

MUSIC 9: NOVEMBER 10, 2025

Historical Background of Romantic Music

The Romantic Period in Music lasted from around 1820 to 1900, following the Classical Period. This era focused on expressing deep emotions, imagination, and individuality. While Classical music emphasized order and balance, Romantic music allowed composers to freely express personal feelings and experiences.

During this time, music became more emotional and dramatic. Composers often drew inspiration from literature, nature, history, and national pride. They aimed to touch the listener's heart and imagination through melodies, harmonies, and powerful orchestration.

The orchestra grew larger, and new instruments were added to produce richer sounds. The piano became the most popular instrument, allowing composers to perform and express themselves personally.

A new type of composition called program music became popular — it tells a story, describes a scene, or expresses an idea without words. Examples include symphonic poems and tone poems.

Some of the most famous Romantic composers are:

- **Frédéric Chopin** – known for expressive piano works.
- **Franz Liszt** – admired for virtuosic piano performances.
- **Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky** – composer of emotional ballets like *Swan Lake* and *The Nutcracker*.
- **Johannes Brahms** – combined Classical structure with Romantic emotion.
- **Franz Schubert** – famous for his songs (lieder) that tell stories of love and sadness.

Romantic music helped people connect to their emotions and identity, making it one of the most expressive periods in musical history.

Comprehension Questions

1. When did the Romantic period in music take place?
 2. What is the main focus of Romantic music?
 3. What inspired most Romantic composers?
 4. What instrument became very popular during the Romantic period?
 5. What do we call music that tells a story or describes a scene?
 6. Which of the following composers is known for piano music?
 7. Who composed *The Nutcracker* and *Swan Lake*?
 8. What happened to the orchestra during the Romantic period?
 9. What makes Romantic music different from Classical music?
 10. Why is Romantic music still appreciated today?
-

Reflection

In 3–5 sentences, explain how Romantic music expresses feelings and emotions. Why do you think this period of music continues to inspire people today?