



The Romantic Period

(1820-1900)

Music of the Romantic Period was all about emotional expression. Romantic composers often focused on telling stories or describing emotions through music.

Characteristics of the Romantic period:

Romantic period composers often used the idea of “chromaticism”—using notes from outside of the given key signature to make their music sound more colorful. Music was sometimes inspired by poetry, literature, or works of art. Music often used a wider range of dynamics, longer melodic lines, and more complicated forms than in earlier periods of history. The piano became the most popular solo instrument during this period, and many famous piano pieces were written during this time.

Popular Instruments:

Grand piano; strings, woodwinds, brass, and percussion (all instruments from the modern orchestra are now available).

Popular Types of Music:

Symphonies, sonatas, tone poems, song cycles, dramatic opera, ballet.

Famous Composers:

Frederic Chopin, Franz Liszt, Felix Mendelssohn, Fanny Mendelssohn-Hensel, Robert Schumann, Clara Schumann, Johannes Brahms, Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky, Edvard Grieg, Amy Beach, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor.

Famous Romantic Pieces You Might Recognize:

“In the Hall of the Mountain King” (Grieg)

“1812 Overture” (Tchaikovsky)

“Nocturne in E-flat Major” (Chopin)

“Wedding March” (Mendelssohn)