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The Story of Classical Music

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Mozart: Overture to The Marriage of Figaro

This is the story of classical music. Have you ever imagined what the world would be like if we had no music at all? Listen.

Quiet... isn't it?

But don't worry. Our story isn't quiet at all. It's filled with the most beautiful and exciting sounds ever made. And we'll be finding out all about the people behind these sounds and about some of the greatest pieces of classical music ever written.

Music like this:

Beethoven: Symphony No. 5

And this:

Britten: The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra

And this:

Offenbach: Can-Can from Orpheus in the Underworld

And even this:

Saint-Saëns: The Carnival of the Animals (Fossils)

But first we need to go back in time. We could... go back some four and a half thousand years, because the people of Egypt were already playing flutes by then.

- 2 But our story *really* begins around the year 600, when classical music was mainly heard in churches.

Picture the scene, if you can, in the writing room of a rather draughty church in Rome. Pope Gregory the First is supervising a group of monks as they finish copying out his new collection of tunes. They're not using the sort of pens that we use today. Instead, they're writing with feather quills dipped in ink. There were no photocopiers or computer printers, so every piece of music had to be copied out by hand.

In fact, music at this time was most often sung by monks, whose voices echoed around the buildings where people came to worship.

Gregorian chant from the Proper of the Mass: Introitus – Adorate deum

This music is known as Gregorian chant. It takes its name from Pope Gregory The First. He didn't *invent* the music, but he did more or less sort it all out, by getting his people to gather together an official collection of the pieces that were sung at this time. Because he was the Pope, his approval of certain versions counted for a lot.

Over the next 400 years, classical music continued to develop, with new ideas being introduced by new composers. But basically, most of the music that was written sounds pretty similar to Gregorian chant.

There was other popular music around back then, played on popular instruments, such as the flute. But there were no CDs or DVDs all that time ago, and none of it was written down. That means we don't have any record of what was being played or sung – we can only guess.

Let's wind forward 500 years to find out about one of the greatest-ever female composers.

- 3 We've now stopped the clock just past the time when William the Conqueror invaded England and when King Harold was killed at the Battle of Hastings in 1066.

32 years after that battle, a woman called Hildegard was born in the Southern German town of Bingen. She was famous in her lifetime for being a visionary nun - many of the influential people of the time listened to her ideas and thoughts.

She set many of her visions to music - and they continue to be performed today.

Hildegard of Bingen: O ignis spiritus

We're going to wind the clock forward again by a few hundred years now, taking us deeper into what we call the Medieval period.

We've gone right past the Crusades; past the time when King John signed the Magna Carta - this happened in the year 1215 at Runnymede, on the banks of the River Thames. The Magna Carta was a document which, for the first time, gave rights to the people ruled by King John in England.

We've gone past the time when people started to die from bubonic plague, or the 'Black Death'. By 1347 this terrible disease had really caught hold. It spread right across Europe: the people in many towns and villages were virtually wiped out. In total, around 25 million Europeans were killed by the Black Death.

We've gone all the way past the Hundred Years War between England and France, which actually went on for 116 years, from 1337 to 1453.

And we've gone just past the time, in 1492, when the Spanish explorer Christopher Columbus set off on a very special journey on his ship, the *Santa Maria*, westwards across the Atlantic Ocean. He discovered a group of islands, which he called 'the Indies'. Today, they're called the West Indies, and were the first discovery of what became known as the 'New World'. Today, we know the 'New World' as the continents of North and South America.

- 4 This brings us out of the Medieval period and into the period that we call the Renaissance. 'Renaissance' is a French word that means re-birth. It was a time in history when many things changed. There were huge leaps forward in science, in exploring the world, in painting and, of course, in classical music. It's difficult to give an exact date of when the Renaissance in music began, but it was underway by the time that

Columbus was on his voyage across the Atlantic to discover the New World.

Palestrina: Missa Papae Marcelli

The churches and the cathedrals had got bigger by now. And the music had become even more beautiful.

One man who was employed to fill the home of the Catholic Church, the big St Peter's Cathedral in Rome, with amazing music, was Giovanni of Palestrina – better known as just 'Palestrina', the town of his birth.

He dedicated the piece we're hearing now, which he composed around the year 1561, to Pope Marcellus. The Pope only reigned for 55 days, and never actually heard the music that was written especially for him.

In England, two important things came together to help music move on. Firstly, printing had been invented. And secondly, Elizabeth the First came to the throne. Now, Elizabeth liked the new 'printing', so she selected two composers – William Byrd and Thomas Tallis – to be allowed to print music.

This meant that, for the first time, people could join in and sing music from printed sheets. It made it much easier for songs to become established right across the country.

In history, we're now sailing through the time when King Phillip II of Spain's Armada of ships tried – and failed – to invade England.

And into the time when William Shakespeare wrote his plays.

*To be, or not to be: that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune...*

[Shakespeare: Hamlet]

- 5 The next big change in classical music came when composers decided to bring acting together with music, to tell a story through singing. This marks the birth of what we now call 'opera'.

The first composer to actually write an opera was an Italian called Jacopo Peri. It was called *Dafne*, but it's been lost, so we don't know what it sounds like today.

The prize for writing the first important opera usually goes to another Italian. His name was Claudio Monteverdi and his opera was called *L'Orfeo*. It told the mythological tale of Orpheus - a musician who, when his wife Euridice died, went down to Hades, the land of the dead, to try to get her back. As you'll hear a lot later in our story of classical music, it was a tale to which composers would return time and time again.

Monteverdi: L'Orfeo (Ecco pur ch'a voi)

Monteverdi wasn't just made famous by his operatic work, though. As with every major composer at this time, he also wrote church music. His *Vespers*, dedicated to Pope Paul V, were written shortly after both his wife and only child died - so he put a lot of the sadness, which he felt, into his music.

Monteverdi: Vespers of the Blessed Virgin (Concerto: Duo Seraphim)

In the Renaissance period, music just for instruments was composed, too. For example, this piece was written by Franciscus Bossinensis, who was born in Venice around the year 1510. It's played on the lute, which was an early version of the guitar.

Bossinensis: Recercar

The Renaissance years were very important for classical music. They saw the development of opera and of music played on instruments. And, printed sheets brought music to more people than ever before.

But now, it's time to wind the clock forward again. We're leaving the Renaissance period of classical music, and moving into the time that's known as the Baroque period. This lasted for 150 years, from 1600 right through until 1750.

- 6 We're now passing through the time when the Pilgrim Fathers set sail on the *Mayflower* from Plymouth in England for a new life in America; and when King Charles I was beheaded.

The year is 1656. And King Louis XIV is on the throne in France.

Jean-Baptiste Lully worked for the king as his personal composer. In just the same way as we go to our personal CD or MP3 player when we want to hear music, so the King of France would go to his personal composer and, as French people would say, voilà! – a piece of music would soon appear. His personal orchestra would then perform it for him.

Lully also did a lot to change the sound of orchestras at that time – his grouping of players was far closer to the orchestras that we have today than it was to the ones that traditionally existed.

Many of the ideas were brand new – and many of the instruments he included had only just been invented.

So, although an orchestra made up of 24 violins, plus flutes, oboes, bassoons, trumpets and timpani – (they're drums) – might seem normal now, it was absolutely revolutionary in the 1600s.

Lully paid money for the right to be the only man in France to be allowed to put on operas. He also became well known for writing ballets, like this one – written especially for King Louis the XIV.

Lully: Ballet des plaisirs (Entrée)

Just as much as Jean-Baptiste Lully *lived* for his music, he also *died* for his music. He used a big stick to conduct his orchestra, and would bang it on the floor in time to the music. One day, he missed the floor. He was so excited, conducting one particular piece, that he stabbed his foot with the stick. Medicine wasn't as good in those days as it is now, so poor old Lully died from his wound.

- 7 Over in London, the King of England also had a brilliant composer working for him. Let's drop in on Westminster Abbey.

His name was Henry Purcell. He was an amazing young talent, Organist of Westminster Abbey at the age of 20. It was one of the biggest jobs in music, something like being a top pop star today.

Purcell: Organ Voluntary in G

Despite the fact that Henry Purcell only lived for another 16 years, he wrote a huge variety of different types of music - including pieces for Charles II, James II and Queen Mary.

He also wrote an opera called *Dido and Aeneas*, which includes one of the most beautiful songs ever written. It's known as 'Dido's Lament'. In the story, Dido is the Queen of Carthage. She's in love with Aeneas, who's sailed away to found Rome. In this song, she describes how sad and lonely she is, now that he is gone.

Purcell: Dido and Aeneas (Dido's Lament)

- 8 The German Johann Pachelbel was another composer who was making a name for himself around this time.

While he was alive, he was best known for being an organist and for writing church music.

But today, there's only one piece of his music that's still played often - his Canon in D.

A canon is a piece of music in which a melody is played and then imitated by one or more other instruments. A good example of this is when choirs sing *Frère Jacques*.

Frère Jacques

That uses people's voices as the instruments. Here's how Pachelbel did it with an orchestra:

Pachelbel: Canon

- 9 Pachelbel was born in 1653, the same year as the Italian composer Arcangelo Corelli.

Corelli was born into a rich family, and, unlike many composers, he faced no financial hardships at all during the 70 years of his life.

He was the first composer to derive his fame purely from instrumental music. And he was important in the development of orchestral playing. He insisted that all the the string players in his orchestra played their

instruments in exactly the same way - moving their bows up and down in the same direction at the same time. This meant that the sound produced was far more exact than it had been in orchestras before. It also meant that his orchestras *looked* stunning, compared with the other orchestras of the day - everyone moving in unison - and his concerts became a great sight to see as well as a great sound to hear.

He left behind some important orchestral music. This is from Corelli's Concerto grosso No. 8, which is known as the 'Christmas Concerto'.

Corelli: Concerto grosso No. 8 'Christmas Concerto'

- 10 There were two composers who dominated the Baroque period of classical music more than any others - their names were Johann Sebastian Bach and George Frideric Handel, and they were both born in exactly the same year.

Let's begin with Bach. He was born in Germany in 1685 into a very musical family.

This is him walking now. By the time he was nine, his parents had both died and he was sent to live with his big brother.

At 15, the young Johann had joined a choir, and this gave him the chance to really begin discovering music.

He's famous now for the lengths he would go to hear musical performances. There were no cars, buses, trains or aeroplanes, so getting about was difficult. When he was still 15, Bach would regularly walk 30 miles to - and from - Hamburg to hear a particular organist.

But that's not where he's walking today. Because now, he's 19, himself an organist, and we've caught up with him during his holidays, as he walks 213 miles to hear a performance by his hero - another organist, called Dietrich Buxtehude. Once he'd heard the concert...

...he turned around and walked 213 miles back home again.

So it's fair to say that the organ was a particular passion of Bach's. He was probably the greatest organist of the century, but he didn't boast about his achievements at all. He said:

Bach: There's really nothing remarkable about it. All you have to do is to hit the right key at the right time and the instrument plays itself.

This, of course, is not really true – the organ is not an easy instrument to play. Not only do your fingers have to fly over the keys at great speed, but your feet have got to press the pedals at the same time – without you looking! This is Bach's best-known work for the instrument. It's called Toccata and Fugue in D minor.

