

HKDSE Music – Listening (Form 4)
Week 11 – Romantic Music (Symphonies and Concertos)

Program music

- a piece of instrumental music that tells a story based on some extramusical source
- the story is sometimes spelled out to the audience by a program
- types of program music in the Romantic period:
 1. **program symphony**: a symphony with the usual three, four, or five movements, which together depict a succession of specific events or scenes drawn from an extramusical story or event
 - Liszt, “Faust” Symphony (1857)
 - Berlioz, *Symphonie fantastique* (1830)
 2. **concert overture**: a one-movement work, usually in sonata form, intended for performance at a concert; it portrays through music a series of scenes or dramatic actions using the traditional form
 - Rossini, *Overture to William Tell* (1829)
 - Mendelssohn, *Overture to A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (1826)
 - Tchaikovsky, *1812 Overture* (1882), *Romeo and Juliet Overture* (1880)
 3. **symphonic poem / tone poem**: a one-movement work for orchestra that gives musical expression to the emotions and events associated with a story, play, political event, or personal experience; this genre was originally invented by Franz Liszt; at the end of the nineteenth century, Richard Strauss preferred using the term “tone poem” for his orchestral works
 - Modest Mussorgsky, *Night on Bald Mountain* (1867)
 - Richard Strauss, *Also Sprach Zarathustra* (1896), *Don Quixote* (1897)

Absolute music

- the opposite of programme music; a musical work that does not have any programmatic content or extramusical invocations (“music for the sake of music”)
 - Brahms, *Symphony No. 3, III* (1868)

Thematic transformation

- a method devised by Franz Liszt to provide unity, variety, and a narrative-like logic to a composition

- the character of the theme is altered by means of changes in dynamics, orchestration, or rhythm, in order to reflect the diverse moods needed to portray a programmatic subject

Romantic concertos

- the first movement dispenses with the Classical “double exposition” in favor of a single exposition, often with the soloist entering immediately and performing with the orchestra
- the cadenza is written out by the composer rather than improvised by the performer
- usually written for the piano or violin as the solo instrument
- romantic concertos can be categorized into two major types:
 1. **virtuoso concerto:** it seeks to challenge the technical skill of the performer, in order to amaze the audience with his/her technical prowess
 - Chopin, Piano Concertos Nos. 1 and 2
 - Liszt, Piano Concertos Nos. 1 and 2
 - Tchaikovsky, Piano Concerto and Violin Concerto
 - Paganini, Violin Concertos Nos. 1–5
 - Saint-Saëns, Piano Concertos Nos. 1–5
 - Rachmaninoff, Piano Concertos Nos. 1–4
 2. **symphonic concerto:** it aspires toward the scale and grandeur of a full-fledged multimovement symphony
 - Brahms, Piano Concertos Nos. 1 and 2
 - Schumann, Piano Concerto

Cyclic Form

- a multimovement work where themes from the earlier movements are recalled in later ones (usually the last movement); used as a unifying device
 - Schumann, Symphony No. 4
 - Liszt, Faust Symphony
 - Tchaikovsky, Symphony No. 5