

# *The Enjoyment of* **MUSIC**

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*Twelfth Edition*

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# Music as Order and Logic

*"Music [is] the favorite passion of my soul."*

—Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826)

Some artistic movements can easily be pinpointed in time, those whose leaders make strong statements about the need for radical change. Classicism is not such a movement: in fact, in some ways classicism is a constant concern in Western culture, since its roots are in the values of order and reason expressed by the ancient Greeks and Romans, who laid the foundations for the very notion of European identity. Ideals of classicism have repeatedly resurfaced through the centuries, and in some cases have coexisted with other stylistic concerns. For example, French artists and musicians in the early 1700s never thought of their work as “baroque”: they were the ones who introduced the term to disparage others who didn’t share their “classical” sensibility.

### The Enlightenment

The Parthenon, Athens (447–432 BCE). The architecture of ancient Greece embodied the ideals of order and harmonious proportions.

The later 1700s were a time when classical ideals were especially strong in Europe, combined with a philosophical and intellectual movement known as the **Enlightenment**, which stressed the centrality of reason in human experience. Artists and musicians strove to join the social push toward order and reason, developing works characterized by clarity and regularity of structure, and by an ideal of “natural simplicity.” This tendency led to the development of an international musical style that was held up by subsequent generations as timeless, embodying the most perfect manifestations of musical logic. While previous styles had risen and fallen with fashion, the music of the Classical style was preserved and treasured even as later styles developed in contrast to its ideals—and this music continues to form the core of the Western concert tradition to this day.



## Classicism and Enlightenment Culture

The Classical era in music encompasses the last half of the eighteenth century and the early decades of the nineteenth (c. 1750–1825). During this era, the rule of strong aristocratic sovereigns continued throughout Europe. Louis XV presided over extravagant celebrations in Versailles, and Frederick the Great ruled in Prussia, Maria Theresa in Austria, and Catherine the Great in Russia. In such societies, the ruling class enjoyed its power through hereditary right. At the same time, a new economic power was growing through the Industrial Revolution, which gathered momentum in



the mid-eighteenth century through a series of important inventions—from James Watt's improved steam engine and James Hargreaves's spinning jenny in the 1760s to Eli Whitney's cotton gin in the 1790s. These decades saw significant advances in science—Benjamin Franklin harnessed electricity, Joseph Priestley discovered oxygen, and Edward Jenner perfected vaccination—and intellectual life, with the publication of the French *Encyclopédie* and the first edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. (See Interface, p. 152.)

The eighteenth century has been called the Age of Reason as well as the Enlightenment. Philosophers considered social and political issues in the light of reason and science, but they were also advocates for the rising middle class. The intellectual climate, then, was nourished by two opposing streams. While Classical art captured the exquisite refinement of a way of life that was drawing to a close, it also caught the first wave of a new social structure that would emerge with the revolutionary upheavals at the end of the century.

Just as eighteenth-century thinkers idealized the civilization of the Greeks and Romans, artists revered the unity and proportions of ancient architecture and fine arts. In this spirit, Thomas Jefferson patterned the nation's Capitol, the University of Virginia (see illustration above), and his home at Monticello after Greek and Roman temples. His example spurred on a classical revival in the United States, which made Ionic, Doric, and Corinthian columns indispensable features of public buildings well into the twentieth century.

By the 1760s, though, a Romantic point of view was emerging in literature. The French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau, sometimes called the “father of Romanticism,” produced some of his most significant writings in these years. One celebrated declaration, “Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains,” epitomizes the temper of the time. The first manifestation of the Romantic spirit in Germany was a literary movement known as *Sturm und Drang* (storm and stress). Two characteristic works appeared in the 1770s by the era's most significant young writers: *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, a novel by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, and *The Robbers*, a play by Friedrich von Schiller. The famous poem “Ode to Joy,” set by Beethoven in his Ninth Symphony, was Schiller's proclamation of universal brotherhood; and Goethe would become the favorite lyric poet of the Romantic composers.

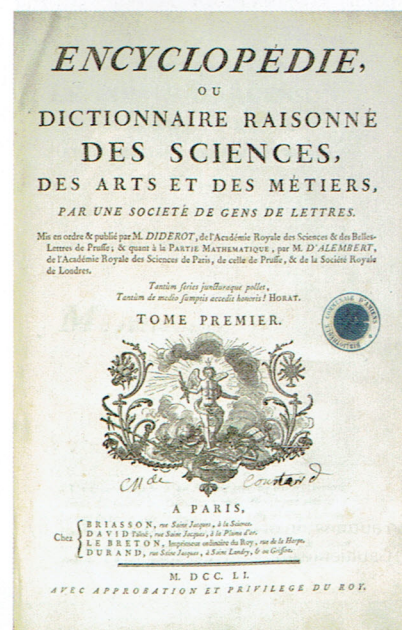
By the end of the century, the old world of the aristocracy was beginning to give way to a new society of the people and to an era that produced some of the greatest artworks of Western culture. Thus, backward-looking classicism itself contained the seeds of what would become the most significant and self-conscious progressive redefinition of European culture.



