

MUSIC · Y3-Y6

# Key Composers

Knowledge Organiser — KS2 Music

## About this organiser

Composers from across 400 years and several cultures. Most KS2 music schemes will introduce children to several. Listen widely — there's no single 'correct' list.

## Baroque (1600-1750)

Ornate, mathematical, powerful

- JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (German, 1685-1750) — 'Tocatta and Fugue in D Minor,' 'Brandenburg Concertos.' Wrote thousands of pieces. Father of 20 children, several also famous composers.
- ANTONIO VIVALDI (Italian, 1678-1741) — 'The Four Seasons.' A priest who taught music to orphan girls in Venice.
- GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL (German, 1685-1759) — 'Messiah' (with the Hallelujah Chorus), 'Music for the Royal Fireworks.'

## Classical (1750-1820)

Balanced, elegant, formal

- WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (Austrian, 1756-1791) — child prodigy. 'Eine kleine Nachtmusik,' 'Symphony No. 40,' 'The Magic Flute.' Wrote over 600 pieces. Died aged 35.
- LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (German, 1770-1827) — 'Symphony No. 9,' 'Moonlight Sonata,' 'Für Elise.' Wrote masterpieces even after going DEAF.
- JOSEPH HAYDN (Austrian, 1732-1809) — Mozart's friend, Beethoven's teacher. 'Surprise Symphony.'



## Romantic (1820-1910)

Big emotion, big orchestras

- PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY (Russian, 1840-1893) — 'Swan Lake,' 'The Nutcracker,' '1812 Overture' (with real cannons!).
- FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN (Polish, 1810-1849) — wrote almost only piano music. 'Minute Waltz,' nocturnes, mazurkas.
- GUSTAV HOLST (British, 1874-1934) — 'The Planets' (the Mars and Jupiter movements are famous).
- EDVARD GRIEG (Norwegian, 1843-1907) — 'In the Hall of the Mountain King.'

## 20th-21st Century

Modern, diverse, often for film

- FLORENCE PRICE (American, 1887-1953) — first African American woman to have a symphony performed by a major US orchestra. Long ignored, now rediscovered.
- BENJAMIN BRITTEN (British, 1913-1976) — 'A Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra' — perfect for KS2.
- JOHN WILLIAMS (American, born 1932) — film scores: 'Star Wars,' 'Harry Potter,' 'Jurassic Park,' 'Indiana Jones,' 'E.T.'
- HANS ZIMMER (German, born 1957) — 'The Lion King,' 'Pirates of the Caribbean,' 'Inception,' 'Interstellar,' 'Dune.'
- ARVO PÄRT (Estonian, born 1935) — modern composer of slow, peaceful music.
- ANNA CLYNE (British, born 1980) — contemporary classical, often with electronics.

## Listen to a piece of music

Things to notice

- What instruments can you hear?
- Is it fast or slow? Loud or quiet? Steady or changing?
- How does it make you feel?



- Are there moments of surprise — sudden change?
- Is there a tune you can hum afterwards?
- What might the composer have wanted you to picture?
- Does it remind you of any film, place, or feeling?
- Listen more than once — you'll hear different things each time.

