

CHAPTER 4

The Classical (1750–1820)

What Do We Find in This Period?

Music: The era of the symphony and sonata form. The music was elegant, formal, and restrained.

Texture: Mainly homophonic which is a melody over a chordal accompaniment.

Forms: Some new forms—Theme and Variations, Rondo, Minuet, Sonata, and Symphony.

Old forms—Concerto, Mass, Opera, Overture, and Oratorio.

Composers: Franz Joseph Haydn, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, and Ludwig van Beethoven.

Travel to: Austria, Germany, and London.

Amazingly, the concepts of Classical Music go back to 79 A.D. when the cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum were buried under volcanic ash from Mt. Vesuvius. When archeologists excavated these ruins in 1748, they uncovered Roman and Greek art, artifacts, and architecture. Many of these discoveries displayed in appearance balance, clarity, simplicity, and symmetry. As applied to music of this period, the ideas of symmetry of form and clarity of sound come from this earlier mentality. In addition, these discoveries in 1748, sparked a renewed interest in ancient Greek and Roman Art.

Note: The term Classical Music has always been used to describe older music history. As you can see, this is an incorrect name in which Classical only refers to music from 1750 to 1820.



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Mount Vesuvius and Pompeii

Music and Events at Court

1. After an event was scheduled, it was the job of the servants to deliver invitations and collect responses.
2. On the day of the event, guests would arrive and mingle, chat and have something to eat (snacks). After a while they would perhaps take a nap before changing their clothes for dinner.

3. After dinner, guests would go to the music room for a concert. Many times they would be disrespectful in that they would talk, not pay attention, and even sleep while the musicians were playing.
4. After the concert, the guests would again retire to their rooms to rest, change their clothes, and get ready for the evening dance (the Ball). These dances would go till the wee hours of the morning. In general, people did not go to bed at 7 p.m. every evening because they did not have 50 in. flat screen TVs. There was not much happening and this was a good way to keep the fun going.

Note: It is important to note that musicians of the day were considered servants of the people. Many times their assignments included serving food and cleaning up before playing music. As the eighteenth century progresses, the nobility becomes the primary patrons of art and music.



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Franz Joseph Haydn (1732–1809)

Waltzing in the Ballroom

1. Born in Rohrau, Austria.
2. Sometimes called, “Father of the Symphony,” “Father of the String Quartet,” or “Pappa Haydn.”
3. At the age of 6, he went to live with a relative Johann Matthias Frankh, to train as a musician. Although Frankh’s house was only 7.5 miles away from where Haydn lived, he never again lived with his parents.
4. At the age of 8, he received a scholarship to study in Vienna. He eventually became a member of the famous Vienna Boys’ Choir, which is still in existence.
5. He did not have a good career as a freelance musician, but as he got older, he held different positions in court such as violinist, music director, and composer.
6. In 1760, he married Maria Anna Keller. This marriage was neither pleasant nor peaceful and produced no children. Apparently, Maria could not care about Haydn’s career or music and it is said she showed such disdain that she used his manuscript paper for pastry pan linings or curl papers.
7. In 1761, he secured a position with the wealthy Esterhazy family for whom he worked for about 30 years. The Esterhazy’s had two palaces, one in Hungary and another in Austria. Haydn traveled back and forth to both places.
8. After the death of his Esterhazy patron, Haydn moved to London where he wrote his famous London (Salomon) Symphonies, numbers 93–104.



Portrait by Thomas Hardy, 1792

9. In his later years, he moved back to Austria to serve Prince Miklos II, the new head of the Esterhazy family. There he wrote his two famous oratorios, *The Creation* and *The Seasons*.
10. Some of his most famous compositions are:
 - 104 symphonies (London 93–104)
 - Two oratorios, *The Creation* and *The Seasons*
 - The Seven Last Words of Christ*
 - Fifteen operas in Italian, many of which were lost
 - Fifty-four piano sonatas
 - Over seventy string quartets
 - Concertos
 - Fourteen Masses.

