CONCERTO
Arguing and Working Together
Concerto

- Concerto = musical composition for soloist and orchestra
- Concerto from root words concertato and concertare
- Concertare = “To fight (or work) together”
- Who is fighting/working together? Soloist and orchestra
Concerto

- Concerto in the Baroque period (1700s) developed by Antonio Vivaldi
- Orchestral passages (*ritornelli*) alternate with passages by the soloist
- Ritornello = “returning thing” played by Orchestra
RITORNELLO FORM = Concerto Form for Baroque composers

- Usually 5 ritornelli alternating with 4 solos
Nigel Kennedy plays Vivaldi’s “Summer” concerto, movement III
Concerto in the Classical and Romantic period (1800s) combines the “solo-ritornello” idea with the use of usually two contrasting themes and the sonata form structure.
## Piano Concerto

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<th>Recapitulation</th>
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Cadenza
The piano becomes one of the most important solo virtuoso instruments in the 1800s due to the piano’s continual technical developments.

Many composers are pianists and write for the instrument.

The piano concerto—along with the violin concerto—becomes one of the most important genres during the Romantic period.
Tchaikovsky

- Written in 1874-1875
- Written for pianist Nikolai Rubenstein, who heavily criticizes it (and Tchaikovsky)
Nikolai Rubenstein
“I played the first movement. Not a single word, not a single remark! If you knew how stupid and intolerable is the situation of a man who cooks and sets before a friend a meal, which he proceeds to eat in silence! Oh, for one word, for friendly attack, but for God’s sake one word of sympathy, even if not of praise.”
“I stood up and asked, “Well?” Then a torrent poured out… It turned out that my concerto was worthless and unplayable; passages were so fragmented, so clumsy, so badly written that they were beyond rescue; the work itself was bad, vulgar; in places I had stolen from other composers; only two or three pages were worth preserving; the rest must be thrown away or completely rewritten. “Here, for instance, this—now what’s all that?” (he caricatured my music on the piano) “And this? How can anyone …”
“The chief thing I can't reproduce is the **tone** in which all this was uttered. In a word, a disinterested person in the room might have thought I was a maniac, a talented, senseless hack who had come to submit his rubbish to an eminent musician.”
Tchaikovsky rewrites it in **1879**, and again in **1888**

Tchaikovsky submits it to German pianist **Hans von Bülow**, who was also a great conductor, who premieres the work in **Boston**.
I’ll play your concerto!

Hans von Bülow
The concerto was such a hit that von Bülow had to repeat the final movement as an encore.

Tchaikovsky is astonished when he hears of it.
Nikolai Rubenstein later becomes a fervent champion of the work, and performs it many times
### Piano Concerto

#### Allegro con spirito

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#### Allegro non troppo e molto maestoso

*Introduction with melody that is only heard here*
First held in 1958

Held every 4 years (like the Olympics)

Musicians between 16 and 30

Meant to demonstrate the cultural superiority of Soviets during the Cold War (c. 1947 – c. 1991)
First year an American—Van Cliburn—wins the piano category when he is 23 years old.

Van Cliburn comes from a musical family—his mother studied with Franz Liszt.

Enters Julliard when he is 17, and studies with Rosina Lhévinne (who studied in Moscow).
PIECES to KNOW


- Tchaikovsky, Piano Concerto in B-flat minor, movement I, Track 30, *99 Essential Pieces of Classical Music*
TERMS to KNOW

- Concerto
- Concertare, Concertato
- Ritornello, Solo
- Sonata Form
- Exposition, Development, Recapitulation
- Tchaikovsky Competition
- Van Cliburn