

## ***Romantic week!***

Timeline: 1830-1900

Famous composers: Tchaikovsky, Brahms, Strauss, Verdi, Mahler

Instruments: Piano was really important! Orchestras were similar to what we know today, with lots and lots of players - brass and wind sections had up to 5 players per instrument compared to 2 during the classical period. Tuba was added to the orchestra a bit later in the period.

The romantic period is where lots of modern orchestration techniques began. Composers began writing music that was super expressive, and music written for instruments began to tell stories for the first time. Composers were inspired by nature and love and art and literature, as well as choosing to write music that told stories of everyday life. Opera continued to increase in popularity, and music in general was closely associated with theatre more than even before. Beethoven was hugely influential in the transition between classical and romantic music, beginning with his Symphony no. 6 "Pastorale", which was about the countryside and the beauty of nature. Have a listen here (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aW-7CqxhAQ>). You can hear even just in the first few minutes how much more dramatic this was than what people were used to from the classical period. However, if you think that's dramatic, try some Tchaikovsky!



Tchaikovsky looking wistfully off into the distance

Tchaikovsky was a Russian composer born in 1840 and he wrote some of the most loved romantic orchestra music of all time. His music always features lots of brass and wind, and as well as writing symphonies, he wrote lots of music for the theatre. His score for the ballet "Swan Lake" was so popular that it's been adapted into an orchestral suite so that people can play it even when there are no dancers to dance along. Here is the finale from the ballet, watch it and see if you can hear all the instruments we have in green wind!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jl7AsZGnyi4> .

While his theatre writing is very famous, Tchaikovsky is also hugely famous for his symphonies and concertos. As brass and wind players, his music is one of the most exciting parts of our repertoire. His 1<sup>st</sup> piano concerto is one of the most famous piano concertos of all time, and starts with some amazing brass writing - check it

out <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hNfpMRSCFPE> . We can really hear the big sweeping melodies that made the romantic era famous, everything was completely dramatic and over the top, and it's really fun to play because you get to play really loud.

Our second composer for this week is Richard Strauss, born in Germany in 1864. His Alpine Symphony is very famous because it is a tone poem, which is another word for a story told through music. It tells the story of a journey up and down an enormous mountain, and if you listen to the beginning of this video

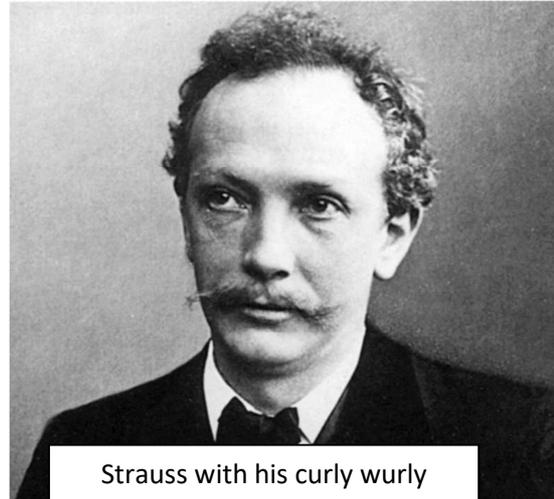
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FQhpWsRhQGs>

you can really hear it telling the story of the sun rising over the edge of the mountain in the morning. Strauss is particularly famous among brass players for how he wrote for horns, because his father played the horn. Strauss was also really famous for his operas, including "Der Rosenkavalier", which was

also made into an orchestral suite. The horn writing right at the beginning of this shows off Strauss' horn sound perfectly! Listen carefully around one minute in to see if you can hear the horns doing something really cool <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p2LreBJ1JX0> . The final scene of the opera shows a really different side to Strauss' writing, but is also extremely beautiful -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=31CtNc0Zp2c>

Overall, the romantic era of music was all about emotions and drama, and using music to show off the beautiful, exciting and sad moments of everyday life.



Strauss with his curly wurly  
moustache