

Eduqas A level AoS A: the development of the symphony, part 1, 1750-c1830

KS5

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Introduction

Component 3 in Eduqas's AS and A level specification is Appraising, assessed through a listening exam. Students learn about two (AS) or three (A level) areas of study, some of which are chosen, though Area of Study A: the Western Classical Tradition is compulsory.

The specific topic within AoS A is the development of the symphony, covering 1750-1830 for AS and 1750-1900 for A level. Students also study two set works (just the first two movements for AS): Haydn's Symphony No. 104 (*London*) and Mendelssohn's Symphony No. 4 (*Italian*). One is prepared in detail (for an analysis question in the exam), while the other is for more general study.

This resource looks at the development of the symphony from 1750 to about 1830, including Haydn's symphonies. A later resource will continue from 1830 and will include Mendelssohn. These will help teachers prepare students for the essay question at A level (an extended response on the wider context) and the comparison question at AS (writing about two unprepared symphonic extracts demonstrating an understanding of the period).

The most recent examiners' report states that 'examiners are looking for evidence that candidates have studied some examples of the symphonic literature in depth and can cite specific features about the music'.

The social, political and cultural situation

The period between 1750 and 1830 saw many changes in society, which affected musicians. In 1750, musicians were likely to be employed by a patron, either the church or a noble family. Stamitz was employed by the Elector at Mannheim, while Haydn spent much of his career working for the Esterházy family near Vienna. However, the French Revolution and Enlightenment ideas led to the opportunity to stage concerts for a new middle-class paying public, who wished and were now able to engage with culture. Having failed to secure a position of employment, Mozart worked as a freelance musician in Vienna, followed by Beethoven (although the latter was also well supported by patrons).

Vienna was a political and cultural centre during this time: as the capital of the Habsburg empire, influential people were attracted to the city, many of whom employed musicians and composers. It was also a cultural crossroads, with musicians from all over Europe passing through.

Composers usually wrote music on request, either to fulfil an employment obligation (Haydn and Stamitz had to produce a certain amount of music each week) or as stand-alone commissions from patrons.

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Giovanni Battista Sammartini

Scores and recordings of the suggested works below are available online.

The origins of the symphony

By 1750, the word symphony (or sinfonia) had been in use for some time. Literally meaning 'sounding together', it sometimes referred to a piece involving instruments and voices. Students may recognise the instrumental music from the start of Handel's *Messiah*, usually referred to as the 'Sinfonia', serving as the overture. Overtures to Italian operas (composed throughout Europe) shortly before 1750 were orchestral pieces in three sections: fast-slow-fast (the final section was often dance-like). They were sometimes separated from the opera and played as instrumental pieces in concerts. It was a short step for composers to write stand-alone instrumental works in three movements, and these symphonies were the most important type of orchestral music by the late 18th century. This went hand in hand with the development of sonata form, used in first and other movements.

By 1760, symphonies composed in Vienna (and in places further afield, where composers had been influenced by Viennese developments) had three movements (fast-slow-fast), with a first movement derived from binary form, featuring two contrasting themes, with a little development, contrast of keys, and a third movement that was often a minuet.

Sammartini (c1700-75)

This Milanese composer performed his operatic sinfonias at concerts and then began writing works specifically for concert use. Over 60 symphonies by Sammartini survive: the earliest are for strings, but later works also have oboes, horns or trumpets. At this time Milan was under Austrian rule, so Sammartini's music quickly spread to Vienna and other cities and courts in Europe, influencing other composers.

Suggested listening

Sammartini Symphony in A, J-C 60

- ▶ www.youtube.com/watch?v=aFuPFL6VGog
- ▶ Movements:
 - ▶ 1 Allegro moderato
 - ▶ 2 Allegretto
 - ▶ 3 Allegro brillante
- ▶ Composed 1772
- ▶ Scoring: two oboes, two horns and strings
- ▶ Approximate duration: 15 minutes

Students should listen for the clear themes and use of key, symmetrical phrases and slow, regular harmonic rhythm. Melodies are played by the upper strings, accompanied by the bassline with harmonic filling in the middle of the texture. There is clear use of sonata form and Sammartini's typical use of the tonic minor in the second movement. There are some interesting harmonies, followed by clear perfect cadences. The horns and oboes, while independent of the strings, do not provide anything crucial and the Symphony would sometimes have been performed without them. Note also the driving rhythms in the bass (continuous quavers), giving a sense of urgency to the music.

