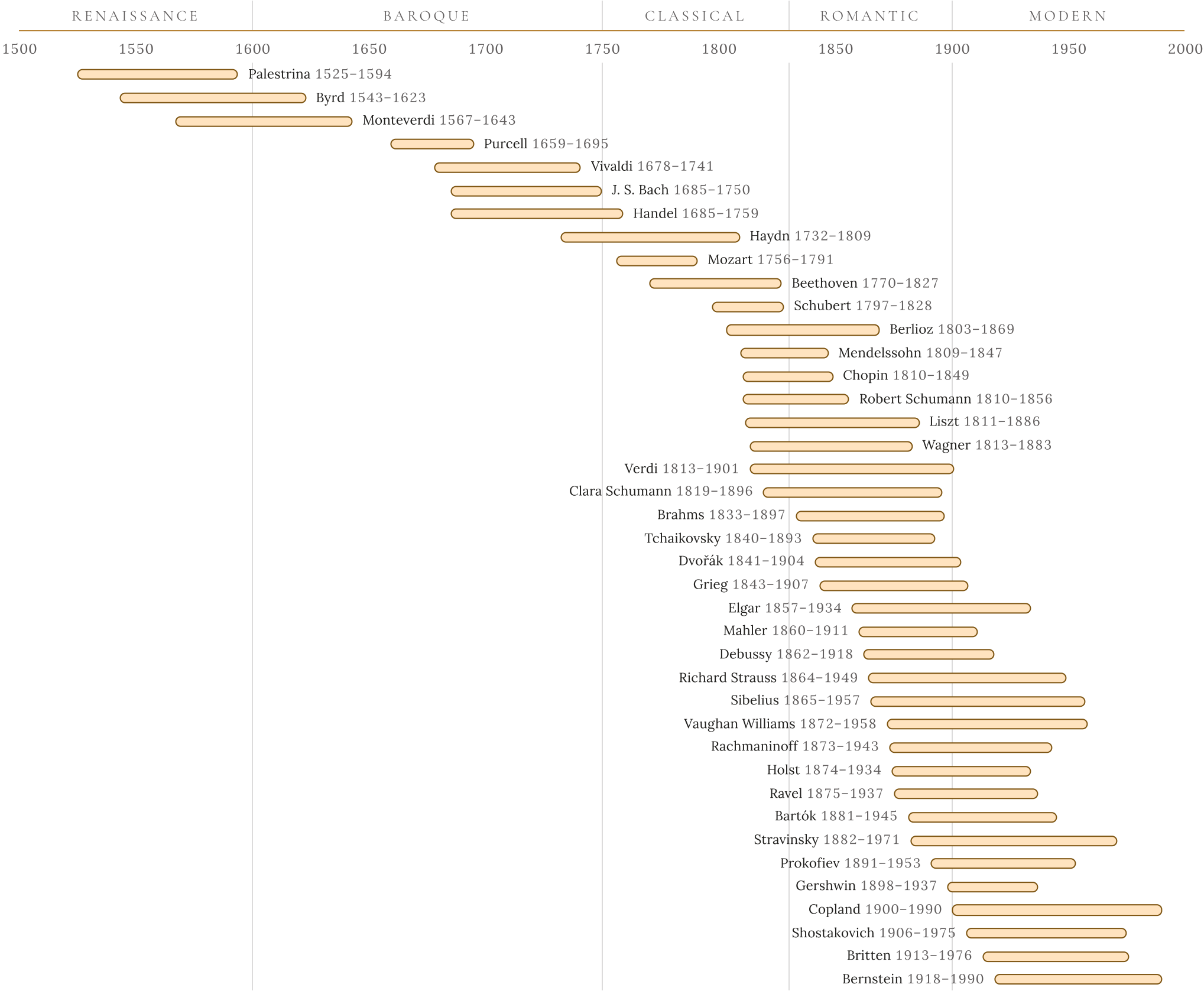


Five Hundred Years of Composers

Every bar is one life, drawn to scale against the same ruler. Read down the page and you watch one style hand over to the next — Bach dies the year Haydn turns eighteen; Brahms and Tchaikovsky write side by side without ever meeting.



What the eras mean

Renaissance — voices above all, woven in equal lines. No bar lines as we know them.

Baroque — a bass line with chords over it, and a fondness for running the same idea through every key.

Classical — balance, clear phrases, sonata form, the orchestra settling into shape.

Romantic — bigger forces, richer harmony, and music asked to carry a story or a feeling.

Modern — every rule up for question at once: new scales, new rhythms, sometimes no key at all.

Overlaps worth noticing

Bach and Handel were born in the same year, eighty miles apart, and never met.

Haydn taught Beethoven and outlived Mozart by eighteen years — one man spans all three Classical giants.

Brahms and Wagner shared half a century and disagreed about almost everything music could be.

Rachmaninoff was still writing lush Romantic melody while Stravinsky and Bartók were tearing the language apart.

Reading the ruler

The scale is even: fifty years is the same distance everywhere on the page.

Era lines are conveniences, not switches. Composers wrote across them, and the labels were invented long afterwards by people looking back.

Bars end at death, not at the last work. Several of these composers wrote nothing of note in their final decade; others finished a masterpiece in it.

Living composers are not shown. Add your own bar at the right-hand edge.