

P E R I O D S O F M U S I C H I S T O R Y

Baroque
1600 - 1750

Characteristics of music: Music of the Baroque period was decorative and filled with ornamentations (much like the fine art of that time). The music contained very few dynamic markings and tempos remained the same for the entire piece.

Size of Orchestras: Orchestras during this time were small and consisted of perhaps four 1st violins, four 2nd violins, 2 violas, two celli, and one bass. When called for, a small wind section (one player per part) was used. Timpani was used sparingly in the percussion section. The total number of musicians ranged from 18-24.

Conductors: Because orchestras were small and works contained little change in tempo or dynamic, no conductors were needed. In most cases, the concert master or harpsichordist used his head or free hand to begin the piece and give the final cutoff. Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632-1687) used to pound the ground with a heavy wooden staff in order to keep time for his orchestra. On one occasion, he missed the floor hitting his foot. His wound was so severe, it did not heal; gangrene resulted and eventually he died from his injury.

Famous Composers:

- Vivaldi (1678-1741),
- George Frederick Handel (1685-1759)
- Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)
- Johann Pachelbel (1653-1706)

Classical
1750-1825

Characteristics of music: Music of the Classical period was much more reserved, intellectual and rational sounding. The ornamentations of the Baroque period had definitely fallen out of style. It was as though the musical pendulum had swung completely the other way to a much more controlled style of composition.

Size of Orchestras: In the early Classical period, the string sections of orchestras began to grow in number. In the late Classical period - Beethoven's time - orchestras were substantially larger in all sections of the orchestra. The total number of musicians ranged from 30-50 and in some cases was even higher

Conductors: Musicians were still experimenting with ways to keep large numbers of players in time. Instead of using a staff to pound noisily on the floor, conductors used rolled up pieces of music into a scroll and waved them in the air.

Famous Composers:

- Joseph Haydn (1732-1809),
- Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)
- Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)
- Franz Schubert (1797-1828)
- Felix Mendelssohn (809-1847)

Romantic
1825 - 1900

Characteristics of music: Music of the Romantic period conveyed feelings. It had many more expression markings and tempo changes. Composers used nature as an inspiration for their works. In the Late Romantic period, composers from countries other than Germany, Austria and Italy (considered to be the center of all arts) used folk tunes from their native countries as inspiration for their compositions. This provided a new flavor of music called Nationalism.

Size of Orchestras: Orchestras exploded during the Romantic Period. Large concert halls were built which could accommodate huge orchestras. String sections as large as 50-60 players were combined with a large compliment of woodwinds, brass, and percussion. Orchestras also began to use a standard of seating that is still used today.

Conductors: By now, conductors were a standard practice for orchestras. They would stand on a podium and use a wooden stick or baton to lead. Their function became more than just a time keeper. It was now the conductor's job to interpret the compositions and convey musical gestures to the musicians that would produce the desired musical effect.

Famous Composers:

- Carl Maria von Weber (1768-1826)
 - Frederic Chopin (1810-1849)
 - Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)
- Nationalistic Composers**
- Antonin Dvorak (1841-1904)
 - Edward Grieg (1843-1907)
 - Peter Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)
 - Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943)

MODERN
1900 TO PRESENT

Characteristics of music: Early in this period, composers tried to convey impressions created by sights, sounds, fragrances, and tastes. Composers broke the molds of traditional harmonies.

Size of Orchestra: Today, the size of an orchestra will vary according to the requirements of the piece it is performing. they can be as large as 100+ or as small as 24. Compositions to day may require an instrument not usually found in an orchestra - i.e. a saxophone.

Conductors: Today, we don't even think about an orchestra without imagining a conductor taking charge of all those musicians! His role has evolved into so much more than a time keeper. With hundreds of years of music in the past, it is the responsibility of the modern day conductor to maintain music integrity when conducting everything from Bach to Copland. Conductors must be well versed in theory, music history, and foreign languages. Because all music is living, they must bring artistic meaning to the notes on the page and convey their musical interpretation to the musicians before them. They are also responsible for choosing an interesting and creative program of music for their listening audience.

Famous Composers:

- Claude Debussy (1862-1918)
- Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)
- Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971)
- Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953)
- Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975)
- Edward MacDowell (1860-1908)
- Aaron Copland (1900-1990)
- George Gershwin (1898-1937)

Baroque Period 1600 - 1750 Classical Period 1750 - 1825 Romantic Period 1825 - 1900 MODERN PERIOD 1900 TO PRESENT

