

# MMP

## MIAMI MUSIC PROJECT

### SUPPORT MATERIALS

#### MUSIC HISTORY OVERVIEW

Musical works and their composers are usually described as belonging to a specific era: Bach wrote "Baroque" music, for example, while Chopin was a "Romantic" composer. These terms serve as a sort of shorthand to tell us that the music shares aspects of style with other pieces written at roughly the same time. These eras of music, however, relate to more than just the sounds of the pieces. They reflect broad changes in society and culture that influenced the way music was written, performed, and heard. There are six major periods of music: Middle Ages (also called Medieval Period), Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, Romantic, and 20th Century (or Modern Period).

Timelines:

**Middle Ages:** ca. 450 - 1450

**Renaissance Period:** 1450 - 1600

**Baroque Period:** 1600 - 1750

**Classical Period:** 1750 - 1825

**Romantic Period:** 1825 - 1900

**Modern Period:** 1900 - present

## **MIDDLE AGES** ca. 450 - 1450

During the 9th century several important developments took place. First, there was a major effort by the Church to unify the many chant traditions, and suppress many of them in favor of the Gregorian liturgy. Gregorian chant is the central tradition of Western plainchant, a form of monophonic liturgical chant in Western Christianity that accompanied the celebration of Mass and other ritual services. It is named for Pope Gregory I, who ruled as pope from 590 to 604, who is traditionally credited for having ordered the simplification and cataloging of music assigned to specific celebrations in the church calendar.

Second, the earliest polyphonic music was sung, a form of parallel singing known as organum. Third, and of greatest significance for music history, notation was reinvented after a lapse of about five hundred years, though it would be several more centuries before a system of pitch and rhythm notation evolved, having the precision and flexibility that modern musicians take for granted.

### History

The Christian religion began as an underground sect of messianic Judaism in the first century C.E. Its practitioners were first persecuted, then tolerated; finally Christianity was accepted as the official religion of the Roman Empire. After the fall of the Western Empire, it emerged as the central unifying force in medieval Europe.

The Roman Emperor Constantine the Great converted to Christianity following his victory at the Battle of Milvian Bridge in 312. Under his rule, Christianity rose to become the dominant religion in the Roman Empire.

During this time, followers of the prophet Mohammed expanded their territory through the Middle East and the Mediterranean; they preserved and built on the knowledge of the ancient Greeks and Romans. Through conflict (the Crusades) and coexistence (the multicultural Iberian Peninsula), Europe gained much from its contacts with this rich culture.

### Music

Music was an integral part of Christian worship. The daily liturgy provided innumerable texts, all set to music in the style we call Gregorian chant. Gregorian chant is monophonic, having one melodic line without an accompaniment. It is said to be very serene, with pure shapes of melody.

The church served as an important patron of the arts, specifically of music. Throughout the period, the majority of composers were associated with and supported by the church.



### Anonymous Composers

It can be humorously stated that Anonymous was the most long-lived and prolific composer of Western music. Virtually all chant and much early polyphony was created by anonymous composers, as was much medieval secular music.

The anonymous chant composers may not have been composers at all, at least not in the modern sense. Most of what we know as "Gregorian Chant" was not written down until probably the ninth century. Before that, it existed as an oral art, passed from one musician to another. In the earliest traditions it was probably the result not of composition, but improvisation. By the time it was written down, it was far removed from what its original creators had first sung.

Anonymous composers were men and women, highborn and low, but they were different people at different times, reflecting society's changing feelings about authorship and the act of creation. It is worth remembering that anonymity was not always an accident of history. It was usually a reflection of the society in which the music was created.

## **RENAISSANCE PERIOD 1450 - 1600**

The Renaissance era encompasses Western music history from 1400 to the beginning of the 1600's. This period in time marked the rebirth of humanism, and the revival of cultural achievements for their own sake in all forms of art, including music. The word "Renaissance" in itself is defined as a "rebirth" or a "reconstruction".

During this time, artists and musicians produced works that displayed more artistic freedom and individualism. This creativity allowed artists to abandon the stricter ways of the Medieval Era. Their art forms rediscovered the ancient Greek ideals. With the new printing techniques, music and musical ideas were able to be preserved and distributed to the people.

### History and Territorial Expansion

Christopher Columbus (1451?-1506) and Ferdinand Magellan (c.1480-1521) expanded Europe's view of the world. The astronomical studies of Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543) -- later championed by Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) -- called into question the old earth-centered view of the universe.

