

The History of Music

Music and Composers from the Romantic Period



Aim

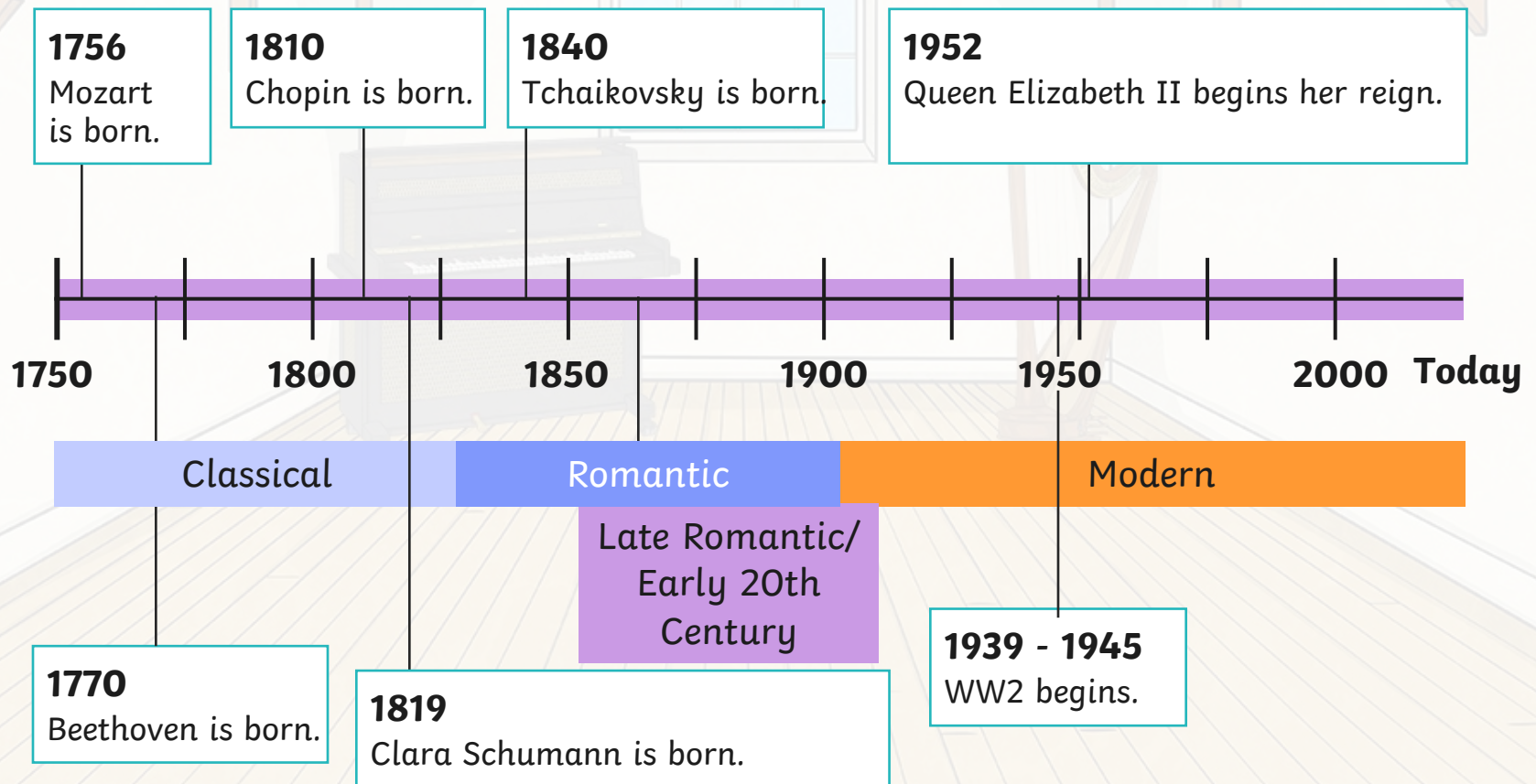
- To learn about the Romantic period of music.
- To learn about famous composers from this era.

Success Criteria

- To identify where the Romantic period fits within musical history.
- To give examples of specific features of music from the Romantic period.
- To be able to name composers from the Romantic period and give facts about their lives.

The Romantic Musical Period

This period of music refers to music and composers between roughly 1827 and 1900. This period follows the Classical era.



