THE HISTORY OF MUSIC

BUZZ

TEACHER'S MANUAL

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THE HISTORY OF MUSIC

What Is the History of Music?

The history of music firstly consists in the description, according to places and times, of the various known forms of musical expression. It next consists in the observation of the cultural and intellectual context in which that music evolved.

Why the History of Music?

As far back as memory can reach, there has always been music. As far forward as we may go, there will always be music. Music, the art of combining sounds, is universal. Since the birth of mankind, throughout all the pages of mankind's history, music can be heard.

What if you were asked how music from prehistoric times or from Antiquity sounded like? What is left of the songs from the Middle Ages? Who were the main composers of the Renaissance and Baroque eras? What are the differences between the Classical and Romantic periods? Why is 20th-century music synonymous with rupture? And, what is music currently? Would you know what to answer? Buzz takes on the challenge of answering all of these questions.

To discover and understand music from the past, to be enriched with it and to thus better appreciate the music to which we listen today, that is why we should learn the history of music.

PREHISTORIC TIMES

Our musical origins go back to Homo sapiens, our ancestor from over 100,000 years ago. It is still difficult to establish the order in which musical phenomenons might have appeared during prehistoric times. We can only suppose a series of general stages along the following lines.

Man would have first tried some elementary rhythms, such as by striking his own body or by banging and shaking objects. Sound-making objects would make their beginnings. He would have then tried mimicking the sounds of nature by using his mouth or larynx. At this stage, Homo sapiens would be discovering the full range of his vocal possibilities. He would thus be exploring different combinations of sounds varying in pitch and timbre. It would be the birth of song, of spoken language and of dance.

ANTIQUITY

It is not until the arrival of the civilizations of Antiquity that the real ambition for artistic creation manifested itself and that a taste for listening developed. At an early age, a child would learn the rudiments of music: plucking the strings of a lyre, of a sitar, blowing into an aulos and playing the tunes taught by his master. Each musical instrument had its distinctive role.

They resonated for gods, for battles or for celebrations. Life during Antiquity was governed by the rhythms of music. Indeed, music livened up homes, temples and theatres alike!

Among the various civilizations of the ancient world, the one that interests us most particularly is the Greco-Roman civilization, the source of Western culture. Among its many trade categories such as ironsmiths, shepherds and potters, there were musicians.

MIDDLE AGES

(476 – 1453, i.e. from the fall of the Western Roman Empire to the fall of Constantinople)

It is during the Middle Ages that Western music started its rise. In the course of this period, musical notation came to be. Until then, music had been transmitted from musician to musician by oral tradition. Now, musical notation enabled composers to set their music for eternity!

The music of the Middle Ages was shrouded in a halo of mystery. Music was a means of communication between Man and his God. Of note is that musicians of this period would hide in the shadows of anonymity. They considered themselves simple mediators striving to capture the invisible and the divine light by means of music.

At the end of the 6th century, Pope Saint Gregory I brought a reform to Roman liturgy. Doing so had a great influence on the course of the history of music. Thus, Gregorian chant (in the name of Pope Saint Gregory I) became the jewel of this period. Gregorian chant is not a precise musical genre but rather a repertoire of Latin liturgical chants, often consisting of a single voice and without instrumental accompaniment.

RENAISSANCE
(1453 – 1600, i.e. from the fall of Constantinople to the beginnings of the monodic style [as opposed to polyphony])

The Renaissance brought about a new phenomenon. Man who, until then, had been hiding among his peers, now sought to detach himself from the group. It was the birth of Humanism. This emergence of Man led several composers to mark history: Josquin des Prés, Dufay, Palestrina, Monteverdi and one of the most illustrious musicians of the Renaissance, Orlando di Lasso.

In parallel, music's actual role was transformed. From then on, music was to be a pleasure for the senses, a pleasure of sounds. It was a return to the values of ancient Greek civilization. Instruments evolved and, by the very fact, so did the families of instruments. Instrumental music took up considerable space. During this period, the brass family itself underwent important developments. This evolution was largely due to two musicians who happened to be related, Andrea Gabrieli and his nephew Giovanni Gabrieli.

