

Category	Date	Event
Politics	800	The Holy Roman Empire is established when Charlemagne is crowned. The Empire lasts until 1806.
Women in music	1098-1179	Hildegard of Bingen, the first documented (named) female composer from Western Europe, is born. She was also an abbess, writer, philosopher, visionary, and mystic.
Instrument	1300	Timpani are brought to Europe by soldiers returning home from the Crusades in the Middle East
Publishing / First example	1360-65	Guillaume de Machaut composes the first polyphonic mass is composed
Instrument	1375	The sackbut, an early version of the trombone, is developed from the trumpet
Instrument	1397	Oldest documented reference to a harpsichord is made in Padua, Italy. There is a later German sculpture (1425) that also depicts a similar instrument, and the oldest complete surviving harpsichord is from 1521.
Music history, general	1400-1600	Renaissance. Much music of this time period focuses on the voice and vocal polyphony. Many of the instruments used make quiet sounds with little dynamic range.
Politics	1492	Sailing for the kingdom of Spain, Christopher Columbus lands in the Caribbean and colonizes what he calls the "New World"
Publishing / First example	1501	The first collection of polyphonic music is printed (Ottaviano Petrucci, "Harmonice Musices Odhecaton")
Instrument	1516	The earliest surviving illustration of the double bass is made.
Women in music	1568	First printed book of music by a female composer (a book of madrigals by Maddalena Casulana)
Publishing / First example	1597	First documented opera is composed (Jacopo Peri, "Dafne")
Music history, general	1600-1750	Baroque period. During this period, the genres of opera, concerto, fugue, and trio sonata are developed. Instrument inventors create instruments that allow for more virtuosic and soloistic playing (more notes, greater dynamic range).
Publishing / First example	1600	First surviving opera composed (Jacopo Peri, "Euridice")
Women in music	1625	Francesca Caccini is the first woman to compose an opera (La liberazione di Ruggiero dall'Isola d'Alcina)
Instrument	1650	The bassoon is developed in France.
Instrument	1660	The oboe is developed in France.
Instrument	1675	Timpani are first used in an orchestra by French composer Jean-Baptiste Lully in his opera Thérèse.
Politics	1687-1789	The Age of Enlightenment, a European intellectual and philosophical movement that advanced ideas like reason as the primary source of knowledge, liberty, progress, toleration, constitutional government, and the scientific method
Instrument	1700	The modern clarinet is invented, possibly by Johann Christoph Denner in Germany, replacing the chalumeau (an instrument used since the Medieval period). The first method book isn't published until 1785.

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Instrument	1700	The piano is invented by Barolomeo Cristofori
Instrument	1702	First solo pieces for flute are published
Instrument	1735	The piccolo is developed in France
Music history, general	1750-1820	Classical period. The genres of string quartet and symphony, along with sonata form, are invented during this time. Much of the music features homophonic textures (lyrical melodies over a simpler accompaniment), clear phrase endings, and balanced phrasing.
Composer	1756	Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart is born in Salzburg, Austria
Composer	1770	Ludwig van Beethoven is born in Bonn, Germany
Non-white musician	1772	Joseph Boulogne, also known as the Chevalier de Saint-George, becomes the first Black violin virtuoso to perform in Paris. He was prevented from becoming director of the Paris Opera when its leading female singers petitioned Queen Marie Antoinette: "degrading their honour and delicate conscience by having them submit to the orders of a mulatto."
Politics	1776	The American colonies declare independence from Great Britain, forming the United States of America
Politics	1789	Imitating their allies in America, citizens of France overthrow their royal family (French Revolution)
Music history, general	1795	The Conservatoire de Paris is founded
Composer	1795	Ludwig van Beethoven composes his first piano sonatas (Op. 2)
Composer	1813	Richard Wagner is born
Invention	1814	The first working metronome is made by Dietrich Nikolaus Winkel. Etienne Loulie had tried earlier (1696) to make a metronome using pendulums.
Music history, general	1820-1900	Romantic period. Much of the symphonic music of this time period is louder, longer, and for larger orchestras than ever before. Virtuosos like Franz Liszt, Frederic Chopin, and Clara Schumann (piano) and Niccolo Paganini and Joseph Joachim (violin) tour Europe, wowing audiences.
Publishing / First example	1821	Premiere of the first major German Romantic opera (Carl Maria von Weber, "Der Freischutz")
Publishing / First example	1830	Premiere of the first fully programmatic symphony (Hector Berlioz, Symphonie fantastique)
Composer	1833	Johannes Brahms is born in Hamburg, Germany
Music history, general	1842	The New York Philharmonic is founded
Women in music	1842	Louise Farrenc becomes the first female professor hired to teach at the Paris Conservatoire. She was only allowed to teach piano, not composition, and all her students were male (female students weren't admitted until 1870).

