

ROMANTIC to 20TH CENTURY

Comparison Chart

	Romantic	Twentieth Century
Melody	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complex melodies, often irregular, with dramatic leaps. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Melodies range from long, luxurious or abstract melodies to short, almost disconnected gestures
Rhythm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Varied and unpredictable rhythm • Wide range of tempo 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rhythmic language expands, no longer based on groupings of twos and threes. • Any grouping is possible, and composers are free to mix rhythms and meters. • In some styles, rhythm's a primary element
Harmony	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Richer, and varied harmonies, more chromaticism • Dissonance kept within bounds of tonality • Distinction between major and minor blurs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any combination of notes is possible • Nothing is too dissonant, including microtones • Major/minor tonality is abandoned by many composers, replaced by atonality, twelve-tone composition, or bitonality
Sound	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wider variety of colors • Sounds of ethnic Western music incorporated, such as that of the Hungarian Gypsies • New instruments introduced and traditional instruments given wider dynamic range 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All sounds are possible (including no sound or the sounds of the past). • Sounds of popular and non-Western music part of the twentieth century. • New instruments are created, and old instruments are used in bold, experimental ways.
Texture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textures often contrapuntal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Polyphonic textures prevail, often non-imitative.
Form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Binary and ternary forms and sonata allegro • Forms expanded, often reflecting programmatic ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Older forms continue, but are more abstract. • New forms and formal principles arise, including forms that freely grow out of spontaneous improvisation and chance.