

Music of the Romantic Era

The misunderstood genius

"To be a genius is to be misunderstood" – Emerson

The artist out in front, ahead of the audience, the advanced guard (a military metaphor) –
the *avant garde*

"Music could quickly come to such a point, that everyone who is not precisely familiar with the rules and difficulties of the art would find absolutely no enjoyment in it."

A critic reviewing the premiere of Beethoven's 3rd Symphony

Aspects of Romanticism in music & art

- Nature (idyllic or awesome, sublime)
"organic unity" (music)
- Supernatural, demonic
- exoticism
- "ancient" (Medieval (not Greek))
- rejection of Classicism & Renaissance
- folklore and Das Volk (Nationalism)

Early Beethoven



He speaks Classical –
the language of
Mozart & Haydn

Aspects of Romanticism in music & art

- THE ARTIST APART FROM SOCIETY
- THE ARTIST AS
SOCIAL CRITIC/REVOLUTIONARY
Beethoven's 9th Symphony
- THE ARTIST AS GENIUS/CULTURAL HERO

BEETHOVEN: "Why bow to social status?"

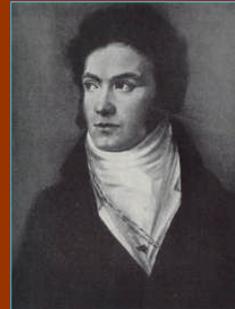
Beethoven

Model Romantic genius-type

Not a servant – an
independent creator!

Concerts very long – a new
audience; amateurs left
behind

Music's Trinity: Bach, Mozart,
Beethoven



Beethoven

9 symphonies

16 string quartets

32 piano sonatas

5 piano concertos

1 violin concerto

1 opera



Beethoven

LISTENING EXAMPLE

Symphony No. 6 "The Pastoral"

5 movements, each with a descriptive title

Pastoral with a sublime storm

1808

Beethoven

LISTENING EXAMPLE

Symphony No. 5 in C minor, 1st mvt.

Dramatic, even violent, but still in a perfectly structured sonata form

All 4 movements unified by famous short-short-short-long motif

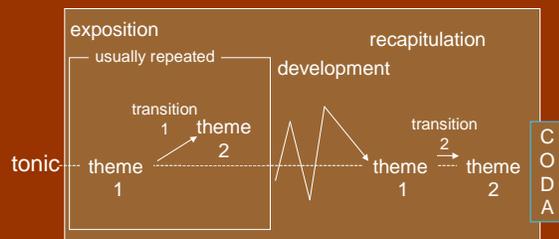
Textbook CD example

1808

John Constable, *The Hay Wain*, 1821



Sonata Form



Beethoven -- Symphony No. 6 "The Pastoral"

5 movements, each with a descriptive title

I. Awakening of cheerful feelings on arriving in the country

II. Scene by the brook

III. Merry assembly of country folk

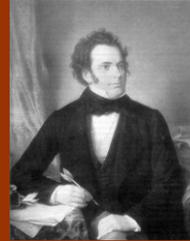
IV. Lightening, thunderstorm

V. Shepherd's song. Happy, grateful feelings after the storm



Thomas Cole, *View From Mount Holyoke, Northampton, Mass. after a thunderstorm, also known as The Oxbow, 1836*

Schubert



Only 31 years old at his death
wrote 16 operas, only 3
performed in his lifetime;
none performed today
between 500-600 songs
a rather unstructured life

Odd Textbook CD
example

Beethoven -- Symphony No. 6 "The Pastoral"

It is left to the listener to find out the situations.

Sinfonia caratteristica – or reminiscence of rural life.

All painting carried too far in instrumental music loses its effect.

Sinfonia pastorella. Anyone that has formed any idea of rural life does not need titles to imagine the composer's intentions.

Even without a description, the whole thing, which is feeling more than tone-painting, will be recognized!

-- notes written by Beethoven in his sketches

Schubert, *Erlkönig* 1815 (Goethe)

(Narrator)	Wer reitet so spät durch Nacht und Wind? Es ist der Vater mit seinem Kind; Er hat den Knaben wohl in dem Arm, Er fasst ihn sicher, er hält ihn warm.	(Narrator)	Who rides so late through the night and wind? It is a father with his child; he has the boy close in his arm, he holds him tight, he keeps him warm.
(Father)	"Mein Sohn, was birgst du so bang dein Gesicht?"	(Father)	"My son, why do you hide your face in fear?"
(Son)	"Siehst, Vater, du den Erlkönig nicht? Den Erlkönig mit Kron' und Schweif?"	(Son)	"Father, don't you see the Erlking? The Erlking with his crown and train?"
(Father)	"Mein Sohn, es ist ein Nebelstreif."	(Father)	"My son, it is a streak of mist."
(Erlking)	"Du liebes Kind, komm geh mit mir! Gar schöne Spiele spiel' ich mit dir; Manch' bunte Blumen sind an dem Strand; Meine Mutter hat manch' gülden Gewand."	(Erlking)	"You dear child, come with me! I'll play very lovely games with you. There are lots of colourful flowers by the shore; my mother has some golden robes."

