

“Perception quiz” - ten examples of ensembles/genres.

In review - As we approach the second half and close of the 19th century –  
**An overview of 19th Century Music**

As previously stated - If the musical world of the nineteenth century can be said to begin with Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) then it must end with Richard Wagner (1813-1883). This description expresses neatly the power that each of these two remarkable composers had over the musicians and composers of a century which, manifestly romantic, lies oddly between the 'neatness' of eighteenth century classicism and the formal 'rationality' of so much of twentieth-century compositional theory about which Stravinsky, in his autobiography, wrote "Music is, by its very nature . . . powerless to express anything at all" and insisted that performers should follow composers' intentions without adding their own ideas or "self-expression".

While looking at individual composers or their musical works and ranking one above another could be thought a fairly pointless occupation, rather like voting for the 'greatest American' or the 'greatest poet', one should remember that the nineteenth century was a time of giants; great actors and actresses, great poets and writers, great philosophers and political theorists, great composers and great performers.

Their greatness can be measured by the audiences who read or heard them, by the influence they had on others in similar or closely related fields of artistic endeavor, and by the degree to which others looked upon them as the 'spirits' of their age.

Beethoven and Wagner exerted their influences not through individual works but through the sheer dominance of their musical personality.

It would be wrong to see music of the nineteenth century in isolation from what came before. Beethoven learned his craft from Haydn and both Beethoven and Haydn are part of an unbroken thread running from the great masters of the eighteenth century, in particular, Johann Sebastian Bach. The leading composers from this century, Beethoven, Weber (1786-1826), Chopin (1810-1849), Schumann (1810-1856), Berlioz (1803-1869), Liszt (1811-86) and Wagner, were all innovators; as were Schubert, Mendelssohn, Brahms, Verdi, and many others. So how can two be said to stand head and shoulders above their contemporaries?

It has been stated: "Beethoven stands at the head of all, over-towering all, out-living all. The combined triple qualification, the spiritual, emotional, and expressional, in the noblest and most intense form, secures his indisputable supremacy. Whilst extending the art in all respects and in all directions, he attained the rare thing, artistic perfection. The key to this secret is that his progress was purely evolutionary."

A public more interested in light Italian opera, tuneful chamber music, waltzes and songs recognized his greatness, and when, early in 1827, he died, upwards of 30,000 are said to have attended the funeral on March 26, 1827. He had become a public figure, as no composer had done before. During the last years of his life and the period after his death the musical audience was changing, as a new bourgeois element replaced the typical eighteenth-century aristocratic circles for which Beethoven himself had composed. He had lived into the age - indeed helped create it - of the artist as hero and the property of mankind at large.

Wagner's influence differs greatly from that of Beethoven. Wagner increased the scale of musical performance, enlarged the orchestra, pushed out the boundaries of the art, in a way that was in part revolutionary, part evolutionary.

The changes in orchestral forces can be shown most dramatically by comparing the Dresden Opera orchestra of 1768 with that specified by Richard Strauss (1864-1949) for a 1909 performance of his opera Elektra. It is reputed that during the rehearsal Strauss was heard exhorting the orchestra: "Louder! Louder! I can still hear the singers!"

#### DRESDEN OPERA ORCHESTRA OF 1768

1 Harpsichord for the Kapellmeister  
1 Harpsichord for the continuo player  
8 First Violins, 7 Second Violins, 4 Violas  
3 'Cellos, 4 Basses  
5 Oboes, 2 Flutes, 5 Bassoons, 2 Hunting Horns  
Trumpets, Drums  
Total: 46 pieces

#### DRESDEN OPERA ORCHESTRA OF 1909 (Elektra )

8 First Violins, 8 Second Violins, 8 Third Violins  
6 First Violas, 6 Second Violas, 6 Third Violas  
6 First 'Cellos, 6 Second 'Cellos, 8 Basses  
1 Piccolo, 3 Flutes, 2 Oboes, 1 English Horn  
1 Heckelphone, 1 E-flat Clarinet, 4 B-flat Clarinets  
2 Bass Horns, 1 Bass Clarinet, 3 Bassoons, 1 Contra Bassoon  
4 Horns, 6 Trumpets, 1 Bass Trumpet  
3 Trombones, 1 Contrabass Trombone  
2 B-flat Tubas, 2 F-Tubas, 1 Contrabass Tuba  
6-8 Tympani (2 players), Glockenspiel, Triangle  
Tambourine, Small Drum, Birch Rod, Cymbals  
Bass Drum, Tam-tam, Celesta, 2 Harps  
Total: 119-121 pieces

