. His attachment to Classicism was fused with eclectic and adventurous tastes. While preserving the integrity of his own style, he drew inspiration from many idioms, and boldly – often wittily – blurred the boundaries between serious and light music. Much of his work plays on the contrast between chiselled technical perfection and fantastical imagination. A meticulous perfectionist, his output was only moderately sized, but of consistently high quality, covering chamber music, songs, an important body of piano works, and orchestral and stage scores, often originally written for piano.

MILESTONES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>Enters Paris Conservatoire as a piano student</td>
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<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td>Begins composition studies with Fauré; first published works</td>
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<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>Writes Miroirs for piano</td>
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<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>Composes Rapsodie espagnole, orchestra</td>
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<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>L’heure espagnole, opera, produced</td>
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<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>Daphnis et Chloé, ballet, performed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>Completed La valse</td>
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<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>L’enfant et les sortilèges, opera</td>
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<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>Boléro first produced</td>
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KEY WORKS

LE TOMBEAU DE COUPERIN

SOLO PIANO  25:00  6

This suite for piano, written in homage to the French 18th-century composer, showcases Ravel’s clarity, precision, and grace. Each of the six movements recreates past forms and is dedicated to friends who fell in World War I.

LA VALSE

BALLET  12:30  1

Composed in the years following World War I, and originally intended as commission by the ballet impresario Diaghilev, Ravel’s satirical and haunting evocation of the Viennese waltz reveals, perhaps most clearly, the dark undercurrents of his postwar music.

BOLÉRO

ORCHESTRAL  15:30  1

In Ravel’s best-known composition, two melodic ideas build up in an inexorable crescendo. Boléro’s brilliant orchestration, and the obsessively repetitive nature of its music, generate the tension for which the piece is famous.

Bright, imaginative costumes and colourful orchestration were integral parts of Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes.
This ballet was commissioned in 1909 by Serge Diaghilev for his legendary Ballets Russes company. The reception of the first production, in 1912, was lukewarm. However, the work was soon hailed not only as one of Ravel’s masterpieces, but also as one of the high points in a golden age for ballet. The plot is set in a fanciful pastoral setting of Greek antiquity.

**FIRST PART:** The lovers Daphnis and Chloé are separated by a lively dance of nymphs, shepherd lads and lasses. Chloé is seized by pirates. Daphnis implores the god Pan to rescue her.

**SECOND PART:** Chloé is made to dance for the pirates and tries to flee, in vain. The god Pan arrives just in time to scatter the pirates.

**THIRD PART:** This section opens with a famous sunrise scene, one of the most intoxicatingly voluptuous musical passages ever written. The reunited lovers dance in Pan’s honour, in a closing bacchanalia.

The opulent orchestration calls for large and varied instrumental forces and an unseen, vocalizing choir. There are two concert suites of Daphnis and Chloé, of which the second, depicting the famous sunrise and bacchanalia, is the most often presented.

Composed in 1929, this much-loved piece proved to be Ravel’s last large-scale work. The two exuberant outer movements frame a lyrical slow movement of haunting beauty.

**FIRST MOVEMENT (ALLEGRAMENTE)**
Here, brilliant and bawdy exuberance, brimming with impish humour and surprising twists and turns, displays Ravel at his most carefree.

**SECOND MOVEMENT (ADAGIO ASSAI)***
Inspired by the slow movement of Mozart’s clarinet quintet, this extended theme is one of Ravel’s most elaborate and moving melodic ideas, at once serene and elegiac. It is first presented by the piano in a long opening solo, and later reiterated by the cor anglais amidst the soloist’s crystalline decorations.

**THIRD MOVEMENT (PRESTO)**
Ravel was never more mercurial than in this chase between piano and orchestra, the dazzling virtuoso fireworks spiced up with jazzy inflections.

**INFLUENCES**
While Ravel’s style is highly distinctive, his search for chiselled perfection was no doubt too personal and rarefied to be widely imitated. He did not have specific disciples, but his ability to remain relevant to 20th-century music, while embracing tonality and reworking past forms, anticipated Neo-Classicism.
Joseph Canteloube

1879–1947

French

French

Born into a musical family of the Auvergne, the young Canteloube was fascinated by the folk music he heard on country walks. Not until his early 20s – now married, having lost both parents – did he study music seriously (with d’Indy). He moved to Paris to further his studies and built a career, moving in circles passionately dedicated to rediscovering, preserving, and popularizing folk music. He collected folk tunes and harmonized them, sometimes simply for amateur use, sometimes in a more elaborate, Impressionistic style. He also gave piano recitals – impressing Debussy – and lecture-recitals. Canteloube had limited success with his original compositions, but his very popular Chants d’Auvergne, while only “arrangements” of folk songs, are so exotically orchestrated that they are virtually original works.

MILESTONES

1902 Meets composer Vincent d’Indy
1907 Studies at Schola Cantorum, Paris
1923 Writes Chants d’Auvergne, series 1 and 2
1933 His second opera, Vercingétorix, produced
1941 Writes article defending complex orchestrations
1954 Writes Chants d’Auvergne, series 5

Canteloube’s most well-known works are arrangements of folk songs from the volcanic hills of the Auvergne.

Lili Boulanger

1893–1918

France

French

Lili Boulanger’s life was brief – in contrast with that of her sister, Nadia, the renowned teacher of composition, who lived into her 90s. But Lili made history, aged only 19, as the first woman to win the prestigious Grand Prix de Rome (her father had won it in 1835) with her cantata Faust et Hélène, which thereafter had great success in Paris. She wrote many of her finest works – mostly with mystical or biblical themes – in her gravely beautiful, clear, and dramatic style, during her stays in Rome, but these were cut short by World War I. After arriving home, she became terminally ill as a result of her immune system having been destroyed by childhood pneumonia. With remarkable serenity thanks to her strong faith, she dictated her intensely poignant Pie Jesu to Nadia on her deathbed in 1918.

MILESTONES

1913 Composes Faust et Hélène, cantata
1913 Wins Grand Prix de Rome
1914 Writes Clairières dans le ciel, song cycle
1916 Visits Italy for second time
1917 Completes two symphonic poems
1918 Composes incidental music for Maeterlinck’s play La princesse Maleine; dictates Pie Jesu on deathbed

Lili Boulanger’s mother was a singer and her father taught at the Conservatoire. Her sister Nadia (left, with fellow competitors), won a Prix de Rome.
Jacques-François Ibert

1890–1962  French  Unknown

Ibert was an important French composer of the first half of the 20th century. He was dedicated to the idea of continuing the French traditions of lightness, conciseness, and clarity, and adopted to this end a Neo-Classical style. His most celebrated works are a flute concerto and an orchestral divertissement. Several operas, some remarkable chamber music, and songs complement these more celebrated works.

LIFE AND MUSIC

Ibert was a Parisian and played an important part in French musical life. He devoted himself to composition in his late teens, working as a piano teacher and accompanist to support himself. He also played for the silent cinema, an activity which was later to result in several film scores. His first major successes were in the 1920s, when several of his works were performed in Paris. Work at the Paris Opéra – for both ballet and opera – earned him further success. The latter part of his life was spent as director of the French Institute in Rome, where winners of the Prix de Rome (a prize awarded to musicians and which he himself had won) were awarded a subsidized year of working on their own projects. Works for the ballet, opera, radio, and film make up a considerable part of his output.

MILESTONES

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>Is admitted to Paris Conservatoire, and later studies with Paul Dukas</td>
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<tr>
<td>1919</td>
<td>Wins Grand Prix de Rome at first attempt with Le poète et la fée, cantata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>First public concert of his works given at Concerts Colonne in Paris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>Impressionistic orchestral pieces Escales premiered with great success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>One-act opera Angélique is received well at the Paris Opéra.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>Composes Divertissement, for orchestra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>Composes Flute Concerto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>Appointed director of Académie de France in Rome (until 1960)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>Begins two years as director of Paris Opéra-Comique</td>
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KEY WORKS

**FLUTE CONCERTO**

One of the challenges of the concerto repertoire, this piece builds on the French tradition of flute-playing, arguably the best-developed and most advanced in the European tradition.

**ANGÉLIQUE**

This farcical opera tells of a woman who has been put up for sale by her husband. To portray the irony, Ibert claimed to have used “the minimum of instruments for the maximum result”.

**DIVERTISSEMENT**

If Neo-Classicism means using modern harmonies and phrase lengths within the frame of Classical forms, then Ibert’s Divertissement is a masterpiece of the genre. It was written as incidental music for Eugène-Martin Lebiche’s play The Italian Straw Hat, and has a joyous mood typical of the 1920s.

Among the film scores that Ibert wrote is one for the 1948 film Macbeth, starring Orson Welles.
Frank Martin

1890–1974     Swiss    73

Although Martin lacked any formal musical training, he became one of the foremost teachers and composers of his generation. Initially drawn to theory, his early works, now mostly forgotten, were excessively theoretical. With maturity, he developed a personal language, based on the 12-tone system, and a personal style, delicate and expressive, reflected in such masterpieces as *Petite symphonie concertante*.

**LIFE AND MUSIC**

Born into an extended Swiss Calvinist family, Martin’s music was initially suffused with craft and workmanship, quite the reverse of the more hedonist style adopted by his French peers. Martin’s work for the Institut Jaques-Dalcroze (where the teaching method was based on rhythm) affected his compositions profoundly. Rhythmic innovation became one of his hallmarks. Although his music evolved through a variety of styles – sometimes tonal, and for a time 12-toned – all bear the composer’s personal stamp, transcending his shifts in style. Martin’s studies of Indian, Ancient, and Bulgarian music coloured his work throughout his life, particularly with regard to rhythm. While he composed profusely, his work remains largely undervalued.

**MILESTONES**

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>Shuttles between Zurich, Rome, Paris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>Starts work on his Mass for two choirs, eventually staged in 1962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923</td>
<td>Settles in Paris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>Returns to Geneva to study; writes <em>Rhythmes</em>, symphonic suite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>Teaches at Institut Jaques-Dalcroze in Geneva, Switzerland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>Piano Concerto No. 1 premiered; founds and directs the Technicum Moderne de Musique in Geneva</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>Writes <em>Le vin herbé</em>, secular oratorio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td><em>In terra pax</em>, cantata for Armistice Day, broadcast on Swiss radio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>Settles in Amsterdam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>Teaches at the Cologne Conservatoire</td>
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</table>

**KEY WORKS**

**PETITE SYMPHONIE CONCERTANTE**

*Orchestral* 4

A traditional symphony in the Teutonic four-movement framework, this piece reworks the elements of sonata, slow-movement, Scherzo and finale in a refreshingly modern way. Both solemn and witty, it is brilliantly orchestrated.

**IN TERRA PAX**

*Mass Setting* 12

An intense, emotional choral work, premiered just after World War II, *In terra pax* is a quasi-Requiem. Martin associated the first part with the horrors of war, and the second with a return to peace and the need for forgiveness.
Pietro Mascagni

1863–1945  |  Italian  |  60

One of the leading Italian composers and conductors of his time, Mascagni is renowned chiefly as an opera composer, although he also wrote songs, piano pieces, and orchestral music. He achieved sudden success with his opera *Cavalleria rusticana*, remembered today as the first verismo (realistic) opera, but which overshadowed the rest of his output, such as the lyrical comedy *L’amico Fritz*.

**LIFE AND MUSIC**

The son of a baker, Mascagni read law before moving to Milan to study at the Conservatorio, which he left after three years to pursue a career conducting opera. After some minor successes, his reputation was made overnight when *Cavalleria rusticana* won the prestigious Sonzogno competition. Although he wrote some 15 operas, all well received, none attained the lasting popularity of *Cavalleria rusticana*. Mascagni is often cited as the first composer of verismo opera, a term referring to the authentic depiction of everyday life in artworks; in fact, he wrote in a range of styles and forms, such as comedy, and some of his works were unashamedly populist in tone. Mascagni’s reputation became somewhat tarnished through his close links with Mussolini’s fascist regime.

**MILESTONES**

1881  *In Fila*nda, cantata, wins first prize in a music competition in Milan
1882  Enters Conservatorio di Milano
1885  Leaves Conservatorio to conduct operetta season in Parma
1886  Becomes master of music at the Philharmony of Cerignola
1890  *Cavalleria rusticana*, opera, wins Sonzogno contest in Rome
1891  *L’amico Fritz*, comic opera, staged
1902  Incidental music for Hall Caine’s *The Eternal City* premiered in London
1903  Becomes director of the Scuola Musicale Romana in Rome
1929  Directs La Scala in Milan
1940  50th tour of *Cavalleria rusticana*

**KEY WORKS**

**CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA**

*OPERA*  70:00  |  1  |  6  

Based on a short story by Giovanni Verga, *Cavalleria rusticana* is a powerful tale of forbidden love, betrayal, and revenge set in rural Sicily. The fast-paced plot revolves around Turridù, his conquests, and his betrayals. After seducing Santuzza, he revives an affair with an old flame, Lola, now married to Alfio.

*A smash-hit* at its premiere in Rome, Mascagni’s tense, racy opera thrilled the audience and received 60 curtain calls.

On hearing of Lola’s betrayal, Alfio challenges and kills Turridù on Easter Sunday, heightening the pathos. While there is little formally innovative about the opera – Mascagni relied on the standard format of arias and recitatives – its originality lies in its inclusion of everyday reality in the world of opera. In an effort to create a sense of realism, Mascagni used much of the original play’s coarse language and set it to earthy, folk-style music. As a result, *Cavalleria* is often hailed as the first verismo opera.
Ferruccio B Busoni

A multi-talented musician best known in his own lifetime as a brilliant piano virtuoso, Busoni was also a leading avant-garde critic, theorist, and teacher at the forefront of the new microtonal and electronic music. Renowned also for his creative transcriptions of J S Bach for the piano, he was less well known as a composer in his own right, but his music is now highly acclaimed as both visionary and progressive.

Born to musical parents in Tuscany, Busoni showed early promise and toured widely as both performer and conductor. Espousing the “Young Classicism”, based on the styles of J S Bach, Mozart, and Liszt, he promoted the music of young composers, such as Schoenberg, while also taking an active interest in ethnic folk music, such as the Native American melodies that surge through Indianisches Tagebuch. It is hard to distinguish his original music from his transcriptions, as he tended to quote existing music in his own works. Although he taught in many musical centres, his home for much of his adult life was Berlin.

MILESTONES

1875 Concerto début; and enrols at the Vienna Conservatory
1880 Studies in Graz with Wilhelm Mayer
1891 Teaches at Helsinki Conservatory
1890 Wins the Rubinstein Prize for piano and composition; teaches in Moscow
1894 Settles in Berlin
1901 Gives masterclasses in Weimar; promotes new music concerts in Berlin
1902 Composes Piano Concerto in C major
1907 Writes Sketch of a New Aesthetic of Music
1911 Die Brautwahl, opera, staged
1915 Settles in Zürich during World War I
1916 Composes opera Turandot
1920 Writes Sonatina super Carmen

KEY WORKS

SONATINA SUPER CARMEN IN A MAJOR, K284
SOLUTO PIANO \( \text{9:00} \) \( \1 \)

Although detesting verismo opera, Busoni recreates themes from Bizet’s Carmen in his own style, achieving a subtle study of Carmen, rather than a medley of tunes. Opening with Bizet’s Act 4 chorus, he follows with the “Flower Song”, the “Habanera”, and the finale motive.

Native American music inspired Busoni’s radical Indianisches Tagebuch, with its sonorously Hopi tunes and flowing rhythms.

DOKTOR FAUST

OPERA \( \text{180:30} \) \( \text{6} \) \( \text{6} \)

Completed posthumously in 1925 by Philip Jarnach, Busoni’s masterpiece is a powerful and mysterious opera that embraces the profundities of the Faustian legend more completely than any other. Although based in part on Marlowe’s semifarical Dr Faustus, Busoni’s drama reveals the innate beauty of human nature. Though Classical in form, the music is lush, chromatic, and richly inventive.
A massive work, demanding stamina and skill from the pianist, Busoni’s epic concerto, with its strong male chorus and huge orchestra, sounds more like a choral symphony than a concerto. A particularly unusual element is the inclusion of a choral setting of the “Hymn to Allah” from Adam Oehlenschläger’s play Aladdin.

PROLOGO E INTROITO (15:40) The strings open with a long melody interrupted by a horn-call. The Introito follows with the entry of the soloist. A cadenza is heard before the second subject enters on the woodwind, then another cadenza and a recapitulation follow before the movement ends with a serene coda recalling the Prologo.

PEZZO GIOCOSO (9:45) The second movement opens with wild upward runs on the piano and a grotesque Turkish dance. After a short cadenza, the clarinet plays a traditional and lyrical Neapolitan song, “Fenesta che lucivi” (“The light through the window”), interspersed with piano figuration. The lively dance is revived before the movement dies away.

PEZZO SERIOSO (23:00) After the Introito, the first section unfolds into a powerful, grand chorale with a variation. In the second section, the piano opens with a new theme, quickly followed by a resurgence of the opening music. The third section subsides into tranquillity.

ALL’ITALIANA (12:00) Italian songs, dances, and marches fuse with a dazzling piano cadenza, evoking “the crowded Roman street”.

CANTICO (10:50) The uplifting finale opens in E minor, recalling earlier themes. The male chorus sings “Hebt zu der ewigen Kraft Eure Herzen” (“Lift up your hearts to the Eternal Almighty”) to the tune of the first movement’s Introito, providing a glowing end to this grand concerto.

FANTASIA CONTRAPPUNTISTICA IN D MINOR

This impressive and influential piano music was composed in two versions, for both piano solo and duet, in 1910. Fascinated by both counterpoint and Bach, Busoni was inspired not only to complete Bach’s unfinished Art of Fugue, but to build a keyboard work around it. Believing that Bach’s Contrapunctus XIV would have consisted of four fugues, Busoni completed the fugue on the letters of Bach’s name (in German the musical letter “B” is B flat, and “H” is B). Busoni composed a fourth fugue using a variety of elegant and polished contrapuntal techniques and variations, while also adding a chorale theme with variations.
Respighi is the first Italian composer after Scarlatti whose fame does not rest on opera. He was a leading member of the so-called “generation of 1880”, which tried to revive Italian music by going back to its roots in the Renaissance and Baroque eras. At one time hugely popular, his star has fallen since World War II, though there are now signs of a revival of interest in his music.

The son of a piano teacher, Respighi grew into a man of wide culture in many languages, as well as a gifted violinist, pianist, and composer. A shy man, he shrank from the controversies between classicists and modernists in Italian music in the 1920s and 1930s, though by temperament he sided with the former. After an uncertain start as a composer, he established the essential elements of his style in *The Fountains of Rome*. This showed an orchestral mastery learned from studying under Rimsky-Korsakov, and later from Ravel and Strauss, as well as a passion for old music, mostly Italian, which worked its way into nearly everything he wrote.

**KEY WORKS**

**THE PINES OF ROME**

**TONE POEM**

This was one of two sets of Roman tone poems that Respighi wrote as sequels to *The Fountains of Rome*. It introduces new elements, such as the recording of a nightingale’s song in “Pine Trees of the Janiculum” and a memory of Ancient Roman triumphs in the “Via Appia” finale – to some an uncomfortable reminder of fascism.

**THE BIRDS**

**ORCHESTRAL SUITE**

This charming orchestral suite of 1927 is entirely based on pre-existing music: the Prelude and “The Cuckoo” on pieces by Pasquini, “The Dove” on music by French composer de Gallot, “The Hen” (the most famous) on a piece by Rameau, and “The Nightingale” on an anonymous English piece.

**MILESTONES**

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>Starts studying violin, viola, composition</td>
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<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>Visits Russia for first time and studies orchestration under Rimsky-Korsakov</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>Begins lifelong research into old music</td>
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<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>Sets in Rome to teach composition</td>
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<tr>
<td>1916</td>
<td><em>The Fountains of Rome</em> is a huge success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923</td>
<td>Appointed director of Conservatorio di Santa Cecilia, but resigns in 1926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>Completes <em>The Pines of Rome</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>Composes <em>Trittico Botticelliano</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>Finishes third <em>Ancient Airs and Dances</em> suite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>Fascist government honours him with membership of Reale Accademia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>Signs petition condemning modernist trends in Italian music</td>
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</table>
ANCIENT AIRS AND DANCES
ORCHESTRAL SUITES
Based on a collection of Renaissance-period lute music, this work consists of three suites for chamber orchestra, each in four movements. The first was so successful that Respighi wrote two more, in 1923 and 1928. The dances are based on dance forms popular at courtly entertainments and masques that Respighi found in ballets and dance manuals of the 16th and 17th centuries. The first suite consists of a balleto, a gagliarda, a villanella, and a “masquerade”. Although each movement is based on the metre and rhythm of the dance, they are not historical reconstructions but charming and beautifully coloured evocations of the past.

THE FOUNTAINS OF ROME
TONE POEM
This was Respighi’s first completely successful work, and perhaps his best. Here, the ponderous quality of his early work has been replaced by a new lightness of touch. The “silver rose” music from Richard Strauss’s Der Rosenkavalier can be heard in the bright, celeste-coloured orchestral sound, but it is absorbed into something entirely personal. The four pieces portray various fountains in Rome at “the hour in which their character is most in harmony with the landscape”. The final “Villa Medici Fountain at Sunset”, for example, simply evokes the scene, painting tolling bells and rustling leaves, whereas “The Triton Fountain in the Morning”, in which naiads and tritons join in a frenzied dance, depicts the myths associated with that fountain.

TRITTICO BOTTICELLIANO
TONE POEM
These orchestral evocations of paintings by the great Italian Renaissance painter Sandro Botticelli were dedicated to the American patroness of music Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge. Although Respighi’s long study of early music, from medieval to Baroque, can be heard in every bar, the music is actually all his own. The first piece, “La primavera”, is full of trilling birdsong and the rustling of new leaves, and evokes Vivaldi’s “Spring” as much as Botticelli’s. The second, “L’adorazione dei Magi”, has an allusion to the Epiphany hymn “Veni, veni Emmanuel”, while the last, “The Birth of Venus”, is a beautiful example of Respighi’s orchestral wizardry, here used to summon up waves and gentle sea breezes.
After a musical training in Naples, Leoncavallo led a bohemian existence in Paris, playing the piano in cafés and composing sporadically. He moved to Milan’s artistic circles, earning money from writing. On seeing the success of Pietro Mascagni’s Cavalleria rusticana, he composed his own short realist opera, I Pagliacci, a polished piece calculated to appeal. It was an instant hit in Milan, and the aria “Vesti la giubba” was the first recording to sell a million copies. But he found problems in Italy, partly due to his litigious nature and partly to bad luck. His La bohème was eclipsed by Puccini’s, and Leoncavallo faded from public view.

The dramatic climax to the intense, verismo opera I Pagliacci shocked its first audiences with the graphic, on-stage murder of Canio’s faithless wife.

**MILESTONES**

1876 Graduates from Naples Conservatory
1890 Collaborates on the libretto for Puccini’s opera Manon Lescaut
1892 I Pagliacci, opera, successfully staged
1897 La bohème, opera, staged
1900 Zazà, opera, premiered successfully
1904 Enrico Caruso records arias “Vesti la giubba” and “Mattinata”

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Wolf was his German father’s name, Ferrari his Italian mother’s, and he always felt torn between the two cultures. He shuttled between Munich and Venice, and his operas combine German graveness with Italian lightness. Switching to music after first studying painting, Wolf-Ferrari won international fame fairly early with his cantata La vita nuova and opera Le donne curiose. For six years he headed the Liceo Benedetto Marcello in Venice, then left for Munich to compose in seclusion. During World War I he wrote little, but resumed with success in the 1920s, until war loomed again at the close of his life.

**MILESTONES**

1901 La vita nuova, cantata, succeeds widely
1902 Directs the Liceo Benedetto Marcello
1906 I quatro rusteghi, comic opera, staged
1909 Writes Il segreto di Susanna, comic opera; moves to Munich to compose full-time
1927 Composes opera Das Himmelskleid
1939 Becomes professor of composition at the Salzburg Mozarteum in Austria

In the witty and fast-paced opera I quatro rusteghi, the rebellious beau Filipeto (left) balks at his arranged marriage, with unexpectedly comic consequences.
Pablo Martín de Sarasate

1844–1908  Spanish  55

One of the most famous violin virtuosos of his time, Sarasate was the dedicatee of some of the best-loved works in the repertoire. His own Spanish-flavoured compositions are almost all showpieces for the violin, written to display his dazzling technique and passionate playing. He made several famous arrangements of works by other composers, including the popular Carmen Fantasy (1883) based on Bizet’s opera.

LIFE AND MUSIC

Born in Navarre to an artillery bandmaster, Sarasate was an infant prodigy who gave his first public concert in Caruña at the age of eight and went on to play regularly at the court of Queen Isabel II in Madrid. At age 12, Sarasate’s mother arranged for him to study with Jean Alard at the Paris Conservatoire. En route to Paris, his mother died of a heart attack, but the boy was rescued by the Spanish Consul. At 17, he won the coveted Premier Prix, establishing his career as a performer. Sarasate’s compositions, mostly fantasies on Spanish melodies or themes from popular operas, were written primarily for his own performances. Renowned for his sweet tone and pure style, he was the dedicatee of many works, some of which have become repertory staples, including Edouard Lalo’s Symphonie espagnole and Camille Saint-Saëns’s Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso.

Ever the caballero (cavalier), Sarasate reputedly received hundreds of propositions from admiring female fans, but remained a lifelong bachelor.

MILESTONES

1852  Public debut, aged eight, in Caruña
1856  Travels to the Paris Conservatoire to study with Jean Alard; mother dies of a heart attack en route; catches cholera
1859  Embarks on first major concert tour
1861  Wins the Conservatoire’s prestigious Premier Prix; makes London debut
1874  Performs Lalo’s Symphonie espagnole
1878  Composes Zigeunerweisen for orchestra
1883  Carmen Fantasy, Op. 25, composed

KEY WORKS

CARMEN FANTASY OP. 25

Following the lead of many performer-composers before him, Sarasate wrote several concert fantasies on themes from popular operas, including Mozart’s Don Giovanni and The Magic Flute, and Verdi’s Forza del destino. Generally short and showy, such fantasies were popular with his audiences. The Carmen Fantasy, based on Bizet’s hot-blooded opera Carmen, is essentially a set of variations on five of the best-known melodies, such as the emotionally charged Habanera.

ZIGEUNERWEISEN

Literally “Gypsy Airs”, Zigeunerweisen is a showpiece for violin and orchestra based on Spanish folk melodies arranged by Sarasate. After a lively start, full of technical trickery, a slow central section demands absolute control and tone, before closing with a breakneck finale.

A spectacular showcase for violin, Zigeunerweisen demands the utmost sensitivity and virtuosity.
Albéniz was pushed into the role of travelling virtuoso at eight by his needy family. His amazing facility as pianist and improviser won him worldwide fame, and by the 1880s he was pouring out a stream of piano character pieces, mostly more than written-out improvisations. But his ambition grew; in the 1880s he wrote two piano concertos and a symphonic piece and, in the 1890s (by then living in London), tried his hand at operetta. In 1894, Francis Burdett Money-Coutts, the banking heir, became his patron. Albéniz then divided his time between operatic projects based on Money-Coutts’s Arthurian libretti, works on Spanish themes, and concert tours.

Composer Felipe Pedrell taught Albéniz, inspiring him with his own enthusiasm for folk music.

Abelíniz’s most successful opera has a Spanish theme but an English libretto by Francis Money-Coutts. Its constant evocation of thrumming guitars makes it sound familiar, partly because of its influence on better-known works by Manuel de Falla.
Worried about his declining health, friends persuaded Albéniz in 1905 to lay aside his operatic plans. Instead, he worked on these 12 character pieces (divided into three books), which turned out to be his masterpiece. Each is a portrait of a Spanish locale. Some, such as El Albaicín (an old quarter of Granada) or Málaga, are conventionally picturesque choices; others, such as Lavapiés (a poor district of Madrid), are surprising. All of them weave extraordinarily subtle webs of sound, in which a simple skeleton (such as an ostinato, or an accompaniment figure with typical guitar-inspired Spanish harmonies) is encrusted with layers of chromatic decoration. When he heard pianist Joaquín Malats perform “Triana” from Book 2, Albéniz was inspired to new heights in Books 3 and 4 in both technical difficulty and density of the inner parts. The influence of these works on later piano music was immense. No less a composer than Olivier Messiaen ranked Iberia alongside Bach’s The Art of Fugue and the late sonatas of Beethoven.

Under the terms of his contract, Albéniz was obliged to set Francis Money-Coutts’s three opera libretti about King Arthur to music. Though enthusiastic, he completed only Merlin. Like so many late 19th-century musicians, Albéniz was a passionate Wagnerian (he was a founder of Barcelona’s Wagnerian Association). Wagner’s influence can be heard in the grandeur of the first-act finale and the pervasive use of Leitmotifs. There is even a direct quotation of the “peace motif” from Siegfried. All this will surprise anyone who knows Albéniz only through his “Spanish” piano music, but some of the Merlin music, notably the “Saracen Dances”, recalls the more familiar Albéniz of Iberia.

Albéniz’s worldwide fame gave Spanish music-making a confidence it had lacked for three centuries. His subtle use of folk-like idioms, and his amazingly refined use of the piano’s resources of colour and chromatic decoration, inspired later Spanish composers such as Granados and de Falla, and were much admired by Debussy and Ravel.
Enrique Granados

1867–1916  Spanish  25

Granados was one of a group of composers who were interested in developing a peculiarly Spanish form of art music by distilling the essence of Spanish indigenous folk music and blending it with the Romanticism of Schumann and Liszt. A virtuoso pianist as well as a composer, Granados died tragically at the peak of his career, before his potential had been completely fulfilled.

LIFE AND MUSIC

Granados studied in Barcelona under Felipe Pedrell, then in Paris, where he met the important French composers of the day, including d’Indy, Dukas, and Saint-Saëns. In 1890 he returned to Barcelona and began developing his career as a concert pianist. His music, much of it for piano and intended for his own performance, was strongly influenced by the nationalist ideas of Pedrell, as shown by his use of folk themes. But it was also Romantic in nature, with an advanced appreciation of chromatic harmony. Granados died when the liner taking him home from the premiere of his opera *Goyescas* was sunk in the English Channel.

MILESTONES

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1887</td>
<td>Goes to study with Charles Wilfrid de Bériot at Paris Conservatoire</td>
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<tr>
<td>1892</td>
<td>Gives Spanish premiere of Grieg's Piano Concerto</td>
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<tr>
<td>1892</td>
<td>Three orchestrated pieces from <em>Danzas españolas</em> given premiere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>Founds Granados Academy (later Marshall Academy) in Barcelona</td>
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<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>Composes <em>Goyescas</em>, suite for piano</td>
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<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>Completes <em>Goyescas</em>, opera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916</td>
<td>Drowned with wife when English liner <em>Sussex</em> hit by German torpedo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

KEY WORKS

**GOYESCAS**

*SOLO PIANO*  
55:00  12

Perhaps Granados’s greatest work is his piano suite *Goyescas*, a set of pieces inspired by the dramatic paintings and tapestries of Goya. Granados makes full use of the rich late-Romantic harmonic palette, whilst incorporating distinctively Spanish rhythms and melodic shapes.

**GOYESCAS**

*OPERA*  
70:00  1

Although Granados had already written several zarzuelas, he had long wanted to expand his piano work *Goyescas* into an opera. He finally began to arrange and extend the music with librettist Fernando Penquet, fitting the words around it. The resulting one-act opera was produced successfully in New York, although it has ultimately been felt to suffer from a thin plot and has not entered the repertoire.

**DANZAS ESPANOLAS**

*SOLO PIANO*  
55:00  12

The *Spanish Dances* are a set of 12 short pieces evoking the folk music of Spain, without being literal arrangements of folk tunes. In 1892, three of the pieces were performed in an orchestral version, bringing Granados’s name to wider notice.
The greatest Spanish composer since the Golden Age of Cristóbal de Morales and Tomás Luis de Victoria, de Falla took the picturesque, Romantic Spanish style forged by Albéniz and Granados and imbued it with the modernism of Debussy and Stravinsky. In his later works, he turned his back on the gorgeous, Impressionistic sound-world of his ballets to create a very Spanish form of Neo-Classicism.

**LIFE AND MUSIC**

Precocious as a pianist but slow to start as a composer, de Falla’s real fame came with his ballets, particularly *The Three-Cornered Hat*. Composed for Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes, it is strongly influenced by French Impressionism. An intensely religious man, de Falla retreated to the calm of Granada in the 1920s, where he developed a new, spare style in which the influence of old Spanish music replaced picturesque “Spanishisms” (a trend begun in *The Three-Cornered Hat*). Distressed by the Spanish Civil War and murder of his friend, the poet Lorca, Falla accepted an invitation to Argentina, where he then remained. His last 20 years were spent writing the huge, unfinished *L’Atlántida*.

**KEY WORKS**

**LA VIDA BREVE**

*OPERA*  60:00  2  5

Written as an entry for a competition (which it won), this passionate, fast-moving zarzuela, *A Short Life*, tells of a gypsy girl who dies of a broken heart after her fiancé marries another girl. Despite the influences of Wagner and contemporaries such as Puccini, the mature de Falla can already be heard.

**EL SOMBRERO DE TRES PICOS**

*BALLET*  38:00  2

The premiere of *The Three-Cornered Hat* – a story of mistaken identities – at the Alhambra Theatre in London in 1919 was one of the greatest triumphs of Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes. The sets were by Picasso and choreography by Massine. Deriving its style from flamenco *cante jondo* (deep song), de Falla’s music was praised for freeing itself from Debussy and Ravel.

**HARPSCICHORD CONCERTO**

*CHAMBER*  13:00  3  6

Written for the great harpsichordist, Wanda Landowska, and much admired by Stravinsky, this ranks among the masterpieces of 1920s Neo-Classicism. The first movement quotes from a 15th-century Spanish song, and the second from Tomás de Victoria’s *Tantum Ergo*.
Astonishingly prolific, the composer Villa-Lobos was a larger-than-life character who has attained legendary status in Brazil. He made an extensive study of the folk music of his native country, which he incorporated into an eclectic musical style. This knowledge later formed the basis for sweeping reforms in the Brazilian music education system under the nationalist government of the 1930s.

Villa-Lobos’s influences were as diverse as his own musical style. As a young man he played as a café musician, toured Brazil exploring indigenous music, and studied in Paris. Almost inevitably, for a composer who wrote with such ease and fluency, the quality of his output is variable. His best works are perhaps those in which his reverence for the Baroque is most obvious, such as the *Bachianas brasileiras* series. Rarely seen without a cigar and a broad smile, Villa Lobos was renowned for his rumbustious character and passionate advocacy of Brazilian music, an area in which he had an enormous impact as an educator.

**KEY WORKS**

### CHÔROS NOS. 1–14

**SUITE 14**

The *Chôros* date from the 1920s and were Villa-Lobos’s own take on the “chorinho”, a style of music that evolved in Rio de Janeiro in the late 19th century, blending European music with Afro-Brazilian rhythms. Scored for different instrumental ensembles, they present a kaleidoscope view of Brazilian music, as filtered through the young composer’s active imagination. No. 5, for piano, is particularly fine.

### CONCERTO FOR GUITAR

**ORCHESTRAL 18:30 3**

The popular guitar concerto is one of comparatively few of Villa-Lobos’s works to have taken a firm hold in the repertoire. An exciting piece, the finale in particular is full of syncopation and brilliant scoring. Villa-Lobos advocated the use of an amplifier to lift the volume of the guitar, but very few performers choose to use one.
Villa-Lobos’s characterful guitar music has helped establish his international reputation, no doubt thanks to his idiomatic writing for the instrument (he was an excellent guitarist himself). Each of the five Preludes is a portrait of a different aspect of Brazilian life, and – as ever with Villa-Lobos – they are quite stylistically diverse.

**NUMBER ONE** (4:30) A typically Brazilian-sounding melody is played in the mid-range of the guitar, accompanied by plucked chords.

**NUMBER TWO** (2:30) This Prelude depicts the **Capadocia**, a cocky native of the city of Rio. The first part is filled with light-hearted swagger, whilst the central section is a flurry of fast picking and parallel chords.

**NUMBER THREE** (3:00) Prelude No. 3 is a homage to Bach, opening with a figure in almost bitonal counterpoint, and leading to a middle section of toccata-like figuration.