Bach: Toccata and Fugue in D minor

Bach continued to work as an organist and choirmaster in the German town of Leipzig. As part of his job, he had to write pieces for the choir to sing to mark major events in the Church calendar.

As well as these, he wrote two Easter works which are still favourites for choirs to sing today – the St John and St Matthew Passions.

This is from the St Matthew Passion:

Bach: St Matthew Passion (Chorale: O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden)

But Bach didn't limit himself to church music. He wrote a lot of pieces for orchestras. The 'Brandenburg' Concertos are probably the most performed of these today. There were six of them in all and Bach wrote them for an aristocrat, who lived in the town of Brandenburg.

Bach: Brandenburg Concerto No. 1

Another piece of music by Johann Sebastian Bach that is still loved today is known as the 'Air on a G String', and it has been made famous through being used in television advertisements for many years.

Bach: Air on the G String from Orchestral Suite No. 3

Bach wrote an incredible amount of music. After he died, someone collected and published all of it, and it took a staggering 46 years to do the job.

- 11 The other truly great composer from the Baroque period was George Frideric Handel. He wrote music like this:

Handel: Zadok the Priest

He was also born in 1685 – obviously a very good year – but, unlike Bach, his father was by no means a fan of music. In one story, it's said that Handel's mother smuggled a keyboard up to the attic of their home, so that the youngster could learn to play without his father finding out.

When Handel was eight, a nobleman heard him play the organ in a church. He paid for Handel to have proper lessons, and three years later the teacher said that there was nothing left for him to teach the boy. This seems to be the last time that Handel had any music lessons at all.

A few years later, Handel was employed as a musician by the Elector of Hanover in Germany. He was given a year's holiday to go to London, where he had offers to write operas and other works. But he stayed longer than he should have, and thought he might not go back at all instead of facing the Elector's anger. But then Queen Anne died. She'd had no children, and it was none other than the Elector himself who became the new King of England.

Handel must have been rather nervous when the Elector arrived to be crowned king. But King George I, as the Elector became, forgave Handel his absence because he was such an outstanding composer.

And that's just as well, because Handel wrote his greatest music during the years that he lived and worked in London.

Because he was employed by King George I, Handel wrote a lot of music with a royal theme.

In 1717 Handel wrote his *Water Music* specially for a royal pageant on the River Thames. This splendid sound must have accompanied quite a sight. Just think of how it might look today – the royal family floating along in barges, some of them trying to stay afloat, some of them trying to fend off seasickness, and some of them trying to listen to a full orchestra, crammed into another series of barges, playing a brand new piece of music. It could have all gone very, very wrong. But it didn't.

Handel: Water Music (Alla hornpipe)

And then, in 1749, King George II asked Handel to write music for a big fireworks concert in London's Hyde Park.

The fireworks were a bit of a let down. The rockets worked, but the other fireworks wouldn't light properly – apart from one, which managed to set fire to a wooden tower that was specially built for the day. The fire caused a lot of panic, but, despite that, the music was a big hit.

Handel: Fireworks Music (La Réjouissance)

Handel was also well known through the music he wrote for choirs to sing. His *Messiah* is probably *the* most performed choral work today, being sung regularly all over the world every year at Christmas and at Easter.

Even though *Messiah* lasts for two-and-a-half hours, it took Handel just 24 days to write all that music.

This is one, famous, part of it, called the 'Hallelujah' Chorus:

Handel: Messiah ('Hallelujah' Chorus)

Handel's music wasn't just for big groups of people, though. Here's something that he wrote for an instrument that you're probably familiar with – the recorder.

Handel: Recorder Sonata in G minor

As well as being a great composer, Handel, like Bach, was also a very fine organist. He once had a keyboard duel with a fellow composer, the Italian Domenico Scarlatti. They had to compete to see who was the better player. Handel chose the organ – and Scarlatti, the harpsichord.

The judges declared that Scarlatti was the better harpsichordist, and that Handel was the better organist – so the result was a draw!

Handel was a very large man, who would often be seen scurrying around the streets of London, muttering to himself.

He was said to be quite grumpy, often shouting angrily at musicians, and apparently he had atrocious table manners. But that didn't stop him from writing incredible music.

When he'd died, he was buried in Westminster Abbey and 3,000 people attended his funeral.

- 12 Although Bach and Handel were undoubtedly the biggest names among Baroque composers, they were by no means the only famous ones.

Albinoni (Giazotto): Adagio for organ and strings

Tomaso Albinoni was born in Italy in 1671. He's known almost solely today for this piece, his *Adagio* for organ and strings. The trouble is, he didn't write it. Well, at least, he never actually finished it!

A scrap of manuscript was discovered by an Italian professor in a German library around 200 years after Albinoni had died. This professor painstakingly rebuilt a whole piece around those few lines of music and that is what we hear today.

Albinoni did write hundreds of other pieces - it's just that he's famous, rather oddly, for the one piece he didn't write.

- 13 Someone who very definitely did write his own music is Antonio Vivaldi. He was born in Venice, seven years after Albinoni, in 1678.

Vivaldi was responsible for what was to become - quite possibly - the most recorded piece anywhere in classical music: *The Four Seasons*. It tells the story of spring, summer, autumn and winter. This is how 'Spring' begins.

Vivaldi: The Four Seasons (Spring)

Antonio Vivaldi had bright red hair, and after he trained to work in the church he became known as 'The Red Priest'.

Vivaldi was excused having to say Mass, as priests usually do, because he claimed to suffer from asthma. Not everyone believed that he had it as badly as he said he did, because his asthma didn't stop him from conducting or from travelling all over Europe.

But it gave him the time he needed to compose. He wrote many operas, hundreds of instrumental pieces, as well as a whole bunch of choral works, including this, his Gloria:

Vivaldi: Gloria (Gloria in excelsis Deo)

After Vivaldi died in 1741, his music faded from popularity. And it only really started to be played regularly again 200 years later in the middle of the 20th century. This wasn't just a fluke of history, either. Some time after he was dead, a nobleman called Count Giacomo Durazzo gathered up all Vivaldi's original works and kept them hidden from everyone. He left instructions for his family to ensure that none of this music by Vivaldi should ever be performed or published. Eventually these instructions were overturned. But it was only about 80 years ago that many of Vivaldi's greatest works were in front of the public again.

During the Baroque period, lots of discoveries were made and theories proved. It must have been a very exciting time to be alive. The great scientist Isaac Newton proved that the earth has a pull of gravity - that's what's stopping us from floating around like astronauts in a spacecraft. He realised the truth about gravity when an apple fell from a tree and bashed him on the head.

Also around this time, scientists accepted that the earth goes around the sun, instead of believing, as they did before, that the sun went around the earth. That made us much smaller members of the universe. Previously, people thought that the earth was the centre of everything.

Time now for us to wind the clock forward again.

- 14** So, we're now out of the Baroque period and we're into the Classical period. This runs for 80 years, roughly from 1750 until 1830.

Now don't get confused here – when we start talking about music from the 'Classical' period. Everything that we are including in our story is classical music - which is different from folk music, pop music, jazz, rock, or dance music. Classical music is usually performed by musicians or singers who don't use microphones or electronic wizardry to create their music. Also, in classical music, the composers are usually more famous than the people who are doing the performing. This is the exact opposite

from other types of music, where the performers are the stars, and the composers are usually unknown. There are exceptions to both of these rules, but they generally hold true.

However, 'classical' also refers to one distinct period of time in our story. And one of the big differences between the Classical period and the Baroque period is that the Church gradually became less important for composers. Although many of them still wrote religious music, they tended to be employed by royal families or rich noblemen rather than working for churches. So the type of music that they wrote changed, as it was for noblemen and their friends, rather than purely music of praise. Gradually, performances in concert halls were becoming more important too. Until this time, there really weren't any concert halls as we now know them.

The Classical period is the one which gave us three people often considered the greatest composers ever - Franz Joseph Haydn, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Ludwig van Beethoven. As we'll find out, Haydn was an enormous influence on the composers who followed him. We could call Mozart 'Mr Classical' because everything he wrote was totally in keeping with this period. Beethoven, however, was part classical, and part the following period. More of that later.

- 15** There were many composers writing music at the start of the Classical period. But first, here's a familiar name: Bach. Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, to be exact. He was one of Johann Sebastian Bach's 20 children - and quite a few were musicians like Papa. To make clear which one's which, they tend to be known by their initials. So Johann Sebastian Bach, the father, is known as J.S. Bach. And then there's Wilhelm Friedemann - W.F. Bach -, Johann Christian - J.C. Bach -, and Carl Philipp Emanuel - C.P.E. Bach. C.P.E. Bach wrote more than 150 keyboard sonatas, choral pieces, and more than 50 orchestral pieces.

C.P.E. Bach: Sinfonia No. 4

The music of C.P.E. Bach, who lived from 1714 to 1788, was the bridge between the punchy Baroque music written by his father and the new Classical style of Haydn and Mozart, whom we'll hear more about in a moment.

- 16 Christoph Willibald Gluck was around at exactly the same time as C.P.E. Bach.

Gluck introduced lots of new ideas into opera, which created a sound and style that people simply hadn't heard before. His big hit opera was *Orpheus and Eurydice*, a version of the same story that Monteverdi had used for his opera more than 150 years earlier.

He included two ballet sections, and here is one of them, called 'Dance of the Blessed Spirits'.

Gluck: Orfeo ed Euridice (Dance of the Blessed Spirits)

- 17 Now, a lot of our composers led unhappy lives. But not this man...

Joseph Haydn, scribbling away as ever, was one of the most cheerful composers of the bunch. He was also one of the most hard-working.

During his life, he wrote more than 80 string quartets and more than 50 piano sonatas. And then there were the 20 operas...

...as well as many concertos, choral works and chamber music. By the way, chamber music means music written for small groups of musicians - the sort of number you could fit into a room at home.

Back to Haydn, though. His biggest achievement of all was his symphonies. A symphony is a big piece of music for the whole orchestra, divided into fast and slow 'movements', or sections. Haydn's symphonies are full of imagination and fun - and he wrote 104 of them.

These include the so-called 'Farewell' Symphony, No. 45. Haydn worked for a prince in Hungary. The musicians who worked for the Prince's orchestra were separated from their wives and children. Haydn wanted to remind his boss that his musicians hadn't seen their families for some time, so the musical score tells the musicians one by one to blow out the candles by their music stands and leave the stage. At the end, only the two principal violinists are left.

Haydn: Symphony No. 45 'Farewell'

Symphony No. 94 is called 'The Surprise'. Haydn wrote it because he wanted to wake up his aristocratic audience, who often nodded off when they were listening to a new piece of music after a large meal with lots of wine. Firstly, Haydn lulled them with a quiet bit. And just when they were about to doze off completely... then came the surprise!

Haydn: Symphony No. 94 'The Surprise'

Symphony No. 101, is called 'The Clock', because of the tick-tocking slow movement.

Haydn: Symphony No. 101 'The Clock'

And then there are other symphonies with names: 'The Philosopher', 'Mercury', 'The Schoolmaster', 'The Bear', 'The Hen', 'The Miracle' and this, his final Symphony, No. 104, one of a group known as the 'London' symphonies.

Haydn: Symphony No. 104

So, with all this, Haydn is known as the 'father of the symphony'. He was another great traveller - born in Austria, he worked in London, Paris, Vienna and many other European cities.

