

A Brief History of Western Music

MSOL Connect Event
August 20, 2020
Steve Kurr

A Brief History of Western Classical Art Music

- Check the Tech
- Introductions
- A History of Western Classical Art Music
 - The 6 Time Periods
 - Major trends/genres
 - Major Composers

Check the Tech

- Everything working? See and hear?
- Links in the chat
- Zoom Etiquette
 - We are recording! Need to step out? Please stop video.
 - I will “spotlight” my video--adjust your screen as needed.
 - Please remain muted to reduce background noise.
 - Questions? Yes! In the chat, please.
 - We will also have a chance for Q&A at the end.

Glad you are here tonight!

- Steve Kurr
 - Middleton HS Orchestra Teacher
 - Founding Conductor - Middleton Community Orchestra
 - M.M. and doctoral work in Musicology from UW-Madison
 - Specialties in Classic Period and Orchestra Conducting
 - Continuing Ed course through UW for almost 25 years

What is our Topic Tonight?

- A Brief History of Western Classical Art Music
 - Only a quick survey of the main concepts
 - Time periods
 - Genres
 - Composers
 - Simplified for sure
 - 1200 years in 45 minutes--whew!

The Major Time Periods (and the Caveats...)

- Medieval: 800-1400
- Renaissance: 1400-1600
- Baroque: 1600-1750
- Classic: 1750-1800
- Romantic: 1800-1920
- Modern: 1920-2020(?)

Medieval: 800-1400

Monophony and then Polyphony

Major Genres:

Gregorian Chant, Organum, Motet, Mass

Major Composers:

Anonymous, Perotin, Machaut

Don't even get me started on...

Forme fixe, music theory, notation



Renaissance: 1400-1600

Music becomes ART

Major Genres:

Masses, motets, madrigals

Major Composers:

Dufay, Josquin, Palestrina, Gabrieli, Lasso, Marenzio

Don't even get me started on...

Gesualdo, parody/cantus firmus, canzonas



Baroque: 1600-1750

Rise of Secular/Instrumental Music

Major Genres:

Opera, Concerto, Sonata

Major Composers:

Monteverdi, Corelli, Vivaldi, Bach, Handel

Don't even get me started on...

Late madrigals, French Opera/Lully, castrati



Classic: 1750-1800

Balance & Symmetry

Major Genres:

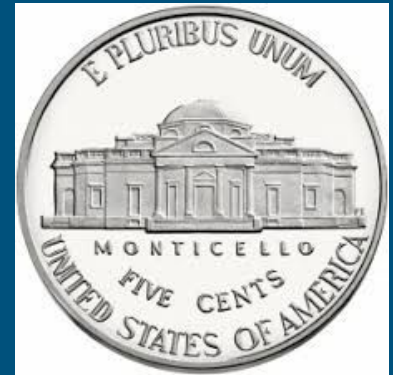
Symphony, String Quartet, Opera, Piano Sonata

Major Composers:

Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven

Don't even get me started on...

Early Classic, the movie *Amadeus*, all the humor of Haydn



Romantic: 1800-1920

Expression & The Middle Class Joins In

Major Genres:

Symphony, Opera, Character Piece, Art Song, Showpieces, Impressionism, Nationalism

Major Composers:

Schubert, Schumann, Brahms, Wagner, Mahler, Verdi, Puccini, Tchaikovsky, Chopin, Rimsky-Korsakov, Debussy, Mendelssohn, etc.

Don't even get me started on...

All the other composers, Brahms vs. Wagner, late Romanticism, etc.



Modern: 1920-2020(?)

Music for the Elite?

Major Genres:

Ballet, Opera, “formless” works, atonality

Major Composers:

Stravinsky, Copland, Bernstein, Schönberg, Shostakovich, Cage, Williams, etc.

Don't even get me started on...

Classical & Pop/Jazz/Ragtime/Rock, Avant-garde, serialism, when the period ends



What we did NOT cover (yet):

- **So much!**
 - **Nuances of each period**
 - **Context with other historic events**
 - **Connections with other forms of art**
 - **More of the trends associated with each period**
 - **The transitional times between the periods**
 - **Anything outside the most broad concepts**
 - **Non-Western music**
 - **Music by historically marginalized demographics**
 - **Outliers in each period**

Q & A

- Please unmute if you have a question.
- If you feel more comfortable, type into the Chat.
- I will answer all of your questions!

If you have questions later:

- You get a souvenir PDF with a Boiled Down version of Music History
 - [Link in the chat](#)
- You can come back and see the slides again.
 - [Link in the chat](#)
- Also my email if you have any follow up questions or comments
 - smkurr@gmail.com

Yet to come

- September: Music & The Brain 9/24
- October: Humor & Classical Music Part II
- November: The Development of the Modern Orchestra
- December: TBA
- January: TBA

Finally...

Please feel free to fill out our monthly feedback survey so we can work to improve our offerings for you.

[Link in the chat!](#)

Thank you!

These slides were created by Steve Kurr for the Madison Symphony Orchestra League Connect Events. Please direct comments and questions to smkurr@gmail.com.