George Frideric Handel

George Frideric Handel (1685–1759) traveled internationally and won great renown throughout Europe. Born in Germany, he lived 50 years in London. Handel composed instrumental solo works, ensemble music, and operas. His famous *Messiah* is an **oratorio**, a large-scale piece for singers and orchestra. Handel often performed on the organ or harpsichord during intermissions of his operas and oratorios, and he was famous for his improvisations. In a keyboard "duel" with Domenico Scarlatti, Handel was named the winning organist. His best-known keyboard work today is a theme and variations known as the "Harmonious Blacksmith."

Handel is portrayed in A Rake's Progress *(1732–1733) by William Hogarth (1697–1764).*

Handel (ca. 1720)

Westminster Bridge, with the Lord Mayor's Procession on the Thames *(1747) by Canaletto (1697–1768)*

Domenico Scarlatti (Italian, 1685–1757) spent most of his life at the court in Madrid, Spain. There, he was music master for Queen Maria Barbara (1711–1758). Many of his over 500 keyboard **sonatas** (instrumental pieces) were composed for her. Their repeated notes, cross-hand playing, arpeggios, fast scales, and wide leaps influenced later keyboard works and keyboard playing. Scarlatti's works are identified by the **Kirkpatrick** (**K.** or **Kk.**) catalogue numbers by Ralph Kirkpatrick (American, 1911–1984).

Summary: Baroque Keyboard Composers

- Italian, French, English, and German composers of the Baroque period developed their own distinct styles, but they also influenced each other.
- *Johann Sebastian Bach* was an important Baroque keyboard composer and virtuoso organist who held different positions in Germany.
- Italian composer *Domenico Scarlatti* wrote many brilliant keyboard sonatas.
- *François Couperin* and *Jean-Philippe Rameau* were two important French composers from the Baroque period, who wrote keyboard music in galant style.

Listening Guide

Track 3: "Gigue" *from* French Suite in G Major, BWV 816
by Johann Sebastian Bach
(Baroque dance suite)

This final dance of the suite is in the unusual meter of $\frac{12}{16}$ but feels like it has four beats per measure. Listen for the recurring main theme as it is imitated in the different voices.

Track 4: Sonata in G Major, K. 125
by Domenico Scarlatti
(Baroque keyboard sonata)

This joyous sonata has rapid scales, repeated notes, ornaments, and wide leaps.

Additional Listening: "Air and Variations" *from* Suite No. 5 in E major ("The Harmonious Blacksmith") *by George Frideric Handel* • Invention No. 8 in F Major, BWV 779, *by Johann Sebastian Bach* • Prelude and Fugue No. 2 in C Minor, BWV 847, *from* The Well-Tempered Clavier, Book 1, *by Johann Sebastian Bach*

Word Search

Find the words and circle them.

B	P	S	C	H	Ü	T	Z	R	H
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BACH

BUXTEHUDE

COUPERIN

HANDEL

PACHELBEL

RAMEAU

SCARLATTI

SCHÜTZ

Haydn's Keyboard Works

Haydn was a close friend of Mozart, and the two composers influenced each other's work. Haydn's optimistic and witty style can be heard in his many symphonies and piano sonatas. His final three piano sonatas were influenced by the virtuoso pianists and rich-sounding Broadwood pianos he heard during visits to London. *Variations in F Minor*, Hob. XVII:6, is considered a keyboard masterpiece, and the *Concerto in D Major*, Hob. XVIII:11, is a popular piano concerto.

Haydn's works are identified by the **Hoboken** (**Hob.**) catalogue numbers by Anthony van Hoboken (Dutch, 1887–1983).

Broadwood piano (1796)

Franz Joseph Haydn

Ludwig van Beethoven

As a young man, **Ludwig van Beethoven** (1770–1827) traveled from his birthplace in Bonn, Germany, to Vienna, Austria, to study with Haydn. He spent the rest of his life there. He was a virtuoso pianist, known for powerful improvisations. At the height of his fame, he began to lose his hearing. Total deafness forced him to focus on composition, where he revealed his anguish. He experimented with Classical forms—sonatas, concertos, chamber music, and symphonies—deepening their expression. These works link the Classical and Romantic periods.

Beethoven's Pianos

Because of Beethoven's fame, piano manufacturers often gave him pianos. In 1803, he was presented with a French piano by Sébastien Érard (1752–1831) that was sturdier than most Viennese pianos of the time. He praised the "singing" quality of pianos by Johann Streicher (1761–1833). In 1817, the English Broadwood company sent him a six-octave piano that pleased him with its full, rich tone. An 1826 piano by Conrad Graf (1782–1851) had four treble strings. These were added with the hope that the extra sound could be heard by the hearing-impaired composer.