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Instrument	1846	Saxophone is invented in Belgium by Adolphe Sax
Instrument	1847	Theobald Boehm develops a new system of flute fingering that is still used today
Music history, general	1850	Stephen Foster publishes a collection of "plantation melodies," including "Camptown Races"
Women in music	1852	Camille Urso becomes the first female violin virtuoso to perform in America
Politics	1860-1865	U.S. Civil War is fought
Women in music	1867	The Cincinnati Conservatory of Music is founded by Clara Baur. It is the first conservatory of music founded by a female musician.
NYC history	1870	The Metropolitan Museum of Art is founded
Music history, general	1876	Using architectural designs made by Richard Wagner, the Bayreuth Festspielhaus opens, the first opera theater with a sunken orchestra pit, stadium seating for the audience, and darkened house lights during the performance
Invention	1877	Thomas Edison invents the phonograph, the first device that could reproduce recorded sound
NYC history	1883	The Metropolitan Opera is founded
Recording history	1885-1930	Music publishers and songwriters create popular music in Tin Pan Alley (West 28th Street between 5th and 6th Avenues), writing hundreds of songs each day
Women in music	1892	The New York Philharmonic is the first American orchestra to perform a piece by a female composer (Amy Beach, "Eilende Wolken")
Women in music	1894	Amy Beach becomes the first American woman to compose a symphony (Gaelic Symphony)
Recording history	1895	George Washington Johnson is the first Black recording artist to make a commercial recording. He was paid \$0.22 for singing "The Laughing Song."
Composer	1900	Aaron Copland is born in Brooklyn, NY
Women in music	1903	The first time the Metropolitan Opera presented an opera by a female composer (Ethel Smyth, "Der Wald")
NYC history	1905	The Juilliard School is founded
Composer	1912	John Cage is born

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Non-white musician	1912	Kosaku Yamada becomes the first Japanese composer to write a symphony. He also conducted the Japanese premiere of works by Claude Debussy, Antonin Dvorak, George Gershwin, Jean Sibelius, Dmitri Shostakovich, Johann Strauss, and Richard Wagner.
Non-white musician	1915	Scott Joplin's opera Treemonisha is the first opera written by a Black composer to ever be staged
Politics	1920	Ratification of the 20th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, giving (white) women the right to vote.
Recording history	1924	The first radio program devoted to country music debuts (National Barn Dance), and its broadcast ends in 1968.
Publishing / First example	1929	The first concerto for an electronic instrument (theremin) and orchestra, composed by Joseph Schillinger, is premiered by the Cleveland Orchestra
Publishing / First example	1931	Edgard Varèse composes "Ionisation", the first chamber ensemble work for 13 percussionists. It is premiered at Carnegie Hall two years later. A critic called it "a sock in the jaw."
Non-white musician	1931	First symphony composed by a Black composer (William Grant Still, Afro-American Symphony) is performed by a major American orchestra
Women in music	1933	First symphony composed by a Black American woman (Florence Price) is performed by the Chicago Symphony. The review in the Chicago Daily News called it "a faultless work, a work that speaks its own message with restraint and yet with passion... worthy of a place in the regular symphonic repertoire."
Instrument	1935	Audiovox produces the first electric bass guitar
Women in music	1938	Antonia Brico becomes the first female conductor of the New York Philharmonic
Women in music	1939	Daughters of the American Revolution prevent Marian Anderson from performing at Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C. She performs on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial instead.
Instrument	1940	The first work that added marimba to an orchestra was a concertino by American composer Paul Creston
Music history, general	1943	The first-ever Pulitzer Prize in music is awarded. The recipient is William Schuman ("Secular Cantata No. 2: A Free Song").
Non-white musician	1945	Everett Lee becomes the first Black conductor to lead a major US opera company. He conducted the New York City Opera's performance of Giuseppe Verdi's La Traviata.
Women in music	1947	The second time the New York Philharmonic performed a piece by a female composer (Marion Bauer)
Publishing / First example	1950	John Cage composes "4'33", a piece in which the performer sits on stage without playing their instrument
Invention	1953	First color TVs are sold

