Meet Music

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MEET

Music

AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE
SOUTH DAKOTA STATE COLLEGE
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
"Confidentially, this long-haired stuff is not for me. I don’t really know a thing about music, and I can’t carry a tune in a bushel basket.” With this pessimistic statement, many of us close the door to a whole new world of enjoyment.

It does seem confusing when we hear people conversing in long-handled terms about symphonies, sonatas, oratorios, writing styles, and the like. Immediately, we become frightened by their apparent knowledge of music. Don’t be misled by that big talk, which may even be done just to impress you. Knowledge of those terms doesn’t mean that they enjoy music any more than you do, or than you can (if you have, at present, a musically uneventful life).

With a little pluck, a few facts, and an ambition to widen life’s interests, we can find a lasting companion in music, whether it be through performance or listening. Music is a universal language and there is something in it for everyone.

“But I Don’t Like...” Naturally, there will be music from which you do not derive full enjoyment, just as in other things in life. Maybe you wouldn’t be caught dead in a dress which your neighbor considers her “very best,” but that doesn’t make you dislike all dresses, does it? So with music. Highly-trained musicians do not have the same tastes in music, themselves. One may prefer the strict-form classical music, another the flowery, romantic style. That depends upon personalities, tastes and emotions. Now you can feel better about not being “sent” by a certain composition or composer.

There Is a Difference—Let us look at the various kinds of music heard in our world of today, and make a few comparisons. It is impossible to completely cover the music field, but we’ll deal with the most important classifications that are commonly used. We’ll begin with the basic question of “Just what is music, anyway?”

WHAT IS MUSIC?

It covers a pretty large field of endeavor, doesn’t it? People sing, dance, play instruments, compose, or hear some of it every day of their lives. One dictionary very simply defines it as “the art and the science
of expression in sound." That's it—a means of expression of thoughts, hopes, joys, sorrows, patriotism, peacefulness, conflict, love, hate and any other emotions of which we are capable. We associate it with starving composers writing in stuffy garrets, jazz bands "digging the latest," great performances of huge instrumental or choral groups, solo artists, group song or jam sessions, and even the whistling cowboy!

**EARLY MUSIC**

Like everything else, music had a simple beginning. It originated in primitive man through imitation of his surroundings—cries of animals, birds, and other sounds. He first heard the rhythmic beats and used crude percussion instruments for chants, campfire dances, rituals and festivals.

Although it is thought that music was developed to a great extent in the ancient civilizations of 1500 B.C., there is no definite record of the state of musical advancement before the Greek civilization. In fact, only a few (about seven) fragments of Greek music remain. Their music consisted of one-line melodies, tunes or chants (no chords or added harmony) that formed the basis for poems or temple worship and probably had a very small range of notes.

The instrument used by serious Greek musicians was the string lyre; common people used a kind of flute, associated with the god of wine. The lyre was used at festivals of the god Apollo, noted for his purity and serenity.

**Simplicity Lost**

Greece fell, and music became commercialized by Greeks who went to Rome. Poetry was no longer used with music, and Latin words replaced the Greek. Roman culture was less refined than that of Greece, and they wanted huge vocal and instrumental productions with lavish costumes on a Hollywood scale; simplicity of music was lost.

The coming of Christianity was a strong influence on people's lives and music. The priests realized music's powers and, influenced by the Israelite music of the Jews, began composing songs that would induce prayer in church. The words were considered more important than the melody.

**Liturgy Developed**

Ambrose (340-97), Bishop of Milan, was first to devise the idea of antiphonal, or responsive, singing, in which one person or group answers another in song. Pope Gregory the Great (540-604) was the true father of the liturgy, though. He developed Gregorian chant, which was a single line, unaccompanied melody sung without any rhythmic pattern, or variation in speed. Only men's voices were used in chanting this plainsong, from which sentimental, artificial or popular tunes were excluded. Gregorian chant formed the basis for other forms of music that followed, especially polyphonic (many melodies combined).

Notes in music at that time were square or oblong shapes called neumes; that means "nod," so neumes gave the nod to the voice to
go up or down, but the singer had to decide how far! Four hundred years after Gregory died, a learned monk named Guido conceived the idea of syllables (note names) and a staff of lines and spaces for notes that gave them definite places in relation to one another. Thus it was possible to write music on paper accurately.

