

Development of the Piano

The Romantic Period

Part 1

MAJOR COMPOSERS & MUSICALFORMS

Bach
Handel
Scarlatti
Vivaldi
Purcell
Pachelbel

Haydn
Mozart
Beethoven

Schubert
Chopin
Schumann
Liszt
Wagner
Verdi
Brahms
Tchaikovsky

BAROQUE
1600-1750

CLASSICAL
1750-1820

ROMANTIC
1820-1900

Opera
Concerto
Oratorio
Fugue
Dance Suite

Symphony
Sonata
String Quartet
Piano Trio
Opera

Miniature Forms
Symphonic Poem
Opera
Symphony
Free Forms

Bach
Handel
Scarlatti

Haydn
Mozart
Beethoven

Chopin
Schumann
Liszt

BAROQUE
1600-1750

Harpsichord
Organ
Clavichord

CLASSICAL
1750-1820

Fortepiano
Harpsichord

ROMANTIC
1820-1900

Pianoforte

KEYBOARD INSTRUMENTS & MAJOR KEYBOARD COMPOSERS

Transitional Times

- Franz Schubert (1797-1828)
- Was he Classical or Romantic?
- Piano style often songlike, with emphasis on **cantabile**
- His songs helped begin the Romantic craze for writing “miniatures” – pieces lasting just a few minutes
- Used German poetry extensively in his songs and thus helped to usher in a new period in which poetic ideas became important
- Music began to tell stories in new ways



Franz Schubert

Schubert's Piano

- Schubert's piano really the same as Beethoven's
- By 1820, the range of the piano had increased from 5 octaves to 6 and a half octaves
- Construction was more solid
- Frame still made of wood
- Some pianos had up to four or five pedals, including a "Turkish" pedal and a "bassoon" pedal
- The Turkish was basically a drum and a cymbal, and the bassoon was a strip of leather that gave the strings a nasal sound

The Industrial Revolution

- Before the 19th Century, metal work was comparatively primitive
- At the end of the 18th Century, the use of coal and the methods of melting iron improved
- Cast iron became possible
- This changed the world



The Wooden-Framed Piano

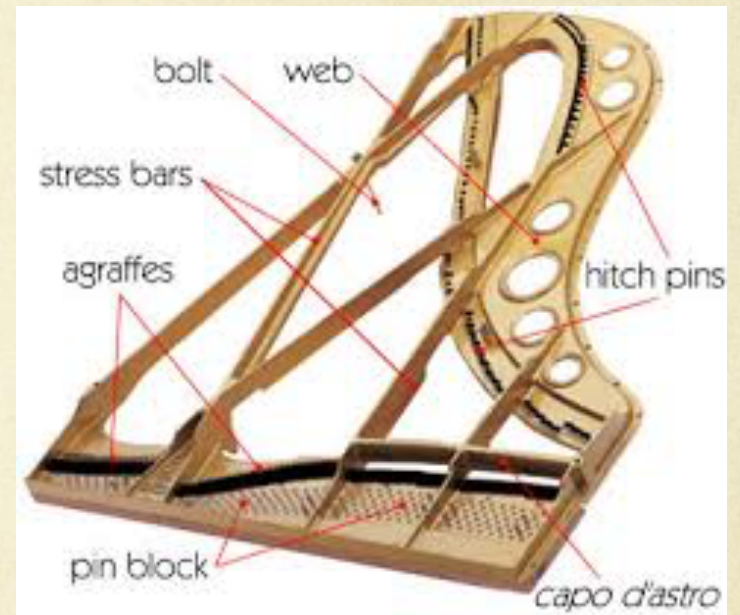
- Beethoven was always searching for the ideal piano
- Even Liszt did not really have it until late in his career
- Until the iron-framed piano, Liszt would often have two pianos on stage – one for the first half of the concert, one for the second
- Both pianos would be destroyed by the end of the concert



A contemporary caricature of Liszt at the piano

The Iron-Framed Piano

- The cast iron frame changed piano building
- Frame all in one piece
- More tension
- More volume
- More power
- **Longer sustain** – very important for Romantic phrasing
- Able to project over a larger orchestra



The ultimate solo instrument



- Able to be tuned to a higher pitch
- Able to use longer, thicker strings
- Bigger, heavier hammers
- Suddenly the piano became a huge beast, several hundred kilos in weight

It's all about image

- In the 19th Century, an artist was seen as someone “touched by God”
- Some (eg. Paganini) were even thought to have sold their souls to the devil!
- Paganini revolutionised violin technique
- Liszt and Chopin wanted to do for the piano what Paganini had done for the violin