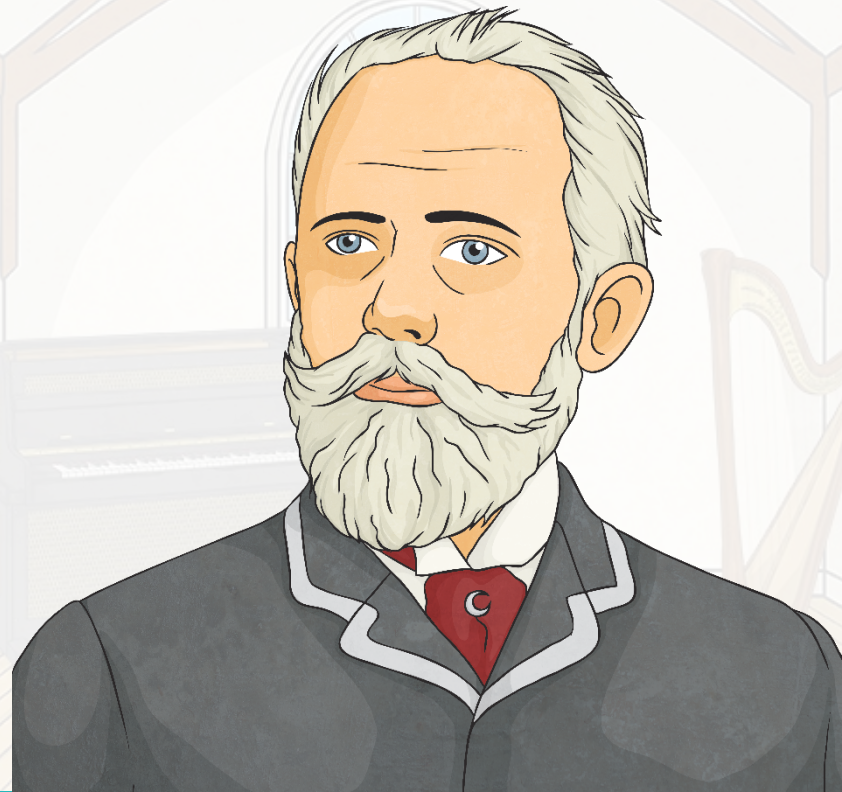
The Romantic Period

Famous composers from this period include:

- Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
- Frédéric Chopin
- Clara Schumann



Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky



Born: May 7th 1840
Died: November 6th 1893

Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Piotr was born in Russia and at the age of 8, his family moved to the city of St. Petersburg. Tchaikovsky was a very talented young musician, however his parents wanted him to go into law and so made him study that instead.

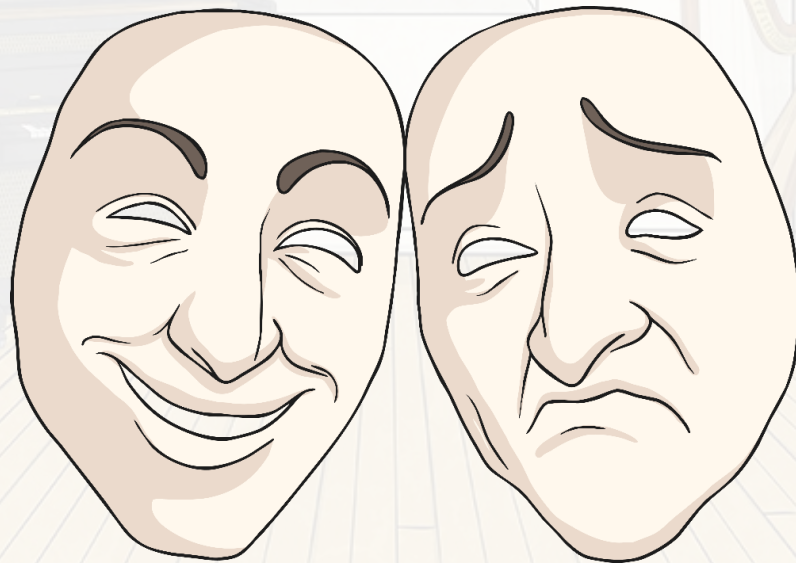
Whilst at law school, Tchaikovsky continued to study music. Eventually, he left his legal job and went to music school, despite his parents' wishes. After he graduated, he moved to Moscow to teach at a new music school which is now named after him.