**NUMBER FOUR** (3:30) A haunting melody in the lower reaches of the instrument depicts the rainforest, returning – after a dramatic central section – in shadowy form using guitar harmonics.

**NUMBER FIVE** (3:30) The final Prelude, a homage to the lively and sophisticated social life of Rio, is a playful waltz that recalls themes from some of the earlier Preludes.

The series of *Bachianas brasileiras* are, like the *Chôros*, scored for a variety of different ensembles. Written as a homage to Bach, Villa-Lobos makes a thorough attempt to fuse the composer’s contrapuntal procedures with the spirit of Brazilian music. The fifth of the series is perhaps his best-known work. Villa-Lobos was a fine cellist, and it is surely his affinity for the instrument that enabled him to conjure a wide range of textures and sounds from this unusual ensemble of eight cellos and solo soprano.

**ARIA** (**CANTILENA|** The Aria begins with a pizzicato bassline accompanying a gentle counterpoint. The soprano enters with a wordless vocalise, shadowed by one of the cellos, intoning a vocal line with a distinctly Brazilian flavour. The central section is a setting of a poem in Portuguese, an impassioned paean to the moon. The opening material then returns, the soprano now humming the melody.

**DANÇA** (**MARTELO|** The second movement is a lively dance. The soprano sings a poem that describes a native Brazilian bird, and has to negotiate all manner of fast, repeated words and sudden leaps.
Joaquín Rodrigo

1901–1999  |  Spanish  |  c.200

Rodrigo is among the most significant Spanish composers of the 20th century. His approachable style, with its echoes of Spanish folk music, changed little throughout his long career. However, his influence has been significant and, while he wrote in many genres, he is remembered mainly for his guitar music. Blind from childhood, Rodrigo’s prodigious output was composed using braille.

**LIFE AND MUSIC**

An attack of diphtheria rendered Rodrigo blind from the age of three. Nonetheless, as a child he showed great aptitude for music, studying firstly in Spain and then, following his fellow Spaniards, Granados and Albeniz, in Paris. While hardly progressive, Rodrigo’s music is an appealing blend of Spanish-inflected melody (although often without direct-reference folk sources) with a subtlety learned from his studies with Dukas, and, at times, a certain Stravinskian coolness – characteristics epitomized in the celebrated *Concierto de Aranjuez*. Not a guitarist himself, it is notable that his large output contains many works for the instrument, and as such he played a significant role in establishing the guitar in the classical mainstream.

**MILESTONES**

- 1918  |  Studies composition at Valencia
- 1927  |  Moves to Paris to study with composer Paul Dukas
- 1933  |  Marries the Turkish pianist Victoria Kamhi
- 1935  |  Writes *Sonada de adiós* for piano, in memory of Dukas
- 1939  |  Returns to Spain; composes *Concierto de Aranjuez*
- 1942  |  Writes *Concierto heroico* for piano and orchestra
- 1947  |  Appointed Manuel de Falla professor of music at Madrid University
- 1954  |  Fantasía para un Gentilhombre produced
- 1963  |  Awarded Légion d’Honneur by the French government

**KEY WORKS**

**CONCIERTO DE ARANJUEZ**

Inspiried by the beautiful Rococo palace at Aranjuez, this is certainly the most famous work in the guitar repertoire, and one of the best-known pieces of classical music of the 20th century. The two outer movements are full of dance rhythms, while the gorgeous second is a masterpiece of subtle scoring – the evocative melody shared between the guitar and cor anglais.

*The guitar is the instrument with which Rodrigo is most associated, but he never played it himself.*

**FANTASÍA PARA UN GENTILHOMBRE**

Rodrigo’s second best-known work for solo guitar and orchestra. Premiered in San Francisco by the renowned guitar virtuoso Andrés Segovia (the gentleman of the title), the work is a fantasy on themes from the 17th-century Spanish composer Gaspar Sanz.

**SONADA DE ADIÓS**

Rodrigo studied with the renowned composer Paul Dukas. His death in 1935 affected him deeply, and the touching *Sonada de adiós* was written as a homage to his friend.
Carlos Chávez

Composer, conductor, teacher, administrator, and writer, Chávez was a prolific and major figure in the development of Mexican music in the 20th century. Trained as a pianist, but self-taught as a composer, he directed the Conservatory and Institute of Fine Arts, created and headed major national orchestras, and promoted both radical new music and native Mexican music to all social classes. Chávez’s works cover traditional genres (for example, his six symphonies) plus some of his own (such as the four “Solis”). They often show indigenous influences, sometimes using folk instruments – based on historical research, such as in the Aztec-influenced Xochipilli. His works are characterized by strong rhythms, a “Mexican accent”, and spiky dissonance, but avoid repetition and cliché. He was also influenced by the music of Stravinsky and Schoenberg.

**MILESTONES**

- 1921 Debut as composer: Piano Sextet
- 1922 Marries Otilia Ortiz, pianist
- 1925 Becomes head of OSM (Mexico Symphony Orchestra)
- 1928 Director of National Conservatory
- 1932 Composes Caballos de vapor, ballet
- 1947 Forms OSN (National Symphony Orchestra)

Alberto Ginastera

Argentinian composer of the 20th century. He combined superb composing technique and eloquence with a strong sense of national identity: the virile rhythms and tough sounds of *Estancia* vividly suggest gauchos out on the ranch. However, his music also ranges from the charming (*Impresiones de la Puna*) to complex contemporary techniques (*String Quartet No. 1*). He directed the National Conservatory and taught — sometimes at loggerheads with the Perón government. In mid-career he wrote film music to support himself, but later commissions piled up: in his last 12 years, working in Switzerland, he composed prodigiously.

**MILESTONES**

- 1941 Writes Estancia, ballet/orchestral suite
- 1948 Composes String Quartet No. 1
- 1954 Pampeana No. 3, orchestra, performed
- 1966 Don Rodrigo, opera, is a success in New York
- 1971 Remarries and moves to Switzerland
The American songwriter Stephen Foster has, curiously, become something of a cult figure. Perhaps because of his unrivalled ability to capture the essence of 19th-century American life and aspiration, he has come to be regarded as almost a folk hero, and his songs as authentic folk songs. In truth the bald facts of his life are rather mundane, rendering his achievements all the more remarkable.

**LIFE AND MUSIC**

Foster initially worked as a bookkeeper for his brother’s steamboat business in Cincinnati, where he enjoyed his first major success with “Oh! Susanna”. On returning to Pennsylvania in 1950, he decided to become a professional songwriter, a genuinely pioneering decision, as there was then no real “music business”. Although almost wholly self-taught, Foster published his first song in his teens, and went on to write around 200 others. His songs were motivated by social purpose – both to capture the spirit of the American people, and to portray a world in which all were equal. At times, he deliberately adopted the musical and poetical style of immigrant groups, such as the cotton planters, which may be one reason why his works were mistaken for folk songs.

**KEY WORKS**

**OH! SUSANNA**

The song “Oh! Susanna” achieved huge popularity when it was taken up as the unofficial anthem of the “forty-niners”, the families travelling to California in the American gold rush. Most would not have known that it was written just a year earlier; as such, it stands as a fine example of Foster’s ability to write songs with the timeless appeal of folk standards.

**BEAUTIFUL DREAMER**

Foster’s later songs rarely rivalled his earlier ones for popularity, bar the serenade “Beautiful Dreamer”, made famous by Bing Crosby in the 1940s.

**MY OLD KENTUCKY HOME**

Foster wrote many evocative songs about the American South. “My Old Kentucky Home”, inspired by a visit to friends in the region, has since been adopted as the official state song.

**MILESTONES**

1844 Publishes his first song, “Open Thy Lattice Love”
1846 Moves to Cincinnati to work as a bookkeeper for his brother
1848 Writes “Oh! Susanna”, song
1850 Returns to Pennsylvania to become a professional songwriter; composes the song “Camptown Races”
1851 Writes “Old Folks at Home (Swanee River)” and “Laura Lee”, songs
1853 Visits friends in Bardstown, Kentucky, inspiring him to write “My Old Kentucky Home”, song
1854 Composes “Jeanie With the Light Brown Hair”, song
1862 Writes “Beautiful Dreamer”, song
Arguably the first American nationalist composer, Gottschalk was a virtuoso pianist and performer, whose flair won the praise of Chopin and Berlioz. Much of his life was spent touring outside his native country, yet the US remained his spiritual home and his music retained elements of the Afro-Creole qualities that shaped his early life. He composed much piano music, two symphonies, and two operas. Gottschalk’s composing, almost always secondary to his performing, has often been dismissed as mere light music, and his works have been largely forgotten today. However, his style can be seen as uniquely American in its exuberant integration of disparate influences.

**LIFE AND MUSIC**

Gottschalk was born in New Orleans, of French-Creole descent. At the age of 13, apparently quite of his own accord, he determined to study in Paris. Although denied admittance to the Conservatoire, he studied privately, establishing himself as a pianist after a dazzling début in 1844. Indeed, his playing was greatly admired by both Chopin and Berlioz, who described his “irresistible prestige and…sovereign power” at the keyboard.

Gottschalk’s composing, almost always secondary to his performing, has often been dismissed as mere light music, and his works have been largely forgotten today. However, his style can be seen as uniquely American in its exuberant integration of disparate influences.

**KEY WORKS**

**THE LAST HOPE; THE DYING POET**

The Last Hope and The Dying Poet are amongst the many overtly sentimental encore pieces that Gottschalk composed for use in his own performances. These two were particular favourites with his audiences, which were reported to have been largely made up of female admirers.

**SYMPHONIE ROMANTIQUE: LA NUIT DES TROPiques**

La nuit des Tropiques, written on the island of Guadaloupe during Gottschalk’s three-year spell in the Caribbean, effectively fuses Romantic idioms with Afro-Creole folk music and Latin American dance rhythms, achieving striking colouristic effects. Whilst rarely performed nowadays, it has assumed a certain historical importance as the first genuine American symphony. That said, it bears little formal similarity to its European counterparts and is more akin to the freer form of symphonic poem. Its evocative mood and name probably derives from Félicien David’s symphonic ode, Christophe Colomb, staged in 1847. A curious point of note is the fugue on a Cuban theme in the second movement.
Amy Marcy Cheney Beach

Amy Beach was one of the first US composers to gain a significant reputation outside her native country, and remains one of the foremost female composers of her time. Finding inspiration in Romanticism and the European folk-music tradition of her New England ancestors, she composed copiously throughout her life, and in later years developed a significant performing career.

LIFE AND MUSIC

Amy Beach would almost certainly have made a career as a concert pianist, but her husband encouraged her to limit public appearances and concentrate instead on composition (she later returned to the platform following his death in 1910). In this she was immensely talented but largely self-taught, learning orchestration from a treatise by Berlioz and counterpoint by writing out fugues from Bach’s *Well-Tempered Clavier*. Whilst not especially innovative, her music is well constructed and shows a sophisticated grasp of harmony. In works such as the Piano Concerto she demonstrated an ability (and willingness) to tackle large-scale forms. Her output is large and covers all the major genres.

MILESTONES

- 1885: Debut with Boston Symphony Orchestra; marries Dr Henry Beach
- 1896: Composes *Gaelic Symphony*, Op. 32
- 1898: Writes *Three Browning Songs*, Op. 44
- 1910: Death of husband
- 1911: Concert tour to Europe; remains in Germany until 1914
- 1914: Settles in New York

Beach composed music for the opening of the Women’s Building at the World’s Columbian Exhibition, held in Chicago in 1893.

KEY WORKS

**GAELIC SYMPHONY, OP. 32**

Rather than follow Dvořák’s example of using Native American and Negro music to forge a national style, Beach turned instead to the Celtic folk tradition. Her *Gaelic Symphony* incorporates Irish melodies and was the first symphony by an American composer to gather significant attention in Europe.

**PIANO CONCERTO, OP. 45**

Beach’s Piano Concerto is a large-scale, bravura masterpiece in the manner of contemporary late-Romantic concertos such as those of Tchaikovsky and Grieg. Three of the four movements are based on material from Beach’s own songs, including one to a poem by her husband. She premiered the work herself with the Boston Symphony Orchestra in 1900.

**THREE BROWNING SONGS, OP. 44**

Beach composed over 100 songs, and it was for these that she was remembered until her revival in the mid-1970s in the wake of the US feminist movement. The *Three Browning Songs*, and in particular the delightful first song, “The Year’s at the Spring”, have proven enduringly popular.
John Philip Sousa

A composer, conductor, bandleader, and patriot, John Philip Sousa was known as the “March King”. He composed many of the world’s best-known military band pieces, including The Stars and Stripes Forever, the official march of the United States. In addition to his band music, which remains immensely popular with bands today, his output included some 15 operettas and many songs.

**LIFE AND MUSIC**

After Sousa attempted to run away with the circus at age 13, his father – a military trombonist – apprenticed him to the Marines. Following his discharge in 1875, and a spell conducting theatre orchestras, he returned to the military to assume leadership of the US Marine Band. He went on to form his own hugely successful band in 1892, touring all over the world and setting new standards for the quality of marching band performance. From his first published composition in 1872 until the end of his life, Sousa wrote constantly, and his position as bandleader gave him ample opportunity to showcase his works. His 135 marches, many celebrating US places or events, are full of delightful melodies and possessed of a distinctive, good-natured swagger.

**MILESTONES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1867</td>
<td>Father enlists Sousa in the Marines</td>
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<tr>
<td>1875</td>
<td>Discharged from Marines</td>
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<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>Returns to the military to lead the US Marine Band</td>
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<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td>Composes march Semper Fidelis</td>
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<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>Composes march The Washington Post, first performed</td>
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<tr>
<td>1892</td>
<td>Forms the Sousa Band</td>
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<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>Composes El Capitan, his first successful operetta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>Composes The Stars and Stripes Forever</td>
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<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>Composes march Hands across the Sea</td>
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<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>Sousa Band tours Europe</td>
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<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>Second European tour</td>
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<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>Third European tour</td>
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<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>Sousa Band’s world tour</td>
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**KEY WORKS**

**THE STARS AND STRIPES FOREVER**

Sousa and his wife were on vacation in Europe when they heard of the death of his manager, David Blakely. Thinking over the news whilst onboard the ship returning to the US, Sousa began to hear “a rhythmic beat of a band playing within my brain”. That melody was in his mind for the remainder of the voyage, and was to become The Stars and Stripes Forever, perhaps his most enduringly popular march.

**THE LIBERTY BELL**

The Liberty Bell is well known as the theme tune to the classic British comedy series Monty Python’s Flying Circus. It is a fine example of Sousa’s musical craft – a rousing march, with a memorable theme and a hint of humour.

John Philip Sousa was the inventor of the sousaphone, a now familiar instrument in the marching-band ensemble.
Edward MacDowell

1860–1908  American  c.70

One of the first US composers to establish a reputation outside his country, MacDowell was held as the most important US composer of his day. As a pianist and teacher he founded the music department of Columbia University and, with his wife Marion, the MacDowell artists’ colony, which still exists. His musical style owes much to the influence of his teacher, Joachim Raff, but became more individual in later years.

LIFE AND MUSIC

MacDowell studied first in New York, then Paris, but it was in Germany that he settled, teaching the piano and establishing a career as a performer. Success as a composer followed his return to the US in 1888. After teaching at Columbia University, his final years were spent between New York and his house in Peterborough, New Hampshire. The artists’ retreat he founded there with his wife in 1907 has flourished ever since. Inevitably, given his education, MacDowell’s music was strongly influenced by the German Romantics, which may be the reason why it fell out of favour in the US between the two world wars.

KEY WORKS

SONATA TRAGICA
SOLÓ PIANO  26:00  4

MacDowell’s four substantial piano sonatas are all inspired by European mythology except this, his first one. It is his most personal – a tribute to the death of his teacher and friend, Raff.

SUITE NO. 2, “INDIAN”
ORCHESTRAL SUITE  30:00  5

MacDowell felt that native Indian music held far more potential than Negro music as a source of inspiration for an “American” style. In this large-scale work for orchestra he employed material that has been traced to the Iroquois and Chippewa tribes.

FIRST MODERN SUITE
SOLÓ PIANO  30:00  5

Despite its title, MacDowell’s First Modern Suite for piano was resolutely in the European style he learned from his time studying with Raff. Nevertheless, it is full of charming music and extremely idiomatic for the piano.
Some of MacDowell’s best-known music is contained in the late sets of short piano pieces Woodland Sketches and New England Idylls. Influenced by the American landscape, particularly that of his country retreat in New Hampshire, the musical language is sparse, direct, and even folksy compared with his earlier piano works. The individual pieces in Woodland Sketches are all evocatively titled.

The famous “To a Wild Rose”, which opens Woodland Sketches, and the eighth piece, “A Deserted Farm”, are perfect examples of pared-down piano writing – beautifully simple melodies arranged over poignant, mildly dissonant chords. “An Old Trysting Place” has richer harmony and the feel of an old choral setting, whilst “To a Water Lily” uses the full range of the piano to suggest a deep lake. “Will o’ the Wisp” is full of gleeful good humour. The most direct folk allusion is in “From an Old Indian Lodge”, which imitates the rhythms of Native American chant.

Although some of the pieces are now performed separately, MacDowell intended them to be played together: in fact, the final piece, “Told at Sunset”, quotes from some of the earlier movements as if in reminiscence.

PIANO CONCERTO NO. 2

Received with success at its premiere in 1889, this work was described by one critic as sounding “a model of its kind – the kind that Johannes Brahms gave the world over 30 years ago in his D minor Concerto”. If this is a little over-stated, there is no doubt that the work cemented MacDowell’s position as the foremost composer in the US. The Concerto No. 2 is a distinctive and interesting work, made unusual by its adoption of a slow first movement and a Scherzo second, and by the many dance rhythms that feature throughout. It has also remained popular, largely thanks to US pianist Van Cliburn.

FIRST MOVEMENT (LAGHETTO CALMATO, 10:00)

After a short introduction led by the brass, the soloist enters with an intense, passionate cadenza. Cellos and clarinets introduce the lyrical second theme.

SECOND MOVEMENT (PRESTO GIOCO, 7:00)

This good-humoured section is a rondo, filled with quicksilver passages for the piano and almost jazz-like in its constant syncopation.

THIRD MOVEMENT (LAGO – MOLTO ALLEGRO, 7:00)

Beginning darkly with cellos leading a slow introduction, the mood lightens into a lively waltz, in which the soloist recalls themes from the first movement.
Music since 1900 has developed in a wide variety of styles, many of them strongly influenced by ideological, social, and technological changes. Whereas composers of earlier times attempted to adopt and develop established styles, much music of the 20th century seems – at least on the surface – to break with the past.

The first half of the 20th century was dominated by two very different composers who both established themselves in Europe before the First World War and who both ended their lives in California: the Austrian Arnold Schoenberg and the Russian Igor Stravinsky.

Schoenberg and his followers – raised on the high Romanticism of composers like Mahler and Wolf – saw themselves as building on the Austro-Germanic tradition. At the same time, Schoenberg’s interest in painting indicates a close relationship between the Expressionism of artists such as Kokoschka and Kandinsky, and of his own music and that of his followers, such as Berg.

Igor Stravinsky sprang to fame with his Russian ballets, such as The Firebird (1909) and The Rite of Spring (1913), and reinvigorated music with the primitive force of his rhythmic language, mirrored in the angular lines of the paintings of Picasso from the same period.

**NEO-CLASSICISM**

Later Stravinsky looked back to the past by drawing on styles and actual materials of the 17th and 18th centuries, and this style or spirit of “Neo-Classicism” was embraced by many contemporary composers, especially in France. Stravinsky’s Pulcinella (1918) was the seminal example of Neo-Classicism, and even as late as his The Rake’s Progress (1948–51) there is a sense of reverting to the traditions (and plots) of the past.

In France, Ravel’s music was sufficiently objective in its poise and clarity to adapt to the Neo-Classical ethos, as is shown in his Le tombeau de Couperin (1917–19), and even Debussy in his Suite Bergamasque succumbs to the charms of the past. In Britain,
SCHOENBERG AND SERIALISM

Schoenberg devised the 12-note process of composition, whereby a pattern of all 12 semitones (known as a “series” or “row”) should be used in a particular order before any one is repeated. The relationship between the notes of the row would always be maintained, though it was permissible to transpose the row (start on a different pitch), to reproduce it in “retrograde” (in reverse) or “inversion” (upside-down), and the notes could be combined simultaneously in chords. The idea was to avoid any sense of key or tonality. This way of composing became known as “serialism” and dominated music in the mid-20th century.

INFLUENTIAL THEORY
Arnold Schoenberg’s *Harmonielehre* (Treatise on Harmony) was published in 1911.

STRAVINSKY’S RITE OF SPRING

For this production by the Kirov Ballet in 2003, the original costumes and Nijinsky’s choreography were reconstructed from contemporary records.

Walton and Constant Lambert took up the Neo-Classical style, while in Germany, Hindemith explored the forms of earlier periods, most notably in his series of duo sonatas for orchestral instruments and piano.

JAZZ

Just as many composers turned to the past to react against Romanticism, others found in jazz a perfect foil to the music of the previous century. Virtually no composer in Paris was immune to the influence of jazz: Stravinsky composed a Rag-time (1918); Milhaud composed the first jazz fugue in his ballet *La création du monde* (1923); and Ravel’s Violin Sonata (1923–27)

TIMELINE: MODERN MUSIC

1900 1905 1910 1915

1900  ❯  1905
Debussy’s opera *Pelléas et Mélisande*

1900 – 1908
Schoenberg composes *Verklärte Nacht* (1907–08)

1905
Einstein proposes Theory of Relativity

1907 – 1908
Start of Cubist movement in the paintings of Picasso and Braque

1910
Première of Stravinsky’s ballet *The Rite of Spring*: noise of opposing factions in audience drowns the music

1911
Stravinsky’s ballet *Petrushka* with Nijinsky in title role

1913
Einstein’s *Theory of Relativity* published

1914 – 1918
First World War
contains a blues movement. At the same time, in the USA Gershwin was creating concert works, such as *Rhapsody in Blue*, that bridged the divide between popular and “serious” music.

**FOLK INFLUENCES**

Elsewhere, composers explored their musical folk heritage. In eastern Europe, Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály both travelled extensively to make recordings of folk songs and dances. The Australian composer and pianist Percy Grainger was equally industrious, collecting music from various parts of the world. In North America, Aaron Copland began to use cowboy songs, Quaker hymns, and Latin-American material in his own work, creating an immediately identifiable American style.

Later, European composers as diverse as Britten and Berio would make settings of folk songs of their own countries, and other composers such as Ligeti, Reich, and Volans would be influenced (in very different ways) by the music of Africa.

**MUSIC AND POLITICS**

In Russia, several distinct and important voices emerged during the 20th century. Prokofiev spent some time in the West, and was influenced by the Neo-Classicism he found in Paris, whereas Shostakovich remained in the Soviet Union and was forced to pay lip-service to the Socialist Realism of the Soviet authorities.

Political interference also surfaced in Nazi Germany, where Jewish composers were banned during the 1930s and even the music of non-Jewish composers, such as Anton Webern and Alban Berg, was outlawed as “degenerate art”. Among the potentially great composers who died or were killed in Nazi camps was the Moravian Gideon Klein and the Czech Viktor Ullmann.
Some composers remained resolutely independent from other movements. Olivier Messiaen took religion as an important unifying factor for his music and at the same time used exotic scales and bird song. Pierre Boulez, meanwhile, was initially influenced by Messiaen, but later rejected his teacher and instead became a high priest of formalism, taking the principles of serialism to a new level.

MODERN TRENDS

In the USA, John Cage, who had studied with Schoenberg, turned his back on serialism and looked to the music and philosophy of the East for inspiration, while bizarre conceptual preoccupations inspired the work of Karlheinz Stockhausen, one of whose works involves a string quartet performing in mid-air in four helicopters. Technology impacted on all types of music, through recording and through the use of synthesized sound; Edgard Varèse, for example, created a tape-only piece, *Poème électronique*, for Le Corbusier’s Philips Pavilion at the Brussels Expo of 1958.

A group of composers who emerged in the late 1960s were the minimalists. Terry Riley, Philip Glass, and Steve Reich composed music based on the repetition of simple motives that many found mesmerizing. Ultimately this style was taken up by composers who sought to reintroduce elements of development, such as John Adams, who has composed orchestral music and opera of romantic proportions both in scale and richness of expression. Just as the minimalists rebelled against the

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**GREAT FILM SCORES**

Music plays a key role in cinema, whether Bernard Herrmann’s score for Hitchcock’s *Psycho* (right) or Ennio Morricone’s for Sergio Leone’s *Dollars* trilogy.

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**MUSIC FOR STAGE AND SCREEN**

The American stage musical has attracted composers from Gershwin (*Porgy and Bess*) to Bernstein (*West Side Story*) and Stephen Sondheim. Fugitives from Europe in the 1930s, including Erich Korngold and Miklós Rózsa, found work in Hollywood alongside American composers such as Bernard Herrmann (*Citizen Kane* and *Taxi Driver*). Well-known classical composers who have also written film scores include Vaughan Williams, Milhaud, Prokofiev, Copland, Walton, and Philip Glass. An especially successful modern film composer is John Williams (of *Star Wars* fame).

**WEST SIDE STORY**

Bernstein’s musical demonstrated the composer’s surefire popular touch.

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**TIMELINE: MODERN MUSIC**

1939
- Germany invades Poland; start of Second World War in Europe

1940
- Siege of Leningrad; Shostakovich dedicates his *Symphony No. 7* to city’s heroism

1944
- Bartók’s Concerto for Orchestra receives its first performance in Boston

1950
- 1953–55 Boulez composes *Le marteau sans maître*

1955–57
- Shostakovich composes *Gruppen*

1957
- Bernstein’s *West Side Story* opens on Broadway

1962
- Britten’s *War Requiem* performed in Coventry Cathedral

1968
- Berio’s *Sinfonia*

1973
- American troops withdraw from Vietnam
20th century was by no means a one-way traffic. Jazz big band leaders such as Duke Ellington used an adapted orchestral format, with a wide instrumental range. In the 1950s and '60s, producers such as Frank Sinatra’s collaborator Nelson Riddle and The Beatles’ producer, George Martin, frequently aspired to full classical orchestral effects. In rock music, a number of bands such as Deep Purple and Pink Floyd dabbled with orchestral compositions. The impressive catalogue of over 1,200 compositions by the radical American musician Frank Zappa ranged from scatological heavy guitar rock to a ballet (Lumpy Gravy, 1968), an opera (200 Motels, 1971), and his final work, the Yellow Shark suite (1992), which saw him working with the Ensemble Moderne.

CROSSOVER MUSIC
Popular music forms, such as jazz, rock, and folk music, inspired a great many modern classical composers, but musical cross-fertilization in the complexity of serialism, so a group of European composers, including John Tavener, Henryk Górecki, and Arvo Pärt, developed music that was equally simple in its construction, but emerged out of a spiritual calm.

FRANK ZAPPA CONDUCTING
Zappa rehearses with the London Symphony Orchestra for a concert at the Barbican in 1984.
“My music is not modern, it is merely badly played.”

ARNOLD SCHOENBERG
Arnold Schoenberg

Schoenberg was born in Vienna, where his father owned a small shoe shop. He began composing as a child, but met Alexander von Zemlinsky (his only teacher) when already a young adult, working in a bank. He converted to Protestantism from Judaism in 1898 and three years later married Zemlinsky’s sister Mathilde. Their circle of friends included Berg and Webern (who had become pupils of Schoenberg), Mahler, and the painter Richard Gerstl, who gave art lessons first to Schoenberg – himself a talented artist – and later to Mathilde. In 1908, Mathilde briefly left her husband for Gerstl, who committed suicide when she subsequently returned to Schoenberg. Mahler’s death in 1911 was another blow to Schoenberg, and it was only when he moved to Berlin that he was able to regain some confidence. In 1933, horrified at the German anti-Semitism of the time, Schoenberg rejoined the Jewish faith in a ceremony witnessed by the painter Marc Chagall. Later that year he left Europe permanently, moving first to Boston and then to Los Angeles, where he took a teaching post at the University of California. Friends and near neighbours to his Hollywood home included George Gershwin and the writer Thomas Mann.

LIFE

Schoenberg’s death seemed to justify his superstitious belief in numerology: he died on Friday 13 July 1951, at 13 minutes before midnight.
After writing his early music in a late-Romantic style, Schoenberg developed a completely new musical language. Works such as the Chamber Symphony No. 1 and the String Quartet No. 2 took dissonance to levels which audiences had not previously encountered. The last movement of String Quartet No. 2 appropriately quotes the German poet Stefan George: “I feel the air of other planets”. The Three Pieces, Op. 11, for piano confirm this new and strange planet: they are effectively atonal and expressionist. This “free atonality” liberated Schoenberg from writing in any particular key, and traditional melodies were replaced by expressive gestures and extremes of pitch or dynamics. He later pared his music down in a way that reflected the Neo-Classicism of the day (for example the Six Little Pieces), and in his final years he strove towards some reparation with tonality.

The opera Moses und Aron – begun in 1932– was one of Schoenberg’s unfinished works. Ever superstitious, he spelt “Aron” with one “r” to avoid a title with thirteen letters.
Pierrot lunaire has gained a certain notoriety as one of Schoenberg’s most radical works despite the composer’s intention that it should be “light, ironic, and satirical”. It is a setting of poems by Albert Giraud about the traditional commedia dell’arte character Pierrot. The work is scored for a female reciter and a chamber ensemble of eight instruments (flute, piccolo, clarinet, bass clarinet, violin, viola, cello, and piano) played by five performers, who play together for the first time in the very last song. The work’s surreal quality is enhanced by the sprechgesang (speech-song) of the reciter, which appears to presage madness.

**PART ONE** Pierrot fantasizes on the nature of love, sex and God. It is mostly calm, as in No. 5, the “Valse de Chopin” and No. 7, “Der kranke Mond” (“The Sick Moon”). In No. 2 however, Columbine’s violin solo is neurotically active.

**PART TWO** This is where the expressionist nightmare world truly makes itself felt in grotesque and sometimes violent music; No. 13, “Enthauptung” (“Beheading”). No. 8, “Nacht”, (“Nacht”) is a passacaglia (a set of variations on a ground bass).

**PART THREE** Pierrot begins his journey home to Bergamo and a sense of calm returns in songs that verge on the sentimental, such as “Heimfahrt” (“Homeward journey”). There are also moments of great contrapuntal ingenuity such as No. 18, “Der Mondfleck” (“The Moon-spot”) where Pierrot turns round to look at himself – this is represented by a palindromic canon between violin and cello, which reverse their lines from the middle of the piece onwards. The final piece almost resolves tonally in the key of E major, as if Schoenberg had begun to come to terms with his personal and artistic crises of the previous years.

This epic cantata was originally conceived as a song cycle based on a text by Jens Peter Jacobsen. It is the story of Waldemar, a medieval king of Denmark, and charts his doomed love for Tove, his blasphemy, penance, and the summer winds which sweep him and his ghostly retinue away in the dawn. The work is immersed in romantic symbolism and calls for a gigantic orchestra, choruses, soloists, and narrator. Significantly, it opens with an ethereal sunset, evoked by shimmering woodwind chords, and ends with a sunrise, symbolizing hope for the future.

**INFLUENCES**
Schoenberg was influenced by composers as diverse as Bach and Mahler. His own influence was immense, partly through his teaching (such composers as Berg, Webern, and John Cage were among his pupils), but also through the wide adoption of serialism on both sides of the Atlantic after 1950.
Webern's legacy was relatively small in terms of works, but substantial in terms of subsequent influence. All his music is immaculately crafted and he developed Schoenberg's 12-note procedures in distinctive ways. Most of Webern's compositions are extremely concise – he was able to compress a range of emotions into a few bars of music – yet they are among the most important works of the 20th century.

**LIFE AND MUSIC**

Webern was born into the middle class in Vienna (his father was a mining engineer). Although he studied musicology under Guido Adler at the University of Vienna, it was Schoenberg who was to be the decisive influence on his music. Webern enjoyed some success as a conductor in the 1920s but gradually withdrew from public life. His music was banned by the Nazis and his teaching activities were restricted after the Anschluss. During the Second World War he moved outside Vienna to escape the bombing of the city; ironically, he was shot one night (just after the war had ended) while smoking a cigar outside his daughter's house.

**MILESTONES**

- **1904** Becomes a pupil of Schoenberg
- **1906** Graduates with a doctorate from the University of Vienna
- **1908** Composes Passacaglia, Op. 1
- **1911** Six Bagatelles for String Quartet, Op. 9; moves to Berlin with Schoenberg; marries Wilhelmine Mörtl
- **1913** Five Pieces, chamber orchestra, Op. 10; undergoes psychoanalysis with Albert Adler
- **1925** Teaches at the Israelisches Blindeninstitute in Vienna
- **1928** Writes Symphony, Op. 21
- **1936** Variations for Piano, Op. 27, published
- **1938** Composes String Quartet, Op. 28
- **1940** Writes Variations for Orchestra, Op. 30

**KEY WORKS**

**PASSACAGLIA, OP. 1**

This is an early work, written whilst Webern was still a pupil of Schoenberg. It is Romantic in style and is one of the last works he wrote to have a key signature (D minor).

**SYMPHONY, OP. 21**

Although titled “Symphony”, this work is for a small chamber orchestra (clarinets, horns, harps, and strings) and avoids the development principles to be found in traditional symphonies. The texture is transparent, mostly consisting of single notes with occasional chords. The quality of tone changes continually – Webern entirely avoids long Romantic phrases – and the entire work is based on complex principles of symmetry.

**PIANO VARIATIONS, OP. 27**

These variations contain symmetries which cannot be detected by the listener, but were clearly important to Webern. For example, the note row used for all three movements, when turned around on itself and upside down, is identical to the original form.
FOUR SONGS FOR VOICE AND INSTRUMENTS, OP. 13

These four songs – which were composed during World War I – draw together poems of four different poets. That Webern composed so many songs at this time shows not only that he was interested in literature, but also how important it was for composers of free atonal music to have a structure in which to work. Each song is accompanied by a chamber ensemble (including woodwind, brass, percussion, and string instruments), and the different combinations of instruments reveal Webern’s fascination for variations in timbre.

**WIESE IM PARK (LAWN IN THE PARK)** is a setting of a poem by Karl Kraus. The delicate vocal part consists of short motives with numerous dissonant intervals. Webern draws attention to important words – such as the word “Wunder” (wonder) – by means of expressive leaps, or through sudden changes in instrumental colouring.

**DIE EINSAME (THE LONELY GIRL)** is a setting of a poem by Wang-Seng-Yu. As in the first song, there is much word-painting, including a climax on the word “Sehnsucht” (longing) in the middle of the song. Appropriately for the theme of solitude, the song finishes with the voice alone.

**IN DER FREMDE (IN A FOREIGN LAND)** is another setting of a Chinese poem – this one written by Li-Tai-Po. The use of the celesta is particularly exotic, and the emphasis given to the word “Mond” (moon) is reminiscent of Schoenberg’s *Pierrot lunaire*.

**EIN WINTERABEND (A WINTER EVENING)** is a setting of words by Georg Trakl and further pursues the idea of dislocation and solitude, by contrasting the warmth and cheerfulness of a brightly-lit house with the loneliness of the wanderer. The wide and dissonant intervals of the vocal part are highly suggestive of the wanderer’s pain and suffering. Webern’s acute awareness of timbre is present in the very last note – a ghostly harp harmonic.
Although he composed relatively few works, Berg is one of the most distinctive voices of the early 20th century. Much of his music employs the new 12-tone principles of his teacher Schoenberg, but still retains a Romantic generosity and the emotional intensity of Expressionism. His music is inherently dramatic: many of Berg’s later works are linked to programmes and some are autobiographical.

Berg was born into a middle-class Viennese family, but his first formal training in music came from Schoenberg at the relatively advanced age of 19. The relationship with Schoenberg was always to be strained, as Berg attempted to please his teacher, but rarely succeeded in doing so. Although his Piano Sonata, Op. 1, marked a new artistic confidence, it was not until the 1920s that his reputation became firmly established, particularly with the success of his opera Wozzeck. After completing his Violin Concerto, Berg spent time in the countryside, where an insect bite brought about the infection that was to result in his death.

