The Classical Period

1750-1820 (1825)
Historical Themes

- Industrial Revolution
- Age of Enlightenment
- Violent political and social upheaval
- Culture
Industrial Revolution

- Steam engine changed the nature of European life
- Move to a more urban society
- Time of great growth and economic prosperity
Age of Enlightenment

- Emphasis on the natural rights of people
- Ability of humans to shape their own environment
- All established ideas were being reexamined, including the existence of God.
Violent political & social upheaval

- Seven Years’ War
- American Revolution
- French Revolution
- Napoleonic Wars
- Power shifted from aristocracy and church to the middle class
- Social mobility increased
France was the leading cultural center of the continent (esp. fashion-Paris)

Austria (Vienna) & Germany were the centers of musical growth

Improved economic conditions led to more people seeking “luxury”

Music was viewed as “an innocent luxury”

Demand for new compositions was great
The Classical Style
Characteristics

- Contrast of Mood
- Rhythm
- Simpler textures
- Simpler melodies
- Dynamics
Contrast of Mood

- Large thematic and tonal contrasts unlike the single-mood compositions of the Baroque
- Dramatic, turbulent might lead to carefree, dance-like
- Change could be sudden or gradual
Rhythm

- Flexibility of rhythm adds variety
- Many rhythmic patterns unlike repetitive rhythms of the Baroque
- Unexpected pauses, syncopations, frequent changes from long notes to shorter notes
- Change could be sudden or gradual
Simpler textures

- Homophonic unlike the polyphony of the late Baroque
- Change from one texture to the next could be sudden or gradual
Simpler melodies

- Tuneful, easy to remember unlike the complex, ornamented melodies of the Baroque
- Mozart—“Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star”
- Melodies were balanced and symmetrical (2 phrases of same length) like “Mary Had a Little Lamb”
Expressing shades of emotions led to gradual dynamic changes.

- Crescendo and decrescendo vs. terraced dynamics of the Baroque.
The Piano

- Originally named the pianoforte in 1711 but not widely used
- Piano replaced the harpsichord because of its ability to play great dynamic range
- Ability to sustain sound
- Change in sound quality
- Piano became the most important instrument for Classical composers
End of basso continuo

- More music written for amateurs who could not improvise from the figured bass
- Composers wanted more control, didn’t trust the musician to improvise the accompaniment
- Striving for the universal music language
The Classical Orchestra

- **Instrumental music rose to a position of undisputed leadership**
- **Instrumentation became standardized**
  - Strings: 20 violins and violas, 4 cellos, 4 basses
  - Winds: 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons
  - Brass: 2 horns, 2 trumpets
  - Percussion: timpani
- **Developed by Johann Stamitz** (violinist, composer, conductor) of Mannheim, Germany
Classical Forms

- Simple rational forms
- Several movements that contrast in tempo and character
  
  *Fast movement*
  
  *Slow movement*
  
  *Dance-related movement*
  
  *Fast movement*

- Movements usually in simple two- and three-part forms (*ABA*)
Composer, Patron, & the Public in the Classical Period

- Composers
  - Moved toward emancipation
  - No longer servants
  - Beethoven instrumental in that movement
Composer, Patron, & the Public in the Classical Period

- **Patrons**
  - Middle class had more wealth
  - Middle class wanted more luxury like theater, literature, and music
  - Middle class families sought musical training for their children
Composer, Patron, & the Public in the Classical Period

- The Public
  - Composers wrote music that amateur musicians could play and understand
  - Operas geared toward middle class
    - Folk-like tunes used
    - Used themes that made fun of the aristocrats
  - Serious compositions favored folk and popular music
Vienna

- Music center of Europe
- Composers moved there to study
- Aristocrats spent winters there
Classical Forms

- Sonata Form (Sonata Allegro Form)
- Theme & Variations
- Menuet and Trio (Minuet)
- Rondo
Sonata Form  
(Sonata Allegro Form)

- Single movement (unlike Sonata which is a several movement composition)

Three Main Sections
- Exposition: Themes are presented
- Development
  - Themes are treated in new ways
  - Modulations to different keys
- Recapitulation: Theme returns
- Coda: Concluding section
Listening #1

PG 207-208 CD 3/16

Symphony No. 40 in G Minor, K. 550, 4th mvt-Mozart

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zHsqCG0gKc0
Theme and Variations

- Independent piece or as a movement of a larger piece (symphony, sonata, string quartet)
- Theme is repeated over and over and is changed each time
  - $A\ A^1\ A^2\ A^3\ A^4$ etc…
- Each variation is different
- Melody dynamics accompaniment
- Rhythm tone color voicing
- Harmony tonality adding countermelody
- Themes are sometimes borrowed from other compositions folk tunes were frequently used
Symphony No. 94 in G Major (Surprise), 2\textsuperscript{nd} movement-Haydn

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lLjwkamp3II
Menuet and Trio (Minuet)

- Often used as 3rd movement of a larger work like a symphony or a string quartet
- Triple meter $\frac{3}{4}$
- ABA form
  - A-minuet
  - B-Trio (named because it was originally written for 3 instruments to play)
  - A-minuet
Listening #3

Eine kleine Nachtmusik (A Little Night Music), K. 525-Mozart

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FVTXlRxFdEY
Rondo

- Main theme which alternates with other themes
- Common forms: ABACA or ABACABA
- Can be used as an independent piece or the form for a movement of a larger piece like a symphony, string quartet, or sonata
String Quartet in C Minor, Op. 18, No. 4, 4th mvt. –Beethoven

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0E3OUvvD7dUoven
The Classical Symphony

- Great contribution to orchestral music
- Most prominent genre of this era
  - Over 12,000 were composed
  - Over 100 by Haydn alone
- Long composition (20-45 minutes)
- Four movement work
  - Fast
  - Slow
  - Dance-like movement
  - Fast
- Each movement is a self-contained composition
Listening #5