He lived a long life - 77 years - from 1732 to 1809. During his lifetime, there were many important developments. Captain Cook, sailing in the South Seas, drew the first proper maps of Australia. English convicts began to be transported to the newly discovered continent. The Americans fought hard against the English and won their independence. France had its violent revolution and beheaded its King and Queen and Prince. And the long Napoleonic Wars started. But Haydn still went on writing music. And meeting other composers who did the same - among them, one Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

- 18** Mozart was the second giant of the Classical period. He's famous for...

Mozart: Eine kleine Nachtmusik

...big orchestral symphonies:

Mozart: Symphony No. 41 'Jupiter'

He's famous for operas:

Mozart: The Marriage of Figaro (Non più andrai)

He's famous for concertos - these are pieces in which the spotlight falls on one instrumentalist playing in front of the orchestra:

Mozart: Piano Concerto in C major, K. 467

He's famous for choral music:

Mozart: Requiem

He's famous for sonatas as well:

Mozart: Piano Sonata in A major, K. 331

And he even had time to be famous for a musical joke:

Mozart: A Musical Joke

One critic once wrote 'Mozart is Music', and it's easy to see why. It isn't just that Mozart wrote such a lot of music. It's because, with him, music seemed to be effortless - it seemed to make sense. We called him 'Mr Classical' before, and there is very much a feeling with his music that it was in the right place at the right time. It just feels 'right'.

He started playing the keyboard at the age of three and was composing music by the time he was just four years old. Here he is at home, aged four, with his father:

Leopold: What are you doing?

Wolfgang: Writing a concerto for the clavier; it will soon be done.

Leopold: Let me see it.

Wolfgang: It's not finished yet

Leopold: Never mind, let me see it! How correct, how orderly it is! Only it could never be of any use, for it is so extraordinarily difficult that no one in the world could play it.

Wolfgang: That's why it's a concerto; it must be practised till it's perfect.

Mozart was such an incredible child prodigy, such a genius, that in the whole of our story he shines as the brightest star.

He wasn't the only person in his family to be musically talented. His father, Leopold, was a composer. He worked for the Prince Archbishop of Salzburg.

And Wolfgang had a sister called Maria Anna, who was also a good musician. Her family and friends called her by her nickname, Nannerl.

When Leopold realised how musical his children were, he decided to take them on a tour of Europe. Wolfgang was just six years old. There was a lot of travelling.

In fact, they travelled for four whole years.

First, Leopold took Wolfgang and Nannerl to Munich. Then to Vienna. Then it was on to Paris. And then across the English Channel, to London.

Finally, in 1766, the family returned home to Salzburg. By now, Wolfgang was a star. He'd played in front of the most important people in each of the countries he'd visited – including the kings and queens.

- 19** Mozart didn't just excel at performing, though. By the time he'd reached the age of 12, he'd already completed two operas.

In 1781, when he was 25, Mozart moved to Vienna. He got married a year later and had children of his own.

Mozart wasn't very good at looking after his money. During his life, he'd earned quite a lot, but he spent everything he had – and more besides. He often borrowed money from his friends and was very bad at paying back his debts. He died virtually penniless and was buried with the other poor people. Nobody is quite sure where.

By the end of his life, he'd written some of the greatest operas ever. Many of them are among the most performed today. They include *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, *Così fan tutte* – and *The Magic Flute*. Here, from *The Magic Flute*, is Papageno, the bird man. He is dressed all in coloured feathers like a big bird and has a flute that he can play, like a bird singing.

Mozart: The Magic Flute ('Der Vogelfänger bin ich ja')

He wrote over 40 symphonies - here is the beginning of No. 40, in the key of G minor.

Mozart: Symphony No. 40

He was equally at home writing for solo instruments. If you learn the piano, you might sometime play Mozart's Piano Sonata in A major.

Mozart: Piano Sonata in A major, K. 331

And if you learn a string instrument, you may come across the chamber serenade *Eine kleine Nachtmusik*, which translates as 'A little night music'.

Mozart: Eine kleine Nachtmusik

- 20 From one of the all-time greats, our story moves straight to another - Ludwig van Beethoven.

He's the man who wrote probably the most famous opening to any piece of classical music:

Beethoven: Symphony No. 5

Born in Bonn in 1770, Beethoven had a tough childhood. His father was determined that he would become the 'new Mozart' and forced him to study the piano all day, every day.

Piano scales

For some reason, this didn't put him off music at all. He still loved it! And it did mean that the young Ludwig became a brilliant pianist. Later on in his life, he wrote some of the greatest of all pieces for the piano - including the 'Moonlight' Sonata.

Beethoven: Piano Sonata in C sharp minor 'Moonlight'

When Beethoven was young, he was taught by Haydn - we heard about him earlier. Haydn said of Beethoven:

This young man will in time fill the position of one of Europe's greatest composers, and I shall be proud to be able to speak of myself as his teacher.

Unfortunately, Beethoven said Haydn was a teacher...

...from whom I learned absolutely nothing.

Beethoven was another composer who was a bit grumpy!

Because music was becoming so popular in France, Austria, Germany and Italy during the 1800s, it was fairly easy for promising youngsters to make a name for themselves. They then tended to get taken on as pupils by more experienced composers.

By the time he was 26, Beethoven realised that he had a problem with his hearing. It gradually got worse and he was completely deaf just a few years later. But his deafness didn't stop him from composing some of the most beautiful music ever written. It is a sign of how brilliant he was that he achieved this, even though he himself was never able to actually hear many of his pieces.

When many musicians look at a page of music, it all comes alive in their heads - the way that most of us look at a painting or photograph of, say, a horse, and can then imagine the movement of the horse running fast and the sound of his hooves thundering across the field. So, even though he was deaf, Beethoven could compose the music in his head and write it down on paper. And when he looked at the paper, he could hear the music in his head. It made him an even more remarkable composer.

He did have trouble coming to terms with losing his hearing, though. During the time he was going deaf, he would angrily thump the piano very hard in an effort to hear the notes, sometimes even breaking the strings of the piano. That can't have made him very popular with his neighbours.

By now, it was a new century - 1801, 1802 and so on. And gradually people realised that the most powerful, amazing composer in those first 20 years of the 19th century was rather a difficult man who had wild hair, was gruff and sometimes bad tempered - and he was deaf.

- 21 Beethoven wrote a lot of 'incidental music' for the theatre. This was performed to add atmosphere to what was happening on the stage - or even to fill a gap when there wasn't much happening at all. If the cinema had been invented in those days, there's no doubt that Beethoven would have been busy writing film music. He wrote the following piece as the overture to a play called *Egmont*. An overture is the bit that comes at the beginning - it often gives you a musical taster of the tunes you'll hear later.

Beethoven: 'Egmont' Overture

Like Mozart, Beethoven was another of those composers who wrote all kinds of music: concertos, choral works, pieces for solo instruments, and a very successful opera called *Fidelio*.

But his speciality was the symphony - which, as a type of piece, he developed hugely in his lifetime. His Symphony No. 1 sounded like the symphonies of Mozart and Haydn - nice and neat and tidy.

Beethoven: Symphony No. 1

There was a gap of 24 years between that, his First Symphony, and this, his final, Ninth Symphony. Many people believe that this final symphony was his biggest triumph - and you can hear why. It used a much bigger orchestra than before, which produced a much bigger, stronger sound. He even added a big choir.

Beethoven: Symphony No. 9 'Choral'

As we said earlier, although Beethoven was born into the Classical period, by the time he's finished we are well and truly in the next major period of music.

- 22 The clock's been winding forward again...

...but not much. Earlier in our story, we wound on the clock a few hundred years each time. But that's not necessary here. There's been no big jump in time because changes were happening more frequently, and composers from the Classical period had a lot of influence on composers from the next part of our story, which is known as the Romantic period.

This covers the music that was being written up to around 1900, although where it starts is often open to argument. Some composers moved on rapidly in the style of music that they were writing, while others continued to write music in the Classical style, and developed far more slowly. You could think of it as being like seeds in the ground - where some grow into plants faster than others.

The Classical period has been a lot shorter than the other periods in our story so far - only lasting for 80 years from 1750 to 1830. But it was a period of huge change. And not just in music either.

It was a time of scientific invention, too.

Steam was harnessed for the first time as a way of powering big machines in factories. James Hargreaves came up with the 'Spinning Jenny', a machine which made spinning cotton faster and easier. These were ways in which Britain propelled itself into the Industrial Revolution, with the number of factories growing fast. This was good news because it meant cheaper clothes and more jobs for everyone. But it was bad news too, because many people - including young children - worked long hours under terrible conditions in dangerous factories.

Benjamin Franklin invented the lightning rod, which stopped buildings from catching fire when they were struck by lightning.

As well as all that, two French brothers - Joseph and Jacques Montgolfier - invented the first hot air balloon in 1783. For the first time in the history of man, people could travel in the air. They could begin to fly.

CD 2

- 1 The biggest change in music during the Classical period was the development of the composer as a star. He was no longer just a servant who would be at the beck and call of an aristocrat. Instead, composers began to travel to different countries, earning large amounts of money as performers. Composers had become celebrities in their own right.

The same thing was happening in other areas of life around the world. In the past, kings, queens, lords and ladies had ruled everyone else. But now that was changing and ordinary people were becoming more important.

While Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven were busy composing, America declared its independence from Britain in 1776; the French Revolution broke out in 1789; and in 1804 Napoleon became Emperor of France. Men and women all over Europe and the New World began to accept new ideas about society – that royalty was not the only way to rule, because, as the American constitution stated, all men are created equal. It was a revolutionary idea for millions. In France, the Revolution was based on three particular words: Liberty (or freedom), Equality (meaning everyone should be treated equally) and Fraternity (or brotherhood): liberty, equality, fraternity.

These changes meant that an ordinary man, with a lot of talent, or strong ideas, could make a real difference to the world around him.

- 2 One of those composers who'd become a big name on the concert circuit was a young Italian. Audiences across Europe were crowding into his violin concerts. His name was Nicolò Paganini.

Paganini: Caprice No. 24 in A minor

Paganini was a real showman. If he were alive today, he'd be one of those people who would never be out of the newspapers, and who would always be appearing on television doing outrageous musical stunts.

He was one of the first concert superstars in music. He would wow audiences by performing all sorts of tricks with his violin. This included playing amazing tunes with just two strings on his violin instead of four, and even deliberately snapping some of the strings in the middle of a performance – and still playing the piece perfectly. He also played the mandolin, guitar and viola brilliantly.

Much of the music that he wrote – like this, his First Violin Concerto – was designed to let him show off when he played it in public.

Paganini: Violin Concerto No. 1

At the time, people thought that only Paganini could play such difficult music, but now, over 160 years later, the great young performers of today can play it just as well. You probably could, if you practised hard enough. But Paganini was famous for being the first to do it.

- 3 While Paganini was doing amazing things with the violin, another Italian composer, Gioachino Rossini, was enthralling audiences with his operas.

Rossini wrote smash hit after smash hit for 20 years. But when he was just 37, he suddenly stopped. During the next 30 years of his life he composed no opera at all, and only wrote a couple of religious works and a few small piano pieces.

Nobody's quite sure why he stopped. He'd undoubtedly grown very wealthy from his early success. Possibly he wasn't in the best of health. Or maybe he was sulking because his final - and massively long - opera, *William Tell*, had not been well received by critics or audiences.

