

Romanticism: Class Period 1

What is Romanticism?

- an international (European) movement
- an outgrowth of *Sturm und Drang*; therefore strongest in Germany
 - also caught on strongly in England, France, Russia, and to lesser degrees in the rest of Europe
 - *Sturm und Drang* was a literary movement which led to romantic literature, which in turn led to romantic music
- **the age of the individual**: individual, controversial opinions were "in fashion"
 - contrast (argument): if someone expressed an idea, someone else said the opposite
- a kind of **revolution**: rejecting the ideals of the Classical period.
 - classicism's ideals: discipline, moderation, harmonious adjustment, balance, attention to form, symmetry
 - romantics rejected these ideals; valued striving rather than achieving; becoming rather than being; emotional or inspired expression rather than balanced, rational expression
- **Intensity of Feeling**: emphasis on feelings and intuition rather than form and rationality
 - **Weltschmerz** (world-weariness, melancholy, frustration) a common thread in literature (and true life): people so world-weary they went insane, became nihilistic (nihilism = disbelief in religious or moral principles, established laws etc.), or attempted suicide.
 - prototype story is Goethe's Werther (1774); protagonist kills himself over unrequited love. This becomes model for pathological despair in literature
 - **Musical manifestations of Intensity of Feeling**: opera: mad scenes; lieder Opposite extreme of feeling also found: Triumphant, joyful music
- **Industrialization**: industrial revolution flourished in 19th century; factories, technology; urban centers grew rapidly (as did population). This was in contrast to romantic sentiments; therefore, romantic art often has themes of **nature** and **escapism**. Examples:
 - Weber's operas had forest scenes painted in music (hunting calls etc)
 - Brahms' and Schumann's songs had wanderlust
 - Mendelssohn did travel, wrote musical portraits of Italy and Scotland