Galant style

This style, with its French name, arose from Baroque music from about 1720, as an alternative to the learned and complicated polyphony. It is much lighter, with a melody and accompaniment texture, and an emphasis on tonic and dominant harmonies with clear cadences and balanced phrasing. Harmonic rhythm is slow and regular, and melodies are often ornamented. Much early Classical music has some features of this style, including the works of CPE and JC Bach and the early works of Haydn and Mozart. Students may be able to identify galant features of the Sammartini Symphony above.

JC Bach (1735-82)

The youngest son of JS Bach is often known as the 'London' Bach, as he settled there in 1762, after making his name in Italy as a composer of Italian opera (and working with Sammartini). He had studied with his father and older brother (CPE Bach), and his music combines German and Italian features. He is famous for graceful melodies, clear structures and three-movement symphonies, and influenced Mozart. Some of his published symphonies were originally operatic overtures.

Suggested listening

JC Bach Symphony in D, Op. 3 No. 1

► www.youtube.com/watch?v=NnFtDkmatFw

► Movements:

► 1 Allegro con spirito

► 2 Andante

► 3 Presto

► First performed 1765

► Scoring: two oboes, two horns and strings

► Approximate duration: 9 minutes

This Symphony opens with a rising scale in octaves, and the second subject is at a quieter dynamic with reduced forces over a dominant pedal. The second movement is in the subdominant while the finale in 6/8 has a dance-like feel and opens in octaves, like the first movement.

Empfindsamkeit

This style, with a German name, can be translated as ‘sensibility’ (as in Jane Austen!) or ‘sentimental style’, and first arose in literature. Features include appoggiaturas and ‘sighing’ melodic features, together with chromaticism. In its use of music for emotional reaction, it was a precursor of Romanticism.

CPE Bach (1714-88)

The second son of JS Bach was an influential composer, despite few of his works being widely distributed. He spent his working life in Berlin and Hamburg, and combines Baroque, Classical and pre-Romantic ideas. His writing about music was influential, saying that the aims of music were to ‘touch the heart and move the affections’. His early symphonies were for strings, to which he later added wind parts, but his later symphonies sometimes feature wind instruments as soloists. He influenced the creation of sonata form, particularly the development of themes.

Suggested listening

CPE Bach Symphony in D, Wq. 183/1

- ▶ www.youtube.com/watch?v=ixR66iqdMwU
- ▶ Movements:
 - ▶ 1 Allegro di molto
 - ▶ 2 Largo
 - ▶ 3 Presto
- ▶ Composed 1776
- ▶ Scoring: two flutes, two oboes, bassoon, two horns, strings, continuo
- ▶ Approximate duration: 10 minutes

This harmonically unstable work has diminished 7ths and a first movement with a linking passage moving to the dominant of E flat major (the key of the second movement). The triple-metre finale has driving rhythms (continuous quavers and semiquavers) but also uses silence (the GP and bars of rest for the whole orchestra).

Mannheim and Johann Stamitz (1717-57)

In 1720, Mannheim was chosen as the seat of the electoral court and gained electors who were willing to invest in music. The number of musicians employed increased dramatically through the century, from 56 on the earliest list to 90 by 1778. In the mid-18th century, the director of music was the Bohemian composer and virtuoso violinist Johann Stamitz (1717-57), whose technically accomplished orchestra became known as the best in Europe. This reputation meant that many composers were keen to visit, including Mozart. The ability of the players allowed Stamitz to write technically demanding music, including features that became associated with Mannheim. These included the 'Mannheim crescendo' (for the whole orchestra, often over a pedal), the 'Mannheim rocket' (ascending music using broken chords, combined with a crescendo) and the 'Mannheim sigh' (a falling phrase). Stamitz's stylistic features in his 70 symphonies include idiomatic scoring and solo passages for woodwind and horns, particularly in his secondary themes.

Suggested listening

Stamitz Symphony in E flat, Op. 4 No. 6

- ▶ www.youtube.com/watch?v=OblpNzjxmUs
- ▶ Movements:
 - ▶ 1 Allegro maestoso
 - ▶ 2 Adagio
 - ▶ 3 Minuetto – Trio
 - ▶ 4 Prestissimo
- ▶ Probably composed 1753-55
- ▶ Scoring: two violins, continuo, two oboes (ad lib), two horns (ad lib)
- ▶ Approximate duration: 15 minutes

A 'Mannheim crescendo' can be heard near the start. There are also examples of the 'Rocket' and driving repeated semiquavers. The eight-bar second subject features the oboes. The relatively long C minor second movement opens dramatically with a unison texture in bars 1-2 and has large dynamic changes. Unlike the Italian model, where the minuet is designed to be the finale, this Symphony uses the minuet in a more 'German' way, with regular four-bar phrases. The very fast finale allowed the orchestra to display its virtuosity.

