

HKDSE Music Listening – Week 9

Romantic Music – Solo and Chamber Works

Romantic style

- a stylistic period in music from 1820 to 1900 with an emphasis on **originality** 獨創性 and direct **expression of emotions** 情感表達
- the rise of **programme music** 標題音樂: descriptive music that tells a story or evokes images in the mind of the listener (some composers, such as Brahms, still persisted with writing only **absolute music**—music without any programmatic or extramusical content)
- harmonies remains mostly functional 功能性 and tonal 有調性, but they become increasingly **chromatic** 半音階 over the course of the century, and shifts between major and minor modes 大小調轉換 are common (either **parallel keys** or **relative keys**)
- **modulations** 轉調 occur more often, often leading to some remote key areas
- phrases became less balanced and symmetrical, with increasing **flexibility** 彈性 in their internal construction
- reliance more on **themes** rather than harmonic-tonal relationships to shape large-scale form; some composers (such as Berlioz and Liszt) prefer using **thematic transformation** 主題轉型 as a formal-defining and narrative device
- the length of the pieces varies greatly, ranging from piano **miniatures** 音樂小品 to monumental symphonies lasting an hour
- **rubato** 彈性速度: performance of Romantic pieces often call for a more liberal handling of time, slightly holding back or pressing forward of tempo to intensify the expression of music (for Chopin, rubato was brought about by a slight anticipation or delay of the right-hand melody with the accompaniment continuing in strict time)

Nocturne (Ger. *Nachtstück*; It. *notturmo*)

- French for “night piece”
- a short mood piece (typically for solo piano) evoking night, usually with a beautiful, embellished melody above a sonorous accompaniment of broken chords
- slow, lyrical, and intimate in character
- Notable composers:
 - **John Field** (an Irish pianist-composer) composed 18
 - **Frederick Chopin** (a Polish pianist-composer, active in Paris) composed 21

🎧 Chopin, Nocturne in E-flat Major, Op. 9, No. 2 (1830–1831)

🎧 John Field, Nocturne No. 1 in E-flat Major (1850)

Étude

- French for “study” (German: *Etüde*, *Studie*)
- An instrumental piece intended to develop one or more aspects of a player’s technical ability (e.g. octaves, scales, arpeggios, trills, wide leaps) or to display the virtuosity and techniques of the performer to an audience
- **Pedagogical etudes:** a composition designed to improve the technique of an instrumental performer by isolating specific difficulties and concentrating his or her efforts on their mastery (each etude usually focuses on one technical problem)
 - (keyboard) Muzio Clementi, Johann Baptist Cramer, Carl Czerny
 - (violin) Rodolphe Kreutzer, Pierre Rode, Charles-Auguste de Bériot
- **Concert etudes** (emerged in the early 19th century): a showpiece to demonstrate the virtuosity of the performer to the public concert

🎧 Paganini, 24 Caprices for Solo Violin, Op. 1, No. 24 in A minor (1802–1817)

🎧 Chopin, Étude in C Minor, Op. 10, No. 2 “Revolutionary” (1831)

🎧 Liszt, Transcendental Etudes, No. 10 (1851)

Waltz

- A couple dance in triple time.
- The accompaniment is characterized by an “um-pah-pah” rhythmic pattern.
- The waltz grew out of southern German and Austrian country dances known generally as *Deutsche* or German Dances. It was considered daring and, by some, morally objectionable because of the close embrace in which the couple danced.
- Waltz became popular across Europe from the 1780s onwards, especially the rise of Viennese Waltz in the middle decades of the 19th century.
- Many 19th-century waltzes comprise a series of two repeated eight-bar periods framed by an introduction and coda.

🎧 Carl Maria von Weber, *Aufforderung zum Tanz* (“Invitation to Dance”) (1819)

🎧 Chopin, Waltz in A-flat major, Op. 34, No. 1 (1834)

🎧 Johann Strauss, *An der schönen blauen Donau* (The Blue Danube) (1867)