

Course Content - Introduction to Classical Music

Historical facts of Classical Music

- Classical Music started out as church music and music for kings and queens in Europe around 900 years ago.
- About 550 years ago, it became *popular outside of churches and castles* because many people were starting to earn more money, so they could afford to go see musical performances.
- Classical music is so complex and hard to play, the music must be written out for the musicians on sheets of paper so they can follow along with all of the notes. This is called the musical 'score'.
- The person who writes the 'score' is called the Composer.
- Small orchestras might also be called Chamber Orchestras and they have around 50 musicians.
- A full-size orchestra, often called a Symphony Orchestra, will have around a hundred musicians.

Classical Music Instruments

- **String family:** Violin, Viola, Cello, Harp and Double Bass. All these instruments are played with either a bow, sliding across the string or by plucking the strings with fingers.
- **Brass family:** Trumpet, Trombone, Tuba and French Horn. All of these instruments are played by blowing into a mouthpiece.
- **Woodwind family:** Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Bassoon. These instruments also need to be played by blowing. All woodwinds except for the flute, the woodwinds have small pieces of wood, called "Reeds" that create the right sound.
- **Percussion family:** This family has a lot of instruments. The piano is included in this family too because you must tap on the keys to make sound. And percussion is all about tapping or hitting or even smashing! Percussion is broken down into 2 types. TUNED or NON-TUNED. Tuned percussion instruments create melodies as well as rhythm. Instruments like xylophones, pianos, timpani, and chimes are tuned percussion instruments. Non-tuned percussion instruments include bass drums, snare drums, triangles, and cymbals.
- **Styles are called forms in classical music.**
- **Movements are the parts of the song.**
- **Solo means alone. A solo is when an instrument plays all by itself and sounds alone in the music.**
- **Tempo means the speed that the music should be played.**
- **Dynamics means how loud or soft the musicians play the music.**

Music in Life Lesson:

The Music in Life lesson is a moment to engage in active listening. The Music in Life lesson song for this course is "Ride of the Valkyries" by Richard Wagner. Students are invited to think about how the music makes them feel, think and move. Music is an individual experience; active listening encourages students to choose their own musical path.

Classical Music Forms

- A **Concerto** is a musical form that has three movements. There is one solo instrument, like a piano, a violin, or a flute that plays a main part and the orchestra plays the rest. During the 3 parts of the concerto, the solo instrument is in a friendly battle for 'who's in charge' with the orchestra. The goal is that by the end of the third movement, the solo instrument and the orchestra are equal and playing together in perfect harmony and balance.
- A **Symphony** is usually played in three or four movements. The first movement would be played at a medium tempo. Then the second movement would be slower. The third movement in a symphony is often a *minuet*. A *minuet* means 'small steps' and in a symphony, 'small steps' or 'minuet' usually means dance music. Then the final movement of a symphony might be played at a medium tempo.
- A **Symphonic Poem** is one long piece of music that tells a story. The music is created to inspire your imagination and to make you feel like you are right in the middle of the action.

Great composers of Classical Music

- Antonio Lucio Vivaldi, Johann Sebastian Bach, Wolfgang Amadeus, Louise Farrenc, Scott Joplin George Gershwin, Judith Weir, John Williams.