

The
Romantic Period
of Western Musical History
circa 1820 - 1900

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- 1. Medieval (476 A.D. to 1400 A.D.)**
- 2. Renaissance (1400 to 1600 A.D.)**
- 3. Baroque (1600 to 1750)**
- 4. Classical (1750 to 1820)**
- 5. Romantic (1820 to 1900)**
- 6. Impressionist (1875 to 1925)**
- 7. Modern (1900 to 1960)**
- 8. “Post-Modern” (1960-present)
(aka “Contemporary”)**

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Romanticism (also known as the **Romantic Era** or the "**Romantic Period**") was an **artistic, literary and intellectual movement** that originated in the **second half of the 18th century** in Europe, and gained strength in reaction to the **Industrial Revolution**.

In part, the Romantic movement was a revolt against aristocratic social and political norms of the **Age of Enlightenment** (the 1700s) and a reaction against the “**scientific rationalization**” of nature.

Romanticism was embodied most strongly in the **visual arts, music** and **literature**.



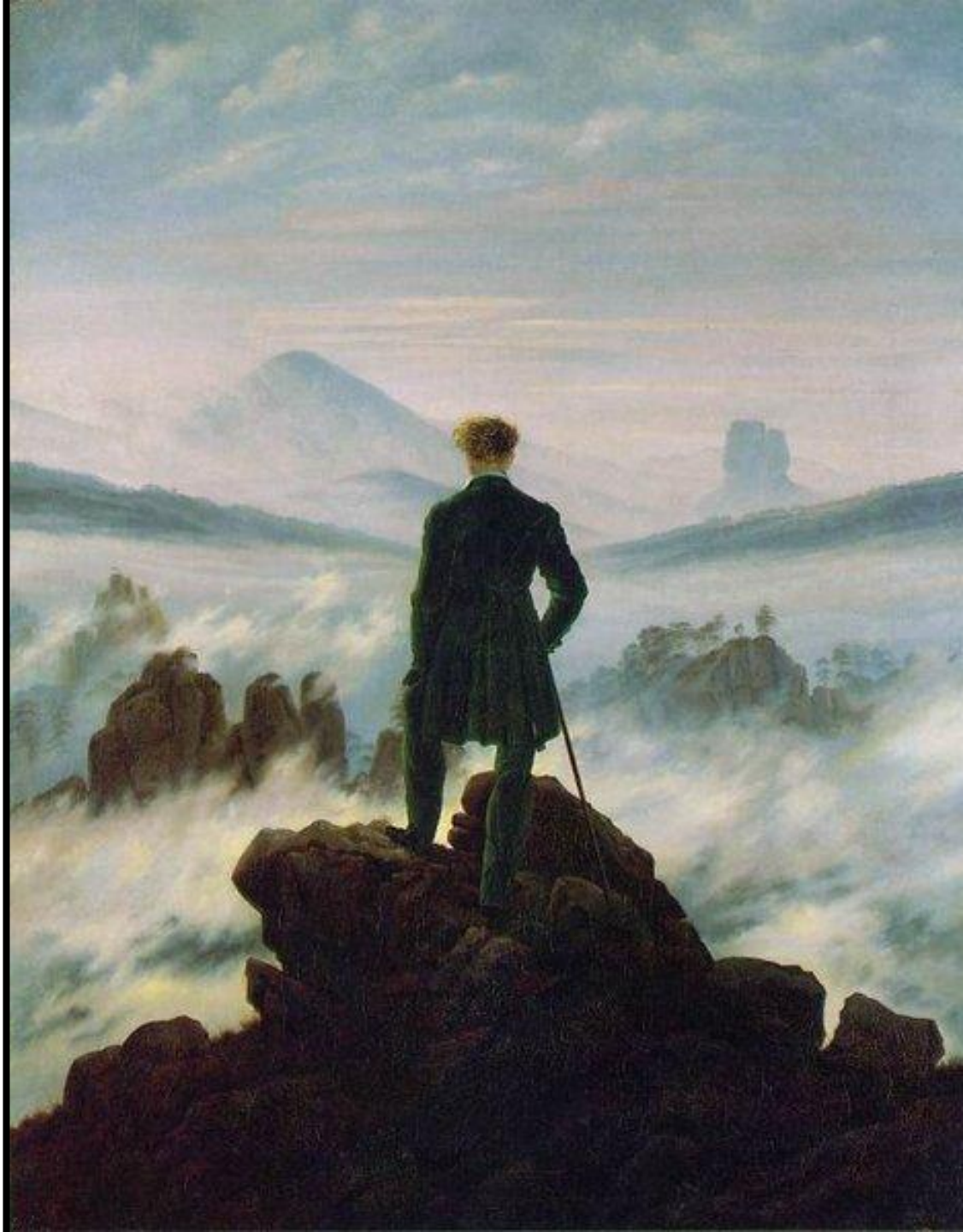
“Liberty Leading The People” (1830)

by French Romantic period painter **Eugène Delacroix**

“Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog”

by the German Romantic
painter

**Caspar David
Friedrich**
(1774 – 1840)



Characteristics of Romantic Period Music

1. **Individuality of musical style** with emphasis on self-expression
2. Development of **new harmonies**, including **chromatic harmonies** - harmonies that use all the keys of the piano keyboard - the black keys and the white keys - together.

Characteristics of Romantic Period Music

3. Development of **"program music"** –
music that depicts a story or scene

4. Development of **"nationalism"** in music,
such as **French** music, **Spanish** music,
Hungarian music, **Czech** music, etc.,
incorporating **native folk music**

Characteristics of Romantic Period Music

5. Greater **variety of mood, atmosphere and tone color**
6. **Expanded orchestra size** for many new compositions, including **large brass sections, expanded woodwind sections** and the addition of new instruments, such as English horn, bass clarinet, contrabassoon and **added percussion**.

Characteristics of Romantic Period Music

7. Development of a **wider range of musical dynamics** - (volume) - from very soft (**pianissimo**) to very loud (**fortissimo**) often encompassing soaring musical high points.

Characteristics of Romantic Period Music

8. **Greater flexibility of tempo**, (musical speed) incorporating the increased use of **accelerandos** (speeding up) and **ritardandos** (slowing down), as well as extensive use of **rubato** (the bending and stretching of tempo/rhythm).

