**The Romantic Period**

Romantic – comes from the word romance. Originally referred to the old poems written in the romantic languages. Almost always dealt with a heroic person or event. Later on they took on the themes of strangeness, far-away, unattainable.

Romanticism – didn’t appear till 1803. “A certain inexpressible something”.

# The Romantic Period (1820-1900):

* There was about a 5 year overlap of the Classical period and the Romantic period. Musical romanticism was different in time period than other romantic subjects
* Romantics stressed individual feeling, emotion, and imagination by celebrating the irrational forces of intuition, fantasy, and indefinite feelings of longing and nostalgia. They were fascinated by the unknown and the mystery and power of evil (i.e. Faust Legend)
  + Faust legend: Faust was a chemist in old times. Many called him the great necromancer, the great sodomite. Faust, in all of his legends, will have a dealing with the devil. Love so desperate it becomes irrational. Heaven and hell. Romantics hit on all subjects.
* **Bohemian** - Romantics love to celebrate martyrs to the religion of art, those figures who die young for having been misunderstood or for adhering too closely to their ideals and uncompromising genius.
* Romanticism was a post-enlightenment ideal. A change from a world where understanding of everything around was critical, seen in music through the idea of taste, to now a world where everything is subjective.
  + i.e., get rid of objectivity, and embrace subjectivity. It’s all about what the individual feels and how the individual sees the world
* they argued that the classical idea of taste was a form of censorship by the aristocrats to silence the not as gifted (Mozart)
* People who lived during this time period thought their lives were boring and dull, and arts were a form of escape from this dull life, allowing a freedom of feelings.
* Women in music during this time:
  + For the first time ever, women can go to institutions to become professional singers, instrumentalists, and composers.
  + However, society still had stigmatisms based on women being musicians. Everyone still thought it to be a man’s domain.
  + Many women who became famous artists chose to use male pseudonyms in order for the mass public to accept their work.
* Types of compositions being composed:
  + “Miniature”
  + “Grandiose”
  + Program music
  + Virtuosic solo music (the piano became the favorite solo instrument)

# Franz Schubert (1797-1828):

* Exemplified the “**Bohemian**” existence.
* Trained in Vienna initially, in the same way Haydn was trained. After puberty, he learns instruments. He follows his father’s footsteps and became a school teacher, which he hated. So against his father advice, he returns to Vienna and worked free-lance
* He was extremely impractical with his money, and was very fond of Beethoven
* He died of syphilis. He was a martyr to the arts for sure, especially seen near the end of his life
* **Gretchen am Spinnrade [CD3 - #3]**
  + The **Art Song** or **Lied** (German for “sung”; “Lieder” is the plural): it is the musical setting of a poem, usually performed by solo voice and piano, in which the performers are expected to contribute significantly to the artistic effect of the poetry – it is a “miniature” composition.
  + This work is a work based off of the Faust legend.
  + **Ostinato**
    - A musical phrase that is repeated persistently
    - The ostinato in this work represents the spinning wheel, which represents time.
  + **Strophic**
    - Music is constant throughout. This work is a modified strophic form (the spinning wheel)
  + **Through-Composed**
    - Music changes with each stanza of poetry