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Non-white musician	1955	William Grant Still becomes first Black conductor of a major American orchestra when he leads the New Orleans Symphony
Women in music	1955	Marian Anderson makes her Metropolitan Opera debut after spending her career in exile in Europe.
Politics	1959	Alaska and Hawaii become states
Instrument	1964	Robert Moog develops the first electronic commercial synthesizer.
Music history, general	1965	Command pilots Walter Schirra Jr. and Thomas P. Stafford give the first musical performance in space, improvising using bells and a harmonica
Politics	1969	The first humans walk on the moon during the Apollo 11 space mission
Politics	1969	The first U.S. Defense computer network, ARPANET, is launched. It is the first version of what will become the Internet.
Non-white musician	1972	Henry Lewis makes his debut at the Metropolitan Opera, becoming the first Black conductor at the house.
Politics	1976	Apple Computer Company is established
Women in music	1976	Sarah Caldwell becomes the first female conductor of the Metropolitan Opera
Recording history	1979	First hip-hop record, Rapper's Delight, is released
Non-white musician	1980	Han Zhongjie becomes the first Chinese conductor of the Boston Symphony
Politics	1981	The cable network MTV is launched
Women in music	1983	Ellen Taaffe Zwilich becomes the first female composer to win the Pulitzer Prize in music (Three Movements for Orchestra). Vivian Fine is the runner-up (Drama for Orchestra).
Politics	1989	The Berlin Wall, which had separated East Germany and West Germany, is torn down, marking the end of the Cold War
Recording history	1989	DJ Jazzy Jeff and the Fresh Prince (aka Will Smith) win the first-ever Grammy for Best Rap Performance
Women in music	1993	Simone Young becomes the first female conductor of the Vienna State Opera
Non-white musician	1996	First Pulitzer prize in music awarded to a living Black composer (George Walker, "Lilacs")
Recording history	1996	Naughty By Nature win the first-ever Grammy for Best Rap Album
Recording history	1998	Lauryn Hill's "The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill" is the first hip-hop album to win a Grammy for Album of the Year. She was also the first female rapper to win a Grammy for Best Rap Album (with the Fugees, "The Score").
Women in music	2003	Nicolette Fraillon becomes the world's first (and only) female music director of a ballet company
Women in music	2007	Marin Alsop becomes the first female music director of a major American orchestra (Baltimore Symphony Orchestra)
Women in music	2008	Inma Shara becomes the first female conductor at the Vatican

Category	Date	Event
Non-white musician	2011	Zhou Long is the first Chinese recipient of the Pulitzer Prize in music (for his opera, "Madame White Snake").
Women in music	2016	The second time the Metropolitan Opera presented an opera by a female composer (Kaija Saariaho, L'Amour de Loin)
Non-white musician	2017	Du Yun becomes the first non-white female composer to win the Pulitzer Prize in music. The runners-up that year are also women: Ashley Fure (Bound to the Bow) and Kate Soper (Ipsa Dixit).
Recording history	2018	Kendrick Lamar's hip-hop album "DAMN" is the first winner of the Pulitzer Prize in music that was not classical or jazz music
Recording history	2018	Cardi B becomes the first solo female rapper to win a Grammy for Best Rap Album ("Invasion of Privacy")
Non-white musician	2021	Terence Blanchard's "Fire Shut Up in My Bones" is the first opera by a Black composer performed by the Metropolitan Opera