

Understanding Music

Seventh Edition

Jeremy Yudkin

Boston University

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The word “classic” is usually used to describe something with an appeal that is both very broad and very long-lasting. A novel may be described as a classic, and so may a movie or a car. This means that the novel, the movie, and the car continue to attract enthusiasts long after they first appeared. It also means that they appeal to a wide range of people.

Both of these things are true of Classic music. The music of the greatest composers of the Classic era has been popular with audiences ever since it was written. Indeed, the masterpieces of Classic music were the first works in musical history that have stayed in the concert repertoire ever since they were first composed. Before that time, a piece was usually performed once or twice and then set aside.

What is it about Classic music that has given it such enduring appeal? Before we can answer that question, we need to consider the social and political climate of Europe in the middle of the eighteenth century.

From Absolutism to Enlightenment to Revolution

The eighteenth century was a time of profound social and political change. It began with the death in 1715 of Louis XIV of



The brilliant, witty French writer known as Voltaire.



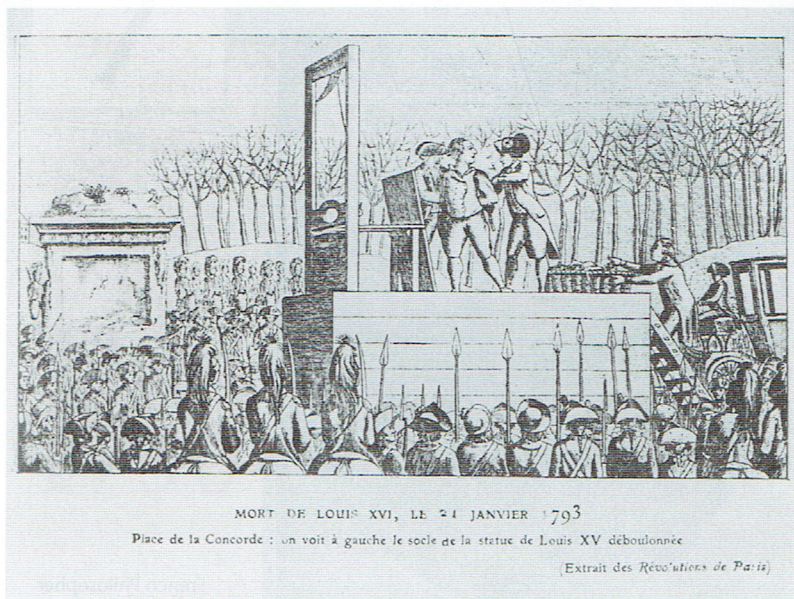
French Philosopher
Jean-Jacques
Rousseau.

France, the most powerful absolute ruler in Europe, and it ended with two of the most significant revolutions in modern history: the American War of Independence (1775–1783) and the French Revolution (1789–1794).

The whole period was colored by the philosophical movement known as the Enlightenment. This movement, led by the great French philosophers Voltaire and Rousseau who both died in 1778, attempted to apply the principles of scientific objectivity to issues of social justice. The Enlightenment favored the human over the divine, reason over religion, and clarity over complexity. Its adherents tried to improve education, eliminate superstition and prejudice, and break down the rigid class structure that separated people from one another.

NEED TO KNOW THE ENLIGHTENMENT

- “The Age of Reason”—applied scientific methods to human society
- Elevated science/the rational over religion/faith—rejected superstition, prejudice, and long-held beliefs in favor of what could be measured scientifically
- “All men are created equal”—valued individual freedom and equality over the older class system



King Louis XVI is led to the guillotine in 1793.

Although these changes were slow in coming, some of the rulers of the time were influenced by the ideas of the Enlightenment. Frederick the Great of Prussia and Emperor Joseph II of Austria, for example, were both regarded as “enlightened” monarchs (at least in comparison with their predecessors). Both men were also strong supporters of the arts. Frederick the Great, whom we have mentioned briefly already, played the flute and employed some of the most accomplished musicians of the day at his court. Joseph II, an amateur cellist, was a great patron of music and literature. In Vienna, which was the capital of the Holy Roman Empire and the place where Joseph held court, all the arts flourished. With names such as Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven in the list of its citizens, Vienna was, by the end of the century, the musical center of Europe.

Enlightenment ideals reached their high point in Vienna in the 1780s and 1790s, but they exerted an influence on many other parts of the world as well. Throughout the century, England had a thriving economy and a rich and varied cultural life. Members of the middle class increasingly claimed free expression and leisure time as their own. In the New World, the ideals of the Enlightenment were realized in the growing resentment of the American colonists against the English government. The American Revolution culminated in the Declaration of Independence in 1776. The American experiment in democratic government had powerful implications for intellectuals and revolutionaries everywhere. In 1786, the French philosopher Condorcet wrote that the rights of humankind must be read “in the

Rousseau, an “enlightened” philosopher, wrote in 1758: “Women, in general, possess no artistic sensibility. The celestial fire that ignites the soul ... the inspiration that consumes ... the sublime ecstasies that reside in the depths of the heart are always lacking in women’s writings. Their creations are as cold and pretty as women themselves.”

example of a great nation. America has given us this example.”