As a result of colonial expansion, great wealth flowed into European cities and courts. Travel and the resulting musical exchange became a driving force for the creation of a more international musical style.

### Music

The arts became an important measure of learning and culture. Music moved from the science of number to an expressive art viewed as an equal to rhetoric.

The rise and rapid spread of music printing increased access to music and books about music.

The rich courts and civic governments of the Renaissance supported music to a degree not previously seen. This level of musical support was also provided by the religious institutions of the day.

### Sacred, Secular and Instrumental music

The composers of the Renaissance concerned themselves with three different areas of music:

- 1) Sacred music: Composers continued to work with the older forms such as the motet and Mass. It is in this music that we find the clearest international style.
- 2) Secular music: Composers created new forms that reflected national trends, such as the Italian madrigal and the French *chanson*.
- 3) Instrumental music: The rise of music printing encouraged the spread of instrumental music for amateurs, and more specific types emerged.

All three types of music share many musical features: the use of four-voice choirs or groups of like-sounding instruments, *imitative or homorhythmic textures*, smooth gentle rhythms, melodies with balanced phrases, harmonies that use full triads, vocal forms tied to structure of texts, dances based on simple binary forms.

### Brass Instruments Development

During the Renaissance brass instruments began to develop what more resembles the instruments used today. Around 1400-1413 the earliest known S-shaped trumpet was developed, which was later followed by the folded trumpet and slide trumpet. It was out of the slide trumpet that the trombone developed around 1450.

This new instrument, commonly referred to as a *sackbut*, was a vast improvement over the awkward to play slide trumpet. Instrument



designers developed a system of connected double tubes which reduced the distance the slide needed to move between notes and therefore improved the musician's performance technique. Improved slide design also allowed a practical tenor range instrument, which has become the most common instrument of the trombone family.



Also during this time, around 1500, large European courts would maintain corps of trumpeters used mainly for heralding/announcements. This early trumpet ensembles eventually progressed to include five part music, but there was little harmonic variety. Players tended to specialize in either the high range or low range.

The horn had yet to develop into an instrument for strictly musical purposes yet, although curved and helical horns were commonly used for hunting.

Italian composer Giovanni Gabrieli, the principal organist at the church of San Marco in Venice, used the church's unusual layout to create striking spatial effects. Gabrieli pioneered the use of specified groups of instruments and singers, with precise directions for instrumentation. Also, he is the earliest known composer to use dynamic markings in his compositions.

In 1597 composed a piece called Sonate pian'forte - the earliest known piece to call for specific brass instruments (to specify that particular instruments play particular lines), and one of the first documented compositions to employ dynamic markings.

## **BAROQUE PERIOD 1600-1750**

The term Baroque era describes the style or period of European music between the years of 1600 and 1750. The term Baroque was derived from a Portuguese word meaning "a pearl of irregular shape." The word Baroque was initially used to imply strangeness, abnormality and extravagance, applying more to art than music. It is only in the 20th century that this term has been employed to refer to a period in music history.

### History

Scientists such as Galileo Galilei (1564-1622) and Isaac Newton (1642-1727) broke away from the older model of science, whose purpose was the proof of an *a priori* assumption. Instead, through observation and experimentation, scientists devised hypotheses about why things happened.

A small group of leaders (kings, queens, and emperors) wielded enormous power in Europe. Such was their power that Louis XIV (1638-1715) was to declare, "L'état ç'est moi" ("I am the state").

The English, French and Spanish holdings in the New World continued to supply Europe with wealth. But as the generations passed, colonists began to feel a growing allegiance to their new homes. Ultimately, such feelings would lead to the independence of these lands.

### Music

Musicians embraced the idea that music could move the listener in a real and physical way. Opera, with its blend of music and drama, was the full realization of this ideal. In instrumental music, no less than in opera, composers experimented with ways of creating impressive effects.

Music continued to be used as an important tool of statecraft. The new and extravagant styles served as a rich adornment to religious services in both Catholic and Protestant traditions. Music, especially opera, was as an important source of entertainment to the growing merchant and landed classes.

### Equality of Instrumental Music

During the beginning of the Baroque period, as a companion for operatic and vocal music, the orchestra evolved. By the mid-1600s the orchestra was growing into its own entity. New instrumental forms, such as the concerto and sonata developed.

The concerto featured a solo instrumentalist, or small ensemble of soloists, playing in opposition to the orchestra, thus creating an interesting contrast of texture and volume. Instrument makers created new types of instruments (especially wind instruments).