I would like to cite Haydn's symphony number 45, the famous "Farewell Symphony." Apparently, Haydn was in the midst of a labor dispute because his musicians were not allowed to bring their wives and families to the Esterhazy Palace in Eisenstadt, which was about thirty miles south of Vienna. Living in servant's quarters and being away from families for a long time was not good for morale.

In his Farewell Symphony, Haydn comes up with a very clever scheme. The first three movements were pretty much conventional. However, in the fourth movement, about midway, Haydn instructed his second horn player and first oboist to pack up their instruments, blow out their reading candles, and leave the hall. Soon after, other musicians followed, the bassoonist, the second oboist, cello and bass players, then violin, and viola players. The symphony ended with just two violin players. Prince Esterhazy got the message and decided to give extended leave to the musicians to visit their families.



The Esterhazy Palace in Eisenstadt, Austria

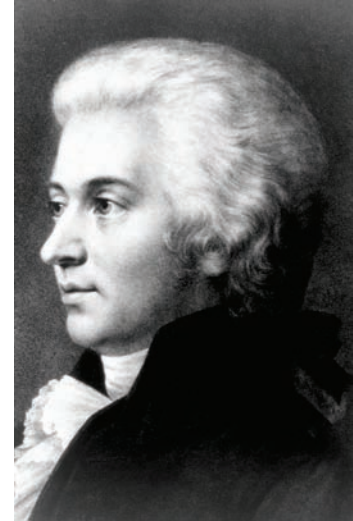


Listening Box 23

Type in Haydn Symphony 45 and choose top box Haydn Symphony No. 45 & 94. Select Track 1, Symphony No. 45 in F—Sharp Minor "Farewell": I Allegro assai; Track 8, Symphony No. 94 in G Major "Surprise": III. Allegro Di Molto.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)

1. Born in Salzburg, Austria.
2. Mozart was definitely a child prodigy as he was composing and concertizing at the age of 4 and 5. He wrote over 600 compositions in only 35 years. He is still considered “the greatest natural genius” of all the composers.
3. Some of his early age accomplishments were his first symphony at the age of 8, his first oratorio at the age of 11, and his first opera at the age of 12.
4. Mozart never went to school and was taught all aspects of music by his father Leopold, who was a violinist in the court orchestra in Salzburg. Mozart’s main instruments were the piano and the violin, but he also played viola and organ. He studied a bit with Haydn.
5. Mozart had an elder sister Maria Anna, also known as Nannerl, who was a very good musician in her own right.
6. Leopold would take his two talented children all over Europe to concertize. Being among the aristocracy so often had an effect on Mozart’s attitude later in life. He actually thought he was a member of the upper class rather than a servant of the people.
7. Mozart spent the first twenty-five years of his life in Salzburg and the last ten years in Vienna.
8. In 1782, he married Constanza Weber, six years his junior and they had six children. Only two lived into adulthood, Karl Thomas and Franz Xavier. Mozart’s father did not approve of this marriage as Mozart did not have a steady job.
9. Several stories had circulated about Mozart, some were true and some were not. First, he was a pauper. This is not true as Mozart made a great deal of money from opera commissions and other sources. Truth is, Mozart had a very lavish lifestyle and out spent what he made. He died owing money. Second, he was murdered by a rival, Antonio Salieri. This is not true, but it had spread like wild fire because Salieri was one of the last people to see Mozart alive and Salieri was somewhat of a musical rival in Vienna. Third, he was buried in a communal grave which was true. In 1784, Emperor Joseph II decreed that all people were to be buried as follows: covered in a linen sack without a coffin, put in a communal grave with other people and buried far from the city, sprinkled with lime and the grave left unmarked. The Emperor put these rules into effect so people could conserve their resources and prevent water contamination.
10. It is important to note that Mozart’s father had set a very high bar for his son and the father was very demanding. By today’s standards, Mozart’s father would probably be considered a control freak. It is also important to note Mozart had a great deal of difficulty with his superiors as he did not consider himself a servant.