The Chamber Concerto, for piano and 13 wind instruments, reveals Berg’s fascination for anagrams: its themes contain musical equivalents of letters in his own name and in those of Arnold Schoenberg and Anton Webern, the other members of the Second Viennese School. Despite complex counterpoint and structural symmetries, Berg described the work as “full of friendship, love, and a world of human and spiritual references”.

Originally composed as a work for string quartet, Berg arranged the three central movements for orchestra. The first and last movements are written according to the principles of Schoenberg’s 12-tone system, but the slow movement contains a

Georg Büchner’s 1914 play Wozzeck gave Berg the plot for his opera of the same name, one of his most successful works.
Soon after he began composing this 12-tone work, Berg was made known of the death of Manon, the daughter of the architect Walter Gropius and Alma Mahler. She had suffered from poliomyelitis, and was only 18 years old when she died. Berg decided to dedicate the Violin Concerto to her memory – the work is inscribed “To the memory of an angel”.

FIRST MOVEMENT This movement consists of two sections: a dreamy and quasi-improvisational Andante and a dance-like Allegretto. Berg used some pre-existing melodies, such as a Carinthian folksong in the Allegretto, which is played by the horn.

SECOND MOVEMENT This also consists of two sections, Allegro and Adagio. The Allegro is the most tortured and Expressionist part of the concerto and represents the suffering of Manon. This culminates in a flourish for the violin, which gives way to another quotation, this time from Bach’s harmonization of the Lutheran chorale “Es ist genug” (“It is Enough”). This chorale enters very quietly, played by clarinets, and this must surely be one of the most poignant moments in any concerto. The soloist soars above the orchestral parts (representing the soul of Manon rising to heaven). Symbolically, the folk tune from the first movement makes a return appearance as a flicker of life before the violin plays the entire note-row to end the work.

Berg saw Büchner’s play Wozzeck in Vienna in 1914 and knew immediately that he should set it to music. However, World War I intervened and this atonal, Expressionist opera was completed only in 1921.

ACT ONE Wozzeck, an infantry soldier, is ridiculed by his captain. His lover Marie flirts with a passing drum-major, inviting him into her home.

ACT TWO Hearing of Marie’s infidelity, Wozzeck confronts her, but she denies any wrongdoing. Wozzeck spies on her as she dances with the drum-major. Back at the barracks, he starts a fight with the drum-major; Wozzeck is knocked unconscious to the ground.

ACT THREE The next day, when out walking, Wozzeck stabs Marie in the throat. Later, drinking at a nearby tavern, Wozzeck notices the blood on his hands. Rushing to a pond, he throws in his knife, but, frightened by the blood-red moon, he tries to retrieve it to throw it in deeper, but accidentally drowns.

Berg was greatly influenced by his teacher, Schoenberg, but also by late-Romantic composers such as Wagner and Richard Strauss. Always the most popular of the Second Viennese School with audiences, his own influence on composers has continued to grow since his death, particularly towards the end of the 20th century.
“Bartók’s name...stands for the principle and the demand for regeneration stemming from the people, both in art and in politics.”

ZOLTÁN KODÁLY
Béla Bartók

1881–1945  Hungarian  695

Hungary’s most important composer of the 20th century and a major exponent of modern music, Bartók was also an outstanding specialist in music folklore and a teacher of wide repute. His music was invigorated by the themes, modes, and rhythmic patterns of the Hungarian and other folk-music traditions he studied, which he synthesized with influences from his contemporaries into his own distinctive style.

LIFE

Bartók was born in southern Hungary to parents who were both teachers and amateur musicians. His idyllic childhood was disrupted in 1888 by the death of his father, and his mother was compelled to move between different towns in the region. The young Bartók composed enthusiastically, but suffered from various childhood illnesses. In 1899, he entered the Academy of Music in Budapest, where he shone as a pianist: he was soon invited to perform in Vienna, Berlin, and Manchester, among other cities. In 1906 Bartók met his contemporary Kodály and discovered that they shared an interest in folk music. Eventually they collected music from all over Eastern Europe. Bartók’s first wife was Márta Ziegler, who assisted him in his field trips to collect folk music; the couple divorced in 1923 and Bartók subsequently married the pianist Ditta Pásztor, who bore him a son, Péter, in 1924. Bartók left Hungary after the German invasion of Austria and settled in New York in 1940. Life in the US proved precarious, although some financial security was provided by the intervention of friends such as Sergei Koussevitsky, who commissioned new works from him. After a long period of ill health, Bartók died in New York while completing his Third Piano Concerto.
**MUSIC**

Bartók’s early music clearly shows the influence of German Romantics such as Richard Strauss. However, his interest in folk music exerted a strong pull and, even when he refrained from using actual folk tunes, his melodic and rhythmic language showed the folk character. Much of the music Bartók wrote around 1910 (such as the *Allegro barbaro* for piano) was percussive in style, mirroring the primitivism of Stravinsky’s music of the same period.

Bartók’s music is meticulously crafted, with remarkably clear proportions: different parts often mirror each other, and the three sections of the ballet *The Wooden Prince*, for example, are arranged symmetrically. Bartók’s most Expressionist phase was after World War I in such compositions as the pantomime *The Miraculous Mandarin*. His later music powerfully evokes the night noises of the Eastern European countryside in its slow sections.

**MILESTONES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>Enters Academy of Music, Budapest</td>
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<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>Meets Kodály; plans folk-song collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>Professor at Academy of Music</td>
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<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td>Marries Márta Ziegler</td>
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<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td><em>Bluebeard’s Castle</em>, Op. 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923</td>
<td>Divorces Ziegler; marries Ditta Pásztor</td>
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<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>First concert tour of the US</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celeste</td>
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<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>Begins Violin Concerto No. 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td><em>Contrasts</em> written for Benny Goodman</td>
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<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>Leaves Hungary for the US</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>Concerto for Orchestra</td>
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**MODERN MUSIC – FOLK MUSIC TO ART MUSIC**

In 1917, Bartók (centre) travelled through Romania with his fellow Hungarian composer Zoltán Kodály (right) and Joan Busitia to collect native folk songs.

**KEY WORKS**

**MUSIC FOR STRINGS, PERCUSSION, AND CELESTE**

*Orchestral* 34:00 4

This piece was written for Paul Sacher and the Basle Chamber Orchestra in 1936. As with many of Bartók’s works, percussion features strongly, not only as a means of rhythmic organization, but also as colour. He integrates folk music and original material highly successfully in this work.

**BLUEBEARD’S CASTLE, OP. 11**

*Opera* 32:00 1

*Bluebeard’s Castle* is a one-act opera of 1911, based on a libretto by Béla Balázs. The work is a dark and Expressionistic examination of the human soul, involving just Duke Bluebeard and his new wife, Judith. The two characters are represented by different kinds of music: Bluebeard by pentatonic melody and Judith by tortured chromatic lines.

**MIKROKOSMOS**

*Solo Piano* 153

Between 1932 and 1939, Bartók composed over 150 short piano pieces as part of a set called *Mikrokosmos*. Ranging from easy to concert-standard, they reflected his wish to introduce Eastern European and Arabic folk tunes to a wider audience, as well as to create piano pieces for his young son Péter to learn. Many of these pieces show Bartók’s interest in mirror images between left- and right-hand patterns.
The conductor Sergei Koussevitsky commissioned the Concerto for Orchestra in memory of his late wife, Nathalie. The title reflects Bartók’s admiration for the virtuosity of Koussevitsky’s orchestra.

**INTRODUCTION** *(ALLEGRO NON TROPPO – ALLEGRO Vivace)*
The first movement begins mysteriously with a theme in the low strings accompanied by whispering violin tremolando. Instrumental groups are gradually added until the bright and energetic Allegro Vivace begins with a theme from the violins. A second theme is introduced by solo trombone in regular metre.

**GAME OF THE PAIRS** *(ALLEGRETTO SCHERZANDO)*
The second movement features pairs of instruments, which move at all times in parallel: the bassoons (a sixth apart) are followed by oboes (a third apart), clarinets (a seventh apart), flutes (a fifth apart), and, finally, trumpets (a second apart). The chorale-like middle section is given to the brass.

**ELEGY** *(ANDANTE NON TROPPO)*
Bartók called the third movement a “lugubrious death song”. The opening theme on low strings recalls the beginning of the first movement. The misty section for flutes and clarinets that follows is accompanied by string tremolando and harp glissando. The music becomes more and more agitated until the passionate material from the first movement reappears.

**INTERMEZZO INTERROTTO** *(ALLEGRETTO)*
This movement was apparently influenced by a broadcast of Shostakovich’s Symphony No. 7. Bartók thought that Shostakovich’s patriotism was misguided and quoted a theme of that work in raucous parody. There is then an outrageous response from muted trumpets, clarinets, and trombones.

**FINALE** *(PRESTO)*
The finale is announced by a horn fanfare and athletic strings. The flurry of movement never lets up, and the coda is a brilliant and exciting culmination to one of the great orchestral works of the 20th century.
George Enescu

- **1881–1955**  
- **Romanian**  
- **c.300**

Despite his astounding memory for music – he knew every note of Wagner’s *The Ring of the Nibelung* – and his prodigious ability as a violinist, Romania’s greatest composer was a modest man. Perhaps too modest: he wrote prolifically, but published only 33 works with opus numbers. When he conducted his folk-inspired *Poème roumain* in Bucharest at 17, he instantly became a figure of national importance. Enescu spent his long career moving between France and Romania, performing internationally, composing (his main love), and developing Romanian musical life. His music reflects the variety of stylistic changes he saw in his lifetime, and his chamber works are especially fine. A perfectionist, he spent ten years writing his opera, *Oedipe*.

**MILESTONES**
- 1889 First public performance, aged eight
- 1893 Studies at Paris Conservatoire
- 1898 *Poème roumain* for orchestra triumphs
- 1926 Composes Violin Sonata No. 3
- 1936 *Oedipe*, opera, premiered in Paris
- 1946 Exiled from Romania; falls ill
- 1954 Writes Chamber Symphony

Although Enescu’s work transcends nationalism, he never abandoned his beloved native country.

Zoltán Kodály

- **1882–1967**  
- **Hungarian**  
- **c.250**

An all-round, practical musician who needed little formal tuition, Kodály did his doctoral thesis on Hungarian folk song, which he collected in rural tours over many decades. Like his friend Bartók, he used it to inspire his own melodic, inventive work, much of it choral. His flourishing career – as academy teacher, critic, scholar, and composer – was affected by the war, but was revived internationally by *Psalmus Hungaricus*. To the end of his life he toured worldwide, both lecturing and conducting his own works. Composing for 70 years, and constantly promoting Hungarian music, Kodály was lavishly honoured at home and abroad. His logical step-by-step teaching methods are still highly influential today.

**As a keen educator**, Kodály devoted much of his time to visiting Hungarian schools and was actively involved in the development of music for children.

**MILESTONES**
- 1915 Solo Cello Sonata Op 8
- 1926 Composes *Háry János*, Singspiel
- 1927 *Psalmus Hungaricus* premiered in London
- 1933 Composes *Dances of Galánta*, orchestra
- 1939 Writes *The Peacock* variations, orchestra
- 1945 Becomes president of the Hungarian Arts Council
Grainger was a virtuoso pianist, a collector, and arranger of folk songs, and a highly original composer. With an unusual breadth of creative vision, his interests spanned the ages—from medieval music to the latest developments by his contemporaries Delius and Grieg. He was a pioneer of what he called “free music” and was particularly keen that music should be available for all.

**LIFE AND MUSIC**

Grainger studied for a short time with Ferruccio Busoni in Germany, but despite a mutual admiration for each other’s abilities, their temperaments were too different to remain on close terms. When he moved to London in 1901, Grainger began to establish himself a reputation as a concert pianist. During his 20s he became friendly with Edvard Grieg, who encouraged him to collect English folk songs; these form the basis for many of his inspired settings, such as *Country Gardens* and *Molly on the Shore*. Often experimental in his approach, Grainger’s interest in “free music” led him to come up with the new idea of “elastic scoring” – meaning that a work could be played by whatever instruments happened to be available, rather than by a prescribed instrumentation.

**MILESTONES**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1894</td>
<td>Makes his début in Melbourne</td>
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<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>Studies in Frankfurt</td>
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<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>Moves to London; composes <em>Hill Song No. 1</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1903</td>
<td>Tours Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>Writes <em>Molly on the Shore</em>, orchestra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>Composes <em>The Warriors</em>, orchestra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td><em>Tribute to Foster</em> published; moves to US</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917</td>
<td>Serves in US Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>Composes <em>Country Gardens</em>, folk-song setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>Mother commits suicide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>Marries Ella Ström at premiere of <em>To a Nordic Princess</em>, Hollywood Bowl</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**KEY WORKS**

**HILL SONG NO. 1**

Grainer considered this to be his finest work, and it was originally scored for a highly unusual ensemble of wind instruments: with the exception of the piccolos, the group comprised double-reed instruments which produce a nasal sound quality (he asked for oboes, cor anglais, bassoons, and contrabassoon). He later felt that this was not realistic and rescored the work in 1923 for an even more diverse group. There are five main sections, and the “fast walking pace” is somewhat obscured by the frequently changing metre.

**TRIBUTE TO FOSTER**

Late in life, Grainger recalled his mother having sung him to sleep with the tune of Stephen Foster’s “Camptown Races”. His *Tribute to Foster* uses an up-tempo version of the tune in its outer sections and a slow lullaby version in the middle section, in which the choir play “musical glasses”.

**GRAINGER’S CLOSE BOND** with his mother was only broken when she committed suicide by jumping off a New York skyscraper.
“Music is given to us with the sole purpose of establishing an order in things, including, and particularly, the coordination between man and time.”

IGOR STRAVINSKY
Igor Stravinsky

1882–1971  Russian  127

Generally considered to be the greatest composer of the previous century, Stravinsky’s long life spanned continents, cultures, and eras. As an iconic figure in the modern arts, he was perhaps equalled only by Pablo Picasso, whose early innovations created the same shock and excitement. He also resembled Picasso in his gift for radical artistic transformations, yet, despite this quality, Stravinsky always remained ineffably himself.

LIFE

Stravinsky was born near St Petersburg, where his father was principal bass singer with the Imperial Opera at the Mariinsky Theatre. Borodin, Dostoyevsky, and Stravinsky’s future teacher, Rimsky-Korsakov, were family friends. Stravinsky’s talent was not obvious at first, and he was forced to study law at St Petersburg University, applying himself to music in his free time. Success came in 1910, with the commission of *The Firebird* from Serge Diaghilev, director of the Ballets Russes. The ballet’s Paris premiere also launched the career of another Diaghilev protégé, the dancer Vaslav Nijinsky, and was hugely successful. Diaghilev encouraged Stravinsky to develop his “Russian” vein, commissioning further ballets such as *The Rite of Spring*, whose premiere prompted part of the audience to riot. Stravinsky joined Europe’s artistic elite, with many of whom (Picasso, Gide, Cocteau) he went on to collaborate in further ballets. Settling in Switzerland, then France, Stravinsky was never to live in Russia again. In mid-career, he fell increasingly under the influence of the European “Classical” heritage. Having fought off tuberculosis, he fled World War II, moving to the United States and spending his final years in the company of other notable émigrés in Hollywood.

MUSICAL OUTPUT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total: 127</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CONCERTOS</strong> (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OTHER ORCHESTRAL</strong> (22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OTHER INSTRUMENTAL</strong> (47)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OPERAS</strong> (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BALLETS</strong> (12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SOLO VOCAL</strong> (25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHORAL</strong> (16)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Despite its “shocking” modernity, Stravinsky’s music is also very structured, precise, and controlled, full of artifice and theatricality.
Stravinsky’s musical output falls into three main periods: “Russian”, “Neo-Classical”, and “serial” (or “12-tone”). From his teacher, Rimsky-Korsakov, Stravinsky had learnt to orchestrate in the exquisite, iridescent colours that characterize The Firebird. As Serge Diaghilev challenged him to find an ever-more Russian style, Stravinsky began to incorporate Russian folk tunes (something the touchy composer played down in later years) and to invent new sounds based on pounding, irregular rhythms and pungent harmonies. The result was an entirely original kind of music beyond simple tonality and which (especially in The Rite of Spring) could not be written in a constant time signature. Such music shocked and excited, flying in the face of the accepted rules of music composition. However, in time (and to the displeasure of those who had admired him for his uncompromising originality), his music returned to the tonal idiom. Stravinsky created the “Neo-Classical style”, which its detractors called “classicism with wrong notes”. Arnold Schoenberg, inventor of the 12-tone system, was particularly disdainful of such backsliding, and the mutual recriminations which often marked relations between Neo-Classicists and serialists (not excluding Schoenberg’s and Stravinsky’s own somewhat inflammatory statements) made it all the more astonishing to many when, in the US, Stravinsky underwent his final metamorphosis, and himself took up the 12-tone method.

**MILESTONES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>Studies law at university, and composition with Rimsky-Korsakov</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td>Premiere of Scherzo fantastique; Diaghilev commissions The Firebird</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>Debussy expresses his admiration; he and Stravinsky become friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>Premiere of The Rite of Spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>At Diaghilev’s suggestion, arranges music by Pergolesi for Pulcinella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>Writes Les noces and embarks on love affair with Vera Sudeykina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>Returns to the Russian Orthodox Church after experiencing a “miracle” in Venice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>Premiere of Oedipus Rex; the work is poorly received</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>US premiere of Apollon Musagète</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>Adopts French citizenship; writes last piece in Europe, Dumbarton Oaks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>Sails for the US after the deaths of his eldest daughter and first wife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td><em>The Rite of Spring</em> features in Walt Disney’s animated film Fantasia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>Writes “Ebony” Concerto for Woody Hermann’s jazz band</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>Premiere of The Rake’s Progress, opera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>Revisits Russia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>Composes Elegy on the death of John F Kennedy; completion of Requiem Canticles, his last major work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 1913, with choreography by Vaslav Nijinsky, Stravinsky’s *The Rite of Spring* received its troubled premiere at the Théâtre de Champs-Elysées, Paris, a theatre which is still in existence today.
THE FIREBIRD
BALLET 45:00 1

The ballet tells the story of the battle between the magical Firebird and the demon Kashchey. Dancers who missed their cues at the premiere blamed their confusion on the unusualness of the orchestration.

LES NOCES (“THE WEDDINGS”)
BALLET 25:00 4

The most startlingly scored of all Stravinsky’s works, Les noces evokes both the earthiness of peasant life and the hieratic splendour of Russian Orthodox ritual.

PULCINELLA
BALLET 38:00 1

Inspired by the Italian commedia dell’arte, this work arranges music by Pergolesi and his 18th-century contemporaries. However, by slight changes of harmony and idiosyncratic orchestration, Stravinsky makes the music entirely his own.

APOLLO MUSAGÈTE
BALLET 30:00 2

A ballet of Classical poise and restraint, scored for strings alone, Apollo began Stravinsky’s connection with the inspired choreographer of so many of his later works, George Balanchine.

AGON
BALLET 24:00 3

An ingenious conflation of styles and periods, Agon takes inspiration from Renaissance dance and works by his contemporaries Boulez and Stockhausen.

OEDIPUS REX
OPERA-ORATORIO 48:00 2

Stravinsky’s collaborator Jean Cocteau based the text of this “opera-oratorio” on Greek tragedy, yet Stravinsky chose to set the text in Latin. Between movements, a spoken narration keeps the audience abreast of the story.

THE RAKE’S PROGRESS
OPERA 135:00 3

This work, with a libretto by W H Auden and Chester Kallman, was based on the series of engravings of the same name by English 18th-century painter and moralist William Hogarth. A “number opera” with arias and recitatives, it marked the end-point of Stravinsky’s Neo-Classical phase. It was Stravinsky’s largest work, and premiered in Venice in 1951.

KEYWORKS

Stravinsky’s impact on other composers was immediate. Edgard Varèse’s Amèriques is full of reminiscences of The Rite of Spring. In fact, most music of recent times could not have been written without Stravinsky’s innovations. Villa-Lobos, Hindemith, Messiaen, Britten, Poulenc, Bernstein, Pärt – all these composers owe him a profound debt.

The Firebird premiered in Paris in 1910. Its success transformed Stravinsky’s career and strengthened his friendship with Diaghilev, with whom he produced two more balletic works: Petrushka (1911) and The Rite of Spring (1913).
Written at a time of many crises in Stravinsky’s life, *Dumbarton Oaks* is a reminder of his assertion that music “expresses nothing but itself”. The work met with a mixed reaction on its premiere, being deplored by those who thought serious composers should be in the vanguard of a continuous musical revolution.

**FIRST MOVEMENT** (TEMPO GIUSTO, 4:00) The opening movement is reminiscent of J S Bach’s “Brandenburg” Concertos. The modest instrumental forces and the regularity of the metre all hark back to Baroque practice.

**SECOND MOVEMENT** (ALLEGRETTO, 3:00) This has a sly, jazzy insouciance. It features flute and violin as solo instruments – plus the clarinet, an instrument that was unknown in Baroque times.

**THIRD MOVEMENT** (CON MOTO, 4:00) A movement with a pronounced “finale”, returning to the Baroque model. Yet Stravinsky abandons counterpoint in favour of his characteristic games of deft chordal interplay, shifting accents and sprightly syncopation.

Stravinsky first intended *Petrushka* to be a concert work for piano and orchestra, but he became possessed by the idea of the piano representing “a puppet suddenly endowed with life, exasperating the patience of the orchestra with diabolical cascades of arpeggios”. Diaghilev soon persuaded him that the work was destined to be a new ballet.

*Dumbarton Oaks* takes its name from the estate of Robert Woods Bliss, who commissioned the piece for his 30th wedding anniversary in 1938.

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**THE RITE OF SPRING**

*The Rite of Spring*, set in primeval Russia, portrays a ritual in which a young girl dances herself to death to win the favour of the god of Spring. The ballet is a work of savage ecstasy, driven forward by its powerful, primitive rhythms.

**PART ONE** (15:30) After the mysterious Introduction comes the “Dance of the Adolescents”, in which young girls dance to the insistent stamping of a single chord repeated continuously with changing accents, while off-beat horn chords punch the air. After further ritual dancing, the first part of the ballet breaks off in mid-air like a terrifying cliff-hanger.

**PART TWO** (16:30) Both parts of the ballet begin quietly and end in pulsing violence. In the dawn-like introduction...
**FIRST PART (10:00)** Petrushka is set in St Petersburg during the Shrovetide Fair. Superimposing a number of characterful instrumental lines and harmonies, the music evokes the ebb and flow of the crowd, interspersed with the antics of street entertainers.

**SECOND PART (4:00)** Petrushka is in his cell. Hiccups of melody suggest the jerking puppet, whilst melancholy, discordant reveries of piano and clarinet evoke Petrushka’s hopeless love for the heartless Ballerina.

**THIRD PART (5:00)** Petrushka’s rival in love, a handsome, scimitar-wielding Blackamoor, dances with the Ballerina. He is portrayed by a trumpet, she by a coy flute; mechanically tender, the music stutters and preens, evoking the reedy sonorities of a fairground organ.

**FOURTH PART (13:00)** Suddenly Petrushka is chased from a tent and cut down by the Blackamoor’s scimitar. The crowd disperses, and in the eerie twilight Petrushka (or his ghost) returns to haunt the terrified showman – and to taunt anyone in the audience who might have been moved by the tale.

to the second part, some of the strings play delicate harmonics while others sound shudders of fearful anticipation.

Stravinsky keeps several dramatic orchestral effects in reserve for the final climax. As the girl chosen for the sacrifice dances herself to death, the horns play “with bells up”, projecting their exultant high notes straight over the heads of the orchestra and out into the auditorium.

The ecstatic rhythms of *The Rite of Spring* have ensured its continuing popularity, both as a ballet and as a concert piece. This performance at Avignon in 1995 was choreographed by Pina Bausch.
Darius Milhaud

1892–1974  French  426

Milhaud was incredibly prolific and it is unavoidable that his output should be uneven in quality, but it is studded with brilliant little jewels as well as works of vast ambition. Much of his work is saturated with the colour and warmth of his native Provence and an optimistic spirit, which, in later life, survived critical disfavour and decades in which severe arthritis confined him to a wheelchair.

LIFE AND MUSIC

Milhaud entered the Paris Conservatoire at 17 and then, in 1917, was taken to Rio de Janeiro by poet and diplomat, Paul Claudel, so that they might work on music theatre projects together. The music of Brazil made a lasting impression on Milhaud. Despite deep-seated differences, (he was unshakeably Jewish in his faith, Claudel a proselytizing Catholic), they collaborated for many years. In later life, Milhaud’s career as a teacher alternated between the Paris Conservatoire and the US. His pupils covered the spectrum of 20th-century music and included Iannis Xenakis, Stockhausen, and Dave Brubeck.

MILESTONES

1909  Studies violin at Paris Conservatoire, then composition there
1917  Composes Les Choéphores for stage; travels to Brazil with Claudel
1920s  Is member of “Les Six”, a radical young French composers’ group
1919  Writes ballet Le bœuf sur le toit in collaboration with Jean Cocteau
1921  Ballet L’homme et son désir premiered
1930  Opera Christophe Colomb is acclaimed
1940  Leaves Nazi-occupied France for US

KEY WORKS

LES CHOÉPHORES

MUSIC THEATRE  33:00  7  6

Some of Milhaud's first and finest music was for Claudel's translation of Aeschylus's Oresteia. Devising a way of setting texts of elemental force, Milhaud had passages spoken by the chorus or narrator to a purely percussion backing. The “Incantation” section is stern, bracing, rich, and atmospheric.

Milhaud wrote Saudados do Brazil in 1920–21 as a dance suite for piano, but later orchestrated it.

LE BŒUF SUR LE TOIT

BALLE  15:30  1

This was Milhaud’s most popular work right from the start, even though it includes bi-tonal passages (music in two keys at once), one of his favourite devices. He was dismayed that people thought of him as a prankster, largely because of this witty and joyous tribute to the music of Brazil. But, however uproarious it sounds in his hands, he said that he sensed the dark side of this gaiety.
Hindemith modelled his early “Chamber Music” series on Bach’s “Brandenburg Concertos”. Most feature a solo instrument, but this work is for a band of equals, playing – among other instruments – xylophone, accordion, trumpet, and siren. The music is inventive and uproarious in equal measure. It was written to inaugurate the Donaueschingen Festivals in 1921 with a minimum of pomposity.

This symphony consists of preludes and studies for an opera Hindemith later wrote on the life of the German painter Matthias Grünewald. It portrays panels from the Isenheim altarpiece: the Concert of the Angels, Entombment of Christ, and Torments of St Anthony. The last movement is an instrumental version of the opera’s climactic scene, when the anguished painter identifies himself with the tormented saint – surely an echo of Hindemith’s own predicament in the troubled 1930s.
Francis Poulenc

Frankis Poulenc

MODERN MUSIC – NEO-CLASSICISM

Francis Poulenc (1899–1963) French 185

Poulenc was well aware that he was not a musical innovator, but believed there was still a place for new music that used familiar means. As a master of natural, unpretentious melody, Poulenc has few rivals; his manner of blending Neo-Classical harmonies with the bittersweet touches of French popular song gives his music a distinct and subtle charm, even when it touches on tragedy.

LIFE AND MUSIC

Poulenc was born into a cultured and wealthy Parisian family (the pharmaceutical giant Rhône-Poulenc still carries its name). Although he studied piano from childhood, he was 22 years old before he went to Charles Koechlin for composition lessons. He joined the group of young French composers known as “Les Six” and, in 1923, Diaghilev commissioned a ballet from him Les biches which achieved popular and critical success. From the 1930s, Poulenc gave concerts of his own songs with the baritone Pierre Bernac. By turns joyous and melancholy, sacred and profane, Poulenc’s music faithfully reflects its composer – a manic depressive, a devout Catholic, and one of the few public figures of his time to be openly (and often turbulently) gay.

MILESTONES

- 1913 Studies piano with Ricardo Viñes
- 1918 First piece La Rhapsodie Negre performed in public. Stravinsky helps him find a publisher
- 1924 Les biches performed by the Ballet Russes in Monte Carlo.
- 1934 Forms duo with Pierre Bernac
- 1936 Makes pilgrimage to Notre-Dame de Rocamadour, and writes Litanies à la vierge noire
- 1938 Concerto for organ, strings and timpani
- 1948 First tours America with Bernac
- 1957 Composes his great opera, Les dialogues des Carmélites
- 1958 La Voix Humaine to text by Cocteau

KEY WORKS

SONATA FOR OBOE AND PIANO

CHAMBER 13:00 3

Poulenc had a gift for chamber music and a special understanding of wind instruments. Towards the end of his life, he wrote a number of sonatas for piano and wind, and this proved to be the last. Dedicated to the memory of Prokofiev, it is a plangent, elegiac piece – all the more haunting for being the composer’s own swansong.

Perhaps Poulenc’s greatest success was his surrealist comic opera, Les Mamelles de Tirésias, based on a farce by Apollinaire.

CONCERTO FOR ORGAN, STRINGS, AND TIMPANI

ORCHESTRAL 22:00 7

In middle life, after the death of a close friend, Poulenc was increasingly drawn to religion. In 1938, when he wrote this piece, he joked that it showed a “Poulenc who was on his way to joining a monastery”. Yet the work’s seven sections cover the gamut of his style, ranging from irreverent burlesque to gothic majesty. The key (G minor) is perhaps an indication of its debt to Bach’s G minor Fantasia.
A largely self-taught composer, Walton was one of the great traditionalists of the 20th century. In time, he became the pre-eminent British “establishment” composer, inheriting the mantle of Elgar, both for his mastery of the English choral style and for his celebrated ceremonial music. A man of fastidious musical taste, his major works are relatively few, but of magisterial quality.

LIFE AND MUSIC

Walton owed much to his fortunate early connections. A boy chorister at Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, he stayed at the university to study music, and was befriended by the Sitwells, an aristocratic family of writers who supported Walton whilst he established his career. His first famous work was Façade – an “entertainment” much influenced by the jazz of the “flapper” era – to which Edith Sitwell recited her melodious bohemian poetry. Walton’s finest pieces were all written early in his career – the expressive Viola Concerto, the stupendous oratorio Belshazzar’s Feast, and his renowned Symphony No. 1. His war-time film scores won him great popular acclaim. In later years, he lived with his Argentinian wife on the picturesque island of Ischia, near Naples.

KEY WORKS

SYMPHONY NO. 1

Most of this symphony was composed between 1932 and 1933, and the white heat of its intensity owes much to a turbulent love affair with Imma von Dörnberg, a baroness with whom Walton had been living in Switzerland. The four movement work was premiered late in 1935 by the conductor Sir Hamilton Harty; its rapturous reception proved to be the zenith of Walton’s life and achievements.

BELSHAZZAR’S FEAST

This is a work of harsh splendour for orchestra, baritone soloist, and choir (for which, as a former boy chorister, Walton always wrote magnificently). Walton treats Belshazzar’s story not as sacred scripture, but as a lurid tale of the supernatural, and the work crams all the drama of an opera or film score into just half an hour.

Walton’s magnificent film score for Laurence Olivier’s Henry V was one of his most outstanding achievements.
Lambert composed his first orchestral work at the precocious age of 13, but in later life could never dedicate himself to composition with the energy his talent deserved. He was not helped by poor health and alcoholism. His most successful work, the ebullient *The Rio Grande*, made such an impression on public and critics alike that it overshadowed his less extrovert pieces – a situation which perhaps persists even today.

**LIFE AND MUSIC**

Lambert’s father was a painter who left his family for Australia when Constant was only 15. After studying composition with Vaughan Williams at the Royal College of Music and conducting with Malcolm Sargent, Lambert became friends with William Walton, Peter Warlock, and painter Charles Ricketts. He then met Serge Diaghilev, who commissioned the 22-year-old composer to write a ballet, *Romeo and Juliet*, but it was *The Rio Grande* in 1927 that made Lambert’s name. Always short of money, he pursued a busy career as a conductor, eventually becoming the founding music director of the Royal Ballet. He was also a gifted writer and in his final decade, he achieved notoriety as an eloquent, and sometimes merciless, critic.

### MILESTONES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>Father deserts family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920s</td>
<td>Wins a scholarship at Royal College of Music in London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923</td>
<td>Encounters jazz – a lifelong influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>Co-recites with Edith Sitwell at premiere of Walton’s <em>Façade</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td><em>Romeo and Juliet</em>, ballet, premiered in Monte Carlo by Ballets Russes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td><em>The Rio Grande</em>, acclaimed choral work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>Made music director at Sadler’s Wells</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>Publishes <em>Music Ho!</em>, a well-written, richly personal view of recent music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>Finishes <em>Summer’s Last Will and Testament</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td>Writes ballet, <em>Horoscope</em>, for Margot Fonteyn and Vic-Wells company</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### KEY WORKS

**THE RIO GRANDE**

Choral: 15:00

Setting a poem by Lambert’s friend, Sacheverell Sitwell, this is an Englishman’s fantasy portrait of Brazil. It provides a heady cocktail of languid exoticism, jazz, and rousing choral writing.

**SUMMER’S LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT**

Choral: 50:00

Lambert valued this haunting, valedictory piece as his best work, not only, perhaps, for its quality, but also because it was true to his melancholic nature. The sombre mood creates tensions which are finally released in the sixth movement’s frenetic dance of death. The last part sets words by the Elizabethan poet Thomas Nashe.

**HOROSCOPE**

Orchestral: 25:00

Lambert’s one-act ballet *Horoscope* was a tribute to his close friendship with Margot Fonteyn and choreographer Frederick Ashton. The glittering orchestral suite that Lambert drew from it consists of five contrasting dances.

Dame Margot Fonteyn (seen here in *Horoscope*) and Lambert were both leading figures in the birth of English national ballet.
Carl Ruggles

- **1876–1971** | **American** | **40**

Ruggles had only eight works published, but was held in high regard by his experimentalist colleagues Charles Ives and Henry Cowell. Like them, he looked for radical new approaches to writing in his own independent style, creating largely atonal, dissonant music. He frequently revised his works and heard his longest and best-known piece, *Sun-Treader*, only from a recording. He turned increasingly to painting in later life.

**MILESTONES**

- 1920s: Work published in Cowell’s New Music Edition and is noticed by Ives
- 1924: Publishes *Men and Mountains*, orchestral
- 1929: Befriends Charles Ives
- 1931: Completes *Sun-Treader*, orchestral
- 1950: Finishes *Evocations*, piano, begun 1937
- 1965: First hears *Men and Mountains*

Walter Piston

- **1894–1976** | **American** | **80**

Largely self-taught as a musician (he trained as an engineer and painter), Piston learned various instruments in dance bands and ended up as a respected, meticulous, yet unpedantic teacher at Harvard. An expert in orchestration and theory, he wrote a set of highly esteemed textbooks and received many honours. His music is Neo-Classical in style and often notable for its strong rhythms. He had popular success with pieces such as *The Incredible Flutist*, his only stage work, and his even-numbered symphonies.

**MILESTONES**

- 1926: Starts teaching at Harvard University
- 1938: Completes *The Incredible Flutist*, ballet
- 1943: Writes Symphony No. 2
- 1955: *Orchestration*, textbook, published
- 1959: Composes *Three New England Sketches*

Edgard Varèse

- **1883–1965** | **French** | **c.50**

Varèse’s driving ambition was to find radical new directions in music. After studying at the Paris Conservatoire, he spent much time in Berlin, befriending Busoni and Debussy (whom he introduced to Schoenberg’s atonality). It was in New York, however, that he pioneered new sounds, treading the border between organization and noise. *Hyperprism* provoked audience outrage, but it, and pieces such as his percussion-plus-siren *Ionisation*, established his modernist credentials. His output was erratic, with many unfinished projects, and he suffered depression in the 1930s when refused research funds; but after World War II his advances in tape-based sound art proved revolutionary.

**MILESTONES**

- 1915: Leaves Europe to settle in New York
- 1922: Composes *Hyperprism*, for wind and percussion
- 1931: Composes *Ionisation*, percussion
- 1936: Composes *Density 21.5* for solo flute
- 1953: Starts experimenting with electronics
- 1954: Completes *Déserts*, instruments and tape
“When you hear strong, masculine music like this, stand up and use your ears like a man!”
CHARLES IVES, TO AN AUDIENCE MEMBER WHO WAS HECKLING A NEW PIECE BY HIS FRIEND CARL RUGGLES
Charles Ives was a great pioneer modernist who experimented with polytonality, multiple tempos, and many-layered textures decades before the famous European modernists. However, in many ways he was a conservative, and a religious, hymn-singing vein runs through even his most radical pieces. The combination of experiment and sturdy affirmation gives his music a strenuous aspirational quality.