In France, the reign of Louis XIV was succeeded by those of Louis XV (1715–1774) and Louis XVI (1774–1789). The powerful central authority wielded by Louis XIV gradually eroded, and his successors became corrupt and increasingly out of touch with popular sentiment. The reign of Louis XVI ended in the turmoil of the French Revolution, which had as its slogan the rallying cry of the Enlightenment: “Liberty, Equality, Brotherhood!” Louis XVI was guillotined by his own people in the middle of Paris on January 21, 1793.

Brotherhood was the concept behind many new organizations founded in the eighteenth century. Chief among these was Freemasonry, founded in England in 1717. The Masons were—and are—an international secret society of mutual support and social charity. Freemasonry cut across the boundaries of class and profession. It spread quickly throughout Europe and America, and its ranks included kings, writers, composers, and politicians. Famous Freemasons of the eighteenth century were Joseph II, the great German poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Mozart, and George Washington.

The idea of brotherhood did not include women, however. And because their roles were narrowly defined by society in this as in other eras, few women became monarchs, well-known writers, or famous composers. Important exceptions were Maria Theresa, ruler of Austria from 1740 to 1780, and Catherine II (“Catherine the Great”) of Russia, who ruled from 1762 to 1796. One of the greatest novelists of the late eighteenth century was Jane Austen (1775–1817), whose masterpieces include *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma*. But the author’s name did not appear on the title pages of her books when they were published, and she received very little public recognition during her own lifetime. Similarly, there were women who composed music but did not have their works published. Anna Amalie, the Duchess of Saxe-Weimar, wrote German operas and chamber music and was highly influential in bringing together intellectuals, poets, and musicians at her court, but her own music was never published.

Nonetheless, women’s influence in all other areas of musical life was great. Women were accomplished music teachers, singers, instrumentalists, authors of instruction manuals, patrons, and organizers of musical life. Marie Lieszcinska, who married Louis XV in 1725, inaugurated an important concert series at Versailles that attracted the leading

musicians of the day. This tradition was continued by Madame de Pompadour in mid-century and by Marie-Antoinette of Austria, the wife of Louis XVI, after 1770.

In the latter part of the century, society's attitudes toward women began to broaden, and women took a more public role in European musical life. Some became professional performers, others both performed and composed. Julie Candeille (1767–1834) was an opera singer, pianist, harpist, and composer. She made her performing debut at the age of 16 as piano soloist in a concerto; the following year, she played a concerto of her own composition. During her life, she published many of her own works and gave song recitals, accompanying herself on the piano in more than 150 performances. Her

greatest success came in 1792–1793, when her comic opera *Catherine* became a hit in Paris. The opera received numerous revivals during the next 20 or 30 years. A great deal more research, publishing, and performance remains to be done to restore women's music from the Classic era to its rightful place.

The Musical Public

Changes in class structure in the eighteenth century had far-reaching effects on music. The flourishing economy created a large and prosperous middle class, whose members felt that they were entitled to the privileges and cultural diversions previously reserved for the aristocracy. The eighteenth century saw the rise of the public concert.

PERFORMANCE IN CONTEXT

A Provincial Theatre

The Estates Theatre today is a remarkably well-preserved example of an eighteenth-century neoclassical theatre. The oval hall is surrounded by five rows of private opera boxes, their edges sparkling with candelabras. Rows of chairs fill the ground floor, then—as now—the domain of the general public. The word “provincial” conjures up images of simplicity, plainness, and old-fashioned customs. This is not so with the city of Prague—the capital of the Austrian province of Bohemia and a vibrant center of literature, fashion, and the arts. Music and musicians thrived in Prague, and its large, musically-educated audiences lured performers and composers from the imperial capital in Vienna. A symphony or opera that failed to impress a conservative Viennese audience might find a receptive audience among Prague's progressive citizens. A difficult work that suffered from poor performances in the capital could be beautifully played in the province nicknamed “The Conservatory of Europe.”

The early history of the Estates Theatre in Prague illustrates the progressive nature of Bohemian audiences. This opera house was built in 1783 by a theatre-loving Czech nobleman, and soon became home to the opera company of Pasquale Bondini, an Italian singer and impresario. In 1786, Mozart's opera *The Marriage of Figaro* opened to a cool reception in Vienna, closing after a disappointing nine performances; undeterred, Bondini decided to stage the opera in Prague. This second production was a critical and financial success, and Bondini soon commissioned Mozart to write a new opera—*Don Giovanni* (1787), which was also a great success in the city. Mozart's music returned to the Estates Theatre again in 1791 with the premiere of his opera *La clemenza di Tito*—performed to celebrate the coronation of Leopold II as King of Bohemia. You can see the Estates Theatre in the movie *Amadeus* (1984), where it is used for the staged productions of Mozart's operas.



Interior of the Estates Theater, Prague.

Beginning in France about 1725, the idea quickly spread across Europe. By the end of the century, public concerts were the primary musical forum in London, Paris, Vienna, Prague, and countless other cities and towns.

