



The Composer Connection

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Hey Kids, Meet Johann Sebastian Bach

German Baroque Era Composer (1685-1750)



Johann Sebastian Bach was born in Eisenach, Germany in 1685. As a child Bach's father taught him to play violin and harpsichord. His uncles were all musicians, serving as church organists and court chamber musicians. One of his uncles, Johann Christoph Bach, introduced him to the art of organ playing.

In 1707 Bach married his second cousin Maria Barbara Bach. They had seven children. In 1720 Maria died, and Bach married Anna Magdalena Wilcke in 1721. Bach had 13 more children with Anna Magdalena. He was a father to 20 children in all.

In 1723 Bach became the cantor, organist, and music composer for St. Thomas Lutheran Church in Leipzig, Germany. Bach remained there for the rest of his life.

Some of Bach's most famous works include the Brandenburg Concertos, the Well-Tempered Clavier, and the celebrated organ work Toccata and Fugue in D Minor.

Johann Sebastian Bach died in 1750. Bach was not appreciated during his own lifetime and was considered an "old-fashioned" composer. Today, Bach is considered to be one of the most influential composers of all time. In fact, he is now such an important composer that the year of his death is a defining point in music history. It marks the end of the Baroque Era.



HEY KIDS, MEET GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL

GERMAN BAROQUE ERA COMPOSER (1685-1759)



George Frideric Handel was born on February 23, 1685 in the North German province of Saxony, in the same year as Baroque composer Johann Sebastian Bach. George's father wanted him to be a lawyer, though music had captivated his attention. His mother, in contrast, supported his interest in music, and he was allowed to take keyboard and music composition lessons. His aunt gave him a harpsichord for his seventh birthday which Handel played whenever he had the chance.

In 1702 Handel followed his father's wishes and began his study of law at the University of Halle. After his father's death in the following year, he returned to music and accepted a position as the organist at the Protestant Cathedral. In the next year he moved to Hamburg and

accepted a position as a violinist and harpsichordist at the opera house. It was there that Handel's first operas were written and produced.

In 1710, Handel accepted the position of Kapellmeister to George, Elector of Hanover, who was soon to be King George I of Great Britain. In 1712 he settled in England where Queen Anne gave him a yearly income.

In the summer of 1717, Handel premiered one of his greatest works, *Water Music*, in a concert on the River Thames. The concert was performed by 50 musicians playing from a barge positioned closely to the royal barge from which the King listened. It was said that King George I enjoyed it so much that he requested the musicians to play the suite three times during the trip!

By 1740, Handel completed his most memorable work - the *Messiah*. It is said that when the king first heard the "Hallelujah Chorus" he rose to his feet. This tradition continues to this day.

On April 6, 1759 Handel conducted his last performance of the *Messiah* and returned home in poor health. He died on April 14, 1759 and was buried in Poet's Corner of Westminster Abbey in London, England. More than 3000 people attended his funeral.



HEY KIDS, MEET JOHANN PACHELBEL

GERMAN BAROQUE ERA COMPOSER (BAPTIZED 1653-1706)



Johann Pachelbel was born in Germany, in the city of Nurnberg in 1653. His father enrolled him in the St. Lorenz High School but soon recognized Johann's musical potential and arranged for outside musical training. Johann also showed such impressive academic abilities that he was allowed to attend various non-music classes at Nurnberg's Auditorium Aegidianum. These abilities also allowed him to gain entrance to the Universitat Altdorf in 1669 at the age of fifteen. In addition to his academic and musical studies, he served as organist at the Pfarrkirche.

Due to financial difficulties, Pachelbel left the university before the end of his first year and enrolled as a scholarship student at the Gymnasium Poeticum (high school) in Regensburg. The school's administration was so impressed by Pachelbel's academic abilities that they admitted him to the school even though they had already accepted their quota of students for the school year. He also was given permission to study music outside the Gymnasium with Kaspar Prentz. It is believed that

this teacher helped to develop Pachelbel's interest in Italian music and church music.

In 1677, he returned to Germany and settled in Eisenach where he accepted an appointment as court organist for Prince Johann Georg of Sachsen-Eisenach. During this time he became known as not only an important German organist but also one of Germany's most accomplished composers. Pachelbel also became friends with the Bach family. He soon began to tutor Johann Ambrosius' children, including Johann Christoph and Johann Sebastian Bach.

In 1681 Pachelbel married Barbara Gabler, and by 1683 was a father. Later that year tragedy struck his family as a plague swept through Erfurt. Only he survived. Several years later Pachelbel married again, taking Judith Drommer as his bride. One of their seven children would become an accomplished composer as well.

Johann Pachelbel wrote many sacred and secular works during his lifetime as a composer, organist and teacher. He is best remembered for his *Canon in D*. It is an example of one of his many works composed using variation forms and techniques. Other well-known works include *Chaconne in F Minor* and *Toccatà in E Minor* for organ. His contributions to the development of the chorale prelude and fugue have earned him a place among the most important composers of the Baroque era.



