

CLASSICAL PERIOD

1750-1825

Social background:

- a. more public concerts due to rising influence of middle class
- b. harpsichords and pianos in homes
- c. music printing

Intellectual background:

- a. advocated common sense, applied science
- b. Age of Reason/Enlightenment, emphasis on intellectual activity and learning
- c. symmetry and balance of design in fine arts

General musical characteristics

- emotional restraint
- clearly organized forms
- homophonic texture, melody dominant
- greater dynamic ranges, crescendo and diminuendo
- instrumental music dominant
- piano – primary keyboard instrument
- standardized orchestra
- distinction between orchestral and chamber music
- melodies often built out of short melodic fragments

Instrumental Music

- Symphony
 - Expanded to a 4th mvt. with each mvt. organized according to a form
 - 1st mvt. – sonata allegro, fast
 - 2nd mvt. – slow
 - 3rd mvt. – minuet, trio, Beethoven changed to scherzo (ABA)
 - 4th mvt. – fast, sonata allegro or rondo form
- Concerto
 - Orchestra and solo player to show off virtuosity of soloist and contrasting timbres
 - 3 mvts. Parts written out except for cadenza
- String quartet
 - 4 mvts.

New Large Forms:

- symphony
- string quartet
- solo concerto
- sonata

New Small Forms:

- sonata allegro
 - 2 contrasting melodies
 - phrases, antecedent and consequent
 - exposition, development, recapitulation
- rondo ABACA
- theme and variation
- minuet and trio ABA
- scherzo ABA

Vocal Music

- da capo aria
- comic opera
 - librettos are always in the national tongue
 - music tends to accentuate the national musical idiom
 - developed as response to demand for naturalness
- oratorio

Representative works:

Mozart, Symphony no. 40 in g minor K. 550

- 1^s mvt. sonata-allegro form
 - theme divided into two equal parts (symmetrical)
 - clearly delineated transition
 - second theme – longer note values, no repeated rhythmic pattern
 - development
 - theme played in 3 keys
 - adds counterpoint
 - fragmentation
 - recapitulation – normal, adds coda
- 2nd mvt. sonata-allegro (unusual) Andante
- 3rd mvt. minuet and trio, lively and light
- 4th mvt. sonata-allegro, fast
 - Mannheim rocket
 - Development passes around the rocket theme, also treated canonically, and played in different keys
 - Recap – conventional

Characteristics of Beethoven's music

- Extreme contrast, intense dynamics: *sfz*, *fp*, long *crescendos*
- Development of themes, music longer
- Extended coda
- Sense of drive
- Changed 3rd movement of symphony to scherzo
- Blurred dividing lines between phrases and movements
- Enlarged size of orchestra and the way instruments were used

Symphony #5 in c minor

1st mvt.

- Sonata allegro
- Melodic fragment basis for entire movement (cyclic – melodic rhythm returns in later movements)

2nd mvt.

- Serene melody
- Theme and variations on 2 melodies

3rd mvt.

- Scherzo, rollicking and dramatic
- Mannheim rocket
- 2nd theme robust, hearty humor

Transition to 4th mvt.

- develops out of scherzo theme
- timpani
- massive crescendo

4th mvt.

- c minor to C Major
- sonata allegro form
- first use of trombones in symphony
- piccolo and double bassoons
- return of 1st mvt. motive
- extensive coda, almost another development section

Symphony #9 in d minor

1st mvt.

- sonata allegro form
- tentative, quiet opening (unusual in 18th century, imitated in 19th century)
- shocking entrance of full orchestra
- long, developmental coda

2nd mvt.

- compound ternary
- incorporates elements of fugue, scherzo, sonata forms
- single rhythmic motive

3rd mvt.

- slow
- 2 contrasting themes with variations

4th mvt.

- choral finale (like a cantata)
- choral and instrumental variations upon two themes
- review of themes of previous movements
- Schiller's poem, Ode to Joy, B. selected verses about universal brotherhood
- Double fugues
- This movement like a full symphony in miniature.

Opera: Mozart

- Mozart regarded opera as a musical composition rather than a dramatic production
- **Don Giovanni**: synthesis of comedy and tragedy
 - secco recitative
 - used trombones (used mainly in church music)
- **Magic Flute**
 - singspiel
 - special effects used
 - written in German language
 - association of keys with characters or situations