If nineteenth-century music can be seen as a progression of ideas whether about form, harmony, rhythm or instrumentation then in each case one finds Beethoven at one end of the chain and Wagner at the other.

So to tonight's topic:

**Nationalism** - It was in the 19th cent. that nationalism became a widespread and powerful force. During this time nationalism expressed itself in many areas as a drive for national unification or independence. However, the nationalism that inspired the German people to rise against the empire of Napoleon I was conservative, tradition-bound, and narrow rather than liberal, progressive, and universal. And when the fragmented Germany was finally unified as the German Empire in 1871, it was a highly authoritarian and militarist state. After many years of fighting, Italy also achieved national unification and freedom from foreign domination. In the United States, national unity was maintained at the cost of the Civil War. At the same time, however, with the emergence in Europe of strong, integrated nation-states, nationalism became increasingly a sentiment of conservatives.

In music, then, it was the development by 19th-century composers of a musical style that would express the characteristics of their own country. They did this by including tunes from their nation's folk music, and taking scenes from their country's history, legends, and folk tales, as a basis for their compositions. Composers were moving away from general concepts towards specific value and emotion.

Musical nationalism took root in Germany in the early 1800s thanks largely to Carl Maria von Weber. At that time, Germans took pride in a pleasant way of life that was traditional, although not yet

a rival economically or politically to England or France. In 1821, Weber wrote an opera - "Der Freischuetz"--"The Free Shooter" about a lone hunter in the forest, using folk songs, fairy tales and woodland horns for inspiration. Within four years, Weber's romantic depiction of truly German music was charming packed opera houses in Vienna, New York and London.

Part of the growing appeal of nationalist music was that it gave outside audiences a glimpse of distant and exotic cultures. We have already discussed Polish composer Frederic Chopin and how he capitalized on the growing taste for foreign sounds and ideas when he entertained in the salons of Paris. Composers of nationalist music include **Bedrich Smetana, Jean Sibelius, Edvard Grieg, Antonín Dvorak, Stephen Foster** and **Carl Nielsen**.

So the nineteenth century was a time in which passionate nationalism was prevalent and which saw many political upheavals. Influenced by such "nationalistic" works as the Hungarian Rhapsodies of **Franz Liszt**, composers from many European countries became determined to develop a "national style" of music for their homeland. To do this they turned to the dances, folk songs, history, and national legends of their countries as a basis for their musical compositions. Of the countries that fostered a growth of such a movement, Russia, Bohemia (now part of the Czech Republic), Finland, England, and the young United States of America produced several outstanding nationalist composers.

In review, then, Romantic music was initially considered to be music that described a landscape or gave melody to a known story. Later, with the inclusion of national folk tunes and dance rhythms into the scores, the music became associated with particular nations.

Czech composers like **Antonin Dvorak** and **Bedrich Smetana** painted beguiling musical portraits of the flowing rivers and green meadows of their country. But not all composers relegated themselves to homegrown musical styles. Hungarian-born composer Franz Liszt had an affinity for assimilating exotic music elements from the other countries he visited.

Eventually, the widespread desire to compose uniquely national music had a reverse effect. By the late 19th century, common elements started to blur distinctions among national styles and many efforts began to seem cliched. Nevertheless, the nationalist movement had opened minds to other cultures, and brought an appreciation of things that were authentic and unspoiled by the increasing rate of change in modern culture. The 20th century continued to see ardent nationalist composers like Hungarian Bela Bartok, who sought authentic national musical elements by recording and transcribing folk music throughout the countryside.