Hey Kids, Meet Antonio Vivaldi

Italian Baroque Era Composer (1678-1741)



Antonio Vivaldi was born on March 4, 1678 in Venice, Italy. Antonio's father, Giovanni Battista, a barber before becoming a violinist, taught young Antonio to play the violin and then toured Venice playing the violin with him.

At the age of 15, Antonio began training to become a priest. At the age of 25, he was ordained a priest and soon after became known as the *Il Prete Rosso*, "The Red Priest", because of his red hair. Due to his health, he left the priesthood in 1703 after only 3 years. But he was still able to pursue a career in music.

Vivaldi's music is joyful, almost playful, revealing his own joy of composing. In addition, Vivaldi was able to compose non-academic music which means it would be enjoyed by many people rather than just college professors. It was these qualities that made Vivaldi's music very popular.

Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*, composed in 1723, is a set of four concertos for violin. It is his most popular work and is among the most popular works of the Baroque Era. For this composition he wrote sonnets to match each season.



Hey Kids, Meet Ludwig van Beethoven

German Classical/Romantic Period Composer (Baptized 1770-1827)



Ludwig van Beethoven was born in Bonn, Germany in 1770, to Johann van Beethoven and Maria Magdalena Keverich. Although Beethoven's exact birth date is not known, his family celebrated it on December 16. Ludwig's first musical instruction came from his father Johann who was said to have been a harsh instructor. Johann later asked his friend, Tobias Pfeiffer, to teach his son. It seems that the harsh treatment continued, as Johann and his friend would come home late on occasion to pull young Ludwig from his bed to practice until morning.

Ludwig's talent was recognized early on, and by 1778 he was learning to play the organ and viola in addition to his piano studies. His most important teacher in Bonn was Christian Gottlob Neefe, a Court organist. It was Neefe who helped Beethoven publish his first piece of music.

In 1787, young Beethoven decided to travel to Vienna, hoping to meet and study composition with Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. It is not clear if he succeeded in meeting or studying with Mozart. By his twenties Beethoven began to suffer from hearing loss. He did, however, continue to compose, conduct and perform, even after he was completely deaf. One story recalls that after conducting the premiere of his Ninth Symphony he had to be turned around to see the overwhelming applause of the audience. When he heard nothing, he began to weep.

Ludwig van Beethoven's most popular pieces are his Fifth Symphony, *Für Elise* for piano solo, and his Ninth Symphony, which includes the melody *Ode to Joy*. He is remembered as an important composer in the transitional period between the Classical Era and Romantic Era in music and continues to be one of the most famous and influential composers of all time.



HEY KIDS, MEET
FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN
AUSTRIAN CLASSICAL ERA COMPOSER (1732-1809)



Franz Joseph Haydn was born in the Austrian village of Rohrau. His childhood was an extremely musical one, singing together frequently as a family and with neighbors. At a very early age his parents, Mathias and Maria, recognized their son's musical talent and accepted an offer to allow schoolmaster and choirmaster Johann Matthias Franck to train young Franz as a musician.

In his teens Franz left the choir to begin working as a freelance musician and composing when he had time. His big break came when he was asked to be the court conductor for Prince Esterhazy, a wealthy Hungarian with an orchestra of his own. Haydn worked for the Prince for 30 years composing many symphonies and other works.

When the prince died Haydn decided to travel to London. When he arrived, he discovered that he was a famous composer with many of his compositions being performed and sold as sheet music for many years.

Perhaps more than any other music composer, Haydn is known for his wit. The most popular example is found in his Surprise Symphony when his light simple melody is suddenly interrupted by a loud chord, "surprising" the audience.

In May 31, 1809, Haydn died a happy man and a beloved composer. Considered to be one of the greatest composers of the classical era, he is referred to as the "Father of the String Quartet" and the "Father of the Symphony".



Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Austrian Composer (1756-1791)



Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was born to Leopold and Anna Maria Pertl Mozart in 1756 in what is now Salzburg, Austria. His father Leopold Mozart was a choir master, a minor composer and an experienced teacher. When Mozart's sister Nannerl was seven she began keyboard lessons with her father while the three year old Wolfgang watched with fascination.

At age 4 Wolfgang himself began keyboard lessons playing without fault and with great sensitivity, and by age 5 he was composing short pieces which his father wrote down for him. In the following year Wolfgang and Nannerl began traveling through Europe with their father giving concerts in the courts of Europe. While touring, Mozart learned to play the violin and the organ.

At the age of 8 Wolfgang published his first two sonatas for the harpsichord. His skills as a composer continued to develop, and

by the age of 13 he had composed his first opera at the request of an emperor.

By the time Mozart was in his mid-twenties he had established himself as one of the most accomplished keyboard players in Vienna, and was recognized as an talented composer. Some of his most famous pieces include *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* for string orchestra, which means 'A Little Night Music', and *Ah vous dirais-je, Maman** for piano solo, which is a set of twelve variations on a french tune that Mozart would have known as a young boy.