LIFE

Ives was the son of a provincial bandmaster with adventurous musical tastes. George Ives's fondness for getting his children to sing a hymn in one key while accompanying them in another left an indelible mark on his son's music. Ives was a precocious child: by the age of 14 he'd become the youngest salaried organist in Connecticut and had composed dozens of works. He studied music for four years at Yale University under Horatio Parker, who succeeded in instilling some academic discipline into his unruly student. In 1898 Ives got a job as an actuary, and ten years later he married Harmony Twichell after a long courtship. Later he founded his own insurance firm with his old friend Julian Myrick, and his high-minded principles and hard work made it one of the most respected firms in New York. In 1912 the Iveses bought a farm, to which they invited poor families to stay. One of these agreed to have their daughter adopted; she became Edith Osborne Ives. In 1926 declining health forced Ives to give up composing and in 1930 he retired from the business. During the 1930s and '40s his music, which had been ignored, was rediscovered by younger admirers. During the '60s and '70s his music was championed by Stokowski, Bernstein, and others, and his key pieces are now firmly in the repertoire.
Ives’s style is made of many disparate things, but the elements aren’t welded together; they keep their separateness. A typical Ives piece might have a sturdy hymn tune harmonized with sturdy chords (but in the wrong key), followed by a wildly rhapsodic line with tumbling piano chords, or it might feature a quick, all-American Stephen Collins Foster melody, next to slow, massive chordal clusters and Debussian shimmers. However, Ives doesn’t just put these ideas side by side; he puts them on top of each other, so that they sound simultaneously. Ives was the first composer to write pieces that had radically different sorts of music going on at once, an effect apparently inspired by childhood memories of hearing brass bands approaching Danbury town square, each playing in a different key and at a different speed. The effect is joyously anarchic. Ives has none of the anxiety of European modernists like Schoenberg. But, despite its democratic appearances, in the end his music affirms conservative values. Chaos is typically subsumed into a hymn tune and a sense of mystical affirmation.

**The Fourth of July** from *A Symphony: New England Holidays* (1913), which celebrates life in small-town America, is one of Ives’s most popular works.

**KEY WORKS**

**STRING QUARTET NO. 2**

Ives described this quartet as an argument between four men who “converse, discuss, argue, fight, shake hands, shut up – then walk up the mountainside to view the firmament”. Lowell Mason’s hymn “Bethany” occurs in all three movements, and in the middle movement the second violin is cast as “Rollo”, a character in a well-known children’s book.

**THE UNANSWERED QUESTION**

The first piece of *Two Contemplations* for chamber orchestra, this is a masterly example of Ives’s ability to pile up different kinds of music moving at different speeds into a meaningful near-chaos. There is a slow-moving string background, a series of woodwind phrases that become ever more dissonant, and an enigmatic repeated trumpet “question”.

**CONCORD SONATA**

This vast work was described by Ives as “one person’s impression of the spirit of the literature, the philosophy, and the men of Concord, Massachusetts, of over a half-century ago.” As always with Ives, the music is peppered with quotations from marches and parlour songs.
THREE PLACES IN NEW ENGLAND

Composed between 1903 and 1914, this much-played orchestral piece follows the typical Ives progression from bracing co-existence of different elements, through riotous complexity, to a radiant vision of eternity.

THE “ST GAUDENS” IN BOSTON COMMON (8:00) Subtitled “Col. Shaw and his Colored Regiment”, this section is an assemblage of marching tunes and songs, sounding as if overheard from a great distance.

PUTNAM’S CAMP, REDDING, CONNECTICUT (6:00) An amalgam of two pre-existing pieces, Overture 1776 and Country Band March, this part is a perfect example of Ives’s layering of two tempos, one above the other.

THE HOUSATONIC AT STOCKBRIDGE (4:00) Inspired by the memory of a morning walk that Ives and his wife took along the misty banks of the Housatonic, this is a modern chorale prelude, the hymn tune heard through a beautifully woven orchestral mist.

SYMPHONY NO. 4

This is the quintessential Ives work. The symphony is stuffed with quotations from hymns, marches, and songs. It absorbs many earlier and unfinished works, and the palette conjured by its vast orchestra ranges from the noisiest piled-up complexity to the ethereal delicacy of harp and violins.

FIRST MOVEMENT (PRELUDE, MAESTOSO, 3:00) According to Ives, this asks the question “Why?”, to which the following movements offer three diverse answers. Stern fanfares are responded to by a beatific choir, with memories of “Bethany” and “Watchman, Tell us of the Night”.

SECOND MOVEMENT (ALLEGRO, 12:00) This is the most extreme music Ives ever wrote. Crammed into this “comedy” is a riotous piled-up assemblage of melodies, quotations, polyrhythms, and quarter-tones which summon up the chaos of life itself.

THIRD MOVEMENT (FUGUE, ANDANTE MODERATO, 8:00) A calm and correct fugue that, as Ives says, expresses “the reaction of life into formalism and ritualism”.

FOURTH MOVEMENT (VERY SLOWLY, LARGO MAESTOSO, 8:00) Gathering everything heard so far into an affirmative apotheosis, a military-sounding dirge introduces memories of Ives’s childhood, a chorus singing “Bethany” leads to a climax, and then the music fades into an evocation of eternity.

INFLUENCES

In the 1950s, John Cage gave Ives’s American-sounding experiments a Zen Buddhist tinge, governed by chance. Elliott Carter went the other way, making Ives’s complexity much more ordered. Since the 1960s, Ives’s influence on composers as diverse as Luciano Berio, Frederic Rzewski, and Peter Maxwell Davies has been immense.
Roger Sessions

1896–1985  American  42

Born in Brooklyn, New York, Sessions was an intellectual prodigy – he wrote an opera at 13, graduated from Harvard at 18, and spoke French, Italian, German, and Russian. An able symphonist, he wrote nine symphonies as well as four concertos, three piano sonatas and many vocal pieces, and much of his work was written after he was 60. His technically difficult music has generally proved more popular with students and musicians than the public. However, this did not trouble the idealistic, good-humoured composer, who inspired many important American composers during his long and distinguished teaching career.

MILESTONES

1923 The Black Maskers, incidental music, first performed
1925 Moves to Europe for eight years
1957 Composes Symphony No. 3
1963 Montezuma, opera, produced
1965 Begins teaching at the Juilliard School of Music
1971 Writes Concerto for Orchestra

Virgil Thomson

1896–1989  American  c.300

Educated at Harvard, Thomson continued his studies in Paris, where he met Satie, who became a major influence on his work. There he also collaborated with fellow expatriate Gertrude Stein on his most famous work, the opera Four Saints in Three Acts, setting Stein’s wordplay and random remarks (tidied up by Thomson’s close friend, the painter Maurice Grosser) to a mosaic of hymn tunes, chant, and straightforward harmony. Back in the US he wrote film scores (often using American ingredients, such as cowboy tunes and spirituals) and orchestral pieces in various styles, and collaborated again with Stein. A fearless but respected critic, he lectured throughout the US and Europe; he also continued to compose, and received many honours.

MILESTONES

1928 Writes Four Saints in Three Acts, opera
1940 Returns to New York; becomes music critic for the Herald Tribune
1936 The Plow that Broke the Plains, film score
1947 Writes The Mother of Us All, opera
1948 Louisiana Story, film score, wins Pulitzer Prize
1968 Composes Lord Byron, opera
Henry Cowell was one of America’s rugged “can-do” modernist spirits, in the same mould as Nancarrow, Charles Ives, and John Cage. However, a vein of traditional religiosity can be heard beneath the modern surface of his work, in his allusions to hymns and chorales. Cowell had a tremendously liberating effect on later composers; as Cage put it, he was “the ‘Open Sesame’ for new music in America”.

**LIFE AND MUSIC**

An unorthodox upbringing by parents who were “philosophical anarchists” left its mark on the young Cowell, and he found himself on the margins of musical life. In 1914, this talented “wild child” met his greatest mentor, ethnomusicologist Charles Seeger, who taught him much about modern music and what we now call “world music”. Cowell’s early works explore the modernist devices described in his pioneering book *New Musical Resources* and include tone clusters, graphic notation, the use of several simultaneous tempi and proto-electronic instruments, such as the rhythmicon. In later works an interest in Irish mythology comes to the fore, as part of a general move towards a startlingly eclectic sound-world combining modernism, “world music”, and naively simple diatonic melodies.

**KEY WORKS**

**EIGHT SIMULTANEOUS MOSAICS**

*Experimental*  

Despite its late date (1963), this piece is amazingly experimental in form. There is no full score, only a series of instrumental parts whose combination in time is left deliberately free.

**PERSIAN SET**

*Chamber*  

Cowell intended this work to be “a simple record of musical contagion, written at the end of a three-month stay in Iran”. Written for the Iranian lute (the tar) accompanied by a chamber orchestra, it is one of Cowell’s successful evocations of distant music cultures.
“I don’t think there has been such an inspired melodist on this Earth since Tchaikovsky…”

LEONARD BERNSTEIN
George Gershwin

1898–1937  |  American  |  369

George Gershwin was one of the most exuberantly talented and successful composers of the 20th century, and its most tragically short-lived. He had his first Broadway success in 1919 and his first “classical” success in 1924, and thereafter remained dominant in both fields, winning the respect of such severe “classical” masters as Rachmaninov and – amazingly – Arnold Schoenberg.

LIFE

Gershwin’s parents were Russian Jews who emigrated to the US in the 1890s. From 1910 Gershwin studied piano seriously and soon progressed to Chopin, Liszt, and Debussy. In 1914 he abandoned classical music in favour of Tin Pan Alley (though he returned to it later in life), by dropping out of high school to work for Jerome Remick and Co. In 1920 he had his first hit with “Swane”, recorded by Al Jolson. Over the next four years he wrote five Broadway revues, two London shows, and three Broadway ones, one of which, Lady Be Good, was the first of many with lyrics by his brother, Ira. In 1924 he gave the premiere of his Rhapsody in Blue. His new wealth allowed him to move into a smart townhouse on the Upper West Side, and to seduce innumerable women. During the late 1920s he followed up the success of Rhapsody with other “classical” pieces including the Concerto in F and the Preludes. In 1928 he travelled to Europe and met Prokofiev, Milhaud, Ravel, and Berg. Throughout the ’30s he divided his time between concert tours as a pianist and composing musicals, including Strike up the Band and Girl Crazy. In 1936 he and Ira signed a contract with RKO film studios, which led to Shall We Dance?, A Damsel in Distress, and The Goldwyn Follies. Gershwin died at the height of his fame in 1937.

A true crossover artist, Gershwin’s serious compositions remain highly popular in the Classical repertoire, and his stage and film songs continue to be jazz and vocal standards.

MUSICAL OUTPUT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total: 369</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ORCHESTRAL (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHAMBER (9)</td>
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<tr>
<td>MUSICAL THEATRE (28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FILM MUSICALS (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPERAS (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SONGS (318)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1898  | 1919  | 1925  | 1931  | 1937
Gershwin’s importance in the history of American “classical” music should not obscure the fact that he was in essence a songwriter. His genius needed no more than the four-minute frame of the popular song, with its predictable verse-and-chorus structure. They fall into a number of types: the sturdy march song, such as “Swanee” and “Strike up the Band”; fast, syncopated songs, such as “Fascinating Rhythm” and “I got Rhythm”; the slow romantic ballad, of which the best-known are “Someone to Watch Over Me” and “Embraceable You”; and the medium-tempo song with an irresistible swinging beat, like “Nice Work if You can Get It”. Though formally simple, these songs are enriched by startlingly original modulations.

The regular two- and four-bar phrases of his songs recur in Gershwin’s concert works, and in his opera Porgy and Bess, as do the characteristic “blue-note” harmonies of African-American music. The concert works achieve their effect by their melodic appeal and accumulation of contrasts, although the Concerto in F major shows a remarkable subtlety of form.

**CONCERTO IN F MAJOR**

Unlike the earlier Rhapsody in Blue, which was scored by an assistant, this piano concerto was scored by Gershwin himself. In the four years after composing Rhapsody in Blue, Gershwin made a close study of European modernist composers, so it is not surprising that, whereas the earlier rhapsody had relied on simple alternations of soloist and orchestra, the concerto makes use of thematic transformation (the recurrence of a main theme in different guises to lend unity to the piece). The result was the pinnacle of Gershwin’s achievement as a concert composer.

**AN AMERICAN IN PARIS**

Gershwin said of this piece, “My intention here is to portray the impressions of an American visitor in Paris as he strolls about the city, listens to various street noises, and absorbs the French atmosphere.” An opening section of infectious gaiety leads to a slow, reflective blues, showing perhaps an attack of homesickness. However, cheerfulness returns, and at the end “the street noises and French atmosphere are triumphant.”
PORGY AND BESS
OPERA 190:00

Given Gershwin’s love of African-American idioms, it is not surprising that his one “serious” music drama should be on an African-American theme. The piece is criticized today for its clichéd, folksy image of African-Americans, but Gershwin can hardly be blamed for accepting the mindset of his time. The opera remains a riveting and profoundly moving work.

ACT ONE
The action opens in Catfish Row, a poor fishing community. The drunken, brutal Crown kills a man during a craps game, then flees. The drug dealer Sportin’ Life offers to take Bess, Crown’s woman, to New York with him. Instead Bess goes to stay with the crippled Porgy.

ACT TWO
Porgy and Bess sing the love duet “Bess, You Is My Woman Now”, then Bess leaves for a picnic on an island. Crown appears at the picnic to reclaim Bess and she stays on the island with him. Two days later she is found, delirious. She wants to stay with Porgy, but is afraid that Crown still has a fatal hold over her. The act ends with a hurricane starting to blow.

ACT THREE
Porgy kills Crown, but nobody gives him away. However, he is jailed for a week and, while he is away, Bess is drugged by Sportin’ Life, who takes her to New York. When Porgy is freed, he vows to find her and prepares to leave on his quest.

RHAPSODY IN BLUE
ORCHESTRAL 13:45

The premiere of this piece in 1924 propelled Gershwin into the history books as the man “who first brought jazz into the concert hall”. In many people’s eyes, the idea that the “low”, socially disreputable popular music of African-Americans could fuse with classical music was too shocking to contemplate.

Gershwin advertised the work as “an experiment in modern music”. The combined frisson of being fashionably new and risqué drew a glittering audience to the premiere. The work has a sectional form, with a big, slow central melody. The obvious jazzy elements in the score have obscured the distinctly Jewish tinge in the melodies, some of which recall synagogue chants.
“I do not compose; I assemble materials.”

AARON COPLAND
Aaron Copland is probably the best-known, and certainly one of the most profoundly gifted, classical composers that America has ever produced. In the 1930s and ’40s he synthesized jazz, Neo-Classical, and folk elements into a style that for many people summons up the spirit of his native country. This, combined with his energetic entrepreneurial and organizational gifts, makes him the key figure in 20th-century American music.

LIFE

Copland was born in New York into a prosperous family of Polish-Lithuanian Jews. During his teens he studied music privately, scoured libraries for scores of new music, took an interest in jazz and, from 1921, spent three years in Paris. While there he acquired a cast-iron technique and a Neo-Classical aesthetic from music teacher Nadia Boulanger, and was dazzled by Parisian artistic life. Back home, early works such as the Piano Concerto earned him the reputation of a hot-headed modernist. Lacking commissions, he staved off destitution by teaching and writing, and threw himself into the cause of new music. He was co-director of the Copland–Sessions concerts and co-founder of the Yaddo Festival, the Arrow Music Press, and the American Composers’ Alliance. In 1934 he wrote workers’ choruses and an article on proletarian music that got him into trouble with Senator McCarthy’s House Committee on Un-American Activities in the 1940s. However, by then he had become the musical voice of America with populist works such as El salón México and the ballet Appalachian Spring, which won a Pulitzer Prize. In the 1960s he became American music’s wise, urbane father figure, dispensing advice and friendship to younger musicians like Bernstein.
At first Copland behaved like a true avant-garde composer, shocking audiences with sharp dissonance and jazzy irreverence. But he was never an ivory-tower composer; he wanted his music to relate to contemporary issues, and to appeal to public taste.

In the 1930s, under the impact of the Depression and a wave of left-wing sentiment among artists, he found a new awareness of himself as an American and as a citizen. In a series of ballets, *Billy the Kid*, *Rodeo*, and *Appalachian Spring*, he crystallized the style that made him famous. It was a style rooted in the forms of Stravinskian Neo-Classicism, but this was united with a specifically American lyricism and feeling for landscape, both rural and urban. In the later years of his career, in the 1960s, he even succeeded in marrying Schoenberg’s 12-tone technique with his own personal sound-world.

**MILESTONES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>Completes first major work, the ballet <em>G rag</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td><em>Billy the Kid</em>, first of his three great ballets, premiered by Lincoln Kirstein’s Ballet Caravan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td><em>Appalachian Spring</em> performed by Martha Graham Touring Company</td>
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<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>Elected to American Academy of Arts and Letters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>Debut with New York Philharmonic launches 20-year conducting career</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>Moves to Peerskill NY, where he lives until his death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>Presidential Medal of Freedom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>Ceases composing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**KEY WORKS**

**PIANO VARIATIONS**

SOLO PIANO  
11:00

Copland said “this was the first of my works where I felt very sure of myself”. It is generally regarded as the most impressive product of Copland’s “abstract” period in the early 1930s. The piece has an unusual combination of rhythmic propulsion derived from jazz and a very strict compositional logic, influenced by Schoenberg’s 12-tone system.

**SYMPHONY NO. 3**

ORCHESTRAL  
42:00  
4

Copland was aiming for a big statement in this work, appropriate to a time of national stress (he began writing the symphony during World War II). The “public” manner culminates in the grandeur of the finale, which begins by quoting Copland’s earlier *Fanfare for the Common Man*.

**CLARINET CONCERTO**

ORCHESTRAL  
17:00  
2

Like Copland’s earlier piano concerto, this consists of two movements separated by a cadenza. The first movement is one of his most inspired pastoral melodies, which unfolds over a stately slow-motion waltz accompaniment. The second explodes in jazzy fireworks, inspired by jazz clarinetist Benny Goodman, for whom the piece was written.

Copland wrote extensively for films in the 1940s. His score for William Wyler’s 1948 film *The Heiress*, starring Olivia de Havilland, won an Academy Award.
The third and most perfect of Copland’s “American” ballets, the work was commissioned in 1943 for the choreographer Martha Graham. It was originally scored for only 13 players, though it’s more often heard today in the arrangement Copland made for full orchestra. The ballet portrays a “pioneer celebration of Spring in a newly built farmhouse in Pennsylvania in the early 1800s”.

The young farmer and his bride-to-be act out their feelings of hope, excitement, and trepidation. Copland said he was inspired by Graham’s choreography, which he described as “prim and restrained, simple yet strong… the music reflects, I hope, the unique quality of a human being, an American landscape and a way of feeling”. Towards the end, the traditional Shaker tune “Simple Gifts” is first quoted and then subtly varied.

This setting of poems by the visionary, reclusive poet Emily Dickinson is one of the great song-cycles of the 20th century. They are set in Copland’s lean mature style, the piano part often confined to single notes in each hand, a style perfectly suited to the poems, which deal with the grandest subjects in the simplest language. The wide-open sounds of the music match Dickinson’s rural imagery, and the unfussy rhythms of the songs accords with the Biblical plainness of Dickinson’s verse. Within these limits the range of moods is vast: homely simplicity in “Nature, the gentlest mother”, a funereal tread in “I felt a funeral in my brain”, bugle-calls and rushing scales in “There came a wind like a bugle”.
Barber’s music defies easy classification. Effortlessly lyrical, Romantic, and yet unmistakably contemporary, he achieved huge popularity without aligning himself to any school of composition or appearing concerned with modernist trends. His comparatively small output covered all genres, although he is best remembered for his vocal works and the *Adagio for Strings*, made famous by the conductor Toscanini.

**LIFE AND MUSIC**

Barber trained both as a composer and singer at the renowned Curtis Academy. At a time when music was dominated by European modernists such as Schoenberg and Stravinsky, Barber’s easy Romanticism struck a chord with audiences. His gift for flowing, memorable melody lines served to mask the more contemporary aspects of his composition, notably an acute handling of dissonance and highly inventive orchestration. His output, already less than prodigious, declined sharply after the failure of his opera *Antony and Cleopatra* at the New York Metropolitan in 1966.

**MILESTONES**

- 1924 Enrols at Curtis Institute
- 1931 Composes vocal work *Dover Beach*
- 1935 Fellow of American Academy in Rome
- 1936 Composes Symphony No. 1
- 1938 Arranges *Adagio for Strings*
- 1939 Composes Violin Concerto
- 1942 Serves in US Air Corp
- 1947 Composes *Knoxville, Summer of 1915*
- 1949 Piano Sonata premiered by Horowitz
- 1958 Opera *Vanessa* wins Pulitzer Prize
- 1962 Composes Piano Concerto

**KEY WORKS**

**SYMPHONY NO. 1**

**ORCHESTRAL**

Barber’s Symphony No. 1 must be ranked as one of the great American orchestral pieces of the 20th century. It is a work of great power, at once traditional in form and yet original in the treatment of its theme.

**KNOXVILLE, SUMMER OF 1915**

**SONG**

*Knoxville, Summer of 1915* was a short piece of prose by the American poet James Agee, recalling his feelings of wonder and confusion as a child growing up in the Deep South. Barber’s setting is extraordinary not only for its lyrical beauty, but also for the delicacy with which it captures the shifting moods of the text. As the soprano Leontyne Price later said, “You can smell the South in it.”

**HERMIT SONGS, OP. 29**

**SONG**

The beautifully crafted *Hermit Songs* are settings of Irish monastic texts from the 8th to 13th centuries and are a wonderful illustration of Barber’s mastery of the voice.
FOCUS

**ADAGIO FOR STRINGS**

The poignant Adagio for Strings is Barber’s most popular work. Composed in 1936, the Adagio originally formed the central movement of his String Quartet, Op. 11. Two years later Barber rescored it for a full string orchestra, taking advantage of the extra resources to add weight and sonority.

The form of the Adagio has been likened to a long arch, based on the gradual expansion of a single, simple theme. This is heard first in hushed tones on the violins, before a more strident presentation by the cellos. After a process of ascending development, an impassioned climax is reached, before the music breaks off abruptly, almost as if overcome by emotion. The work then concludes quietly, recalling fragments of the theme.

Perhaps because of its profoundly melancholic, contemplative tone, the Adagio has found wide resonance with the public and has been played at many funerals, including those of John F Kennedy, Roosevelt, and Einstein. In 1967, Barber re-scored it for chorus, setting the Agnus Dei text. Arguably less successful than previous incarnations, it was nevertheless popularized further in this guise in the film *Platoon*.

**VIOLIN CONCERTO**

Commissioned for a child prodigy, the first two movements of the Violin Concerto were – according to the young violinist – insufficiently taxing to showcase his talent. In response, Barber wrote a finale so difficult that the young violinist couldn’t play it.

**FIRST MOVEMENT** (ALLEGRO, 10:00) Melody abounds in this movement. Unusually, Barber chose to dispense with an introduction, the soloist launching immediately into the lyrical main theme of this sonata-form movement.

**SECOND MOVEMENT** (ANDANTE, 8:00) A haunting solo oboe introduces the first theme, which is developed by the strings before the soloist enters after nearly three minutes and leads into a darker and more impassioned section.

**THIRD MOVEMENT** (PRESTO IN MOTO PERPETUOSO, 3:00) An astonishing tour de force for the soloist against a background of wild rhythms from the orchestra, this finale could hardly cut a greater contrast with the first two movements.
John Cage

John Cage may well be the most original composer in the history of Western music. His life’s project was to repudiate the entire Western tradition, but not in a spirit of anger or negativity. Even at its most chaotic, his music comes across as exuberant and life-affirming. He used chance procedures to free sounds from the “bullying” effects of human intentions and rules, so that they could “be themselves”.

LIFE AND MUSIC

Born in Los Angeles, John Cage became interested in classical Indian music and Oriental philosophies. He formed a percussion orchestra before settling in New York in 1942 and beginning a lifelong collaboration with dancer Merce Cunningham’s dance company. His life-project began with a ruthless process of stripping away, starting with harmony and melody. (Cage’s earliest pieces are built out of pure rhythm, played on percussion or the “prepared piano”.) Then he stripped away intention and form by introducing chance operations into music, ending up with pure silence in his famous piece 4’33”. This led to a welcoming in, when any chance noises could become part of a “piece”. This is why Cage’s later music ranges from the simplicity of Two to the riotous complication of Roaratorio.

KEY WORKS

SONATAS AND INTERLUDES

This sequence of 16 sonatas, interleaved with four interludes, attempts to represent the eight “permanent emotions” of ancient Indian thought, “and their common tendency towards tranquillity”. It is scored for “prepared piano”, Cage’s invention whereby metal and rubber objects are placed inside a piano to alter the sound.

In 4’33” the pianist sits reading the score, shown here, for four minutes 33 seconds, but does not play.

MILESTONES

1934 Meets Arnold Schoenberg and decides to dedicate his life to music
1938 Invents the “prepared piano”
1940s Studies Zen Buddhism
1948 Completes Sonatas and Interludes for prepared piano.
1950 Creates first “chance pieces” after reading Chinese book of I Ching
1952 Creates silent piece 4’33”
1961 Variations II premiered; Silence (collected writings) brings him world fame
1978 Starts to “write” music as graphic designs at Crown Point Press
1979 Roaratorio, with tape, premiered
1987 Employing randomness, writes Two, first of his late “time bracket” pieces

VARIATIONS II

This is perhaps Cage’s most extreme experiment in notation. The “score” consists of 11 transparent sheets bearing lines or dots. These are tossed down and the resulting patterns used to determine the basic characteristics of the sounds.

ROARATORIO

This exuberant work – a joyous cacophony – for electronic tape and live performers is an attempt to translate James Joyce’s vast novel Finnegans Wake into sound.
Roy Harris

HDRS 1898–1979  American  c.200

Harris’s broad, sweeping melodies, robustly based on hymns and American folk tunes and with vigorous but unusual rhythms, suggest the Midwest landscapes he knew well (he grew up on a farm in Oklahoma and drove a truck during his college days).

MILESTONES
1925 Andante for Strings wins competition
1926 Goes to study in Paris
1929 Injured in a fall; returns to US
1933 Conductor Sergei Koussevitzky commissions symphony from him
1934 Completes first of his 13 symphonies
1938 Completes Symphony No. 3

Conlon Nancarrow

HDRS 1912–1997  American  c.75

Turning his back on an engineering career, Nancarrow studied music privately, fought in the Spanish Civil War, and – escaping anti-communist feeling in America – moved to Mexico City permanently. There he composed in isolation an extraordinary series of studies for the player piano, which could be “programmed” to automatically play music punched into piano rolls. The 50 or so works use an astounding variety of techniques, such as inhumanly fast tempos, relentless accelerations, and unimaginably mathematical cross-rhythms. In the late 1970s Nancarrow’s music was discovered and recorded, and he found fame: he was given commissions, he was invited to international music festivals, and received a $300,000 award.

In his early career, Nancarrow notated all his mature compositions on player-piano rolls. Most of them are impossible for human hands to play.

MILESTONES
1930 Starts composing conventionally
1939 Refused US passport after having fought in Spanish Civil War
1940 Moves to Mexico City
1947 Buys player piano
1948 Writes Study No. 1 for player piano
1992 Writes Study No. 52 for player piano
Leonard Bernstein

1918–1990  American  90

Bernstein was one of the most dazzlingly gifted musicians of the 20th century. He was also an immense personality, with huge intellectual curiosity. He achieved pre-eminence in two fields: conducting, and composing for Broadway musicals and dance shows. He was also an eminent composer of concert music, though here his achievement is more uneven and controversial.

**LIFE AND MUSIC**

Bernstein was the son of a family of rabbis, and Jewish themes feature prominently in his music. By the end of his student years, it was clear his talents would be divided between “serious” music and Broadway. His greatest successes as a composer came before he was 40, both in the musical theatre (West Side Story, Candide) and in concert music (Symphonies Nos. 1 and 2 and Serenade). After becoming chief conductor of the New York Philharmonic, conducting took up more of his time. However, he strove to compose at the same pace, while leading a complicated love life and showing support for unpopular causes such as the Black Panthers. “I’m over-committed on all fronts,” he once said.

**MILESTONES**

- 1939: Writes thesis “Race Elements in Music”; graduates from Harvard University
- 1943: Wins fame conducting New York Philharmonic when Bruno Walter is ill
- 1944: Symphony No. 1, ballet Fancy Free, and musical On the Town are big successes
- 1949: Composes Symphony No. 2
- 1953: Is first American to conduct at La Scala
- 1956: Completes operetta Candide
- 1973: Lectures at Harvard televised in US and abroad as The Unanswered Question
- 1983: Opera A Quiet Place premiered

**KEY WORKS**

**CANDIDE**

Operetta  140:00  2  

Based on Voltaire’s brilliant satire of human folly written in 1759, this is one of Bernstein’s greatest creations. It reflects the 1950s trend for cross-fertilization between the Broadway musical on one hand and “straight” theatre and opera on the other. Much of Candide’s verve springs from its joyful parodies of different styles: Baroque “moto perpetuo”, the “waltz aria” of French operetta, and even 12-tone music in the duet “Quiet”.

**A QUIT PLACE**

Opera  150:00  3  

Bernstein considered this the summation of his work. It takes Trouble in Tahiti, his early (1951) “operetta” about social malaise – which portrays the failing marriage of Sam and Dinah – and inserts it, unchanged, into a contemporary soap opera that opens 30 years later, at Dinah’s funeral. The use of flashback, the mix of musical styles, and the treatment of difficult themes, including homosexuality, make this a challenging work.
Bernstein’s masterpiece, and one of the great musicals of all time, takes the idea of Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet and transfers it to 1950s New York. Bernstein, Choreographer Jerome Robbins and writer Arthur Laurents together elaborated the story of a native-born Polish boy and a Puerto Rican girl newly arrived in America, describing how their love is thwarted by the constant warfare between rival gangs on the city’s West Side. Bernstein offered the job of lyricist to the then-unknown Stephen Sondheim, who proved to be a brilliant choice. The show’s debt to Rodgers and Hammerstein’s South Pacific can be seen in its mix of opera and Broadway idioms, the dramatic integration of dance, and the use of song to highlight social tensions. However, the hard-edged gang music, and the sheer range of Bernstein’s invention, takes this work far beyond its model. Bernstein later created a suite of orchestral Symphonic Dances from the musical.

This symphony takes its scenario of three men and a woman who meet in a New York bar during the Second World War from W H Auden’s ingenious long poem The Age of Anxiety. For its relatively short length, the symphony has a very complicated form: it is a combination of piano concerto, and theme and variations. In addition, it is also divided into two parts. The first closely follows the poem’s portrayal of “seven ages and seven stages” – hence the 14 variations. The second portrays the goings-on back at the girl’s apartment and begins with a dirge (this includes a 12-note row) followed by a strange masque in Bernstein’s most brilliant jazz idiom and a final, affirmative chorale. The combination of influences – Brahms, Hindemith, Berg, and jazz – makes for a fascinating, if only partially successful, mix.

Bernstein’s blending of classical “Americana” with jazz elements and his concern to address big metaphysical and social issues certainly find an echo in contemporary American music. However, his sources – jazz, Jewish music, and “classic” American composers such as Copland – still remain more influential than Bernstein himself.
Elliott Carter

**1908– 100**

Elliott Carter is the oldest of that vanishing breed of modernists born before World War II. Since the late 1940s he has clung to the unfashionable view that music has to be many-layered and full of complex cross-currents, because only then can it be true to the complexity of modern life. In his music of the 1980s and ’90s the textures thinned out, but the thought behind it was as quick and subtle as ever.

**LIFE AND MUSIC**

Carter was born in New York into a prosperous lace-importing family that spent much of its time in Europe. Having got acquainted with new music through Charles Ives, he joined the long line of American composers who studied with the great Paris-based advocate of Neo-Classicism, Nadia Boulanger. In the late 1940s Carter had a creative crisis that led him to abandon his populist American Neo-Classical stance in favour of an uncompromising modernism. Until the 1980s and ’90s this made him better known in Europe than America, but recently the American establishment has woken up to the fact that it has a great modernist master in its midst.

**MILESTONES**

- **1924** Meets Charles Ives
- **1926** Enters Harvard to study literature, Greek, and philosophy; studies music on the side at the Longy School
- **1932** Begins three-year stay in Paris
- **1939** Marries sculptress Helen Frost; begins teaching in Annapolis, US
- **1948** Composes “breakthrough” piece, the Cello Sonata
- **1960** String Quartet No. 2 wins Pulitzer Prize, New York Music Critics’ Award, and UNESCO First Prize
- **1976** Composes Symphony of Three Orchestras; premiere of vocal work *A Mirror on Which to Dwell*
- **1999** Premiere of opera *What Next?*

**KEY WORKS**

**STRING QUARTET NO. 2**

This quartet followed a three-year gap in composing while Carter explored chord types and a new method of changing smoothly from one tempo to another, which he called “metric modulation”. Both these ideas can be seen in the String Quartet No. 2. The third guiding idea was that of music conceived as a drama played out by musical “characters”. Here the first violin is virtuosic and fantastic, the second violin is “laconic and orderly, sometimes humorous”, the viola is theatrically doleful, while the cello is played as impetuous.

**WHAT NEXT?**

**OPERA**

Carter’s first opera, premiered at Berlin Staatsoper under Daniel Barenboim, is a sparkling 50-minute comedy about a group of people marooned on a freeway after a car crash, trying to remember who and where they are.

**SYMPHONIA**

In 1992, Carter embarked on his biggest project to date: a three movement piece for large orchestra lasting 45 minutes. Carter gave it the subtitle “Sum fluxae pretium spei” (“I am the Prize of Flowing Hope”).
This single-movement orchestral work was Carter’s response to Hart Crane’s magnificent poem “The Bridge”, a mystical evocation of Brooklyn Bridge and the city of New York. In Hart’s poem the bridge becomes a symbol which spans a river and a continent, and which unites an ancient past and a technological future. To capture this visionary quality, Carter created a dense, glistening soundscape for three orchestras, the first consisting of brass, timpani, and strings, the second of percussion, clarinets, and solo strings, and the third of winds, horns, and upper strings. Each orchestra has its own repertoire of chords and melodic shapes, and its own independent succession of tempos. These are unfolded simultaneously, creating Carter’s most extreme experiment in collage. The piece begins with a high trumpet solo, which has been described as the definitive portrait in sound of New York, and ends with a “factory-noise” coda that tumbles down to the depths of the orchestra.

In the 1940s Carter had become dissatisfied with the populist style of his early works, and over the next decade he began to grope his way towards a new style. The second movement of the Cello Sonata, originally intended as the first, is in a jazz-tinged style, but the next two movements introduce musical ideas moving at different speeds. He then composed a new first movement, which instead of starting with a “theme” presents chords and intervals that act as a “quarry” for everything that follows. This movement picks up from the ending, which means the work is in the shape of an endless loop, with the “beginning” in the middle.
Milton Babbitt

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<tr>
<th>1916–</th>
<th>American</th>
<th>c.110</th>
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After playing jazz, Babbitt was a music graduate by 19 and carried on studying privately. An early proponent of 12-tone music, he worked in music and mathematics university faculties, developing advanced theories of musical systems. He taught at Princeton and the Juilliard School, among others, and became a significant writer and lecturer – and, as well as being a major intellectual, he is also a sports fan and raconteur. Babbitt’s highly structured and complex works makes them unlikely to gain popular success, but they and his teachings have proved very influential. Frequently honoured, he was still composing and working well into his 80s.

**Milestones**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td><em>Composition for String Orchestra</em>, 12-tone work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>Professor of music at Princeton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td><em>Philomel</em>, for soprano and synthesizer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>Composes <em>String Quartet No. 3</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Starts teaching composition at Juilliard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Pulitzer Prize citation for life’s work</td>
</tr>
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Lou Harrison

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<tr>
<th>1917–2003</th>
<th>American</th>
<th>c.220</th>
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Harrison was a US West Coast experimenter, synthesizing world native and Western styles, working in different tuning systems, and creating novel percussive sounds. With his partner William Colvig he developed “American gamelan”, from items such as garbage cans, tins, and baseball bats. He also wrote for standard Western instruments, usually with a lyrical flavour, and collaborated with Ives and Cage. His opera *Young Caesar* shows his advocacy of gay rights.