# Robert Schumann (1810-1856) and Clara Wieck-Schumann (1819-1896)

* **Robert Schumann**
  + Parents were very much against him being a musician, and he eventually began studying law. He gets expelled from university for not attending classes and playing piano instead.
  + His mom told him to take lessons with the hardest teacher out there, Friedrich Wieck (who was the father of Clara). Clara was always a lot better of a player than Robert. She was basically a child prodigy.
  + Co-founded the *New Music Journal*. This brought into stardom many famous composers like Chopin, Brahms, etc.
  + Could have possibly had Manic Depression
  + At 38, he starts to go insane and hearing voices. He tries to commit suicide, but fails, and eventually enters himself into an insane asylum.
  + **Waldesgesprach (“Forest Conversation”) [CD3-#8]**
    - An Art Song or Lied
    - A young man meets a beautiful woman while traveling through a forest. She turns out to be a supernatural being, in this case the Lorelei, a terrible witch cursed for having taken her life over unrequited love, and now condemned to seduce men and to lead them to their ruin.
    - This song is meant to warn young men to beware strange women, to stay on the path of the straight and narrow, as (in this era) a sexually transmitted disease meant almost certain death. The opening and closing material adopts the calm innocence of childhood, for after all, fairy tales such as this are meant as warnings to children.
* **Clara Wieck-Schumann**
  + A child prodigy at the piano. She was recognized around Europe, but not as much as she should have due to her being a woman and her failed recital in Paris
  + By 16, Clara and Robert were madly in love. Robert asked Clara’s father if he could marry her daughter. He said no, so Clara decided to take him to court about it.
  + The court case is a long and arduous process, taking a lot of years and complications. After 3 years, they went back to the court and testified again against Clara’s father and won.
  + After getting married, Clara had to put her career on hold, having Robert be the main “bread winner” of the house. Brahms visited their house all the time, and Clara was essentially Brahms’ teacher.
  + After Robert goes to the asylum, Brahms moves into their household and helps take care of their family. Clara picks up her career again at 40, and becomes extremely successful
  + **Fugitive Piece no. 1 [CD3-#9]**
    - The title of this work stems not only from the tendency in Romantic poetry to refer to certain ethereal works as “fugitive”, but from the unpredictable small-scale variation and unexpected motion that comprises much of the piece
    - **Character Piece** – a “miniature” composition for solo piano
    - This work is in ABA or ternary form
    - Supposedly written for her husband while he was institutionalized.

# Frederic Chopin(1810-1849):

* Polish, virtually self-taught piano player who was incredibly successful as a young child, growing more so as he grew older.
* Around the age of 20, he decides to go on tour, firstly to Vienna. He is seen as a charming commodity there because of his ethnicity. Soon after he gets there, a polish independence war breaks out, and Chopin became a national symbol of independence, a title he didn’t really want.
* The rulers of Vienna were sided with Russia, who was against the polish independence, now saw Chopin as a menace.
* Chopin moves to Paris (the global center for master composers and pianists), met with other famous pianists and composers, notably Franz Liszt, who introduced him to the aristocracy.
* He also met a woman who he chose to court named George Sand (Madame Aurore Dudevant). She was very masculine in character, wearing men’s clothes and smoking cigars. She did however promote Chopin’s musical artistry in every way.
* He never returned to Poland, and thus was buried in Paris. His heart, however, was shipped back to Poland.
* He was against the normal piano techniques of the time, and created his own so as to promote the “singing” quality of the piano. He also created the “flutter peddle” technique to help in this singing.
* He creates the illusion that the piano sings, and had a gift for breathing life into the Romantic ideal of giving oneself over to inward feelings and longings. Among his favorite genres were the:
  + Nocturne: nocturnal, the day is done, time to dream. Very dreamlike music
  + Polonaise: invokes dance
  + Mazurka
  + Impromptu: something that sounds improvised or made up on the spot
  + Ballade: song-like
  + Etude: works usually used for study
  + Waltz: formal dance type music in ¾ time
  + Prelude: leading you to a dreamlike state and leaving you to fill in the blanks
* **Nocturne in F-sharp [CD3 - #5]:**
  + Character piece (“miniature”)
  + Virtuosic solo music
  + Rubato (“Robbed” time): the free treatment of meter in performance
    - Romantic music was thought to not be played metronomically, but rather played to make music
    - However, the overall time of the piece should be the same. (5 min piece is still 5 min long)
  + The overall form of this piece is: A A1 B C A2 coda, but features a small-scale variation on the opening two-measure phrase which is comprised of a two-note ascent, followed by a rapid descent to a low, repeated note.

# Franz Liszt (1811-1886):

* **Transcendental Etude (compressed sonata form)**
* Decided to try and become the Paganini of the piano after seeing one of this concerts
* He had relationships with Daniel Stern (Countess Marie d’Agoult) and Princess Caralyne Sayn-Wittgenstein
* He was a very proud person, encouraging flamboyant nature with his concerts, usually wearing a red cape that he would throw around the piano in dramatic fashion
* After all of this, he left Stern and went on to compose great works, meeting Princess Caralyne

# Niccolo Paganini (1782-1840):

* Premier violinist of the time
* The violin was considered a devilish instrument, which many thought could invoke evil in people. Many thought that the devil was a serious part of Paganini, that he was somewhat possessed
* He ran with this idea, and would sell out all of his shows. He would purposely use old strings so that they would break, and he would be forced to continue playing on the other strings, making him contort his arms in ghoulish ways.
* It didn’t help that he won his violin in a poker match (which was considered the devil’s game)