NATIONALISTIC composers:

In Russia, a group of composers emerged that was dubbed "The Mighty Five" by music critics of the day because of their attempts to endow Russia with music of a national flavor. Of these five, the most influential were undoubtedly **Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov** (1844-1908) and **Modest Mussorgsky** (1839 - 1881). Lacking a true musical training, Mussorgsky relied on his own unique sense of harmony and orchestration, and composed works of rare, unusual, and stark emotion. He completed only a few of his works, among them the piano suite Pictures at an Exhibition, (later brilliantly transcribed for orchestra by Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)), the song cycle Songs and Dances of Death, and what is considered the supreme masterpiece of Russian opera, Boris Godunov. The opera is based on a tragedy by the Russian poet, Alexander Pushkin, and concerns the rise to power of Czar Boris and his tragic reign and downfall. The Coronation scene from "Boris Godunov" is an example of Mussorgsky's use of orchestral color to imitate the ringing bells of the Kremlin during the crowning of Boris. Many of Mussorgsky's works were "touched up" and re-scored after his death by such composers as Rimsky-Korsakov. In their original scoring, however, one can fully appreciate the crude

power and emotionalism Mussorgsky sought to bring to them, as in this performance of A Night on Bald Mountain, a symphonic poem representing a Witches' Sabbath on a haunted mountaintop.

### **Antonín Dvorák**

Born: Mühlhausen, September 8, 1841

Died: Prague, May 1, 1904

Certainly the greatest composer that Bohemia produced, Dvorák's fame as a musician spread during his lifetime throughout Europe and to America, where he served as artistic director of the National Conservatory in New York City from 1892 to 1895. Composing music in almost every conceivable genre during his career, many of his chamber works, symphonies, and concertos have entered the general repertory. The use of Bohemian folk dances in many of his works is typical, and among Dvorák's most successful works are two sets of Slavonic Dances, originally composed for piano, four-hands, and which he later orchestrated.

His nine symphonies are infused with the flavor of the Bohemian countryside, even his most famous, the Symphony No. 9 in E minor, nicknamed "From the New World". It is in the third movements of many of these symphonies where Dvorák gives free rein to the music of his homeland, as he does in the Symphony no. 7 in D minor

#### From the Bohemian Forest, Op.68; Silent Woods no. 5 for Cello and Orchestra

This work was published in 1884 as a piece for piano, four hands. Dvorak later arranged it for cello and piano (December 1891) and for cello and small orchestra (October 1893). This is our first performance of the work. Dvorak appreciated the sound and expressive power of the cello, and wrote a number of solo works for the instrument, including the great Cello Concerto of 1895--one of the landmark works for the instrument--and several smaller pieces. His Silent Woods had its origins in an 1884 set of programmatic pieces for piano, four hands titled Ze Sumavy (roughly: "From the Bohemian Woods"). This set, composed for his publisher Fritz Simrock, proved to be very popular. European audiences loved Bohemian music and also responded to its picturesquely-titled movements: "By the Black Lake," "Witches' Sabbath," "In Stormy Times," and so on. The fifth and longest movement was given the Czech title Klid ("Silence").

Six years later, Dvorak was about to leave for an extended stay in the United States, and arranged a farewell concert tour through Bohemia in January with his friends, the violinist Ferdinand Lachner and cellist Hanus Wihan. For Wihan, he composed a Rondo for cello and piano (later arranged for cello and orchestra), and--just a few days before they left--an arrangement for solo cello and piano of Klid. This proved to be one of the most popular pieces of the tour, and in 1894, Simrock published it with the German title Waldesruhe ("Silent Woods"). The piece appeared in both the cello and piano version and a later orchestration by Dvorak--the version heard at this concert.

The work has a simple three-part form, beginning with a lyrical and lovely theme from the solo cello, accompanied lightly by strings and woodwinds. A more agitated central section speeds the tempo slightly, and introduces just a hint of Bohemian folk style. The end is a highly varied reprise of the opening music and a quiet coda. Originally Composed for piano (4 hands), 1883-84 No.5 was arranged for cello with by piano by Dvorak, 1891 and first published in 1891. It was also arranged for cello and orchestra by Dvorak in 1893 - Scored for Cello + Flute, 2 Clarinets, 2 Bassoons, Horn, Violins I, Violin II, Violas, Cellos, Double Bases; and first published in 1894.