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11. Mozart died on December 5th, 1791 from a kidney ailment, rheumatic fever, and a streptococcal infection.
12. Some of his most important compositions are:
 - Forty-one Symphonies
 - Concertos
 - Eine Kleine Nachtmusik
 - Chamber Music
 - Piano Music
 - Twenty Operas, several written in German as opposed to the traditional Italian language
 - Choral music: The Requiem (a death Mass) was Mozart's last composition and was completed by a friend Sussmeyer.

Note: Recommended reading: Mozart's Letters, Mozart's Life by Robert Spaethling.

Popular Forms

Sonata Form

Sonata form is most frequently used in the first movement of symphonies. In a fast movement it is called Sonata-Allegro. It can be used in other movements of the same work. In the Classical Era, the form was so popular that it was used in concertos, string quartets, and just about any two, three, or four movement compositions.



Mozart's Birth House in Salzburg, Austria

The Plan

1. **Optional introduction.**
2. **Exposition (A):** The main melody is exposed or introduced in this section.
3. **Development (B):** In this section the composer takes melody A, adds new material to come up with a bit of a different sound. Development sections provide sound variety.
4. **Recapitulation (A):** In the recapitulation section, the main melody A is restated.
5. **Coda:** The coda is the tag or tail ending. In this section musical events are summarized.



Interior of Birth House

**Listening Box 24**

Type in Beethoven Classical Best and choose top box Beethoven—Classical Best of. Select Track 8, Symphony No. 5 in C Minor Op. 67 Part 1.

Classical Best of Beethoven, Symphony No. 5 in C Minor Part 1

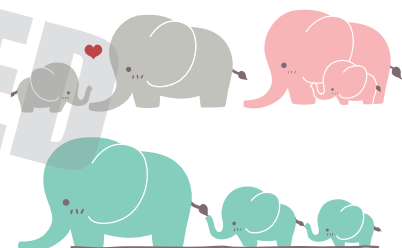
Theme and Variations

Theme and variations are basically melody and variety (changes made to the melody).

The Plan and Diagram**Listening Box 25**

Type in Mozart for Baby and under Tracks choose Twinkle Twinkle Little Star (Baby Cla . . . Select Track 4, Twinkle Twinkle Little Star (Baby Classical Sleepin Song)).

Note: Caution! Do not be fooled by this listening. I purposely chose this melody because you know it and will be able to hear the variations as they are very clear. While listening, follow the diagram I put for you preceding Listening Box 25.

**Overture Form**

I previously discussed the overture in bio notes about Claudio Monteverdi and in the Chapter 3 Summary. With that being said, I would be remiss if I do not mention the Overture to the Marriage of Figaro (Le nozze di Figaro).

1. Written in 1786, by Mozart and with Lorenzo Da Ponte as librettist.
2. The four main characters are: Count Almaviva, Countess Rosina Almaviva, Susanna the countess's maid and fiancée to Figaro and Figaro, personal valet to the count, and fiancée to Susanna.

Synopsis of Story

The story takes place in a single day of court life. Figaro is to marry Susanna. Count Almaviva has turned into a lecherous, skirt chasing individual who wants to be with Susanna. The Count tries to stall the wedding and compel Figaro to marry a much older woman who happens to be Figaro's mother. Things heat up and Figaro, Susanna, and the Countess embarrass the Count by publicly exposing his scheme. In the end, the Count apologizes to the Countess and in so doing restores his love for her. As you might have guessed, Susanna and Figaro get married and live happily ever after.



Listening Box 26

Type in Big Mozart Box and under Tracks choose Overture To Marriage of Figaro, Vienna Symphony Orch. Select Track 37, Overture to Marriage of Figaro K.492.

Note: Go to YouTube and type in Overture to the Marriage of Figaro. Select the one that says Mozart Overture the Marriage of Figaro Muti Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra. Riccardo Muti is the conductor. Good Classical Era Rock n Roll.