# Hector Berlioz (1803-1869):

* Son of a surgeon in France, who wants his son to become a doctor as well. Instead, Berlioz wants to go to the Paris Music Conservatory, after which his parents disown him.
* Berlioz didn’t want others to constrict what he wrote, yet on the other hand he knew he needed the skills acquired from musical school to become a great(er) composer.
* He was very much influenced by Beethoven and Shakespeare. He came to admire the most famous Shakespearian actress out there, Harriet Smithson. He was kind of obsessed with her, like a stalker.
* Berlioz wins a famous Paris music award on the 5th try, allowing him the opportunity to study in Italy for 2 years and then come back to perform a national concert to launch his career. His piece that he creates for the concert is the Symphonie Fantastique. Instead of launching his career, he performs this piece for Harriet Smithson, who is moved so much by it that she marries him.
* He becomes a prominent journalist later in his life
* **Symphonie Fantastique [CD3 - #6]**
  + An autobiographical essay of Berlioz’s life
  + Grandiose: many musicians, ***five*** movements (instead of the usual four movements)
  + Idée fixe theme: Inspired by his obsession Harriet Smithson. Present throughout every movement
  + Dies irae (“Day of Wrath”): Gregorian chant from requiem Mass
  + Program Symphony (Program music)
  + Overall idea of work:
    - A young man obsessed with a woman chooses to poison himself with opium, yet the dose of which puts him into a heavy sleep. Everything in his dream becomes musical ideas, revolving around this love. This young man is obviously Berlioz
  + Movements
    - 1. Reverence: very depressing start. Changes to happy near the end with the introduction of the Idée fixe.
    - 2. A Ball: imagines he’s dating his love. A waltz. Heavy use of rubato throughout. Adds to the romantic nature of this dance
    - 3. Seen in the Country: two shepherds in a field. One is Berlioz the other is Smithson. Requires lead oboe to be offstage for this. This was a new idea in musical performance
    - 4. March to the Scaffold: his dream goes wrong. He dreams he has killed his loved one and is condemned to death, accompanied by a march.
    - **5. Dream of a Witches Sabbath: he is dead and has gone to hell, where he experiences a witches Sabbath. Unearthly sounds from hell, tortured soul. He hears the melody of his love here, but it has lost its original clarity and beauty (now on the Eb clarinet). Judgement day has come. Warnings to the witches from upon high come in form of Gregorian chant. Turns into an unstable fugue, which doesn’t last long. After which, the music dies down (indicating that you must choose a side – heaven or hell). A final battle comes between the witches and the heavenly army. Army wins, and witches disperse.**
  + Musical tone-painting is very present
  + Romantic ideas
    - Exploring love so desperate he “dies”
    - Exploring ideas of the afterlife and the ideas of good and evil
    - Etc.

# Vincenzo Bellini (1801-1835):

* **Bel Canto Style** (“Beautiful Singing”) – reflects the Italian opera lovers’ commitment to the human voice, and the belief that opera was a singing art. Though Gluck tried to reform opera in the previous century, by the 1810’s a certain ritualized formula emerged again (“Code Rossini”) in the construction of operas. Audiences loved it.
  + Within the Bel Canto Style, arias provide a dramatic, florid, and virtuosic vocal line, with an orchestral accompaniment (though active) that would never overshadow the singer. Bellini relies on a popular formal plan for his arias called “the two-tempo aria” which is really a three-tempo work with the following sections:
    - Tempo Primo – first tempo
      * Also, one affect covered
    - Temp di mezzo – middle tempo
      * Second distinct affect covered
    - Cabaleta – a rousing section to conclude
      * No distinct affect expressed here
  + Each section allows the singer to embrace a distinct affect. Another element often heard is a **banda**, a group of instrumentalists who appear on stage forming part of the action.
  + Bellini wrote 10 operas (all serious) for the soprano, **Giuditta Pasta**
  + **Giuditta** – the prominent female opera singer of the time and the woman who Bellini ends up marrying
* **“Casta diva” (Chase Goddess) from Norma, Act 1, Scene 4 (1831) [CD3 - #4]**
  + The story revolves around complications in love, and is set in ancient Gaul, the region of western Europe that is now France
    - Norma: high priestess of the Druids
    - Druids: nature worshipping residents of Gaul
    - Roman Proconsul: the governor of the occupied territory, and the father of Norma’s two sons
    - Adalgisa: Norma’s best friend
  + Harp like arpeggios in the strings
  + Flute solo replicating the melody Norma will sing.
  + Melody unfolds very slowly here, unlike the rest of the opera
  + The choir of druids joins in on her singing, matching her melody, symbolizing that they belief that she is praying for god’s go-ahead to go to war when in fact she is biding time.