For many years, Tchaikovsky had a supporter named Nadezhda von Meck. She was a wealthy widow who was a huge fan of Tchaikovsky's music. She would send him money so that he didn't need to work, allowing him to concentrate on composing. He showed his gratitude by dedicating some of his music to her.

Tchaikovsky travelled all around Europe performing his music.

Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Tchaikovsky's music can be interpreted in different ways, however many believe that his compositions are full of emotion and despair perhaps stemming from when his mother left him at boarding school. He was said to find the experience so traumatic that the memory never left him.



Frédéric Chopin



Born: February/March 1810
Died: October 17th 1849

Frédéric Chopin

Frédéric Chopin was born in Poland. He was born at the end of the Classical era but became one of the greatest Romantic pianists of his day.

At just six years old, he was already an extremely talented pianist and began composing his own music and writing his own poetry. His first concert was given at the age of eight.

At 20 he left Poland to travel around Europe and make a fortune from his talent, eventually settling in Paris. Many believe that he always carried some Polish soil with him as he was very patriotic.

Chopin died at the young age of 39. He was buried in France with a box of earth brought from Poland. His heart was taken back to Poland in an urn.

Clara Schumann



Born: September 13th 1819

Died: May 20th 1896

Clara Schumann

It was Clara's father who taught her how to play the piano. He taught her to compose and perform from a very early age. She eventually performed for audiences all over Europe.

Later in life, Clara fell in love with Robert Schumann, who was taking piano lessons with her father. Clara's father didn't approve of the pairing and tried to stop the marriage, but eventually, true love overcame everything, and the two married.

Robert was a very talented musician too and Clara enjoyed performing some of his pieces. Despite the fact that she had eight children, Robert still encouraged his wife with her musical abilities.

Clara died 40 years after Robert.

Robert Schumann

Born: 8 June, 1810

Died: 29 July, 1856

Features of Romantic Music

Composers poured emotion, energy and passion into their pieces. Some pieces expressed tragedy or love based on the composer's own life experiences, much like music today.

Chopin famously said "Sometimes I can only groan, suffer and pour out my despair at the piano."

Music from the Romantic era didn't always end in the key it started in. Overall, it was music with several twists and turns and didn't always end in the way you might expect.

Listen to the following famous examples of Romantic music and discuss which emotions may have inspired the composer to compose these pieces.

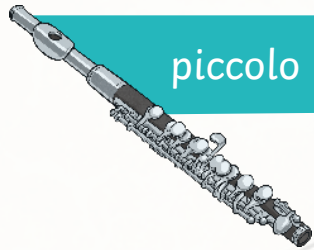
- Schubert's 'Unfinished' Symphony No. 8
- Dvořák's Symphony No. 9, 'From the New World'
- Minute Waltz by Chopin
- Swan Lake Finale by Tchaikovsky
- Nocturne in F major Op.6 No.2 by Schumann



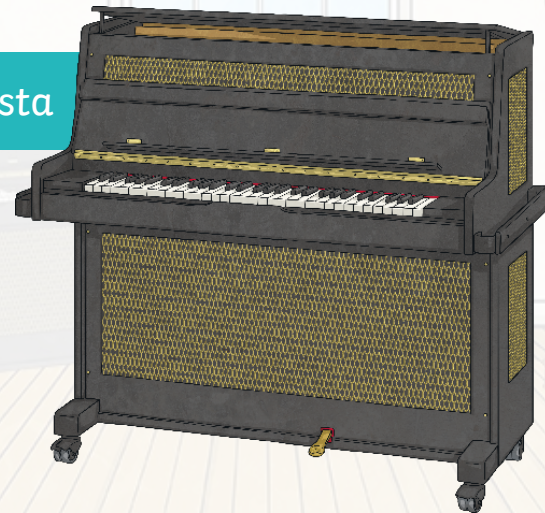
The Instruments of The Romantic Period

The range of instruments within the orchestra continued to grow in order to express the passions of the composer. New instruments used in composing included:

- **woodwind:** bass clarinet and piccolo
- **percussion:** drums, xylophones, triangles, bells, harps and celesta.



piccolo



celesta



harp

Have a listen to the following pieces. Which instruments can you hear?

- Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy by Tchaikovsky
- Tchaikovsky's Romeo & Juliet
- Debussy's La Mer

True or False?

Clara's husband was called Robert, another successful pianist and composer from the Romantic era.

True

True or False?

The Romantic era was a time when composers could express their emotions through their music.

True

True or False?

Tchaikovsky's parents encouraged him with his music.