The violin moved to center stage as the most important string instrument.

Performers reached new heights of expression and technique. Virtuoso players (such as Archangelo Corelli and Antonio Vivaldi) reflected these abilities in their own compositions.

Even in vocal music, instruments played an important role. Instruments not only served as accompaniment, but often played equal roles with the voices.

The three outstanding composers of the period were Johann Sebastian Bach, George Frideric Handel, and Antonio Vivaldi, but a host of other composers, some with huge output, were active in the period.



Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) was a German composer and organist and a culminating figure of the German Baroque. Bach had an innate musical talent. As a child, he learned to play the organ and the clavichord and sang in a choir. He was able to support himself by his music at the age of fifteen and held several organist positions in nearby towns.

He was a master at composing concertos, *cantatas*, *oratorios*, chorales, piano inventions, and other religious music. For most of his life, the organ and clavichord were his instruments of choice.

Bach was not introduced to the piano until he was sixty years old. Once he discovered the instrument, Bach wrote a six-part *fugue* for King Frederick as a "musical offering". Today that fugue is considered one of the most remarkable fugues in all of music history.

Later on in life Bach was stricken with blindness. He suffered a paralytic stroke and died. He is considered one of the most influential composers of all time.

Georg Friedrich Handel (1685-1759) - became the second most prominent composer of the High Baroque era. He was second only to J.S. Bach.



Handel composed sonatas, concertos, operas, and modern oratorios. He helped develop the modern opera and modern oratorio form further, while his sonatas and concertos made great use of his melodic techniques. A famous song from the oratorio *Judas Maccabeus*, is "Sing Unto God." Another famous work that is recognized world wide is the "Hallelujah Chorus" (from the *Messiah*) which is also written in oratorio form.



Antonio Vivaldi (1680-1743) - an Italian composer who was well known as a violinist and composer of solo violin concertos. He had a different musical philosophy regarding composition. He felt that the soloist and orchestra should be in musical conflict with one another, (similar to the give and take that happens when two people are speaking to one another). He is believed to have composed over 750 works of music. He set precedence by adding drama and strong rhythm to basic harmonies. Vivaldi previewed what was to become the sonata-allegro form and the typical sound of the 18th century. One of Vivaldi's most famous works is the *Four Seasons*, a four part concerto. Each section is named after each season in the year.

## **CLASSICAL PERIOD 1750-1825**

Improved economic conditions - fostered by better production methods - yielded more goods and greater wealth. "The pursuit of happiness" was available to a broader class of society. Music began to be seen as "an innocent luxury". European composers reacted to increased demand for music.

The "unnatural" and "artificial" gestures of Baroque painting and sculpture were replaced with "natural" ideals of simplicity and balance. In music, simplicity, balance and an interest in real emotions were critical for the composer.

### History

New developments in the means of production led to increases in material goods and wealth. As production was centralized, urban society became more central to life in Europe and the Americas.

The philosophy of the Enlightenment placed an emphasis on the natural rights of people, and on the ability of humans to shape their own environment. Writers such as Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) and Voltaire (1694-1778) helped shape these ideals. The Enlightenment's emphasis on the individual led to the elevation of the individual's role in political life. The idea of the social contract lay behind two of the most momentous events of the period, the American and French Revolutions.

### Music

Although the Classical Era lasted for only 75 years, there was a substantial change in the music that was being produced. Classical music placed a greater stress on clarity with regard to melodic expression and instrumental color. Although opera and vocal music (both sacred and secular) were still being written, orchestral literature was performed on a much broader basis. The orchestra gained more color and flexibility as clarinets, flutes, oboes, and bassoons became permanent members of the orchestra.

The classical style was dominated by homophony, which consisted of a single melodic line and an accompaniment. New forms of composition were developed to adapt to this style. The most important of these forms was the sonata which was in instrumental music. Simple two- and three-part forms became the essential building blocks of all Classical forms, especially the Sonata Allegro form. Homophony became the standard. Contrapuntal texture was used sparingly, and for specific purposes.

Classical melodies usually fall into even phrases, and often were organized into symmetrical "question and answer" structures. Many composers found inspiration in folk melodies. At this point, the piano, with its ability to produce gradations of dynamics, became the most important solo instrument for Classical composers.

The four major composers of the Classical era were Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. These composers wrote extensively for vocal and instrumental mediums.



Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809) - Austrian born and raised, began his musical career as a choirboy in Vienna. While at school, scribbling music on paper became a favorite pastime of his. A man named Count Furnberg became the first patron of Haydn. Under the Count, Haydn played string quartets and composed his first eighteen quartets. He then went on to be a music director to the Count Morzin. At this time, he composed his Symphony No. 1, which was followed by over a hundred more! He then spent thirty years with the family of Prince Paul Anton Esterhazy. During those years, he composed five masses, forty string quartets, sixty symphonies, thirty clavier pieces, one hundred and five cello trios, and many different types of works for funerals, weddings, birthdays, and other celebrations. Haydn is known as the father of the string quartet and is regarded today as one of the greatest composers in all of music history.

Wofgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) - Austrian born, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was regarded to be the greatest child prodigy the world has ever known!

As a child, he seemed gifted beyond all measure, playing at age six before the empress, and composing at an even earlier age. By twelve he had written an opera, and his talents seemed to know no bounds. But his career, which ended tragically with his death at age thirty-five, was a constant disappointment. When once asked about a meager court appointment he held, Mozart replied: "I get paid far too much for what I do, and far too little for what I could do". Mozart himself always felt that his talents were never adequately recognized.



Mozart composed orchestral music (including some 40 symphonies), Concertos (including 27 for piano, 5 for violin, concertos for clarinet, oboe, French horn, bassoon, flute, and flute and harp), Choral music (including 18 Masses, the *Requiem* K.626), Chamber music (including famous *Eine kleine Nachtmusik*), Keyboard music, (including 17 piano sonatas), Secular vocal music, and many operas of which his most loved are *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, and *Cosi Fan Tutte*. His last opera, *The Magic Flute*, has charm and intelligence, even though it was written when he was sick and depressed. The Requiem Mass would be his last composition. Although he only lived to age 35, Mozart is regarded as a prominent musical genius.



Ludwig Van Beethoven (1770-1827) Beethoven's music remembered today for its unique quality and for its defiance. His new styles bridged the Classical and Romantic era and brought the musical world from the old into the new. Beethoven was also the first composer to ever be appreciated by the public within his own lifetime. By the middle of his life he was almost totally deaf, and had yet to produce his most profound works. Beethoven's music experimented with new rhythms, and he composed music based on an idea, as opposed to a full rhythm. His works were composed for quartets, concertos, symphonies, and piano sonatas. To some, Beethoven is regarded as the father of modern music. Beethoven's music is recognized around the world. He wrote nine symphonies including famous Third Symphony, also known as *Eroica*, 32 piano sonatas, chamber music, and pieces such as *Fur Elise*, and *Moonlight Sonata*.

## ROMANTIC PERIOD 1825-1900

### History

The skepticism resulting from a clearer understanding of the world and humanity's place in it changed the way people thought of themselves and society. Charles Darwin's (1809-1882) *The Origin of the Species* is one example of the new attitude. The role of science in defining a worldview increased.

Many areas of Europe (especially Italy and Central Europe) struggled to free themselves from foreign control. The years around 1850 saw many revolutions and attempts at revolutions resulting in the rise of European nationalism. At the same time, Germany - never a fully unified country - struggled to create a separate national identity. More and more, art was removed from functional roles and came to be appreciated for its aesthetic worth. The art of the past became increasingly revered, and our modern notions of the "artist" and of the "fine arts" were born.

### Music

In the Romantic period, music became more expressive and emotional, expanding to encompass literature, art, and philosophy.

The Romantic era was a period of great change and emancipation. While the Classical era had strict laws of balance and restraint, the Romantic era moved away from that by allowing artistic freedom, experimentation, and creativity. The music of this time period was very expressive, and melody became the dominant feature. Composers even used this expressive means to display nationalism. This became a driving force in the late Romantic period, as composers used elements of folk music to express their cultural identity. Composers also wrote works based on stories of exotic lands and people. The natural world was considered less a model of perfection and more a source of mysterious powers. Music began to be used to tell stories, or to imply meaning beyond the purely musical. Composers found ways to make their musical ideas represent people, things, and dramatic situations as well as emotional states and even philosophical ideas.

Music was seen less as an occupation and more as a calling. Specialized training institutions (conservatories) replaced the apprentice system of the church and the court. Women found more opportunities for musical expression, especially as performers, but social and cultural barriers still limited their participation as composers.

In a Romantic Style dynamic range is wider, and there is a larger range of sound. There is a greater variety of instruments, including improved or newly-invented wind instruments. Melodies are longer, more dramatic and emotional. Tempos are more extreme, and *tempo rubato* is often called for. Harmonies are fuller, often more dissonant. Formal structures are expanded.