**Milestones**

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>Conducts premiere of Ives’s <em>Symphony No. 3</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Composes <em>Suite for Violin and American Gamelan</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Completes <em>Young Caesar</em>, opera</td>
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Leon Kirchner

<table>
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<tr>
<th>1919–</th>
<th>American</th>
<th>50</th>
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Alongside a distinguished teaching career Kirchner has served as pianist and conductor. His music – sometimes agonised, sometimes driving and energetic – is firmly in the tradition of his mentor, Schoenberg, flowing and unfolding, but always governed by some underlying idea, and resistant to temporary musical fashions. He received a Pulitzer Prize for his *Quartet No. 3*.

**Milestones**

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>Composes <em>String Quartet No. 2</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>Professor of music at Harvard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>Composes <em>Piano Concerto No. 2</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Composes <em>Lily</em>, chamber ensemble and tape (arrangement of opera)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Writes <em>Of things exactly as they are</em>, two singers, chorus, orchestra</td>
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</table>
Ned Rorem

Rorem studied with Virgil Thomson (for whom he was secretary and copyist) and Copland at the Juilliard School. After winning prizes with the Lordly Hudson (best published song of 1948) and his Overture in C (Gershwin Prize) he went to Paris, where he lived for several years and became part of the artistic circles of Cocteau and Poulenc, one of his inspirations. Back in New York, where the success of his songs drew him, he taught at various institutes and increasingly developed his reputation as an excellent song composer (he has written nearly 400, with naturalness of word setting and advanced but never impossible harmonies) and as a writer (such as his elegant and frank diaries).

**MILESTONES**

- 1951 Goes to Paris
- 1958 Returns to New York
- 1965 Composes Miss Julie, opera
- 1966 Publishes The Paris Diary of Ned Rorem
- 1976 Air Music, orchestra, wins Pulitzer Prize
- 1997 Composes Evidence of Things Not Seen, song cycle

**During his time in Paris, Rorem wrote his entertaining journal The Paris Diary of Ned Rorem (1950–55).**

Morton Feldman

Spurning conventional academic training – he worked in the family business – Feldman was influenced by the new sounds of Varèse, the pioneering work of Cage, and especially New York’s 1950s abstract Expressionist school of painters and their faith in directness and instinct. His modernist pieces sometimes involve non-standard notation (his series of pieces Projections and Intersections are written on graphical scores, with general directions rather than individual notes on a stave), and can be of immense length – his String Quartet II lasts almost six hours. One of his last works, Palais de Maris, is unusual for a late composition in that it is only 20 minutes long. It came about from a request for Feldman to sum up everything he was doing in his very long pieces and to condense that into a smaller piece. After some time in Berlin, where he gained several commissions, he returned to the US to teach composition in Buffalo.

**MILESTONES**

- 1951 Composes Projections and Intersections
- 1971 Is granted a residency in Berlin
- 1971 The Rothko Chapel, singers and ensemble
- 1973 Appointed professor at SUNY, Buffalo
- 1984 Composes For Philip Guston, ensemble
- 1986 Composes Palais de Maris
- 1987 Marries composer Barbara Monk
A prodigiously talented pianist and composer, Rzewski went from Harvard and Princeton to Europe, where he performed and taught through the 1960s. He worked on radical jazz-based improvisation and live electronic projects, some with a socialist theme. He has been based in Rome and Liège since 1976 and teaches widely. His popular *The People United* is a 50-minute set of virtuoso variations in an astonishing array of styles on a worker’s revolutionary song; later works were more experimental, before a recent freer phase. Miles 49–56 of his mammoth seven-hour-long piano solo *The Road* involve playing the floor and stool, whistling, humming, screwed-up paper, and a radio, plus sections for each hand alone.

George Crumb

- **1929–**
- **American**
- **c.60**

Raised in a musical family accustomed to the classics, trained in the conventional way rounded off at Berlin’s Hochschule, and having made a career in teaching, mostly at Pennsylvania, Crumb was at home with the standard repertoire. After initially being influenced by Webern, he has become almost notorious for requiring unusual sounds and innovative techniques in his relatively small but refined output. *Black Angels*, for example, evokes the horrors of Vietnam by asking the string quartet players to shout and bow wine glasses, while *Vox balaenae (The Voice of the Whale)* requires its musicians to wear masks and perform under a blue light (the latter also features an electric flute, an electric cello, and an amplified piano). Many of his works set texts by Lorca, and the theatrical nature of his music – sometimes trance-like, other times explosive – has made it popular with dance companies.

**MILESTONES**

- **1965** Begins association with Pennsylvania University
- **1968** Wins Pulitzer Prize for *Echoes of Time and the River*
- **1970** Writes *Ancient Voices of Children; Black Angels*, string quartet, produced
- **1973** Writes *Makrokosmos I-III* for piano
- **2002** Joint residency at Arizona University

Frederic Rzewski

- **1938–**
- **American**
- **c.70**

Rzewski’s magnum opus, *The Road*, is a musical “novel” composed of 64 parts, each marking a “mile” in the work’s journey.
John Corigliano

John Corigliano belongs to the same generation as the minimalists Reich, Glass, and Riley. But whereas they took a long and winding route to Romantic expressivity, via the severities of minimalism, Corigliano knew from the beginning that expressivity was his true home. His eclectic language, which calls on the evocative power of musical memory, has won him a wide audience.

**LIFE AND MUSIC**

Corigliano was a somewhat slow starter as a composer, and after studying at Columbia University he worked in classical music radio and as a concert programmer. Corigliano describes his early works, such as the Violin Sonata and the earlier movements of the *Dylan Thomas Trilogy*, as “a tense, histrionic outgrowth of the ‘clean’ American sound of Barber, Copland, Harris, and Schuman”. The later works, beginning with the Clarinet Concerto, present a very different musical palette, less driven and with many more layers. But it is not Elliott Carter’s intellectual complication at which Corigliano is aiming. Memory, nostalgia, and the evocation of different emotional worlds are what interest him, which is why he is a truly post-modern composer.

**MILESTONES**

- **1959** Graduates from Columbia University
- **1960** Works as music programmer at New York music station WXQR
- **1961** Starts work with Leonard Bernstein on the *Young People’s Concert* series
- **1971** Starts teaching at Manhattan School of Music
- **1977** Clarinet Concerto premiered by Bernstein in New York
- **1991** *The Ghost of Versailles* premiered in New York
- **1992** Teaches composition at Juilliard School in New York
- **1997** Feature film *The Red Violin* opens with score by Corigliano
- **2000** Premiere of Symphony No. 2

**A DYLAN THOMAS TRILOGY**

Oratorio 30:00  3

It took Corigliano around 40 years to complete this large-scale “memory play in the form of an oratorio”, as he calls it. It consists of setting of three poems by Dylan Thomas particularly dear to Corigliano: “Fern Hill”, “Poem in October”, and the darker “Poem on his Birthday”. As Thomas himself wrote, in his *Poetic Manifesto* (1951), “What the words stood for, symbolized, or meant was of very secondary importance; what matters was the sound of them.”

**SYMPHONY NO. 1**

Orchestral 43:00  4

“During the past decade I have lost many friends and colleagues to the AIDS epidemic... My first symphony was generated by feelings of loss, anger, and frustration.” Each movement is a memorial to a different friend; the moment in the first when a memory of Albéniz’s “Tango” floats through the orchestra is typical of Corigliano’s directness.

*Featured in The Red Violin, a haunting, complex, and lyrical score by Corigliano.*
Steve Reich

MILESTONES

LIFE AND MUSIC

Although Reich reacted against the serial orthodoxy taught in the US, his early music was no less rigorous in the way it took a few simple ideas and pursued them relentlessly. In the 1960s, he found that, when started together, identical tape loops in old-style tape recorders would soon move out of synchronization. He began to transfer these phasing effects to conventional instruments, elaborating on them in ingenious ways. By the mid-1970s, his technique of making music from repeating, slowly changing patterns was established. In the 1980s, he returned to speech recordings for inspiration.

KEY WORKS

VIOLIN PHASE

This piece asks a live performer to mimic the phase-shifting Reich had already achieved with tape recorders, but in a more complicated way, with the violinist playing against one, then two, and finally three pre-recorded tape tracks of himself/herself. The final refinement is that the violinist sometimes bows out of the phasing process in order to tease out and reinforce the new patterns formed in the mind by the phasing process. This has a fascinating effect, as if an aural illusion were to become suddenly real.

Profoundly influenced by African drumming, Reich’s music consists of “pattern games” which are concerned not with melody, but with changes in time.
FOCUS

MUSIC FOR 18 MUSICIANS
CHAMBER  55:00  1
This big, single-movement piece, created in 1974 and 1975 for an enlarged form of Reich’s own ensemble, has a good claim to be his masterpiece. What makes it so irresistible is the way the moment-to-moment unfolding of Reich’s familiar “pattern games” is embedded in a convincing architectural frame.

The frame consists of a cycle of 11 chords, announced at the beginning, which is then repeated, in hugely expanded form, across the remainder of the piece. Each chord becomes the basis of a “movement” lasting several minutes, which may be in an arch form (ABCDCBA) or cast in one of Reich’s typical processes, such as substituting beats for rests.

The division of the ensemble into “breathing” wind instruments and voice and “pulsing” instruments gives rise to a layered texture, with slow-moving phrases set against pattering activity—a texture that has become so characteristic of his work.

THE CAVE
MULTI-MEDIA  142:00  1
In this ambitious work created between 1989 and 1993 with his wife, video artist Beryl Korot, several of Reich’s interests come together: the use of speech rhythms in recordings—an idea revived after a lapse of more than 20 years; a concern with Jewish themes; and a desire to create a new kind of multimedia experience involving music, voices, and images. What is striking about this piece (and the subsequent Three Tales, also created with his wife) is the way speech, music, and images are strictly co-ordinated in time.

The work concerns the Cave of Hebron, the burial place of both Abraham and Sarah and thus sacred to both Muslims and Jews. Recorded in Israel and in the US, the work explores the troubled legacy of the cave through interviews seen on screens and heard over speakers. The key phrases are teased out and repeated, and their rhythms and speech melodies caught and amplified by live instruments and voices.

INFLUENCES
Reich’s effect on general musical culture is perhaps not as great as Philip Glass’s, although within classical circles his influence may be greater, owing to the continuing modernist rigour of his music. Nonetheless, his characteristic pattering, marimba-and-winds sound has managed to spread further, appearing on pop remix albums.
Glass said, “Taboos – the things we’re not supposed to do – are often the most interesting. In my case, musical materials are found among the ordinary things, such as sequences and cadences.” Those ordinary things were indeed taboo in Glass’s formative years, when the strict serial techniques of Stockhausen held sway. Through meeting Ravi Shankar and, later, the great percussionist Alla Rakha, he liberated himself from modernism and forged a hypnotic, repetitive style that was exactly suited to the rhythmic sax-and-keyboard sound of his own ensemble. After a difficult start playing New York lofts and galleries, Glass gained a cult following.

Philip Glass's soundtrack of atmospheric simplicity for The Hours is based on common chords and arpeggios, and is played in strange, circulating patterns by piano and strings.

**LIFE AND MUSIC**

Glass is one of the founding fathers of minimalism, along with Steve Reich, Terry Riley, and La Monte Young. He shares with Riley and Young a respect for Indian music, and with Reich an interest in repetitive patterns. Today, he is most famous of them all, because of his vast productivity, his eagerness to collaborate with artists in different media, and the increasing emotional range and lyricism of his music.

**MILESTONES**

- 1949 Starts composition lessons, also works in his father’s record shop
- 1957 Enrols at Juilliard School of Music
- 1963 Studies in Paris with Nadia Boulanger
- 1967 Takes lessons in Indian rhythm
- 1976 Premiere of Einstein on the Beach, the first of Glass’s “character operas”
- 1980 Satyagraha, opera, performed
- 1983 Composes Akhnaten, opera
- 1984 Composes music to inaugurate Los Angeles Olympics
- 1992 The Voyage, opera, for 500th anniversary of Columbus’s arrival in America
- 1998 Composes Symphony No. 5
- 2002 Writes score for Stephen Daldry’s film The Hours

**KEY WORKS**

**VIOLIN CONCERTO**

Written in 1987, this was the piece through which Glass discovered a liking for the conventional symphony orchestra. Here he treats it like a vastly enlarged Philip Glass Ensemble (his own performing group), with all the colours merged in gentle arpeggiated undulations (in the slow movement) or hectic motor rhythms (in the fast ones). Above this unceasing rhythmic activity the haunting violin dances and floats.

**SYMPHONY NO. 5**

This ambitious work brings together texts from many different “wisdom traditions”, as Glass calls them. The 12 movements describe a journey through Death to Enlightenment, in music of statuesque simplicity.
EINSTEIN ON THE BEACH

Glass’s first major collaboration, was the one that brought him fame (or notoriety). His collaborator was Robert Wilson, known for creating a multimedia “theatre of visions” which avoided conventional narratives in favour of a dream-like strangeness. Although it is based on the life of the great physicist Albert Einstein, the piece avoids plot, presenting instead a series of tableaux based on key images or ideas. These include Einstein’s violin, and the image of the train used in the theory of relativity. The text consists of numbers and solfèges, which are set to insistently repetitive music. When you add the choreographed movement, the bizarre costumes, the five-hour duration, and the invitation to the audience to wander in and out of the auditorium at will, you have the most extreme work Glass ever created.

MUSIC IN 12 PARTS

The longest and most ambitious piece Glass ever wrote for the Philip Glass Ensemble, this work is the summit of his early minimalist style. It began in 1971 as a single piece in 12 horizontal parts (six on keyboards, three on woodwind, and three vocal parts). Glass played it to a friend, who remarked, “Very beautiful. What will the other 11 parts be like?” Glass took this misunderstanding as a cue to compose 11 more pieces. Each projects a texture of rigorously patterned stasis, with single harmonies sustained for minutes at a stretch. What supplies the interest is the way the repeating patterns gradually change, one step at a time. When the harmony eventually alters, “it’s as if a wall of a room has collapsed to reveal a new view,” as one critic put it.

AKHNATEN

Glass’s “character operas” deal respectively with a brilliant scientist (Einstein), a great politician (Gandhi), and an influential religious reformer (Akhnaten). The last of the three works is the closest to a conventional opera. The characters sing in what is known, or imagined, of the languages of Ancient Egypt, while a narrator explains and interprets in English. The music has a majestic slowness, in keeping with the vast timescale of the Egyptian world.

INFLUENCES

Glass’s influence has been immense, entering the general consciousness in a way no other living composer can match. The most telling evidence of this is the countless TV soundtracks and commercials which imitate his style. However, his reputation in the classical world is much less secure, and his influence there has been minimal.
John Adams

John Adams has become the most frequently performed living classical composer in the US, and quite possibly the world, due to his brilliant transformation of the minimal language he inherited from Glass and Reich. He retains the relentless forward momentum of minimalism, but vastly expands its expressive resources, and imports an exuberant range of cultural references, both “high” and “low”.

LIFE AND MUSIC

Adams’ name evokes the US of the Founding Fathers, and his birth in Massachusetts seems to confirm this East Coast orientation. But his music evokes a very different West Coast mindset, symbolized by his move to California and it is shown by an openness both to high-flown culture and Americana. These elements are held together in an idiom that grew out of the continuities of minimalism, and which, in its quieter moods, has a laid-back “Californian” feel. However, this mood is increasingly inflected by other elements – from dark European Romanticism to bright US pop.

KEY WORKS

THE DHARMA AT BIG SUR

Completed in 2003, this is an exuberant concerto for electric violin and orchestra. “Big Sur” refers to a famous scenic spot on the San Francisco–Los Angeles freeway, while “Dharma” is a Sanskrit word meaning “universal truth”. The Californian reference is bolstered by subtle evocations of three Californian composers: Terry Riley, LaMonte Young, and Lou Harrison.

DEATH OF KLINGHOFFER

This dark opera is based on the hijacking of the cruise liner Achille Lauro by Palestinian terrorists, and their subsequent murder of an elderly disabled Jewish passenger, Leon Klinghoffer. The models behind this work were the Passions of J S Bach. Adams was attacked for portraying the terrorists in a sympathetic light.

Adams conducting his nativity oratorio, El Niño — an impressive reworking of the Christmas story, based on texts from religious and multi-cultural sources.
Adams has often spoken of the folly of ignoring popular culture and the necessity of embracing his US heritage. Some of his works revel in that heritage to an exuberant, irreverent degree; this is one of them. As he put it, “Beethoven and Rachmaninoff soak in the same warm bath with Liberace, Wagner, the Supremes, Charles Ives, and John Philip Sousa.” Much of the writing is delicate, with the two pianos playing slightly out-of-phase. The loud, bombastic finale, entitled “The Dominant Divide”, applies minimalist techniques to the simplest possible chord progression.

**HARMONIOLEHRE**

This work marked the decisive shift in Adams’ work from the minimalist purity of his early works to his mature, more expressive style. The title comes from Schoenberg’s harmony textbook of 1911, but the first inspiration for the piece came from a dream in which Adams saw a huge tanker rise out of San Francisco bay and take off like a rocket. The music mirrors this “take off” in a series of hammered E minor chords which speed up and disintegrate. The surprise comes later, when a long-breathed melody of a distinctly late-Romantic cast rises out of the cellos. The second movement, “The Amfortas Wound”, is the darkest of the three, while the third, “Meister Eckhardt and Quackie”, begins in radiance and ends in E flat major triumph.

**NIXON IN CHINA**

In Adams’ first opera, the music is scored for only 34 players, including saxophones and synthesizers. The narrative is based on the visit by US president Richard Nixon to China in 1972, and much of the action consists of big public set-pieces. There are also intimate scenes in which the characters reveal their hopes and fears. Adams shows great sensitivity to Alice Goodman’s text, notably in the aria “The News”, sung by Nixon at the foot of the steps to his aircraft, *Spirit of ’76*. The gasping rhythm and obsessive repetitions reveal the anxiety, the hunger for greatness, and perhaps the shallowness of the leading character.
Terry Riley

1935– American 80

Terry Riley is one of the founding fathers of minimalism. His ‘60s piece In C is acknowledged as a key work in the emergence of a driving, repetitive style that was picked up by composers who are now better known than Riley, such as Reich and Glass. The success of this piece has obscured the great variety of Riley’s music, which ranges from tape-delay montages to Indian-inspired lyricism.

LIFE AND MUSIC

Terry Riley’s life has been as unorthodox as his music. After studies at the University of California, he led a rootless life, playing piano in bars in Europe and America. In the early ‘60s he was a co-founder of the San Francisco Tape Music Center, where he created highly innovative pieces using montage and tape-echo techniques, some in collaboration with underground composer La Monte Young.

Riley’s main influence has been Indian Classical music – a form he now teaches at the Christi Sabri School in New Delhi.

His 1964 piece In C defines the ‘60s like no other classical piece, but Riley would say that the meeting with Kirana vocal master Pandit Pran Nath in 1970 was the real watershed in his life. Since then his music has reflected the profound influence of Indian classical music, in its incorporation of improvisation, in its use of unorthodox tuning systems, and in its yearning for mystical transcendence.

MILESTONES

1960 Collaborates with La Monte Young
1962 Begins two-year stay in Europe
1964 Premiere of In C
1970 Meets Pandit Pran Nath
1980 Starts writing for the Kronos Quartet
1989 Leads Khayal group until 1993
1993 Starts teaching at Christi Sabri School of Indian Classical Music

KEY WORKS

IN C

EXPERIMENTAL

To be played “by any instruments”, this is a joyous affirmation of the chord of C major. The entire score consists of a single page of melodic fragments, through which the players move at their own pace. The fixed element is a hammered octave C, which holds the key and the rhythm.

THE SAINT ADOLF RING

OPERA

Like several other contemporary composers, Riley has become fascinated by the strange visions of the Swiss schizophrenic artist Adolf Wölfli. In 1992 he founded the Traveling Avant-Garde Theater Company to perform his multi-media chamber opera The Saint Adolf Ring, in which he performed as player, singer, and actor.

CONCERT FOR TWO PIANOS AND FIVE TAPE RECORDERS

EXPERIMENTAL

Much inspired by the chance works of John Cage, this work was premiered by Riley himself and La Monte Young. It is a joyously anarchic collage of keyboard sounds (both live and on tape loops) and recorded sounds such as explosions, screams, and laughter.
Aram Khachaturian 1903–1978 Armenian 76

Khachaturian was the first, and so far the only, Armenian composer to achieve world renown. This was due to his two Romantic ballets Gayaneh and Spartacus, and his attractively melodious concertos. Like many Soviet ballets, his recall the exotic Romanticism of Rimsky-Korsakov and early Stravinsky. The extra ingredient is an Armenian folk flavour, which can be heard in nearly all Khachaturian’s works.

LIFE AND MUSIC

Khachaturian had a generous, optimistic nature. Throughout the horrors of Stalin’s Terror in the 1930s and the denunciations of the cultural commissar Zhdanov, he conducted himself with dignity, refusing to point the finger at fellow composers. His music has a similar straightforward cheerfulness; even the tragic moments in the ballets are picturesque rather than moving. The influence of Armenian folk music can be seen in the frequent hectic ostinatos, in chords based on fourths and fifths (inspired by the open strings of the Armenian saz), and in a rhapsodic improvisational form of melody.

MILESTONES

1929 Enters Moscow Conservatory
1932 Joins Composers’ Union
1933 Marries fellow Conservatory student Nina Makarova
1936 Premiere of Piano Concerto,
1939 Awarded Order of Lenin
1940 Premiere of Violin Concerto
1942 Premiere of Gayaneh
1948 Denounced as a formalist by Zhdanov, alongside Shostakovich and others
1956 Premiere of Spartacus
1973 Appointed Hero of Socialist Labour

KEY WORKS

GAYANEH BALLET 150 4 4
The first of Khachaturian’s two balletic masterpieces, Gayaneh contains the famous “Sabre Dance”, which soon became a hit for, among others, the Andrews Sisters (a fact which, along with Khachaturian’s risky habit of wearing double-breasted “American” suits, may have led to his problems with Zhdanov in 1948). Almost as famous is the “Adagio”, used by Stanley Kubrick in 2001: A Space Odyssey.

SPARTACUS BALLET 140:00 4 4
This ballet portrays the heroic efforts of the slave Spartacus to free himself and his comrades from captivity. Given the date of the piece (1956), the conservatism of the musical language is astonishing. But so is the music’s sheer Hollywood-ish orchestral bravura.

Spartacus tells the tale of a group of gladiators who defeat the Roman Army in the 1st century BC.
"I abhor imitation and I abhor the familiar."

SERGEI PROKOFIEV
Sergei Prokofiev

1891–1953  Russian  102

Prokofiev had an immense natural gift as a composer and pianist and a determinedly optimistic character. His pre-Revolutionary music is vivid, sarcastic, sometimes brutal; the later music is more measured and lyrical, and after his return to the Soviet Union, more conventional. Throughout his life Prokofiev kept his strong pictorial and dramatic sense, revealed as much in his “abstract” symphonies and sonatas as in his famous ballets.

LIFE

An adored only child with a highly musical mother, Prokofiev had composed two operas by his 11th birthday. From 1905 he studied at the St Petersburg Conservatory, where he quickly became known as an arrogant, rebellious composer of brashly modernist music. After the upheavals of the Bolshevik Revolution, in 1918 Prokofiev left for what he thought would be a short trip abroad. It turned out to be an 18-year sojourn, of which the first two were spent in the US. He scored an instant hit as a pianist, and received a commission for The Love for Three Oranges, the only one of his operas to win international fame in his lifetime. In 1921 his ballet Chout was a great success in Paris, and the following year he resettled, firstly in Bavaria, then Paris. The 1920s brought two further successes with the Ballets Russes: Le Pas d’Acier (The Steel Step) and The Prodigal Son. In between composing, Prokofiev made many successful tours as a pianist, to the US, Europe, and the Soviet Union. But he missed home. He started to accept Soviet commissions, and in 1935 returned to the Soviet Union, then in the grip of the Stalinist Terror. In the late 1940s he was criticized for “formalist tendencies” by the authorities. He died of a brain haemorrhage on the same day as Stalin.

Though Prokofiev wrote several “official pieces” for state occasions, his music was also criticized by the Soviet regime.

MUSICAL OUTPUT

| Total: 102 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| SYMPHONIES (7) | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| CONCERTOS (9) | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 |
| CHAMBER (96) | 10 | 9 | 11 | 13 |
| FILM SCORES (11) | 2 | 3 | 3 | 1 |
| OPERAS (9) | 2 | 2 | 3 | 1 |
| BALLET (10) | 2 | 2 | 3 | 1 |
| OFFICIAL PIECES (10) | 6 | 4 |

Though Prokofiev wrote several “official pieces” for state occasions, his music was also criticized by the Soviet regime.
MUSIC

Up to the time of World War I there were two distinct strands in Prokofiev’s music. There was a rich, post-Romantic mood, derived from Scriabin and Rachmaninov, evident in works like the opera *The Fiery Angel*. Then there was a mood of biting sarcasm, revealed in such hectically rhythmic and dissonant pieces as the *Scythian Suite* and the piano work *Saracesms*. Here the model was Stravinsky, with whom Prokofiev kept up a not always friendly rivalry. Prokofiev also had a quality all his own: this was a childlike playfulness, shown in a fondness for primary-colour orchestration, and a tendency for the harmony to jump unexpectedly to distant chords, often within a single melodic phrase. But the chords themselves are not dissonant, and they always find their way back to their starting point. In the music of the Soviet period the dissonance and sarcasm withdraw, and the lyrical Prokofiev is revealed ever more clearly. The result in some people’s eyes is disappointingly conventional, but the later works have their admirers too.

KEY WORKS

**SYMPHONY NO. 5, OP. 100**

Orchestral [42:00] [4]

Composed in the darkest days of World War II, the premiere of this symphony in 1945 was heard against the thunderous background of an artillery salute. Prokofiev wrote that the piece portrayed “the grandeur of the human spirit”. The affirmative final movement ends in jubilation, reflecting Soviet victories in the war.

**VISIONS FUGITIVES, OP. 22**

Solo piano [20]

These 20 piano miniatures, by turns grotesque, tender, and sardonic, were written in 1915–17. The title comes from a line by the symbolist poet Balmont: “In every fugitive vision I see whole worlds: they change endlessly, flashing in playful rainbow colours”.

**ALEXANDER NEVSKY**

Orchestral [7]

In 1937 the great Russian director Sergei Eisenstein asked Prokofiev to provide the score for his film *Alexander Nevsky*. Eisenstein had great respect for the composer’s work, and at times cut or shortened sequences to fit in with Prokofiev’s music.

In this 1930s production of Prokofiev’s *Romeo and Juliet* by the Bolshoi Ballet, Galina Ulanova, creator of the role of Juliet, dances with Yuri Zhadonov.
FOCUS

VIOLIN CONCERTO NO. 1, OP. 19

Composed in 1917, in the same period as Visions Fugitives, the concerto was not premiered until 1923 in Paris. It has an unconventional form, with two slow movements framing a quicksilver, acid scherzo.

FIRST MOVEMENT (ANDANTINO, ANDANTE ASSAI, 9:00) This begins with a radiantly lyrical theme, but soon the tempo quickens and the mood becomes brittle and strange, with a high-stepping balletic second theme. The reprise of the opening theme carries the music aloft to a shimmering, pianissimo ending.

SECOND MOVEMENT (SCHERZO, VIVACISSIMO, 4:00) The light-footed scherzo is brilliantly orchestrated. The contrasting second theme is a galumphing march, like a dance for trolls, whereas the ending is pure glittering colour, the violin playing a stream of high harmonics.

THIRD MOVEMENT (MODERATO, 7:00) A dry bassoon theme provides a neutral background for the lyrical violin. The bassoon theme’s more emphatic return later on takes on a fugal texture. This leads to the climax, after which there is an exact reprise of the ending of the first movement.

ROMEO AND JULIET, OP. 64

Composed in 1934, this is a classic example of the Soviet taste for full-length, traditional ballets.

ACT ONE The Prince of Verona’s command that no one break the peace is portrayed in unusually sharp dissonance. Prokofiev lavishes three tender themes on Juliet, and portrays with great subtlety the moment when she sees herself in the mirror and realises she’s no longer a girl. The ensuing “Masked Ball” where Juliet meets Romeo has some of Prokofiev’s finest dance music.

ACT TWO Juliet and Romeo are married in secret by Friar Lawrence in a marvellously tender and intimate scene. The fight scenes are full of restless, “cinematic” music.

ACT THREE Prokofiev at first contrived a happy ending (this may have been a concession to the Soviet demand for optimism in art), but the original tragic ending was reinstated.

SUITE NO.2 (OP. 64b)

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>5 6 7 8</td>
<td>9 10 11 12</td>
<td>13 14 15 16 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brass and woodwind</td>
<td>Flute depicts Juliet</td>
<td>Clarinet solo</td>
<td>Theme played by oboe with pizzicato accompaniment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trumpet enters</td>
<td>Violins alone (return of love theme)</td>
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“To me he seemed like a trapped man, whose only wish was to be left alone, to the peace of his own art and to the tragic destiny to which he had been forced to resign himself.”

NICHOLAS NABOKOV ON MEETING SHOSTAKOVICH IN 1949 IN NEW YORK
Dmitri Shostakovich

1906–1975  •  Russian  •  110

Alongside Benjamin Britten, Shostakovich is the most popular composer of the mid-20th century. His 15 symphonies are acknowledged as the greatest since Mahler’s his 15 string quartets the most significant since Bartók’s. But he’s also a controversial figure. Modernists dismissed him as a reactionary, or a lackey of the Soviet regime, and recent attempts to find anti-Stalinist messages in his music have aroused fierce debate.

LIFE

Until the age of 11 Shostakovich lived a comfortable life in a well-off bourgeois Russian household. However, in October 1917 the Bolsheviks came to power, sweeping away the privileges of the middle class. After study at the St Petersburg Conservatory, Shostakovich’s first big success came with his Symphony No. 1, premiered in 1925, when he was only 19. He spent much of the 1920s and 30s writing film and theatre scores to earn money, but, despite the frantic pace of work, he found time for a complicated love life. He married the physics student Nina Varzar in 1932, but had several affairs thereafter. Along with all creative artists in Russia at that time, Shostakovich’s life was overshadowed by Stalin’s repressive policies. In 1936 his opera Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District was attacked in the official newspaper Pravda. He eventually rehabilitated himself with his Symphony No. 5, but in 1948 he was attacked again for formalism. From the 1930s onwards he was obliged to write optimistic “official” pieces alongside his “pure” symphonies and quartets. After Nina’s death in 1954, Shostakovich remarried twice, latterly to Irina Supinskaya, who outlived him. In the 1960s his health, which had never been strong, declined further, and much of his last years were spent in hospital.

MUSICAL OUTPUT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>1906</th>
<th>1925</th>
<th>1936</th>
<th>1948</th>
<th>1960</th>
<th>1975</th>
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<tr>
<td>SYMPHONIES (15)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
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<td>CONCERTOS (6)</td>
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<td>FILM/THEATRE SCORES (48)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19</td>
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<td>CHAMBER MUSIC (21)</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>OPERAS (4)</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>BALLET (4)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>OFFICIAL PIECES (12)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Total: 110
Shostakovich’s early works, such as the Symphony No. 1, have the exuberant balletic energy of Tchaikovsky and Stravinsky, and often a sarcastic spirit learned from Prokofiev. In the late 1920s and ’30s two more ingredients entered the mix: the combination of grotesque parody and tragedy of Mahler, and the fierce Expressionism and social satire of Alban Berg’s opera Wozzeck. At first the result was gleeful and exuberant, as in the opera The Nose and his 1936 hit Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District, an opera that proved to be the watershed in Shostakovich’s life. After it was attacked, and he was disgraced, his music lost its high spirits. The parody was still there, but it had become anguished, and the general tone became angular, lean, and serious. In the Symphony No. 5, Shostakovich strikes a delicate balance between satisfying the communist regime’s demand for simplicity and optimism (ie “representing contemporary reality in a musical language comprehensible to The People”) and expressing his own views on the regime. What those views were is still a matter of debate, but there are many signs that in later life he hated it, as witnessed by the overblown fake triumphalism of Symphony No. 10’s finale, the use of Jewish melodies (anti-semitism was rife in Stalinist Russia) and his attraction to dissident poets, like Yevtushenko, whose verses appear in Shostakovich’s late, bleak Symphony No. 13.

Shostakovich (right) worked as a fireman during the Siege of Leningrad. In 1941, the first year of the siege, he composed his Symphony No. 7.

MILESTONES

1917 Bolshevik Revolution
1919 Enters St Petersburg Conservatory
1926 Symphony No. 1, Op. 10, wins acclaim
1934 Composers’ Union promulgates official aesthetic of Socialist Realism
1936 Lady Macbeth condemned in Pravda
1937 Premiere of Symphony No. 5, Op. 47
1941 Hitler invades Soviet Union
1942 Premiere of Symphony No. 7 in Moscow; American premiere conducted by Toscanini; symphony becomes symbol of resistance to fascism
1948 Accused of “anti-democratic tendencies” by cultural commissar
1949 Visits US as part of Soviet-sponsored “Peace Conference”; forced to declare allegiance to Stalinist aesthetics
1953 Death of Stalin brings relaxation of controls on expression
1953 Premiere of Symphony No. 10
1954 Wife Nina Varzar dies; his mother dies the following year
1960 Joins Communist Party
1962 Premiere of “Babi Yar”
1966 Suffers heart attack; is made Hero of Socialist Labour and receives second Order of Lenin
1972 Travels to East and West Germany, and England to meet his friend Benjamin Britten
KEY WORKS

CONCERTO FOR PIANO, TRUMPET, AND STRINGS, OP. 35

This concerto is heavily influenced by the clean-cut Neo-Classicism of composers such as Paul Hindemith. The first movement pits a nostalgic piano theme against a Baroque-sounding military fanfare on trumpet, while the second is an elegiac waltz. The third is full of busy Neo-Classical counterpoint, and the last is one of Shostakovich’s most effervescent finales.

SYMPHONY NO. 13, OP. 113

This piece, consisting of settings of poetry by dissident poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko, begins with “Babi Yar”, which describes a massacre of Jews in Russia by the Nazis in 1943. The music has the bare, hollow style typical of Shostakovich’s late music. After the symphony’s premiere, Yevtushenko was forced to add a stanza to his poem claiming that Russians and Ukrainians had died alongside the Jews at Babi Yar.

SYMPHONY NO. 5, OP. 47

The most played and discussed of all Shostakovich’s works, this symphony encapsulates the agonies of his creative life. Subtitled “A Soviet Artist’s Practical Creative Reply to Just Criticism”, it begins with a great despairing outcry, followed by a long, numb lament. Of the apparently optimistic finale, Shostakovich said, “It’s as if someone was beating you with a stick and saying, ‘Your business is rejoicing, your business is rejoicing.’”

INFLUENCES

Because of his isolation from the West, Shostakovich’s influence on the wider world of Classical music has been minimal. However, his influence on Russian composers, particularly Sofia Gubaidulina, Galina Ustvolskaya, and Alfred Schnittke, has been immense.

The famous Russian violinist Maxim Vengerov (below, left) performs Shostakovich’s Piano Trio No. 2 at the Barbican Theatre in London.
Shostakovich’s second opera was based on a brutal tale about a woman who murders her father-in-law and husband. He composed a brilliant score mingling tragedy, comedy, and satire. The seamless, symphonic texture incorporates tension-building orchestral interludes between scenes, inspired perhaps by Berg’s Wozzeck. The erotic scenes shocked Prokofiev and the author of “Muddle Instead of Music” (in Pravda) who complained that “...love” is smeared all over the opera in the most ‘vulgar’ manner.

ACT ONE Katerina is bored in her marriage to Zinovy. The new labourer, Sergei, arrives, tries to molest the cook, Aksinka, and is wrestled to the ground by the outraged Katerina. However, by the end of the act Sergei and Katerina become lovers.

ACT TWO Katerina’s father-in-law catches Sergei leaving Katerina’s room and thrashes him. He orders Katerina to make a meal for him, which she poisons. Later Zinovy returns and is beaten to death by Katerina and Sergei.