False

True or False?

Chopin is supposed to have carried around a small amount of Polish soil to remind him of home.

True

True or False?

Clara Schumann had six children.



False

True or False?

Chopin gave his first concert at the age of 20.

False

True or False?

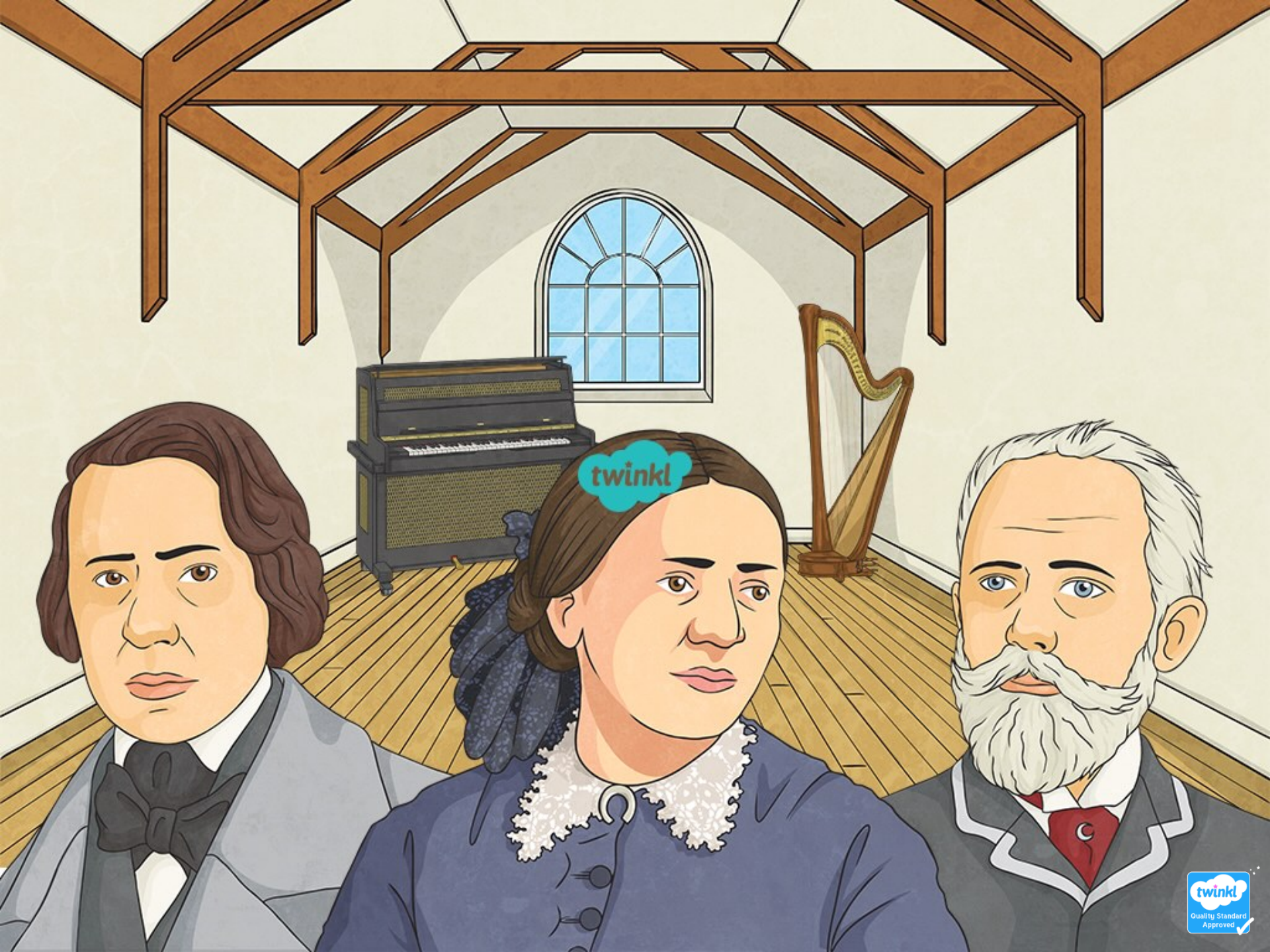
Tchaikovsky had a supporter named Nadezhda von Meck who gave him money so he could concentrate on his composing.

True

True or False?

Tchaikovsky composed The Nutcracker and Swan Lake.

True



twinkl