Audio: IPOD/ Dvorak/Conceto for Cello and Orchestra/**Silent Woods**

## Jean Sibelius

Born: Hämeenlinna, December 8, 1865

Died: Järvenpää, September 20, 1957

Undoubtedly Finland's greatest composer, Sibelius made his name principally as the composer of seven symphonies, a violin concerto, and a number of symphonic poems. He also wrote a great many songs and pieces for piano, but today these are known mainly in Finland only. Although he never actually quoted folk songs in his music and used traditional harmonies, by concentrating on Finnish legends and fiercely allying himself with Finnish nationalism, Sibelius became something of a national hero during his lifetime. He achieved renown in his own country with the composition of his tone poem

*Finlandia*, a work of patriotic fervor not unlike the 1812 Overture of Tchaikovsky. But Sibelius' true art is found among the symphonies, in which he developed a personal style of creating structures from fragments and bits of melody, synthesizing them during the course of a movement, such as in the final movement of the Symphony no. 5, op. 82

### AUDIO: Sibelius (1865-1957) - Tone Poem "En Saga"

In 1892, the successful premiere of this earliest such effort, the epic *Kullervo Symphony*, prompted the conductor Robert Kajanus to suggest he write another symphonic work, to appeal to general listeners without overstressing their powers of concentration and understanding. Apparently Sibelius took this as criticism of the (over-)ambitious scale of some earlier compositions and subsequently produced a succession of shorter, tauter works, such as the *Four Lemminkainen Legends* (1893-9), *Finlandia* and the *First Symphony* (1899).

*En Saga* has no specific "programme", being quite literally "a Story" or "a Fairy Tale" for which we must invent our own libretti (a direct parallel of Rimsky-Korsakov's *Skazka*). Sibelius claimed, "It represents a state of mind. I had recently undergone several painful experiences, and in no other work have I revealed myself so completely". This is an "adventure in an inner landscape", what we nowadays would call a "psycho-drama", and a far cry from the objectivity of his later works. There are five sections: a slow introduction and postlude bracketing a sort of evolutionary *Overture in the Italian Style* (fast-slow-fast).

1. An atmosphere of expectancy is immediately conjured by swirling (*mist-ical?*) "sound effects", unusually for Sibelius not thematically integrated. The main melodic germ is born, protesting, out of agonised woodwind, growing painfully in black woodwind and pizzicato double-basses before blossoming on 'cellos as the flowing first derivative [A].

2. As if decisively embarking on some quest, the tempo picks up (an accelerando devoid of the symphonic subtleties which would become his hallmark). A second derivative [B], with a prominent dotted rhythm, soon followed by a propulsive third derivative [C], dominate this part of the "quest".

3. Our imaginary hero reins in his steed as he seems to lose the trail (my libretto sees this as an equestrian quest!). [B] dissolves into chamber-music textures. [C], plaintive on oboe beneath strange harmonic overtones, descends into a vale of sighs and sobs echoing the pain of the mother-theme.

4. The music abruptly takes off like the Lone Ranger: "With the speed of light, and a cloud of dust", [A] plunges onwards in a cumulatively thundering tumult, suddenly halted

...

5. [C], broken, expires. [A] wanders, in numb puzzlement, on lonely clarinet. Finally only [B]'s dotted rhythm remains, a dull, bass throbbing. What has our hero stumbled on? More to the point: how on earth does this grim pool of despond fit in with the Finnish nationalist feelings of the time?

In 1856 Ralph Waldo Emerson quipped that England had no music. His observation was really one of surprise. Victorian Britain was a galvanized nation readily embracing and investing in new sciences and technologies, exploration and grand architecture; and intellectually it was delighting in new art and literature. But, sadly, not music. Really, Emerson meant that England was without identifiable contemporary composers. Yet 80 years later England had evolved its own pantheon of internationally recognized composers.