It's not performed in full very often these days - but the Overture is one of the most famous ever written.

Rossini: Overture to 'William Tell'

- 4 While Rossini was influencing the future direction of opera in Italy, Carl Maria von Weber was doing the same thing in Germany.

Weber is seen as an important figure in music not so much because of what he wrote, but because of the effect his music had on some of the composers who followed him - people like Chopin, Berlioz, Liszt, Mahler and Wagner. We'll be hearing more about all of them later in our story.

Weber didn't just write operas - he's better known today for his instrumental and orchestral pieces, including his two clarinet concertos. But people often say that even these give the clarinet a special sound, as if it's telling an operatic tale.

Weber: Clarinet Concerto No. 2

As we discovered earlier, composers like Paganini were able to promote their music around Europe because they were brilliant concert performers. Remember - there was no radio, no television, no CDs and no

MP3s. So, if a composer wanted to show off what he'd written, he needed to get it performed regularly in halls packed full of people.

- 5 The Austrian composer Franz Schubert suffered in his own lifetime because he himself wasn't a great concert performer.

He himself never heard one of his symphonies in a professional performance. And in fact, it wasn't until half a century after he died that they were finally published.

That might have got a lesser person down. But not Schubert. He was a one-man music factory. Music came so easily to him any time of the day or night that he could find himself sitting in a café, struck by a brilliant idea; so he would pick up a pen and write on the café tablecloth, or on the back of a menu.

He was most famous for writing songs, which, in his language, are called 'Lieder'. This particular song is called *Gretchen at the Spinning-Wheel*. Gretchen sits at her spinning-wheel, thinking of her lover. And you can hear how Schubert creates the picture of a spinning-wheel in the piano accompaniment.

Schubert: Gretchen am Spinnrade (Gretchen at the Spinning-Wheel)

Schubert lived to be just 31, but by then he'd written more than 600 of these songs. In the year 1815, he composed 144 of them - writing eight in one day in October alone. He also wrote two Masses, a symphony, and many other pieces in that same year.

Despite working so hard, he still had time to party. He was well known for putting on musical extravaganzas, which he called 'Schubertiads'. That's why he wrote a lot of chamber music - music for small groups of instrumentalists that he could hear played at his Schubertiads. Like many composers before and after him, he wrote string quartets - four string players -, string quintets - five string players-; and he also wrote piano trios - for piano, violin and cello, and the famous 'Trout' Quintet - for violin, viola, cello, double bass and piano. It was called the 'Trout' Quintet because he borrowed one of the main melodies from his own song *The Trout*. It sounds, in the quintet form, like this.

Schubert: Piano Quintet in A major 'Trout'

Schubert wrote nine symphonies, or, to be more exact, he wrote just over eight and a half.

His Symphony No. 8 - nicknamed the 'Unfinished' Symphony - is one of his best-known works.

He wrote the first two movements, and then abandoned it.

Nobody's quite sure why.

Schubert: Symphony No. 8 'Unfinished'

- 6 Now, if you want to look for one composer whose whole life could be defined by the word 'romantic', then you don't need to go any further than the Frenchman, Hector Berlioz.

In his day, his music was seen as being very modern - it was at the cutting edge. He mixed with other very artistic people and this is perhaps why he developed a very artistic temperament. He would often fly into a rage at musicians who had not performed his music to the high standard he demanded.

Unlike most of the musical greats, Berlioz didn't learn either the piano or the violin when he was a child, instead taking up the flute and the guitar.

He was a hopeless romantic, regularly falling in love with women and writing music for them - even if he'd only just met them. The great love of his life was an Irish actress called Harriet Smithson. After trying to persuade her to fall in love with him for many years, he did finally marry her. And he wrote his *Symphonie fantastique* for her.

Berlioz: Symphonie fantastique (Un Bal)

Berlioz's biggest work - in every sense - was his Requiem. It was written for an absolutely huge orchestra and chorus, as well as four brass bands, one at each corner of the stage.

Berlioz: Requiem (Dies irae)

- 7 While Berlioz was busy being loud, Fryderyk Chopin was an altogether quieter composer.

Chopin: Nocturne in E flat, Op. 9 No. 2

Chopin was born in 1810 in Warsaw, the capital of Poland, to a French father and Polish mother.

He's unique among all the composers who feature in our story because every single piece he wrote was for the piano. He wrote no symphonies, no operas and nothing for choirs. In fact, of the two hundred pieces that he wrote during his life, 169 are for solo piano - and involve no other instruments at all.

This is Chopin's Prelude No. 15 in D flat. But it's better known as the 'Raindrop' Prelude. Can you hear the rain falling in the music?

Chopin: Prelude in D flat, Op. 28 No. 15 'Raindrop'

Chopin was a brilliant performer on the piano, as well as being one of the greatest composers for the instrument. But he was quite often ill, and died at the young age of 39, from a disease called consumption.

As well as writing all this *solo* piano music, Chopin also wrote two piano *concertos*. Now listen carefully to this bit, because it gets complicated. Chopin's Second Piano Concerto was actually written *before* his First Piano Concerto. But his First Piano Concerto was *published* first, so even though the Second Piano Concerto was in fact written first, it has always been referred to as the second. If you're confused - don't worry. The important thing is that he wrote two of them. This is how his Second Piano Concerto sounds:

Chopin: Piano Concerto No. 2

- 8 The German composer Felix Mendelssohn, who was born in 1809, was an incredibly clever child.

He was a brilliant painter, great at sport, could speak several languages, and was, of course, a very gifted musician.

He made his debut as a pianist at the age of nine, and by the time he was 16 he'd written his Octet for strings.

Mendelssohn came from a wealthy background and had no financial worries. This seems to have given him a rather cheerful outlook on life - and you can hear this happiness in much of his music.

Just a year after his Octet had achieved great approval, he wrote his Overture to Shakespeare's play *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. This made him very famous. And he was still only 17 years old.

Mendelssohn: Overture to 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'

17 years after he composed that Overture, Mendelssohn wrote some more incidental music for the same play. If you've ever been to a wedding, you'll probably recognise this. It's the 'Wedding' March from Mendelssohn's music for the play.

Mendelssohn: A Midsummer Night's Dream (Wedding March)

During his life, Mendelssohn travelled a lot, including to Scotland. Actually, he didn't think much of the Highlands. He found that they 'brew nothing but whisky, fog and foul weather', and the lurching waves made him violently sea-sick. But they still inspired his 'Hebrides' overture - about a group of islands in the sea to the very far north.

Mendelssohn: The Hebrides

Mendelssohn wrote great big choral works, too, including *Elijah*, which sits alongside Handel's *Messiah* as one of the finest-ever pieces for a large choir to sing.

But Mendelssohn is probably best known these days for his Violin Concerto, which remains one of the most popular pieces of its type.

Mendelssohn: Violin Concerto in E minor

- 9 Pop stars today have hordes of screaming fans following their every move, and, in his day, the Hungarian-born pianist and composer Franz Liszt was the closest thing to a pop star of the time.

Liszt: Hungarian Rhapsody No. 8 in F sharp minor

Wherever he went, Liszt was heaped with honours, and counted royalty and the aristocracy among his friends.

When Liszt was young, Paganini was one of his heroes. Not just because he was a brilliant musician, but also because he was a real star. At an early age, Liszt decided to become 'the Paganini of the Piano'.

And he succeeded.

His piano pieces were amazingly difficult to play. And he performed them with real pizzazz and style! Like Paganini before him, he was mobbed in the street wherever he went, and women fainted from excitement at his concerts.

As well as Paganini, Chopin and Berlioz were all strong influences on Liszt. He in turn was one of the biggest champions of somebody else: the German composer Wagner. We'll hear more about him later.

Liszt knew a good tune when he heard one. He didn't just write his own masterpieces, but also turned the orchestral music of composers such as Beethoven, Berlioz, Rossini and Schubert into piano pieces.

- 10** Robert Schumann was another great piano composer, who lived at the same time as Liszt. He started his musical life as a pianist but illness forced him to turn to composition. He wrote symphonies, piano music and chamber music; but he's best known for his Piano Concerto.

Schumann: Piano Concerto in A minor

Schumann was ill for much of the time. When he was alive, his music was overshadowed by the performances of his wife Clara, who was a very famous concert pianist.

- 11** Although she was best known for her piano playing, Clara was also a composer. In fact, you might have noticed that so far every significant composer in the development of classical music has been a man - except for Hildegard of Bingen back in the 12th century. So here's some music from only our second female composer:

Clara Schumann: Romance, Op. 11 No. 1

- 12** The composer Johannes Brahms was head over heels in love with Clara Schumann. Brahms was a friend of Robert Schumann, and when Robert died, many people thought that Johannes and Clara would get together. But it never happened. Much of Brahms's music, especially later on in his life, is filled with sadness – perhaps because of his unhappiness in love.

Brahms: Intermezzo in C sharp minor

But he was capable of writing upbeat music too, like this: the 'Academic Festival' Overture. It includes tunes from student songs of the time, and it's said that, at its first performance, when the students heard their college songs incorporated into a piece by Brahms, one of the country's greatest composers, they rose to their feet, cheered, and threw their hats in the air. Feel free to do the same!

Brahms: 'Academic Festival' Overture

Brahms also wrote four great symphonies and a lot of chamber music. He was a particularly fine composer of music for the piano, and was, himself, a formidable pianist. As a young man, he used to earn money as a piano player in German beer halls. This is from his First Piano Concerto:

Brahms: Piano Concerto No. 1

- 13** Max Bruch, another German composer, was around at the same time as Brahms. He wrote a number of big choral pieces before being given the job of conductor of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra in 1880, where he was said to be immensely unpopular with the players. He wrote many pieces during his lifetime, but today he is really only well known because of one.

This is something that he himself predicted. Looking into the future, he said: '50 years from now, Brahms will loom up as one of the supremely great composers of all time, while I will be remembered for having written my G minor Violin Concerto'.

The prediction was pretty accurate – nevertheless, even *he* didn't foresee the huge popularity of the work that keeps his name alive:

Bruch: Violin Concerto No. 1

- 14** If Bruch is remembered by one work, Anton Bruckner is remembered for his nine large symphonies. He was born the son of a village schoolmaster in Austria, and started musical life as an organist in his local church. But this apparently simple countryman was a great improviser on the organ - and wrote symphonies, he said, 'for God and the World'.

Here is a short section from Symphony No. 4 called the 'Romantic', and its big string sound shows that it comes from the height of the Romantic period - in 1874.

Bruckner: Symphony No. 4 'Romantic'

As we heard earlier, Johannes Brahms was a master of nearly every type of classical music - all except for opera, which he never had a go at.

Our next composer excelled at writing opera, though.

He was also one of the most unpleasant characters anywhere in classical music.

- 15** Richard Wagner was born in Leipzig, in 1813. He was a brilliant and important composer. But his thoughts and his personality made him a thoroughly dislikeable man.

He held racist views, which would be completely unacceptable in our society today. To get what he wanted, he was prepared to lie, cheat and steal. He would often use people before casting them aside without further thought. He had a monstrous ego and believed himself to be almost like a god.

Despite his character, he wrote some of the most important and impressive music of the Romantic period, especially in the world of opera. Generally, his operas are long - very long.

