

Nineteenth century romantic period



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What is music. The dictionary says music is, an artistic form of auditory communication incorporating instrumental or vocal tones in a structured and continuous manner (Dictionary. com). Most people would also have to agree that music is a sound that comes out of passion and that the maker of the sound is expressing what music is to him/her to the entire world. We as individuals get to pick what kind of music to listen to and what kind of music has interest to us. The Romantic Period was loved by many individuals because it let the composers express the music the way they choice to. The music was simple and had a lot of emotional expression to it. Romantic music goes back to the particular period, theory, and practice of about 1815-1910. The romanticism in the Romantic Period of the early 19th century made this kind of music a movement that describes the expansion of the structures within a composition and improved pieces by having more passion and expressive to them. The expansion of the forms made it easier to identify the work to the artist, for example by the elements of form, key, instrumentation and the like of the work. The Romantic revolution in a way one can say in the literature became a similar revolution in the music during this time period. Romantic music is certainly related to the romanticism in literature, and also to visual arts, and philosophy. It was believed that Romantic music struggled to uplift emotional expression and also struggled with power while saving or even extending the formal structural from the classical period which occurred before the Romantic period even started. The 19th century had musical language. The composers analyzed the music to poetry and its rhapsodic and narrative structure to create a more systematic starting point when composing and even performing the concert music. Romantic composers wanted to expand the form therefore they used longer

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melodies and when the composers wanted greater harmonic, the work of art in the music ran more fluidly as a result. The Romantic period was indeed a time of great revolutions. Passion was the key element that made the Romantic period what it was rather than reason. Passion went side by side with imagination. The Romantic period was about composers trying something new, something out of the box, something that was never tried before and most importantly, something that identified who the said composer was. This was the way some individuals fought back during the American Civil War. Individuals fought back with their feelings and most importantly with their emotions when the Industrial Revolution began to replace everyone with machines. As stated, emotions ruled the arts during this time period, the Romantic period had more artistic freedom than other periods before it, and a big part of that was due to emotions and the imagination of these wonderful composers. The Romantic period brought a new musical form with it called tone poem which told a story kind of like a ballad. These stories and music were about exotic places and wonderful events. Tone color was another important creation. Tone color is when a special sound makes an instrument or voice sound different from another. The new instruments created new tone colors while the old instruments produced different tone colors as they were played in new ways. Virtuosity was also very big for the Romantic period. Virtuosity is something that many individuals can relate to. The composers and musicians showed off their talents by playing very difficult sections of music. Franz Liszt which will be talked about later on was one of these famous piano virtuosos. If he was to be related to something in the present time, Liszt would have to be what a rock star is today. When thinking of the Romantic period, the most popular

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instrument would have to indeed be the piano. Frederic Chopin which will be talked about later on was the best known composer of piano music. Many new instruments were also invented during the Romantic period such as the tuba, saxophone, and the old instruments were improved and were better than before. The 19th century introduced many -isms, such as nationalism, impressionism, supernaturalism, and symbolism. The Romantic Period was about emotion, longing, imagination, literature, dreams, and program music taking place. The composers' status rose during the Romantic Era.

Composers were more liked by the public. The Industrial Revolution made it possible for every middle class home to have a piano. The music was being taken to extremes during this time period. The composers' stretched out the forms into their works. Not only was it possible to have a piano in every middle class household because of the Industrial Revolution but it made it possible for regular people to make and experience music in their own homes in the comfort of their family and friends. Frederic Francois Chopin, Franz Ritter von Liszt, and Felix Mendelssohn in my opinion had to be some of the greatest composers of the 19th century.