The vast increase in the number of musical consumers affected other areas of music, too. Music publishing became a profitable business, and music publishers sprang up in many cities, catering to a new class of amateur performers. Middle-class men and women wanted to learn to play music themselves. They arranged lessons for themselves and their children, and bought musical instruments to play at home, books to learn how to play, and sheet music to learn their favorite pieces.

The social changes of the eighteenth century also affected the status of performers and composers. Although many musicians were still supported by powerful rulers or wealthy aristocrats, some could begin to make a living on their own as the century progressed. One example of this gradual change is the life of the composer Joseph Haydn. He spent most of his career in the employ of a wealthy prince, but toward the end of his life he became independent, living off the sales of his music, traveling abroad, and taking charge of his own financial affairs.

Even the style of music composed in the Classic era was affected by the new audiences and consumers. The complex rhythms and counterpoint of Baroque music, with its heavy bass line and emotional intensity, were no longer in fashion. Music was now designed to appeal to a broader public. It had to be lighter, clearer, and more accessible. It had to be easier to listen to and easier to play. This was the era of several new genres, including the *divertimento*—a piece played as a “diversion”—and comic opera. A common musical language developed, one that could be understood by a broad range of society. In this language—the “classic” language of music—enormous amounts of music were

composed. All of it is pleasant and accessible. A few geniuses used this language to produce masterpieces of enduring significance.

General Characteristics of Classic Music

Balance and proportion, clarity and accessibility—these are the primary features of Classic music. It is designed to be “easy on the ear.” Yet that does not mean it cannot also be very beautiful, very moving, and very profound. Mozart once wrote to his father that his latest compositions would appeal to the most experienced listeners and to amateurs alike. The experts would appreciate all the subtleties, and the amateurs would be pleased “without knowing why.”

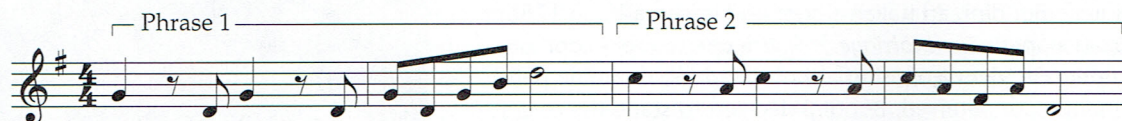
Classic music was a reaction to the complexity of Baroque music. Classic music usually has just a melody and an accompaniment, and the accompaniment is light and simple. Imitative counterpoint is used only rarely, and then only for special effect. The melodies are pleasing and tuneful—the kind you can hum or whistle as you go through the day. Mozart was delighted when he was told that everyone on the streets of Prague was singing the tunes from his latest opera.

There are some technical aspects to the special sound of Classic music. The first has to do with the length of melodic phrases. Classic music is usually made up of two- or four-bar phrases, rather than the long lines common in Baroque music. This makes the music clear and balanced. These phrases are usually arranged into patterns of opening and closing phrases. A two- or four-bar opening phrase is immediately followed by a two- or four-bar closing phrase, creating a symmetrical pattern. This pattern makes the music easy to follow and establishes a sense of regularity in the mind of the listener.

Find the **Quick Listen** on **MySearchLab**
“Papageno Papagena Duet”

Find the **Quick Listen** on **MySearchLab**
“Mozart Divertimento K. 136”

Melody is the main thing.
—Joseph Haydn



The second technical aspect of Classic music is its harmony. The harmony of Classic music is generally simple, logical, and clear. Classic composers do not usually go very far afield in their harmonies. They tend to stick to relatively straightforward keys, and they do not often use strange or dissonant chords.

Finally, the effect of Classic music depends a great deal on its accompaniment. Gone is the powerful basso continuo of the Baroque. In its place, we find a simple “walking bass” (in which the bass line moves mostly by step, in even notes and with a regular rhythm) or little bustling accompanying figures that keep

the rhythm lively. A special development of the Classic era was the “Alberti bass,” named after the composer Domenico Alberti (1710–1740). This is an accompaniment made up of a

continuously moving pattern of short notes. The accompanying chords are broken up into separate notes played one after the other, not together, to keep the texture light and lively.



Two examples of
“walking bass.”

Lively, rhythmic accom-
panying figures.

Accompanying chords
broken into
“Alberti bass.”

These three features—the balanced phrases, the simple harmony, and the light accompaniment—help to give Classic music its special sound and to provide a framework for its tuneful, pleasing melodies.

NEED TO KNOW THREE CHARACTERISTICS OF CLASSIC MUSIC

1. Balanced melodic phrases
2. Simple harmonies
3. Light accompaniment

Genres of Classic Music

Several musical genres were popular in the Classic era. The most important genres were opera, symphony, string quartet, and sonata. Some composers wrote in other genres, too. Mozart, for example, composed many beautiful piano concertos and some string *quintets*. But on the whole, composers stayed within the conventional genres. Notice that these genres are all secular. Although composers still

occasionally wrote sacred works such as Masses and oratorios, they were far less common in the Classic era, reflecting a shift in society’s makeup and interests.

Operas were staged in the palaces of a few very wealthy aristocrats or in the public opera houses of big cities such as Prague, Paris, or Vienna. Symphonies also were performed in aristocratic courts or at the public concert venues springing up all over Europe. String quartets and sonatas, with their smaller ensembles and more intimate sound, were designed for private gatherings—in an aristocratic salon or in the living rooms of middle-class music lovers.