His masterpiece remains the *Ring* cycle: four operas, which, were they to be sung back-to-back, would last for more than 20 hours.

Wagner: The Ride of the Valkyries from The Valkyrie

The *Ring* cycle is based on Norse mythology and tells stories about gods and heroes, with a famous sword, a magic helmet that makes the person wearing it disappear, and the all-powerful Ring that carries the curse of a dwarf.

He also wrote one of the most frequently used tunes in the world - the 'Bridal' Chorus from his opera *Lohengrin*. It sits alongside Mendelssohn's 'Wedding' March, which we heard earlier, as one of the pieces of music that's heard often at weddings today - usually people choose Wagner's piece for going into the church, and Mendelssohn's for going out.

Wagner: Lohengrin (Bridal Chorus)

As opera became more prominent, so did the need to have somewhere to perform it. So opera houses were built all over Europe - Wagner even had one built especially for him in the German town of Bayreuth.

But Italians loved opera too. The operas that they composed were very different from the German ones, in the same way that the Italian language is a lighter, more tuneful language than German.

16 The most important of the Italian opera composers was Giuseppe Verdi.

His operas are full of wonderful tunes, like the 'Anvil Chorus', sung by a group of blacksmiths in the opera *Il trovatore*.

Verdi: Il trovatore (Anvil Chorus)

Another of Verdi's big hits comes from his opera *Aida*. This is the 'Triumphal' March and Chorus.

Verdi: Aida (Triumphal March and Chorus)

Many of the best tunes in opera are in the arias, or songs. This also gives a star-opportunity for great singers. Here is the aria 'La donna è mobile' from Verdi's *Rigoletto*. The Duke of Mantua is singing about his love of women!

Verdi: La donna è mobile (Rigoletto)

Away from opera for a moment, Verdi also composed a major choral work: his Requiem - a Mass for the dead. Although he intended it to be sung by a choir, some critics have described it as 'his best opera', because of its dramatic sound.

It's still regularly performed in churches and cathedrals across the world today.

Verdi: Requiem (Dies irae)

Back to opera again now. And to remind you: we have Wagner composing opera in Germany and Verdi composing opera in Italy.

Not all opera was what we call 'Grand Opera'. There were composers writing light-hearted pieces too.

- 17 In France, all eyes and ears were on a Frenchman with a German-sounding surname - Jacques Offenbach. He's the man who unleashed this on the world:

Offenbach: Can-Can from Orpheus in the Underworld

The 'Can-Can' comes from his opera *Orpheus in the Underworld*. If you think the name sounds familiar to you, you're right. We've heard about Orpheus before. Monteverdi wrote an opera about him back in 1607 and Gluck wrote an opera about him in Italian in 1762, and then again in French in 1774.

Offenbach's version of the opera, in 1858, didn't treat the story with quite the same reverence and it shocked French society - yet it was still a real success. It was more like a musical than a grand opera.

- 18 Now opera might have been the big thing in Italy, Germany, and Paris; but in Vienna, dancing was all the fashion - in particular, waltzing. When the waltz first appeared it was regarded as scandalous, because the male and female dancer danced face to face very close to each other. But then it became very popular in the most elegant salons, at huge balls with women in long dresses, men in smart dinner jackets, and the rooms filled with glittering chandeliers and sparkling champagne. One family, more than any other, has become associated with the waltz.

J. Strauss I: Kettenbrücke-Walzer

Johann Strauss was known as 'the father of the waltz', despite the fact that his best-known piece of music today is actually a march - the 'Radetzky' March.

J. Strauss I: 'Radetzky' March

Although Johann Strauss went on to write more than 200 waltzes, it was his son - confusingly also called Johann Strauss - who had the greatest success with them.

He set up a rival orchestra to his father's, and notched up 400 waltzes as well as 300 polkas, gallops, marches and other dances. His dad may have been called 'the father of the waltz', but Johann Junior would eventually be known as 'the Waltz King'.

His waltzes went down a storm both in the Viennese cafés and on his many tours across Europe and to the United States.

He made a fortune from the waltz - but then he did compose the most famous of them all: 'The Blue Danube'.

J. Strauss II: The Blue Danube

The most popular drink in the coffee houses of Vienna is 'Kaffee mit Schlagsahne' - that's coffee with mountains of whipped cream on top. It goes well with the waltzes, and if you go to Vienna today, you will *still* hear 'The Blue Danube' - and drink 'Kaffee mit Schlagsahne'.

Some people regard the Strauss family's waltzes as being nothing more than the musical equivalent of the froth on that Viennese coffee. But that does seem unfair, because so many people enjoyed their music, and continue to enjoy it.

- 19** Well, we've had plenty of child stars so far in our story. And now it's time for another brainy youngster.

Picture the scene if you can:

It's 1886 and one of the greatest French composers has just put the final bar-line on a piece of music which will still be performed more than 100 years later. So what does he do with it? Does he... rush it to the publishers, to be printed immediately? Does he... gather some friends, to play it through? Well, in fact, he does neither. He slowly and thoughtfully places it in his bottom drawer, which he then locks. And there it remains until he dies. And who is this French composer, this ultimate 'brainy youngster'? It is Camille Saint-Saëns.

Camille Saint-Saëns was born in Paris in 1835. He was incredibly intelligent and could read and write by the time he was two. He was starting to write tunes on the piano just a year later. He gave his first piano recital aged five. When he was seven, he was an expert in the study of insects. And after his first formal concert - at the grand old age of 10 - he offered to play any of Beethoven's 32 piano sonatas from memory.

As well as writing his own music, he spent much of his time promoting the music of some of the great composers of the past including, J.S. Bach, Mozart, Handel and Gluck. You know all about these now!

His best-known work today is *The Carnival of The Animals*, the piece he locked away. It was never performed in public during his lifetime, because he feared that once people had heard it, they would no longer see him as a serious composer.

Each part of the music represents an animal.

In the carnival there was the big, slow elephant with its big ears flapping in the wind.

Saint-Saëns: The Carnival of the Animals (Elephant)

Following on behind the elephant, there were some fossils. Can you hear their bones rattling together?

Saint-Saëns: The Carnival of the Animals (Fossils)

And then came the beautiful, graceful swan, swimming along with its long, white neck held high.

Saint-Saëns: The Carnival of the Animals (Swan)

- 20 At the same time that Saint-Saëns was making a name for himself in Paris, another French composer was doing the same thing just across the city - and his name was Léo Delibes.

Ballet music used to feature in the third act of all French operas, but gradually during the 19th century it became important in its own right.

Delibes was excellent at writing ballets. His most famous is *Coppélia*, which tells the story of a doll that comes to life.

Delibes: *Coppélia* (Act I: Valse)

- 21 We stay in France for our next composer. During the middle of the 19th century, the French were producing some of the best new music that was being written.

And if Delibes was the king of the ballet, then it was Georges Bizet who was trying to rule the world of opera. As we'll hear, though, he didn't really manage to do it during his lifetime.

Bizet's best-known opera *Carmen*, was set in Spain. Bizet was French, but that didn't stop him from using his music to conjure up the sounds of Spain, and the environment of a bullfight.

Bizet: *Carmen* (Prélude)

But poor old Bizet died before *Carmen's* brilliance was recognised. At the time, it was too big a jump from the kind of spectacle that the opera-going audience in Paris was used to. Bizet himself admitted that the first performance was 'a definite and hopeless flop'.

He lived to be only 36 years old. Had he survived for just three more years, he would have seen *Carmen* being hailed as an enormous success, with performances in virtually every major opera house in Europe.

- 22 So far in our story, we haven't visited Russia. But that's about to change.

Russia is a massive country, full of massive contrasts. In the 19th century, it contained the rich and sophisticated cities of Moscow and St

Petersburg, as well as the frozen wastelands of Siberia. The country was ruled by the all-powerful Tsar, who lived a life of magnificent luxury.

The Russian composers of the 19th century were keen to find their own national 'voice'. This doesn't mean a particular person to sing their songs; instead it's about having a style and a sound that is different from that of other countries. The Russian composers didn't want to imitate the big names in Europe.

Many countries have their own folk music. Just as languages between different countries vary enormously, so does the folk music. When we get to know classical music well, we can often say 'this is by a German composer', or an Italian composer, or French or English; or even Norwegian or Czech - because the sound produced in each country can be very distinctive. It's a bit like language. We can hear the difference between Italian...

Example of Italian

...and German...

Example of German

...and Russian:

Example of Russian

It is often the same with music, particularly music by some of the major Russian composers: it sounds 'Russian'. And in the 19th century, five of these composers formed a group that was known in Russia as 'The Mighty Handful'. They wanted to make their music sound very Russian.

- 23** We're going to look at three of these in particular: Alexander Borodin, Modest Mussorgsky and Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov. First, let's find out more about Alexander Borodin.

For a long time he wasn't a composer at all. He trained as a scientist, ending up as a professor. This meant that the first things he wrote weren't musical at all: they were scientific research papers.

Borodin's remembered now for two works. One is his opera *Prince Igor* - though he hadn't completed it when he died. It was finished by his fellow composers, Rimsky-Korsakov and Glazunov.

Borodin's other major work is an orchestral piece called *In the Steppes of Central Asia*. He wrote this one all by himself.

Borodin: In the Steppes of Central Asia

- 24 The first truly great piano work by a Russian composer came from Modest Mussorgsky, who was born in 1839 and started off as an army officer, rather than a composer.

Called *Pictures at an Exhibition*, it describes the composer walking through an art gallery, looking at the paintings of a close friend who has recently died. Here's the sound of the 'promenade', or walk, through the gallery:

Mussorgsky: Pictures at an Exhibition (Promenade)

And this is the 'sound' of one of the pictures. It shows 'The Great Gate at Kiev', a Russian city:

Mussorgsky: Pictures at an Exhibition (The Great Gate at Kiev)

Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* was turned into an orchestral piece by the composer Ravel nearly 40 years later. Listen to how grand 'The Great Gate at Kiev' sounds with full orchestra. It really is the 'great gate'.

Mussorgsky, orch. Ravel: Pictures at an Exhibition (The Great Gate at Kiev)

Mussorgsky's other key work - *Night on Bald Mountain* - also benefited from being rearranged by another composer. It was Mussorgsky's old friend Rimsky-Korsakov who gave him the helping hand - again. The *Night on a Bald Mountain* depicts a witches' Sabbath - dancing and drinking and wild behaviour, on a bald mountain, in the middle of the night.

Mussorgsky: Night on the Bare Mountain

- 25 Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov was himself creating a buzz of a different kind in Russia, with pieces of music like this – the *Flight of the Bumble Bee*. You can hear the bumble bee, in the solo cello. This is incredibly difficult to play for the solo cellist. But don't think of that – just think of the bee, buzzing around.

Rimsky-Korsakov (arr. B. Traubas): The Flight of the Bumble Bee from The Tale of Tsar Saltan

Music wasn't Rimsky-Korsakov's first love. When he was a boy he dreamed of being a sailor – and when he was just 12 years old he joined the navy.

At 27, he left to become a music professor. He was a natural musician who hadn't had much formal musical training. He taught himself a lot about music and once admitted that what he learnt one day he would have to teach to his students the next. Imagine having a teacher who was only two pages ahead of you in the textbook!