Thomas Jefferson's design for the Rotunda of the University of Virginia at Charlottesville, completed in 1826, reflects his admiration for classical architecture.

### Romanticism in literature

Edited by Denis Diderot and with contributions from many specialists, the great French *Encyclopédie* (1751–72) sought to bring together knowledge from all over the world.



## Classicism in Music

The Classical period in music is characterized best by the masters of the so-called Viennese School—Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and their successor Franz Schubert. These composers worked in an age of great musical experimentation and discovery, when musicians took on new challenges: first, to explore thoroughly the possibilities offered by the major-minor



## Interface

## Science, Philosophy, and Music in the Age of Enlightenment

In a major intellectual and cultural shift, the eighteenth century looked toward the advancement of knowledge through reason and science. Among those who spearheaded change were the philosopher Voltaire and the physicist who developed the laws of gravity, Isaac Newton. These thinkers embraced a new philosophy that sought to understand all things according to nature and mathematics rather than religion. Scholars arduously collected information to increase the overall body of knowledge, and society in general embraced a focus on learning. One result was the great French *Encyclopédie*, a thirty-five-volume reference source purporting to systematize all knowledge, written by the leading intellectuals of the day, including Voltaire and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Musicians took

part in this effort to amass learning: Rousseau (also a composer) published a comprehensive dictionary of musical terms; Jean-Philippe Rameau wrote an important music theory treatise; and in 1776, the Englishman Charles Burney penned the first music history text (the ancestor of your textbook), which sought to record all knowledge about musicians and their works.

Some of the most celebrated technological achievements were connected to music: for example, “music boxes” with rotating cylinders and other mechanical means of plucking strings or striking metal plates when wound up. (Many of these musical machines were created by clock makers, who were making tremendous technological strides in miniaturizing time-keeping devices in the 1700s.) Some musical machines, known as automata, were made to resemble humans: a life-size human flute player played twelve separate melodies, and there’s a famous automaton, now in the museum of Art and History in Neuchâtel, Switzerland, of a woman playing an organ, pressing the keys of the instrument with her fingers. While the “robotic” performer’s bodily movements may seem less convincing to us in an age of sophisticated CGI animation, they were certainly among the most humanlike mechanical actions that had ever been seen at the time, and they demonstrated the power of human ingenuity.

Across the Atlantic, the statesman and scientist Benjamin Franklin was central to the American Enlightenment through his scientific experi-



A glass armonica from Boston, c. 1830.

ments with electricity and his diverse inventions, including the lightning rod, bifocal glasses, the Franklin stove, and the glass armonica—a musical instrument made of tuned water glasses, for which both Mozart and Beethoven composed works. Franklin was a musician himself (he played harp and guitar), and he wrote a treatise on musical aesthetics, in which he espoused a philosophy of simplicity in melody and harmony.

We can easily relate the Enlightenment’s goals of reasoned thought and simplicity to the music we are studying from this period. Both the individual musical elements—melody, rhythm, and harmony—and the overall structures are designed to embody a clarity, balance, and logic new to composition. This was truly intended as a “universally understandable” language of sound, and it is partly because of this quasi-scientific clarity that many still point to the music of the Classical era as the most straightforward pathway into understanding the musical logic of the European tradition.



An automaton of a mandolin player, built by P. Gaultier (eighteenth century).



system; and second, to perfect a large-scale form of instrumental music—known as sonata form—that exploited those possibilities to the fullest degree. Having found this ideal structure, composers then developed it into the solo and duo sonata, the trio and quartet (especially the string quartet), the concerto, and the symphony.

“Classicism” did not imply a strict adherence to traditional forms; as we will see, the composers of the Viennese School experimented boldly and ceaselessly with the materials at their disposal. And it should not surprise us to find that Romantic elements appear as well in the music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, especially in their late works. These composers dealt with musical challenges so brilliantly that their works have remained unsurpassed models for all who followed.

## Elements of Classical Style

The music of the Viennese masters is notable for its elegant, lyrical melodies. Classical melodies “sing,” even those intended for instruments. They are usually based on symmetrical four-bar phrases marked by clear-cut cadences, and they often move stepwise or by small leaps within a narrow range. Clarity is further provided by repetition and the frequent use of sequence (a pattern repeated at a higher or lower pitch). These devices make for balanced structures that are readily accessible to the listener.

