Classical Music

1770-1820

1750-1770 = ???
Active but often “nameless” period – sometimes known as “Pre-Classical” or GALLANT STYLE or Rococo
C.P.E. Bach – more famous than his dad (J.S.)

Overview
The SYMPHONY emerges
CHAMBER MUSIC emerges
OPERA continues & evolves
Three major composers:
HAYDN
MOZART
BEETHOVEN

The Classical Style
• CLARITY
• REGULAR PHRASES
• CONTRAST BECOMES STRUCTURAL, EVEN NARRATIVE
• MOTIFIC RATHER THAN MELODIC
• MOTIFIC MATERIAL IS “WORKED OUT”

Haydn

LIFE-TIME-LINES

BEETHOVEN 1770-1827
MOZART 1756-1791
HAYDN 1732-1809
1770 1820
Listening example

**Haydn** -- first movement from Sonata in C Major, No. 50
-- clarity of texture
-- contrast of mood within one movement
-- piano sonata (3-movement work for solo piano)
-- short motivic ideas rather than long melodies
-- sonata form

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The string quartet – a chamber music ensemble

-- The string quartet as an ensemble is made up of 2 violins, viola and cello.
-- The string quartet as a musical genre is a multi-movement work similar to the symphony in that it usually has 4 movements, usually
  I. sonata form – fast
  II. slow – lyrical, often variation form
  III. medium tempo dance movement
  IV. fast – rondo (ABACA) form

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Listening example

**Haydn** -- first movement from String Quartet in C Major, Opus 76 No. 3, “Emperor”
-- clarity of texture
-- four-part texture with different roles or personalities for each part, as if the music was a conversation among four people
-- short motivic ideas rather than long melodies
-- sonata form, single theme

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**Don’t write this down:**
104 symphonies
60 Piano sonatas
68 String quartets
25 Operas (10 lost)
Masses & oratorios

**THE POINT:** plenty of chances to experiment with form

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Esterháza

A private laboratory for Haydn and his development of classical forms
- 30 years of support, isolated but not cut-off from the world . . . 2 operas & 2 concerts every week, almost daily chamber music, his own 25-member orchestra

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A digression: the social status of the artist

**Velasquez proudly wearing a mark of distinction**

**Haydn a (very glorified) servant**

Beethoven fancied himself to be independent – an entrepreneur
Sonata Form

- exposition
- usually repeated
- development
- recapitulation

- tonic
  - theme 1
  - theme 2
  - transition

- theme 1
  - repeated
  - transition

- theme 2

- theme 1

- recapitulation

- development

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Mozart listening example

1st movement from Symphony No. 40 in G minor
- Minor key
- Sonata form – very clear
- motif
- p. 314-16 in text

Mozart

- Only 35 years on the planet

- 40+ symphonies
- 23 string quartets
- 27 piano concertos
- masses
- 20 operas
Mozart listening example

- first movement from Symphony No. 35 in D Major, K. 385, "Haffner"
  -- begins with a huge leap; there is a variety of articulations and textures
  -- clarity of texture and clarity of musical ideas
  -- sonata form: the modulation to the second theme/key is complete at about 1:30; the development section starts at about 2:34; the recapitulation begins at about 3:29.
  -- major key
  -- the development section plays with the contrast of minor keys to the home key of the piece, which is major

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SUMMARY – 18TH CENTURY

- IDEAS – Enlightenment & rationalist Criticism
- ART – 3 genres: Rococo, Neo-Classical, Bourgeois (Genre)
- MUSIC – Genres such as the SYMPHONY and the STRING QUARTET emerge, all emphasizing CLARITY of musical ideas and the organization of CONTRAST, as exemplified by SONATA FORM
- key composers: HAYDN, MOZART & early Beethoven

Mozart and opera

- all voice ranges used (instead of the Baroque’s treble + bass preference)
- ensembles (groups of solo voices) now contrasted with arias and recitative
- several operas about contemporary characters, not mythological figures or ancient history from Rome or Greece (although he did a few of those, too)
- biting social commentary: the decadent aristocracy is compared to the normal, happy, healthy lust and love of the common folk
- recitative still used
- some in German with spoken dialogue

Da Ponte – librettist