BAROQUE PERIOD

(1600 – 1750, i.e. from the beginnings of the monodic style [as opposed to polyphony] to the death of Johann Sebastian Bach)

One of the main characteristics of Baroque music is that it focusses on great expressivity. Through its elaborate use of musical ornamentation and of flowery melodies winding together like so many vines, it strived to free the emotions that sacred music had repressed. In so doing, it led its audiences to an expression of emotions that had been unexplored at the time. The music of the Baroque era can be divided into three main genres: chamber music, religious music and opera.

One cannot study the Baroque period without mentioning Johann Sebastian Bach and Georg Friedrich Haendel. Each had his share of success and merit. Haendel's glory has never been challenged but his work is so misappreciated that the real nature of his genius is often overlooked.

As to Bach, he contributed to putting in place a tempered musical system by which the octave is divided into twelve equal sounds. His work, entitled "The Well-Tempered Clavier", is representative of this new notion of sounds. Through it, Bach established the fundamental rules of tonal music. Music could not be what it has become today if it hadn't passed through the hands of the immortal Johann Sebastian Bach!

CLASSICAL PERIOD
(1750 – 1800)

To say Classical is to say order, calm and simplicity. Here, balance prevails. After the great upheavals of the Baroque period, feelings and passions mellowed, as is reflected in the music. How? By means of melodies without ornementation and of orchestrations that remain simple and elegant.
Among the Classical composers, Joseph Haydn, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Ludwig van Beethoven cannot be ignored.
Haydn lived a long life, namely from the late-Baroque era to the dawn of Romanticism. When Haydn was born, Bach and Haendel were at the apex of their careers and when he died, Beethoven had written his 6th Symphony and would soon celebrate his 39th birthday. The sum of Haydn's works is immense and his influence on the great forms of instrumental music is undeniable.
As for Mozart, he died suddenly at the age of 35. Among the great masters of the history of music, Mozart is the only one to have taken an interest in all of the musical genres, enriching them all with exceptional works. As a musical child prodigy, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart had only one teacher: his father, Leopold Mozart.

When Wolfgang was 29 years old, he made the acquaintance of Joseph Haydn. Mozart had such admiration for Haydn that he considered him a second father. As the art of Mozart grew, so did Haydn's work deepen at his contact although Haydn was his senior.

Ludwig van Beethoven, for his part, gradually became afflicted with severe deafness. He had to abandon his career as virtuoso pianist and improviser to devote himself to composition. Among his most famous works, let us first underline the 5th Symphony. It is the symphony of fate—not only for its famous motif that evokes fate striking at the door, but also for the lesson in greatness and courage that Beethoven gives us in his own battle with fate.

Let us also mention Beethoven's 9th Symphony, the final movement of which puts to music poet Schiller's "Ode To Joy". Rarely has a work matured so long in its creator's mind. In fact, thirty-one years went by between the project's conception and its realization. As a source of Romanticism, Beethoven served as a model to 19th-century composers.

Along with Haydn and Mozart, Beethoven belongs to the immortal trio of Classical Viennese composers to which we owe the elaboration and culmination of the classic instrumental forms. These forms are: the piano sonata, the string quartet, the other forms of chamber music and the symphony.

ROMANTICISM (1800 – 1900)

The Romantic period has its roots in the French revolution, i.e. in that very cry by which the French claimed freedom. For centuries, musicians—be they composers or performers—had been in the service of patrons. By patrons, we mean the nobility, the Church and the wealthy. The Romantic period saw the democratization of concerts as these became accessible to everyone. The artist is freed, proclaiming his freedom loud and clear! We witness the birth of a strong feeling of nationalism. The musician composes, plays and sings never-ending works in favour of his own ambitions, raising unprecedented musical storms in the process! To say Romanticism is to say excess. Extreme passion leads to extreme music! The musical repertoire is vastly contrasted. While on the one hand a piece may be played by a piano alone, on the other hand a symphonic work is played by a number of orchestral musicians that has increased tenfold. Feelings are pushed to such musical expressivity as to take audiences even further than during the Baroque period. Johann Sebastian Bach's tonal system is thus pushed to its furthest limits. Unfortunately, the artist pays dearly for his freedom as, little by little, he becomes marginalized. Society comes to understand him less and less and tries to isolate him.

