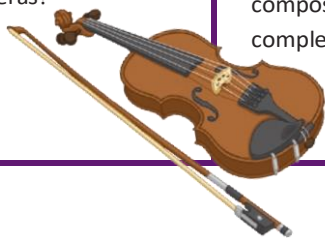# Western Classical Tradition 1650-1910 Knowledge Organiser

The Coronation Anthems and Oratorios of Handel

Oratorios

An oratorio is a large musical composition for orchestra, choir, and soloists.

- They are similar to operas, but oratorios often tell stories from the Bible.
- There is usually no acting and no scenery.
- The main types of movements in oratorios are chorus, aria and recitative.
- Handel's oratorios were originally all sung by men, as women were banned from singing in church.

Handel's 'Messiah'

- 'Messiah' is one of Handel's most well-known oratorios and is still regularly performed today.
- It was first performed in Dublin in 1742 and received its London premiere nearly a year later.
- It is often melismatic and features word-painting, common musical techniques for its era.
- It was intended to be performed with an orchestra of a few dozen players. This would have involved mostly strings and woodwinds with minimal brass and percussion.

Differences between Opera and Oratorio

Opera:
- features scenery;
- features acting;
- lyrics are secular (non-religious).

Oratorio:
- no scenery;
- no acting;
- lyrics are sacred (religious).

Coronation Anthems

A coronation anthem is a piece of choral music written to accompany the coronation of a monarch.

Zadok the Priest
- Handel composed 'Zadok the Priest' along with three other anthems for the coronation of George II and his wife Caroline in 1727.
- It was so well received that it has been used at every coronation of a British monarch ever since.

Key Vocabulary

chorus

aria

recitative

melismatic

word-painting

choral

soprano

alto

tenor

bass

The Orchestral Music of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven

Haydn

- Franz Joseph Haydn was Austrian and a key composer of the Classical period.
- Haydn visited London twice. On each occasion, he composed six symphonies – known as the 'London' symphonies.
- He kept himself busy, composing 107 symphonies, 83 string quartets, 45 piano trios, 62 piano sonatas, 14 masses and 26 operas!

Beethoven

- Beethoven was a composer of the late Classical and early Romantic eras.
- He demanded that people listen attentively.
- He composed many symphonies and concertos for orchestra.
- Some of his best works were composed when he had gone completely deaf.

Mozart

- He lived a short life.
- By the age of six, he was writing his own compositions.
- He wrote his first mass at age 12 and his first opera at 14.
- He composed 41 symphonies during his lifetime (around 25 more were discovered later).

Study Piece: Symphony No. 101 by Haydn

(2nd Movement)

- Nicknamed the 'Clock' symphony because it has a ticking pattern (in quavers). These are often played pizzicato and/ or staccato.
- Played by a full orchestra, including clarinets.
- Haydn ensures there is a sense of balance through careful use of phrasing and dynamics.
- The tempo is andante throughout.
- Starts in G major, modulates to G minor (bar 36) and returns to G major at bar 65. There are a few other short-lived modulations to other keys as well.
- Features two main themes.

Key Vocabulary

overture

concerto

symphony

sonata form

exposition

development

recapitulation

cadenza

The Piano Music of Chopin and Schumann

Chopin
- The Polish composer, Frédéric Chopin, came from a musical family. His mother was a piano teacher, and his father played the flute and violin.
- Chopin started composing and writing poetry at the age of six. He gave his first public concerto performance at the age of eight.
- Most of Chopin's music was written for piano. He wrote 59 mazurkas, 27 études, 27 preludes, 21 nocturnes and 20 waltzes for the instrument.

Schumann
- Robert Schumann was a German composer from the Romantic era.
- Schumann wanted to become a great pianist and to help with this, he created a device to strengthen his fingers. Unfortunately, this device actually injured his hand, putting an end to his dream of being a virtuosic pianist. He decided to become a composer instead.
- His music is full of emotion. Many of his pieces are inspired by literature.
- His piano concerto is one of the most famous piano concertos of all time.
- Until 1839, he only composed music for the piano. After 1839, he composed many more pieces, including symphonies, concertos and chamber music.

Aspects of Romantic Piano Music
- The **tonality** (major/minor) and modulations
- Describing the **melody** (e.g. cantabile, use of sequences, etc.)
- **Dynamics** (there is usually a large range)
- Use of **cadenzas**
- **Structure**
- **Key signature**
- The use of **accompaniment** (e.g. chordal, broken chords, etc.)
- The use of **pedal**
- Use of **chromaticism**
- **Phrasing**
- **Time Signature**

Key Vocabulary
tonality

melody

dynamics

cadenza

structure

pedal

chromaticism

phrasing

The Requiem of the Late Romantic Period

Mass
- A Mass is a Christian religious service, the purpose of which is to reaffirm a Catholic's faith in their religion.
- It is made up of different prayers, many of which are sung to music. It is divided into two parts:
  1. The Mass **Ordinary**: consists of the five standard prayers.
  2. The Mass **Proper**: consists of 15 prayers that change daily to focus on the specific occasion being celebrated.

Requiem Mass
- The Requiem Mass is a 'Mass of the Dead.' It is a Catholic Church service in memory of someone who has recently died.
- It contains texts from both the Ordinary and Proper sections of the Mass.
- It is often, but not always, performed at funerals.

Notable Composers
- The Requiem Mass is notable for the large number of musical compositions that it has inspired, including settings by Mozart, Verdi, Berlioz, Dvořák, Fauré, Duruflé and others.
- One of the most well-known requiems is the Requiem in D minor, K. 626 composed by Mozart in 1791. It was commissioned by a mysterious messenger who asked Mozart to compose a piece for Count von Walsegg. However, Mozart became convinced his requiem was being commissioned for his own funeral.
- Giuseppe **Verdi** composed Messa da Requiem (1874) which sounds very operatic in style. He composed it in memory of the famous poet and novelist Alessandro Manzoni.
- Gabriel **Fauré** finished composing his Requiem in D Minor in 1890. Although requiems are usually composed to commemorate the death of someone, Fauré once said, 'my requiem wasn't written for anything – for pleasure, if I may call it that!'

Key Vocabulary
Mass Ordinary

Mass Proper

polyphonic

Kyrie

Gloria

Credo

Sanctus

Agnus Dei