ACT THREE Katerina and Sergei are about to marry. An old peasant finds Zinovy’s corpse and runs off to tell the police. At the wedding reception the police arrive and the couple give themselves up.

ACT FOUR Katerina and Sergei are now convicts in Siberia. Sergei rejects Katerina and makes advances to Sonyetka. At the end, the infuriated Katerina throws Sonyetka and herself into the river.

**SYMPHONY NO. 10 IN E MINOR, OP. 95**

This symphony was written in 1953, the year of Stalin’s death. Some see its second movement as a menacing portrayal of one of Stalin’s military parades. As is so often the case with Shostakovich, the work’s apparently triumphal ending is deceptive.

**FIRST MOVEMENT (MODERATO, 22:00)** This immense sonata-form movement has a dark, uncertain first subject, and an anxious, wavering second subject like a distorted waltz.

**SECOND MOVEMENT (ALLEGRO, 4:00)** The ruthlessly aggressive scherzo is played at breakneck speed.

**THIRD MOVEMENT (ALLEGRETTO, 11:00)** In the first part a forthright woodwind theme is framed by a quiet, enigmatic theme...
In 1960 Shostakovich witnessed the devastation wrought on Dresden by the Allies during World War II, and in a mere three days wrote this piece.

**FIRST MOVEMENT** (LARGO, 5:00) This begins with Shostakovich’s personal musical “cipher”, DSCH (the notes D, E flat, C, and B) in the cello, which slowly ascends through the parts in a canon. The bleak mood is sustained by a quotation of the first symphony.

**SECOND MOVEMENT** (ALLEGRO MOLTO, 2:00) This scherzo has a driving rhythm taken from the fifth symphony combined with DSCH in a canon. This builds to a climax in which the Jewish theme from Shostakovich’s Piano Trio is played fortissimo.

**THIRD MOVEMENT** (ALLEGRETTO, 4:00) A varied reprise of the previous movement, refracted through the rhythm of a diabolical waltz.

**FOURTH MOVEMENT** (LARGO, 5:00) A high note on the first violin is accompanied by three terrifying chords followed by various themes from the Cello Concerto, Symphonies Nos. 10 and 11, DSCH, the revolutionary song “Tormented by grievous bondage”, and _Lady Macbeth._

**FIFTH MOVEMENT** (LARGO, 3:0) This reprise of the opening fugue combines with a new lullaby-like countersubject, which descends to C minor and the DSCH motive.

Yevgeny Mravinsky unveiled the Symphony No. 10 with the Leningrad Philharmonic Orchestra.

Allegro bursts into life with a cheekily trivial theme. But the cheeriness is constantly undercut by memories of the Andante opening, and of Shostakovich’s cipher, which entwines in majestic counterpoint with the main theme at the end.
Sofia Gubaidulina

1931–

Russian

4.120

With a Tatar father and Russian mother, Gubaidulina mixes East and West in her deep, spiritual music. It found disfavour at times during the Soviet era, when she made a living from film scores. In 1990, however, she was invited onto the State prize-awarding committee and has received numerous prizes herself. Her affecting, mystic music mixes unusual textures and instruments in techniques ranging from microtones to mathematically generated rhythmic structures. Her violin concerto *Offertorium* helped establish her in the West.

**MILESTONES**

1961 Graduates from Moscow Conservatory
1978 Composes *De profundis* for accordion
1980 Composes *Offertorium*, violin concerto made famous by Gidon Kremer
1982 *Seven Last Words* for cello, bayan, strings
1990 Moves to village outside Hamburg
2000 Writes *The Passion According to St John*

The Kronos Quartet, renowned for its love of the new, commissions work from Gubaidulina.

Rodion Shchedrin

1932–

Russian

4.110

A virtuoso pianist, Shchedrin became professor of composition at the Moscow Conservatory in 1964 and stayed in official favour in the USSR, despite his refusal to endorse the Czech Invasion in 1968. Since 1990 he has received many commissions and spends a lot of time in Germany. His compositions mix cultured music references with humour in styles from jazz to folk music and atonality. He has impeccable academic credentials, but his music (such as his ballet *Carmen Suite*) also enjoys popular appeal, both within Russia and increasingly outside. He has recorded his own vibrant, witty piano music, including five concertos and the 1972 *Polyphonic Notebook*. His output also includes ballets and operas, as well as orchestral, choral, and chamber works, and even a Japanese musical.

**MILESTONES**

1967 Composes *Carmen Suite*, after Bizet
1969 Turns freelance
1970 Writes *24 Preludes and Fugues*, piano
1973 Succeeds Shostakovich as president of Composers’ Union of USSR
1999 Composes Piano Concerto No. 5

Shchedrin is married to ballerina Maya Plisetskaya, for whom he created the ballet *Carmen Suite*, an affectionately joking tribute to Bizet’s opera.
Alfred Schnittke

Alfred Schnittke is easily the best-known Russian composer since Shostakovich. He achieved that eminence through the shocking emotional rawness of his music, which to some people is the authentic voice of modern spiritual deracination. However, his critics say that this bleakness is only a reflection of the conditions peculiar to Soviet Russia, and that his hyper-intensity veers close to musical chaos.

LIFE AND MUSIC

Schnittke grew up – and lived – torn between different cultural roots: Russian, Jewish, and Austro-German. He also had to live with the Soviet hostility to anything that smacked of experimentation. The result is a music of spiritual torment that veers between Mahlerian irony and the bleakness of late Shostakovich. However, Schnittke goes much further than these, creating tension from the coexistence within single pieces of many stylistic references, a technique he dubbed “polystylism”. In his music, as exemplified in his Concerto Grosso No. 1, a phrase of Mozartian sweetness can turn into a dissonant scream and a Vivaldi concerto Allegro can become a danse macabre.

MILESTONES

1953 Enters Moscow Conservatory
1958 Union of Composers condemns his oratorio Nagasaki
1962 Begins successful career as freelance composer for film and theatre
1974 Composers’ Union chief condemns his emblematic Symphony No. 1
1977 Writes Concerto Grosso No. 1
1990 Moves permanently to Hamburg

Schnittke’s Requiem of 1975 expressed spiritual deracination at its most extreme. The fall of communism has allowed his music to be more widely heard in Russia.

KEY WORKS

CONCERTO GROSSO NO. 1

Like many of Schnittke’s works, this piece reworks material from a film score. He achieves an alienating effect by sampling Baroque music, by mixing micro-intervals and chromaticism, and by quoting “banal popular music which enters as if from the outside with a disruptive effect”.

SYMPHONY NO. 1

One of Schnittke’s most extreme works, his first symphony exemplifies, as he once said, all the ingredients of his life’s music. It begins with the players arriving one by one and improvising chaotically until a signal from the conductor brings silence. Towards the end they leave, only to return and begin the work all over again.

VIOLA CONCERTO

Written for the Russian violist Yuri Bashmet, this piece has a moment which starkly illustrates Schnittke’s way of making familiar things seem strange. The violist launches a conventional-sounding phrase, which mounts higher and higher until it becomes a deranged scream.
Weill is one of few composers to make the transition successfully from modernist art music to the Broadway stage. With Bertold Brecht, he developed a sophisticated form of political theatre that satirized contemporary life and incorporated popular music. After emigrating to the US, he adapted these ideas to the stage, writing several hit works and having a huge influence on the development of the musical.

During his early career in Weimar Germany, Weill embraced the neue Sachlichkeit (new objectivity) of Paul Hindemith and Ernst Krenek – music of cool modernism, consciously detached from the “excesses” of the Romantic era. Weill’s interests became increasingly political, and he began a collaboration with left-wing playwright Bertold Brecht that revolutionized music theatre by openly satirizing the establishment. After condemnation by the Nazis in 1935, he emigrated to the US and turned to composing for Broadway. His style, always deliberately referential and incorporating elements of popular music and jazz, proved ideally suited to this new medium.

**KEY WORKS**

**CONCERTO FOR VIOLIN AND WIND ORCHESTRA**

As well as stage works, Weill also wrote instrumental music, including two symphonies, and this violin concerto, composed in 1924 in the neue Sachlichkeit style. The influence of Stravinsky can be heard, particularly in the wind scoring.

**THE THREEPENNY OPERA**

Based loosely on John Gay’s Beggar’s Opera of 1728, The Threepenny Opera was Weill’s first collaboration with Brecht on a piece for the stage, and remains Weill’s best-known work. Brecht’s sardonic libretto is a damning critique of capitalism, depicting a world of beggars, prostitutes, thieves, and corrupt officials, where money and personal gain are all-important. “Mack the Knife”, perhaps Weill’s most famous song, is from this opera.
The premiere of this full-length opera, based on a radio Singspiel that was Weill’s first collaboration with Brecht, was delayed for a year, owing to both the publisher’s misgivings about the frank sexual references, and the hostile reception of other new satirical operas, such as Hindemith’s *Neues von Tage*.

Mahagonny is a biting satire on capitalist society. It tells the story of three escaped convicts, who, stranded in the US during the gold rush, decide to establish a city, Mahagonny, devoted to the hedonistic pleasures of drink, women, and gambling. Business booms and so do prices. Jim, a gold prospector, is unable to pay his debts and is executed by electric chair when his prostitute girlfriend refuses to assist. The people demonstrate, while the city collapses in flames.

Musically, *Mahagonny* is a curious blend of abrasive Neo-Classicism in the mould of Hindemith, pastiche of grand opera, and popular jazz and cabaret. By juxtaposing these styles, Weill adds bite to the satirical libretto.

After success with stage musicals, Weill began to harbour a desire to write what he called an “American opera”. This would be in the mould of a verismo opera, with most of the dialogue sung rather than acted, but still based on the musical virtues of Broadway.

The story Weill chose was *Street Scene*, a Pulitzer Prize-winning play by Elmer Rice. Set over 24 hours in a run-down New York tenement, it tells of a tragic murder among the immigrant community. A bullying husband catches his wife in flagrante with her lover, shoots them both dead, and, after briefly escaping, is caught.

The musical styles are diverse, from Anna’s touching aria “Still I could never believe”, reminiscent of Puccini, to the pure 1940s jive of “Moon-faced, starry-eyed”, and all manner of blues and jazz in between. Although this multiplicity of reference has led some critics to question whether Weill’s vision of an American opera was truly fulfilled, *Street Scene* is certainly immaculately crafted and enjoyable to see in production.
Olivier Messiaen

1908–1992 French 74

Olivier Messiaen is one of the most paradoxical figures in music. A great radical of the 20th century, on a par with Debussy or John Cage, he was also a deeply traditional figure, serenely convinced of the truths of the Catholic faith. Messiaen saw no contradiction between these attitudes. He felt he had to develop his radically new language in order to give his fervently held beliefs the most vivid expression.

LIFE AND MUSIC

Messiaen’s early influences were Wagner, Debussy, and Mussorgsky, and later, while at the Paris Conservatoire, Christian chant and folk music. His early piece “Le banquet céleste” already has the essential elements of Messiaen: it was scored for his own instrument, the organ; it has a Catholic subject; and it seems to bring time to a halt, through its incredibly slow tempo. Over the next 64 years Messiaen invented many other ways of loosening the grip of measured time on music, to give a foretaste of the eternity of heaven. Among these were rhythmic modes learned from ancient Indian sources, the use of patterned, repetitive forms, and imitation of birdsong.

KEY WORKS

TURANGALÎLA SYMPHONY

Orchestral 70:00 10

One of a cycle of three pieces based on the Tristan legend and its theme of boundless love, this piece includes a prominent part for ondes martenot, whose tremulous, swooping melodiousness is an essential ingredient of its fascination. The ten movements alternate passionate love-music with austere rhythmic games.

ST FRANÇOIS D’ASSISE

Opera 180:00 3

Messiaen spent nearly a decade writing this, his longest work and only opera. It’s an ambitious piece, uniting the “old” Messiaen of long, ecstatic melody and the “new” Messiaen of fast, glittering birdsong. It avoids drama in the normal sense and includes blocks of almost static sound. The characters involved are all monks, apart from the Angel and the Leper, and the aim is to show “the progress of grace in St Francis’s soul”.

MILESTONES

1923 Enters Paris Conservatoire
1931 Becomes organist at La Trinité
1932 Marries violinist Claire Delbos
1936 Founds “La Jeune France” (with others) in opposition to Neo-Classicism
1940 Interned in a prisoner-of-war camp in Poland
1942 Begins teaching at Conservatoire
1949 Turangalîla Symphony produced
1951 Begins systematic study of birdsong
1956 Composes Réveil des Oiseaux
1961 Marries Yvonne Loriod
1965 Begins work on La transfiguration de notre seigneur Jésus-Christ, choral
1978 Retires from teaching
1984 Premiere of St François d’Assise, opera
Messiaen composed this quartet for violin, cello, clarinet, and piano while being held in a German prisoner-of-war camp in Silesia in Poland during World War II. The premiere took place one freezing night, on a piano with faulty keys and a cello with only three strings. Years later, Messiaen said, “Never have I been listened to with such concentration and understanding.” The piece is full of Messiaen’s apocalyptic imagery of angels, rainbows, and birds (for Messiaen, birds were God’s true musicians). The opening “Liturgie de cristal” has repeating harmonic and rhythmic cycles of different lengths for cello and piano, outlining a pattern that, if completed, would take aeons to come back to its starting point (an image of the “end of time”). Later, there is a gentle monody, “Abyss of birds”; a savage “Dance of fury for the seven trumpets”; and finally an ecstatic “Louange à l’immortalité de Jésus” (“Praise to the Immortality of Jesus”).

A vast, tumultuous cycle of pieces for two pianos, first performed in 1943 by Messiaen and his wife-to-be, Yvonne Loriod, whose amazing virtuosity inspired the piece. It began a new era in Messiaen’s creative life in which the piano became central. The titles “Amen of Creation” and “Amen of the Agony of Jesus” give a flavour of the apocalyptic imagery of the piece.

This immense orchestral piece was described by Messiaen as “an ascending from the canyons to the stars – and higher still, to the resurrected in Paradise – in order to glorify God in his creation... a work of sound-colour, where all the colours of the rainbow rotate around the blue of the Stellar’s Jay and the red of Bryce Canyon.” The work is scored for a late-Messiaen orchestra, designed to produce his favourite effect of “dazzlement” – serried ranks of brass, woodwind, and exotic percussion, a solo piano, and only a modest complement of strings.
“I like to think of composing as a physical business. I compose at the piano and like to feel involved in my work with my hands.”

MICHAEL TIPPETT
Michael Tippett

1905–1998  British  73

Tippett is the only rival to Benjamin Britten for the title of Britain’s most significant composer since World War II, though he has only recently found a place in the hearts of music-lovers. In his determination to articulate an all-embracing world-view in his music, he is almost unique; the only comparable figure is the Catholic composer Olivier Messiaen. But unlike Messiaen, Tippett had to work out his own salvation.

LIFE

The two important factors in Tippett’s childhood were his rural surroundings (he spent almost his whole life in the English countryside) and his freethinking parents, who gave him a stubborn independence of mind. He was slow to develop, spending five years at London’s Royal College of Music, returning for a further two years from 1928–1930. During the 30s he taught French to earn a living, and composed on the side. His socialist sympathies led him to found the South London Orchestra, composed of unemployed musicians. But in the mid-1930s he withdrew from politics, and after a personal crisis following the break-up of his first serious gay relationship, he began an intense engagement with Jungian analysis. By the late-1930s he’d formed his deeply spiritual and yet agnostic beliefs. For him life was a never-ending process of uncovering the dark and light aspects of the personality, and reconciling them into wholeness. From *A Child of our Time* onwards, all his art was dedicated to articulating this world view. In the 1960s and 70s his delighted discovery of America and its music brought on an Indian summer of creativity. In his old age he gained the reputation of a sage, particularly among a new, young audience.

MUSICAL OUTPUT

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Many of Tippett’s works explore a world illuminated by Jungian theories of psychology.
Tippett once declared that in an age of “shattered dreams” it was the duty of an artist to create images of “generous, abounding beauty”. He achieved this many times, but not without an immense struggle, first to work out a world view, and then to forge a personal musical language. At first this language took the form of a rich, very English Romanticism with a folk-like flavour.

In the early 1960s, Tippett’s music underwent a dramatic change. The new style consisted of accumulations of short, contrasted fragments and used a much more astringent harmonic language. But the urge to ecstasy and transcendence was still there. The works of the 1980s and 1990s incorporated American pop influences into his earlier styles. The results were exuberant, if not always coherent.

**SYMPHONY NO. 3**

This is a bleak, questioning piece, cast in four sections. In the finale Tippett parodies the vision of universal brotherhood expressed in Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9, setting it off against the blues. The soprano sings Tippett’s own text, which embraces both humanism and the horrors of Auschwitz, and at the end offers a small ray of hope (“What though the dream crack, we shall remake it”).

**CONCERTO FOR DOUBLE STRING ORCHESTRA**

Tippett’s first undoubted masterpiece, this concerto belongs to the tradition of English string music established by Elgar, Vaughan Williams, and Britten. Further English traits are the “sprung” rhythms of the first movement, and the use of the folk song “Ca’ the Yowes”.

**KING PRIAM**

The theatre director Peter Brook advised Tippett to base his second opera on a public myth, avoiding the private mythology of *The Midsummer Marriage*. It marked a startling new departure in Tippett’s style. The music is made of short, hard-edged, contrasting blocks – a “mosaic of musical gestures”, as Tippett put it.
ACT THREE  

King Fisher’s attempts to manipulate his daughter and Bella fail. Jack and Bella go off happily together. King Fisher tries to unveil the mysterious soothsayer Sosostris, but this causes his death. Mark and Jenifer reappear and are engulfed in the flames of an ecstatic ritual fire dance. Dawn then rises and they can celebrate their union.

A CHILD OF OUR TIME  

This piece established Tippett’s reputation at the age of 39. It was prompted by the shooting of a German official by a Polish Jewish agitator in 1938, which became the pretext for a pogrom. In Tippett’s piece this event becomes a symbol for the oppression of the individual by dark collective forces. But the libretto suggests that these forces are in fact our own faults, projected onto other groups, who are then perceived as hostile. Tippett followed the advice of T S Eliot to write his own libretto, a practice he always followed thereafter. The piece is a kind of modern Passion along the lines of J S Bach’s St Matthew Passion, with the Lutheran chorales replaced by Negro spirituals. The closing ensemble sums up Tippett’s philosophy: “I would know my shadow and my light, So shall I at last be whole.”

**PART THREE**

1. Chorus: Largo, poco lento;
   Triple time

2. Alto solo; Allegro;
   Quadruple time

   Quadruple time

4. Praeludium

5. A spiritual: “Deep river”;
   Quadruple time;
   B minor

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Chorus enters: “The soul deepens”
Fugato, begun by sopranns
Alto enters: “The soul of Man”
Trombone
Chorus: “Is the man of destiny master of us all?”
Tenor solo
Chorus: “I would know my shadow and my light”
Soloists punctuate the chorus
“It is cruel, you know, that music should be so beautiful. It has the beauty of loneliness and of pain… The beauty of disappointment and never-satisfied love.”

BENJAMIN BRITTEN
Benjamin Britten

1913–1976

British

Benjamin Britten is the only British composer since Elgar to have achieved worldwide renown. He single-handedly created a school of British opera, and left a large body of instrumental and vocal music which gives fresh new life to the familiar forms and harmonies of Western music. By the 1950s he had become a national institution, and today his popularity and musical influence seem more secure than ever.

LIFE

A precociously gifted child, Britten began several years of study with Frank Bridge at the age of 11. They proved to be far more fruitful than his later years at the Royal College of Music. His plans to study in Vienna with Alban Berg were quashed on the grounds that Berg would be a bad influence, but in 1935 Britten found an equally bad influence at home, in the shape of the poet W H Auden. He collaborated with Auden on films for the GPO film unit, and on several mordant satires, including Our Hunting Fathers. In 1939 he met the love of his life, the tenor Peter Pears. They set up home in 1945 in the Suffolk coastal village of Aldeburgh, where Britten would remain for the rest of his life. Many of Britten’s greatest roles were created for Pears, including the lead in Peter Grimes, which reopened Sadler’s Wells Opera in 1945. From 1947 the newly formed English Opera Group would be the centre of Britten’s operatic endeavours, though there were big commissions from Covent Garden (Billy Budd, Gloriana), BBC television (Owen Wingrave) and, most prestigious of all, the Anglican Church (the War Requiem, written for the reopening of Coventry Cathedral). His last decade was clouded by ill-health, though his very last works are among his greatest.

MUSICAL OUTPUT

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Born in Lowestoft, Britten was inspired by his native county of Suffolk, where he also began the institution of the Aldeburgh Festival at the Snape Maltings.
The numerous works of Britten’s childhood reveal one of the great prodigies of all time, with an amazing variety of styles ranging from Viennese Expressionism to modal lyricism. The stylistic uncertainty persisted into his 20s, though certain traits emerged that would be lifelong. There’s a fondness for parody and stark funereal tragedy akin to Mahler, and a debt to the clear, clean textures of Stravinsky’s Neo-Classicism. In Peter Grimes, all these things come together in a brilliant, miraculous synthesis. By this date nearly all of Britten’s vocabulary was in place, the only major additions being the sound-world of Balinese music, as revealed in the ballet The Prince of the Pagodas, and in the 1960s a Japanese spareness and economy, expressed most directly in the Three Church Parables. These opened the final phase in Britten’s music, in which he refined his style to its essence.

**MILESTONES**

1924 Meets adventurous composer Frank Bridge, who becomes his mentor
1930 Enters Royal College of Music, London
1935 Meets W H Auden
1939 Leaves wartime England for the US with tenor Peter Pears
1942 Reading Suffolk poet George Crabbe, especially “The Borough” brings on Britten’s decision to return home
1945 7 June premiere of Peter Grimes, Op. 33, makes Britten world famous
1948 Aldeburgh Festival founded: this soon becomes the centre of Britten’s musical life
1951 Premiere of Billy Budd, Op. 50, at Covent Garden
1962 Premiere of War Requiem, Op. 66
1964 Premiere of church parable Curlew River, Op. 71, the first of his late, lean works
1973 Premiere of Britten’s last opera, Death in Venice, Op 88, with Pears in main role of Aschenbach

**KEY WORKS**

**SERENADE FOR TENOR, HORN, AND STRINGS, OP. 31**

**ORCHESTRAL**

25:00  
8  

Of Britten’s five song cycles for voice and instruments, this is probably the greatest. It consists of six songs in a predominantly meditative or nocturnal mood, framed by a prologue and epilogue for solo horn.

**BILLY BUDD, OP. 50**

**OPERA**

150:00  
4  

This is one of Britten’s most profound explorations of his favourite theme; the helplessness of innocence and goodness in the face of evil. It contains some of Britten’s most gripping inventions, including the desperately sad chorus of seamen and Billy’s lullaby sung the night before his execution – a perfect example of Britten’s ability to plumb emotional depths with the most hackneyed materials.

**YOUNG PERSON’S GUIDE TO THE ORCHESTRA, OP. 34**

**ORCHESTRAL**

16:00  
1  

One of Britten’s most irresistibly ebullient works, this piece leads the listener through each section of the orchestra. It ends with a brilliant fugue, out of which the theme majestically emerges.

Benjamin Britten’s opera for children Let’s Make an Opera! in rehearsal at Aldeburgh in Suffolk, the composer’s home town.
Britten’s first opera has an anti-hero: Peter Grimes, an outcast from the Borough, a fishing village not unlike the Aldeburgh Britten had recently settled in. He’s a sadistic bully, who wants to get rich and marry; but in Britten’s opera he also has a poetic side. The wonderful orchestral interludes (known as the Four Sea Interludes) may have been suggested by Alban Berg’s opera Wozzeck, while the saucy tavern music shows the influence of Gershwin’s Porgy and Bess.

PROLOGUE AND ACT ONE The opening courtroom scene shows Britten’s gift for comedy (later expressed more fully in Albert Herring). The following scene where Grimes recruits a new apprentice is a brilliant portrayal of village small-mindedness.

ACT TWO Grimes’s mistreatment of the boy becomes clear in Scene 1, and in Scene 2 the boy falls to his death (notice this appearance, early in Britten’s career, of the theme of innocence abused). In the intervening interlude comes Britten’s brilliant reinvention of an old form, the passacaglia.

ACT THREE After a jolly dancing scene with a brilliant evocation of rustic bands, a posse is organised to hunt for Grimes. But his suicide (set to music which is brilliantly understated for some, and a disappointment to others) thwarts their revenge.

TURN OF THE SCREW, OP. 54

As in Peter Grimes, the theme is innocence corrupted, but there is an extra twist: is the boy Miles willing to be corrupted by the ghost of the evil Quint? And is the Governess, who wants to protect him, herself corrupted? With his small chamber orchestra, Britten invents a fascinating sound-world that takes familiar symbols of innocence – the high tinkly sound of the celesta, children’s voices, simple folk songs – and gives them a subtle twist that makes them appear sinister.

ACT ONE (53:00) The Governess’s arrival at the house to look after Miles and his sister Flora starts well, but soon the ghosts of the dead Quint and Miss Jessel appear, and the Governess is horrified to discover that the children are unafraid of them. The act climaxes in a sensuously uncanny duet between Jessel and Quint, one of the great moments in Britten’s operas.

ACT TWO (50:00) The Governess challenges the children to reveal their knowledge, but is rebuffed. At the end she wrests Miles away from Quint’s evil influence, but he dies, and the opera ends with her heartbroken rendition of Miles’s song “Malo”.

INFLUENCES

Britten’s influence has been most marked in Britain, where his interest in arranging Early Music and folk song has been as important as his own music. However, he is revered by composers who share his concern for reinvigorating simple tonal devices, and even younger composers who are less respectful cannot entirely escape his influence.
Yrjö Kilpinen

1892–1959  Finnish  c.750

Kilpinen was almost exclusively a composer of songs, writing over 700, but only half were published. After training in Helsinki, he travelled throughout Scandinavia and central Europe, and, in the 1930s, he was particularly popular in Nazi Germany, where he was seen as a Lieder composer in the tradition of Schubert or Wolf. However, his austere and bare style was neither modernist nor Romantic. Many of the poems he set were Finnish or Swedish, although he wrote 75 songs to German texts by Morgenstern.

MILESTONES

1920  Writes Leino songs; reputation grows
1922  Concentrates on Swedish poets
1923  First concerts of his works, Helsinki
1928  Composes Tunturilauluja; Writes Lieder der Liebe, Lieder um den Tod
1954  Hochgebirgswinter published
1955  Starts Savonlinna Music Days

Elisabeth Lutyens

1906–1983  English  190

Daughter of the architect Sir Edwin, Lutyens had a turbulent personal and professional life. She was a radical innovator and wrote uncompromisingly modern expressionist works, but also had to produce film and radio music to support her four children. Notorious for her dismissal of English pastoral music (such as that of Vaughan Williams) as “the cowpat school”, she often felt isolated and met with incomprehension from the music establishment, whose recognition of her consistent achievement came late.

MILESTONES

1940  Composes Chamber Concerto No. 1
1952  Writes String Quartet No. 6
1957  De amore, cantata, produced
1972  Time Off? Not a Ghost of a Chance!, opera, performed

Elizabeth Maconchy

1907–1994  English  c.200

The only musician in her family, Maconchy studied at Prague Conservatory and was influenced by the urgent energy of Janáček and Bartók. Her suite The Land triumphed in a London Proms concert and launched a highly successful composing career, briefly interrupted by tuberculosis. Though a placid person, her music can be immensely passionate. Her ten string quartets – rhythmic and profoundly argued works – are a major achievement. She also wrote effective music for amateurs and children.

MILESTONES

1930  The Land, suite, performed
1933  Composes String Quartet No. 1
1957  Writes The Sofa, first of three operas
1981  My Dark Heart, song cycle, performed
1984  Composes String Quartet No. 13

Gian Carlo Menotti

1911–  American  70

Born and brought up in Italy, where he wrote two operas before entering the Milan Conservatory at 13, Menotti settled in the US, becoming a versatile director, librettist, and composer of stage works. He has directed many film versions of his works, whose popular success is due to their light and open orchestral textures and memorable melodies. His TV opera Amahl and the Night Visitors has been broadcast annually since 1951.

MILESTONES

1946  Writes The Telephone, one-act opera
1950  The Consul, first full-length opera
1951  Amahl and the Night Visitors, first opera for TV, broadcast
1958  Founds Festival of Two Worlds, Italy
1976  Composes The Halcyon, symphony
1986  Goya, opera, performed
MODERN MUSIC – EUROPE

Roberto Gerhard

1896–1970    Spanish    130

From a multicultural European background, Gerhard considered himself firmly Catalan, but settled in England to escape the Spanish Civil War. His music combines Spanish nationalism with modernism (he studied with both Pedrell and Schoenberg), and he wrote everything from innovative TV and radio incidental music to pioneering works for tape. All his work has imaginative genius and colour – his Symphony No. 3 reflects the feeling of a transatlantic flight. After a precarious career, serious recognition eventually came in the 1960s, and his music was widely performed.

MILESTONES

1915  Teaches music in Barcelona
1939  Settles in Cambridge, England
1941  *Don Quixote*, ballet, performed
1947  Writes *The Duenna*, opera
1952  Composes Symphony No. 1
1959  *Lament on the Death of a Bullfighter*, speaker and tape

In Barcelona, Gerhard studied piano with Granados and composition with Carlos Pedrell who aroused his interest in Catalan folk music.

Henri Dutilleux

1916–     French    46

Henri Dutilleux, one of France’s most distinguished post-war composers, has led a quiet, reclusive life away from the public eye. Since he retired as head of music commissions at French Radio in 1963 he has focused all his energies on composition. His works have the typical French virtues of a subtle and sensuous palette of instrumental colour and an ornamented form of melody. They are like a series of subtle half-hints, where nothing is ever stated definitively – no sooner does a melodic or harmonic shape emerge than it is transformed into something new. Even though he has an international reputation, his ruthless self-criticism means that his work list has remained relatively small.

MILESTONES

1933  Studies at the Paris Conservatoire
1938  Wins Prix de Rome with cantata, *L’anneau du roi*
1942  Conducts choir at the Paris Opéra
1946  Composes Piano Sonata, Op. 1
1951  Symphony No. 1 premiered
1985  Premiere of *L’arbre des songes*, concerto

After a year’s service as a stretcher-bearer in the French Army, Dutilleux returned to Paris in 1940 to work as a pianist, arranger, and teacher.
Robert Simpson

1921–1997  English  65

As a writer and broadcaster, Simpson related complex ideas in an accessible way. He did the same with his music, especially his 11 symphonies and 16 string quartets, whose feel of cosmic energy released from small, nuclear reactions reflects his passion for astronomy. He wrote significant books on Bruckner and Nielsen, and worked for the BBC Music Division for 30 years before resigning to compose more. His music is tonal and rigorously structured, makes great use of dissonance, and is noted for its power, energy, and drive.

**MILESTONES**

1951  Completes Symphony No. 1
1952  Composes String Quartet No. 1
1965  Second book on Danish composer Carl Nielsen published
1986  Moves to live in Ireland
1989  Composes Vortex for brass band
1991  Composes Symphony No. 11

George Lloyd

1913–1998  English  55

After modest, early success with his lyrical, traditionally tuneful music – and a period of less popularity in rural Dorset as a market gardener, composing in his spare time – Lloyd’s heyday came in the last 20 years of his life. A 1977 broadcast of his Symphony No. 8 re-established his reputation and many listeners disaffected by modernism eagerly discovered his music on CD. His substantial output includes 12 symphonies, four piano concertos, two violin concertos and three operas.

**MILESTONES**

1932  Composes Symphony No. 1
1938  Covent Garden stages The Serf, opera
1963  Composes Piano Concerto No. 1
1965  Composes Symphony No. 8
1998  Composes Cello Concerto

Einojuhani Rautavaara

1928–  Finnish  220

Rautavaara has found popularity with sombre, beautiful, and imaginative orchestral pieces such as Cantus arcticus (for taped bird-song and orchestra), the mystical Symphony No. 7 “Angel of Light” and his lyrical Piano Concerto No. 3. His Serenades of the Unicorn for guitar uses a teaspoon to suggest giggling nymphs, while his eerie Symphony No. 6 (based on his opera Vincent) portrays van Gogh’s troubled mind with a synthesizer.

**MILESTONES**

1952  Writes Pelimannit (Fiddlers) for piano
1972  Composes Cantus arcticus
1976  Begins 14 years as professor at Sibelius Academy in Helsinki
1987  Completes Vincent, opera
1994  Composes Symphony No. 7
1999  Composes Piano Concerto No. 3

Malcolm Arnold

1921–  English  265

For 20 years, the gregarious Arnold composed direct, melodic, and colourful music with astonishing energy, including over 100 film scores (his Oscar-winning music for Bridge on The River Kwai being written in just ten days in 1957), plus extraordinary amounts of lively concert music – his 20-odd concertos were written for friends such as Dennis Brain, Julian Bream, and Yehudi Menuhin. The strain told, however, with descent into drink and depression, and his story is told in nine wide-ranging symphonies that span his creative life.

**MILESTONES**

1953  Composes Symphony No. 2
1956  Writes A Grand, Grand Overture, vacuum cleaners, floor polisher, and orchestra
1959  Composes Guitar Concerto
1973  Composes Symphony No. 7
Krzysztof Penderecki

1933– Polish

At a time when avant garde experimental music mainly avoided emotion, the harrowing directness of *Threnody to the Victims of Hiroshima* – scored for 52 strings and using innovative notation and a shocking range of sounds – made Penderecki’s name. (The original title was 8’ 37’; the Hiroshima connection came after he first heard it played.) His *St Luke Passion* resulted in invitations to work abroad and regular commissions. In the mid-1970s, his radical language softened and became more lyrical (his Symphony No. 3 of 1995 is mainly traditional-sounding) but the passion and anger at human injustice remains. His oratorios, in particular, reflect the struggle between Church and State in 1980s Poland.

**MILESTONES**

- 1959: Wins the top three prizes in Warsaw composing competition
- 1960: Composes *Threnody to the Victims of Hiroshima* for 52 strings
- 1966: Composes *St Luke Passion*
- 1972: Becomes rector at Kraków Academy
- 1980: Writes *Lacrimosa*, choral, for Solidarity

Often conducting his own music, Penderecki was one of the pioneers of microtones and the use of whistles, hissing, shouting, and mechanical noise in music.

Hans Werner Henze

1926– German

Henze escaped from a pro-Nazi family upbringing into music. He gained a wide stylistic knowledge and soon found himself in demand to write for musical theatre. From 1950–53 he was music director of Wiesbaden Ballet, but then moved to Italy. After 1968, disillusioned with European capitalist society, he spent some time in Cuba and began writing works reflecting his socialist ideals. He has since become a major international composer, with a prolific output of operas, choral, and large and small instrumental works, in complex but expressive style.

**MILESTONES**

- 1958: Writes *Kammermusik*, tenor and guitar
- 1964: Composes *Der junge Lord*, opera
- 1993: Composes Symphony No. 8

John Rutter

1945– English

Known throughout Britain and the US for his lively choral pieces – easily sung, memorable and written with great craft, drawing from the English tradition of partsong – Rutter is probably the most widely performed British composer of his generation. His *Shepherd’s Pipe Carol* and *Star Carol* are regular features of amateur and professional Christmas concerts. His three volumes of *Carols for Choirs*, as editor with Sir David Willcocks, have made his work familiar to many singers and listeners. Usually joyful, with an interest in writing for young people, he can also be sombre, as in his *Requiem* and *Te Deum*.

**MILESTONES**

- 1974: Writes *Gloria* for chorus and orchestra
- 1979: Founds Cambridge Singers
- 1981: Performing edition of Fauré *Requiem*
- 1988: Writes *Te Deum*, choral work
- 1990: Writes *Requiem*, choral work
The artistry of violinist Anne-Sophie Mutter inspired many of Lutoslawski later pieces. Lutoslawski lived in difficult times. His early works had to please the communist authorities and were largely inspired by Polish folk music. Later he was able to experiment publicly, expanding his harmony and incorporating passages in which performers were given some degree of rhythmic autonomy. In his last period, he strove to incorporate both worlds in his music, blending modernism with nostalgia.

