



# The Romantic Period

1825 - 1910

# The Romantic Era

Where Classical had been reason, order, and rules,  
Romantic was **emotion, adventure, and imagination.**

## OPERA

Written to show off skills

Implemented Dissonance and modulation

**Sounds harsh  
to the ear**

**Changing from 1 key to another**

Huge interest in songs written as part of a cycle: a complete story told with several related songs.

# What was happening in the world during this period?



1825 - Erie Canal opens

1838 - Invention of photography

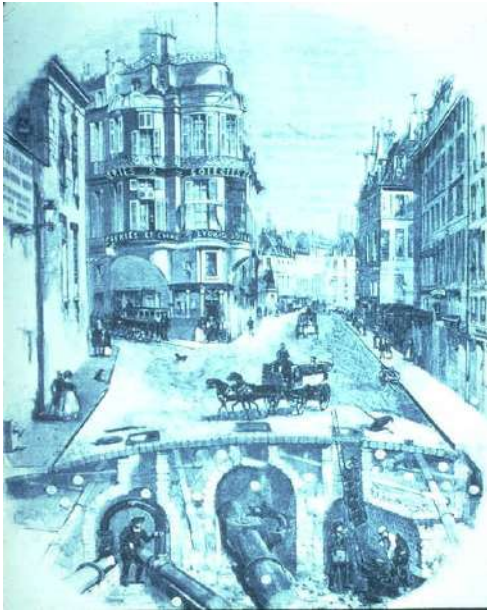
1846 - Neptune discovered

1859 - Charles Darwin publishes *The Origin of the Species*

1861-1865 - American Civil War

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- 1869 - Transcontinental Railroad completed
  - 1872 - Brooklyn Bridge opens
  - 1876 - Telephone invented
  - 1877 - Phonograph invented
  - 1886 - Statue of Liberty presented to New York
  - 1893 - Henry Ford builds first car
  - 1903 - Wright Brothers first airplane flight at Kitty Hawk, NC
  - 1905 -  $E=mc^2$  - Einstein's Theory of Relativity
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# Social and Political Influences