On December 5, 1791, Mozart died at 35 years of age, leaving behind a collection of more than 600 compositions, including works for the symphony, the piano, and the opera. Some of these pieces are considered to be the finest works in the Classical style.



Hey Kids, Meet Johannes Brahms

German Romantic Era Composer (1833-1897)

Johannes Brahms was born in Hamburg, Germany on May 7, 1833. Johannes' father, a town musician, gave him his first musical instruction. At the age of seven he studied piano with Otto Friedrich Willibald Cossel. Young Brahms gave concerts in Hamburg and worked playing piano in restaurants and theaters to help support his family.

When Brahms was 20 he met famous composers Franz Liszt and Robert Schumann. Schumann was so impressed with Brahms' music that he wrote an article for a music journal that made Brahms famous. Brahms' success was also due to his hard work and his critical attitude toward his own music. He never felt he could live up to the standard set by Ludwig van Beethoven.



Brahms was one of the few music composers who could devote his time completely to composing without having to accept other employment. In fact, he spent so much time with his composing that he sometimes neglected his appearance. Sometimes, when he forgot to attach his suspenders, he would have to hold his pants up while conducting to keep them from falling down.

In 1889 Thomas Edison, an American inventor, visited Brahms in Vienna and invited him to perform for an experimental recording. Brahms played an abbreviated version of Hungarian Dance No.1 on the piano. The performance is one of the earliest recordings ever made by a major composer.

In later years, Brahms often participated in performances of his own compositions. In 1890, at the age of 57, he decided to give up composing. But this did not last long. He soon started composing again and his efforts in these final years produced several works that are now recognized as masterpieces.

Johannes Brahms died on April 3, 1897, a celebrated composer of the Romantic Era. His most notable works include his *Double Concerto for Violin and Cello*, *Liebeslieder Waltzes*, *Academic Festival Overture* and his *Lullaby*.



Hey Kids, Meet Frederic Chopin

Polish Romantic Era Composer (1810-1849)



Frederic Chopin was born on March 1, 1810 in Poland. His father was French and his mother was Polish. In his future the music of both of these nations would influence his compositions. Some of his works for piano are called mazurkas and polonaises, which are Polish dances.

As a child he showed an intelligence that allowed him to absorb everything. As he grew older, so did his abilities of observation, drawing, and his uncommon ability to imitate what he observed.

Frederic's first professional piano teacher was the respected Wojciech Zywny. He was devoted to the piano and his skills soon surpassed those of his teacher. At the age of seven, his public performances began to be compared to Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart as a child, and to his contemporary, Ludwig van Beethoven.

No other composer could play the piano like Chopin. His performances showed exceptional tenderness, happiness and boldness.

Chopin's love of Poland is captured in a small silver box filled with Polish earth which he carried with him when he left Poland at the age of 21. The silver box was buried with him when he died in Paris on October 17, 1849 at the age of 38.



Hey Kids, Meet Antonin Dvorak

Czech Romantic Era Composer (1841-1904)

Antonin Dvorak was born on September 8, 1841 in a small village in Bohemia, which is now part of the Czech Republic. He was one of seven children. Antonin's parents recognized his musical talent, and at the age of six he began his musical training. He studied music in Prague and graduated as an accomplished violin and viola player before he was 20 years old.

As a young adult Antonin played viola in the Bohemian Provisional Theater Orchestra. When it became necessary to supplement his income with a teaching job, he left the orchestra to allow himself time to compose. While teaching, he fell in love with one of his students. In an attempt to win her heart, he wrote a song cycle called, *Cypress Trees*.



In 1875 Dvorak composed his second string quintet. A performance of this work attracted the attention of German composer Johannes Brahms. Brahms contacted a music publisher in Vienna who commissioned Dvorak to write his first set of *Slavonic Dances*. This work was published in 1878 and became an immediate success.

In 1892 Dvorak moved to America to accept a position as head of the National Conservatory of Music. While in America he wrote his *Symphony No. 9 "New World Symphony"*. The New York Philharmonic's premiere performance created a sensation at Carnegie Hall in 1893.

Antonin Dvorak died in Prague, Czechoslovakia on May 1, 1904. His most successful works include *Carnival Overture*, *Humoresque in Eb Minor*, *Slavonic Dance in E Minor*, and his *Symphony No. 9 "New World Symphony"*.



Hey Kids, Meet Edvard Grieg

Norwegian Romantic Era Composer (1843-1907)



Edvard Grieg was born in Bergen, Norway on June 15, 1843. For most of Edvard's life Norway struggled to be its own nation separate from unions with other countries. It was his music that helped give Norway its own identity. For his contribution, he came to be regarded as a hero to the people of Norway. Many of his works include Norwegian folksongs and paint a musical picture of the landscape of the beautiful countryside.

Edvard's first music lessons were with his mother. He began writing music at the age of nine. Encouraged by a famous Norwegian violinist, Edvard enrolled in Leipzig Conservatory at the age of fifteen. He graduated four years later as a talented pianist and composer.