Let’s look briefly at how the opera, the symphony, the string quartet, and the sonata developed in the Classic era.


Opera We have seen that opera was the Baroque art form *par excellence*. It combined a story with artwork, costumes, illusion, and best of all, superb singing. But during the late Baroque period, some people began to criticize Baroque opera as artificial. They complained that the plots were always about mythological or historical figures rather than about real people and actual situations; that

Opera: an exotic and irrational entertainment.


—Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary* (1755)

You see actresses virtually in convulsions as they rend from their lungs the most violent ululations; both fists clenched against the breast, the head thrown back, cheeks aflame, veins bursting, and diaphragm heaving. It is impossible to say which is the more unpleasantly assailed, the eye or the ear.

—Jean-Jacques Rousseau

 Find the **Quick Listen** on **MySearchLab**

"Stamitz Symphony in C"

 Find the **Quick Listen** on **MySearchLab**

"La Serva Padrona"

the music was too heavy and complex; and that the stage sets, with their elaborate scenery and complicated machines for simulating battles and shipwrecks, were too involved. The arias, with their obligatory repeats (the *da capo* aria form, you remember, is ABA), were criticized for two reasons: (1) the repeat of the first part (the second A) interrupted the continuity of the story; and (2) singers abused the convention of embellishing the music on its repeat by showing off and drawing attention to themselves rather than to the plot. Finally, what could be more unnatural than a castrato (a man singing with a woman's voice!)?

This attack on Baroque opera was another sign of the changing social structure of the eighteenth century. Baroque opera was the province of the aristocracy; what was demanded was a style of opera that would appeal to everyone. It should be about real people in everyday situations. The result was the development of a new type of opera called *comic opera*. Comic opera became very popular in the Classic era. It featured simpler music, down-to-earth characters, and amusing plots.

In Italy comic opera was known as *opera buffa*, in France it was called *opéra comique*, and in Germany it was known as *Singspiel*. In French and German comic opera, the dialogue is spoken instead of being set to music, though there are still arias. In Italian opera the dialogue is in recitative. The most famous early example of Italian comic opera is Pergolesi's *La Serva Padrona* (1733). Even the title is meant to be comical: it means "The Servant Girl Who Became Mistress of the House." The opera is about a clever servant girl who tricks her master, a rich old bachelor, into marrying her. The story was designed to appeal to an age in which rigid class barriers were being called into question.

Symphony The most important genre of instrumental music in the Classic era was the symphony. Indeed, the origins of the symphony date from the beginnings of the Classic era, about 1730, and it grew to maturity in the hands of the great Classic composers Haydn and Mozart.

The symphony began life as an introductory piece to Italian opera. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, Italian operas were usually preceded by an *overture*—an instrumental introduction in three short movements: fast–slow–fast. The Italian name for this type of

opera overture was *sinfonia*. The music of these overtures was unrelated to the music of the operas they introduced. Gradually these instrumental pieces achieved independent status and were played in concert performances. The idea of independent symphonies spread rapidly, and soon composers from Italy to Germany to England were writing symphonies with no connection to opera.

The most important center of symphonic composition and performance in the early Classic era was Mannheim, in Germany. Here was a wealthy court, which supported the largest and most accomplished orchestra in Europe. The concertmaster and conductor of the Mannheim orchestra was Johann Stamitz (1717–1757), who was famous for his rigorous discipline. Stamitz was also a prolific composer who wrote more than 60 symphonies. These symphonies established the norm for the Classic symphony for the remainder of the eighteenth century.

Stamitz expanded the fast–slow–fast pattern of the Italian *sinfonia* to a four-movement scheme. The first movement is fast and serious, the second movement slow and lyrical, the third movement graceful and moderate in tempo, and the last movement very fast and lively. This pattern of movements became standard for the symphony throughout the Classic period.

Stamitz also established the basic structure of the Classic orchestra, which had three main instrumental groups: strings, woodwinds, and (sometimes) trumpets and drums. The string section consisted of two groups of violins ("first violins" and "second violins"), as well as violas, cellos, and double basses. The woodwind section had two flutes or two oboes, plus two horns. Only bright, ceremonial symphonies used trumpets and timpani. In the later Classic period, the orchestra was augmented slightly, particularly in the woodwind section. Composers often used both flutes *and* oboes. Bassoons were employed to fill out the low sounds of the woodwind section, and in the late eighteenth century clarinets also became popular.

A composer could choose the number and types of instruments in a particular work to achieve different effects. If a composer wanted a delicate sound, he or she might write for strings, one flute, and two horns. A fuller, richer sound could be obtained with the strings plus all the woodwind instruments. And for a really festive piece, trumpets and drums were added.

In actual performance, the size of the string section varied according to the financial resources of the sponsor. In rich cities or aristocratic courts, there could be as many as twelve first violinists, twelve second violinists, six viola players, eight cellists, and four double bass players. In smaller orchestras, there were only three or four first violins, three or four second violins, two violas, two cellos, and one double bass.