Frederic Francois Chopin was born in 1810 and died in 1849 at a young age. It is said that at the young age of 39 Chopin died of tuberculosis. Chopin was born in the village of Zelazowa Wola, in the Duchy of Warsaw to a French father, and a Polish mother. As Chopin got older he left to go to Paris where he was indeed making a living as a composer and a piano teacher, and from time to time he was also giving a few public performances for fun. His compositions were written primarily just for the piano as a solo instrument. The piano meant everything to Chopin, and the piano was the most popular

instrument of the Romantic Period as stated before. Many people have said that Chopin was a Nationalistic composer. “ Nationalism is a love of one’s country and the desire to see one’s country free from invaders. His music speaks to these feelings of patriotism and freedom” (Todd 55). It is believed that Chopin invented musical forms such as the instrumental ballad. The instrumental ballad is in a way like a story having a dramatic or exciting episode in it or even a narrative. The twist is that this episode or narrative is placed in a song, poem, or even a verse by a person such as a composer. Stories that are looked at as ballads include but are not limited to, historical accounts, familial traditions, or fairy tales. These three examples communicate the fact that these ballads are indeed heard from oral tradition; a story passed on from generation to generation. The ballad usually has three stress lines which are called a “ ballad meter”, and simple repeating rhymes, which are often repeated with a refrain. It is also said that Chopin was also responsible for major innovation in the piano, here are just a few; sonata, mazurka, waltz, and prelude.

Chopin wrote four Sonatas. A sonata is a musical composition of three or four movements of contrasting forms. Using the word sonata from the Latin and Italian sonar it means “ to sound”. Three for piano solo and one for piano and cello. His sonatas were targeted of much abuse that Chopin had four of his maddest children under the same roof. The traditional Sonata form is A-B-A. Chopin’s first sonata was titled “ Sonata No. 2 in B-flat minor, Op. 35”, this was composed in 1839 at Nohant near Chateauroux in France. This sonata consists of four movements; the first is the Grave; Doppio movimento, second is the Scherzo, third is the Marche funebre: Lento, and the fourth is the

Finale: Presto. In the first movement I feel as if the song features a stormy opening maybe to introduce the theme while the second theme has more of a calmer relaxed feel to it. The third movement begins and ends with the funeral march in B flat minor which is what gives this sonata its title. The finale contains a whirlwind of notes played in unison. There is not a single rest of chord until the final bars. In the finale there are a lot of dynamics, the volume changes very often. As I listen to this sonata I feel my mind drifting off and I mean that in a good way. I am thinking of memories and I imagine myself staring out by the window on a rainy day while this is playing in the room. I feel very calm and very at peace when I hear this sonata, but at the same time I feel as if this sonata is very slow and down that it kind of makes me bored in the middle of it.

A mazurka is a moderately fast Polish country dance which was popular in Europe during the Romantic Period. These Polish folk dances are in triple meter with a heavy accent on the second or third beat of every measure. For example: (1-2-3| 1-2-3 or 1-2-3| 1-2-3). The Mazurkas, Op. 6 contains four of the first mazurkas that Chopin published. No. 1 in F minor uses Polish folk rhythms and modes. This Mazurka starts out with a piano section in which the theme is started. The second theme is started in fortissimo. Fortissimo is used in dynamics to refer to the volume of a sound or note. Fortissimo means very loud and it is the highest dynamic there is to capture the volume of sound or a note. These two passages both end with repeats. The third theme is introduced as an ostinato, which is a phrase that is persistently repeated in the same musical voice that an ostinato always has equal sounds. Chopin composed a total of 58 mazurkas. Another famous mazurka

by Frederic Chopin was his Mazurka in B-flat, op. 7, no. 1. The melody of this mazurka stands out in the uppermost voice while the lower voices play a strictly supporting role. The texture is homophonic because of the high melody of the piece. This work is a character piece; it has short works that capture a particular character, not the character in a story but in the sense of a character's mood. This piece of music by Chopin is a great example of musical nationalism and a great example of how Chopin used nationalism in his music. There are no voices just the piano heard in this mazurka but the piano is playing the part of the vocalist. A drone bass is a single pair of notes that are repeated over and over again which is used in this song. This mazurka uses a lot of scales (Do-Re-Mi...) that go up and down. This mazurka is popular with the pianist opening with a theme that consists simply of an ascending scale- a series of steps going up in an upward motion to p which is soft. Then later the mode changes to mystery or contemplation and the series of scales go down in a downward motion to pp which is very soft. This is when rubato is taking place. Rubato in music just basically means when the tempo is being pushed and pulled by the measures.