Famous Romantic composers include Schumann, Chopin, Mendelssohn, Berlioz Johann Strauss, Brahms, Liszt, Tchaikovsky, Verdi, Wagner, Dvořák, Mahler, Richard Strauss, Puccini, Sibelius, Grieg, Saint-Saëns, Rachmaninoff and Franck.

Robert Schumann (1810-1856) was a German composer, aesthete and influential music critic. He is one of the most famous Romantic composers of the 19th century. He had hoped to pursue a career as a virtuoso pianist. However, a self-inflicted hand injury prevented those hopes from being realized, and he decided to focus his musical energies on composition. Schumann's published compositions were all for the piano until 1840; he later composed works for piano and orchestra, over 300 songs for voice and piano, four symphonies, an opera, and other orchestral, choral and chamber works.



His writings about music appeared mostly in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* ("The New Journal for Music"), a Leipzig-based publication that he jointly founded. In 1840 Schumann married pianist Clara Wieck, who also composed music and had a considerable concert career, including premieres of many of her husband's works. Robert Schumann died in middle age; for the last two years of his life, after an attempted suicide, he was confined to a mental institution at his own request.



Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) German composer and pianist, was one of the leading musicians of the Romantic period. Born in Hamburg, Brahms spent much of his professional life in Vienna, Austria, where he was a leader of the musical scene. Brahms composed for piano, chamber ensembles, symphony orchestra, and for voice and chorus. An accomplished pianist, he gave the first performance of many of his own works; he also worked with the leading performers of his time, including the virtuoso pianist Clara Schumann (Robert Schumann's wife), and the violinist Joseph Joachim. Many of his works have become staples of the modern concert repertoire. Brahms, an uncompromising perfectionist, destroyed many works and left some unpublished. Brahms wrote a number of major works for orchestra, including two serenades, four symphonies, two piano concertos (No. 1 in D minor; No. 2 in B flat major), a Violin Concerto, a Double Concerto for violin and cello, and two orchestral overtures, the Academic Festival Overture and the Tragic Overture.

Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893) Russian born composer, regarded today as one of the greatest and most popular symphonists, second only to Beethoven. As a person, he was extremely fragile, sensitive, and charming but breakable. His first symphony was not well received which made him extremely upset, as he had labored so hard over the completion of this work.

Some of Tchaikovsky's most famous works are *The Romeo and Juliet Overture*, the opera *Eugen Onegin*, and the *Violin Concerto*. Tchaikovsky also composed the score to the well-known ballet, *The Nutcracker*. This piece is a multi-movement work and is typically performed around Christmas time. "Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairies," "Trepak," "Arabian Dance," "Chinese Dance," "Dance of the Reed Flutes," "Waltz of the Flowers" are parts of this work. He is regarded today as one of the most expressive Romantic composers to come from Russia.



## **MODERN PERIOD** 1900 – present

### History

The 20<sup>th</sup> century has brought us from the earliest automobiles to supersonic jets and space travel. Science has progressed at a rate unthinkable to earlier generations. We possess the technological ability to control nearly every aspect of our lives. We take for granted the fact that we can send and receive messages instantly, at the click of a button. All aspects of communication, entertainment and learning have been fundamentally reshaped by these advances. In fact, what you are doing at this very minute would have been unthinkable a generation ago.

The Russian and Chinese revolutions and the rise of Adolf Hitler in Germany ushered in governments the likes of which had never been seen. At the same time, their decline, along with movements for freedom and democracy in places as different as Poland and South Africa, is a testament to the ultimate strength of the human spirit.

### Music

The 20th Century saw a revolution in music listening as the radio gained popularity worldwide and new media and technologies were developed to record, capture, reproduce and distribute music. Because music was no longer limited to concerts and clubs, it became possible for music artists to quickly gain fame nationwide and worldwide. Conversely, audiences were able to be exposed to a wider range of music than ever before. Music performances became increasingly visual with the broadcast and recording of music videos and concerts. The invention of Headphones allowed people sitting next to each other to listen to entirely different performance. Music of all kinds also became increasingly portable with the advancement in electronic technology. Now you can download and own an unlimited amount of music on a single handheld wireless device.

