Graham School of General Studies

**Late Romantic Masters: From Swan Lake to Rosenkavelier**

John Gibbons

708-393-9729 - john@holdekunst.com

  

**Description:** The period from 1840 (Tchaikovsky’s birth) to World War I saw a seismic shift in the agendas and techniques of Romantic composers. The early Romantic generation of Chopin and Mendelssohn had used modest means -- piano solos, lieder, and intimate chamber music -- as a platform for introspective, often quirky, personal expression. Their successors employed far grander means -- opera, ballet, large-scale symphonic works -- for more public, even political expression. Whether obsessed with imperial, nationalistic, or purely philosophical themes, these composers-Brahms, Tchaikovsky, Dvorak, Strauss, Mahler, Bruckner, and others-were as revolutionary as any who came before them.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Week** | **Biographical and Historical Themes** | **Featured Works** |
| 1 | The Liszt Legacy; The Imperial Style | Tchaikovsky: *Swan Lake*, *Piano Concerto*, *Romeo & Juliet* |
| 2 | The Mighty Handful: Nationalism, Exoticism, Travelogues | Mussorgsky: *Night on a Bald Mountain* and *The Nursery*Borodin: *From the Steppes of Central Asia*Rimsky- Korsakov: *Sheherezade* |
| 3 | The Cataclysmic influence of Liszt and Wagner; The Organ Style and French Nationalism | Frank: Symphony in D MinorSaint-Saëns:Organ Symphony |
| 4 | Sentimental Pastoralism | Dvořák: Symphonies 7-8 |
| 5 | Music as Autobiography; Music in the Twilight | Brahms: Symphony No. 3Bruckner: Overview of his works |
| 6 | Looking Inward. Reckoning with the Past. Backward with Brahms, Forward with Webern. | Brahms: Late Piano Works Op. 116-119Brahms: Fourth Symphony (Passacaglia)Webern: Passacaglia for Orchestra Op. 1 |
| 7 | Beethoven’s Fifth: The Next Generation | Mahler: Symphony No. 2Josef Suk: Asrael SymphonyBrahms:Ein Deutsches Requiem |
| 8 | Retreat from Modernism; Cocoons of the Past | Strauss: *Der Rosenkavalier* and *Ariadne auf Naxos* |

 **Recommended Materials**

Reinhold Brinkmann, *Late Idyll: The Second Symphony of Johannes Brahms*

Carl Dalhaus, *Nineteenth Century Music*

Walter Frisch, *Brahms: The Four Symphonies*

*The New Grove Russian Masters 1: Glinka, Borodin, Balakirev, Musorgsky, Tchaikovsky*

Leon Plantinga, *Romantic Music: A History of Musical Style in Nineteenth Century Europe*

Michael Steinberg, *The Symphony: A Listener’s Guide*

Richard Taruskin,

* *Music in the Nineteenth Century*
* *Music in the Early Twentieth Century*
* *Defining Russia Musically*