Portrait of Ludwig van Beethoven (1803) by Christian Horneman (1765–1844)

The Course of Empire: The Arcadia or Pastoral State *(1834) by Thomas Cole (1801–1848)*

Beethoven's Broadwood piano (1817)

A page from the "Moonlight Sonata"

Early 19th-Century Composers

At age seven, the talented **Johann Nepomuk Hummel** (Austrian, 1778–1837) studied and lived with Mozart, without charge. Hummel later succeeded Haydn as Court Composer for the Esterházy family. In 1828, Hummel's *Klavierschule* (*Keyboard School*) sold thousands of copies within days of its publication. It suggested new ways for playing ornaments and for fingering. Hummel's music links late-Classical and early-Romantic styles.

Hummel

Weber conducting

A virtuoso pianist, **Carl Maria von Weber** (German, 1786–1826) introduced dramatic keyboard techniques in his music—tremolos, wide leaps, arpeggios, and other effects—that influenced later Romantic composers. A brilliant conductor, he was one of the first to stand in front of the orchestra. He is now known primarily as an opera composer.

Anton Diabelli (Austrian, 1781–1858) was a composer, music publisher, and piano and guitar teacher. Diabelli & Company, his Viennese publishing house, gained international fame by publishing the music of Schubert. Diabelli's sonatinas, another mark of his legacy, are still taught to young pianists today. However, his name is perhaps best known by the title of Beethoven's *Diabelli Variations*, considered one of the greatest variation sets of all time.

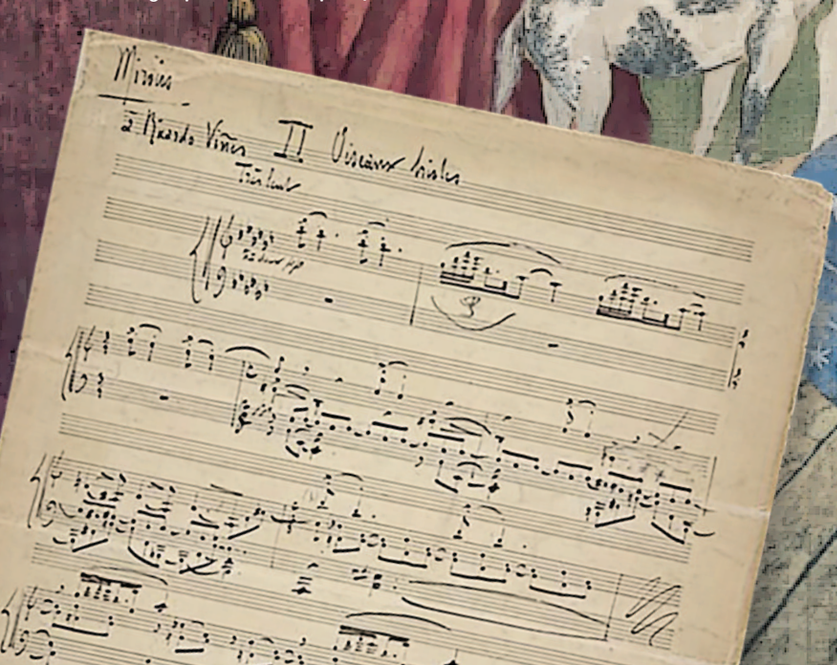
Diabelli

Late 18th-century Vienna

Maurice Ravel

Born in the Basque region of France near the Spanish border, **Maurice Ravel** (1875–1937) was raised in Paris and became the leading French composer after World War I. Spanish rhythms and style are heard in some of Ravel's music, such as his famous orchestral piece "Boléro." In the years following his training at the Paris Conservatory, Ravel met with other artists and writers known as the **Apaches** (meaning "hooligans" in French). They inspired and supported one another and other controversial artists. In 1928, Ravel toured America. There, he spent time with prominent American composer **George Gershwin** (1898–1937) and visited jazz clubs. The influence of jazz can be heard in Ravel's piano concertos and other works.

Autograph manuscript of Miroirs



Ravel's Piano Works

The piano music of Ravel is carefully crafted, with a balance of emotion and intellect. His 1901 masterpiece, "Jeux d'eau" (Games of Water), opened up a new era of sound that influenced Debussy and other composers.