In the long list of major 19th-century composers, of note are Berlioz, Brahms, Chopin, Liszt, Puccini, Schubert, Schumann, Tchaikovsky, Verdi and Wagner. Composers who marked the end of Romanticism and the post-Romantic period are Mahler, Shostakovitch and Richard Strauss.

XXth CENTURY

Often misunderstood because of its great extravagance, 20th-century music is synonymous with rupture. More than ever, musicians seek what is innovative, out of the ordinary, what has yet never been seen or, more precisely, never been heard. The writing systems and the forms used until now no longer satisfy composers such as Bartok, Prokofiev, Stravinsky, Berg, Webern and Schoenberg. Music heads off in all directions because it is no longer defined as the art of organizing sounds in a manner that is pleasing to the ear.

In that perspective, two main lines of conduct took shape. On the one hand, there is the rigorous organization of music. In the middle of this century, new expressions of it could be heard in the form of serial music and repetitive music. On the other hand, there is the so-called random music and intuitive music, to name just those two.

In parallel, a new form of musical expression saw the light: jazz. Stemming from the blues, jazz found much of its inspiration in classical music to establish its own harmonic rules. Jazz and classical music were fused together, notably, in the compositions of Gershwin, Milhaud and Ellington.

Until this point in time, the only way to hear music had been to be where it was being played. With the emergence of sound recording in the 20th century, music can be experienced anytime, anywhere! Scientific discoveries abound and come to strengthen the projects of composers. With the appearance of radio, television and cinema, music reaches an ever broader audience. Artists here find inspiration in music from elsewhere and, thanks to continuously more efficient means of communication, boundaries gradually disappear.

THE MAESTRO

The maestro—or conductor—is a musician who, through his gestures, coordinates and leads the instrumentalists' performance. These days, a conductor faces a most demanding musical task and very few of them attain a veritable mastery in this field.

The artist looks to the sky and hopes to have his place among the stars. Worshipped artists. Revered conductors. In such a circus, what becomes of the music?

Music, Maestro!

THE HISTORY OF BRASS INSTRUMENTS

INTRODUCTION

Brass: Group of wind instruments, made of metal and having a cup mouthpiece, producing a sound through lip vibrations (Buzz).

In this family of instruments are found the horn, trumpet, trombone and tuba. Their appearance in history is not a coincidence and their development is directly related to the evolution of Man.

Once upon a time, there was…

THE HORN

Three thousand years BC, the horn was in fact a shell, a plant, an animal horn or a bone. A thousand years later, it was being reproduced in terracotta or thin metals. Ornamented with engraving, these instruments proved to be veritable works of art.

Later, as a symbol of knighthood, the horn was used for hunting, for sounding the hour or for signaling a danger. In the 8th century, the horn was known as the oliphant. It was a sign of nobility for knights who wore it proudly. One could get but a single note out of an oliphant, two at the very most. Rhythm was the key to the intented meaning of the calls. By the 16th century, one could distinguish fourteen calls drawn from the hunting horn, comparable to Morse code.

During the Renaissance, major innovations were brought to the horn. On one hand, the discovery of the laws of harmonics allowed the making of instruments from which different sounds could be drawn by the puckering of the lips. On the other hand, new manufacturing methods enabled to curve long metal tubing at will. Later on, the manufacturing of conical tubing—tubes that are tapered like a cone—brought about a difference between the horn and the trumpet.

During the Baroque era, the horn's size was reduced, the bell was flared and the mouthpiece was given a funnel shape, which led to a dark, mellow tone that lent itself well to playing with stringed instruments (violins). During the 18th century, it was not unusual to see two horns in the orchestra. Haendel, for example, often used horns in his works. Until then, the horn had been limited to a few notes that were spaced far apart in the lower register. Attempts to make the instrument chromatic—able to produce consecutive half-tones—were numerous and even far-fetched. Some horn players specialized in the clarino register, which consists of playing very high notes that allow for scales and trills. Another technique consists of stopping the bell with one's hand to lower the notes. This latter discovery, by Anton Hampel of Germany, would allow the horn to become a virtuoso instrument during the Classical period.

