

A YOUTUBE CRASH-COURSE IN MUSIC HISTORY by Mary Woods

First: **THE BAROQUE 1600-1750.**

Many compositions in this era are simple, suitable for young students, while others are complicated, requiring an advanced technique. Baroque music is mostly polyphonic which means different lines of music played together that sound complicated, yet beautiful. It could just be a melody and bass line or many voices sounding together. German composer, Johann Sebastian Bach was the crowning glory of the Baroque era. I'm sure many of you have heard this piece for the glorious pipe organ...at least the first part of it.

J.S. BACH TOCCATA in D minor (Played by John Sherer) RobScallon2

<https://youtu.be/vfySQBxAA4w>

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This next amazing example of the Baroque is by Italian composer, Vivaldi. It starts with a slow, simple theme, followed by variations; some are slow with fancy ornaments, some are very fast with crazy string playing. I love the blue harpsichord. (Pianos weren't invented yet.)

La Folia Sebastians, THEN select the one that says Vivaldi's Trio Sonata (Early Music America)

<https://youtu.be/TuqXzVGGu-g>

Next comes... **THE CLASSICAL ERA 1750-1820**

Music of this time was perfectly constructed with balanced phrasing and dynamics, running scales, but steady tempos ...It was not overly emotional, but it was very expressive. Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven are the most famous composers of the classical period.

Haydn is said to have fully developed the Sonata Form. (Sonatinas are a mini version.) It is like the plot of a novel and makes a perfect musical story. Composers have used this form to write for almost every instrument, ensemble and orchestra for over 200 years. You will enjoy seeing this young pianist play one of Haydn's cheerful piano sonatas.

Piano Sonata in D Major, HobXVI: 37, Joseph Haydn (Leo Jergovic TheFleok)

<https://youtu.be/YM1KepcDZpw>

Could Mozart be the greatest composer of all time? Some say so. Certainly, his music was perfectly classical, his operas were particularly brilliant. The Magic Flute is a fantasy/ comedy/ drama. The most famous song, or aria, is sung by the Queen of the Night, and it is a doozy!

In this scene, the evil queen gives her daughter a knife and threatens to disown her unless she stabs the high priest of the temple. While still in classical form, this aria is electrifying!

Mozart, QUEEN OF THE NIGHT (English subtitles) older fuzzy video / blue costume.

(Richard Thomas) <https://youtu.be/IFkfr1kmHc>

And now 43 seconds of fun!

Opera singing Parrot vs an opera lady singing to Mozart's "Magic Flute" difcymru

https://youtu.be/sfT_SuDRLNE

Ludwig Von Beethoven was a musical genius, but a very troubled man. He struggled with many things including deafness. His piano sonatas range from beautifully sublime... "the Moonlight" to wild and dramatic... "the Pathetique." Listen to the 3rd movement of his only violin concerto and hear impeccable beauty.

Beethoven Violin Concerto – Hilary Hahn.. scroll until you find just the 3rd Movement

(The Violin Network) <https://youtu.be/1dbOIkYtafw>

And now... **THE ROMANTIC ERA 1825-1900**

(I can only give you a 'smattering' of this extensive, magnificent music.) The word, romantic makes us think 'lovey-dovey.' But for this period, the word really means "deeply emotional"... different emotions, that is...such as sadness, joy, anger, surprise, passion AND love.... Some works reflected the pride the composer had for his own country. This next piece has a bit of everything. I recommend you watch and compare all three versions.

Liszt Hungarian Rhapsody #2 in C# minor

Khatia Buniatishvili (Marcia M) Not her in the RED dress ...must be the BLACK dress.

https://youtu.be/_yOSweFsmO0

This version is split screen with a pianist and "Tom and Jerry" (Oscar for best cartoon 1946)

Yannie Tan plays the Hungarian Rhapsody #2 <https://youtu.be/E1JKd1C7izQ>

Here is a marvelous, exciting guitar version.

Liszt Hungarian Rhapsody guitar, Anatoly Izoyov (Bouroff)

<https://youtu.be/bok9LV0HQ1A>

Composers began writing music exclusively for ballet... most notably the famous Russian, Tchaikovsky. You may have seen or certainly heard The Nutcracker. Here are 2 excerpts:

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky / Nina Kaptsova – Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy (Palmtree media)

https://youtu.be/Wz_f9B4pPtg

Lavalee was a French-Canadian composer, most famous for writing the Canadian national anthem. His piano piece, The Butterfly, is fabulously fluttery, and darling as you will see!

Lavalee “The Butterfly” Etude Le Papillon / Elisey Mysin

<https://youtu.be/aqLVZaU5xU4>

I decided to include this ‘friendship duet’ from The Pearl Fishers, an opera by French composer, Bizet because it is beautiful and sung by my favorite tenor and bass in the world.

Hvorostovsky & Kaufman – Pearl Fishers duet (frufuJ)

<https://youtu.be/p2MwnHpLV48>

Gilbert and Sullivan, two gentlemen from Great Britain were famous for writing many charming operettas... light, often comical sung plays. The cast of this version of the ‘The Pirates of Penzance’ are not normally associated with ‘classical’ music. Linda Ronstadt, (from Tucson) Kevin Klein and Angela Lansbury. (Sorry, Linda doesn’t sing in this ‘patter’ song” excerpt.)

It really doesn’t matter (Subtitles) Ronariverah

<https://youtu.be/rQGrQPZMLK8>

And finally... **CONTEMPORARY (20TH CENTURY) 1900-PRESENT**

With the turn of the 20th century, music started to go down a different path...some would say to a place of chaotic freedom! French composer Debussy was an important link to this new music. Forms and key centers were abandoned, melodies not required - “a shimmering interplay of colors.” In this version of Claire de Lune, probably his most famous piece, you will hear the beautiful piano part, but also a

theremin..... an instrument you don't touch. The radio waves produced are interrupted by moving your hands in the air. This young teenager's performance blows my mind.

Debussy "Clair de Lune" on the theremin (Gregoire Blanc)

<https://youtu.be/PjnaciNT-wQ>

As composers let go of old traditions, they felt free to experiment and took many new directions. In the same way people are often baffled by modern art, it took a while for concert-goers to appreciate much of this new music, whether minimalistic or cacophonous. (Not all composers chose to go this route, as you will see.)

This flute piece by French composer, Messiaen is definitely 'free form.' Many of his works were inspired by birds. He tries to imitate their calls and map their flight patterns.

Olivier Messiaen; Le Merle Noir (The Blackbird) Kate Morgan

https://youtu.be/7voZLH4kG_M

Many Spanish composers came to the fore in the 20th century. Listen to this superb artist.

Turina's "Sevilana" played by Pepe Romero on a 1924 Migel (Guitar Salon International)

https://youtu.be/4ANgp9_fTl

Kick up you heels! This next piece by Aaron Copeland, inspired by the American West was actually written for modern ballet.

"Hoedown" from "Rodeo" by Aaron Copeland (PhiladelphiaVirtuosi)

<https://youtu.be/Un0BCd3Kb3l>

Hip Hop Meets Copland "Hoedown" from Rodeo

<https://youtu.be/HvAHgsSR66s>

Ready for some fun? Listen to the rhythmic drive and energy of this signature piece... by Armenian composer, Khachaturian, who happens to be MADA student, Angelina Iskandar's great-great grandfather.

Saber Dance Khachaturian: Sabre Dance / Rattle Berliner Piharnoniker

<https://youtu.be/mUQHGpxrz-8>