Rondo Form

Rondo form was one of the most popular forms in music composition. It was used most frequently in symphonies, sonatas, concertos, and string quartets. Rondo means return of the main theme, so the listener is always listening for the return of melody A.

One of the most popular piano pieces by Beethoven is Fur Elise (For Elise). This is a good example of rondo form.

Melody A

Melody B

Melody A

Melody C

Melody A

The Plan and Diagram

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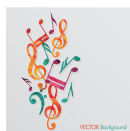
Listening Box 27

Type in Fur Elise and choose top box Fur Elise. Select Track 7, Fur Elise.

Minuet Form

The minuet was a very popular dance in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It is written in triple meter, also called $\frac{3}{4}$ time. Composers often used the minuet in the third movement of the symphony as this dance was popular with the general public.

I have chosen three Mozart minuettes. These pieces are short and your listening objective here, if possible, is to count the three beats in a measure. In this rhythm, the accent is on the first beat.



Listening Box 28

Type in menuetto first and choose top box III. Menuetto (First Version . . . Select Tracks 15, 19, and 23. They will all say III. Menuetto—Trio and are from different Mozart Symphonies.

Symphony Form

The symphony is an instrumental piece usually in four movements. Traditionally, the first movement is fast, the second movement is slow, the third movement is the dance movement (minuet), and the fourth movement is fast. An exception to this four movement form is Beethoven's Symphony No. 6, The Pastoral, which is in five movements.

For the symphony listening I chose Beethoven's Symphony No. 9, the fourth movement. The symphony is called the Choral Symphony which is the first time vocal soloists and a chorus is performed in a symphony. Beethoven based his musical ideas on a poem by Friedrich Schiller, "Ode to Joy." This was Beethoven's last symphony and he wrote it when he was totally deaf. There is much emotion in this section and I chose it because you know the melody, but probably never heard the original setting. Most people have heard this melody as a vocal, but Beethoven presents the melody in the bass section. The range of music is low and being played in the bass section provides the listener with very dark colors. This symphony was completed in 1824 and was first performed in the same year in Vienna, Austria. Also, listen how the melody takes on different flavors as Beethoven brings it to a higher range.



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Listening Box 29

Type in Classical Blast and choose top box Symphony #9: Ode To Joy. Select Track 7, Symphony #9: IV. Ode To Joy.

In the summer of 1788, Mozart wrote three symphonies, 39 was finished on June 26th, 40 was finished on July 25th, and 41 was completed on August 10th. These three combined

are called “The Trilogy” and are his last symphonies. I have chosen the fourth movement of the 41st as a final symphony listening for this period. The section starts off with no introduction and a four note melody. The section is written in sonata form and has a total of five melodies. Toward the end, Mozart has a five voice fugue which represents all five melodies. This will be a good test for you in the symphony listening category. Listen to it several times and do not panic if you cannot hear everything. It is a mind blower!



Listening Box 30

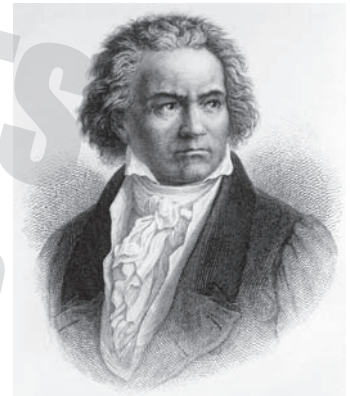
Type in Jupiter Symphony and under Tracks take first choice. This will take you right to Track 4. Select Track 4, as this is the last movement of Symphony 41, The Jupiter.

Suggested Video

Go to YouTube videos and type in, Mozart Symphony No. 41 Kazuo Yamada NHKso 4th movement. Yamada is the conductor and I think you are going to like this guy.