For a number of years Grieg and his wife lived in Copenhagen, Denmark and toured Europe performing his music. Then in 1885 they returned to his beloved Norway to build a cabin in a villa called Troldhaugen which means "Hill of the Mountain Men". From this cabin that overlooked the mountains and a fjord, Grieg wrote some of his greatest compositions.

Edvard Grieg died on September 4, 1907 in his hometown of Bergen, Norway. He is best known for his *Piano Concerto in A Minor* and his music for Henrik Ibsen's stage play *Peer Gynt*, which includes two of his best known works: *Morning Mood* and *In the Hall of the Mountain King*.



Hey Kids, Meet **Modest Mussorgsky**

Russian Romantic Era Composer (1839-1881)



Modest Mussorgsky was born on March 9, 1839, in Karevo, a village near St. Petersburg, Russia. At six years old Modest began piano lessons with his mother, who encouraged his early efforts at composition. At the age of ten, Modest and his brother were taken to St. Petersburg to study piano at the elite Peterschule. Three years later Modest entered the Cadet School of the Guards. Music remained important to him, and at his father's expense he published his first piece, *Porte Enseigne Polka* for the piano.

In 1856, Mussorgsky joined the Preobrazhensky Imperial Guards Regiment. As a teenage officer, Mussorgsky met Alexander Borodin, a medical officer in the regiment. Several years later, along with Mily Balakirev, Cesar Cui, and Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, they would form *The Five*, a group of composers united to create nationalistic music that was distinctly Russian.

Mussorgsky died on March 16, 1881. His musical compositions have been an inspiration for many Russian composers. Some of his greatest accomplishments include the orchestral work *Night on Bald Mountain*, made famous when it appeared in *Fantasia* in 1940, and *Pictures at an Exhibition*, a collection of piano pieces which describe a set of 10 drawings and watercolor paintings.



Hey Kids, Meet Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov

Russian Romantic Era Composer (1844-1908)



Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov was born in 1844 in Tikhvin, a village east of St. Petersburg, Russia. Though Nikolai showed a talent for music at an early age, he pursued an education at the School for Mathematical and Navigational Sciences in St. Petersburg and later joined the Imperial Russian Navy. It was not until he met Mily Balakirev in 1861 that he decided to concentrate on developing his musical skills. When Rimsky-Korsakov was not at sea, Balakirev encouraged and taught him how to compose music. It also was through Balakirev that Rimsky-Korsakov met four other composers who later became known as the *The Five*.

In 1871, Rimsky-Korsakov took a post as the professor of composition and orchestration at the St. Petersburg Conservatory. During his first few years as a teacher at the Conservatory he also concentrated on developing his own skills as a composer.

In 1872, Rimsky-Korsakov married Nadezhda Nikolayevna Purgold (1848-1919), a pianist and composer. Modest Mussorgsky, another famous composer, was his best man at their wedding.

Rimsky-Korsakov died in 1908, having written some of our most celebrated music. His works include *Flight of the Bumblebee* from *Tsar Saltan* and the symphonic suite *Scheherazade*. He is also recognized for his talents as an orchestrator. It is his version of Mussorgsky's *Night on Bald Mountain* that has taken its place in the standard orchestra repertory.



Hey Kids, Meet Gioachino Antonio Rossini

Italian Romantic Era Composer (1792-1868)



Gioachino Antonio Rossini was born in Pesaro, Italy on February 29, 1792 into a family of musicians. Gioachino's parents began his musical training at a young age. At the age of six, he was playing the triangle in his father's band.

Antonio's father made a bad choice and had to go to jail. His mother, as a result, decided to move her family to Bologna to support them as an opera singer. As a child, Antonio performed as an apprentice opera performer, and later entered the Conservatory of Bologna to study cello and composition. Because he was so taken by the music of Mozart his classmates referred to him as "the little German."

By the early 1820's Rossini had been appointed the Director of the San Carlo Theater in Naples. During his 19 years in this position, he wrote 36 operas that are full of humor and beautiful melodies. Then suddenly he stopped writing music. For the next 40 years of his life he did not compose at all.

Rossini died on November 13, 1868. His most successful and best known works include his operas *The Barber of Seville* completed at the age of 18, and *William Tell*, his final opera.



Hey Kids, Meet Camille Saint-Saëns

French Romantic Era Composer (1835-1921)



Charles-Camille Saint-Saëns was born in Paris, France in 1835. His father was a government clerk who died 3 months after his birth. At the request of his mother, Camille's great-aunt Charlotte moved in with them. She was the first to introduce him to the piano. Beginning piano lessons at the age of two, he came to be known as one of the outstanding child prodigies of his time. He almost immediately began to write music with his first composition for piano dated March 22, 1839. His talent was not limited to music, he also learned to read by age three and mastered Latin by age seven.