**LIFE AND MUSIC**

Lutoslawski’s early years were darkened by the death of his father in Russia (where he had fought the Bolsheviks) and the loss of the family estate. Despite privations, he studied violin and piano, and entered the Warsaw Conservatory in 1927. By 1938 his music had been championed by Poland’s leading conductor, Grzegorz Fitelberg, but World War II brought mobilization and capture by the Germans. Lutoslawski escaped and returned to Warsaw, where he survived by playing dance music and piano duets with fellow composer Andrzej Panufnik. In later life, Lutoslawski became Poland’s pre-eminent composer, honoured both for his music and his political integrity during the struggles against communism. His work was greatly influential both in his homeland and internationally.

**MILESTONES**

1918 Father and uncle executed as “counterrevolutionaries”
1927 Enters the Warsaw Conservatory, later studies with Maliszewski
1939 Symphonic Variations broadcast by Polish radio; mobilized
1940 Escapes enemy capture; returns to Warsaw; forms piano duo with Panufnik
1949 Symphony No. 1 denounced by the communist authorities
1954 Success of Concerto for Orchestra
1958 Musique funèbre and Jeux vénitiens win international acclaim.
1994 Awarded Poland’s rare Order of the White Eagle weeks before his death

**KEY WORKS**

**LES ESPACES DU SOMMEIL**

Some of Lutoslawski’s most sensuously beautiful music was inspired by the French poetry of Robert Desnos. This sensitive vocal work, written for the acclaimed baritone Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, evokes the mysterious world of sleep. The night is full of half-understood, hallucinatory images, but always “there is also you” – the beloved woman who haunts the poet’s dreams.

The artistry of violinist Anne-Sophie Mutter inspired many of Lutoslawski later pieces.

**MI-PARTI**

A compact work of great lucidity and visceral excitement, Mi-Parti moves from dreaming hesitancy towards a climactic tumult, peaking on a sforzando chord. The music then settles on a distant “icy” harmony, before melting away into a meditative coda. In archetypal Lutoslawskian fashion, the piece alternates strictly conducted passages with ad libitum sections in which individual players repeat melodic motifs in free time.
Iannis Xenakis

1922–2001
Greek

World War II disrupted Xenakis's education; he fought for the Greek resistance, fled a death sentence, and ended up penniless in Paris. He then worked in the great architect Le Corbusier’s studio for 12 years, as an engineer and architect, whilst studying music privately. His ideas on electro-acoustic music established him as a pioneer, and he taught at many institutions. His rigorous works are often intricately computer-generated by detailed mathematical processes, and generally written for combinations of conventional instruments, sometimes played unconventionally. Xenakis’s explorations of the fundamentals of music continue to fascinate and influence advanced performers and listeners.

MILESTONES

1947 Arrives in France as illegal immigrant
1953 Writes Metastasis for orchestra
1957 Works with Schaeffer’s electro-acoustic group
1962 Starts composing with a computer
1967 Teaches at Bloomington, Indiana
1991 Writes computer program, GENDYN

An architect with an understanding of advanced mathematics, Xenakis designed the Philips Pavilion for the Brussels World Fair in 1958.

Luigi Nono

1924–1990
Italian

Born into a family of artists, Nono was strongly influenced by painting, philosophy, and poetry. He established himself at the renowned Darmstadt summer school and became a key figure in the postwar avant-garde. His 1950s theatrical pieces, often with a strongly socialist theme, use innovative sounds and textures. Having rejected Darmstadt, he turned to electronics and amplification in the 1960s, creating political works based on vocal material and centred around his performers. Through the 1980s, his experimentation in music theatre – and with new technical resources – continued, moving occasionally from the political to the more private, and his concentration on the nature of music and communication made his work widely influential.

MILESTONES

1946 Meets Maderna
1955 Marries Schoenberg’s daughter, Nuria
1956 Writes Il canto sospeso for soloists, chorus, and orchestra
1959 Gives controversial lecture criticizing Darmstadt
1984 Prometeo, “azione scenica”, produced

The premiere of Nono’s opera Intolleranza 1960 with electronic sound, visual projections, and a political message, caused uproar in Venice.
Ligeti was born in a small Hungarian-speaking enclave in Romanian Transylvania. At first intent on a career in science, his education was disrupted by anti-Jewish legislation, and he turned to composition. After World War II, Ligeti found his progress as a composer frustrated by communism, and in 1956 he fled to the West. Befriended by Stockhausen, Ligeti experimented with electronic music, but resisted pressures to adopt systematic methods of composition. The use of Ligeti’s music in the film 2001: A Space Odyssey won him a world-wide following.

**KEY WORKS**

**REQUIEM**

Choral 25:00 4 4 4

Ligeti’s Requiem is a work of apocalyptic power, influenced by Renaissance polyphony and the choral works of Bach, but dividing orchestra and choir into so many individual parts that the intricate counterpoint dissolves into spectacular clouds of sound.

**ATMOSPHÈRES**

Orchestral 09:00 1 1

His first great success, Ligeti’s Atmosphères is entirely concerned with subtly evolving textures, and is strongly influenced by his experience of working with tape and electronics.

**LA GRANDE MACABRE**

Opera 12:00 2 2 4 4 4

Ligeti’s only opera to date is set in an imaginary country inspired by the paintings of Pieter Breughel and Hieronymus Bosch. The score teems with grotesque invention, shot through with moments of poignant beauty.

Ligeti’s atmospheric Requiem (1965) was used on the soundtrack of 2001: A Space Odyssey for scenes with strange visual effects and dreamlike sequences.
Like Atmosphères and other early masterpieces, Lontano is composed of countless barely audible canons. Great control is needed by orchestra and conductor to sustain the hushed flow of mysteriously shifting, infinitely delicate sound. A study in subdued restlessness, Lontano consists of quiet murmuring until a point two-thirds of the way through. A climax for a group of solo strings is followed by a second crescendo for the entire string section (except the double basses). The final climax is suddenly cut off, movement almost ceases, and the music moves into catatonic retreat.

LONTANO
ORCHESTRAL 11:30 p 1 o

SAN FRANCISCO POLYPHONY
ORCHESTRAL 13:00 1 o

Ligeti’s career charts a gradual recovery of the musical language of the past. Each new piece reclaims techniques which other modernists judged to have outlived their usefulness. He has always liked polyphony (the overlaying of many voices in independent lines), but before San Francisco Polyphony, permitted himself to use it only on the microscopic level. Here the counterpoint comes to the surface in bold, characterful gestures, whose virtuosity once led orchestras to regard the piece as unplayable; moments such as the frantic conclusion, in which ostinato figures spin like tops as the horns yelp in excited syncopation, still test performers to the limit.

SAN FRANCISCO POLYPHONY
ORCHESTRAL 13:00 1 o

VIOLIN CONCERTO
ORCHESTRAL 27:00 5 o

Ligeti’s late works achieve a magical synthesis between direct – even naive – music reminiscent of his Hungarian roots and innovative techniques honed through a lifetime of experimentation.

VIOLIN CONCERTO
ORCHESTRAL 27:00 5 o

FOCUS

PRAELUDIUM (VIVACISSIMO LUMINOSO 4:00)
Inspired by the music of French-Canadian Claude Vivier, and instruments like the sacred flutes of Papua New Guinea, Ligeti brings strange “natural” tunings into his orchestra. An orchestral violin and viola play with their strings tuned to slightly different pitches, while the solo violin plays normally.

ARIA, HOQUETUS, CHORAL (ANDANTE CON MOTO 8:00)
The soloist plays a sad folk-like melody borrowed from an early work, but Ligeti takes the strange tunings to the brink of absurdity by adding incorrigibly out-of-tune ocarinas – almost toy whistles – to the orchestra.

INTERMEZZO (PRESTO FLUIDO 2:00) The violin soars aloft as descending scales cascade all around like falling stars.

PASSACAGLIA (LENTO INTENSO 6:00) Tragedy is in the air, brusque interjections attempt to silence a lament, but the soloist ignores them, climbing to a distraught climax.

APPASSIONATO (AGITATO MOLTO 7:00) Materials from the previous movements are thrown into a volatile mix, ending in violinistic fireworks and another feature of the traditional concerto: a solo cadenza.
For almost 40 years, Boulez has been the dominant force in contemporary music, not only as a composer, but also as a conductor, theorist, broadcaster, and as the founder of IRCAM, a Paris-based centre for research into music and technology. In his middle years, his composing seemed dangerously close to being stifled by other activities, but recent years have seen a steady succession of large-scale works.

LIFE AND MUSIC

Noting Boulez’s youthful talent for maths, his father sent him to study engineering. Boulez, however, defected to the Paris Conservatoire, where he was taught by Messiaen and gained a fearsome reputation for heckling at concerts of contemporary works that he judged insufficiently radical. He made his name as a composer in 1955 with Le marteau sans maître. With Stockhausen, he dominated the Darmstadt summer schools, the centre of new music in the 1950s. Having taken to the podium as an advocate of new music, Boulez began an international career as a conductor. His interest in technology resurfaced in the 1970s, when he founded IRCAM to find ways of extending music’s frontiers.

KEY WORKS

PIANO SONATA NO. 2

This fiercely demanding work has become a pillar of the modern piano repertoire – especially thanks to the advocacy of pianist Maurizio Pollini.

LE MARTEAU SANS MAÎTRE

A sequence of songs and instrumental cadenzas (“commentaries”), this piece was influenced by Schoenberg’s Pierrot lunaire and, in its use of percussion, by African, Japanese, and Javanese music.

PLI SELON PLI

Boulez based this cycle of movements on words by Mallarmé, and on the poet’s idea of an open-ended book – a potent image for Boulez, who revises works such as this every few years. The work ends with the same hammer-blow chord with which it began, as if to start the cycle all over again.

To Stravinsky, Le marteau’s fascinating but cerebral sound suggested “ice-cubes clinking in a cocktail glass”.

MILESTONES

1944 Studies with Messiaen
1955 Premiere of Le marteau sans maître
1962 Pli selon pli premiered
1969 Becomes chief conductor of BBC Symphony Orchestra
1971 Succeeds Bernstein as music director of New York Philharmonic Orchestra
1976 Founds Ensemble Intercontemporain
1977 Opens IRCAM at Pompidou Centre
1976 Conducts Wagner’s Ring at Bayreuth
1982 Premiere of Répons at London Proms
2000 Wins Grammy award for Répons
This diptych actually consists of a “complete” piece (Éclats) and its open-ended sequel (Multiples). Éclats was intended to give its 15 players some freedom in choosing when and what they wished to play, in response to the rhythmic complexity of much contemporary music reducing musicians to the level of virtuosic machines. However, in performance Boulez did not always like the results of Éclats’s freedoms and soon began to eliminate them, giving all the decisions about the order in which sections would be performed to the conductor (usually Boulez himself).

Multiples is one of the first works which pointed to the use of what were to become more straightforward rhythms in his music – rhythms which audiences find easier to “hear”, just as musicians find them easier to play.

ÉCLATS (10:00) Fifteen instruments are divided into two groups: strings and wind, which can hold notes almost indefinitely; and piano and tuned percussion instruments, which cannot. The sustaining instruments (strings and wind) hold background harmonies, which the soloists’ group peppers with “fragments” of melody.

MULTIPLES (17:00) To the previous ensemble, Boulez adds a basset horn and nine violas, which often play in warm unison. Towards the end, they divide, rhapsodizing in voluptuous chords. At the end, the piece dissolves in flurries of sustained trills.

Répons (Responses) refers to early Church music in which a soloist’s music alternates with that of the choir. Though the separation of the soloists and their attendant electronics is clear enough at the beginning and end, most of the piece overlays “questions” and “responses” within a shape which Boulez himself compares to the spiral ramp of the Guggenheim Museum’s interior in New York. At every stage of the ascent, snatches can be heard of things which have just occurred, or which are just around the corner.
The leading Italian composer of the second half of the 20th century, Berio was a composer of formidable intellect and technique. He numbered among the pioneers of the avant-garde, yet even his most exuberant music had an undertone of Mediterranean melancholy. His ear for sonority, feeling for context, and knowledge of tradition helped to give whatever he wrote the rich hues of an old master.

LIFE AND MUSIC

Berio came from a family of musicians, and was taught piano and harmony by his father. In 1944, a hand injury sustained on his first day in the army put an end to his soldiering as well as his hopes of becoming a pianist. While studying composition in Milan, Berio met his first wife, American soprano Cathy Berberian. He spent the 1960s teaching across the US. After the breakup of a second marriage, he returned to Italy, developing an interest in Sicilian folk music and working with writers and personal friends such as Umberto Eco, Edoardo Sanguinetti, and Italo Calvino. His final marriage to Israeli musicologist Talia Packer is reflected in his works on Jewish themes.

Berio often worked, as here, with his first wife, Cathy Berberian. In 1958 he created Thēma for electronics based on her reading from James Joyce’s Ulysses.

KEY WORKS

**FOLKSONGS**

Berio was the great arranger of recent times. These transparent, affecting, unsentimental versions of traditional songs from the US, France, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Italy were made for his first wife, Cathy Berberian, in 1964.

**LABORINTUS II**

Many of Berio’s best works involve the human voice. In this piece for voice and orchestra, it is featured speaking, singing, scatting in jazz style, and reciting the poetry of Sanguinetti and Dante. Laborintus II was written in 1965 for Dante’s 700th anniversary.

POINTS ON A CURVE TO FIND

Berio liked to base his pieces on the simplest music devices. Here the piano ducks and dives, tracing a single chromatic line. It often hovers on adjacent notes, pursued and worried by other instruments like a hare chased by hounds.
In this piece there are work songs, lullabies, love songs, and abbagnate (street-vendors’ cries), all originating from Sicily. They play continuously, so, like Points on a Curve to Find, the work is essentially an elaborated monody (solo line). With Voci, Berio wished to draw attention to Sicilian folk music, which is among the “richest, hottest, and most complex” of the Mediterranean. At times, the viola imitates folk singers, reminiscing, lamenting, and sliding between notes against a tremulous backdrop provided by two instrumental ensembles. Elsewhere, the other players encourage, nudge the soloist’s memory, or even take over entirely.

Berio’s most celebrated work caught the mood of its time (the late 1960s) to perfection, and still crackles today with undiminished electricity. Eight voices supply a montage of fragmentary texts, acting like a section of the orchestra.

FIRST MOVEMENT (6:00) This evokes Brazilian myths on the origin of water.

SECOND MOVEMENT: O KING (5:00) The singers intone syllables from the name “Martin Luther King” while trumpets and a snare drum salute his memory.

THIRD MOVEMENT (12:00) This dazzling montage of quotes from the Romantic and modern repertoires is carried along on the “river” of the third movement of Mahler’s Symphony No. 2.

FOURTH MOVEMENT (2:00) A subdued interlude, in which the singers mull over fragments of their texts so far.

FIFTH MOVEMENT (7:00) The inspired finale samples music that has already been sampled from other music.

In postmodern style, Berio boldly advertised his influences: Mahler, Stravinsky, Berg, Stockhausen are all detectable in the third movement of Sinfonia. However, Berio above all thought of music as a kind of speech. By analyzing speech and applying the post-structuralist ideas of thinkers like Eco and Calvino to music, Berio found his own musical voice.
Stockhausen has won cult status, thanks to a genius for music and publicity. Yet his stunts often have a serious point; even his recent *Helicopter Quartet*, in which a string quartet performs whilst airborne in four different helicopters, develops his long-standing fascination for music which moves in space, and which has led him to dream of concert halls in which the sound assails the listener from every direction.

**LIFE AND MUSIC**

Stockhausen was the first composer of the avant garde to devote himself fully to electronic music. His teenage years were scarred by the deaths of his mother and father during World War II, leaving him to pay for his music studies in Cologne by playing in piano bars and accompanying a stage magician. He then studied with Messiaen in Paris and became involved in the birth of electronic music, producing seminal works such as *Gesang der Jünglinge*. Stockhausen became a leading figure at the Darmstadt summer schools, where John Cage introduced him to the use of chance processes in music. In recent years he has concentrated on completing his vast opera cycle *Licht*. The seven operas are named after the days of the week. The first to be written, *Donnerstag* (Thursday), was staged in Milan as long ago as 1981; the last, *Sonntag* (Sunday), completed in 2003, has yet to be performed. Though very different in character, all the operas are linked by three key melodies. The staging of the works has presented problems for conventional opera houses, especially when the composer requests such things as flying rockets, helicopters, or a pencil sharpener four metres high.

**KEY WORKS**

**GRUPPEN**

*Orc/stral 22:00 1 3*

This early work remains truly epoch-making. It requires three separate orchestras and conductors, and is composed according to arcane rules linking pitch and rhythm, but the impact of the piece is spatial and, indeed, visceral. Few venues can place the musicians around the audience in the way Stockhausen intended, but to hear three massed orchestras in intricate three-way converse is still an unforgettable experience.

**GESANG DER JÜNGLINGE**

*Electronic 13:00 1 3 3 3*

The power of this piece (which even influenced the Beatles, causing them to include a photo of Stockhausen on the cover of their *Sgt Pepper* album) lies not only in the use of early tape technology, but also in the emotional effect of a boy’s voice singing the Benedictus among a welter of alien sounds. Stockhausen envisaged it as walking unharmed through a “fiery furnace”, an image which surely has autobiographical wartime resonances.

**MILESTONES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>Serves in military hospital; father dies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>Begins music studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>Studies with Messiaen; produces first electronic pieces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>Starts teaching at Darmstadt; writes <em>Gesang der Jünglinge</em>, boy’s voice and tape</td>
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<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td><em>Gruppen</em> for three orchestras</td>
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<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>Hears John Cage lecture at Darmstadt</td>
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<tr>
<td>1960s</td>
<td>Forms his own ensemble; tours world</td>
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<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>Composes <em>Stimmung</em>, 70-minute work for six singers based on a single chord</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>Complete works performed in Osaka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Completes his 29-hour opera, <em>Licht</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### György Kurtág

**1926–**  
**Hungarian**  
**c.80**

After graduating from the Liszt Academy in Budapest and winning state prizes, Kurtág gained a name as a pianist, especially of Bartók, a major influence. In 1957–58 he encountered Western music in Paris, especially admiring Schoenberg, Webern, and their serial music. He then produced his String Quartet No. 1 – a new starting point for his music. He returned to Hungary, becoming a renowned piano teacher, vocal coach, and repetiteur. In his mid-40s, he was commissioned to write children’s piano music and the results inspired new creativity. Success with his Troussova songs in France made his name abroad, and since 1985 (having reached only Op. 23) he has composed more frequently.

**MILESTONES**

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Writes <em>Games</em>, children’s piano works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Completes song cycle <em>Messages of the Late Miss R V Troussova</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Writes <em>Kafka Fragments</em>, voice and violin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Samuel Beckett Sends Word Through Ildikó Monyók..., for soprano and piano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Moves to Berlin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td><em>Stele</em>, for orchestra, premiered in Berlin</td>
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</tbody>
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Many of Kurtág’s works are small scale, such as his 1980 *Messages of the Late Miss R V Troussova* for soprano and chamber ensemble with cimbalom.

### Jonathan Harvey

**1939–**  
**English**  
**c.95**

After receiving doctorates from Cambridge and Glasgow universities and a fellowship at Princeton, Harvey’s visionary experiments with electronic music impressed Boulez, who invited him to work at IRCAM in Paris. Harvey’s innovative works, which include chamber, orchestral, and many choral pieces, have a meditative, spiritual, and ecstatic character (he has found the writings of Rudolf Steiner particularly inspirational) and have been widely recorded and performed across Europe. He is especially successful at combining conventional instruments with electronic or electronically modified sounds. Harvey has received honours in both the UK and US, and continues to fulfil constant new commissions, including some from the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra.

**MILESTONES**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Composes String Quartet No. 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Writes <em>Mortuos plango, vivos voco</em>, tape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Writes <em>Passion and Resurrection</em>, church opera; staged at Winchester Cathedral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Composes <em>Bhakti</em>, 15 players and tape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Composes <em>Madonna of Winter and Spring</em>, live electronics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Composes <em>Scena</em>, violin concerto</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Jonathan Harvey’s *Hymn*, a piece for chorus and orchestra, was composed for the 900th-anniversary celebrations of Winchester Cathedral.
Peter Maxwell Davies

1934 – British 273

Intense energy is as apparent in Davies’s charismatic personality as it is in his prolific output. Davies has dominated British music since the appearance of his explosive works of the 1960s, which gave exemplary expression to the anarchic spirit of the times. Responsible since then for works of the grandest integrity, his musical voice can be heard clearly, even in the many works he has written for children or film.

LIFE AND MUSIC

Davies’s earliest memory of music is of being taken to see a local performance of Gilbert and Sullivan’s The Gondoliers. He encountered very different musical experiences at the Royal Manchester College, however, where his friends included fellow composers Alexander Goehr and Harrison Birtwistle. Davies studied in Italy and America before returning to England to teach at a grammar school. He soon became known for eclectic music-theatre works, like Eight Songs for a Mad King, but the direction of his work changed when he moved to Orkney and fell under the spell of its majestic seascapes.

MILESTONES

1957 Studies with composer Goffredo Petrassi in Rome
1959 Teaches music at Cirencester Grammar School
1969 Writes Eight Songs for a Mad King
1972 Premiere of Taverner, opera
1971 Moves to Orkney
1976 Premiere of Symphony No. 1
1977 Black Pentecost performed; founds the St Magnus Festival
1987 Receives knighthood
1997 Visits Antarctica prior to writing his Antarctic Symphony
2004 Becomes Master of the Queen’s Music

KEY WORKS

EIGHT SONGS FOR A MAD KING
MUSIC THEATRE 30:00

Variously shocking tour de force and high camp, this portrait of the “madness” of George III made Davies widely famous. The work is expressionistic and relies on parody and distortion to represent an extreme mental state. Davies places the musicians in cages, like King George’s own pet bullfinches.

TAVERNER
OPERA 130:00

Davies’s largest work is based around the life and legend of the Tudor composer John Taverner and his conversion to Protestantism, for which cause he destroyed the churches that had once inspired him to create his own choral masterpieces. Davies uses much of Taverner’s own music – in various transformations – in this musically complex and violently theatrical opera about a character who betrays his true vocation to save his skin.

St Magnus Cathedral on Orkney offers perfect acoustics for players at Davies’s summer festival.
This chamber masterpiece is written for six instruments, including piano and cimbalom (a Hungarian dulcimer whose strings are struck with mallets). It might seem an odd choice for a tribute to the Orkney landscape, but—as the title suggests—the music teems with echoes and doublings, and the cimbalom is the pungent, brackish double of the scintillating piano. The title comes from a poem by Charles Senior, which describes the flight of gulls and the dance of their shadows over rocks and waves.

FIRST MOVEMENT (ADAGIO 13:00)
A brooding, lyrical nocturne, evoking an earlier work, Davies’s Ave maris stella. Alto flute and bass clarinet drift hauntingly, like shadows, through the pre-dawn stillness.

SECOND MOVEMENT (ALLEGRO 8:00)
A buoyant, contrapuntal scherzo. In the first part, the piano effervesces in mad, upward-rushing arpeggios, only for them to cascade down again in the second, like waves dashed against rocks. After a hushed cimbalom solo comes a rush of swirling radiance, fading into mist.

THIRD MOVEMENT (ALLEGRO VIVACE 7:40)
Davies alters the angle at which the same nave is viewed: some elements are foreshortened, others magnified. Through side arches, the dark expanses of the final movement can be glimpsed.

FOURTH MOVEMENT (LENTO; ADAGIO FLESSIBILE 22:00) Davies pays tribute to the last movement of Mahler’s ninth symphony, and ends his impressive work with intimations of eternity.
Sir Harrison Birtwistle

1934 –

English

112

A few bars are all you need to hear to know that a piece is by Birtwistle. The quirky rhythms, the layered textures, and the immediate sense of theatre are unmistakable fingerprints. His music sounds idiosyncratically English, and often there is a dominant part for his favourite instrument – the clarinet. However, in recent years, Birtwistle has become known above all for his vocal music and his majestic, ritualistic operas.

**LIFE AND MUSIC**

Birtwistle studied clarinet at the Royal Northern College of Music, where he formed the New Music Manchester Group with fellow students, including Peter Maxwell Davies and trumpeter and conductor Elgar Howarth. After graduating, Birtwistle worked briefly as a professional clarinettist, but dedicated himself to composing on hearing that his first acknowledged piece had been selected for the Cheltenham Festival in 1959. Landmarks since that time have included his orchestral piece *The Triumph of Time* (inspired by Breughel), the parody opera *Punch and Judy*, and the mighty *Masque of Orpheus* with its elaborate stage spectacle and haunting electronics.

**MILESTONES**

- 1952 Studies clarinet
- 1955 Plays in the Royal Artillery band
- 1959 *Refrains and Choruses*, wind quintet, performed at Cheltenham Festival
- 1965 Composes *Tragoedia*; the music reappears in *Punch and Judy*, opera
- 1972 Writes *The Triumph of Time*, orchestra
- 1981 Composes music for Peter Halls’ production of the *Orestea*
- 1988 Receives knighthood
- 1991 *Gawain* performed at Covent Garden

**KEY WORKS**

**GAWAIN’S JOURNEY**

-SUITE-

This impressive piece is derived from Birtwistle’s second epic opera, depicting Gawain’s quest for the mysterious Green Knight. The earthy and evocative music draws on his rite-of-passage journey, the three attempts by the Green Knight’s beautiful wife to seduce Gawain (each marked by a cockcrow), and the clopping horse hooves and whirling figures which characterize the encounters with her terrifying, if finally beneficent, husband.

Each character in *Orpheus* appears in three guises: as a singer, a dancer, and a mime.

**THE MASK OF ORPHEUS**

-OPERA-

This remarkably complicated work retells three conflicting Greek legends about the death of Orpheus, enacted by singers and giant puppets. It is also a wonderfully baffling reconstruction of the rites once associated with the worship of Orpheus. Each act focuses on a specific ritual serving as a fixed point around which the opera revolves. Electronics are used to imitate the voice of Apollo and to create “auras” suggesting the sounds of tides and bees, both of which have rich symbolic connotations.
Toru Takemitsu

Takemitsu first heard Western music when he was 14. After World War II, he listened to classical music on US-forces radio, and it was mainly by listening to the works of composers like Debussy and Messiaen that he taught himself compositional technique. In 1959, Stravinsky heard Takemitsu’s *Requiem* for strings, and declared it a masterpiece. It was only after talking to John Cage in 1964 that Takemitsu began to pay any attention to Japanese music, producing works like *November Steps* for orchestra and Japanese instruments. His most famous piece is probably *A Flock Descends into the Pentagonal Garden*. Takemitsu also wrote music for films, including Oshima’s *The Empire of the Senses* and Akira Kurosawa’s *Ran*.

**MILESTONES**
- 1944 Military service
- 1951 Founds an experimental workshop
- 1957 *Requiem* for strings wins acclaim
- 1967 Composes *November Steps*
- 1977 *A Flock Descends into the Pentagonal Garden*
- 1994 Wins prestigious Grawemeyer Award for Music Composition

Takemitsu’s love of nature and Japanese traditional culture are constant themes in Takemitsu’s music.

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Tan Dun

Tan Dun grew up during the Chinese Cultural Revolution, receiving no regular education and working as a rice planter. Later he was employed as a violinist and arranger at the Beijing Opera theatre, only encountering Western music when he entered the newly re-opened Central Conservatory of Music in 1976. His music began to show avant-garde influences and was even denounced as “spiritual pollution” by the Chinese government in 1983. Three years later he moved to New York, and has since taken American nationality and has begun to write film scores. His music shows a wide range of influences, from jazz to Chinese opera, and often features unusual sounds, such as ancient Chinese bells or splashing water. As a conductor, Dun has created programmes which reach a new and diverse audience.

**MILESTONES**
- 1976 Enters Beijing Music Conservatory
- 1983 Moves to US
- 1998 Composes *Peony Pavilion*, opera
- 1999 Writes *Orchestral Theatre IV, The Gate* for a Peking Opera actress, Japanese puppeteer, and string orchestra
- 2001 Wins awards for his score for Ang Lee’s film *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*
Part has a following like few others in contemporary music. Starting out as a “progressive” composer, frequently in an atonal idiom, he stopped composing in the 1970s and emerged – after a period of creative silence – with an entirely new musical voice imbued with simplicity and devotional humility. Inspired by the sound of bells and the music of the distant past, his works seem to exist outside time.

LIFE AND MUSIC

As a child, Pärt attended evening music school. His early compositional experimentation was encouraged by necessity – only the lowest and highest notes on the piano at home worked properly. Having survived a serious illness, he entered the Central Tallinn Conservatory, and by the time he graduated he was already a successful film composer. His early serious music used a “collage” technique, mixing various styles. Although he achieved a national reputation, both his progressive and religious works were often banned by the authorities. In the early 1970s, Pärt joined the Russian Orthodox Church. He left Estonia in 1980 and settled in Germany.

KEY WORKS

CANTUS IN MEMORIAM BENJAMIN BRITTEN

One of the first of Pärt’s “little bell” pieces does indeed feature a bell, tolling for the death of a composer that he had recently come to admire. Overlapping scales in the strings, ever more drawn out, pay homage to Britten’s own love of scalic melodies. In the final bar, a bell is struck inaudibly and resonates – once the strings have stopped playing – as if sounding from nowhere.

TABULA RASA

The title means “clean slate” and reflects Pärt’s desire to return to the basics of sound in order to create music of innocence and purity. Like many of Pärt’s mature pieces, it is largely “white note” music, built on a tonic chord, arpeggiated, and overlaid with simple scales. Bell-like “chimes” are provided by a prepared piano.

Für Alina, for piano, is based on a simple tonic triad; Pärt may have been influenced by St Gregory of Palamas’s book Triads.
Audiences enthused over this work – the last written in Pärt’s earlier “collage” style – but the communist authorities vilified it on account of its religious text. The music in Parts 1 and 3 is derived from the first C major prelude in J S Bach’s *Well-tempered Clavier* – for, as in all the collage pieces, Pärt “borrows” the tonal material from older composers. The piece dramatizes the conflict between good and evil, with good being represented by pure C major and evil by dissonant note clusters (represented in the score by thick black lines, rather than actual notes). However, the transitions between these two extremes are gradual. The final resolution on a quiet C major chord (which now, as in later works, seems to evoke the presence of God) is like an echo from the dawn of time.

The fact that *Fratres* can be heard in seven versions – for different instrumental combinations – reflects the fact that it is one of Pärt’s most loved works. One of the early so-called “tintinnabuli” pieces, it sets the notes of an A minor tonic chord against overlapping scales in subtly shifting patterns – a technique which has some similarity to the compositional techniques of late medieval composers. That Pärt originally left the choice of instruments open to the performers also reflects the aesthetics of an earlier time; the notes themselves were presumed to suggest a divine order, which could be communicated in any medium. Fratres means “brethren”, perhaps suggesting a vision of society in which conflict and egotism has been supplanted by the “brotherly love” of communities living according to the Christian gospel.

A piece that can be appreciated even by those who dislike minimalism, *Miserere* sets two ancient hymns: the *Miserere* itself and the Dies Irae sequence, depicting the Last Judgment. After repeated pleas for mercy, interspersed with fateful pauses, the day of wrath itself is ushered in by a thunderous drum-roll. The drum initiates each new verse, as the choir sings the most terrifying words in the Christian liturgy. Pärt here applies a medieval technique to descending A minor scales; the music is in five parts, each successive part singing at half the speed of its predecessor, the slowest voice taking 16 times longer to finish the scale. Two electric guitars colour the ensemble, but it is the climax on trombone and trumpet that sets the spine tingling. Having confronted catastrophe, the choir ascends to radiant heights over the deep-throated resonance of the organ, tam-tam, and bell.
Henryk Górecki

There is more to Górecki than the meditative minimal music which has made him famous in recent years. In the earlier part of his career he was an aggressively experimental composer of the avant garde, but – as with Arvo Pärt – Górecki’s search in later decades for a pure, transparent style has been inspired by a religious sensibility. He is a devout Catholic for whom music is often a form of prayer.

**LIFE AND MUSIC**

Górecki was born in Silesia, a part of Poland in which Polish, German and Czech cultures exist side by side in a mix that has coloured his musical interests. His studies at Katowice Academy of Music, where he embraced the radical “Polish School” (which also included Krzysztof Penderecki), resulted in his Symphony No. 1 and Scontri, both aggressively dissonant. He later taught at the Academy and became its rector, but resigned for political reasons in 1979. By the mid-1970s, influences such as a growing love of Polish folk music and medieval Polish chants caused him to adopt a far less astringent style. His Symphony No. 3 shot him to huge international fame.

**MILESTONES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>Writes Symphony No. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>Writes Scontri (Collisions), orchestral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>Meets Boulez on study tour to Paris; wins first prize at Youth Biennale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Wins UNESCO first prize in Paris for Ad Matrem, choral work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>Composes Symphony No. 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>Beat us Vir, choral work, premiered at Kraków for visit of Pope John Paul II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Completes Miserere, choral work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Already it is Dusk for string quartet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Soprano Dawn Upshaw’s recording of Symphony No. 3 creates huge interest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**KEY WORKS**

**SYMPHONY NO. 3, “SORROWFUL SONGS”**

This symphony is a daring conception: it is unusual for a symphony to be uniformly slow and meditative. It could also be thought risky to quote such famous works as Beethoven’s “Eroica” Symphony and a famous Chopin mazurka as Górecki does in his last movement, but these quotations are both expressive and symbolic:

the two chords he takes from the fourth of Chopin’s Op. 17 mazurkas alternate like the rocking refrain of a lullaby for the souls of the Silesian freedom-fighters of both world wars, whilst the Eroica quote surely pays tribute to their heroism.

**MISERERE**

Górecki composed this piece for unaccompanied chorus as a protest against the brutal treatment of peaceful Solidarity members in 1981. This political “programme” ensured that the work was not performed for another six years. As with the Symphony No. 3, the mood is rapt and poignant.

In Górecki’s spiritual and meditative Symphony No. 3, a soprano sings poignant words written by a girl on a wall in a concentration camp.
John Tavener

For Tavener – who has had several brushes with death – music is a way of communing with God. His pieces resemble the sacred images of the Christian Orthodox faith with which he surrounds himself in both his Greek and English homes. He is influenced by Orthodox chant, as well as by mystical Islamic and Indian music; one of his favourite musicians, soprano Patricia Rozario, is herself Indian.

LIFE AND MUSIC

Tavener’s first success came in 1968 with an avant-garde piece titled The Whale. In the following year a simpler work, the Celtic Requiem, appeared on the Apple label, thanks to contacts made by his brother, a builder, who was then working for Ringo Starr. Despite the religious nature of many early pieces, it took two events in the late 1970s to confirm Tavener in his pursuit of the harmonious simplicity for which he is now renowned: the failure of a musically and technically taxing opera at Covent Garden, and his reception into the Russian Orthodox Church. Since that time, Tavener has concentrated on writing devotional choral music – what he calls “icons in sound”. By this, he means music that is “non-developmental” – that is, simple in texture and form, in the same way that religious icons are limited in their colour palette and three-dimensionality, but yet inspire calm, spiritual illumination.

NO CHORAL REVIEW

This is a spare, searing work based on Byzantine chant. Premiered in 1981, it played to scanty audiences and met with little sympathy from critics. It sets poems written in secret by the great Russian poet Anna Akhmatova during the Stalinist years. Between her words are funeral texts from the Orthodox liturgy.

KEY WORKS

AKHMATOVA: REKVIEM

This is a spare, searing work based on Byzantine chant. Premiered in 1981, it played to scanty audiences and met with little sympathy from critics. It sets poems written in secret by the great Russian poet Anna Akhmatova during the Stalinist years. Between her words are funeral texts from the Orthodox liturgy.

THE PROTECTING VEIL

Tavener had written nothing but vocal music for several years when leading cellist Steven Isserlis asked him for a piece. Yet in a way, this piece is “vocal” too: throughout, the solo cello soars in a tender, continuous “song” representing the voice of the Mother of God. Isserlis has suggested that people who find this music monotonous might understand its aims better if they attended an Orthodox service. The Feast of the Protecting Veil is an annual service commemorating a tenth-century Byzantine mystic’s vision of the Virgin Mary. The string orchestra that supports the cello acts like an echo chamber and represents the vast resonant spaces of an Orthodox church. Like Akhmatova: Rekviem, the work is based on Byzantine chant.
**Poul Ruders**

Ruders decided to be a composer at 16, when he heard Penderecki’s *Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima*. A Royal Danish Academy graduate in piano and organ, he became an acclaimed freelance composer, despite being mostly self-taught. He spent four years in London, after the Proms success of his Symphony No. 1, and then returned to live and work in Copenhagen. The success of his opera based on Margaret Atwood’s novel *The Handmaid’s Tale* established his reputation worldwide. His music can be gloriously joyful and exuberant one moment and then change suddenly to introspection and despair. Using an expressive and flexible musical language – with passages of parody and quotation – Ruders has produced an impressive body of work.