Sturm und Drang

This term is usually translated as 'storm and stress' and began in German literature in the 1760s. The name comes from the title of a 1776 play by Friedrich Maximilian Klingler, but musically the style was apparent before the stage work. Rather like Empfindsamkeit, importance is given to expression of emotion.

Features include use of minor keys, striking dynamics (including terraced dynamics and sforzando), unison/monophonic passages (or passages in octaves), syncopation, off-beat and repeated quaver rhythms, dramatic rests and silence, melodic lines with awkward or angular intervals, extremes of register and chromatic harmony (such as diminished, Neapolitan and diminished 7th chords), often leading to uncertainty of tonality. Many features were extended further by Romantic composers.

Suggested listening

Haydn Symphony No. 26 in D minor (*Lamentatione*)

- ▶ www.youtube.com/watch?v=orNCggzEeFw
- ▶ Movements:
 - ▶ 1 Allegro assai con spirito
 - ▶ 2 Adagio
 - ▶ 2 Minuet and Trio
- ▶ Composed c1768.
- ▶ Scoring: two oboes, bassoon, two horns and strings
- ▶ Approximate duration: 17 minutes

Haydn uses two plainchant melodies: the first movement second subject uses a Passion-tone (Passiontide is the last two weeks of Lent) while the second movement uses a chant from the Lamentations of Jeremiah (sung at the end of Holy Week). Many typical Sturm und Drang features are evident: the minor key (the minuet alternates between major and minor), the Adagio tempo of the second movement (rather than Andante), silence and canon in the minuet, hammering quaver figuration and sudden ascending scalar passages in the first movement, and the intense emotions suggested.

More Haydn symphonies

Haydn composed symphonies throughout his working life, but they were not produced at a steady rate since he had to meet the demands of his employers. Haydn's earliest symphonies, many of which were written while he was employed by Count Morzin, are for two oboes, two horns and strings. Some are in three movements while others have four, but the minuet is sometimes placed second. Three of Haydn's early symphonies even begin with a slow movement. These symphonies were circulated throughout Europe in manuscript copies.

At Esterházy, Haydn had a bigger ensemble: by the 1780s there were about 24 players, including flute, two oboes, two bassoons and two horns (with trumpet and timpani players brought in when required). Most weeks Haydn had to provide music for two concerts (though not two new symphonies every week!).

Haydn's first symphonies for Esterházy (in 1761) were numbers 6 to 8, with the programmatic titles *Le matin*, *Le midi* and *Le soir* ('Morning', 'Midday' and 'Evening'). These are for one or two flutes, oboes, bassoon, two horns and strings. The strings are divided into a concertino and ripieno group, as in a Baroque concerto grosso.

After these symphonies, Haydn returned to a slightly smaller ensemble. He is often quoted as saying that he was 'forced to be original', but he was influenced by the works of contemporary composers, which he encountered in Vienna and through manuscript copies. An example of an 'experimental' symphony is No. 31 in D (*Hornsignal*) from 1765. This Symphony requires four virtuoso horn players and has relatively difficult parts for the other instruments, demonstrating Haydn's original writing for wind (and brass). Like those of numbers 6-8, the second movement contrasts a solo and tutti group, and the finale is a theme and set of seven variations, in which each variation is allocated to a particular instrumental group.

Suggested listening

Haydn Symphony No. 45 in F sharp minor (*Farewell*)

► www.youtube.com/watch?v=cYvjr86_aJY

► Movements:

- 1 Allegro assai
- 2 Adagio
- 3 Minuet and Trio
- 4 Presto – Adagio

► Composed 1772

► Scoring: two oboes, bassoon, two horns and strings

► Approximate duration: 27 minutes

This unusual choice of key reflects the Sturm und Drang style of the music. The key necessitated new crooks for the horns, so that they were able to play all the required notes. The story behind this work is well known: Haydn and his musicians were annoyed at having to stay in Eszterháza and therefore not be able to see their families back in Eisenstadt. The final Adagio section involves the players blowing out their candles and leaving one by one, until only two muted violins are left.

