

PERIODS OF MUSIC HISTORY

Baroque 1600 - 1750

Characteristics of music: Music of the Baroque period was dramatic and filled with ornamentation (much like the first use of that term). The music contained very few dynamic markings and tempo 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 cellos, and one bass. When per party was used. Trumpets were used sparingly in the percussion section. The total number of musicians ranged from 10-24.

Conductors: Because orchestras were small and works contained little change in tempo or dynamics, no conductor was needed. In most cases, the concert master or harpsichordist used his hand or finger to lead. Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632-1687) would stand in front of the orchestra and pound the ground with a heavy wooden staff in order to keep time for his orchestra. On one occasion, he missed the down beat, he did not lead, 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 (1698-1750)

Classical 1750-1825

Characteristics of music: Music of the Classical period was much more reserved, intellectual and rational sounding. The ornamentation of the Baroque period had definitely fallen out of style. It was as if 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 30-40 and in some cases was even higher.

Conductors: Musicians were still expected to play with ways to keep large numbers of players in time. Instead of using a staff and calling up pieces of music into a scroll and waving 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 (1809-1847)

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 art) used folktales from their native countries as a source of inspiration for their compositions. This produced a new flavor of music called Nationalism.

Size of Orchestras: Orchestras exploded during the Romantic Period. Large concert halls were built which could accommodate large orchestras. String sections in large concert halls were conducted with a large baton. 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 were no longer just a job title. Their function became more than just a time keeper. It was now the conductor's job to interpret the composer's and convey musical gestures to desired musical effect.

- Famous Composers:**
 Carl Maria von Weber (1786-1826)
 Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849)
 Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)
Nationalistic Composers:
 Antonín Dvořák (1854-1904)
 Edward Grieg (1843-1907)
 Franz Liszt (1811-1886)
 Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943)

MODERN 1900 TO PRESENT

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

Size of Orchestras: 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. Conductors usually found in an orchestra - i.e. a musician.

Conductors: Today, we don't even think about an orchestra without imagining a conductor taking charge of all these 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 in the past. Conductors must be well versed in theory, music history, and language. Because all music is living, they must bring another 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 (1893-1953)
 Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975)
 Edward MacDowell (1860-1908)
 Aaron Copland (1895-1990)
 George Gershwin (1898-1937)