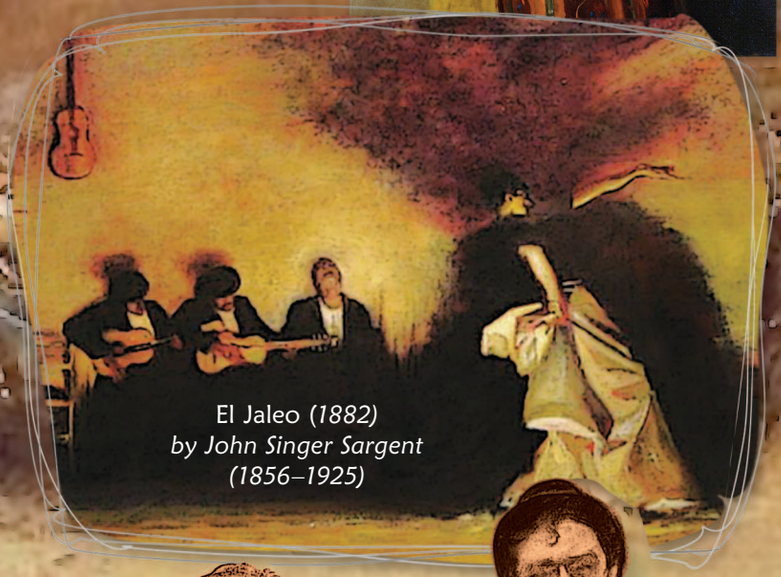
Ravel wrote many suites with descriptive titles. *Miroirs* (Mirrors) contains five pieces that suggest images as reflected in a mirror, each piece dedicated to a different member of the Apaches. *Valses nobles et sentimentales* (Noble and Sentimental Waltzes) were inspired by Schubert. The *Mother Goose* suite, for piano duet, was inspired by various fairy tales. "Scarbo," the final of three pieces from *Gaspard de la nuit* (Treasurer of the Night), is one of the most difficult works in the piano repertoire. Ravel's works are identified by the **Marnat** (**M.**) catalogue numbers by Marcel Marnat (French, b. 1933).

Unit 8

Into the 20th Century

Spanish composers **Isaac Albéniz** (1860–1909) and **Enrique Granados** (1867–1916) share many similarities. Both were born in the region of Catalonia, became outstanding pianists, and studied in Paris. Their teacher Felipe Pedrell (Spanish, 1841–1922) collected Spanish folk music and encouraged them to incorporate these folk elements into their compositions. As important Spanish nationalist composers, their most lasting works are for piano: Albéniz's *Iberia* and Granados's *Goyescas*.

Spanish Girl of Segovia *(1912)* *by Robert Henri* *(1865–1929)*



El Jaleo *(1882)* *by John Singer Sargent* *(1856–1925)*

Falla

Sketches of Albéniz and Granados by Ramon Casas (1866–1932)

Manuel de Falla (Spanish, 1876–1946) spent seven years in Paris. There he became friends with Debussy and Ravel who influenced his compositional style. After returning to Madrid, he composed his best-known pieces. These include the ballet *El amor brujo (The Bewitched Love)* and the nocturne for piano and orchestra *Nights in the Gardens of Spain*.
El amor brujo includes "Ritual Fire Dance," an exciting piece that Falla also arranged for piano solo.

Unit 9

Music of the Americas

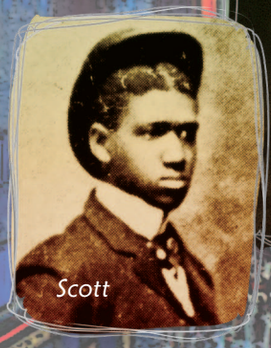
From colonial days, most music in the Americas was imported from Europe. By the late 19th century, European performers toured America, but most American-born musicians composed in the European tradition and traveled to Europe for serious music study. Over time, however, new and unique musical styles began to emerge from the Americas.

Ragtime has a march-like, steady bass with uneven "ragged" rhythms in the treble that originated in America in the late 1800s. **Scott Joplin** (American, ca. 1868–1917) was known as the "King of Ragtime." He played piano in St. Louis saloons, and his "Maple Leaf Rag" was the first piece of sheet music to sell one million copies. Joplin, **James Scott** (American, 1885–1938), and **Joseph Lamb** (American, 1887–1960) were the leading ragtime composers of the early 20th century. Ragtime was important in the evolution of blues and jazz.

Tatum

Joplin

Lamb



Scott

Early Jazz Composers

The word "jazz" (originally spelled *jaz*) was a slang term that meant "to speed things up, making them more exciting." Jazz style became a fusion of West African, European, and American traditions. Although influenced by ragtime, jazz music usually is improvised while ragtime is composed. Jazz pianists developed unique styles as they continually worked to develop greater technical virtuosity.

"Fats" Waller (American, 1904–1943) was often named the top player in jazz-improvisation contests. He was known for his **stride style**, a left-hand accompaniment pattern that leaps between low notes and higher chords. "Ain't Misbehavin'" is one of his hits.

Art Tatum (American, 1909–1956) is recognized as one of the greatest jazz pianists of all time. Nearly blind, he learned to play the piano by listening to player pianos. His playing was greatly admired by both Rachmaninoff and Horowitz.