



Johann Sebastian Bach

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.

Today, most of what is referred to in music and higher education as the "rules" or accepted characteristics and trends of western tonal harmony were defined simply by studying the trends of what people like Bach composed...the what, why and how. He laid a solid foundation of tonality for the following composers.



To Do Today:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Circle 6 nouns with red. | <input type="checkbox"/> Underline 4 prepositional phrases with orange. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Circle 9 verbs with blue. | <input type="checkbox"/> Underline 7 dependent clauses with purple. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Circle 5 adjectives with green. | <input type="checkbox"/> Underline 8 independent clauses with yellow. |



Name _____



Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

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 perfectly 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 a talented composer. Many believe that Mozart composed the theme for *Ah vous dirais-je, Maman* (Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star) when he was 4 or 5 years of age. His requiem was also very famous.

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. Mozart is part of the first or elder school of Vienna. Some also refer to these men as the fathers of Western music: Mozart, Joseph Haydn and Ludwig van Beethoven.



To Do Today:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Circle 6 proper nouns with red. | <input type="checkbox"/> Underline 4 prepositional phrases with orange. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Circle 9 past tense verbs with blue. | <input type="checkbox"/> Underline 7 dependent clauses with purple. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Circle 5 adjectives with green. | <input type="checkbox"/> Underline 8 independent clauses with yellow. |



Name _____

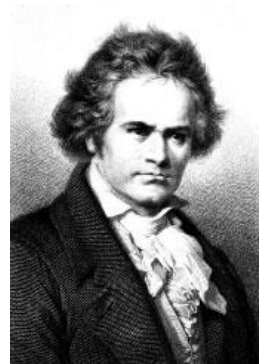


Ludwig van Beethoven

Ludwig van Beethoven was born in Bonn, Germany in 1770. 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 Neeffe, a Court organist, 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, his Ninth Symphony, which includes the melody Ode to Joy, and a number of piano sonatas including his *Moonlight*, and *Pathétique*. 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. He was a revolutionary composer, and disputed to be the most influential musician of all time.



To Do Today:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Circle 6 proper nouns with red. | <input type="checkbox"/> Underline 4 prepositional phrases with orange. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Circle 9 past tense verbs with blue. | <input type="checkbox"/> Underline 7 dependent clauses with purple. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Circle 5 adjectives with green. | <input type="checkbox"/> Underline 8 independent clauses with yellow. |



Name _____



Frederic Chopin

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. He was renowned for his improvisation abilities.

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.

makingmusicfun.net



To Do Today:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Circle 6 proper nouns with red. | <input type="checkbox"/> Underline 4 prepositional phrases with orange. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Circle 9 past tense verbs with blue. | <input type="checkbox"/> Underline 7 dependent clauses with purple. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Circle 5 adjectives with green. | <input type="checkbox"/> Underline 8 independent clauses with yellow. |

Look up "improvisation" in a dictionary. What does it mean? _____

How many years old was Chopin when he died? _____



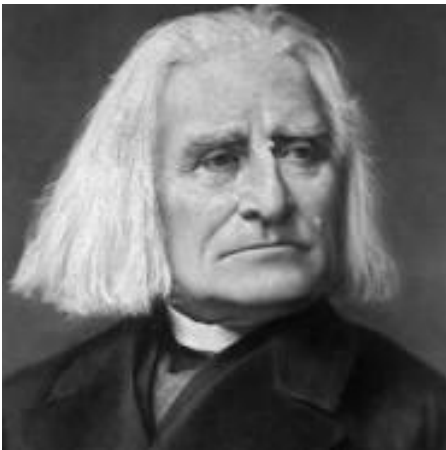
Name _____



Franz Liszt

Franz Liszt was born on October 22, 1811 in Hungary. While Franz Liszt was a composer, conductor, critic and teacher, he was best known as a pianist. He was the first of the virtuoso performers. When Liszt walked onto the stage, he took over the hall, amazing the audience with his incredible technique and his awesome presence. He was a true showman and the man who invented the solo recital. Although some were annoyed by his personality, Liszt was one of the greatest pianists the world has ever known.

As a composer, Liszt, of course, wrote music primarily for the piano. He also transcribed popular orchestral works for this instrument. Many of his pieces are tremendously difficult and few pianists can perform them properly. Later in his life, he started writing music for the orchestra and composed wonderful melodies. Most agree that the hardest piano piece ever written could be narrowed down to either Rachmaninoff's or Liszt's piano concertos.