Industrialism

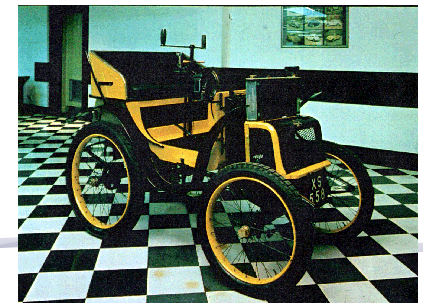
First occurred in Britain

Power shifted from  
aristocratic landowners  
to middle class city  
dwellers

Populations moved from  
an agrarian (rural)  
center to an urban  
center



# Inventions



# Famous People from the Era

Charles Darwin

Albert Einstein

Sigmund Freud

Abraham Lincoln

Mark Twain

Alexander Graham Bell

Henry Ford

Booker T. Washington

Karl Marx

Jack the Ripper

Walt Whitman

Ralph Waldo Emerson

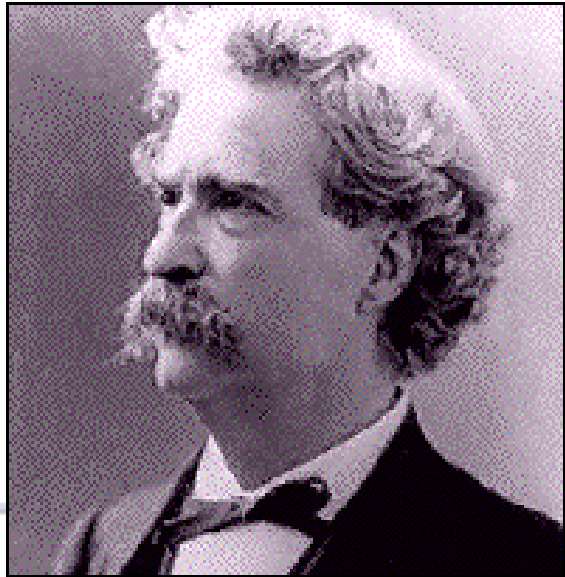
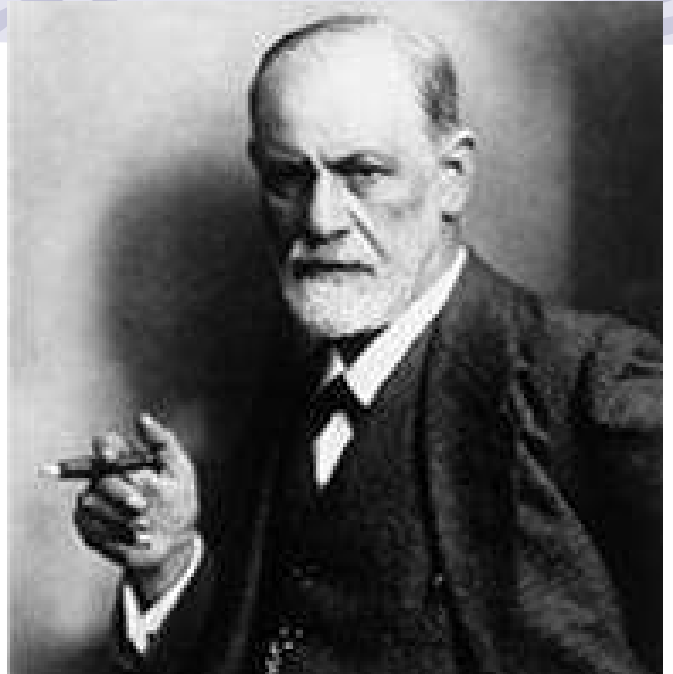
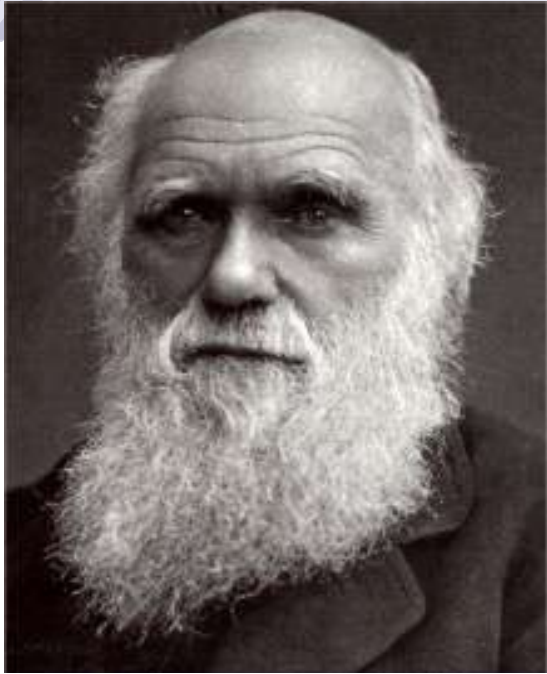
Henry David Thoreau

