

Unit 14

La musique

Music



Des musiciens merveilleux (Great musicians)



RAMEAU

Jean Philippe Rameau
1683-1764

Jean Philippe Rameau (1683-1764) was born in Dijon. A superb musician, he played the organ and the harpsichord. He also wrote a book, *Le Traité d'harmonie*, about the rules of musical harmony. Rameau is considered today the outstanding French composer of the **Baroque** period. He wrote 21 operas and ballets, church music, and special music for the harpsichord. Some of his works are *Castor and Pollux*, an opera based on the mythological story of Greek and Roman twins, and *Pieces for the Harpsichord* (*Pièces pour le clavecin*). This French composer's style has been compared to that of Johann Sebastian Bach of Germany and Antonio Vivaldi of Italy.

Georges Bizet (1838-75) was born in Paris. He began his musical studies at age six and at nine he entered the Paris Conservatory of Music. At 17 he composed a delightful piece of music called *Symphony in C*. At 19 he won the *Prix de Rome*, an award for achievements in music and art.

Bizet's musical style is considered **Romantic**, that is, based on the movement called **Romanticism**. Some of his works are musical adaptations of famous stories. He wrote the music for *The Woman from Arles* (*L'Arlésienne*), which was based on a play by compatriot Alphonse Daudet, and an opera called *Carmen*, which was based on a story by another Frenchman, Prosper Mérimée. *Carmen* is about gypsies, smugglers, toreadors, and soldiers. Today this opera is considered the best ever written by a French composer because it is colorful, exciting, and dramatic. The music critics of the time, however, were extremely harsh in their reviews. Bizet became very depressed by their rejection, and his health got worse. He died at the age of 37.

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937) was born in Ciboure, a Basque village near Bordeaux. Like many of the composers of his time, such as Aaron Copland and Manuel de Falla, he worked folk music into his



Maurice Ravel
1875-1937

5) compositions. He created music for his favorite instrument, the piano, and for a large orchestra. He used wind and percussive instruments to create dramatic sound effects, hoping that the different sounds would create different impressions on the listener. (This style of music is called **Impressionistic**, that is, based on a movement called **Impressionism**.) Unlike the Baroque composer Rameau, Ravel did not use the standard rules of harmony. He was freer and more inventive in terms of creating sounds. Much of Ravel's music reflects his Basque heritage.

Ravel's works include *Daphne and Chloe* (*Daphnis et Chloé*), a ballet; *Mother Goose Suite* (*Ma mère l'oye*), a piece for the piano; *The Spanish Hour* (*L'heure espagnole*), a comic opera; *The Waltz* (*La Valse*), a ballet to represent the Viennese spirit; *Bolero*, a very popular ballet; and finally, *The Spanish Rhapsody* (*Rapsodie espagnole*), a work for the full orchestra.

Popular Music

Contemporary rock music in Europe has been greatly influenced by the English speaking world. The blues, jazz, rock and roll, country western, and rap from the United States and rock from England have all had an effect on the new sounds in other countries. Many French bands lean heavily on these models, while others create their own unique styles. Some groups, including *Manau*, sing and rap in French.

Traditional music is largely folk music, that is, music that reflects the cultural heritage of a certain region. It could be a folk song, dance music, or another kind of instrumental music. You can hear this music at regional dances and annual folk festivals. Some French groups play songs in the Breton and Basque languages or perform on traditional instruments. The *Gipsy Kings*, a very popular band, creates music based on their Basque heritage. The rock/rap band *Manau* has recently brought out a Celtic album, which highlights the Breton heritage of its members. A type of music imported from North Africa is called *le raï*, which combines Arabic folk music with electronic sounds.



The Gipsy Kings are members of two related families from Arles and Montpellier.



Manau chose its name from the old Gaelic name for the Isle of Man.



Céline Dion sings in both French and English.



The musical influences of Angélique Kidjo include Afropop, Jazz, Gospel, Congolese rumba, and Caribbean zouk.