That didn't stop Rimsky-Korsakov from becoming one of Russia's most important composers, though. One of his biggest talents was the way he could manipulate the hundreds of different sounds of an orchestra to get them exactly as he wanted, in new and original ways – this is called 'orchestration', and Rimsky-Korsakov was a master.

His greatest work was *Sheherazade*, which is based on a series of ancient stories told to the Sultan by Sheherazade. The stories lasted for 1001 nights. Of course, there was no television or radio back then, so story-telling was a major part of life.

One of the most popular parts of *Sheherazade* concerns the tale of a young prince and princess.

Rimsky-Korsakov: Sheherazade (The Young Prince and the Young Princess)

- 26 Pyotr Il'yich Tchaikovsky didn't need help from anyone to write a good tune. His symphonies, piano concertos and ballets are packed full of them. He did, however, need help in paying the bills – and luckily for him, a rich widow called Madame von Meck gave him money to write music.

Now, close your eyes for a moment, and imagine this: a bustling Moscow street. On one side is the composer Tchaikovsky, his head down to the biting wind, his body dwarfed by a huge, well-worn fur coat. Suddenly he looks up. There, in front of him, is the woman who has paid all his bills for the last 13 years. She has given him the money which made possible the composition of such masterpieces as his Fifth Symphony, his Violin Concerto and his opera *Eugene Onegin*. The two look at each other, for a moment, frozen. And what do they do? They both turn around abruptly, and walk off without exchanging a word. Because she had always said that the two of them should never meet, and if they ever did, then they were not even to acknowledge each other.

Tchaikovsky was Russian, just like Borodin, Mussorgsky and Rimsky-Korsakov. But unlike them, he wasn't a member of the group of composers called 'The Mighty Handful'. His music was different from theirs too, sounding more European than Russian.

Today, Tchaikovsky's ballets are among his most performed works. They include: *Sleeping Beauty*...

Tchaikovsky: The Sleeping Beauty

...*Swan Lake*...

Tchaikovsky: Swan Lake

...and *The Nutcracker*.

Tchaikovsky: The Nutcracker

Tchaikovsky was pretty miserable during his life - much of his early work didn't receive the credit it deserved while he was still alive. But his talent didn't end with writing ballets.

He composed six symphonies - the final one is known as the 'Pathétique'. It's achingly beautiful.

Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 6 'Pathétique'

1 Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 6 'Pathétique' (continued)

Tchaikovsky also wrote for the piano. His Piano Concerto No. 1 was one of the first classical records to achieve 'gold disc' status, selling millions of copies.

Tchaikovsky: Piano Concerto No. 1

And then there was his biggest triumph of them all – the '1812' Overture, which was written to celebrate Napoleon's defeat in Russia in that year. It's now very popular at outdoor concerts during the summer, with fireworks adding to the cannon that boom out towards the end.

Tchaikovsky: '1812' Overture

We've heard how composers in Russia wanted to use their music to create a 'national' identity. Well, the same thing was going on in smaller countries, too.

- 2** Antonín Dvořák was a hero to his fellow countrymen. He was passionate about being a Czech, and used many local folk tunes in his music. Here's a good example – one of his Slavonic Dances:

Dvořák: Slavonic Dance, Op. 46 No. 8

Dvořák also travelled much further afield, though – all the way to America. Back then, it wasn't really that long since America had first been discovered by people from Europe – so it was still known as the 'New World'.

Dvořák was very homesick when he was in America, but he did fall in love with the music he heard while he was there. He was hired to teach American composers and fell in love with the American spirituals and the Native American traditional tunes. This led him to write his greatest work: his Symphony 'From the New World'. The tune you can hear is played on the English horn, which is a member of the oboe family.

Dvořák: Symphony No. 9 'From the New World'

- 3 Dvořák wasn't the only composer to write music that was inspired by his homeland. Edvard Grieg was just as passionate about the country in which he was born - Norway.

Grieg loved Norway's musical history and became a much-loved figure in the country. He wrote one of the most beautiful piano concertos ever, which remains a big favourite today.

Grieg: Piano Concerto in A minor

Like Beethoven before him, Grieg wrote incidental music for the theatre. This is the music used to accompany what was happening on the stage. The best example of this is the music he wrote for a play by Henrik Ibsen, called *Peer Gynt*.

Grieg: Peer Gynt (In the Hall of the Mountain King)

- 4 We haven't been in England since Handel was writing music for King George I. In fact, many people had noticed the fact that England had not produced a world-class composer for some time. In Germany, it was even called 'Das Land ohne Musik' – 'the land without music'.

Well, Queen Victoria was on the throne when the English composer Arthur Sullivan began working with W.S. Gilbert in the 1870s.

Sullivan: Overture to HMS Pinafore

They wrote operettas. These are like operas, but are more light-hearted and fun. In Gilbert and Sullivan's case, Gilbert wrote the words and Sullivan wrote the music.

Theirs was a very successful partnership - but the two men didn't really get on terribly well. They would have enormous rows about seemingly trivial things: one of their biggest bust-ups was about a new carpet at the Savoy Theatre in London, where their operettas were staged.

Each one of their 13 operettas gently made fun of one part or other of British life - they even had a song all about sausage rolls!

Here are the words that Gilbert wrote for a song in *HMS Pinafore*:

I am the monarch of the sea
The ruler of the Queen's navy
Whose praise Great Britain loudly chants.

And here is how Sullivan set them to music:

Sullivan: HMS Pinafore ('Now give three cheers')

Gilbert and Sullivan weren't the ones to bring great classical music back to the land that had gone without for so long. For that, we would have to wait until the arrival of a man whose name begins with the letter 'E', and who became famous some 30 years later...

But Sir Arthur Sullivan wanted to be seen as a serious musician too. And he certainly knew how to write a good tune.

- 5** Over in France, Jules Massenet was composing operas that were far more serious than Gilbert and Sullivan's work.

One of Massenet's operas, written in 1884, is about a girl called Manon, who falls in love with a young nobleman but ends up dying of a broken heart in a prison cell.

Even though he wrote 24 operas, Massenet is actually best remembered for a piece of music that doesn't have any words. It does come from one of his operas - called *Thaïs*. Massenet actually wrote the piece to give the scenery-shifters time to change the set on the stage, but it has become very popular in its own right. The same tune appears again when the main female character dies. As you might have realised by now, a lot of people die in opera stories!

Massenet: Meditation from Thaïs

We haven't had any religious music in our story recently. As we heard right at the start, most of the music written early on in our story was created with choirs and churches in mind.

We discovered that lots more non-religious, instrumental music then began to be written. But plenty of church music was still being composed in the second half of the 19th century.

- 6 For instance, the Frenchman Gabriel Fauré wrote one of the greatest of all requiems.

Fauré: Requiem (Pie Jesu)

Fauré spent much of his life as a church organist, so he learnt how to write music that brought the best out of choirs.

He also wrote orchestral music, including another of his big hits - the *Pavane*.

Fauré: Pavane

- 7 Staying in France, towards the end of the 19th century, we find the composer Claude Debussy busy trying out radical new ideas in classical music.

He was known as an 'Impressionist' composer, but this wasn't because he was doing an impression of anyone else. It was because he broke the rules that people then believed composers should follow - in the same way as did a group of painters who were around at the same time. The painters, also French - people like Claude Monet - were known as 'Impressionists' and the tag was given to the composers, too.

The painters and the musicians wanted to give a general 'impression' of moods and feelings in a much freer way, rather than presenting an exact copy of what they saw.

Here's an example of Debussy's music. It's called *La Mer* - which is French for 'The Sea'. So, Debussy wasn't trying to paint a picture like Rimsky-Korsakov was in his *Pictures at an Exhibition*: instead, his music creates an impression of the waves.

Debussy: La Mer

As well as writing opera and big orchestral pieces, Debussy also wrote the *Children's Corner* suite for piano. It was especially for his young daughter.

Debussy: Children's Corner (Golliwog's Cakewalk)

- 8 There wasn't so much classical music coming out of Spain in the 19th century.

But one Spaniard, called Isaac Albéniz, did write a lot of music that's still played today - such as this, from his *Iberia* suite.

Albéniz: Iberia, Book 1 (El Puerto)

Albéniz was probably one of the biggest tearaways in our whole story.

Born in 1860, he learnt to play the piano when he was just one year old - his sister taught him - and he was performing in public by the time he was four.

He ran away from home a few years later, and managed to support himself by performing an extraordinary trick on the piano. He would stand with the keyboard behind him and would play tunes with the backs of his hands. It's incredibly difficult to do - and Albéniz did it dressed as a musketeer.

He had plenty more adventures, and by the time he was 15 he'd performed in Argentina, Cuba, America and England.

At about this time, he decided to settle down and start composing; his adult life was far less adventurous than his early years.

- 9 Now, before we move on, let's take a look at where we've got to. By the 1880s, there'd been huge changes. Gas lighting was on the streets of the big cities: that made them a lot safer - people walking about could see where they were going. The roads had improved too; and so had the standard of health. Cities were getting bigger all over Europe. And in America the Civil War was over, and slavery had been abolished. Trains were now criss-crossing Europe and America, which made long journeys in horse-drawn carriages a thing of the past. And steel ships powered by steam engines were transforming travel by boat.

Britain was a worldwide power. The world really was changing - and so was music.

- 10 Back in England, and good news. One of the greatest-ever British composers had arrived - the one beginning with E - and he was writing some of the finest British music yet to exist.

Elgar: Pomp and Circumstance March No. 1

His name was Edward Elgar, and if you ever see his picture you'll be able to recognise him because of his big curly moustache.

Elgar's father ran a music shop in Worcester and was organist at the local church. As a boy, young Edward learnt to play the organ, and by the age of 12 he was standing in for his Dad as church organist.

He left school when he was 15 and went to work in a solicitor's office. He moved on a year later and decided his life would be better if he simply concentrated on music.

So he gave violin and piano lessons, played the violin in local orchestras, and did some conducting.

He also put a lot more effort into his composing - ultimately writing music like this, one of the greatest cello concertos around:

Elgar: Cello Concerto

One of Elgar's best-known works is called '*Enigma*' Variations. This is a series of musical pictures of his friends, his wife, and himself.

The picture that we hear most often now is called '*Nimrod*'. Elgar had his music publisher in mind when he wrote it.

Elgar: Enigma Variations (Nimrod)

- 11 Over to Italy now, but, before we go, keep in mind Elgar's bushy, handlebar moustache. That's it. Only, transplant it now, onto a tall, dark, handsome Italian, wearing very smart, fashionable clothes. Have you done that? Then you should now more or less have a picture in your head of one Giacomo Puccini.

We found out earlier how Giuseppe Verdi reigned as the Italian king of opera. Well, it was this Italian, Puccini, who took over where Verdi left off.

Puccini was responsible for an extremely popular opera - *La Bohème*. Here, the two lovers, Rodolfo and Mimì, fall in love.

Puccini: O soave fanciulla from La Bohème

But he also wrote many others - including *Madam Butterfly* and *Tosca*. And *Turandot*, which includes one of the best-known arias ever written: 'Nessun Dorma', which means 'None shall sleep'.

Puccini: Nessun Dorma from Turandot

Incidentally, *Turandot* is, sadly, up there with Schubert's Eighth Symphony and Borodin's *Prince Igor*, in that it remained unfinished when the composer died. In fact, at its first performance, when it had been completed by somebody else, the conductor stopped at the last note to have been written by Puccini. He turned to the audience and said, 'This is where the music died,' and the performance did not continue.