Edgar Allen Poe

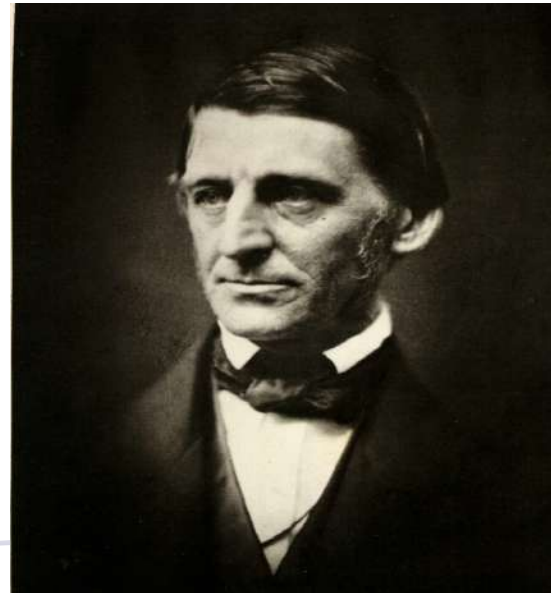
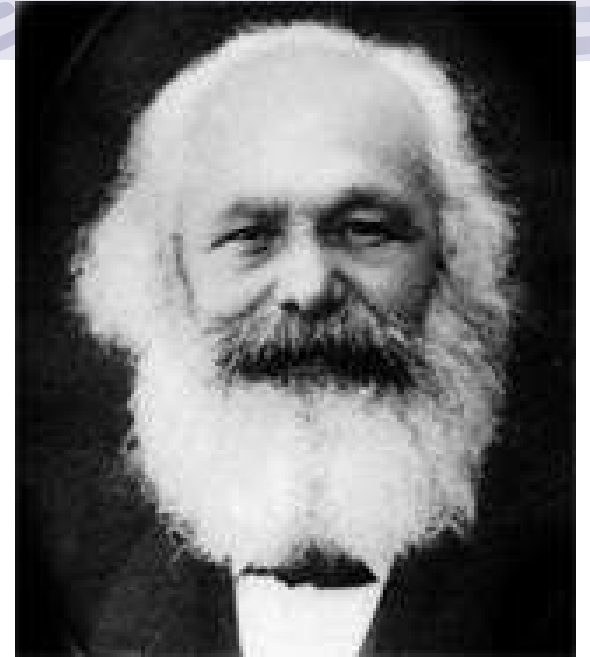
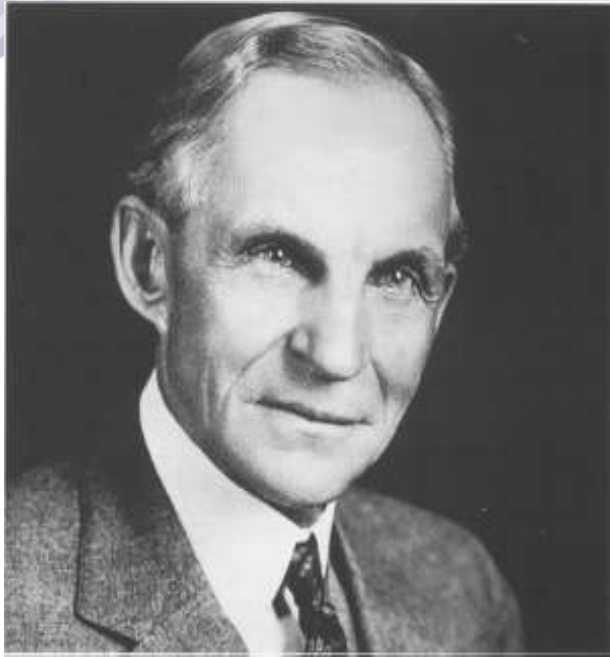
Emily Dickinson