As a world power, England really had no nationalistic movements. Since the Hanoverian ascension, Britons had been content with the formal classical arrangements of composers such as Handel and Haydn at first, then Mendelssohn and other early 19<sup>th</sup> century composers. Then, in the late 19th century, there was a shift in musical fashion; audiences wanted to hear new music, and English composers were tired of working within the classic German format. This change was partially presaged by Gilbert and Sullivan's playful operettas, which certainly have nationalistic undertones.

Today, English Romantic music is an integral component in the programs of numerous music festivals throughout England. A journey to a festival or two, combined with visiting where the composers lived and were inspired, allows travellers to compose their own symphonic sojourns into English classical music and along the way to savor other components of the nation's rich heritage. **Granville Bantock, Ethyl Smyth, Charles Stanford, Vaughan Williams, Holst, Delius, Coleridge-Taylor** are but a few of the names of composers whose work had also been heard by 1900, and in whose subsequent music there is discernable a more potent Englishness than with Elgar, whose later achievement became more celebrity and image than the creator of music for 20th century England. However, it is **Elgar** who is perhaps the most significant English composer since Henry Purcell (1659-1695)

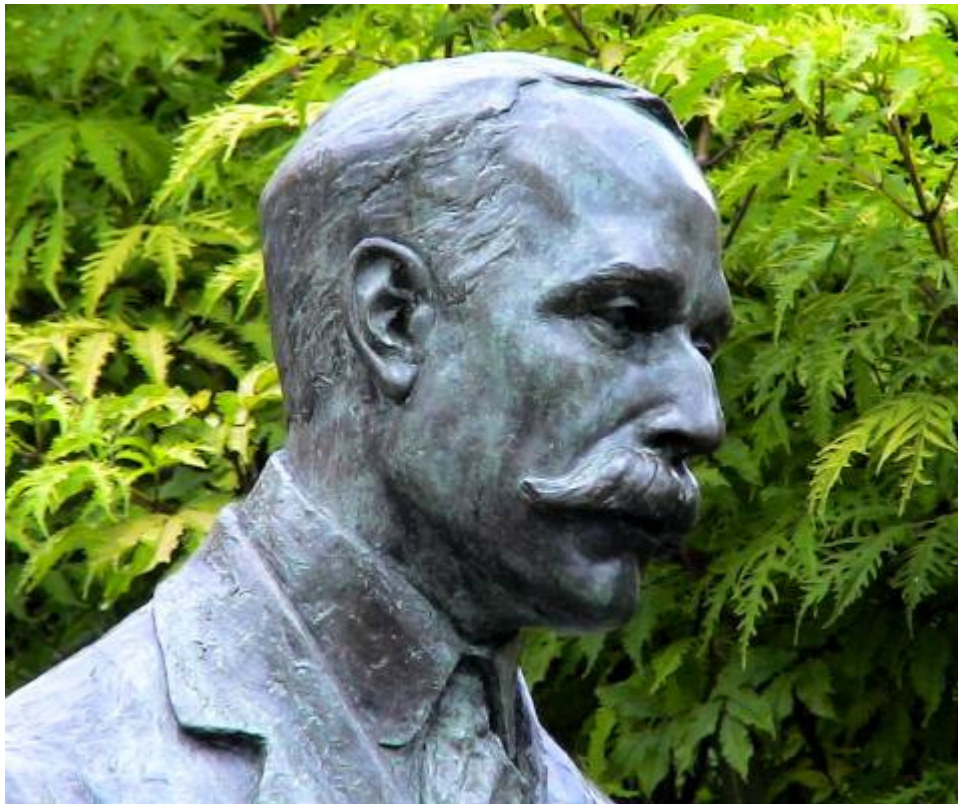
**Edward William Elgar** was born on 2nd June 1857 and, because to a great many in England, he is the quintessence of Englishness, the voice of a lost Edwardian dignity, the epitome of old world tradition and nobility, Empire and Monarchy.

Elgar was certainly the first English composer to draw attention to the possible musical potential of a country unfairly judged in Europe to be without any. The interest in him, especially in Germany (where all nineteenth century musical worth in orchestras, opera houses, music publishers and a great many performers seemed to be centred) was significant. Both he and his music were in tune with a Teutonic temperament that was easily accepted here in England too, for both Queen Victoria and Prince Albert were of German descent. It was clear that if there was any enthusiasm in England for music at its most exalted level, it might well be for that which had some spiritual affinity to what was most comfortably German.