Goya, *Executions of the Third of May, 1808*



BEETHOVEN Symphonies 5 & 6

text
p. 340

(Son)	"Mein Vater, mein Vater, und hörest du nicht, Was Erlkönig mir leise verspricht?"	(Son)	"My father, my father, don't you hear the Erlking whispering promises to me?"
(Father)	"Sei ruhig, bleibe ruhig, mein Kind; In dürren Blättern säuselt der Wind."	(Father)	"Be still, stay calm, my child; it's the wind rustling in the dry leaves."
(Erlking)	"Willst, feiner Knabe, du mit mir geh'n? Meine Töchter sollen dich warten schön; Meine Töchter führen den nächtlichen Reih'n Und wiegen und tanzen und singen dich ein."	(Erlking)	"My fine lad, do you want to come with me? My daughters will take care of you; my daughters lead the nightly dance, and they'll rock and dance and sing you to sleep."
(Son)	"Mein Vater, mein Vater, und siehst du nicht dort, Erlkönigs Töchter am düsteren Ort?"	(Son)	"My father, my father, don't you see the Erlking's daughters over there in the shadows?"

<p>(Father) "Mein Sohn, mein Sohn, ich seh' es genau, Es scheinen die alten Weiden so grau." (Erking) "Ich liebe dich, mich reizt deine schöne Gestalt, Und bist du nicht willig, so brauch ich Gewalt." (Son) "Mein Vater, mein Vater, jetzt fasst er mich an! Erikönig hat mir ein Leids getan!" (Narrator) Dem Vater grauset's, er reitet geschwind, Er hält in Armen das ächzende Kind, Erreicht den Hof mit Müh und Noth;</p>	<p>(Father) "My son, my son, I see it clearly, it's the gray sheen of the old willows." (Erking) "I love you, your beautiful form delights me! And if you're not willing, then I'll use force." (Son) "My father, my father, now he's grasping me! The Erking has hurt me!" (Narrator) The father shudders, he rides swiftly, he holds the moaning child in his arms: with effort and urgency he reaches the courtyard:</p>
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The Bach Revival

Portions of the B-minor Mass performed in the 1830s –
1st complete performance in 1861

"And this man, the greatest musical poet and the
greatest musical orator that ever existed, and
probably ever will exist, was a German. Let our
country be proud of him. Let it be proud, but, at the
same time, worthy of him." -- J.N. Forkel, 1802

In seinen Armen das Kind war tot. in his arms the child was dead.

Emotions? Balance, repose, clarity?

**NO! FEAR &
SUPERNATURAL
EVIL**

Is death tempting & attractive?



Symphonie Fantastique
- program music
- themes of love, madness,
drugs, death, demons

Berlioz



Textbook CD example

Another development

In the 1829, composer/conductor Felix Mendelssohn conducts a performance of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* – so what?

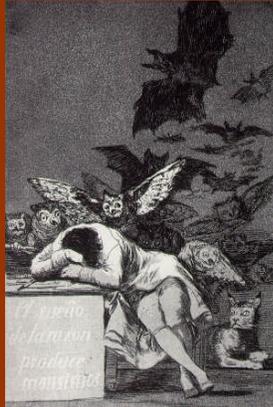
**MUSIC OF THE PAST BEGINS TO TAKE A
PLACE ON CONCERT PROGRAMS – IT
EVENTUALLY DOMINATES CONCERT
PROGRAMMING**

By 1870, seventy-five per cent of works in the Gewandhaus (a famous German orchestra) repertory were by dead composers.

Berlioz

Symphonie Fantastique
- *idée fixe*
- themes not worked-out in the German way; emphasis on effects and color
- 1831





Goya,
*The Sleep of Reason
 Brings Forth
 Monsters*
 1796-8
 etching

Aspects of Romanticism in music & art

- Nature (idyllic or awesome, sublime)
 BEETHOVEN SYMPHONY No. 6
 "organic unity" (music)
 BEETHOVEN SYMPHONY No. 5
 Chopin Mazurka = folk → nature
- Supernatural – Berlioz, WAGNER *TRISTAN*
- dream world, interior world CHOPIN NOCTURNE
- exoticism – Chopin Mazurka; Beethoven Symphony No. 9
- "ancient" (Medieval) WAGNER *TRISTAN*
 old – Bach
- folklore and Das Volk (Nationalism)
 WAGNER *The Ring*

Chopin

Mazurka in B-flat Major, Opus 7, No.1 (1832)

Two traits or Romantic ideas

- "nature" = folk music ← mazurka
 - Polish dance in triple meter, Chopin wrote a lot of them; "Love and the melancholy of the land meet" – Chopin
- exoticism
 - "C" section in ABACA form; chromatic, "exotic" melody in "distant" high register

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