- 12 Meanwhile, back in Austria, where Mozart had been born all those years ago, the young Gustav Mahler had discovered a piano in his grandmother's attic. He was six years old. Just four years later, he gave his first public performance.

Mahler had a pretty unhappy childhood, and many people believe that this is why much of the music he wrote when he grew older is tinged with sadness.

He became a very successful conductor, but still had time to compose music.

Today, his symphonies are performed all over the world. He wrote 10 in all, although the Tenth was unfinished when he died. Yes, you guessed it - someone else finished it off instead!

This is from his Symphony No. 2, which is for a huge orchestra as well as a choir and all sorts of special instruments, including an organ and church bells. They create a mighty sound!

Mahler: Symphony No. 2 'Resurrection'

- 13** The French composer Paul Dukas has only one big hit to his name.

And if he were alive today, it would be Mickey Mouse he'd be thanking for its recent popularity. When Walt Disney decided to make a cartoon film starring Mickey with a classical music soundtrack, he chose, amongst others, a piece written by the Frenchman. The film was called *Fantasia* - and the piece was *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*.

Dukas: The Sorcerer's Apprentice

- 14** And now for another Frenchman - this time, one who gave his pieces some of the strangest names anywhere in classical music.

Erik Satie wrote one work that he called *Three Pieces in the Shape of a Pear*, and another called the *Waltz of the Chocolate with Almonds*.

He also wrote one of the longest piece of music in our story. It was for piano and had 180 notes, which had to be repeated 840 times. When it was presented in New York in 1963, five different pianists had to play in relays all night long to give it a full performance.

Despite this slightly wacky side to his character, Satie also wrote some very beautiful music, including this, his *Gymnopédie* No. 1:

Satie: Gymnopédie No. 1

- 15** Maurice Ravel was another French composer. But during the First World War (1914 to 1918) he also worked as an ambulance driver. He was deeply affected by the terrible scenes that he witnessed.

One of his close friends, a pianist, lost his right arm in battle. So Ravel set about writing him a piano concerto with a difference - one in which every note is played with just the left hand. Listen - even though the pianist is only using one hand, he still covers the whole keyboard from the top to the bottom.

Ravel: Piano Concerto for the Left Hand

But perhaps his most famous work is a virtuoso piece for orchestra, called *Boléro*. It's been used in films; as the background, too, to a winning performance by Olympic ice-skating champions. But he wrote it as a bit of an experiment: could he keep the same tune going round again and again with different instruments playing it many times?

Ravel: Boléro

- 16 But to go back to the late 19th century, composers were still writing pieces for large orchestras – though the music was now sounding more modern. Things like this, by Richard Strauss, which was used, much later on, in a film about space:

R. Strauss: Also sprach Zarathustra

Richard Strauss was born in Munich in Germany in 1864. He was no relation to the famous waltzing Strauss family from Vienna, who we heard about earlier in our story.

His music was quite a bit more serious, and he wrote a lot of operas and songs. He was another very clever boy – he'd written his first piece of music by the time he was just six years old.

- 17 We haven't yet been to Finland in our story. If the truth be told, up until now, we haven't really had any reason to. But our next composer was to put Finland on the musical map in such a big way that the Finnish government even wanted to put up a statue of him while he was still alive – but the modest composer persuaded them not to.

His name was Jean Sibelius. And the people of Finland loved him.

He was actually given the name Johan when he was born: that's the Finnish version of the American name, John. But when he found out that his Uncle had turned *his* name into 'Jean', which is the French version of 'John', Sibelius decided to do the same thing.

Sibelius's music is very heavily influenced by Finnish legends and history – and his best-known piece even has the title *Finlandia*.

Sibelius: Finlandia

You might have noticed that we haven't had to wind the clock forward in our story for a long time. We're now right in the middle of the composers who were born towards the end of the 19th century and lived well into the 20th century.

- 18** One of the best-loved English composers was born in Gloucestershire in 1872.

His name was Ralph Vaughan Williams. And his music was heavily influenced by English folksongs... like *Greensleeves*, for instance.

Vaughan Williams: Fantasia on 'Greensleeves'

Vaughan Williams composed music for all sorts of instruments, including the mighty brass tuba - and the harmonica (or mouth organ).

But he's probably best known today for a piece which casts the violin as one of the beautiful larks which he would most likely have heard on his travels across the English countryside, collecting folk tunes. It's called *The Lark Ascending*.

Vaughan Williams: The Lark Ascending

- 19** Vaughan Williams studied at the Royal College of Music in London, where he sat just a couple of desks along from another English composer, Gustav Holst.

When he left college, Holst earned a living as a trombonist, before becoming a teacher.

Although he wrote lots of other music, by far his most famous work is *The Planets*.

Each movement tells the story of the characters of each of the planets. The one that is most often performed is 'Jupiter - the bringer of Jollity'. But don't look too long and hard for Pluto: you won't find it. Pluto doesn't get a movement because it hadn't been discovered at the time Holst wrote his masterpiece.

Holst: The Planets (Jupiter - the bringer of Jollity)

- 20 Back in Russia, one of the greatest pianists in the first years of the 20th century was writing music like this:

Rachmaninov: Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini

Sergei Rachmaninov is one of the world's most popular composers today. But during the early part of his career the critics attacked a lot of his music. This upset poor old Sergei, and he had a very unhappy period, when even he himself began to doubt his own ability as a composer.

He spent some time with a doctor, who helped him to come to terms with his problems. And, once he was completely better, he sat down and wrote his most enduring masterpiece - his Second Piano Concerto.

Rachmaninov: Piano Concerto No. 2

Rachmaninov wrote four piano concertos in all, as well as three symphonies. He's in the Guinness Book of World Records as having the largest hands of any musician. Because his hands were so big, his piano pieces were easy for him to play. But many other pianists, with smaller hands, struggle to master them.

Rachmaninov toured the world as a conductor, making a lot of money, and ended up living in New York. Although he was no longer suffering from the self-doubt that had worried him so much before he wrote his Second Piano Concerto, he never seemed a terribly cheerful man. It was very rare to see him smile.

- 21 At the beginning of the 20th century, music started to change. Romantic composers began to make way for composers from the more modern period - though there was of course some cross-over, with Romantic-style music being written into the 1900s.

Some of the composers who eventually did new things in music initially wrote pieces that were still Romantic in style.

One of those is Arnold Schoenberg, who was born in Vienna in 1874. He began by writing music like this:

Schoenberg: Verklärte Nacht

But, after a while, he began to develop new ideas about the way that classical music should be written. Rather than thinking of a tune, composers like Schoenberg organised music differently.

Schoenberg: Piano Piece, Op. 11 No. 3

Eventually, as he wrote more and more, his music came to sound very different from what everyone had been used to. At the time, though, not all composers were following his trend and writing this new kind of music.

- 22 Over in Russia, Igor Stravinsky's music was about to bring the house down, almost literally.

Stravinsky: The Rite of Spring (Part 2: The Sacrifice)

When the audience heard this music to Stravinsky's ballet *The Rite of Spring*, many of them began to feel uncomfortable in their seats. From discomfort they moved to dislike, from dislike to hate, and from hate to... well, all out riot...

Stravinsky: The Rite of Spring (Part 2: The Sacrifice)

...with chairs and punches thrown in equal measure. There were some people there who liked it, and they raised their fists to defend the piece, because they saw that Stravinsky's style was important for the future of classical music.

Stravinsky was a major force in classical music, particularly in the years leading up to the Second World War in 1945.

As well as *The Rite of Spring*, Stravinsky wrote other ballets, including *Petrushka*, *Pulcinella* and *The Firebird*. The last of these has one of the most exciting endings anywhere in classical music.

Stravinsky: The Firebird (Finale)

- 23 Sergei Prokofiev is another Russian composer who wrote ballet music. He wrote one of the best-known ballet tunes.

Prokofiev: Romeo and Juliet (Dance of the Knights)

That comes from *Romeo and Juliet*, which tells William Shakespeare's story of a boy and a girl from two warring families who fall in love. It's a tale that we'll hear again before the end of our story.

Prokofiev was also one of the first composers to really make a success of writing for the cinema.

As we'll hear later, writing music for films becomes increasingly important for classical composers during the 20th century. These composers were building on the tradition established by Beethoven, Bizet, Grieg and others of writing 'incidental' music to accompany stage productions.

Prokofiev was asked to write the music to a film called *Lieutenant Kijé*. A version of the sleigh-ride music, which originally came from that film-score, is often played at Christmas today.

Prokofiev: Troika from Lieutenant Kijé

Prokofiev also wrote symphonies. This is his first, known as the 'Classical', because it borrows some of the sounds and styles from the earlier Classical period - the one with Mozart and Haydn. Listen to how clean and light it is:

Prokofiev: Symphony No. 1 'Classical'

Prokofiev also wrote a musical tale for children, called *Peter and the Wolf*. It's for a storyteller - in this case, Dame Edna Everage - accompanied by a whole orchestra. Prokofiev decided to give characters to some of the instruments. So, the clarinet is the cat, the flute is the bird, the bassoon is Peter's grumbling grandfather, and Peter himself is played by the whole the string section.

Prokofiev: Peter and the Wolf (Peter in the meadow)

- 24** Now, the year is 1904, and two men, in a Budapest coffee house, are about to have a conversation which would alter their lives. And it brings Hungarian music into our story.

Their names were Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály, and by the time the conversation had ended, they had sealed their shared passion for Hungarian folk music and agreed to undertake a fantastic journey.

They travelled around their homeland, away from the cities and into the countryside, with a very early recording machine. They collected local folk tunes sung by local countrymen and women. These were not songs written by the major composers that we have been discovering: they were folksongs – songs of 'the people'. And this was one of the first times that an attempt was made to save traditional folksongs, which were being forgotten. As we learnt earlier, folk music could sound very different in different countries and places.

Bartók became a music professor, first in Budapest, and later in America. A lot of the music that he wrote after his journeys into the countryside was influenced by the folksongs he had collected. However, he also wrote quite modern music – and here is one of his last works: the Concerto for Orchestra, for which he is best remembered.

Bartók: Concerto for Orchestra

- 25 The Hungarian folk tunes were just as important to Bartók's friend, Zoltán Kodály.

He became a national hero and outlived Bartók. And he wrote an opera about a man called Háy János, who was a legendary figure in Hungary. This is from the suite of music that he developed from that opera:

Kodály: Suite from Háy János (Viennese Musical Clock)

- 26 Do you remember the new ideas that Schoenberg started to come up with at the beginning of the century? Well, here's a composer who took some of those ideas, and developed them.

His name was Anton Webern and he was born in Vienna in 1883. But his music was just as different as you could get from that other great Viennese composer Johann Strauss, who, as you probably remember, wrote the '*Blue Danube*'.

Here is an early work by Webern, the Passacaglia.

Webern: Passacaglia

Webern studied with Schoenberg, as did another composer, Alban Berg. Together, the three are known as 'The Second Viennese School'. For these composers, it was time to move on from the big, beautiful Romantic sound. When they wrote music, they began to experiment with number patterns, giving each note of the scale a number, and they produced interesting and original sounds - so much so that their later music is still thought of as 'modern', even though it was written over 50 years ago!