PG 259-263 CD 4/23

Symphony No. 5 in C Minor, 1st mvt. - Beethoven

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i_Km6u1_zMs
Classical Concerto

- Written for soloist and orchestra
- Long composition (20-45 minutes)
- Three movement work
  - Fast
  - Slow
  - Fast
- Cadenza-showpiece for the soloist
Listening #6

PG 225-227 CD 3/4

Trumpet Concerto in Eb Major, 3rd mvt. - Haydn

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8dUZfBTbI0k
Classical Chamber Music

- Written to be played in a smaller room not a concert hall
- 2-9 musicians
  - One player to a part
  - All parts are essential
- Written for pleasure of the performer and listener
String Quartet

- Most important form of chamber music
- 2 violin, viola, cello
- Four movements
  - Fast
  - Slow
  - Minuet (scherzo)
  - Fast
Listening #4 (review)

PG 214-215 CD 3/40

*String Quartet in C Minor, Op. 18, No. 4, 4th mvt. – Beethoven*

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0E3OUvvD7dUoven
Operas

Two Types
- Opera Seria-serious opera
- Opera Buffa/opera comique-comic opera
Listening #7

Don Giovanni, Act I: Intro-Mozart

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=22nihfvybNz0
Listening #8

Don Giovanni, Act I: Leporello’s catalog aria (Madamina)-Mozart

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=INF9r5jju0A
Don Giovanni, Act I: Duet: La ci darem la mano (There you will give me your hand) - Mozart
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GADW9XYoLBY
Leading Composers

Haydn
Mozart
Beethoven
Franz Joseph Haydn
(Austrian, 1732-1809)

**Achievements**

- Developed the principle of thematic development
- Developed a style appealing to amateur musicians and the middle class
- Brought the symphony and string quartet to artistic maturity re-introducing counterpoint as a compositional technique
- Master of both the Mass and the oratorio
Franz Joseph Haydn (Austrian, 1732-1809)

- **Works**
  - more than 100 symphonies, 80 string quartets, and 20 operas
  - many sacred works including masses and oratorios
  - piano sonatas, piano trios, 30 concertos, & 30 divertimenti
  - over 50 lieder and more than 400 folk songs
Franz Joseph Haydn
(Austrian, 1732-1809)

- **Style**
  - known for his originality, diversity, craftsmanship, melodic simplicity, and engaging humor
  - Master of surprise and unusual phrasing

- **Career**
  - Choirboy in Vienna
  - Largely self-taught
  - Pianist and violinist (not a virtuoso)
  - Teacher
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (Austrian, 1756-91)

Achievements
- Mastered all of the genres of his time
- One of the greatest opera composers
- Known for his ability to delineate character
- For his mastery of the ensemble and the finale
- For adapting sonata style to opera
- Drew elements from national styles of opera
- Fused elements of opera buffa and opera seria with drama giocoso
- Established the form and character of the Classical Concerto
- Solo instrument and orchestra function as equals
- Virtuosic playing is second to musical expression
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (Austrian, 1756-91)

- Works
  - Wrote more than 600 compositions
  - Cataloged by Koechel and indicated with K. numbers
  - Wrote 22 operas, 31 concertos, several sonatas, string quartets, over 50 symphonies, and others
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(Austrian, 1756-91)

- **Style**
  - Influenced by national styles as well as music of Bach and Haydn
  - Blended German and Italian styles with Classical restraint
  - Dramatic use of contrast and rich part-writing
  - Was not interested in originality instead he tried to make his pieces perfect technically and very expressive
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (Austrian, 1756-91)

**Career**

- Mainly taught by his father
- Organist, violinist, and pianist as well as composer
- Began composing at age 4
- Toured extensively as a child prodigy giving concerts in Germany, Austria, England, and Italy
- As an adult he did not find financial success due to the lack of a steady income and illnesses
- Died at age 35 and was buried in a common grave
Ludwig von Beethoven (German, 1770-1827)

Achievements

- “One of the great disruptive forces in the history of music” (Grout)
- Led composers into the Romantic Era (transitional composer)
- Very innovative composer
- Expanded the basic sonata structure
- Changed order and number of movements in compositions
- Added a coda as a major element of structure
Ludwig von Beethoven (German, 1770-1827)

- **Works**
  - Wrote about 250 pieces
  - 48 sonatas, several string quartets and trios, 9 symphonies, 11 overtures, 9 concertos, 1 opera, 70 lieder, 20 sets of piano variations, 150 folksong arrangements, and various sacred compositions
Ludwig von Beethoven (German, 1770-1827)

- **Style**
  - emphasis on rhythmic drive and powerful closing movements of large-scale pieces
  - adopted Haydn’s principle of thematic development—wanted to achieve unity in symphonic works with rhythmic motives
  - innovative in his use of cyclic and programmatic elements, expansion of the orchestra, introduction of the chorus and text into symphony, writing out the cadenza sections in the concerto
Listening #10

PG 256-257 CD 4/8

*Piano Sonata in C minor, Op. 13, 1st mvt (Pathetique)*-Beethoven

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kqvBJc9IovI
Ludwig von Beethoven (German, 1770-1827)

- **Career**
  - educated by his father, court organist Neefe, Haydn Albrechtsberger, Salieri
  - organist, violinist, concert pianist
  - began to lose his hearing around 1796 and totally lost his hearing by 1820
  - this terminated his performances and eventually isolated him from society
  - was very successful at selling his compositions to publishers thus did not have to take any jobs and was able to live independently in Vienna
  - died in Vienna in 1827
  - very popular musician about 20,000 at the funeral including Schubert