

The history of music - classical composers: Beethoven, Ravel

Key composers, genre and instruments

**Ludwig Van Beethoven**  
1770-1827

Widely regarded as the greatest composer who ever lived, Ludwig van Beethoven dominated a period of musical history as no one else before or since. He was born in Germany. Beethoven first noticed difficulties with his hearing sometime in 1798, when he was about 28. By the time he was 44 or 45, he was totally deaf and unable to converse unless he passed written notes back and forth to his colleagues, visitors and friends. He died in 1827 at the age of 56.

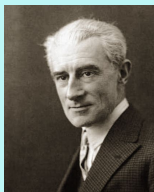


**Famous works**

Beethoven wrote 722 pieces of music! They include nine symphonies, 35 piano sonatas and 16 string quartets. One of his most recognised symphonies is Symphony no.5 in C minor with a very well known opening.

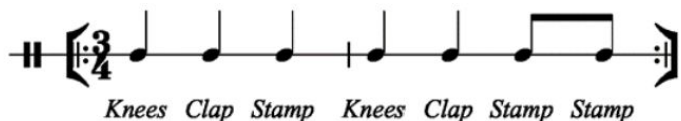
**Maurice Ravel**  
1875-1937

Joseph Maurice Ravel was a French composer, pianist and conductor. Ravel was internationally regarded as France's greatest living composer.



**Famous works**

Bolero was written in 1928. It has a rhythmic ostinato (repeated pattern) which plays throughout the piece on the snare drum. The piece starts very softly (piano) and builds and builds until it is very loud (forte) at the end. It was famously used by Jane Torvill and Christopher Dean in the 1984 winter Olympics when Britain won gold in the pairs figure skating.



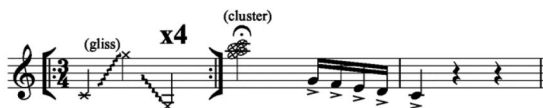
Key Skills

- Play instruments with increasing accuracy, fluency, control and expression.
- Appreciate, understand, review and evaluate music by famous composers.
- Use and understand staff and other musical notations.
- Develop an understanding of the history of music.
- Understand and explore how music is created, produced and communicated, including through the inter-related dimensions: pitch, duration, dynamics, tempo, timbre, texture, structure and appropriate musical notations.



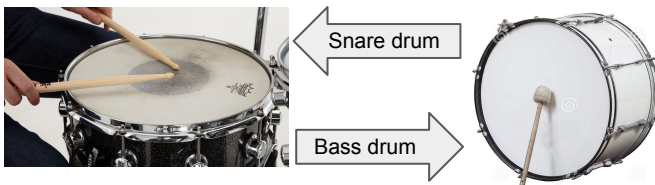
A melodic ostinato

- CODA** - Ravel adds a 'Coda' (special ending) to his piece. It looks (roughly) like this:



Relevant songs

Symphony no.5 - Beethoven  
Ravel's Bolero



Key Vocabulary

<b>rhythmic ostinato</b>	A repeated pattern on an untuned instrument, e.g. drum.
<b>melodic ostinato</b>	A repeated melody on a tuned instrument, e.g. xylophone.
<b>timbre</b>	The quality and difference of sounds between instruments.
<b>duration</b>	How long or short a note is.
<b>dynamic</b>	How loud or soft the music is.
<b>notation</b>	Written music.
<b>tempo</b>	The speed of the music
<b>sonata</b>	A piece for the orchestra involving a solo section for an instrument such as piano, flute or violin.
<b>texture</b>	Layers of music to create a fuller sound.
<b>structure</b>	The way a piece of music is put together.
<b>symphony</b>	A lengthy form of musical composition for orchestra.



A gong and bass drum are used during the coda (end) section.