Classical Music

1770-1820

Mozart

Only 35 years on the planet

Opera evolution

Baroque
recitative
aria (solo)
action
recitative
aria
action
recitative
aria
action...

Classical/Mozart
recitative
aria (solo)
action
ensemble...

action
eMOTE
action
emotion & action...

contrastling emotions

Mozart

40+ symphonies
23 string quartets
piano sonatas
27 piano concertos
masses
20 operas

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

The three Da Ponte operas:
Marriage of Figaro (1786)
(Play by Beaumarchais)
Don Giovanni (1787)
Cosi Fan Tutte (1790)

Which one to choose as most representative?

(libretto = "little book," the story and words for an opera)
Mozart (viewing) example

*Cosi fan Tutte* (they all do it)
3 pairs of voices – symmetry of design appeals to the Neo-Classical mind
Rococo moral stance
Rarely performed in the 1800s – now regarded as one of Mozart’s finest operas
Ends with an appeal for forgiveness & HUMAN REASON

Fragonard, *The Swing*, 1769

Joseph II

*Petit Trianon*, Versailles, France 1764 (Louis XVI)

**NEO-CLASSICAL**

Joseph II

Still from *Amadeus*
Baron van Swieten

Mozart viewing example

**Don Giovanni**
Don Juan as anti-hero – critique of aristocracy
(a proud anti-hero, though – perhaps a reflection of the Enlightenment attitude about religion?)
Rarely performed in the 1800s – now regarded as one of Mozart’s finest operas
1787

The Marriage of Figaro
(Le Nozze di Figaro)
- celebration of “the common people” v. the decadent aristocracy
- 1786

**Don Giovanni**
characters are multi-faceted; not just good or bad

Don Giovanni a sexual predator – but brave
Leporello – likable servant easily swayed by $$$ (or €€€)
Donna Anna – obsessed with vengeance (justly), but loses sight of love
Don Ottavio – noble blowhard; ineffectual
Donna Elvira – noble woman but foolish in love
Zerlina & Masetto – peasants & moral center but easily led astray

Mozart listening example
-- finale from Act II of *The Marriage of Figaro*
-- an ensemble scene (six voices)
-- contrasting emotions presented simultaneously (compare that to the Baroque ideal aesthetic of Affect, one mood or emotion per piece)

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
1600 – Caravaggio, *The Calling of St Matthew; Baroque beginnings*

1742 – Handel's *Messiah* oratorio

1776 – Amer. Rev.

1787 – J.L. David *Death of Socrates*
Mozart, *Don Giovanni*

1789 – French Rev.