A waltz is a ballroom and folk dance that is performed in a closed position. A waltz is a piece of music that is in triple meter; a waltz also has a 1. 2. 3 - 1. 2. 3. count and is usually a slow tempo. Waltzes have one chord per measure and the root of the chord is the first note. Chopin himself composed 20 waltzes. A prelude is a short piece of music in which the form of it may vary.

Chopin's Waltz in D flat is a popular Waltz that many are familiar with. It is popularly known as the "Minute Waltz". Chopin wrote this waltz in 1847; therefore it was composed during the middle of the Romantic Period. Chopin

did not intend for this waltz to be played in one minute usually this performance of the waltz is about one and half to two and a half minutes. While listening to Chopin's Waltz in D flat, I very much enjoyed the Waltz. It is very fast and I like that it keeps to a rhythm. I also like how some of the notes are loud and out there for the listener to hear very clearly, and then after a while the notes just fade away and are very quite. It makes the listener want to pay extra close attention to the notes, and then when the listener does, the notes surprise the listener and come back louder like they were played before. I was also imagining a big ballroom full of people dancing and that is not because this is a Waltz. The truth is the feel of the music. This kind of music makes you want to ballroom dance in a way.

Franz Ritter von Liszt was born on October 22, 1811 and died on July 31, 1886. He was born to Marie Anna Lager and Adam Liszt in the village of Raiding in Sopron Country, which is now in Hungary. Liszt's father played the piano as well as many other instruments and he taught Franz Liszt how to play the piano at the young age of seven. Then at the age of eight, Liszt began composing. At the age of nine, Liszt appeared in many concerts and after the concerts, a group of well off Hungarians offered to finance Franz music education abroad. He was a Hungarian composer, a wonderful pianist and a teacher. Liszt was becoming popular during the 19th century throughout Europe for the great skill that he had as a performer. He is said to be the greatest pianist of all time. Many individuals are influenced by him as an important composer and a conductor who contributed to the modern development of the art of all time. He contributed to the invention of the symphonic poem. The symphonic poem is also called a tone poem and" is a

piece of orchestral music in a single continuous section (a movement) in which the content of a poem, a story or a novel, a painting, a landscape or another (non- musical) source is illustrated or evoked” (dictionary. com). The term of symphonic poem was first applied by Franz Liszt himself to his 13 works. Liszt also developed the concept of the thematic transformation as part of his musical form and making departures in harmony. Liszt was known as a prolific composer. His career followed his changing personal and professional life. He was not afraid to mix professional and personal life together. Liszt’s piano works are said to be difficult to the average person. Liszt also liked to expand his musical ideas into poetry and painting. The largest and well best known music of Liszt has to be his original piano work. He was known for taking previously done works and revising them for example, “ Annees de Pelerinage” which means years of pilgrimage in English has gone through some thoroughly revised process by Liszt. Many people have said that Liszt’s piano works are divided into two different classes. The first class are his original works such as the piece called Harmonies poetiques et religieuses and the second class are the fantasy works that have been done by other composers, for example Liszt’s transcriptions of songs done by Schubert. Liszt is well known for composing almost six dozen original songs with a piano accompaniment. A lot of the songs were in German or French, and only one song was done in English. As of today a lot of Liszt’s songs have been forgotten by the public. Liszt’s songs should be played and remembered forever because he loved the idea of programme music. Programme music is much that is intended to evoke extra musical ideas. His own view on this was that “ music can be taken from the preface of the Album d’un Voyageur” (NAME PG). One thing that great

composer need to be is noted teachers and Liszt was the most noted teacher of the 19th century.

Liszt piano concerto no. 1 consists of four movements. Allegro maestoso, Quasi adagio, Allegretto vivace, and Allegro marziale. During the Allegro maestoso, the piece begins and the theme is introduced by the orchestra. Then following is the piano with an octave that spans four octaves. The duet is quiet and is formed between the clarinet and piano making the passage peaceful. The main theme soon takes over again there after. Introduced in the adagio section is the cello and the double bass. They are introduced in serene, unison cantabile prior to the rest of the string joining sections. The double bass and cello descend before the joining of the piano in *una corda*. The piano develops further while using the string theme. A strong fortissimo is played as the climax is reached. Prior to this a descending diminuendo scale is played. The orchestra joins in full after a slight pause following the same theme but instead a cello is played as the piano is played quickly. This introduces a new passage. The windward section is now playing a new theme as the piano is in the upper register. The passage comes to an end with the piano. Starting the Allegretto vivace is a string quartet. There after the piano resumes, playing the same theme as it further develops. Giving the concerto its unique form, the last two movements are reintroduced and combined. The ending of the movement ends the same the same way the first movement began with a piano passage ending in F-minor. During the Allegro marziale animato begins with a descending E-flat scale which plays before the orchestra plays the slow woodwind section that was played in the previous movement. The brass is used to decorate the melody in this

movement. This movement continues to bring all the themes out at different times while combining them all together.