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

1. Born in Bonn, Germany, baptized on December 17th, 1770, and died on March 26, 1827.
2. At an early age he was taught music by his father Johann who was a court musician.
3. Beethoven's parents Johann and Maria had seven children. Beethoven was second oldest and he had two younger brothers Casper (Carl) and Nikolas Johann.
4. Beethoven's father realized that his son had talent and he tried to promote his son as a prodigy. On concert programs he would say Beethoven was 6 when he really was 7. Beethoven's father had heard of the success Leopold Mozart had with his children and he tried to copy him.
5. At the age of 21 he moved to Vienna to study composition with Haydn. Beethoven remained in Vienna until death.
6. His main physical impediment was his hearing loss and in 1802 he went to the town of Heiligenstadt to take thermal baths in hopes of a cure. These treatments did not work and he became very depressed and on October 2, 1802, he wrote the famous Heiligenstadt Testament. Beethoven considered this document to be his last will and testament as he clearly stated considering suicide. He went completely deaf in 1819.
7. Beethoven had many “firsts” in music. Because of his hearing loss he demanded piano makers construct larger instruments for better sound. He also increased



the size of the orchestra for the same reason. As previously stated, he was the first composer to use vocals in a symphony and was unorthodoxed in his symphony writing as he sometimes went from one movement to the next without stopping.

8. He was considered “The Bridge to Romanticism” as he was a freelance musician and broke many traditions of how composers earned a living. He made a great deal of money from publishing and concerts. He was a good businessman and a much better negotiator than Mozart.
9. His personal life also reveals he had relationships with several women, but he never married and supposedly had no children.
10. Some of his most important compositions are:

Nine Symphonies

One Violin Concerto

Five Piano concerts

Thirty-two Piano Sonatas

Sixteen String Quartets

Missa Solemnis (Mass)

One Opera, Fidelio.

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Summary of Unit Three, Chapter 4 Terms and Study Sheet

Terms

Theme and Variations: A melody and variety.

Rondo: A return of the main melody (A).

Minuet: *A dance in $\frac{3}{4}$ time.*

Sonata Form: Optional introduction, exposition, development, recapitulation, and coda.

Symphony: An orchestral piece, usually in four movements.

Overture: An instrumental section that comes before an opera or oratorio begins.

Composers: Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven.

Summary of Listeners Toolbox

This era is definitely the era of the symphony. Try to add some of these listening to your daily routine and use them for enjoyment and relaxation.

Questions

How did the events at Pompeii and Herculaneum in 79 A.D. affect the mentality of music in the Classical Era? How were social events at the courts handled? Why did it bother musicians to be considered servants?

To The Student: The instructor may add or delete study items at his or her discretion.

Unit Three, Chapter 4 Listening Box Playlist

LB23: Type in Haydn Symphony 45 and choose top box Haydn Symphony No. 45 & 94. Select Track 1, Symphony No. 45 in F—Sharp Minor “Farewell”: I Allegro assai; Track 8, Symphony No. 94 in G Major “Surprise”: III. Allegro Di Molto.

LB24: Type in Beethoven Classical Best and choose top box Beethoven—Classical Best of. Select Track 8, Symphony No. 5 in C Minor Op. 67 Part I.

LB25: Type in Mozart for Baby and under Tracks choose Twinkle Twinkle Little Star (Baby Cla . . . Select Track 4, Twinkle Twinkle Little Star (Baby Classical Sleeping Song).

LB26: Type in Big Mozart Box and under Tracks choose Overture to Marriage of Figaro, Vienna Symphony Orchestra. Select Track 37, Overture to Marriage of Figaro. K492.

LB27: Type in Fur Elise and choose top box Fur Elise. Select Track 7, Fur Elise.

LB28: Type in Menuetto First and choose top box III. Menuetto (First version . . . Select Tracks 15, 19, and 23. They will all say III. Menuetto—Trio and they are from different Mozart Symphonies.

LB29: Type in Classical Blast and choose top box Symphony #9: Ode to Joy. Select Track 7, Symphony #9: IV. Ode To Joy.

LB31: Type in Jupiter Symphony and under Tracks take first choice. This will take you right to Track 4. Select Track 4, as this is the last movement of Symphony 41, The Jupiter.