The breakthrough that would revolutionize the history of brass instruments occurred in the Romantic period. In 1813, a German named Stözel invented the piston valve. From then on, all brass instruments would be chromatic: they would be able to play all twelve half-tones of an octave. When valves are pressed, the air blown in the instrument goes through an added length of tubing. The longer the tube, the lower the note and vice-versa. As a consequence, horn players of that time had to relearn their trade (by developing a fingering technique, some transposing skills, etc.). However, certain composers, such as Brahms and Weber, rejected the idea of using the valved horn in their works.

In orchestral works from the Romantic period to today, the horn is often used for solos accompanied by various combinations of instruments. Composer Richard Strauss, for example, gives it important themes in his symphonic repertoire. As an instrument that is capable of a variety of tones, the horn can be used in all music groups.

THE TRUMPET

The prehistoric origins of the trumpet merge with those of the horn. At the outset, both these instruments fulfilled the same function: communicating. The trumpet had to be loud to frighten the enemy during combat. Over the centuries, the horn and the trumpet each developed their own characteristics. The trumpet is higher-pitched than the horn, its tone is brighter, its shape is elongated and it is not a conical instrument.

The Old Testament mentions the trumpet as a sacred instrument reserved for priests—while the ancient Greeks considered trumpet playing an Olympic event! In the Middle Ages, trumpeters were often paired with kettledrums, played in princely courts and came to be honourable. They were the first musicians to be in the regular employ of the nobility. Hired as soldier-musicians, they were supplied with a horse and expensive uniforms.

At the time, one could get four sounds out of a trumpet's lower register. The instrument was called a natural trumpet because the series of notes it could render was imposed by the laws of nature. By the 15th century, the art of making brass instruments allowed curving the tubes. At that time, the slide trumpet made its appearance but it was not very efficient as its mechanism was not yet fine-tuned.

During the Renaissance, the cornetto made its appearance. It is a sort of straight trumpet that is made of wood but that nonetheless has a cup mouthpiece like brass instruments have and it includes finger holes. Its tone resembles that of the voice and it can play as softly as a clarinet. At that time, as had done the horn players, trumpeters also began familiarizing themselves with the clarino register.

It was during the Baroque period that the trumpet reached the concert halls. Trumpeters had been refining their technique, learning to play softly and in tune. Bach, for example, made frequent use of the trumpet in his works. Great masters tought the art of trumpet playing and methods were written on the subject.

During the Classical period that followed, in which string instruments were favoured, the trumpet was somewhat set aside. It was only used to mark the rhythm and to reinforce the tuttis—the passages where all the instruments in the orchestra must play. It was not yet flexible enough to be entrusted with elegant melodies. Attempts were therefore made to improve the instrument. In 1777, the stopped trumpet made its appearance. It is curved so that its bell can be stopped, thus copying the technique applied to the horn a few years earlier. Another idea, which was also applied to the horn, was to insert various lengths of tubing—or crooks—between the mouthpiece and the instrument for playing in various keys. This trumpet with its crooks, however, could not modulate—change keys—without first having to cease playing.

The invention of the piston valve, in the Romantic period, turned the trumpet into a chromatic instrument capable of producing all its notes with a consistent tone. This novelty was not embraced overnight because trumpeters had to relearn how to play. The invention did however allow the trumpet's orchestral role to be defined: with its ringing tone, the trumpet would now dominate the brass section. From then on, composers such as Bruckner and Tchaikovsky used the trumpet extensively. Around 1830, a new instrument saw the light of day in the trumpet family: the cornet. A conical instrument, it has a velvety and pleasant tone. Its frequent use in military bands led to the appearance of veritable virtuosos who mastered the cornet with a dazzling technique.

The advent of jazz in the 20th century allowed trumpeters such as Louis Armstrong, Dizzy Gillespie and Miles Davis to stand out. Their skilful improvisations stirred the public. It is important to mention Maynard Ferguson, a Canadian who became famous for his talent at playing in the upper register. In a modern-day brass quintet, the trumpet plays a role similar to the one played by the first violin in an orchestra.