Liszt's Piano Concerto no. 1: Allegro maestoso-Tempo giusto makes me feel as if I'm at a dinner party listening to this song playing. I very much enjoy the part when the piano and the orchestra are played together. The whole song just gives this feeling of excitement at some parts with the cello being played then when the piano and orchestra is playing together I get this sense of being at a real piano concerto. This song is making me feel as if its a real professional song that is being played for entertainment.

Liszt fell down the stairs of a hotel on July 2, 1881. It was believed that Liszt was in good health before the accident of his death accorded. Later on when he got checked in for his accident, it was shown that Liszt had dropsy, asthma, insomnia, a cataract of the left eye and chronic heart disease (NAME PG). Liszt later died in Germany, on July 31, 1886. He died at a normal age at the age of 74.

Felix Mendelssohn originally named Jakob Ludwig Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy was born on February 3, 1847 in Hamburg Germany and was raised by a highly intellect Jewish family. He first began studying the piano after his family had moved to Berlin under Ludwig Berger and then studied composition under Karl F. Zelter. As a child, Felix played the piano and the violin. He showed a great level of talent as a child proving that he was a prodigy. Not only did he show that he was musically gifted, but he was also artistic and proved to be gifted in foreign languages. It was believed that Mendelssohn was not just a great composer but also an artist. His giftedness

included drawing, watercolors, and oil painting. He also drew humorous sketches and cartoons in the text of his drawings. Music and art go with each other and both are great works of art. Clearly Mendelssohn was a very gifted man. Mendelssohn also had a normal life like most people do. He got married to Cecile Jarnrenaud on March 28, 1837. They had five children together which they named: Carl, Marie, Lilli, Felix, and Paul. Mendelssohn traveled across the European continent to study music such as Paris where he studied the works of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Johann Sebastian Bach along with his sister Fanny who was said to be the one to introduce him to music as a young child. Mendelssohn most defiantly got his ideas for music from some of the greatest composers of the earlier time as stated by Mozart and Bach. Mendelssohn was inspired by the many musical masters, especially Bach. Mendelssohn composed eleven symphonies, five operas, and many other piano pieces. These pieces were only the beginning of his highly talented musical career. At such a young age and at the beginning of his musical career, he managed to impress every audience member and proved his musical talent. His first concert that he performed in front of a public audience was at the age of nine. At age fifteen in 1824, Mendelssohn wrote his very first full orchestra symphony in C minor, Op. 11. String E-flat major which he wrote at the age of sixteen truly showed the power of his musical talent. His best known early works were, This Octet, and the overture to Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream: Wedding March.

Mendelssohn's overture to Shakespeare's play, "A Midsummer Night's Dream" is written in sonata form. It is a one movement work with no repeat of the exposition. The work captures the chaotic, magic spirit of any

enchanted forest. There is this pull against the world of fantasy and the world of reality. The real are the two pair of human lovers while the unreal are the fairies. The transformed unreal is the workman's head that is changed to a donkey during the end. This work has a story to it therefore it is program music. The artists thought it was important to integrate purely instrumental music with ideas which is what Mendelssohn clearly did here.

Mendelssohn also wanted to create characters through sound. There are five opening measures of this work. The first measure is entirely winds, it draws to the enchanted forest such as setting the story out for the audience. The second measure is the high-pitched figure in the strings. The third measure is the loud theme, it reflects the heavier world of the pair of humans and its ruler (Theseus). The fourth measure is the first theme in the secondary key area. When the human lovers fall in and out of love with each other. The last measure is a loud, braying theme which is associated with Bottom, the head of the donkey. The workman's head is changed into a donkey is when the fifth measure is introduced and finished.