Elgar drew attention to English music, but apart from the superb (and perhaps exceptional) clarity of ***Enigma Variations***...(CD extracts)

...the work that brought Elgar fame, originated in the Malverns and illustrated how he worked. One evening, while he was improvising on some piano tunes, Alice stated she liked a particular piece. He then described how the tune would be variously played by their friends. Elgar devised 14 variations on this tune, each titled with an enigmatic reference to a friend, or even himself. Only Variation 13 is still an enigma and will remain so, as three asterisks are too challenging to decipher. If the Enigma gave Elgar fame, his "Pomp and Circumstance March Number 1" made him a household name when it was reworked with A.C. Benson's words, "Land of Hope and Glory," for Edward VII's coronation. Though not his greatest work, its panache makes it a perennial concert favorite.

The real national character in was therefore born during the later part of the nineteenth century and began to emerge as distinctive musical voices over the first decade of the twentieth century, a decade that began with Elgar's success with *Gerontius* -- in Germany -- and ended with his Violin Concerto and Second Symphony.



It is however easier to call Elgar quintessentially English than to dispute it; we have been persuaded to hear the Malvern Hills in it. But he did rise during a period of fervent patriotism (*Pomp and Circumstance* 1 and 2; *The Banner of St George*) under Victoria and Albert's flag and was English in that he was completely committed to his belief in England. Perhaps that is why some still celebrate him here.

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## Music: Death of Elgar

Time Magazine: Monday, Mar. 05, 1934

No soldiers paraded, no trumpets blared, no drums rolled out an elegy. But throughout the Western World last week a mighty marching tune reverberated. Sir Edward Elgar, 76, was dead in Worcester, England. He was Britain's foremost composer. Master of the King's Musick. His *Pomp and Circumstance* was practically a national anthem.\* But as he lay dying from an abdominal operation last autumn. Sir Edward had made his daughter promise not to give him a pompish London funeral. He had grown up in Worcester and in Worcester he had chosen to end his days. He never posed as a great composer. At the last he was a square-shouldered, square-mustachioed old man who might have been taken for a retired army officer and who liked to shock his friends by saying that he preferred a good horse race to a concert any day.

Worcester first heard Edward Elgar's music but did little to encourage him. Nor did England, until after Europe had approved him. Nor did Edward Elgar's father, who, in spite of being the town's best organist, had to keep a music shop to eke out a living for his seven children. Elgar's early talent was extraordinary. He learned to play the organ by watching his father Sunday mornings, taught himself the bassoon well enough to play in local festivals. But Father Elgar was not impressed. He set the boy to work in a law office but Elgar soon walked out, announcing that he preferred to earn his living as a violin teacher. His first steady job was as orchestra leader in the County Lunatic Asylum.

Elgar's fame as a composer reached London by way of Germany. The *Dream of Gerontius* had been given in the provinces but no one thought to call it a masterpiece until Conductor Hans Richter presented it in Düsseldorf and Richard Strauss acclaimed it. The *Enigma Variations*, Elgar's best-known symphonic work, was Richter's piece de resistance when he toured England in 1899. Five years later Elgar was knighted and the new King Edward pronounced *Pomp and Circumstance* "a very fine air."

The world has agreed with King Edward. Cinema audiences hear it with half the British newsreels. Noel Coward made it the theme tune of his *Cavalcade* (TIME, Jan. 16, 1933). And though Sir Edward tired of it (he omits it from the list of his compositions in *British Who's Who*) *Pomp and Circumstance* has the lusty, red-blooded quality which characterizes the best of Elgar's music. When he was recognized by the throne, Elgar started writing too much occasional music. He celebrated King George's coronation, his visit to India in 1912, his recovery from pneumonia in 1929. But having found an important native composer. England never stopped praising him, rated him a worthy successor of Beethoven and Brahms.

(ii) Book p.663, 685-9, 713, 754-763.

(iii) Assignment: Tchaikovsky was also considered "nationalistic" – discuss with examples of his work.