

Musical Styles

Baroque (1600-1750)

Chief characteristics: ornate and elaborate.

Keyboard instruments used: harpsichord, clavichord.

Popular keyboard compositions: suites, fugues, toccatas.

Composers: Henry **Purcell** (England, 1659-1695), Georg Philipp **Telemann** (Germany, 1681-1767), Johann Sebastian **Bach** (Germany, 1685-1750), Domenico **Scarlatti** (Italy, 1685-1757), George Frideric **Handel** (Germany, 1685-1759).

Classical (1750-1810)

Chief characteristics: light and elegant.

Keyboard instruments used: fortepiano.

Popular keyboard compositions: sonatas, rondos, variations.

Composers: Joseph **Haydn** (Austria, 1732-1809), Wolfgang Amadeus **Mozart** (Austria, 1756-1791), Ludwig van **Beethoven** (Germany, 1770-1827), Franz **Schubert** (Austria, 1797-1828).

Romantic (1810-1900)

Chief characteristics: passionate and expressive.

Keyboard instruments used: pianoforte (still undergoing development).

Popular keyboard compositions: character pieces, nationalistic dances (e.g. mazurkas), études, impromptus, rhapsodies.

Composers: Felix **Mendelssohn** (Germany, 1809-1847), Fryderyk **Chopin** (Poland, 1810-1849), Robert **Schumann** (Germany, 1810-1856), Franz **Liszt** (Hungary, 1811-1886), Johannes **Brahms** (Germany, 1833-1897), Pyotr **Tchaikovsky** (Russia, 1840-1893), Edvard **Grieg** (Norway, 1843-1907), Isaac **Albéniz** (Spain, 1860-1909).

Impressionist (1890-1918)

Chief characteristics: delicate and misty.

Keyboard instruments used: pianoforte.

Popular keyboard compositions: descriptive pieces, often involving water images.

Composers: Claude **Debussy** (France, 1862-1918), Maurice **Ravel** (France, 1875-1937).

20th Century (1900-2000)

The 20th Century saw a much greater diversity of styles than in earlier periods. Some important strands are:

- expressionism and serialism (mostly German composers - **Schoenberg, Berg, Webern**, in the first half of the century).
- modernism (**Stravinsky, Bartók, Prokofiev, Khachaturian**).
- neoclassicism (chiefly composers based in Paris between the two world wars - **Poulenc, Martinu**, as well as Stravinsky and Prokofiev).
- jazz and Latin American influences (**Gershwin, Bernstein**).
- new national styles (**Copland** in America, **Sculthorpe** in Australia).
- minimalism (mostly American composers post 1960 - **Glass, Reich, Adams**).
- postmodernism.