Liszt also wrote music criticism and was known as a conductor and teacher. He trained many of the performers of his time in his tradition. Because of his ego and attitude, Liszt was always a controversial figure. However, he is recognized as one of the dominant personalities of 19th century Romantic music. Liszt died on July 31, 1886.

classicsforkids.com

To Do Today:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Circle 6 proper nouns with green. | <input type="checkbox"/> Underline 4 dependent clauses with orange. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Circle 9 past tense verbs with blue. | <input type="checkbox"/> Underline 7 independent clauses with purple. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Circle 5 adjectives with red. | <input type="checkbox"/> Underline 8 prepositional phrases with yellow. |

Look up the word "concerto" in a dictionary. What does it mean? _____

What does "he took over the hall" mean in paragraph 1? _____



Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky

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 recognized 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.



To Do Today:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Circle 6 proper nouns with red. | <input type="checkbox"/> Underline 4 prepositional phrases with orange. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Circle 9 past tense verbs with blue. | <input type="checkbox"/> Underline 7 dependent clauses with purple. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Circle 5 adjectives with green. | <input type="checkbox"/> Underline 8 independent clauses with yellow. |

Look up "conservatory" in a dictionary. What does it mean? _____



Name _____



Sergei Rachmaninoff

Sergei Rachmaninoff was born in Russia on April 1, 1873. He was one of the most important composers in Russia in the early 20th century. He first made a name for himself as a concert pianist, and some of his most important compositions were written for that instrument. He studied first at the school of a very difficult taskmaster, Nikolai Zverev, who made his students work for 16 hours each day. He then went to the Moscow Conservatory, where he won the Great Gold Medal in 1892.

Despite this fine training, and encouragement from Tchaikovsky, who was Russia's most famous composer at the time, Rachmaninoff's career moved slowly. When his first symphony was performed, absolutely nobody liked it. He lost confidence and found himself unable to compose. He finally went to a hypnotist, who repeated over and over to him, "You will write your Concerto – You will write your Concerto...." He did, producing his famous Piano Concerto in c minor, which is his most popular work. He went on to compose several other concertos plus symphonies, piano works and songs. Another well-known work of his is the *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*.

Following the Russian Revolution in 1917, Rachmaninoff left his home country, moving first to Switzerland and then to the United States. He toured often, conducting and performing. His astounding abilities on the piano won him high praise and great fame. He had a phenomenal memory and could hear a piece of music and play it back not only the next day but years afterward. Fortunately, Rachmaninoff recorded much of his own music, so we can still hear his performances today. He died in California on March 28, 1943.



To Do Today:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Circle 6 proper nouns with red. | <input type="checkbox"/> Underline 4 prepositional phrases with orange. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Circle 9 past tense verbs with blue. | <input type="checkbox"/> Underline 7 dependent clauses with purple. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Circle 5 adjectives with green. | <input type="checkbox"/> Underline 8 independent clauses with yellow. |

How old was Rachmaninoff when he died? _____

Look up "astounding" in a thesaurus. List 3 synonyms. _____



Name _____



Claude Debussy

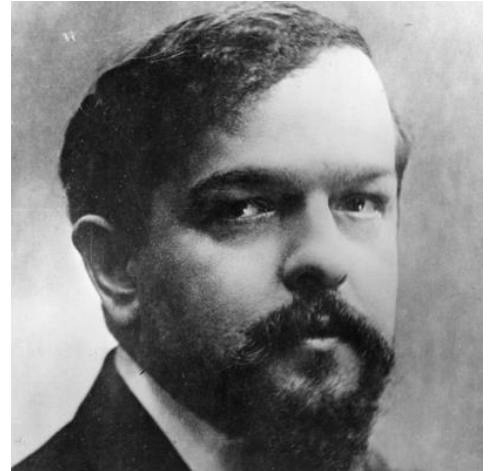
Claude Debussy was born in France on August 22, 1862.

Debussy really had a double first name: Achille-Claude. He was born in a suburb of Paris, and it was his aunt who first noticed how musical he was. She got him started taking piano lessons. When he was only ten, Debussy started studying at the very strict Paris Conservatory.

As a child, Debussy was fascinated by visual art, and as he grew up, he loved the new style called "Impressionism." Instead of painting realistic, lifelike paintings with hard outlines,

Impressionists used thousands of dots, or many different shades of color to create the "impression" of what they wanted to depict. Debussy took that idea and applied it to music, creating Impressionism in music.

He is widely regarded as one of the most influential composers of the 20th century. His harmonies, considered radical in his day, were influential to almost every major composer of the 20th century. He died on March 25, 1918.