THE TROMBONE

The word "trombone" comes from the Italian term "tromba"—trumpet—and the augmentative suffix "–one", which results in "large trumpet". The trombone was invented in the beginning of the 15th century, at the same time as the first slide trumpets. The slide, which allows rapid length changes to the instrument, made the trombone the first brass instrument capable of playing a chromatic scale. In France, it was long known as the sackbut, the name stemming from the Old-French verbs sacquer and bouter—to pull and to push. The sackbut's tubing is much narrower than for the trombone and its bell is less flared.

The trombone family grew during the Renaissance and ranged from the contrabass trombone to the soprano trombone. At the time, trombonists played in princely ceremonies, in church to support the voices, and outdoors during festivities. Later on, the instrument is found in the operas of Monteverdi and in the cantatas of Bach.

During the Classical period, the trombone was a permanent fixture of certain operatic orchestras. It was also used in Masses, Requiems and ballet music. As an orchestral or solo instrument, the alto trombone was much appreciated. Austrian composers wrote four trombone concertos. Beethoven is considered to be the first to use the trombone in symphonic music (5th Symphony). He is also the one to have composed, in 1812, the first work for trombone quartet.

During the Romantic period, several improvements were made to the instrument. In 1825, the valve trombone was invented. It became popular in military bands because its mechanism was less delicate than the slide. It influenced composers Rossini and Verdi because such a mechanism facilitated the performance of rapid passages. However, it was less appreciated by Berlioz who found its tone was thin and its tuning faulty. In 1839, the rotary valve made its appearance. Activated with the thumb, it allows the use of an added length of tubing.

By 1845, thanks to the invention of the water key, condensation that formed inside the trombone could rapidly be expelled. Composers Wagner and Mahler recognised the slide trombone's qualities and gave it an important role in the orchestra.

In the 20th century, the trombone grew in size. It also saw the addition of a nut to attach the slide and the bell. In jazz, it was at times used as an accompaniment instrument for its mellow tone, at times as a solo instrument such as in the hands of Tommy Dorsey, Bill Watrous or Frank Rosolino. Practically unchanged since its invention, the trombone is one of music's simplest instruments and, thanks to its slide, the only wind instrument to play rigorously in tune.

THE TUBA

The tuba's ancestors all had the same role: accompaniment. Of similar lengths, these instruments had a similar range. Their prototype—the serpent—appeared in France in 1590. In church, it doubled the voices to maintain intonation and to add richness to the sound. Made of wood, it had 6 finger holes and an ivory mouthpiece that was inserted in a metal receiver. Stemming from the cornetto, it had a sinuous shape that could be six to eight feet long (2 to 2.5 m). The serpent player had to be able to adjust his lips for each note, since each had variable intonation. This accompanying instrument could play loudly enough to support twenty men's voices and softly enough to join a chamber-music ensemble. During the 18th century, the holes were replaced with keys, varying in number from three to thirteen.

Other such hybrids were used in the early 19th century. First, there was the Russian bassoon. It was largely inspired by the serpent, but much easier for the musician to hold. Its bell was shaped like a dragon's head. There was also the bass horn. It was made of metal, was V-shaped and its bell was more flared. The most popular remained the ophicleide, which literally means "keyed serpent". Invented in 1817, this instrument was made of metal and had many keys that made it chromatic over at least three octaves. The ophicleide allowed for a superb legato. For several decades, it was used as often as the tuba.

As to that first valved tuba, it appeared 20 years after the invention of Stözel's piston valve. This new conical instrument made its entrance in the orchestra thanks to Wagner. In the tuba family, we also find the baritone and the euphonium, which are half as large and therefore higher pitched. There is also the sousaphone, a tuba that wraps around the musician with its bell pointing forward, used for parades.

In 1954, the tuba was used solo in a concerto written by Vaughan Williams. However, the tuba's support role in the overall musical repertoire makes it appear generally oafish and it remains caricatured as in those notorious A&W advertisements!!!