Chamber Music The increase during the eighteenth century in the number of middle-class householders who were interested in music created a demand for music that could be performed at home. Because this music was designed to be played in smaller rooms, it is usually known as **chamber music**. It includes duets, trios, and quintets for various instrumental combinations, but the most important types of chamber music during this period were the string quartet and the sonata.

The **string quartet** developed about the middle of the eighteenth century. It involves four stringed instruments: two violins, a viola, and a cello. This grouping had great appeal for Classic composers, and many of the finest works of the eighteenth century were written for string quartet. The string quartet provides an ideal balance between high and low instruments. The first violinist plays the principal melody while the second violinist plays the accompanying figures. Meanwhile, the violist fills in the harmony in the middle, and the cellist provides the bass line. The instruments cover a wide pitch band from high to low. The smooth, high, silvery sounds of the two violins are balanced by the drier, throatier quality of the viola and the strong, rich tones of the cello. Because all the instruments belong to the same family, they blend perfectly.

Works for string quartet closely followed the pattern of symphonic works. They usually had four movements: the first, fast and serious; the second, slow and lyrical; the third, graceful; and the fourth, lively.

Sonatas could be written either for a keyboard instrument alone or for a keyboard instrument with another instrument such as a violin or a flute. Until about 1775, the favorite keyboard instrument was the harpsichord. By the last part of the eighteenth century, the piano, invented early in the century, began to replace the harpsichord in this role. The piano was capable of

gradations of volume—that was why it was originally called the *piano-forte* (“soft-loud”)—and it had a fine, delicate sound. Eighteenth-century pianos sounded very different from the large concert grand pianos of today. They were softer and lighter in the upper register, and more textured and less resonant in the bass.

Keyboard sonatas often contain some of the most interesting music of Classic composers, because it was (and still is) common for composers to compose while sitting at the keyboard—to experiment with ideas, play them through, and see how they sound. Some keyboard sonatas, therefore, have an improvisatory effect, as though we were actually hearing the composer at work.

Convention in Classic Music

The eighteenth century was a time of strict social conventions. In upper-class society, dress codes were carefully followed. People wore powdered wigs, brocaded coats, and silver shoe buckles. There was an elaborate pattern of rules that governed social behavior—when to curtsy, when to bow, what to talk about. Even written communication was highly formalized.

So it is not surprising to learn that strict conventions were established for music, too. The instruments used for particular types of works, the number of movements, and the approximate length of each movement were all fixed by convention. Yet the pattern of

Find the **Quick Listen** on **MySearchLab**
“Fortepiano”

I am issuing by subscription a work consisting of six quartets ... written in a new and special way [for] the great patrons of music and the amateur gentlemen.
—Joseph Haydn

Find the **Quick Listen** on **MySearchLab**
“Haydn String Quartet Op. 76 No. 5”

A group of eighteenth-century gentlemen playing a string quartet in a middle-class home. Notice the bust of Mozart on the wall.

String Quartet. Color engraving, 18th century, Austrian. Mozart Museum, Prague, Czech Republic. Giraudon/Art Resource, NY.



expectations in Classic music went further than that. Even the keys in which a composition might be written were governed by convention. Some keys were far more common than others, and each key was linked with a certain mood or atmosphere. D major, for example, is ceremonious and bright, whereas F minor is strained and melancholy. One reason is that major keys sound brighter than minor keys. Another has to do with the tuning system and instruments of the time. Trumpets and drums could play particularly well in D major, so that was the key often chosen for festive music. F minor, with four flats, was (and remains) a difficult key to play. In addition, more flat notes in a key tended to make the instruments of the time sound muffled and shadowy.

The most far-reaching convention in Classic music controlled the *form* in which a composer could write each individual movement of a composition. Only a few forms were used in Classic music. The most important of these are sonata form, aria form, minuet-and-trio form, and rondo form. We will look at each of these in turn, but before we do, let us consider the importance of convention in Classic music.

Today, nothing seems more important to us than originality. We look for it in our own work, in the books we read, the paintings we look at, and the music we listen to. The cult of originality, however, is a recent phenomenon. In the eighteenth century, writers, artists, and composers were respected not for the originality of their work but for its quality. Between about 1730 and 1800, hundreds of composers wrote tens of thousands of symphonies. From this enormous quantity of music, the works of Haydn and Mozart stand out, not because they are original, but because they demonstrate the most skill, the

greatest resourcefulness, and the widest range of expression. Haydn and Mozart were the greatest composers of the age, not because they ignored convention, but because they used it to better advantage than anyone else.