To Do Today:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Circle 10 nouns with red. | <input type="checkbox"/> Underline 4 prepositional phrases with orange. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Circle 9 verbs with green. | <input type="checkbox"/> Underline 7 dependent clauses with purple. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Circle 5 adjectives with blue. | <input type="checkbox"/> Underline 8 independent clauses with yellow. |

How old was Debussy when he died? _____

What does "radical" mean in paragraph 3? _____

How did Debussy apply his love of visual art to music? _____



Name _____

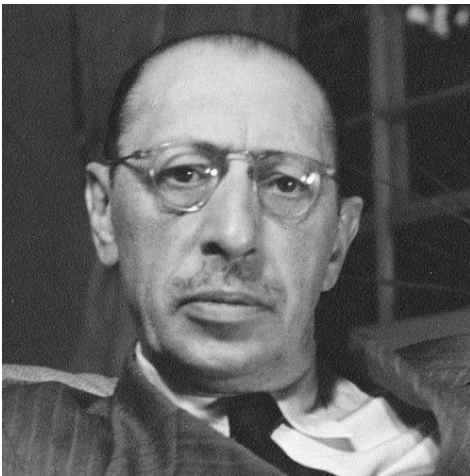


Igor Stravinsky

Igor Stravinsky was born in St. Petersburg, (which was the capital of Russia at the time) on June 17, 1882. His father was a famous opera singer, so as a kid, Igor got to hang out at the opera house, where he met all the famous musicians of the day. At one performance, he even caught sight of Tchaikovsky.

Igor began taking piano lessons at age 9. When he grew up, he started studying law. One of his fellow law students was the son of the composer who wrote *Flight of the Bumblebee*, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, who agreed to give Stravinsky lessons on composing (writing) music. Law fell by the wayside completely after Stravinsky had a big success with *The Firebird*, which he composed for Serge Diaghilev, head of the Russian Ballet.

Stravinsky went on to write more ballets for Diaghilev. One of those was *The Rite of Spring*, about a pagan ritual in ancient Russia. The opening night audience found the music and choreography so shocking that



there was actually a riot in the theater!

Stravinsky moved around a lot. In Europe, he lived in France and Switzerland; during World War II, he came to the United States, where he lived in both California and New York. Stravinsky's music moved around, too -- he never really picked one style. He wrote Russian-sounding music, music that looked back to previous centuries, modern music, opera, and religious music -- including a symphony with psalms in it. Some of his music influenced later composers that compose music for film score. Stravinsky died on April 6, 1971.

To Do Today:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Circle 10 nouns with red. | <input type="checkbox"/> Underline 4 prepositional phrases with orange. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Circle 9 verbs with green. | <input type="checkbox"/> Underline 7 dependent clauses with purple. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Circle 5 adjectives with blue. | <input type="checkbox"/> Underline 8 independent clauses with yellow. |

How old was Stravinsky when he died? _____

What does "fell by the wayside" mean in paragraph 2? _____



Name _____



Bela Bartók

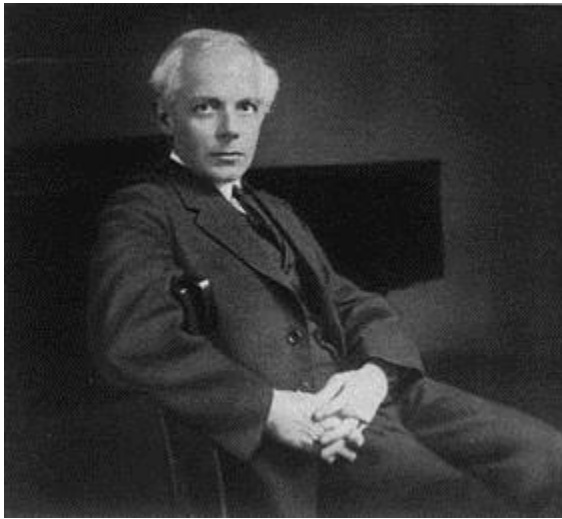
Bela Bartók was born in Hungary on March 25, 1881. He started playing piano at an early age. At first, he was taught by his mother; later, he attended and graduated from the prestigious Budapest Academy of Music.

Bartók was very interested in the folk music of his native land and traveled throughout Hungary and other neighboring countries recording thousands of old songs. He wanted to use this music in a

very natural way in his own compositions. You can hear the strong rhythmic patterns of the folk tunes and their unique sounds in many of his pieces. One of his most famous works is the Mikrokosmos, which consists of over 150 pieces for teaching piano that are based on Hungarian music.

In 1940, Bartók moved to the United States to escape from Hitler and Nazism. He settled in New York City with his wife, where he taught at Columbia University and continued to compose. His health was never good, however, and he had constant financial problems. He died in 1945. Although

Bartók's music was not very popular during his lifetime, after his death he became one of the most well known composers of the 20th century.



To Do Today:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Circle 10 nouns with red. | <input type="checkbox"/> Underline 4 prepositional phrases with orange. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Circle 9 verbs with green. | <input type="checkbox"/> Underline 7 dependent clauses with purple. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Circle 5 adjectives with blue. | <input type="checkbox"/> Underline 8 independent clauses with yellow. |

How old was Bartók when he died? _____

Why did Bartók leave Europe? _____

What problems did he face as an adult? _____