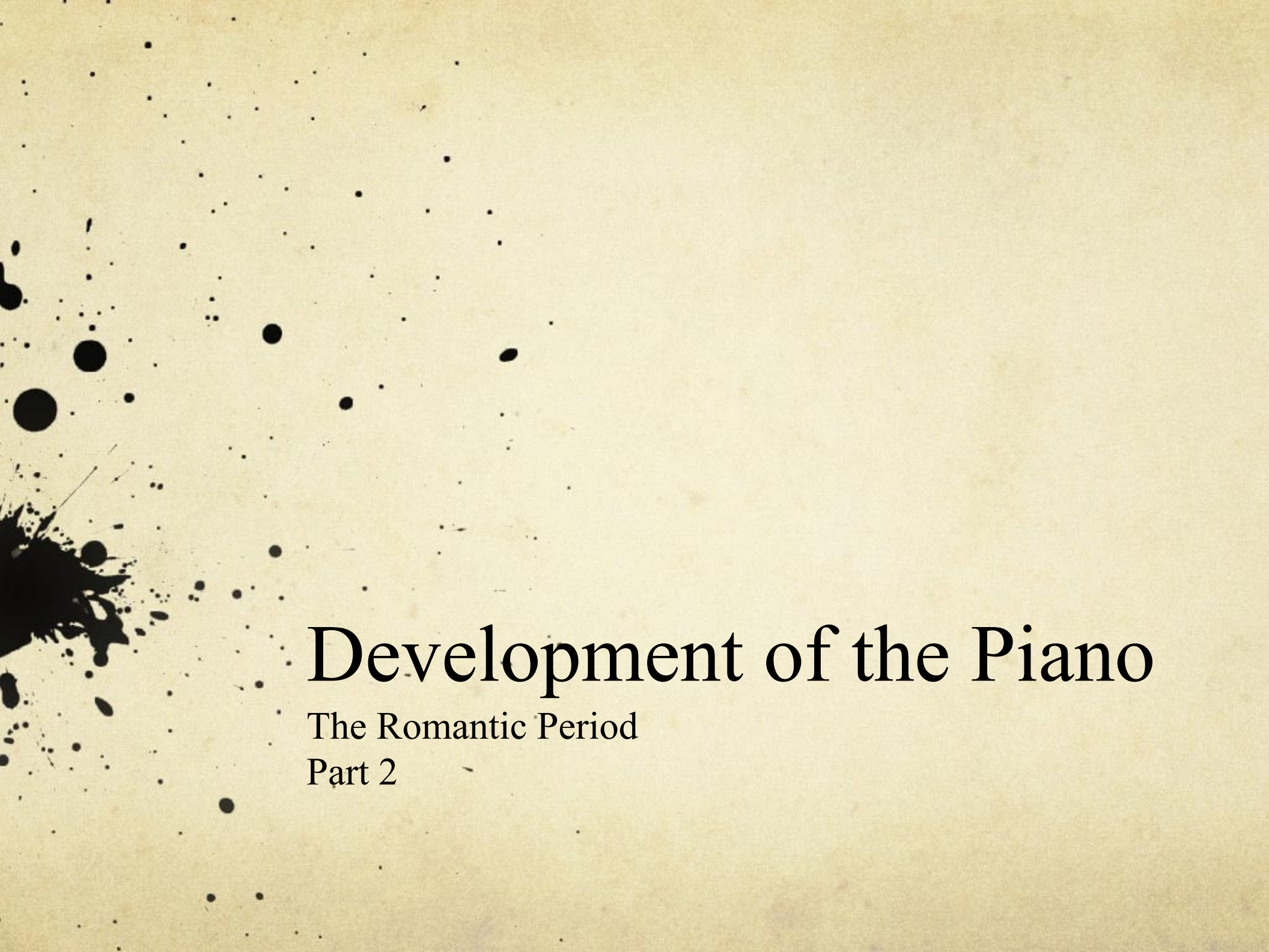
Niccolo Paganini

A new animal

- The Virtuoso became a special breed in the 19th Century
- Pianists in particular were fanatically developing every possible aspect of technique and reaching unbelievable levels of accomplishment
- Some of the areas which developed alongside the new piano designs were:
 - Tone
 - Touch
 - Agility and finger strength
 - Phrasing
 - Pedalling
 - Power
 - Volume
 - Arm weight



Anton Rubinstein



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The Romantic Period

Part 2



Frederic Chopin

A Trio of Revolutionaries



Franz Liszt



Robert Schumann

The Rock Star



Ludwig van Beethoven

- Franz Liszt (1811-86)
- Hungarian pianist
- His teacher was a pupil of Beethoven
- “Passing on the Torch” very important to the Romantic mind
- Later, some pianists would say they had learnt from Liszt even if they hadn’t!
- A teacher might be considered a spiritual guide



Franz Liszt

“Le concert, c’est moi!”

