



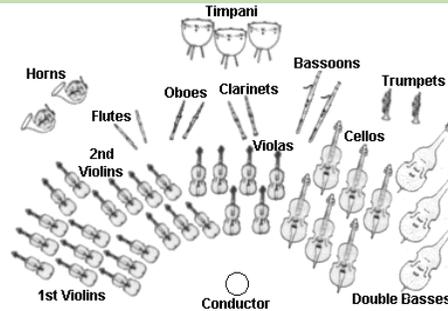
The Classical Period (1750-1820)

The **CLASSICAL PERIOD** refers to music composed between 1750-1820 approximately. The Baroque Trio Sonata began to give way to the Classical Sonata and the Italian Overture, found in many Baroque Operas, grew into the Classical Symphony. The word **CLASSICAL** means having a **WELL-BALANCED STRUCTURE OR FORM**, a **CLEAR MELODIC LINE** and **NOTHING THAT IS OVERDONE OR 'SHOWY'**. Baroque Music was highly decorated and ornamented whereas Classical Music is much clearer, and you can hear each individual part. Early Classical style is called **STYLE GALANT** – a 'courtly style' which aimed chiefly to please the listener. Later, the style matured to emphasise more qualities associated with Classical Architecture: grace and beauty of line (**MELODY**) and shape (**FORM AND STRUCTURE**), proportion and balance; moderation and control. In particular, the Classical composer strikes a perfect balance in their music between expressiveness and formal structure.

Instruments, Timbres and Sonorities

EXPANSION OF THE ORCHESTRA - In the Classical Period the orchestra expanded. The **STRINGS** were still the 'backbone of the orchestra' and played the **MELODY LINE** parts most of the time (1st and 2nd Violins often an octave apart – **OCTAVE DOUBLING**) with the number of strings increasing. The **WOODWIND** became more important and formed its own section. There would usually be **TWO FLUTES, TWO OBOES, TWO BASSOONS** and later, **TWO CLARINETS** – newly invented in the Classical Period – **DOUBLE WOODWIND**. The **BRASS** section would now contain **TRUMPETS** and **FRENCH HORNS** with **TROMBONES** (again invented during the Classical Period) being added later. Classical composers often used the **FRENCH HORNS** and **WOODWIND** section to 'bind the texture of their music together'. The **PERCUSSION** section, as in the Baroque Period, contained just the **TIMPANI**. The **CONTINUO** (Harpichord) player was now no longer necessary, and the orchestra was, for the first time, directed by a non-instrumental player – the **CONDUCTOR**.

The Classical Orchestra



Melody and Texture

Both melody and texture had an emphasis on **ELEGANCE** and **BALANCE**. Baroque Music was often Polyphonic with complex textures and lots of parts played simultaneously. Texture in the Classical Period tended to be **CLEARER, LIGHTER** and **LESS COMPLICATED** with **CLEAR MELODIC LINES** where you can hear each individual part, **SHORT, WELL-BALANCED MELODIES** and **CLEAR-CUT QUESTION AND ANSWER PHRASES**. **IMITATION** and **RIISING AND FALLING SEQUENCES** were still used in Classical melodies. With its emphasis on melody, the predominant texture used in the Classical Period was mainly **HOMOPHONIC MELODY AND ACCOMPANIMENT TEXTURE**, but with some use of **COUNTERPOINT** where two or more ideas are combined and **HOMOPHONIC BLOCK CHORDAL** texture often being used at the end of a phrase or section of music.

Harmony and Tonality

Classical Music used mainly simple, **DIATONIC HARMONIES** with more frequent **MODULATIONS TO RELATED KEYS**, although composers were starting to experiment with more **RAPID MODULATIONS TO REMOTE KEYS** (particularly within Development Sections of Sonatas and Symphonies). **CHROMATIC HARMONY** was used at times to create tension with chords such as **AUGMENTED SIXTHS**. With the emphasis on balance of phrases, **CADENCES** became increasingly important as a way of making the end of a phrase or section. **DOMINANT SEVENTH** chords were often used along with **TONIC AND DOMINANT PEDALS** in the Bass Line parts to prepare for a modulation to the tonic or another key.

The Pianoforte

The Baroque Harpsichord fell out of popularity and use with the newly invented **PIANOFORTE (PIANO)** in 1698 by Cristofori in Italy. Whereas the strings of a Harpsichord were plucked, in a piano they are hit by hammers – lightly, or more forcefully, depending on the pressure made by the player's fingers upon the keys. The piano had more powers of expression offering sudden contrasts between **LOUD (FORTE)** and **SOFT (PIANO)**, but sounds could **GRADUALLY GET LOUDER (CRESCENDO)**, **GRADUALLY GET SOFTER (DECRESCENDO/DIMINUENDO)** and be made **LEGATO (SMOOTH)** or **STACCATO (DETACHED)**. A player could shape an expressive melody in **CATABLE** ('singin') style with the right hand against a quieter accompaniment with the left hand. A favourite kind of accompaniment patterns often used by Classical composers was the **ALBERTI BASS** – simple broken chords repeated in the left hand, keeping the music moving while outlining the harmonies to support the melody. **HAYDN** and **MOZART** wrote much music during the Classical Period for the piano in the form of **SOLO PIANO SONATAS**.