Part-Singing Begun
After these additions, part-singing began to develop. First, all of the singers sang the same melody; the only difference was that they began on different harmonizing pitches. Then the idea was conceived whereby one group would sing a different melody (descant) above the original melody. The church relaxed its strict observances of Gregorian rules of writing, and motets containing three different parts or melodies were composed. Notes were also given different time values so that rhythm patterns could be sung with a definite beat.

From 1100–1300, France led the musical world, adding freedom and folk-quality to the music. The Crusades at that time inspired patriotic songs and brought new music ideas via the returning warriors.

This was the age of wandering minstrels who sang in feudal castles, guildhalls and taverns. They sang religious music plus songs of their own. The latter were usually tales of heroism, love, romance, or adventure. Gradually, these men banded together, led by the organizer and composer of tales, called a troubadour, trouvère, harper or minnesinger. Minstrels and jugglers were "stars of the show," using viols, harps, flutes, bagpipes and other stringed instruments for accompaniment. Many texts of their songs remain, but only 250 melodies have been preserved.

Common Participation
St. Francis of Assisi (1182–1226) helped inject the expression of common people in church music by having them participate in church singing and by creating hymns for home worship.

And that's the setting for our musical world. Music has continued to expand its realm in composition, new and better instruments, use of the voice and service to mankind. It has been greatly affected by historical events, revolutions and wars; for, music reflects the times and the people.

THE OUTER WRAPS OF MUSIC
Some of our composers had very definite stories, ideas or associations in mind when they wrote a number; this type of work is called "program music." Peter and the Wolf is an example. At concerts, program notes are often used to explain the music and to help us to exercise our imaginations; we must realize, however, that good music does not require a story element for its success.

Just as persons have nicknames, so does music, e.g., "Moonlight" Sonata or the "Pathétique" Symphony. These names are originated by listeners and usually are most appropriate in describing the number. Opus numbers are merely a means of indexing or dating a com-
poser's work, most frequently referring to the date published, not written. For example, Beethoven's "Moonlight" Sonata is officially named Sonata for Piano No. 14, in C-sharp Minor, Op. 27, No. 2. This means it was the 14th sonata he wrote, in the key of C-sharp Minor, his 27th published work and second in a short group of sonatas which he had probably contracted to write.

Had there been a No. 2a or No. 2b on the last figure, it would mean that he had written two instrumental arrangements of it, a and b. If a letter is used in place of Op., the works have not been classified until after the composer's death, and it represents the name of the person doing the classification. Opus numbers need not worry you; they are mainly used by long-hair musicians!

"These music terms are for the birds"—I do hope you mean songbirds.

Sometimes terminology becomes so involved we become discouraged; but we must remember that everything must have some manner of classification, music included. The terms do not affect the music; but it does help to know the important ones, for nothing more than want of confidence. Besides, they really aren't so hard.

Music may be put into two general groups: classical or romantic. Classical is the serious, "good music." Specifically, it is music of certain composers (Haydn, Mozart) of the 16th-18th centuries, distinguished because of perfect form according to certain standards or accepted patterns. In composition, the form rules the inspiration or emotions. It may be compared to poetry, in which certain lines must rhyme. The poet chooses words that rhyme and the skill lies in being able to speak the original thoughts while abiding by the strict rules.

The composer of romantic (not love as we think of it) music considers expression of his thoughts and emotions first, then the rules. If he cannot stay within the rules, he merely breaks a few. This does not mean that he has no form or organization whatsoever to his writing; it is free-style composition and highly
acceptable in the music world. Romanticism in music and art arose in the early 1800's, along with the French and American Revolutions.

Form in music refers to organization of music expression so that it makes sense to the composer and the listener. Repetition of melodies, contrast and association are devices used. Repetition consists of stating a musical melody theme and returning to it later. Contrast may be achieved by tempo changes—fast, slow, fast. Association may include the theme and some variations of it or a new melody resembling it.