In 1886 Saint-Saëns premiered one of his most loved works - *Le Carnaval des Animaux* (*The Carnival of the Animals*). Shortly after its premiere, however, Saint-Saëns requested that the complete collection of pieces not be performed, allowing only a single movement, *Le Cygne* (*The Swan*), a piece for cello and two pianos, to be published during his lifetime. *The Carnival of the Animals* was written as a musical joke, and Saint-Saëns believed it would harm his reputation as a serious composer. Instead, this work has provided a testament to the imagination and musical brilliance of Camille Saint-Saëns.



Hey Kids, Meet Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Russian Romantic Era Composer (1840-1893)



Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky was born in 1840 in present-day Udmurtia, Russia. His father was a Ukrainian mining engineer. Peter began piano lessons at the age of five, and within three years he could read music as well as his teacher.

In 1850, Peter's father was appointed as the Director of the St. Petersburg Technological Institute. It was there that Peter received his education at the School of Jurisprudence. The only music instruction he received were piano lessons from a piano manufacturer who occasionally made visits to the school. He also attended the opera and theater with his classmates. It was the works of Rossini, Bellini, Verdi and Mozart that he enjoyed the most.

Peter's mother died in 1854, which brought him much sorrow. He responded by turning to music. It was at this time that he made his first serious efforts as a composer, writing a waltz in her memory.

In 1855, Peter's father asked a well-known German piano teacher to encourage his son's interest in music. However, when Peter's father asked about his son's musical potential, his teacher wrote that nothing indicated he would be a fine composer or performer. His father asked Peter to complete his course of study and then pursue a post in the Ministry of Justice. He did as he was asked, though his interest in music never left him.

In 1861, Tchaikovsky heard about classes being offered by the Russian Musical Society. He promptly began his studies. In the following year, Tchaikovsky followed his teacher to the St. Petersburg Conservatory where he accepted a post. It was at the conservatory that he met and studied with Anton Rubinstein, director and founder of the Conservatory. Rubinstein was impressed with Tchaikovsky's talent.

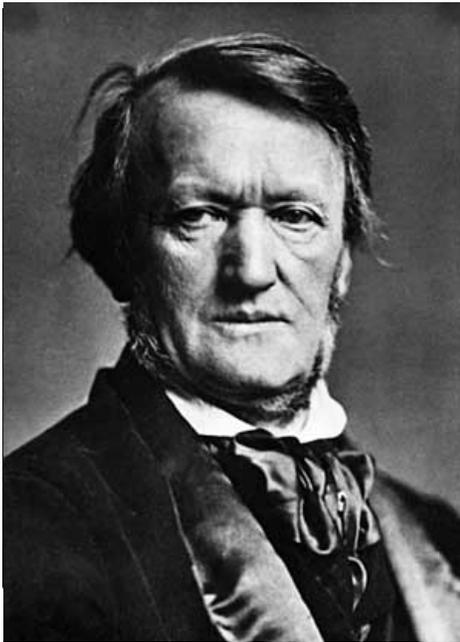
In 1869 Tchaikovsky composed his first recognised masterpiece, the Overture-Fantasy *Romeo and Juliet*. Tchaikovsky was deeply inspired by Shakespeare's writing, and in later years composed other works for *The Tempest* and *Hamlet*.

On November 6, 1893 Tchaikovsky died in St. Petersburg from cholera. His compositions are some of the greatest works of the Romantic Era, including the *1812 Overture*, *March Slav*, and *The Nutcracker*, which has become a Christmas season favorite.



Hey Kids, Meet Richard Wagner

German Romantic Era Opera Composer (1813-1883)



Richard Wagner was born in Leipzig, Germany, on May 22, 1813. He was the ninth son of Carl Friedrich Wagner and Johanna Rosine. Richard's father died of typhus six months after his birth. His mother then married painter, actor, and poet, Ludwig Geyer, and the family moved to Dresden.

Richard took an interest in the plays in which his stepfather performed, and Richard sometimes even participated in the plays alongside of him. In late 1820, Richard received some piano instruction from a Latin teacher. As a teen, Richard's teacher said that he would "torture the piano in a most abominable fashion." Despite what his teacher thought, Richard enjoyed playing the piano, and began to compose music as a teenager.

In 1831, he attended Leipzig University. He was impacted greatly by famous musicians, such as Beethoven, Mozart, and Wilhelmine Schröder-Devrient.

In 1833 Wagner became a choir master in Würzburg, Germany. Within a year of obtaining this position, Wagner composed his first opera, *Die Feen* (The Fairies). This opera was not performed until after his death.

Between 1857-1864, he wrote the opera *Tristan and Isolde*, a tragic love story. Many musicians consider *Tristan and Isolde* to be the beginning of modern classical music. Because of Wagner's strong political views and his poor money management, Wagner had to move often, moving to Russia, France, Switzerland, and then back to Germany. Even though his life was turbulent, he produced some of his most famous works during this time.