AC

A

B

C

The **entertainment world** is always eager for singers and song writers. Back in the 1930's and 1940's there was the world-famous Parisian singer Édith Piaf, called the *la Môme*, or "Little Sparrow." Recognized by her very distinctive and powerful voice, Édith was a cabaret singer who sang about the troubles and problems of ordinary people. Currently popular is Céline Dion, a singer from Québec, Canada. She has made soundtracks for motion pictures such as *Beauty and the Beast (La Belle et la Bête)* and *Titanic*. She became a hit in France as well, winning at the Music Awards Festival at Cannes and receiving an honor from the French government.

There are other popular celebrities. Patricia Kaas, a singer from Alsace in northeastern France, sings in French, German, and English. Angélique Kidjo, a singer from the African country of Bénin, sings in both French and her native language Fon. (As a Goodwill Ambassador for UNICEF, she uses her music to call attention to the problems facing the world's children.) Like Céline Dion, she has also recorded soundtracks for many movies. Jean-Jacques Goldman has a huge following in Europe. His songs are a combination of folk and rock, somewhat similar to the style of Bob Dylan. Finally, there is Patrick Bruel, a singer and actor originally from Algeria, a former French colony.

Activités

A Give the full name of the composer who. . .

1. . . . used folk songs in his music. _____
2. . . . wrote a book about harmony. _____
3. . . . wrote music for a play and a story. _____

B Match the work in column A with its description in column B.

- | A | B |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1. _____ <i>Carmen</i> | A. a play set to music |
| 2. _____ <i>Castor and Pollux</i> | B. opera that at first displeased the public |
| 3. _____ <i>The Waltz</i> | C. full orchestral work |
| 4. _____ <i>The Woman from Arles</i> | D. ballet inspired by the city of Vienna |
| 5. _____ <i>The Spanish Rhapsody</i> | E. opera inspired by mythological twins |

C Identify. . . (Identify. . .)

1. . . . the name of the city referenced in *L'Arlésienne*.

2. . . . the ethnic heritage of Maurice Ravel.

3. . . . the nationality of Céline Dion.

4. . . . the name of the singer from Bénin.

5. . . . the region of France that Patricia Kaas calls home.

include
id

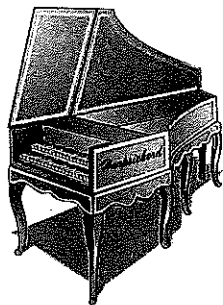
D Complete the analogies.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. <i>Daphnis and Chloé</i> : Ravel | = <i>Castor and Pollux</i> : _____ |
| 2. Maurice Ravel: composer | = Jean-Jacques Goldman: _____ |
| 3. Ravel: _____ | = Rameau: harpsichord |
| 4. _____: Kidjo | = Édith: Piaf |
| 5. Georges: Bizet | = Céline: _____ |

E Match the composer with his style of music.

- | A | B |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| 1. _____ Ravel | A. Romantic |
| 2. _____ Rameau | B. Impressionistic |
| 3. _____ Bizet | C. Baroque |

F Write the correct name of the musician associated with the idea represented by the image.



G

Contemporary Music

Can you name a female singer. . .

from Africa? _____

from Europe? _____

from North America? _____

H

C'est à toi! Choose one of the following composers, musicians, or singers. Find out as much as you can about the person's life and musical works. Report to the class about your findings. A musical excerpt on an audio CD or a printout of a song's lyrics would add a nice touch to your presentation.

Aznavour, Charles

Berlioz, Hector

Brassens, Georges

Brel, Jacques

Debussy, Claude

Gainsbourg, Serge

Goldman, Jean-Jacques

Gounod, Charles

Hallyday, Johnny

Khaled

Massenet, Jules

Saint-Saëns, Camille

image.

Proverbe

“ Le musicien est
magicien.
The musician is a
magician. ”



Langue vivante!



Depuis l'été 1998, le rap celtique est sur toutes les ondes !

Manau, composé de Martial, Cédric et R.V. (Hervé), 3 garçons de banlieue parisienne

qui revendiquent leurs racines bretonnes. Après l'immense succès

de *La tribu de Dana*, et plus de 1 700 000 singles vendus,

Manau enchaîne avec *Panique Celtique*.