In one sense, our popular songs are like classical music, for they have a certain form—a chorus of 32 bars (measures), a melody line which is stated twice at the beginning of the chorus, a middle part that contrasts with the original melody, followed by a repetition of the original theme. Surprised? We like familiar patterns, and that's why our popular tunes find such ready fame.

Nationalism in music pertains to native folk rhythms, melodies, myths or history expressing characteristics of the people of a nation; not merely a rousing, patriotic march. After Napoleon's defeat, European nations became more independent and we find nationalism in the music of the Polish Chopin, German Wagner and Russian Rimsky-Korsakov.

Our modern music by present day composers sounds dissonant and ineffective to us; this is perfectly normal, for it is an old custom to reject new musical ideas. Beethoven, Brahms and Debussy are only a few of the many composers who were regarded as radicals in their day. The general course is for popularity and fame to follow death and a poverty-stricken life on the part of the hero. Modern music requires several listenings before it grows on us.

Counterpoint and harmony are two terms often used in speaking of music composition. Sing the rounds Three Blind Mice and Are You Sleeping simultaneously and you have counterpoint. You also have it when singing each of these rounds separately in the usual manner of a round. Counterpoint consists of two or more melodies put together, achieving a pleasant sound.

Bach's fugues are a type of counterpoint, in which he excelled. Fugue means flight, and melodies chase one another over the keyboard, obeying strict rules as to where they may go. They become very complex, and one is always amazed when the selection ends...
with comparative ease and logic.

**Harmony** consists of one melody combined with chords which, instead of being parts of little melodies themselves, serve to "dress up" the main melody. This largely replaced counterpoint and is used today in most writing.

**FULL-ORCHESTRA MUSIC TERMS**

**Symphony**—this large orchestral work may have from one to five movements (contrasting tempo changes), but most have four. The first movement is generally written in sonata allegro form, which involves stating two separate melody themes, development and combination of these themes, and finally repetition of the original themes. It is usually followed by (2) adagio (slow, songlike) (3) scherzo (dance form) (4) presto (fast) movements.

**Symphonic Tone Poems**—are full orchestra works usually in one movement and classed as "program" music; for they either tell a story or describe an event, mood or scene. Debussy’s *La Mer*, Rimsky-Korsakov’s *Scheherazade* and Sibelius’ *Finlandia* are examples. Regardless of whether we know the story or not, the music provides enjoyable listening.

**Concert Overtures**—resemble tone-poems, except for the fact that they were originally written as introductions to operas or musical shows. Some of these opening selections have become popular in themselves, while the operas they preceded may be extinct.

**Suite**—just as we have suites in furniture, so we have them in music. Sets or series of pieces are combined to present a whole unit. Originally, suites were contrasting dance numbers, but now are written with a story idea or for a ballet, resembling a collection of tone-poems.

**Ballet Music**—has a story, but the choreographer (dance writer) and composer are more important. Some ballets are based on several compositions written long ago; for example, *Les Sylphides* is based on piano compositions by Chopin. Modern composers write a great deal of enjoyable ballet music.

**Theme and Variations**—may not only be used for orchestral numbers, but in all music-writing as well. It involves taking a theme and repeating it in different rhythms, tempo changes, moods, instrument combinations — it may even be played backwards!

**INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC TERMS**

This class resembles orchestral, except for the fact that it is based upon smaller groups, soloists and combinations. Melody, variations, rhythm and special effects are used for interest rather than reliance upon the full, big qualities of the large orchestra.

**Concerto**—this work for one or more solo instruments accompanied by a fairly large orchestra is usually in three movements. Any instrument may solo but piano and violin seem to be favorites. Solo passages without the orchestra are called cadenzas. The original concerto grosso of the 1600’s featured small groups in solo parts.
Chamber Music—as the name implies, this is music for performance by small groups, trios or quartets, in a small room. There may be from two to 20 players, voices, or both. Individual parts are important, and ingenuity must be exercised by the composer who has no huge orchestra to give rousing crescendos and build-ups to the music.

Sonata—a specific three or four movement form for one or a few instruments. It is to one instrument as a symphony is to an orchestra. Both the first movement of a sonata and a symphony may have a special form called sonata allegro (see symphony).