Here is the opening of the first movement of Webern's Symphony.

Webern: Symphony

- 27 Now, as we've heard, some classical music is quiet; some classical music is gentle; and some classical music is relaxing. But then, some classical music isn't any of these. Some classical music sounds like this:

Orff: Carmina Burana (O Fortuna)

Another of those composers famous for just one piece of music: his name is Carl Orff, and this work is called *Carmina Burana*. It sounds quite modern but it's actually based on Latin words written by monks hundreds of years ago.

Carl Orff died in 1982, and made a lot of money because this music is still used for television advertisements.

- 28 Joaquín Rodrigo is another composer best known for a single work, even though he lived for 98 years, from 1901 to 1999. Rodrigo went blind at the age of three after an illness, and always said that if this hadn't happened he wouldn't have become a composer. And that would have been a pity because we wouldn't have had this beautiful slow movement from his concerto for guitar and orchestra.

Rodrigo: Concierto de Aranjuez

- 29 Music was very important in America, but it has a rather different history from the rest of the world. All through the 18th century and then the 19th century, people came to live in the 'New World' from all parts of the 'Old World'. They came from many European countries, from China and Japan, and for hundreds of years slaves were brought over from

Africa. So the traditional folk music of America was really mixed - with many styles brought from all these different countries.

Throughout the 19th century America itself was developing very quickly into an important industrial power. Not very long after the first pioneers travelled to the West Coast braving many dangers, hundreds of thousands of men began building the first railway to go right across the country, across deserts and mountain ranges and plains. Cities grew very quickly and factories were built. So by the 20th century, the United States of America was a very powerful country. It was a country formed by immigrants from all over the globe - from Europe, Asia and Africa.

While some of this cultural mix found its way into classical music, American composers generally imitated what was happening in Europe - the big symphonies or concertos. Some pioneer composers, such as Charles Ives, had new ideas. He was born in 1874 but he was a real adventurer. In one of his works he describes four marching bands walking into a town square from different directions, crossing over, and walking away. It sounds - well, different!

In his *Country Band March*, he paints a musical picture of country bands - who are very enthusiastic and don't mind so much if things go a bit wrong. It is a wonderful mess!

Ives: Country Band March

- 30 Roy Harris, who lived from 1898 to 1979, wrote what is often called the first American symphony – Symphony No. 3 –, in 1938, developing a really American sound. He wrote 13 symphonies in all. Here is an excerpt from No. 7.

Harris: Symphony No. 7

CD 4

- 1 But it was the popular music of America that first really made an impact on the world as the 20th century got going. Ragtime, blues, jazz and popular music, including musicals, became very important. Everyone was tapping their feet to different kinds of rhythms. Even European

composers such as Ravel and Milhaud used ragtime and jazz in their music. And so did American composers writing for the concert hall.

Popular music was the background of George Gershwin, who started writing songs, then musicals. In the 1920s he was earning 250,000 dollars a year. That's a large amount of money by today's standards - and it was an absolutely huge amount back then.

But he also turned his hand to classical music - the first popular composer to do so successfully.

After visiting Europe, Gershwin wrote *An American in Paris*. It was all about a tourist from the USA walking along the bustling streets of the French capital, while feeling a little homesick. Listen, you can hear the car horns suggesting the busy streets and people in a hurry.

Gershwin: An American in Paris

Gershwin is seen as a composer who successfully joined together parts of jazz and classical music, not least in this piece called *Rhapsody in Blue*, a jazzy piece for piano and orchestra.

Gershwin: Rhapsody in Blue

The day after the *Rhapsody in Blue*'s first performance, George Gershwin was commissioned to write a full-length piano concerto, and this went on to be one of the most popular piano concertos written in the 20th century.

Gershwin: Piano Concerto

- 2 Although many American classical composers started by imitating European styles, Aaron Copland found quickly a true American voice. You can hear this in his ballets *Appalachian Spring*, *Billy the Kid* – and *Rodeo*, which featured this 'Hoe Down':

Copland: Rodeo (Hoe Down)

Copland's best-known work is called *Fanfare for the Common Man*. It's used now at American Presidential Inaugurations - that's the ceremony where a new person officially becomes President of the United States.

Copland: Fanfare for the Common Man

- 3 Still in America, one of the best-loved pieces of American classical music had just been written by Samuel Barber.

Barber had a good singing voice and actually recorded himself performing some of his own work – and there aren't many instances of that among composers!

But his real hit was called *Adagio* for strings. First of all, he wrote it for a string quartet: two violins, one viola and one cello. Later, he built it up into a piece for full string orchestra, and then he rearranged it so that it could be sung by a choir.

Let's hear the middle version, which is often played at times of great national sadness.

Barber: Adagio for strings

- 4 Our next composer was also from America: his name was Leonard Bernstein, and he was a real personality. I should know – I sang with him!

He became famous for writing successful Broadway musicals, for being a superb conductor, and for performing as a pianist.

He was the first composer to become a television and radio star, and he also hosted regular 'Young People's Concerts' for much of his life.

He's best-known for *West Side Story*, which is a more modern version of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. It started life as a wildly successful musical in 1957, and Bernstein later turned the main tunes into a suite of orchestral music. It even became a popular film.

Bernstein: Suite from West Side Story (Prologue)

- 5 We are now halfway through the 20th century. The Second World War has finished. The gramophone, or record player, has changed the musical world. Suddenly, music is truly international, and people are hearing music of all kinds from the far corners of the earth, including jazz, folk, blues,

ragtime, popular ballads – sung by stars such as Frank Sinatra and Bing Crosby – and, of course, classical music.

Before the gramophone, many people had pianos in their home and made their own music. Now people were more likely to listen to the gramophone instead. And music for films became important, which meant that lots of pieces became world famous quickly.

William Walton wrote a lot of music for films. He was born in Oldham in the north of England in 1902. He became the most important English composer in the years between the First and Second World Wars.

His film music includes the stirring 'Spitfire Prelude and Fugue' from a film about the Royal Air Force, called *The First of the Few*.

Walton: Spitfire Prelude and Fugue from The First of the Few

- 6 Like William Walton, the Russian Dmitri Shostakovich was another of the great 20th-century composers, who also wrote music for films.

He wrote this Romance for a film called *The Gadfly* in 1955.

Shostakovich: The Gadfly (Romance)

Shostakovich also wrote a couple of what he called 'Jazz Suites', which won him a new audience outside classical music. This piece is called 'Tahiti Trot' – though it's better known as 'Tea for Two'.

Shostakovich: Tahiti Trot

But Shostakovich's music wasn't generally light and frothy by nature. He lived in difficult times because Russia was now a Communist country and composers had to follow very strict rules. Sometimes, Shostakovich broke these rules and got into trouble. His Second Piano Concerto has a slow movement that's as beautiful as any of Rachmaninov's works. Shostakovich wrote it for his 19-year-old son Maxim, who himself would go on to be a famous musician.

Shostakovich: Piano Concerto No. 2

- 7 Back in Britain, a composer *called* Britten was making a name for himself. Benjamin Britten, to be exact - although his name's spelt differently from the country.

He was seen as the greatest British composer in the years after the Second World War. He lived in Aldeburgh in Suffolk, where he founded the music festival that still runs every year.

As well as opera, choral music, orchestral works and songs, he also wrote this, for which he is perhaps best known:

Britten: The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra (Theme)

It's called *The Young Person's Guide To the Orchestra* and uses a tune by the composer Purcell, who, as we discovered a long time ago, was once the top organist at Westminster Abbey. If you want to find out more about classical music after you've heard our story, then *The Young Person's Guide To the Orchestra* is a great place to start.

- 8 Back in France, Francis Poulenc was writing bright, tuneful pieces of music, too. But this type of music wasn't nearly as popular in France as it was in America at the time, so Poulenc didn't really get the credit he deserved in the 1920s and 1930s.

He became quite a religious man and his setting of the Gloria is a very uplifting and powerful religious piece, with tunes that stay in your head for a long time after you've heard them sung.

Poulenc: Gloria (Gloria in excelsis Deo)

Poulenc did have his fun side, too. He set to music a children's story about Babar the Elephant. Here's a short extract – the story's told by Barry Humphries:

Poulenc: The Story of Babar the Elephant, the Little Elephant (Arthur and Celeste)

- 9 Our story has now arrived at the composers writing music far more recently.

After the Second World War, classical music splintered into two main paths. The first involved quite traditional styles, with nice melodies – the sort of music that Vaughan Williams and Rachmaninov had written. The second path involved more adventurous, experimental music, more like Schoenberg and Webern. This is known as 'contemporary' or 'avant-garde' music.

There were some big changes going on in the world now, with people spending a lot of time imagining what the future might be like. First came science fiction, with stories of travel to other planets in the universe. Those stories even became reality when a group of astronauts travelled through space to the moon for the very first time. The imagination of composers produced sounds to match this exciting new world.

A good example of this contemporary sound comes from the French-born American Edgard Varèse, who wrote music like this:

Varèse: Déserts

- 10 The radical American composer John Cage attempted to push the boundaries of what it is that we actually call 'music'. He even wrote a piece for 12 radios!

His piece called 4'33" was the first-ever 'silent' piece of classical music. The pianist walks onto the stage, sits down at the piano, and makes no sound at all. Instead, Cage said that whatever sounds happened to be going on in the background during that four and a half minutes were the 'music'. Imagine the performance! Would you clap at the end?

Cage also developed what he called the 'prepared piano'. Cage had heard the music of the Far East, particularly music from Bali, and he wanted to suggest that sound-world. Into the strings of the piano he put bits of rubber and wood and stone, and this is what it sounded like:

Cage: Sonata V

- 11 At the end of the 20th century and beginning of the 21st, music of all styles is being written.

For example, there's a lot of very popular choral music being composed, like this piece by the Englishman John Tavener. It was sung at the funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales in 1997.

Tavener: Song for Athene

- 12 Some contemporary composers, like the Americans John Adams, Steve Reich and Philip Glass, have made their names from writing a type of music called 'minimalism'. In this style of music, the composer repeats the same notes over and over again, only changing small details as he goes. It feels a bit like being on a train, where you have the regular clatter of the wheels, but the landscape is changing as you go past it.

A good example is Philip Glass's Violin Concerto.

Glass: Violin Concerto

- 13 Classical music has had a huge effect on film music. You can hear that many film scores of recent years have developed from the big symphonies and classical music of the past. Virtually all our favourite films now have successful soundtracks to go alongside them.

Listen to this music Hans Zimmer wrote for the film *Gladiator*:

Zimmer: Suite from Gladiator

- 14 The Canadian composer Howard Shore is the man behind the music for another big box-office hit, *The Lord of the Rings*.

Shore: The Lord of the Rings (The Fellowship)

- 15 But perhaps the biggest name in film music today is the American composer John Williams. He has written the music for blockbusters like *Star Wars*, *Superman*, *E.T.* – and, *Harry Potter*.

Williams: Harry Potter (Hedwig's Theme)

- 16 And that's the story of classical music... so far. Our journey has lasted for more than 1400 years – starting at the time of Gregorian chant.

But it doesn't end here, because composers all over the world are still writing classical music today. So music will go on changing as composers introduce new ideas over the decades and centuries ahead.

We know that without music the world would be a quieter place to be. But don't you think it would be a far, far less interesting place too?

Ravel: Boléro