20th Century music brought a new freedom and wide experimentation with new musical styles and forms that challenged the accepted rules of music of earlier periods. All sounds are possible, even no sounds (with John Cage's "silent piece" called 4'33", that consists of four minutes and thirty-three seconds in which the performer plays nothing). Melodies can be long and abstract or reduced to small gestures. Rhythmic language can be enormously complex. Any harmonic combination is possible. Form can be controlled to an almost infinite degree, or it may be the result of improvisation and chance.

The invention of musical amplification and electronic instruments, especially the synthesizer, in the mid-20th century revolutionized popular music and accelerated the development of new forms of music.

Some composers have made the conscious decision to distance themselves from the styles and values of the past. Claude Debussy said: "The century of the airplane ought to have its own music." Other composers have just as consciously tried to return to some aspects of the past, especially the elements of the Classical style.

### Trends in Music

Throughout the twentieth century, many trends developed. Some of these trends were incorporated together into the same piece of music. The twentieth century broke all the musical rules of the past and let one form and style flow right into another.

For example, many new techniques were used to accommodate new trends. One of the highly specialized techniques was serialism. It began with twelve-tone technique that orders the 12 notes of the chromatic scale, forming a row or series and providing a unifying basis for a composition's melody, harmony, structural progressions, and variations.

Modern period trends in music include:

**Impressionism** was the very first trend of significance which moved away from Romanticism and towards Modern era characteristics. Impressionistic music was vague in form, delicate in nature, and had a mysterious atmosphere to it.

**Expressionism** was a prominent early twentieth century movement. Stylistically, expressionistic music was very atonal and dissonant. It was a German movement away from French Impressionism. It was emotional and had a somewhat Romantic feel to it.

**Neo-Classicism** can be defined as the new classical movement. This movement started in the early 1920s and continued to be a leading musical movement throughout the century. This trend is still popular today. Neo-Classicism is a movement which incorporated the music of the Classical era, in terms of clarity of texture and objectivity. This trend not only based its music on the Classical era, but it also mixed Renaissance, Baroque, and some modern trends in with it.

**Jazz** is a musical movement which dominated the 1900s. It is mainly an American form and remains popular to this day. Jazz can be defined as anything from popular music of the twentieth century to the improvised sounds of a dance band. Some prominent forms of Jazz throughout the century have been Ragtime, *Blues*, *Swing*, Dixieland Jazz, Bop, and Boogie-Woogie. Since the second half of the 1900s, new forms and techniques of Jazz have come about. These include funky hard bop regression, cool jazz, progressive jazz, and rock and roll. Generally these newer styles have a greater range in harmony, rhythm, and melody, and are less oriented to dance music. They also sometimes borrow techniques and forms from classical music, and vice versa, as modern classical music often contains Jazz elements.

**Aleatory Music** or Chance Music is an extremely random style of music. The composer and/or the performer will randomly pick musical materials and make it into a piece of music. There are no rules to this form of music, and, thus, any kind of music can be created as a result. Some techniques involved in aleatory music are having the audience improvise along with the performer, or using electronic or computer media.

**Electronic Music** is the newest trend of the twentieth century lies in electronic music. Electronic music takes electronically generated sounds and turns it into a work of music. Electronic music is typically composed on either a synthesizer or a computer.

**Pop Music** is a music genre that developed from the mid-1950s as a softer alternative to rock 'n' roll and later to rock music. It has a focus on commercial recording, often orientated towards a youth market, usually through the medium of relatively short and simple love songs. While these basic elements of the genre have remained fairly constant, pop music has absorbed influences from most other forms of popular music, particularly borrowing from the development of rock music, and utilizing key technological innovations to produce new variations on existing themes.

Musicologists often identify the following characteristics as typical of the pop music genre:

- A focus on the individual song or singles, rather than on extended works or albums.
- An aim of appealing to a general audience, rather than to a particular sub-culture or ideology.
- An emphasis on craftsmanship rather than formal "artistic" qualities.
- An emphasis on recording, production, and technology, over live performance.
- A tendency to reflect existing trends rather than progressive developments.

The main medium of pop music is the song, often between two and a half and three and a half minutes in length, generally marked by a consistent and noticeable rhythmic element, a mainstream style and a simple traditional structure. Common variants include the verse-chorus form and the thirty-two-bar form, with a focus on melodies and catchy hooks, and a chorus that contrasts melodically, rhythmically and harmonically with the verse. The beat and the melodies tend to be simple, with limited harmonic accompaniment. The lyrics of modern pop songs typically focus on simple themes – often love and romantic relationships – although there are notable exceptions.