Cela fait plusieurs années que tous les 3 ils utilisent les platines et qu'ils évoluent dans l'univers

de la musique, entre rap, groove et techno.



I

Look at the screen-shot from the Web site of the musical group Manau; then answer the questions.

1. What kind of music does it play?

2. How many musicians make up the group?

3. The group's members all have Breton roots, that is, they come from the province of Brittany. Can you find the phrase "Breton roots"?

4. Breton roots mean the members share a Celtic heritage. Can you find a phrase that includes the word "*celtique*"?

5. What is the title of one of their albums?

J

The newspaper *Le Monde* has a musical offer for the reader.

1. What is the name of the composer featured in this offer?

2. *Il y combien de CD?*

3. What accompanies each CD?

K

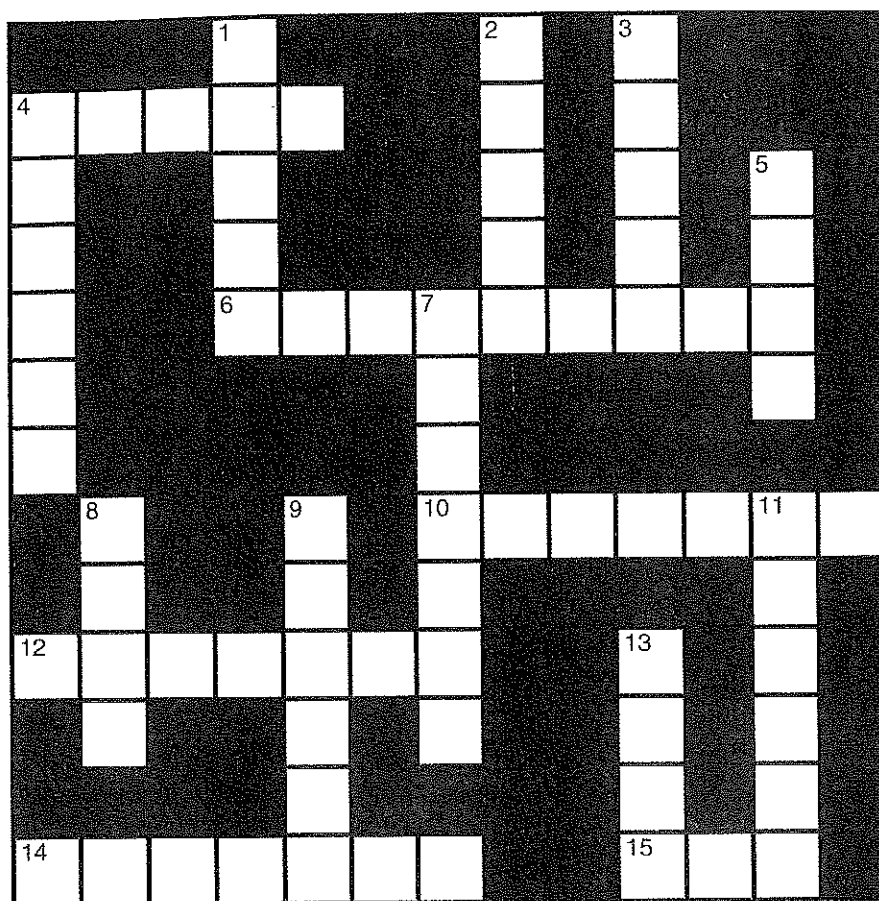
Le Parisien is another newspaper featuring a musical event. Answer the following questions about it.

1. What event is being advertised in the picture?

2. In what month does it take place?

3. What information about this event can you find in the paper?

Mots croisés



Horizontalement

4. birthplace of Georges Bizet
6. used entirely by Ravel
10. first name of Impressionist composer
12. Jean-Jacques ____
14. birthplace of Ravel
15. Angélique Kidjo's first language

Verticalement

1. singer from Africa
2. *Mother* ____ *Suite*
3. composer of *Carmen*
4. one of the mythological brothers
5. sings in French, German, and English
7. Rameau believed in the rules of ____.
8. Céline's last name
9. Baroque composer
11. most famous French opera
13. world famous singer of the 1930's and 1940's