Dance Forms—waltz, polka, mazurka, chaconne, passacaglia, polonaise and other dance forms used as a basis for short, free-styled works by composers are not really dances as we think of them. The rhythm is borrowed and dressed with frills and trills to become an impressive concert number instead. The stately, slow, three-beat passacaglia and chaconne are often concert numbers; they are distinguished by a constant repetition used in the bass or low-voiced instruments, with variations performed by the treble (high) voices.

Other Terms—Short, Free Forms

Serenade—an “evening song,” associated with a lover singing to his lady fair on the balcony above him.

Caprice—a lively, happy, showy number, usually for one instrument.

Fantasy—similar to a small symphonic tone-poem. It may be a combination of melodies from an opera.

Rhapsody—a fantasy-type of work, often based on national folk or dance tunes.

Toccata—a “touch-piece” that is rapid, showy and brilliant. Bach used this often to introduce his fugues.

Etude—a “little study” in melody patterns or music problems. Chopin’s melodious and delightful etudes have become favorite program pieces.

Prelude—like an overture, it may introduce a large work or stand alone as a program number. Frequently it has a story element.

VOCAL MUSIC TERMS

Voices may be classified as to range and quality. In opera, most solos and lead roles are for tenor and soprano voices, the alto and bass having secondary parts.

Soprano—highest woman’s or boy’s voice

Lyric soprano—light, gentle, melodic voice

Dramatic soprano—heavy, large soprano voice

Coloratura soprano—very flexible high voice capable of sustaining and of soaring, of flowery trills and frills, it is the glory of the opera. Tenor or baritone voices with this quality are called “bel canto.”

Mezzo soprano—a middle soprano, between alto and high soprano.

Alto—between soprano and contralto

Contralto—lowest woman’s voice, lower than alto.
Tenor—highest adult male voice.
Lyric, Dramatic tenors—refer to lyric, dramatic soprano.
Baritone—male voice between tenor and bass range—high bass.
Bass—lowest male voice.

Opera—a drama set to music, often tragic in nature, in which virtuoso voices and vocal abilities are displayed and the hero sings for 20 minutes after being fatally stabbed. These arias, as such solos are called, may become famous in themselves as separate numbers. The recitative, a half-sung, half-spoken part of opera, keeps the story moving, sets the mood for a coming aria, or fills gaps between arias. Ensemble selections are for quartets, sextets, duets, or the like.

As most operas are not in English, a good understanding of the story action is necessary. Mozart, Wagner, and Verdi wrote many operas; Mozart’s are classical, Wagner’s are heavy, heroic drama, and Verdi’s are emotional with true Italian qualities. As a starter, Italian and French operas are probably most enjoyable. Be sure to read the story of the opera first, even if you have a chance to see one on the stage; librettos (like a play book) are sold before the performance of live opera, and one gets the story, word for word.

Song
Folk and popular song has always existed; it has no known composer or origin and is an expression of the people. Repetition of melody is a distinguishing feature. Popular song writers of today write tunes, some of which might be called folk songs.

Art songs are composed; they may have the qualities of love, hate and other emotions of folk song, but not the repetition of melody. Texts of poems are frequently used as a base. Brahms and Schubert wrote numerous art songs.

A cappella—literally, “as in a chapel,” unaccompanied choral singing. Motets (religious) and madrigals (secular) were early forms of this in 1500.

Liturgical Music—religious music such as Masses and hymns.

Oratorio—basically, a large work for soloists, chorus, and orchestra for concert or church. It is opera without action, scenery or costumes.

Cantata—may be religious, based on gospel texts or prayers. It may be occasional, too, as Bach’s Coffee Cantata. In form, it resembles a short oratorio.

JAZZ BITS FOR CRAZY CATS

Let’s face it. Jazz is here to stay, for it is very important as a music
interest. It, too, has had stages of development, and will continue to change in style, just as our serious music does. Let's take a glance at some of its history.

**Ragtime**—In 1900, New Orlean's Storyville was a haven for starving, Negro musicians who played in crowded dance halls, saloons, and had cornetist contests on street corners to determine the "King." The favorite combo was a cornet, clarinet, trombone, violin and guitar. *Twelfth Street Rag* is typical of Dixieland ragtime. Serious composers such as Debussy and Stravinsky borrowed the syncopated rhythms used in ragtime for *Golliwog's Cake Walk* and *Ragtime*.