Forms of Classic Music

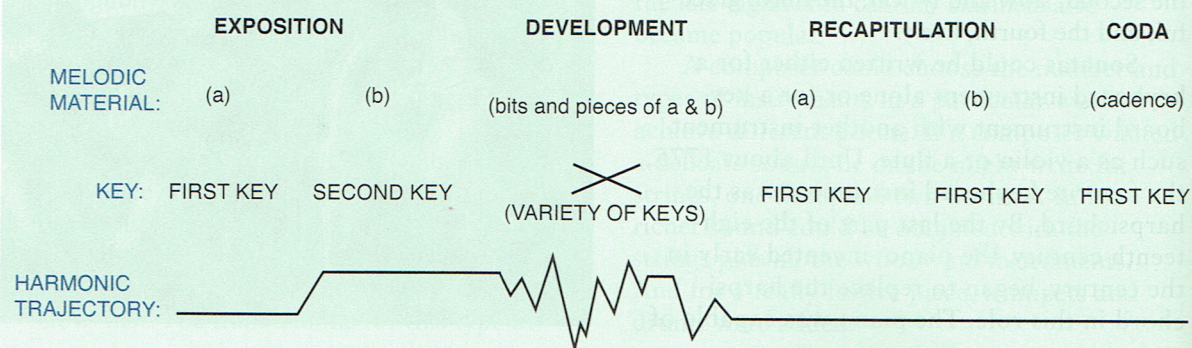
Sonata Form The most important single-movement form in Classic music is **sonata form**. This form was used for almost all first movements of Classic instrumental music. Although it is called sonata form, it was used for the first movements not only of sonatas, but also of symphonies, string quartets, and many other genres. For that reason, it is sometimes known as “first-movement form.” But sonata form became so popular in the Classic era that it was often used for other movements as well.

Sonata form is intellectually demanding, and composers used it for their most serious ideas. That doesn’t mean it has to be difficult to listen to. As with any art form, however, it takes practice to become familiar with the ways in which it is organized. Once we understand sonata form, many of the secrets of Classic music are revealed to us.

Sonata form has three sections: **exposition**, **development**, and **recapitulation**. The exposition begins in the tonic key and presents the opening material of the piece. Then it moves to a second key (usually the dominant or the relative major) and presents new material in that key. The exposition ends with a clear cadence. In Classic sonata-form movements, the exposition is normally played twice.

The development section explores many different keys. It usually moves quickly from key to key, has a great deal of counterpoint, mixes up short phrases of the previous

SONATA FORM



material, and is generally quite turbulent. The development leads dramatically into the recapitulation, usually without an intervening cadence.

The recapitulation brings back all the music of the exposition, but with one crucial change: *the material that was previously presented in the second key is now played in the home key, so that the movement can end in the key in which it began.* Sometimes there is a short closing section added to the end of a sonata-form movement just to round it off. This short section is called the *coda* (literally “tail”).

The most important place to listen carefully in a sonata-form movement is right at the beginning. If you remember the sound of the beginning of the exposition, you will be able to recognize the recapitulation when it comes, because it brings back the same music. Also, with practice, you will be able to recognize the development

section, partly because it changes key frequently and partly because it contains a great deal of turbulence—as though the material of the exposition had been thrown into a blender and was being cut up and tossed around.

Aria Form Aria form is simple, and we have discussed it before in the context of opera. Classic composers often used it for the second, slow movement of a sonata, a symphony, or a string quartet. This movement is designed to be lyrical and songlike. Aria form is ABA, with a slow, lyrical opening section (A) that is often in triple meter. This is followed by a contrasting central section in a new key (B), which sometimes has slightly faster notes. Finally, the opening section (A) is repeated, often decorated or slightly modified. Slow movements are often in aria form, but they sometimes follow sonata form or theme-and-variations form.

ARIA FORM

A (melody and first key)

B (new melody, new key)

A (repeated, often embellished)

Minuet-and-Trio Form Minuet-and-trio form is the standard form for third movements in sonatas, symphonies, and string quartets, although it is often omitted from piano sonatas. The minuet was originally a Baroque court dance in moderate triple meter. Gradually it became an instrumental form and made its way into Classic music. (We analyzed a Classic minuet and trio in Chapter 3 on page 50.) A minuet and trio simply means two minuets played in the pattern minuet–trio–minuet. The trio (second minuet) usually presents some kind of contrast to the first minuet—in instrumentation, texture, dynamics, or key.

The minuet itself is in two parts, each of which is repeated: AABB. The trio has the same pattern: CCDD. After the trio, the first minuet is played again (often without repeats). The whole scheme of a minuet-and-trio movement looks like this:

MINUET	TRIO	MINUET
AABB	CCDD	AABB (or AB)

The most important characteristics of a minuet-and-trio movement are as follows:

1. It is always in $\frac{3}{4}$ meter.
2. It has a moderate tempo.

3. It is always in ternary form (minuet–trio–minuet).
4. The trio always presents some kind of contrast to the minuet.

Rondo Form Rondo form was often used for the last (fourth) movement of symphonies, string quartets, and sonatas. Rondos are usually fairly fast, with a lively or catchy tune that keeps on returning or coming round again (hence “rondo”). Between appearances of the tune (sometimes called the refrain or **main theme**) are **episodes** of contrasting material. Thus, if we designate the main theme as A and the contrasting episodes with other letters, we have the following:

A B A C A D A

Sometimes composers used the first episode again just before the last appearance of the refrain:

A B A C A B A

This makes a particularly symmetrical kind of rondo.

Four-Movement Structure

MOVEMENT	FORM	KEY
I	Sonata	Tonic
II	Aria or Sonata or Theme and Variations	Dominant or Subdominant or Relative minor
III	Minuet-and-Trio	Tonic (Trio is sometimes in a different key)
IV	Rondo or Sonata	Tonic

Summary

To summarize this overview of the main forms of Classic music, the most common and most serious form in classic music is sonata form. First movements are nearly always in sonata form. Second movements are often in aria form: ABA. Minuet-and-trio form (“ternary”) is the usual form for third movements. Last movements are often in rondo form.