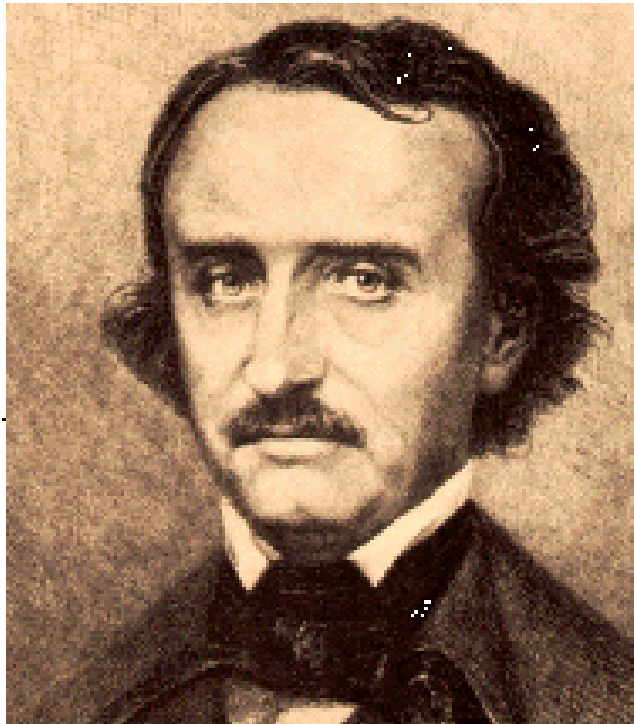
James Fenimore Cooper

Cezanne, Manet, Van Gogh











# Famous Artists

Paul Cezanne

Edouard Manet

Edgar Degas

Claude Monet

Vincent van Gogh

Edvard Munch

Georges Seurat











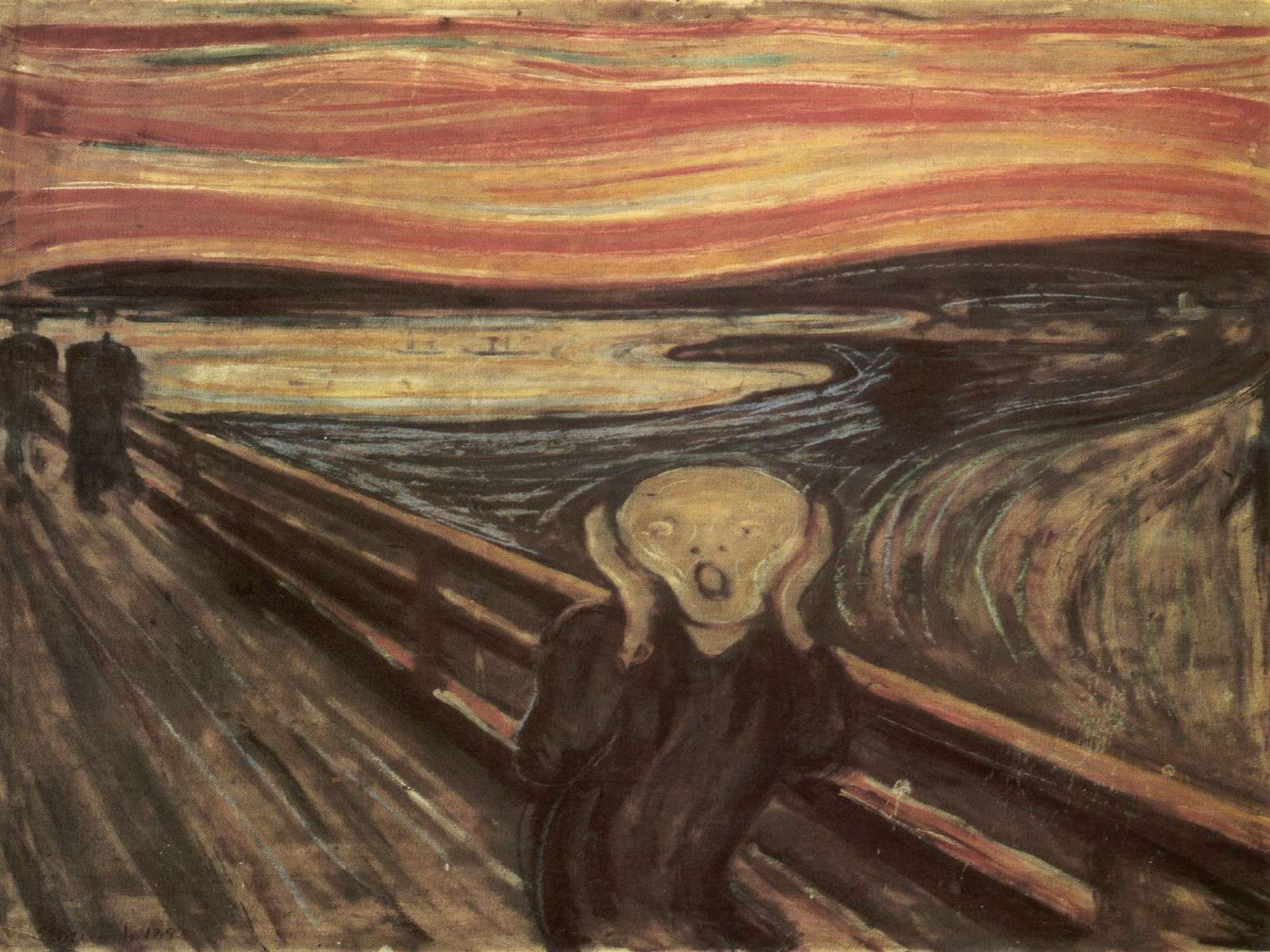
















# What does the term *Romantic* mean?

The Romantic movement in music coincides with a general Romantic movement in all arts.

At this period, the arts of literature and painting began to influence music.

In the Romantic era, music acquired poetic or philosophical meaning.

Antiquity, folklore, history and exotic cultures were examined as possible sources of inspiration.

# Characteristics of the Romantic Period

Music is not as reliant on repetition as in Classical music

The music often directly tells a story

Exploration of tone colors

Much bigger orchestras

Popularity of chamber music

Music is highly emotional

Poetry and music are intimately fused

# Musical Innovations

Invention of the **song cycle**

Invention of the **symphonic poem**

Great works written for solo piano

Composers stretched the listeners ear by creating a great deal of dissonance using chromatic notes, and extensions of the triad.

Composers began to drift away from the strong sense of tonality heard in Classical music.

Founding of conservatories

# Composer

Composers gradually left the patronage system and became free agents of their own works.

This meant that the composer, their music and their livelihood depended on the public's approval.

For the first time, a composer's work might not be publicly performed during his or her lifetime.