# Music of the Future (vs. Nationlism):

* **Richard Wagner (1813 – 1883)**
  + “Music Dramas” – Wagner argues that dramas that were divisible into discreet sections broke the illusion of an alternate reality on the stage that he was striving for. He saw opera as a serious drama in music – not just a vehicle for song, spectacle, and entertainment – that could have such integrity and power that society itself would be reshaped by them. **The Ring** (for short) tells the story of idle gods, the dawn of the world dominated by men, the coming of the hero, and the destruction of the old order.
  + Second only to Beethoven in terms of influencing modern classical concert music
  + He self-exiled himself to Switzerland due to civil unrest in Germany. While in Switzerland, Wagner writes several attacking essays against Jewish musicians and composers. These writings were later picked up by Hitler, and shit happens. Thus, many blame Wagner for Hitler’s obsessions with the Jewish people, and why many don’t like his music.
  + **Der Ring des Nibelungen [CD# - #---]**
    - Music Drama
    - There are 4 “operas” that make up the drama. Each one is about 5 hours long. So, this was meant to be played in a series of 4 days to a week.
    - Crucial features
      * Seamlessness or endless melody (almost without stops or pauses; no arias, no cadences)
      * Leitmotifs: motives that become associated with a person, place, or thing that would guide the listener to the source of truth. Signposts for the listener in apprehending any hidden meanings, foreshadowing passages, or duplicity within the drama. Wagner reflects **Arthur Schopenhauer’s** belief that all human experience could be traced to:
        + “The will”: emotions and drives (sexual love the most exciting) – his view of marital vows were ambivalent at best
        + “Appearance”: ideas, morals, and reasons
      * Gesamtkunstwerk (total artwork): expresses his ideal of fusing all the arts at their highest perfection. He wrote the text and the music, oversaw the performance and creation of an opera house (the Festspielhaus) intended solely for his works
      * Linear chromatic harmony: polyphonic lines that create harmony with pitches outside the tonic scale, often moving chromatically. The effect is a yearning sensation that suggests an urgent but frustrated search for stability
      * Grandiose in conception, the dramas are lengthy, the orchestra is huge, and the singers must have extremely powerful voices and stamina
    - Main Characters in order of appearance
      * Rhine Maidens: a group of nymphs that guard the Rhine River’s cache of magic gold
      * Alberich: an evil dwarf who steals the gold after renouncing love, and forges an all-powerful ring that will allow him to rule the world
      * Wotan: the highest god, who loves mortals, and cannot break a promise
      * Two Giants: they happen to be brothers, and have built a palace in the sky for the gods
      * Freia: goddess who provides the gods with gold apples, which keep them young and happy
      * Loge: the embodiment of fire, persuades Wotan to join him on a journey to Nibelheim, the subterranean home of Alberich
      * Fricka: Wotan’s wife and goddess of matrimonial vows
      * Siegmund: son of Wotan and a mortal woman
      * Sieglinde: lover/sister of Siegmund (married to Hunding)
      * Hunding: husband to Sieglinde, and enemy of Siegmund
      * Valkyrie: in Norse mythology, one of the twelve handmaidens of Odin who ride horses over the battle field to collect souls of fallen heroes; and especially Wotan’s favorite daughter, Brunnhilde
      * Brunnhilde: Wotan’s favorite daughter, who elects to defy her father
      * **Siegfried:** son of Siegmund and Sieglinde, who is the great warrior that shows no fear and wrestles the ring form the giant and frees Brunnhilde from the rock where she sleeps
      * Gotterdammerung (Twilight of the Gods)
        + The final music drama: depicts the fall of the gods through the heroism and treachery of mortals