These are the main forms for the standard four movements of most Classic instrumental music. There are variants of this pattern, however. For example, Classic concertos had only three movements: sonata form, slow, and rondo. In the other genres, sonata form was sometimes used for movements in addition to the first. It is not uncommon for the slow movement of a Classic composition to be in sonata form, and sometimes composers used sonata form for the last movement also. Some compositions reverse the position of the slow movement and the minuet and trio, putting the minuet second and the slow movement third.

The Early Classic Period

Although the end of the Baroque era is generally given as 1750 (the date of Bach’s death), the origins of the Classic style date from earlier than that. Starting about 1730, a new musical style began to appear that was lighter, more accessible, more varied, and less demanding. The name given to this musical style at the time was *galant*, which we might translate as “fashionable” or “up-to-date.” Two of the composers involved in this stylistic change were Bach’s sons: C. P. E. Bach, who was serving at the court of Frederick the Great in Berlin, and J. C. Bach, who made his career in London. Other important composers of this early Classic style were Johann Stamitz (1717–1757) in Mannheim and Giovanni Battista Sammartini (1701–1775) in Italy.

These composers rejected the dense contrapuntal style of the late Baroque era in favor of music that was lighter in texture, easier to listen to, and more varied. Early Classic music has far more variety than Baroque music. There are frequent changes of texture, dynamics, and instrumentation. The phrases are shorter, and each phrase may be quite different from the one that precedes it.

Many early Classic compositions have three movements instead of four, because the minuet did not become a standard feature of sonatas and symphonies until the second half of the eighteenth century.

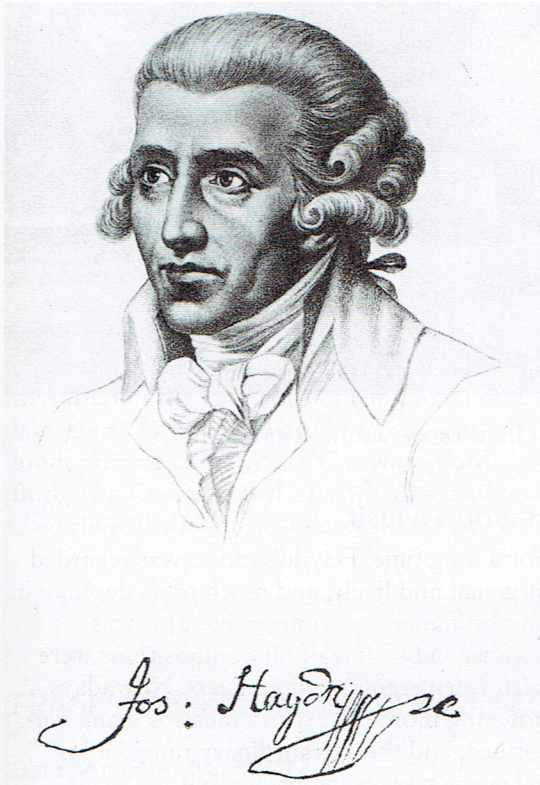
The Classic Masters

The masters of the Classic style were Haydn and Mozart. Since their own time, these two composers have been regarded as the most accomplished among a large number of highly skilled musicians active in the second half of the eighteenth century. Both men were extraordinarily prolific, completing many hundreds of superb compositions during their lifetimes. Although the musical language and techniques they used were common throughout Europe at the time, their individual abilities were so remarkable; their grasp of harmony, form, and expression so assured; and their melodic invention so rich that they stand out from their contemporaries.

Franz Joseph Haydn (1732–1809)

Anyone can see that I’m a good-natured fellow.
—Haydn

Haydn was born in a small village in Austria. His father was a wheelmaker—an important trade in the eighteenth century—and Haydn was one of 12 children. There was much music making at home and in the village, and Haydn displayed an early talent for music.



Joseph Haydn.

At the age of eight, he was accepted as a choirboy at St. Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna, the biggest city in the Austrian empire. Here he stayed until he was 18, when his voice changed. (In those days, the onset of puberty for both boys and girls was much later than it is today.)

At the cathedral, Haydn had learned to play the harpsichord and the violin, so for the

next 10 years (about 1750–1760), he made a living giving harpsichord lessons and playing in local orchestras. During this time, he lived in a small room in an apartment building in Vienna. Luckily for him, some of the grander apartments in the building were occupied by people who became very useful in furthering his career. One of his neighbors was Pietro Metastasio, the most famous poet and opera librettist (opera text writer) of his time; Metastasio introduced Haydn to many prominent figures in the musical world. Another was a woman who was the head of one of the most prominent aristocratic families of the time. Her name was Maria Esterházy, and the Esterházy family was to play a significant role in Haydn's life and career.

In 1761, Haydn was hired as assistant music director to the household of Prince Paul Anton Esterházy. The prince had a sizable retinue of servants, including a small orchestra of about 12 players. Haydn was responsible for composing music on demand, supervising and rehearsing the other musicians, and caring for the instruments.