Romantics saw themselves as outsiders, isolated from mainstream society, struggling to express their creative ideas.

In general, composers held higher social status than in the Classical period.



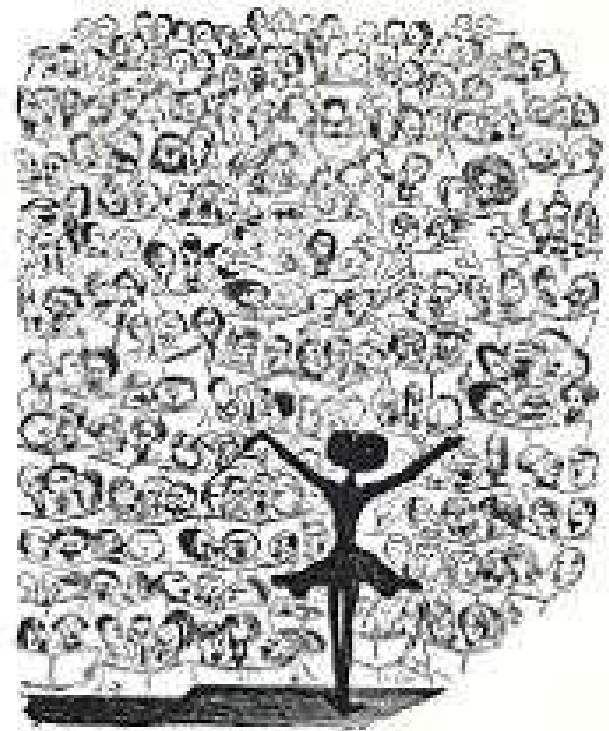
# Performer

- Rise of virtuosic performers
  - the public was captured by virtuosity and showmanship
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# Conductor

Resulted from the  
orchestras growth in  
numbers and  
complexity

Became necessary to  
have one person to  
lead and control the  
orchestra







# General Musical Characteristics

Individuality

Expressive Aims and Subjects

Nationalism and Exoticism

Rise and Importance of Program Music



# Musical Elements

## Melody

Age of lyricism – unending melody

Melodies appealed to the emotions

Phrases tended to be longer and irregular in length

Themes were more complex and utilized chromaticism

Advent of theme transformation (Berlioz, Wagner)

# Musical Elements

- Harmony
- Basically tonal
- By end of the 19th century  
chromaticism (movement by half steps)  
stretched tonality to the breaking point
- Chromaticism imbued greater  
dissonance and tension into the sound

# Musical Elements

## Rhythm


Rhythmic effects were used for “color” – rubato

Articulations in the instruments tended to be heavy and intense

A new vocabulary of music terms arose that indicated how to achieve the composer’s desired sound – *cantabile*, *dolce*, *con amore*, *allegro agitato*. These designations produced a more emotional sound and response.



# Musical Elements

- Texture
  - Essentially homophonic
  - Tended to be thick, heavy and lush
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# Dynamics

- Gradual
- Much wider range – extremes of dynamic variation
- Used extensively throughout the compositions

# Timbre/Instrumentation

This period saw a full exploration of the instrumental families.

Instruments were used for both their individual and collective color potential.

Instrumental timbre was used to convey mood and atmosphere.

The orchestra became much larger – from 70 players to more than 100 (resulting in the necessity of a conductor).

Instruments could play louder and carry farther.

Instruments were capable of major changes in dynamics.

# Strings



String sections increased in size and were given more difficult accompaniment parts (scales, arpeggios)



# Woodwinds

## Development of new instruments

saxophone (baritone and tuba) were invented by  
Adolf Sax

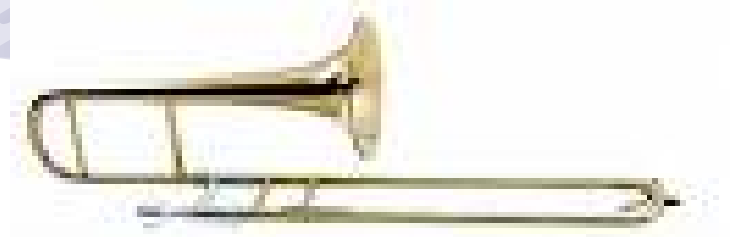
piccolo, bass clarinet and English horn were added.