Dynamics & Articulation

The Classical Period saw more **CONTRASTING MOODS** within movements or pieces of music (unlike the Baroque 'Terraced Dynamics') and **EXPRESSION MARKINGS** were used on scores – **CRESCENDOS** (*cresc.*) and **DIMINUENDOS/DECRESCENDOS** (*dim./decresc.*) appeared for the first time along with **ARTICULATION MARKINGS - accents (>), sforzandos (sf/sfz), legato slurs and staccato dots (.)**

Classical Instrumental Music

The Classical Symphony

A **SYMPHONY** (meaning 'sounding together') is a "**Sonata for Orchestra**" – a large-scale orchestral works sometimes lasting for over an hour! Early in the Classical Period, Symphonies had three movements but borrowing the **MINUET AND TRIO** (from the Baroque Dance Suite) as the third movement, the standard number of movements was **FOUR**. **HAYDN** and **MOZART** enriched and perfected the Symphony in the second half of the 18th century.

The movements of a Classical Symphony and Sonata, well contrasted in speed and character, are usually set out as follows:

| | | |
|------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| First Movement | Sonata Form | Fairly Fast |
| Second Movement | Ternary Form or Variation Form (sometimes Sonata Form) | Slower and Songlike |
| Third Movement | Minuet & Trio (Haydn & Mozart); Scherzo & Trio (Beethoven) | Brisk and Vigorous |
| Fourth Movement | Rondo, Variation, Sonata or Sonata-Rondo Form | Fast and Light-Hearted/Cheerful |

The Classical Sonata

SONATA (meaning 'sounded') was the name a Classical composer gave to a work in several movements for one or two instruments only – piano, or violin and piano.

The Classical Concerto

The Classical Concerto, featuring a **SOLO INSTRUMENT** against the orchestra grew from the Baroque Solo Concerto and is structured in **THREE MOVEMENTS**.

| | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| First Movement | Sonata Form | Fairly Fast |
| Second Movement | Ternary or Variation Form | Slower and Songlike |
| Third Movement | Rondo, Variation or Sonata Form | Fast and Cheerful |

The first movement begins with a **DOUBLE EXPOSITION** – orchestra alone then entry of the soloist. A **CADENZA** occurs towards the end of the **RECAPITULATION** – a showy passage based on themes heard earlier, which displays the brilliance of the player's technique – originally the soloist was expected to improvise but later composers began writing out the soloist's cadenzas.

Classical Chamber Music

Music written for a small group of solo musicians and intended to be played in a room (chamber) rather than in a large hall. The **STRING QUARTET** (two violins, viola and cello) is a 'Sonata for String Instruments'. Other grouping include: **STRING TRIO, PIANO TRIO, STRING QUINTET, STRING QUINTET** and **WIND OCTET**. **CLASSICAL RECREATION MUSIC** was also popular, light in character and designed to be performed in the open air – **SERENADE, NOCTURNE, DIVERTIMENTO**.

Sonata Form

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| EXPOSITION FIRST SUBJECT – Tonic Key BRIDGE PASSAGE SECOND SUBJECT – In a new, but related, key (often the Dominant or Relative Major/Minor) CODETTA. Repeat Marks. | DEVELOPMENT Moving through new keys, discussing, developing, combining and opposing ideas from the Exposition often using rhythmic or melodic fragments of subjects with tension. | RECAPITULATION FIRST SUBJECT – Tonic Key BRIDGE PASSAGE (altered) SECOND SUBJECT – Now in the Tonic Key CODA ('rounding off'). |
|--|---|---|

Classical Composers



Gluck
(1714-1787)



C. P. E. Bach
(1714-1788)



Haydn
(1732-1809)



J. C. Bach
(1735-1782)



Clementi
(1752-1832)



Mozart
(1756-1791)



Beethoven
(1770-1827)

The main types of vocal music composed during the Classical Period were the **MASS** and **OPERA**. **GLUCK** 'reformed opera' – focusing on driving the action forward and avoiding interruptions for vocal displays with careful choice of instruments to suit the situation and an **OVERTURE**. **MOZART** 'transformed opera' using musical genius and dramatic instinct (*The Marriage of Figaro, Don Giovanni, The Magic Flute*) adding a dramatic final scene using all the characters joining in an **ENSEMBLE**. Mozart's orchestration mirrors the mood and drama of the action but always enhancing the voices.