**Blues**—Ten years after ragtime, the Negro began to sing of sadness, death and unhappiness, using a guitar or rhythm instrument with one or two melody instruments to accompany. Louis Armstrong and vocalist Bessie Smith have been favorites in blues. Serious composer Carpenter used blues for his ballet, *Krazy Kat*; Milhaud used *Aunt Hagar's Blues* as a theme for his ballet, *The Creation of the World*; Ravel's *Sonata* for violin and piano has a second movement entitled "Blues."

**Hot Jazz** — Blues and ragtime were combined after World War I to express joy and triumph; the Charleston, Shimmy and Black Bottom accompanied this new music with its many solo improvisations. Stravinsky, Milhaud, Gershwin, Gould, and Copland (*Concerto*) borrowed these jazz rhythms for serious music.

**Swing** — Before World War II, Count Basie, Benny Goodman, Glenn Miller, and Artie Shaw were national *swing* favorites. Jazz tamed down; bands were larger (mainly reed, brass and rhythm instruments); boogie-woogie came in; favorite classics were swung; and arrangers began to plan jazz music.

**Progressive Jazz**—During World War II, arrangers became more concerned about effects and instrumental combinations and began to borrow ideas from the serious composers, Debussy, Ravel, Stravinsky and Bartok. Stan Kenton and Woody Herman exemplify this period of jazz concerts and larger bands.

**BeBop**—Bop seems to demand a restless spirit, unison octaves, non-harmonic tones, rhythm patterns ending with two staccato notes and crazy sound coming from perfectly normal instruments. Trumpet, tenor sax, piano and drums are Bop combo favorites. Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker are top in bop.

**Cool Jazz**—This is the trend today. Bach, Beethoven, Copland and Milhaud are influencing composers of jazz today, and we have Dave Brubeck, Gerry Mulligan, Chet Baker, Ella Fitzgerald and hundreds of other "cats." To put the expression for our word "daring" into jazz terms, the jazz today is "far-out."
Music listening is a very personal thing, and selection of your listening music is definitely up to you. However, we all like a guide in making choices; we've become acquainted with kinds of music, so let's get the "latest scoop" on some composers. Following each description will be a list of some favorite compositions you may wish to sample.

CLASSICAL COMPOSERS

J. S. Bach (bahk) Ger. 1685–1750. This excellent organist, violinist and clavichord (early piano form) player wrote nearly every form of music (except opera, symphonies and jazz) including much religious music. His music is not sensational with cadenzas and flowery display, but uses counterpoint in flawless form, and has spiritual strength, sincerity, plus a driving quality of precision and regularity. His Two-Part Inventions are a must for every piano student. His son, C. P. E. Bach, founded the school of modern piano playing and contributed much to the modern symphony which did not exist then.

Fugue in G Minor; Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring; Air for G String; Sleepers, Awake.

Handel (handle) Ger. 1685–1759. Unlike his contemporary, Bach, he wrote to please the listener with singable, joyous, dramatic, entertaining music. He is often called an English composer because much of his life was spent in that country and his famous oratorio, The Messiah, was written there. The Harmonious Blacksmith; Hallelujah Chorus from The Messiah; Water Music Suite.

"Papa" Haydn (hide'n) Austria 1732–1809. He received his nickname because of being the "Father of Symphony" of today. For 30 years he was employed as court composer for Prince Esterhazy, during which time he wrote many symphonies, quartets and chamber music selections. His works have a tinkling, bright, folksy quality. Toy, Surprise, Farewell, or London Symphonies; Kaiser Quartet.
Mozart (moh-tsart) Austria 1756–1791. A natural musical genius, he was on the concert stage and composing at the age of five. His life was poverty-stricken, but he gave volumes of music in the form of opera, symphonies and chamber music that was polished, bright and charming. He loved puns, nonsensical rhymes and crazy words, and this humor is displayed in his work. Ave Verum; Eine Kleine Nachtmusik (serenade); arias or overtures from operas Don Giovanni, The Marriage of Figaro, Così fan Tutte; Jupiter Symphony.