- The Piano Recital is born
- Up till now, solo piano music was always played in concerts alongside other performers
- Now just one person
- Suddenly performer is side-on to audience
- A piano recital is now a spectacle
- Concert pianist is the rock star of the 19th Century

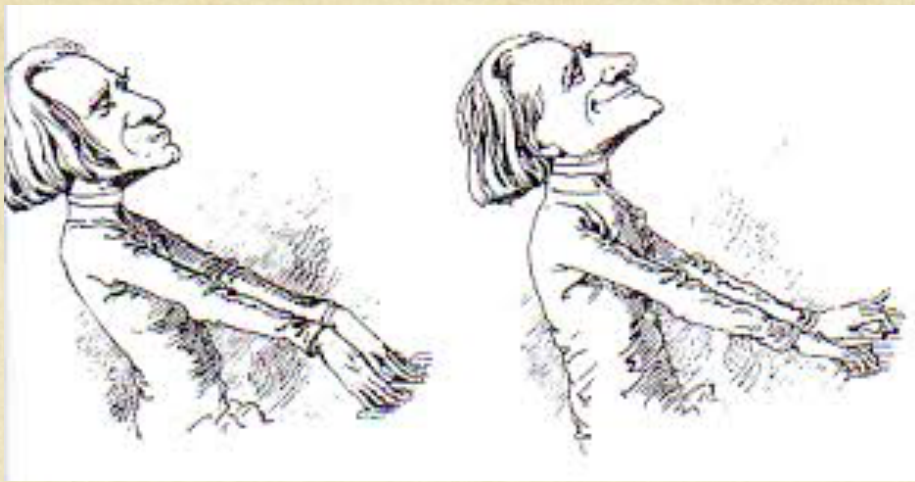


A cast of Liszt's hands

Quite the ladies' man

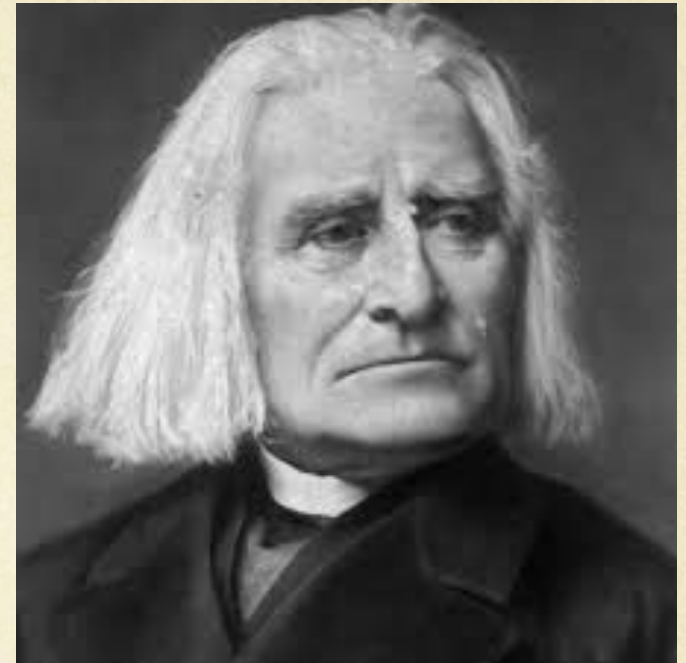
- Women stalk Liszt, steal his cigar butts and hide them in their underwear
- Liszt never married but had a number of scandalous affairs with famous married women
- One of the most famous men in 19th Century Europe
- Towards the end of his life, took minor orders in the Catholic Church and became known as “The Abbé Liszt”





Liszt's music

- Wild and exciting
- Larger than life – the epitome of Romanticism
- Some of his works are inspired by his homeland – eg. his Hungarian Rhapsodies
- This **Nationalistic** tendency became common with a number of Romantic composers



Liszt in old age

The Dreamer



Robert and Clara Schumann

- Robert Schumann (1810-56)
- A very “poetic” approach – his music often sounds dreamy
- Some works have fanciful titles – eg. one of his piano pieces is simply called “Why?”
- Went insane and spent his last years in an asylum
- His wife Clara was one of the first great female pianists
- She was also a great teacher and helped to “pass the torch” into the 20th Century

The Aristocrat

- Frederic Chopin (1810-49)
- His **Etudes** (studies) almost single-handedly reinvented piano technique
- The first composer to write music that was only possible on the piano
- Arguably the greatest piano composer of all time
- His music really sings – Chopin was inspired by the opera composers of his day
- His anguish over leaving his homeland led him to write very “Polish” music
- In other words, he was a Nationalist



Frederic Chopin