Sonata form includes the exposition, development, recapitulation, and the coda. In the exposition, all the opening themes are introduced in the tonic key area. Moves from tonic to new key area. This is the first binary section of the sonata form. Then in the development the themes are being developed from the expositions that they were introduced in. This is when the new key area moves into the unstable key area(s). In the recapitulation the opening theme(s) in the tonic are returning. This is when the unstable key area(s) move to tonic again. Then the return of theme(s) are still in the tonic. This is the second binary section. Then coda in Italian means "tail", which indicates

the movement to a close after the recapitulation. The coda is the ending where new music usually shows up that has not been heard in the rest of the work so far. Now in this work of a sonata form, the characters are introduced in the exposition. In the development the exposition does not need to be repeated. The scurrying theme heard here is associated with the fairies. In the recapitulation all the main themes are brought back to the tonic. Then the coda is when it ends the work as it began. During the coda the listener can hear long held notes being played by the winds.

After Mendelssohn's death on November 4, 1847 it was believed that the death of his close sister Fanny six months before Mendelssohn's death caused him great distress in his life. In his wake he was mourned both in Germany and England. That just comes to show what a great reputation he had. In England his reputation was very highly looked upon for an extremely long period of time. Mendelssohn's popular piano music will always remain popular to his fans especially the overture to Shakespeare's: A Midsummer Night's Dream: Wedding March.

The 19th Century Romantic Period must have created an impact to future generations. The Romantic Period to date created old technologies for later generations to use. The Romantic Period also made it okay to turn poetry into songs. This era showed that not every song has to be about falling in love and having a happy fairy tail ending. It showed people that it is okay to write and sing about the dark side of things. Romantic Period made it possible for future generations to express themselves into the songs that the composers write nowadays. The Romantic Period had passion in the music that was performed. This passion carried along to the future generations.

Celine Dionne, Taylor Swift, and many more artists put passion into their songs. It is the songs that have passion that the audience enjoys listening to over and over again. People enjoy going to the concerts, enjoy and wants to buy the CDs, because the people want to hear songs that have passion in them and songs that they can relate to. I honestly believe that the 19th Century Romantic Period had a lot of impact on our generation and will have impact on many more generations to come. Individuals learn and grow from the past. People take old ideas and try to make them new, but they also keep the initial thought of the idea going. The new ideas that are represented have to start from somewhere. It is like adding a new larger step to an idea that was perfect in the past, but just adding a little something more to make that idea even better now in the present.

The events and changes of society have greatly affected music. Such as the attitudes, ideas, inventions, discoveries, and various historical events of society all played a big role in inspiration of 19th century music. During the 19th century, the industrial revolution was in its prime. The industrial revolution had a huge impact on the music of this time period by the implementation of new technology into musical instruments. Some of the innovations included newly redesigned mechanical valves and redesigned key for brass and woodwind instruments that improved sound quality and ease of play. The uprising of the middle class impacted the development of music as well. Prior to the 19th century music era, a vast majority of composers were living on the patronage of aristocracy. Most of the audiences of the performances were of mostly upper class music savvy individuals and were small in numbers. Large audience concerts such as

festivals and public events were often wrote by composers of the Romantic Era. The audiences of these performances were mainly paying customers and didn't have vast knowledge of music that the upper class did.

Composers of the Romantic Era did not want music to be segregated among a particular class of society. Instead it is stated that the “ purpose was to write music that was to be heard” (Young 1967, 527). During the 19th century, the importance of nationalism became increasingly important and projected into the music and other various arts of the Romantic Era.

Nationalism was expressed in the music by implementing native unique elements of native cultures like folk songs and dances. Using elements such as rhythm and melody by composers, the diversification of the musical language was increasing especially during the end of the 19th century.

Nationalist music written by composers contained many different elements from various cultures. Music from one country may contain elements from another and incorporate it into one. For example Bedrich Smentana and Antonin Dvorak of Russia used elements and themes from Czech songs and folk dances. Chopin also wrote some of his pieces in such forms as polonaise and mazurka which was originated from polish folk music. It can be said that during this time music became very politically charged in a global scene.