Ruders’s most recent opera, *The Trial*, was commissioned for the opening of the new opera house in Copenhagen (2005).

**Wolfgang Rihm**

Rihm’s encyclopedic knowledge of Western music, and his affinity for the great Germans, has informed his enormous output of vocal and instrumental music. He studied under Stockhausen in 1972 and attended Darmstadt, where he is now a regular instructor. He is also professor of composition at Karlsruhe, where he was a student. Rihm started composing at 11, but his reputation was established in the 1970s with his cerebral but expressive music – particularly with the frequently staged *Jakob Lenz*, an opera on the descent of the poet into madness. He has frequently set texts by Nietzsche, and many of his works have historical allusions. Subjective in nature and emotionally powerful, yet retaining intellectual weight, Rihm’s music enjoys high esteem with many serious listeners.

**MILESTONES**

1972 Studies with Stockhausen
1978 Finishes *Jakob Lenz*, chamber opera
1985 Professor of composition, Karlsruhe
1987 *Oedipus*, opera, performed
1992 *Gesungene Zeit*, for violin and orchestra
1994 Premiere of *Séraphin*, music-theatre
1999 Writes *Jagden und Formen*, orchestra
Kaija Saariaho

b 1952– n Finnish w 87

After studying at the Sibelius Academy, and in Freiburg, Germany, under the English composer Brian Ferneyhough, Saariaho moved to Paris, where she has worked regularly at the IRCAM electronics studio. After writing melodious vocal works in the late 1970s, she started working with computers, exploiting techniques such as transforming synthesized sounds slowly into others. In recent years she has written for more conventional instrumentation, often in a dramatic and extrovert style, and occasionally using experimental effects like selective amplification. Saariaho has been involved in various multi-media projects, including a full-length ballet, *Maa*. In 2003, her lyric opera *L’amour de loin* won the Grawemeyer Prize, one of many awards that her works have received, and she continues to fulfil regular commissions across Europe.

**MILESTONES**

1982 Moves to Paris
1986 Composes *Lichtbogen*, instruments and live electronics
1988 Records *Stilleben*, tape
1991 *Maa*, ballet, performed
1995 Violin concerto *Graal théâtre* premiered
2000 Premiere of *L’amour de loin*, opera

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Anne Boyd

b 1946– n Australian w c.50

On graduating from Sydney, having studied under Peter Sculthorpe, Boyd spent several years in England (at York, under Mellers, then teaching at Sussex), and here she achieved success with her imaginative but disciplined, uncluttered music. Back at home she spent a period as a freelance composer, often setting Australian and Asian themes, as in her oratorio *The Death of Captain Cook*. Her interest in Asian music took her to Hong Kong for ten years, before returning to Sydney. As her academic career flourished, there was not always time for composing. However, she continues to produce works, such as the orchestral *Black Sun* and *Grathawai*, and lectures internationally.

Anne Boyd explores the music and tone worlds of a wide range of styles and cultures in her colourful works.

**MILESTONES**

1969 Moves to England
1974 Composes *Angklung*, for piano
1975 Writes *As I Crossed the Bridge of Dreams*, for 12 voices
1977 Returns to Australia
1981 Becomes head of music at Hong Kong University
1990 Head of music, Sydney University
Judith Weir

Judith Weir’s music is accessible, unpretentious, and beautifully crafted. She is a tireless advocate of the “middle way” in contemporary music, rejecting both the extremes of simplicity (attributing much of the success of Górecki, Pärt, and Nyman to commercial forces) and intellectualism. She is best known for her operas, although theatrical wit and a strong gift for narrative inform all her work.

LIFE AND MUSIC

Whilst still at school, Judith Weir studied with John Tavener, and later at Cambridge University with Robin Holloway. Since then, she has held teaching positions at universities in Britain and the US, but these have not deflected her from composing works of broad appeal, working with children and amateurs, and striving to build “wider musical communities”. Whilst director of London’s Spitalfields Festival, she regularly programmed Indian music alongside contemporary pieces and community music-making events. Her own works draw inspiration from Chinese and Indian traditions (recently she has collaborated on projects with the Indian storyteller Vaiyu Naidu), as well as from her own Scottish roots. Her interest in medieval culture also shows in her music.

MILESTONES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Composes The Consolations of Scholarship for ensemble and soprano, based on a Chinese drama of the Yuan period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>A Night at the Chinese Opera premiered by Kent Opera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Completes choral work Missa del Cid; it is televised by the BBC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Takes over as artistic director of Spitalfields Festival for five years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Natural History (setting of Taoist texts) for soprano and orchestra premiered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Woman.Life.Song commissioned by Jessye Norman to words by Clarissa Estés, Maya Angelou, Toni Morrison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Collaborates with storyteller Vaiyu Naidu on Future Perfect, a blend of music and narrative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

KEY WORKS

MISSA DEL CID

This work for chorus and narrator is full of dark truths. It blends the Latin Mass with extracts from a Spanish medieval epic recounting the exploits of the Cid – the fanatical slayer of the Moors. The brutalities of his era is satirized by its absorption into the liturgy, but the work ends in desolation, portraying the aftermath of battle.

Simon Rattle commissioned Weir’s We Are Shadows for the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra in 1999.

A NIGHT AT THE CHINESE OPERA

Judith Weir’s first full-length opera is an expansion of her earlier The Consolations of Scholarship, which forms the central act as a play within a play. The plot concerns the revenge of an orphan who has been unwittingly reared by a despot who killed his family. Act II echoes Chinese opera in providing music whose task is to support drama and stage gestures.
Magnus Lindberg

1958–

In recent years, Finland has produced a throng of outstanding musical talents. Amongst its composers, Lindberg has one of the highest international profiles. The reasons are not hard to find: his music is dramatic, harmonically clear, colourful, ebullient (one of his major pieces is called Joy), and he uses the orchestra with prodigious skill to produce works of powerful immediacy.

LIFE AND MUSIC

Lindberg studied at the Sibelius Academy with composers Einojuhani Rautavaara and Paavo Heininen. Rautavaara would have encouraged Lindberg to see himself as a descendant of the founding father of Finnish music, Sibelius, but Heininen was interested above all in the works of the European avantgarde. Lindberg’s early works, such as Kraft and Action-Situation-Signification, are bracingly modernist, in keeping with the exploratory aesthetics of Toimii, the performance group he helped found with the conductor Esa-Pekka Salonen in 1981. Lindberg’s debt to Sibelius and other symphonic composers has become become more audible, albeit with no dilution of his own musical voice.

MILESTONES

- 1970s Works with Swedish electronics studio
- 1977 Co-founds the modernist “Korvat auki” (Ears Open Society)
- 1981 Goes to study in Paris
- 1982 Difficulties of performing Action-Situation-Signification lead to founding of Toimii ensemble
- 1985 Kraft is first successful orchestral work
- 1994 Aura premiered in Tokyo
- 1996 Directs Meltdown Festival at London’s South Bank
- 1997 Writes Related Rocks for IRCAM studio
- 2001 Related Rocks Lindberg Festival tours

KEY WORKS

AURA (IN MEMORIAM WITOLD LUTOSLAWSKI)

Lindberg considered this massive work to be a cross between a symphony and a concerto for orchestra – both forms at which the modern Polish composer, Lutoslawski, excelled. The four movements play continuously, the last building hypnotically to a climax based on repeating figurations, giving way to a strongly melodic epilogue for strings.

RELATED ROCKS

Related Rocks for two percussionists, two pianos, and electronics, was inspired by a geological exhibition at which Lindberg was impressed both by the variety and the ordered unity of the exhibits. The electronics provide a sonic “exhibition space” in which the instruments are presented. The work also develops an idea Lindberg had nurtured for some years: using electronically sampled recordings made during the demolition of a grand piano. The resultant sounds seem to have a symbolic power, perhaps the violence of events that formed the crystalline rocks.

In the 1970s, Lindberg was impressed by the energy of the English punk band The Clash and the destruction performances of Germany’s Einstürzende Neubauten.
James MacMillan

MacMillan is one of the diplomats of contemporary music. His music can be challenging, but attracts a broad audience. He is Scottish and proud of it, but without being fanatical. A practising Roman Catholic, his theology is liberal and, though his music reflects his faith, it does not offer serenity by ignoring the “conflict and ambiguity” which is typical of most people’s lives and on which, indeed, he believes music thrives.

LIFE AND MUSIC

MacMillan started composing while learning to play the trumpet as a child. He studied at Edinburgh and Durham universities, but began to find his personal voice as a composer only in his late 20s as he identified his national and religious sources of inspiration. His first success was Búsqueda (Search), a music-theatre piece that combined the Catholic liturgy with poems written by the mothers of the disappeared in Argentina during the military dictatorship there in the 1970s. Búsqueda and The Confessions of Isobel Gowdie set the course for his development, his works expressing religious conviction while still engaging with the “real world”.

MACSTONES

1988 Writes Búsqueda, ensemble and actors
1990 The Confessions of Isobel Gowdie, orchestral, premiered at the Proms
1992 Completes Veni, Veni Emmanuel
1994 Writes Symphony No. 1 and Vigil
1996 Cello Concerto performed by Mstislav Rostropovich
1999 Quickenning premiered at Proms

MacMillan has a strong interest in Scottish and Irish folk music. In 1989 he was composer-in-residence at the St Magnus Festival in Orkney.

KEY WORKS

VENI, VENI EMMANUEL

Veni, Veni, Emmanuel (Come, Come, Emmanuel) was written for leading percussionist Evelyn Glennie, who is also Scottish. As a percussion concerto, it allows a performer to demonstrate mastery of a vast array of instruments, but this presents a problem for the composer, because the number of sounds the soloist makes risks producing a fragmentary effect. MacMillan avoids this by turning the concerto into a set of clearly audible variations on one of the most glorious and familiar of all the liturgical chants for Advent.

VIGIL

This large work is part of an epic triptych titled Triduum. It was commissioned by Mstislav Rostropovich, who had come to know and admire Veni, Veni, Emmanuel. Rostropovich premiered Vigil at the Barbican in London with the London Symphony Orchestra in 1997. Vigil was inspired by the Easter service, when Catholics anticipate Christ’s Resurrection, and uses plainsong associated with the service. MacMillan describes Vigil simply, but graphically, as a journey from “despair to joy, from darkness to light, from death to life”.
Mark-Anthony Turnage

Mark-Anthony Turnage has a gift for crossing boundaries. Many of his most striking works are infused with the spirit, harmonies, and rhythms of jazz. The energy this imparts to much of his music, together with his sense of drama and his commitment to contemporary social issues, commands attention from listeners of all persuasions, not only from those with “classical” tastes.

LIFE AND MUSIC

Turnage began to win major composition prizes soon after completing his studies under John Lambert and Oliver Knussen. Important conductors and composers began to take note. Hans Werner Henze commissioned an opera for the Munich Biennale in 1988, and the hard-hitting result, Greek, to a libretto by playwright Steven Berkoff, became an international success. In 1989, Simon Rattle invited Turnage to become composer-in-association with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. The first result of the partnership was Three Screaming Popes, a work which proved that Turnage could be as aggressive and compelling in the concert hall as on the opera stage. Successes since then have come thick and fast, his greatest achievement so far perhaps being his opera The Silver Tassie.

MILESTONES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Attends Royal College of Music</td>
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<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Wins Guinness Prize for Night Dances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Greek composed for Munich Biennale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Made composer-in-association at City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Composes Your Rockaby, concerto for saxophone, a favourite instrument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Collaborates with John Scofield and other jazz musicians on Blood on the Floor, for large ensemble and jazz trio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Turnage retrospective festival, Fractured Lines, held in London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>The Silver Tassie premiered by English National Opera; later wins awards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Blood on the Floor performed by Berlin Philharmonic under Simon Rattle</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

KEY WORKS

THE SILVER TASSIE

The Silver Tassie takes its text from Sean O’Casey’s pacifist play about a young Dubliner who wins a coveted football trophy before leaving to fight in World War I. The opera does not shy away from depicting the horrors of the trenches; but, yet more disturbing, are the consequences for the young man who returns home to face betrayal and rejection because of his injuries.

Turnage is a great admirer of the trumpeter Miles Davis and jazz guitarist John Scofield.

BLOOD ON THE FLOOR

Commissioned as a ten-minute piece for an evening of jazz-inspired works by Gershwin, Bernstein, and others, Blood on the Floor outgrew the original brief. Like Three Screaming Popes, it takes its title from a haunted, visceral painting by Francis Bacon. With movements such as “Junior Addict” and “Needles”, its subject is very personal, as Turnage’s brother died from a drug overdose. Yet the work is an absorbing experience, a compelling blend of composed music and jazz improvisation.
George Benjamin

- **1960– English**
- **c.30**

After studies with Olivier Messiaen in Paris and Alexander Goehr in Cambridge, Benjamin quickly emerged as a mature and confident composer. An early piece, *Ringed by the Flat Horizon* – written for an orchestra of 93 – was played at the London Proms, making Benjamin, at 20, the youngest composer to have a piece performed at the Proms. His serious yet colourful, direct, even flamboyant style – compared by some to the mood of J M W Turner’s late paintings – led to frequent high-profile commissions through the 1980s. *Antara*, for Pierre Boulez, celebrated the 10th anniversary of IRCAM (the electronic music studios in Paris) and won a major recording award. Benjamin has also been active as both pianist and festival organizer, and regularly conducts leading international orchestras. He has won several prizes and awards, and has recently enjoyed a close association with the Tanglewood label, while also holding teaching posts at the Royal Academy and London university.

**MILESTONES**
- 1974 Studies with Olivier Messiaen
- 1980 Composes *Ringed by the Flat Horizon* for large orchestra
- 1984 Researches music at IRCAM
- 1987 Writes *Antara* for small orchestra
- 2001 Becomes Professor of Composition at King’s College, London university

The evocative sound of Peruvian pan pipes (*antara*), manipulated electronically, gives the innovative composition *Antara*, its futuristic and cosmic quality.

Thomas Adès

- **1971– English**
- **c.40**

Winning “only” second prize as a pianist at the BBC Young Musician of the Year in 1989 proved a blessing in disguise for Thomas Adès. He concentrated instead on composing, becoming composer-in-residence for the Hallé Orchestra, shortly after leaving Cambridge university, and has since risen rapidly to prominence. His vivid, detailed, mighty assured style brought commissions from major orchestras, and his opera *Powder her Face* established his name worldwide. The orchestral piece *Ayyla* was commissioned by Sir Simon Rattle, who conducted it at two seminal concerts, at Birmingham in 1998 and at Berlin in 2000 and the piece also won the coveted Grawemeyer Award, the largest international prize for composition. Adès is also active as a gifted conductor, teacher, and outstanding performer of his own and others’ piano works.

**The acclaimed production** of *The Tempest*, conducted by Adès and premiered at London’s Royal Opera House in 2004, starred Cyndia Sieden as Ariel.

**MILESTONES**
- 1992 Double-starred first from Cambridge
- 1993 Performs first public recital in London
- 1995 *Powder her Face*, chamber opera, achieves international recognition
- 1997 *Ayyla*, for orchestra, highly acclaimed
- 1999 Becomes artistic director of Aldeburgh Festival
- 2004 *The Tempest*, opera, premiered
Kevin Volans

1949– South African c.70

Volans became popularly known in 1986 with the Kronos Quartet’s best-selling CD of his work, White Man Sleeps. After university in Johannesburg, he studied in Cologne in Germany, became Karlheinz Stockhausen’s teaching assistant, and was commissioned to write for IRCAM. Associated with the New Simplicity school in the late 1970s, he became increasingly influenced by African music, incorporating its techniques into his original style, which established him in the 1980s. After further success with Kronos, Volans turned to dance in the 1990s, collaborating with British dancers, such as Siobhan Davies, Jonathan Burrows and Shobana Jeyasingh.

African drummers perform at a dance on the Ivory Coast. African music inspired much of Volans’s output, shaping his style and technique.

Carl Vine

1954– Australian c.50

Vine completed an electronic commission for West Australian Ballet while still at school, and won various music prizes while majoring in Physics at university. Now one of Australia’s most performed and eminent composers, he has produced 20 vibrant, witty, and very danceable scores, as well as six symphonies, music for film and theatre, and several other works. After winning many prizes in Australia, Vine worked as a freelance composer and pianist before embarking on a variety of composing residencies. He has appeared as a conductor and pianist in Europe, and has lectured widely on electronic music. Vine lives in Sydney, where he is again composing after a four-year sabbatical.

Vine’s stirring score for the closing ceremony of the 1996 Olympics invoked the heroic spirit of the Games.
Despite his love and respect for the classical, Sculthorpe has deliberately distanced himself from it, creating instead an Australian sound world by reflecting the continent’s landscape and by frequently basing his works on Aboriginal chants. He also incorporates elements from Japanese and Balinese music, reasoning that Australian art should link to a wider Pacific Rim culture, just as British music relates to Europe’s.

LIFE AND MUSIC

Sculthorpe wrote music under the bedclothes by torchlight as a boy, after being rebuked by his piano teacher for composing rather than practising. He was only 16 when he began studying music at Melbourne University. In 1955, his Piano Sonatina was selected to represent Australia at the International Society for Contemporary Music Festival in Germany and in 1958 he won a scholarship to study in England. On returning home, he wrote the desolate Irkanda 1 for solo violin – a farewell to Europe as well as to his recently deceased father. It established the basis for a vivid new “Australian” soundscape, which he has explored ever more resourcefully in all his subsequent work.

MILESTONES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>Piano Sonatina played at ISCM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>Writes Irkanda 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>Joins Sydney University staff (to 1999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Begins Sun Music series for orchestra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Composes Earthcry for orchestra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Elected one of Australia’s 100 Living National Treasures by popular vote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Premiers Requiem, large work for choir, soloists, orchestra, four didgeridoos.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Evoking the blazing heat of the Outback, Sculthorpe’s typically rhythmic works sharing the title Sun Music include a ballet and chamber, orchestral, and vocal pieces.

KEY WORKS

**PORT ESSINGTON**

*Orchestral 15:00 6*

*Port Essington* is an unsettling, powerfully atmospheric piece that draws on music Sculthorpe wrote for a film about the history of a doomed, 19th-century British settlement in northern Australia. A string trio plays gracious, romantic, “civilized” music to represent the ill-fated settlers, while the string orchestra constantly encroaches with the wilder, eerier sounds of the Bush. Both kinds of music comprise a series of variations on an aboriginal tune, Djilili, which occurs in many of Sculthorpe’s works.

**EARTHCRY**

*Orchestral 11:00 1*

*Earthcry* brings together two of Sculthorpe’s abiding concerns: the horror he feels at modern civilization’s abuse of the environment, and its dispossession of native peoples. The work recasts an earlier piece, *The Song of Tailitnama*, which was based on an Aboriginal chant for greeting the Earth at dawn. *Earthcry*, however, takes the material in new directions, working the music up into a fierce, mesmeric dance before reaching a final plateau of spectacular grandeur.
Glossary of music terms

**A CAPPELLA** Literally “in the style of the chapel” (Italian), the term describes a piece written for unaccompanied voice(s).

**ATONAL** Describes any music without a recognizable tonality (key), such as serial music.

**ARIA** Literally “air” (Italian), a vocal piece for one or more voices in an opera or oratorio, more formally organized than a song. Arias written in the 17th and 18th centuries usually take the form of “da capo arias”, with a three-part structure, the third part being a reiteration of the first.

**ARS NOVA** Literally “the new art” (Latin), a term coined in c.1322 to refer to a new style of music incorporating a wider range of note values than that of earlier music (of the “ars antiqua”).

**BASSO CONTINUO** Harmonic, quasi-improvisatory accompaniment to a melodic piece used extensively in the Baroque period. The continuo usually comprised a harpsichord and strings, but could also include woodwind and brass instruments.

**BARCAROLLE** Song or piece of music associated with Venetian gondoliers, characterized by a lilting 6/8 or 12/8 rhythm. Well-known examples include Offenbach's Barcarolle from *Tales of Hoffman* and Chopin’s piano Barcarolle in F sharp.

**CADENZA** Literally “cadence” (Italian). Originally an improvised solo passage by the solo performer within a concerto, from the 19th century onwards cadenzas became more formalized and less spontaneous.

**CANON** Piece in which each line is split into phrases of equal length. The entries of the voices or instruments are staggered to produce a layered, imitative effect. If a canon is strict, the melody line is repeated exactly by all parts.

**CANTATA** Literally “a thing to sing” (Italian), a cantata is in many respects similar to opera, being a programmatic piece generally for voice and orchestra that is designed to tell a story. The 17th and 18th centuries saw the rise of both the cantata da camera (a secular chamber piece) and the cantata da chiesa (its sacred equivalent). Writers of these types of cantata include J S Bach and Heinrich Schütz, whereas the modern, freer version of the cantata has enjoyed treatments by Britten, Stravinsky and Britten, among others.

**CANTUS FIRMUS** Literally a “fixed song” (Latin) – usually comprising very long notes and often based on a fragment of Gregorian chant – that served as the structural basis for polyphonic composition, particularly during the Renaissance.

**CANZONA** Short, polyphonic part song popular in the 16th and 17th centuries. In many ways a canzona is similar to a madrigal, although the writing is lighter.

**CAPRICCIO** Short piece in a generally free style. Capriccios written in the 17th century tend to be fugal in structure and rather more formalised than their Romantic equivalents – written by the likes of Brahms and Paganini, for example – which tend to be solo rhapsodic pieces.

**CATCH** Part song popular in the 17th century that is canonic in form, which causes the words to take on new and bizarre meanings.

**CHACONNE** 17th-century instrumental or vocal piece composed above a ground and characterized by a slow, stately triple-time beat.

**CHAMBER MUSIC** Music composed for small groups of two or more instruments such as duet, trios and quartets. Chamber music was originally designed to be performed at home for the entertainment of small gatherings, but is now more often performed in concert environments. Similarly, chamber orchestras and operas are pieces written for small numbers of instruments, although all orchestral instruments are represented.

**CHANSON** Old French part song similar to the canzona and often arranged for voice and lute.

**CHITARONNE** Literally “big guitar” (Italian), a very large double-necked lute.

**CHROMATIC** Literally “of colour” (Latin), the term refers to a progression of notes that move in semitone steps.

**CLAVICHORD** Early stringed keyboard instrument whose strings are sounded by being struck at a tangent, rather than being struck (like a piano’s) or plucked (like a harpsichord’s).

**CODA** Literally “tail” (Italian), a final section of a piece of music that is distinct from the overall structure yet is based on the piece’s thematic elements.

**CONCERTO** Today, the term “concerto” – derived from terms meaning both “performing together” and “struggling” – is given to describe a large piece for a solo instrument and orchestra, designed to be a vehicle for the solo performer’s virtuosity on his instrument. In the earlier Baroque concerto grosso, however, there was a more equal interplay between the much smaller orchestra (“ripieno”) and a group of soloists (“concertino”).

**CONCERTO GROSSO** See *Concerto.*

**CONTINUO** See *Basso Continuo.*

**CONTRAPUNTAL** Describes a styles of music writing whereby single, interweaving lines of music are played simultaneously to create a complex, continually shifting texture, as typified by the writing of J S Bach.

**COUNTERPOINT** See *Contrapuntal.*

**CRESCEndo** Literally “growing” (Italian), a musical direction to play or sing gradually louder. The opposite is diminuendo.
DA CAPO ARIA See Aria.

DANCE SUITE See Suite.

DIMINUENDO Literally “waning, lessening” (Italian), a musical direction to play or sing gradually more quietly. The opposite is crescendo.

DISSONANCE Sounding together of notes to produce discord (ie sounds unpleasing to the ear). The opposite of these terms are “concordance” and “concord”. Much 20th-century music is dissonant.

DIVERTIMENTO Classical instrumental genre for chamber ensemble or soloist, often performed as light entertainment. Mozart wrote many divertimentos.

DYNAMICS Differences in volume of a piece or section of music.

EMBELLISHMENT See Ornamentation.

ENLIGHTENMENT Social move towards rational scientific reasoning and rational thinking that occurred towards the end of the 18th century, and found its musical expression in the writing of composers such as Haydn.

EQUAL TEMPERAMENT System of tuning whereby each note of the chromatic scale is separated from its neighbours by exactly the same degree. Equal temperament was introduced in the 18th century, before which the intervals varied slightly and the sharps and flats in a scale were all at slightly different pitches.

FUGATO Passage written in the manner of a fugue.

FUGUE Traditionally, a complex, highly structured contrapuntal piece, in two or more parts, popular in the Baroque period. Each line comprises a subject, counter-subject and free part, in that order, which are then performed by the other parts or voices to produce a highly imitative sound.

GALANT SOUND Special musical style of the 18th century characterized by elegance, formality and profuse ornamentation.

GRAND OPÉRA French development of opera, Grand Opéra is characterized by historic plots, large choruses, crowd scenes, ornate costumes and spectacular sets.

GROUND Composition developed on a ground bass (a constantly repeated bass figure, often melodic). Can also refers to the bass part itself.

HARMONIC The harmonic series consists of a fundamental (ie the note played) and a logarithmic, ascending progression of partials (ie overtones) determining the individual tone colour of an instrument.

HOMOPHONIC Describes a style of writing popularized in the Classical period whereby a lyrical melody line is supported by a dense chordal harmony and a solid bass.

INTERMEDI Short musical dramas performed between the acts of spoken plays.

IRCAM Institut de Recherche et Coordination Acoustique/Musique, a France-based research centre for electronic music, founded in 1969 by Georges Pompidou and Pierre Boulez.

KAPPELLMEISTER/HOFKAPPELLMEISTER Choirmaster/music director. The term Kapellmeister later came to be synonymous with the English term “conductor”.

LIBRETTO Text of an opera or other vocal dramatic work

LIED Traditional German song, popularized by the Lieder of Schubert.

LUTE Early precursor of the modern guitar, of Eastern origin, with five pairs of strings, two tuned to each note, which were plucked.

MADRIGAL Secular a cappella song popular in the Renaissance period – particularly in England and Italy – often set to a lyric love poem.

MASQUE Elaborate English stage entertainment chiefly cultivated in the 17th century and involving poetry, dancing, scenery, costumes, instrumental and vocal music. The masque was related to opera and ballet.

MASS Main service of the Roman Catholic Church, highly formalized in structure, comprising specific sections – known as the “Ordinary” – performed in the following order: Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus with Hosanna and Benedictus, and Agnus Dei and Dona nobis pacem. The Baroque period was a fertile time for the Mass as most composers were employed by the churches of Europe.

MÉLODIE French equivalent of the German Lied and English song.

MINUET AND TRIO A graceful dance in 3/4 time, normally in three sections: the Minuet section (either binary or ternary form), then the Trio (originally intended for three musicians to play, and consisting of unrelated material), and finally a reprise of the Minuet. The piece appears as a movement of Baroque suites and Classical sonatas and symphonies, but was replaced with the faster Scherzo by Beethoven.

MÔDÈLES Eight-note scales inherited from Ancient Greece via the Middle Ages in which they were most prevalent, although they still survive today in folk music and plainsong.

MODULATION In a passage of music, a shift from one key (tonality) to another – for example, C major to A minor.

MONODY Vocal style developed in the Baroque period whereby the musical intent is conveyed by a single melodic line, either accompanied or not.

MONOPHONIC Describes music written in a single-line texture, or melody without an accompaniment.
MOTET Originally, in medieval times, a vocal composition elaborating on the melody and text of plainsong. In the 15th century, the motet became a more independent religious choral composition, set to any Latin words not included in the Mass.

MOTIVE Short but recognisable melodic or rhythmical figure that recurs throughout a piece, often used programatically to refer to a character, object, or idea, as with Wagner’s Leitmotiv and Berlioz’s idée fixe.

NATURAL INSTRUMENT Usually refers to a woodwind or brass instrument consisting of a basic tube with no extra mechanisms for modifying the sound, other than breath control and embouchure.

NOCTURNE Night piece. As a solo, one-movement piano piece, the nocturne originated with John Field, but was developed to a great degree by Chopin, who made the form his own.

OPERA Drama in which all or most characters sing and in which music is an important element. Traditionally, the writing is for full orchestra, soloists, and chorus, although examples exist that include fewer or more than these elements.

OPERA COMIQUE Exclusively French type of opera which, despite its name, is not always comic, nor particularly light. It is always based on original material, however, and always includes spoken dialogue.

OPERA BUFFA Type of comic opera that was especially popular in the 18th century (eg Mozart’s The Marriage of Figaro, Rossini’s The Barber of Seville).

OPERA SERIA Literally “serious opera”, and the direct opposite of opera buffa. The style is characterized by the use of castrato singers, heroic or mythological plots, Italian libretti, and formality in music and action, and was popularized in the writings of Rossini.

OPERETTA Literally “little opera”, and sometimes known as “light opera”, this term refers to a lighter style of 19th-century opera involving dialogue.

ORATORIO Work for vocal soloists and choir with instrumental accompaniment originating in the congregation of Oratorians, founded by St Philip Neri in the 16th century. Oratorios traditionally take biblical text as their subject matter and are usually performed “straight”, although they originally involved sets, costumes, and action.

ORNAMENT Also known as an “embellishment”, an ornament is a modification of a note by alternating it rapidly with its neighbour either above, below, or both.

OSTINATO Repeated musical figure, usually in the bass part, than can provide a foundation for harmonic and melodic variation above. Similar to a ground bass.

OVERTURE Literally “opening” (French), an instrumental part of an opera played at the beginning of the work to present the important thematic material therein. In the Romantic period, stand-alone overtures were written – ie Brahms’ Tragic Overture and Mendelssohn’s Hebrides Overture – and performed in their own right. These pieces are usually in sonata form.

PASSACAGLIA Originally a slow and stately dance in moderately slow triple metre appearing in 17th-century keyboard music. These pieces are based on a short, repeated bass-line melody that serves as the basis for continuous variation in the other voices. With later passacaglias, the repeated theme did not necessarily appear in the bass.

PEDAL (POINT) A held note that usually occurs in the bass, above which harmonies change, sometimes even becoming discordant. A pedal point will often occur at the climax of a fugue.

PIZZICATO Literally “pinched” (It.), a style of playing stringed instruments, such as the violin or cello, by plucking the string with a finger of the bowing hand, or occasionally with the frettng hand between bowed notes.

PLAINSONG Also known as plainchant (from the Latin cantus planus), plainsong is medieval church music which still survives today in the Roman Catholic Church. It consists of a unison, unaccompanied vocal line in free rhythm, like speech, with no regular bar lengths. Gregorian chant is a well-known type of plainsong.

POLYPHONY Literally “many sounds”, in Classical music this refers to a style of writing in which all parts are independent and of equal importance, unlike homophonic music, and therefore implies contrapuntal music. Music forms that typify this style include the canon, fugue, and motet.

PROGRAMME MUSIC Any music written to describe a non-musical theme, such as an event, landscape, or literary work.

RECITATIVE Style of singing in opera and oratorio that is closely related to the delivery of dramatic speech in pitch and rhythm. The notes of the recitative are fixed, but there is no fixed time.

REPETITIEUR Someone who plays a piano reduction of a work for voice and orchestra so that the singers can practise their lines to an accompaniment.

RICERCARE Literally “to seek out” (It.), an instrumental fugal work played on keyboard instruments or by a consort of string or wind instruments. Can be seen as the instrumental counterpart of the madrigal or motet.

RONDOPiece (or movement) of music based on a recurring theme with interspersed material, often written in rondo sonata form.

RONDO SONATA FORM See Sonata Principle/Form.
SCHERZO Lively dance piece (or movement) in triple time. During the Classical and Romantic periods, the third movement of a symphony one of a sonata’s middle movements was a Scherzo, usually paired with a Trio. The Scherzo and Trio replaced the Baroque Minuet and Trio.

SERENATA A kind of 18th-century secular cantata, often of an occasional or congratulatory nature, and performed either as a small quasi-opera or as a concert piece.

SERIAL MUSIC System of atonal composition developed by Arnold Schoenberg and others of the Second Viennese School, in which fixed sequences of musical elements are used as a foundation for more complex structures. Most commonly these sequences comprise arrangements of each degree of the chromatic scale – known as a “tone row” – although shorter sequences may also be used. This tone row, or series, can then appear in four different ways: forwards, backwards (retrograde), upside-down (inversion), and upside-down and backwards (retrograde inversion). Pieces composed to this method include Schoenberg’s Serenade, Op. 24, and Webern’s String Trio, Op. 20.

SINGSPIEL Literally “song play” (German), Singspiel generally refers to a comic opera with spoken dialogue in lieu of recitative, as typified in Mozart’s The Magic Flute.

SONATA Popular instrumental piece for one or more players. Appearing first in the Baroque period, when it was a short piece for a solo or small group of instruments accompanied by a continuo, the Classical sonata adhered to a three- or four-movement structure for one or two instruments (although the three-instrument trio sonata was often popular), comprising usually three or four movements: an opening movement (in what later became known as “first movement” or “sonata” form), a slow second movement, a lively Scherzo, and finally a Rondo.

SONATA DA CAMERA Literally “chamber sonata” (Italian), a multi-instrumental piece (usually for two violins with basso continuo) of the late 17th and early 18th centuries that often took the form of a collection of dance movements, usually with a quick first movement.

SONATA DA CHIESA Literally “church sonata”, a multi-instrumental piece similar in many respects to the secular sonata da camera, usually comprising four movements: a slow introduction, a fugal movement, a slow movement, and a quick finale.

SONATA PRINCIPLE/FORM Structural form popularized in the Classical period, and from this period onwards the first movements of sonatas, symphonies, and concertos were written mainly in this form.
1. A piece written in sonata form traditionally comprises an exposition, comprising a subject followed by a second subject (linked by a bridge section and modulated to a different key), after which the initial material is expounded on in the development section, and finally the recapitulation restates the exposition, although remaining in the tonic (main key).
2. A variation on sonata form is “rondo sonata form”, in which the restated rondo theme is constructed around a similar developmental format, with a refrain (ie a section which returns regularly) alternating with contrasting sections called “episodes”. If the refrain is labelled as A and the episodes as B and C, a typical rondo form will be as follows: ABACAD (with D being the coda).

STACCATO Literally “detached” (Italian), a performance technique whereby each note is articulated separately, without slurring.

SUBJECT In musical terms, a group of notes forming a basic element or idea in a composition by repetition and development, particularly in a fugue or rondo. Pieces composed in sonata form contain first and second subjects, but these are thematic groups rather than individual themes.

SUITE Multi-movement work (generally instrumental) made up of a series of contrasting dance movements, usually all in the same key.

SYMPHONY Large-scale work for full orchestra. The Classical and Romantic symphony, popularized by Haydn and Mozart, contains four movements – traditionally an Allegro, a slower second movement, a Scherzo, and a lively Finale – but later symphonies can contain more or fewer. The first movement is often in sonata form, and the slow movement and Finale may follow a similar structure.

SYMPHONIC POEM Extended single-movement symphonic work, usually of a programmatic nature, often describing landscape or literary works. Also known as a tone poem.

TEMPERAMENT See Equal Temperament.

TOCCATA Literally “a thing to touch (ie play)” (Italian), and thus distinguished from a “cantata”. The term came to be associated with touching a keyboard to test it, and so toccatas came to include rapid ornamentation and brilliant passages, a trend that continued into later Classical and Romantic toccatas.

12-TONE MUSIC System of composition on which the later works of Schoenberg and his followers are based, whereby each degree of the chromatic scale is ascribed exactly the same degree of importance, thus eliminating any concept of key or tonality. (See also Serial Music.)

VERISMO Style of opera with thematic material and presentation rooted firmly in reality.

VOLUNTARY Traditionally, an organ piece written for performance before and after an Anglican church service. The term also applies generally to a free-style keyboard piece.

ZARZUELA Light Spanish one- or two-act musical stage play or comic opera, usually strongly nationalistic with spoken dialogue and, sometimes, audience participation.
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