Wilhelm Richard Wagner died on February 13, 1883, at the age of 69 while visiting Venice, Italy. He was buried in Bayreuth, Germany, where there is still an annual musical festival that performs his operas. Richard Wagner is best-known for *Tristan and Isolde*, *The Ride of the Valkyries* and *Bridal Chorus*, also commonly called *Here Comes the Bride*.



Hey Kids, Meet Claude Debussy

French Impressionist Era Composer (1862-1918)



Claude Debussy was born in Saint-Germain-en-Laye, France, on August 22, 1862. He was the oldest of five children. His father, owned a china and crockery shop, and his mother, Victorine Manoury Debussy, was a seamstress.

Claude began piano lessons at the age of seven with an Italian violinist named Cerrito. His musical talent was quite evident, and by the age of ten Claude began studying music at the Paris Conservatoire. During his time there he studied composition, music history, piano, organ, and solfge. His experimental approach to composing music was problematic to his teachers however, as he did not like following the

strict rules of the Conservatory.

In 1884 Debussy was awarded the Prix de Rome for his composition *L'enfant prodigue* (The Prodigal Son), and received a scholarship to the Académie des Beaux-Arts. In the next year Debussy wrote of his longing to pursue his own way composing, saying, "I am sure the Institute would not approve, for naturally it regards the path which it ordains as the only right one. But there is no help for it! I am too enamoured of my freedom, too fond of my own ideas!"

Debussy returned to Paris in 1887, and soon after was introduced to Gamelan music (Indonesian music performed with bells, gongs and xylophones, and sometimes voices). In the following years Debussy would incorporate these sounds in his own music, producing a unique new sound. The music written during this period represents his early masterpieces, including *Ariettes oubliées* (Forgotten Arias) (1888), *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* (Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun)(1892), and the *String Quartet* (1893).

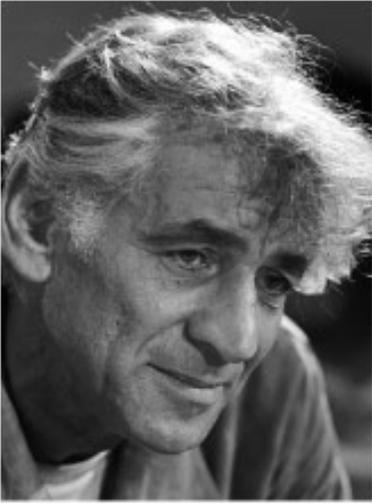


Debussy's opera, *Pelléas et Mélisande*, was a sensation when first performed in 1902. The attention gained with *Pelléas et Mélisande*, and *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune*, earned Debussy significant recognition, finally establishing him as a leading figure in French music.

Claude Debussy died on March 25, 1918. He is remembered as one of the most influential composers of the Impressionist period. His most popular pieces include *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* (1892), *Pelléas et Mélisande*, *La Mer (The Sea)* (1905), and *Children's Corner Suite* (1908), a six-movement suite for solo piano which includes the popular *Golliwogg's Cakewalk*.

Hey Kids, Meet Leonard Bernstein

American Composer, Conductor, Teacher and Pianist (1918-1990)



Leonard Bernstein was born in Lawrence, Massachusetts in 1918. His father, Sam Bernstein, did not support young Leonard's interest in music at first. Despite this, his father took him to many orchestra concerts. At one of these concerts he heard a piano performance that captivated him. It was then that he began to learn to play the piano.

In 1934, Bernstein enrolled at Harvard University where he studied music with Walter Piston. After finishing his music studies at Harvard, he attended the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia where he studied piano, conducting and composition. While at the Curtis Institute, Bernstein was awarded the only "A" grade in conducting that his teacher Fritz Reiner ever gave.

In 1943, when Bernstein was still very young, he was appointed to his first permanent conducting post as assistant conductor of the New York Philharmonic. On November 14, 1943 he was asked to substitute for principal conductor Bruno Walter who was not feeling well. With just a few hours notice, Bernstein accepted. The Carnegie Hall concert which was broadcast nationally on radio received critical acclaim. Soon orchestras worldwide were asking him to be a guest conductor.

From 1958-1969 Bernstein served as the principal conductor of the New York Philharmonic. During his time with the New York Philharmonic, Bernstein conducted the orchestra for the CBS television series, *Young People's Concerts*. Throughout Bernstein's musical career he believed teaching young students was a very important thing to do. Years later, Bernstein referred to these concerts as being "among my favorite" and his most highly prized activities of his life.

Bernstein also composed music for the symphony orchestra and musical theater. His first large-scale work for symphony orchestra, *Symphony No. 1: Jeremiah* (1943), received the New York Music Critics Award. *West Side Story*, written for the Broadway stage, was later made into an Academy Award-Winning film.



Hey Kids, Meet Aaron Copland

American Composer, Conductor and Pianist (1900-1990)



Aaron Copland was born in Brooklyn, New York, on November 14, 1900 to Jewish parents who immigrated from Russia. His first experience with music came from his older sister who taught him how to play the piano.