ROMANTIC COMPOSERS

Beethoven (bay'toh-ven) Ger. 1770–1827. One of the greatest in our musical world, he rebelled against social classes that would not accept or recognize music and intellectual artists of lower social classes. His dynamic temperament can be discerned in his music; when rules prevented expression of ideas, he broke them. He began the romantic movement which placed expression above form in writing, and his very human music possesses great strength. Although his early deafness made him socially misunderstood, it did not prevent him from continuing his great work. Minuet in G; Egmont Overture; Leonore Overture No. 3; “Moonlight” Sonata No. 14; Symphonies No. 5 in C Minor and No. 6 in F.

R. Schumann - Ger. 1810-56. His best music was written after marrying Clara Weick, daughter of his piano teacher, and an accomplished pianist herself. It is filled with exuberance, melody, and freshness; the piano was his favorite instrument and he seems to be at his best when writing for it. Carnaval ballet; Piano Concerto in A Minor; Kinderscenen (childhood scenes Traumerei is from this); Symphony No. 1 in B-flat Major.

Franz Schubert - Austria 1797-1828. Lack of money and influence did not prevent him from writing over 600 songs, most of them art songs with poems as a basis. He was unknown then because Haydn, Beethoven and Mozart were stars. His work is rich in melody, and our popular songs have often been based on his tunes. Unfinished Symphony (Song of Love theme); Erlking; Ave Maria; Serenade; Who is Sylvia?

Mendelssohn (men' del-son) Ger. 1809-47. Unlike most composers, he had a happy, well-travelled, comfortable life. A romantic composer of sparkling, melodious music, he nevertheless was a great Bach fan and revived the latter's works. Fingal's Cave Overture and Midsum-
Meet Music

Mer Night's Dream are program music. O Rest in the Lord from Elijah oratorio; On Wings of Song; Wedding March.

NATIONALISTIC COMPOSERS

Chopin (show-pan) Poland 1810-49. Though frail and sickly, this genius is acclaimed greatest of all composers of piano music. His music requires expert technique and contains much depth of feeling about his native Poland and the oppression of its people. He wrote many short polonaises, mazurkas, nocturnes, ballades and impromptus. His etudes are beautiful, especially the “Revolutionary,” “Butterfly,” and “Black Key” Etudes. Fantaisie - Impromptu in C-sharp Minor (I’m Always Chasing Rainbows theme); Polonaise in A flat; Preludes; Minute Waltz; Les Sylphides.

Dvorak (dvor’shak) Bohemia 1841-1904. His New World Symphony written in America as a “bread and butter” letter home included American and Negro folk song themes, but still shows influence of his own native land. “Goin’ Home” is our popular theme from that symphony. His music, serious in mood, has great vitality and poetic qualities. Songs My Mother Taught Me; Slavonic Dances; Humoresque.

Grieg—Nor. 1843-1907. Music contains Norse qualities of rugged, heroic nobility in a refined manner. Piano Concerto in A Minor; Peer Gynt Suites; Album Leaf; I Love Thee.

Rimsky-Korsakov—Russ. 1844-1908. His attempt to put Russian music in its own national theme was a deliberate one. Scheherazade suite; Hymn to the Sun; Flight of the Bumblebee; Song of India.

Sibelius (see-bail-yus) Fin. 1865. Sometimes he is called the Beethoven of our age, for his music contains great strength and rugged beauty. Finlandia; Valse Triste; Berceuse; The Swan of Tonela.

MORE RECENT COMPOSERS

Liszt (list) Hung. 1811-86. One of the first great artists to have “box-office” quality, he not only put on a great show musically but personally, as well. He was the “swoony” type who wore green gloves; and was one of the most sensational pianists of all time. Gypsy folk tunes influenced his beloved Hungarian Rhapsodies (Nos. 1, 2, 6 are good). You will enjoy the flashy brilliance of his music. Les Preludes; Liebestraum (Dream of Love theme); La Campanella.

Brahms (brahmz) Ger. 1833-97. Third of the “three B’s”—Bach, Bee-