THE BRASS QUINTET

A brass quintet is a chamber-music ensemble that brings together five musicians. During the Renaissance, there were ensembles consisting of two cornettos and three sackbuts. Pezel wrote over one hundred pieces for five brass instruments. Romantic composers such as Maurer and Ewald wrote celebrated works that, at the time, were played by five conical brass instruments. The brass quintet as we know it today first appeared in New York after the Second World War. It consists of two trumpets, a horn, a trombone and a tuba (or bass trombone). These days, the musical repertoire for brass quintet includes hundreds of original works written by Arnold Malcolm, Eugène Bozza, Eric Ewazen and many more. In addition, numerous transcriptions have been made for this type of musical ensemble.

CONCLUSION

The history of brass instruments has always been tied to the needs of the various historical periods. First used toward communication, brass instruments were needed for hunts and battles to follow their course or for establishing contact with spirits. Later on, their manufacture was greatly improved thanks to advances made in the handling of metals. Brass instruments then found their way into churches and courts.

The invention of valves in 1813 brought about a radical change: all brass instruments then became chromatic. Their use in the orchestra is imposing, with up to twelve horns being required. Brass instruments today have become soloists in military bands as well as in jazz ensembles.

After more than 2,000 years of history, their primitive use has changed significantly. Brass instruments now fill concert halls with their rich and powerful tone.

MUSICAL REPERTOIRE PERFORMED

PREHISTORIC PERIOD

The Caveman's Rap
Johanne Latreille,
arrangement: Sylvain Lapointe

ANTIQUITY

Song of the Sicilian Sheperds and Sikkinis Dance
Anonymous, arrangement: Jason De Carufel and Sylvain Lapointe

Roman Calls
Jason De Carufel and Sylvain Lapointe

20th Century Fox Fanfare
Alfred Newman, arrangement: Enrico O. Dastous

MIDDLE AGES

Antiphony to the Holy Virgin
Anonymous Gregorian chant

Venetia, Mundi Splendor / Michael Cui Steno Domus
Motet for the Installation of the Doge Michele Steno, 19 December 1400
Johannes Ciconia

RENAISSANCE

Canzon per sonare no.1 "La spiritata"
Giovanni Gabrieli

Now is the Month of Maying
Thomas Morley,
arrangement: Sylvain Lapointe

The Marie-Golde
Anthony Holborne

BAROQUE PERIOD

The Four Seasons, Spring
Antonio Vivaldi, arrangement: Sylvain Lapointe

Toccata and Fugue in D minor
Johann Sebastian Bach,
arrangement: Frederick Mills

CLASSICISM

Surprise Symphony and Divertimento
Joseph Haydn, arrangement: Sylvain Lapointe

A Little Night Music
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, arrangement: Sylvain Lapointe

9th Symphony
Ludwig van Beethoven, arrangement: Sylvain Lapointe

ROMANTICISM

Buzz Opera
Enrico O. Dastous

XXth CENTURY

Bubble Jazz Cocktail
Marie-Josée Poulin

Décadence
Enrico O. Dastous

Do You Want to Build a Snowman? / Let it Go
Kristen Anderson-Lopez & Robert Lopez, arr. Enrico O. Dastous

Hockey Night in Canada
Dolores Claman, arrangement: Jocelyn Leblanc

James Bond Theme
Monty Norman, arrangement : Sylvain Lapointe

Johnny B. Goode
Chuck Berry, arrangement: Sylvain Lapointe

On Broadway
Barry Mann, Cynthia Weil, Mike Stoller, Jerry Leiber, arrangement: Sylvain Lapointe

The Rite of Spring
Igor Stravinski, arrangement: Benoît Côté

Singin' In The Rain
Nacio Herb Brown, arrangement: Sylvain Lapointe

Super Mario Bros. Theme
Koji Kondo, arrangement : Sylvain Leblanc

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THE MAESTRO

La Péri - Fanfare
Paul Dukas, arr. Wayne Barrington

5th Symphony
Ludwig van Beethoven
Arrangement: Sylvain Lapointe

Just a Closer Walk
Traditional American
Arrangement: Frederick Mills

The Saint's Hallelujah
Traditional American Folk / Georg-Friedrich Haendel
Arrangement: Luther Henderson
Adaptation: Sylvain Lapointe

Imperial March (from Star Wars)
John Williams, arrangement: Sylvain Lapointe

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