By age 17, Aaron decided that he wanted to be a composer, so he began taking composition lessons from a respected private music instructor in Manhattan. During this time, Aaron attended many music performances at the New York Symphony and Brooklyn Academy of Music where he listened to the music of contemporary and classical composers. Following his passion for European music, Aaron left New York for Paris.

While in Paris Copland studied with Nadia Boulanger, a French music professor, who taught many of the most important composers of the 20th century. Copland began to write his first full-fledged pieces. He soon sold his first musical composition, and was asked to write another piece of music for the Boston Symphony Orchestra. *Symphony for Organ and Orchestra* (1925), marked the beginning of Copland's life as a professional music composer. Compositions that followed included elements of jazz, because Copland believed jazz would inspire a nationalistic sound that was distinctly American.

In the late 1920's, Copland shifted his interest in jazz to popular folk music. It was with this new interest that Copland would forge a new and dynamic symphonic style. In 1935, Copland premiered *El Salon Mexico*, a work which began his most productive and popular years as a composer.

In search of a wider audience for his music, Copland began composing music for the ballet and for the movies. His most popular film scores include *Our Town* (1940) and *The Heiress* (1949), for which he won an Academy Award for Best Score. For the ballet he composed *Rodeo* (1942) and *Appalachian Spring* (1944), for which he received the Pulitzer Prize. One of his most unique and successful pieces from this time period was *Lincoln Portrait* (1942). The piece, written for orchestra and narrator, presented quotes from Lincoln's writing over a musical score.

Aaron Copland died in North Tarrytown, New York, on December 2, 1990. His distinctive and masterful compositions shaped our American musical style, and made him one of the most important composers of the twentieth-century.



Hey Kids, Meet George Gershwin

American Modern Era Composer and Pianist (1898-1937)



George Gershwin was born as Jacob Gershowitz on September 26, 1898 in Brooklyn, New York. George, the second of four children, was born to Russian Jewish immigrant parents Morris Gershowitz and Rosa Bruskin. His father changed the family name to Gershwin after immigrating from Russia.

George first displayed an interest in music at the age of ten when he attended his friend's violin recital in lower East Side Manhattan. His parents purchased a piano for George's older brother Ira, but it was George who played it.

After trying various piano teachers for his first two years of study, he was introduced to Charles Hambitzer, the pianist with the Beethoven Symphony Orchestra. Hambitzer mentored George's musical development until his death in 1918. Mr. Hambitzer taught George traditional piano technique, introduced him to the classical music of European composers, and encouraged him to attend orchestral concerts to hear their music.

By the age of fifteen George had begun working in Tin Pan Alley's publishing district as a "song plugger". He first worked for the Remick publishing house in New York playing piano to boost sales for the company. Later he worked for the Harms publishing house where he earned thirty-five dollars a week writing songs. It was during this time that he began to receive commissions to write songs. Then, in 1924, George teamed up with his brother Ira, a lyricist, and began what would be a legendary career. Together they produced many of Broadway's hits including *Lady be Good*, *Strike Up the Band*, *Fascinating Rhythm* and *I Got Rhythm*. Gershwin won the Pulitzer Prize for *Of Thee I Sing* (1931) which was the first musical comedy to be awarded this honor. However, despite the honor it received, it was his *Rhapsody in Blue* which he wrote in 1924 that made him a star.

George Gershwin died on July 11, 1937 in Hollywood, California of a brain tumor. He was only 38 years old.



Hey Kids, Meet Scott Joplin

American Musician and Composer (1867 or 1868-1917)



Scott Joplin, the second of six children, was born sometime between June 1867 and January 1868 in Eastern Texas. His father was a slave, while his mother was born a free black woman. After 1871 Joplin and his family moved to Texarkana, Texas. It was then that young Scott taught himself music on a piano in a home where his mother worked.

Exhibiting musical ability at an early age, Joplin received free music lessons from a local German music teacher. His teacher not only trained him to play the piano well, but also gave him a well-rounded knowledge of classical music form. It was this training in classical form that served him in later years in developing his compositional style.

In the late 1880's Joplin left home to pursue his musical career. By 1898 Joplin had sold six pieces for the piano. By 1889 he had published his most celebrated composition, *Maple Leaf Rag* which placed Joplin at the top of the list of ragtime performers and established ragtime as an important musical form. In the early 1900's, Joplin and his new wife, Belle, moved to St. Louis, Missouri. While living there, he composed some of his best-known works including *The Entertainer* and *Elite Syncopations*.

Scott Joplin died April 1, 1917. He remains the best-known ragtime composer and performer. He also is regarded as one of the three most important composers of classic ragtime.



Hey Kids, Meet Dmitri Kabalevsky

Russian Modern Era Composer (1904-1987)



Dmitri Kabalevsky was born in Saint Petersburg, Russia on December 30, 1904. As a young boy, Dmitri was encouraged by his father, a mathematician, to study mathematics. His interests, however, drew him to the arts. Eventually he became an accomplished pianist with interests in poetry and painting. He even spent three years as a theater pianist playing for silent films.