Prince Paul Anton died in 1762 and was succeeded by his brother Nikolaus. Prince Nikolaus Esterházy was an avid music lover who spent a great deal of money on his court and entertainment. In the countryside, Prince Nikolaus built a magnificent palace that had two large music rooms and two small theaters for opera. He called this palace Esterháza after the family name.

In 1766 Haydn was promoted to music director at Esterháza. He was responsible for

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COMPOSERS, PATRONS, AND AUDIENCES

The Classic Orchestra

By the time of the Classic period, the orchestra had inherited certain traits from the Baroque, but it also featured new ones. The main body of the orchestra was still formed by the strings: perhaps eight to twelve violins (divided into two groups), four violas, two or three cellos, and a double bass or two. (These numbers could be greater or lesser depending on the occasion for which the music was written or the financial resources of the sponsoring organization.) But now there was a clearer and more defined role for the wind instruments; no longer did they simply play along with the strings: they had more clearly defined music of their own. The wind section was formed of flutes, oboes, bassoons, and horns, usually in pairs. Toward the end of the eighteenth century clarinets were added.

A composer such as Mozart, with his subtle and refined sense of sound, would assign very distinctive roles to the winds. One flute might join the violins in a slow movement to add luster to their song. A pair of oboes and a bassoon might be featured in the trio section of a minuet. And often the winds would play passages of their own to contrast deliberately with the strings. In line with the Classic desire for symmetry and clarity, the balance of the strings and the winds was more clearly organized. Finally, for festive occasions, or for a symphony that the composer wanted to make stirring or more extroverted, the orchestra could feature trumpets and timpani. You can immediately hear the difference between an orchestra with trumpets and drums and one without.



Haydn in full dress.

Edouard Jean Conrad Hamman, Portrait of Joseph Haydn. Engraving. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, France. Giraudon/ Art Resource, NY.

I was never so devout as when I was at work on *The Creation*.

—Haydn

directing all the music at the palace. Two full operas, as well as two big concerts, were performed each week. Extra concerts were put on whenever an important visitor came to the palace. Music was performed at meals, and the prince had chamber music played in his own rooms almost every day. Haydn wrote much of this music himself.

Over the course of his lifetime, Haydn wrote about a dozen operas; more than 100 symphonies; nearly 70 string quartets; more than 50 keyboard sonatas; and a large amount of choral music, songs, and other chamber music. Haydn stayed in the service of the Esterházy family until 1790, when Prince Nikolaus died. The new prince, Nikolaus II, did not like music and disbanded the orchestra. Haydn, now nearly 60 years old, moved back to Vienna.

By this time, his work was internationally known, and he traveled twice to London—first from 1791 to 1792, and then from 1794 to 1795. For his visits to London, Haydn wrote his last 12 symphonies, which were performed there to wild public acclaim. These brilliant and fascinating works are known as the *London Symphonies*.

In his late years, back in Vienna, Haydn wrote mostly string quartets and vocal music. His quartets are varied and masterful, covering the entire range of expression from playfulness to profundity. The vocal works include six Mass settings for chorus and orchestra and the two great oratorios of his last years, *The Creation* (1798) and *The Seasons* (1801).

Haydn died in 1809 at the age of 77. His reputation transcended even national disputes. Vienna was under siege by the French army at the time, but Napoleon posted a guard of honor outside Haydn's house to pay homage to the greatest composer of the age.



The Esterházy Palace in Austria.

Haydn's Music

For a long time, Haydn's music was regarded as genial and lively, and much of its depth, wit, and brilliance went unnoticed. This was because only a few of his compositions were performed regularly at concerts. Nowadays, however, more of Haydn's music is being performed, and the extraordinary range of his achievement is being recognized.

His operas are full of beautiful music: lyrical, inventive, and moving. His symphonies range from ceremonious public works with trumpets and drums to compositions of great delicacy, charm, and even tragedy. The string quartets explore an enormous range of expression, with a masterful handling of the intimate medium and brilliant writing for the four instruments. The early quartets give most of the melodic material to the first violin, but in the later quartets the other instruments are more fully integrated, with each of the four players contributing to the discourse. When the great German poet Goethe compared a string quartet to a conversation among four equally interesting individuals, he must have been thinking of the Haydn quartets.

HAYDN'S CONTRACT

When Haydn was appointed to the Esterházy court, his contract was very specific about his duties. He was required to dress "as befits an honest house officer in a princely court," that is, with powdered wig, brocaded coat, white stockings, and silver buckles on his shoes. He was to be in charge of all the musicians, serve as an example to them, and "avoid undue familiarity with them in eating and drinking or in other relations, lest he should lose the respect due to him." He was responsible for looking after all the music and the instruments. And he was required to compose music as the prince demanded, and was forbidden to give away or sell copies of his music or to compose for anyone else "without the knowledge and gracious permission of his Serene Princely Highness."

Haydn was quite content with this arrangement. He said later, "My Prince was happy with all my works; I received approval; I could, as head of an orchestra, make experiments in my music. I was cut off from the world: there was no one to confuse or annoy me, and I was forced to become original."