The harmonies that sustain the melodies are equally clear. Chords are built from the seven tones of the major or minor scale (meaning they are diatonic) and therefore are firmly rooted in the key. The chords underline the balanced symmetry of phrases and cadences, and they form vertical columns of sound over which the melody unfolds freely, generally in a homophonic texture (a melody with accompanying harmony).

Much of the music is in one of the four basic meters— $2/4$ ,  $3/4$ ,  $4/4$ , or  $6/8$ —and moves at a steady tempo. If a piece or movement begins in a certain meter, it is apt to stay there until the end. Rhythm works closely with melody and harmony to make clear the symmetrical phrase-and-cadence structure of the piece. Well-defined sections establish the home (tonic) key, move to contrasting but closely related keys, and return to the home key. The result is the beautifully molded architectural forms of the Classical style, fulfilling the listener’s need for both unity and variety.

Despite its aristocratic elegance, music of the Classical era absorbed a variety of folk and popular elements. This influence made itself felt not only in the German dances, minuets, and waltzes of the Viennese masters but also in their songs, symphonies, concertos, string quartets, and sonatas.

## The Patronage System

The culture of the eighteenth century thrived under the patronage, or sponsorship, of an aristocracy that viewed the arts as a necessary adornment of life. Music was part of the elaborate lifestyle of the nobility, and the center of musical life was the palace.



The minuet was one of the most popular dances in the eighteenth century. *The Minuet under an Oak Tree* (1787), by François Louis Joseph Watteau (1758–1823).

This engraving, dated 1773, shows a typical violin-piano duo.





The social events at court created a steady demand for new works from composers, who had to supply whatever their patrons wanted. Although musicians ranked little better than servants, their situation was not quite as depressing as it sounds. The patronage system actually gave musicians economic security and provided a social framework within which they could function. It offered important advantages to those who successfully adjusted to its requirements, as the career of Joseph Haydn clearly shows (see p. 159).

## Opportunities for Women

While aristocratic women like Marie Antoinette, archduchess of Austria and wife of French king Louis XVI, continued their regular music studies, middle-class women also found a place as musicians under the patronage system. In Italy and France, professional female singers achieved prominence in opera and in court ballets. Others found a place within aristocratic circles as court instrumentalists and music teachers, offering private lessons to members of the nobility.

**Maria Anna Mozart**

Two women in particular, both associated with Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, stand out as impressive keyboard players of the late eighteenth century. His sister, Maria Anna Mozart (1751–1829), known as Nannerl, was an accomplished pianist who as a child toured widely with Wolfgang, performing concertos and four-hand piano works. Their father noted that Nannerl, at age twelve, played “so beautifully that everyone is talking about her and admiring her execution.” A friend of Mozart’s, the blind composer Maria Theresia von Paradis (1759–1824), was an excellent pianist and organist, renowned for her remarkable musical memory, which retained some sixty different concertos that she prepared for an extended European tour.

**Maria Theresia von Paradis**

The public prominence achieved by these women was unusual for the era. However, the many engravings and paintings of the time illustrating music-mak-



Map of Europe, 1763–89, showing major musical centers.



ing scenes make it clear that women participated frequently in performances at home, in aristocratic salons, and at court. Ultimately, with the growth of the music trades, especially music printing and publishing, women found more professional opportunities open to them. And as more amateurs participated in music-making, women of the middle as well as upper classes found an outlet for their talents.

## From Palace to Concert Hall

At this time, musical performances were beginning to move from the palace to the concert hall. The rise of the public concert gave composers a new venue (site) in which to perform their works. Haydn and Beethoven conducted their own symphonies at concerts, and Mozart and Beethoven played their own piano concertos. The public flocked to hear the latest works—unlike modern (classical music) concertgoers who are interested mainly in music of the past. The eagerness of eighteenth-century audiences for new music surely stimulated composers to greater productivity.

While great virtuoso performers continued to be highly prized, the clarity and simplicity of the Classical style made it increasingly accessible to the informed amateur—whether through performance or through careful listening. More and more instrumental music was described in terms of dialogue and communication—whether between performers or between the composer and the public. As the idea of communication through instrumental storytelling became ingrained, the notion of using that communication to build a deep and intimate connection between the uniquely inspired composer-genius and the receptive listener grew more appealing to musicians and their audiences. This too was an essential element in the emerging Romantic sensibility, as we will see in the work of Beethoven and in the public response to Mozart's late compositions.



An aristocratic concert. Oil and wood panel, attributed to Jean-Honoré Fragonard (1732–1806).

## CRITICAL THINKING

1. What were the primary characteristics of Classicism?
2. How are Classical ideals reflected in eighteenth-century music?