Kabalevsky's most important contribution to music is perhaps his effort to connect children to music. His "Twenty-Four Little Pieces" for piano solo is an example of the music he composed with the intention of bridging the gap between children's technical skills and musical aesthetics. He also led a music education pilot program in twenty-five Soviet schools.

Kabalevsky died on February 14, 1987. In spite of Russia's control over its composers and artists, Kabalevsky managed to build a successful career for himself.



Hey Kids, Meet Sergei Prokofiev

Russia Modern Era Composer (1891-1953)



Sergei Prokofiev was born in Russia on April 27, 1891. He began studying the piano with his mother at the age of three. By the age of five Sergei was displaying unusual musical abilities. His first composition, written down by his mother, was called *Indian Gallop*. By the age of nine he had written his first opera, *The Giant*.

At the age of thirteen Sergei entered the St. Petersburg Conservatory having already produced a whole portfolio of compositions. While at the conservatory he studied with Russian composer Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov. Later in his life, Prokofiev was said to have regretted not having taken full advantage of this opportunity.

The music that Prokofiev composed was new and different. He brought to the concert hall strange new harmonies, dynamic rhythms and lots of humor.

When the Russian Revolution broke out, Prokofiev traveled to America. He hoped he would be able to compose in peace. American audiences, however, were not ready for his new sounds so he moved to Paris. In Paris, Prokofiev found greater success where his operas and ballets were well liked.

Prokofiev returned to Russia in 1932 spending the last 19 years of his life in his home country. During this time, he produced some of his finest works including *Peter and the Wolf* for chamber orchestra and narrator, and the score for his ballet *Romeo and Juliet* which contained some of his most inspired music.

Sergei Prokofiev died on March 5, 1953 as one of the most admired composers of the twentieth century.



HEY KIDS, MEET DIMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH

Russian Modern Era Composer (1906-1975)

Dimitri Shostakovich was born in 1906 to Dmitri Boleslavovich Shostakovich and Sofiya Vasilievna Kokoulina, the second of three children. He was born in St. Petersburg, Russia, during the beginnings of the Russian Revolution. As a child, he was a prodigy as both a pianist and composer. His talent became apparent after beginning piano lessons with his mother at the age of eight.



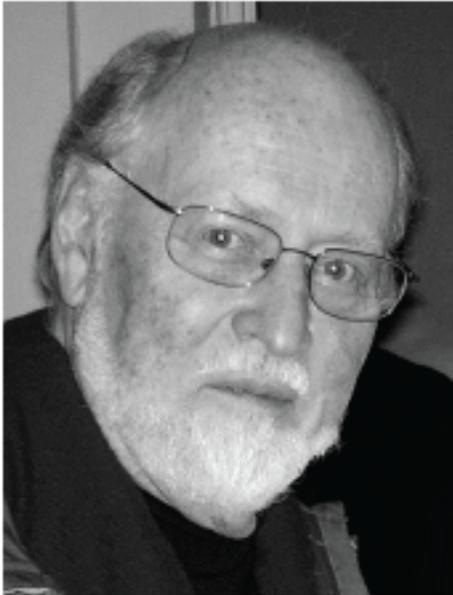
In the midst of a government that strongly enforced the style and elements of symphonic music, the works that Shostakovich produced as an adult reveal significant genius. Not only do they show great depth, but also his struggle to make his music fresh and original without overstepping the boundaries established by the former Soviet Union. The government insisted that composers use folk and folk-like elements, straight forward rhythms, minimal dissonance and simple harmonies. Not adhering to these expectations, especially in years of Stalin's regime, may have literally meant death.

Dimitri Shostakovich died on August 9, 1975. Many people feel that Shostakovich was one of the greatest composers of the mid-twentieth-century.



HEY KIDS, MEET JOHN WILLIAMS

AMERICAN COMPOSER, CONDUCTOR, AND PIANIST (1932-PRESENT)



John Williams was born on February 8, 1932, in Floral Park, New York. In 1948 John moved with his family to Los Angeles, California. He later attended college near his home in Los Angeles where he began to study composition. After college he was drafted into the United States Air Force where he had the opportunity to conduct and arrange music for the Air Force band.

In 1954, when his service ended, Williams moved to New York City and enrolled in the Juilliard School of Music. After completing his education at Juilliard, Williams moved back to Los Angeles to begin working as a film studio orchestrator. Eventually he was given the opportunity to compose the theme to

the television series *Lost in Space*. This marked the beginning of a career that has spanned six decades. During this time Williams produced some of the best music ever written for film, including his music for Star Wars which was selected by the American Film Institute as the greatest film score of all time.

John Williams top film scores include:

- Jaws (1975)
- Star Wars (1977)
- Superman (1978)
- Raiders of the Lost Ark (1981)
- E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial (1982)
- Home Alone (1990)
- Jurassic Park (1993)
- Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone (2001)

In total John Williams has received 5 Academy Awards and 50 Academy Award nominations. He is the second most nominated individual after Walt Disney.