## Important improvements in wind instruments

“Boehm system” of fingering for flutes and clarinets  
achieved better facility and intonation for the  
performer and greater musical range



# Brass



Addition of valves and improvement to valves on brass instruments allowed the playing of a full chromatic compass for the first time and to more easily play quick runs of notes

Tubas and Trombones were added

# Percussion

- Expanded to include bass drum, snare drum, cymbals and other exotic percussion instruments (gong, castanets)





# Famous Romantic Composers

Frederic Chopin

Franz Liszt

Hector Berlioz

Johannes Brahms

Modest Mussorgsky

Felix Mendelssohn

Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Richard Wagner



# Ludwig Von Beethoven



# Ludwig Von Beethoven

- Crucial figure in the transition from Classical to Romantic
- The Romantic period really began around 1815. Works from this period are characterized by their intellectual depth, their formal innovations, and their intense, highly-personal expression.

# Frederic Chopin

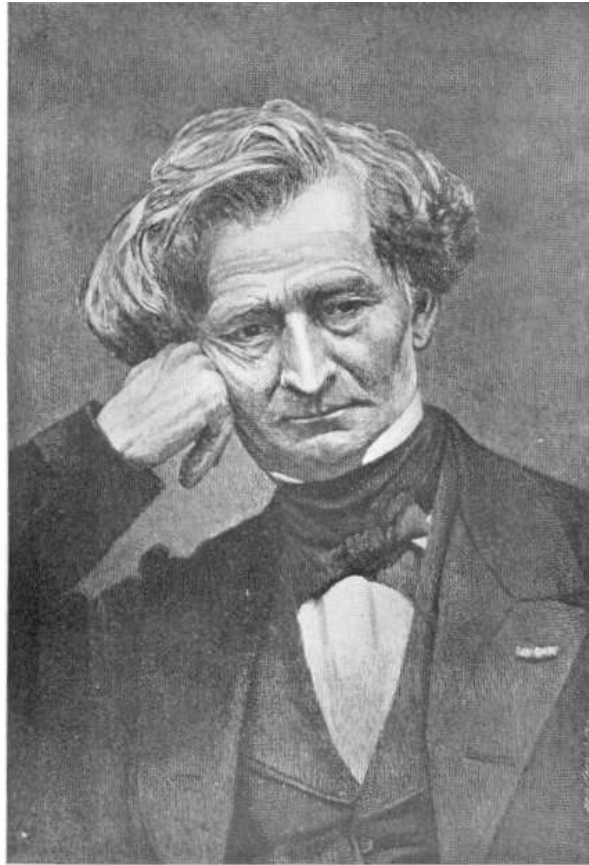


# Franz Liszt





# Hector Berlioz



# Johannes Brahms



# Modest Mussorgsky



# Felix Mendelssohn



# Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky



# Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Russian composer

Wrote 11 operas, 4 concertos, 6 symphonies, 3 ballets

Most remembered for his ballets: *Sleeping Beauty* and *Swan Lake*

Music is intense: Melancholy & emotional

It has been speculated that he committed suicide

# Richard Wagner





# Richard Wagner

Began composing at age 17

3 stages of opera creations:  
early, middle, and third

His primary legacy was his  
creation of operas

Wrote the opera *Tristan and  
Isolde*.

Tristan und Isolde was  
one of his greatest  
operas





# *Tristan & Isolde*

In the Wagnerian version the plot is briefly as follows: Tristan, having lost his parents in infancy, has been reared at the court of his uncle, Marke, King of Cornwall. He has slain in combat Morold, an Irish knight, who had come to Cornwall, to collect the tribute that country had been paying to Ireland. Morold was affianced to his cousin Isolde, daughter of the Irish king. Tristan, having been dangerously wounded in the combat, places himself, without disclosing his identity, under the care of Morold's affianced, Isolde who comes of a race skilled in magic arts.

She discerns who he is; but, although she is aware that she is harbouring the slayer of her affianced, she spares him and carefully tends him, for she has conceived a deep passion for him. Tristan also becomes enamoured of her, but both deem their love unrequited. Soon after Tristan's return to Cornwall, he is dispatched to Ireland by Marke, that he may win Isolde as Queen for the Cornish king...



# Period Instruments

Tuba

Alto, Bass, Contrabass Clarinet

Contrabassoon

Euphonium

Alto, Tenor, Baritone Saxophone

Alto Flute





# Opera

- Very popular during the Romantic era.
- Composers focused on melodies and themes.
- Huge interest in songs written as part of a cycle: a complete story told with related songs.