The first movement has typical Sturm und Drang features: minor arpeggios, syncopation and a key change to C sharp minor in the exposition, rather than the dominant major. Haydn does not introduce a new second subject theme until the start of the development. The second movement begins in the relative major but has major-minor mode juxtaposition and use of dissonance (in the form of suspensions). The Minuet is in the tonic major, followed by a Trio in which Haydn uses the same plainchant as in his Symphony No. 26.

Students could choose one of Haydn's many symphonies to study and present their findings to their peers.

The numbering of Haydn's symphonies can be rather confusing, as it does not reflect their chronology.

Haydn's contract with Esterházy forbade him from writing music for anywhere else, though this was later relaxed. Haydn's music was well known in Paris, as his symphonies had been printed and performed there from about 1764. In 1785 Haydn was commissioned to write a set of six symphonies for the city's large orchestra, the Concert de la Loge Olympique. The opportunity to compose for a large number of players seems to have spurred Haydn to write some significant works, exploring a wide variety of textures, with different combinations of instruments and some grand tutti sections. Symphonies 82 to 87 all have four movements, with first movements in sonata form (three of them begin with slow introductions). Third movements are minuets and trios, usually with a clear contrast (in tempo, scoring or tonality) between the minuet and trio. In the sonata-form movements there are many examples of monothematicism.

On Haydn's release from his contract with Esterházy, he was invited on two visits to London, and composed his final and possibly greatest symphonies for performance there. These exhibit unusual and chromatic harmonies, more polyphonic writing, greater rhythmic drive and the woodwind heard without the strings. However, the clarinet (still a relatively new instrument) is included in only five of these 12 symphonies. Unlike Haydn's earlier symphonies, the trumpets and timpani appear in slow movements. The slow introductions often have motivic links with the subsequent fast sections, and the works include careful and dramatic use of silences.

Suggested listening

Haydn Symphony No. 100 in G (*Military*)

► www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bdw9wac4qIU

► Movements:

► 1 Adagio – Allegro

► 2 Allegretto

► 3 Menuetto: moderato

► 4 Finale: Presto

► Composed 1794

► Scoring: two flutes, two oboes, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, timpani, triangle, cymbals, bass drum, strings

► Approximate duration: 25 minutes

This was composed for Haydn's second visit to London. In the first movement the development begins in the key of B flat major (after two bars of silence) and the recapitulation moves to the flattened submediant (E flat). Similarly, the second movement moves to A flat at bar 161. Both the second and fourth movements feature a large percussion section, contributing (together with the brass fanfare in the second movement) to the nickname.

Mozart

Although Mozart wrote fewer symphonies than Haydn, due to his shorter lifespan and interest in other genres, his contribution to the genre is equally significant. There are 41 numbered symphonies, composed throughout his life, the earliest of which show the influence of Haydn and JC Bach, who Mozart met while travelling around Europe as a child. His works often have more for wind instruments to do than those of Haydn, and he writes slightly more idiomatically. He also wrote more lyrical melodies (often taking ideas from his operatic works). Early symphonies have three movements, but he soon moved to four movements, with a rich harmonic vocabulary.

Like Haydn, Mozart was invited to write for the large Paris orchestra, producing his Symphony No. 31 in D, in three movements. Mozart's final symphonies (Nos 39 to 41) were produced in a short space of time in the summer of 1788. His mature symphonies are harmonically and texturally complex, including greater use of chromaticism and counterpoint. Wind parts are more demanding, and the finales are more significant in size and scope, to balance the larger first movements – an idea pursued by Romantic composers.

Suggested listening

Mozart Symphony No. 41 in C (*Jupiter*)

► www.youtube.com/watch?v=gAmw8ATIn68

► Movements:

► 1 Allegro vivace

► 2 Andante cantabile

► 3 Minuet: Allegretto

► 4 Molto allegro

► Composed 1788

► Scoring: flute, two oboes, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, timpani, strings

► Approximate duration: 30 minutes

Mozart's final symphony is also his longest. The title, reflecting the work's grandeur, was given after Mozart's death. In the 18th century, the key of C was associated with festivities and ceremonies, hence the inclusion of trumpets and drums. As in Haydn's *London* symphonies, there is significant use of silence. The development section of the first movement has a false recapitulation (bar 161) and development of ideas also takes place in the exposition and recapitulation. One of the themes in the second subject is recycled from an opera aria. The second movement is in sonata form in the subdominant, and could be seen as a sarabande. Though the third movement has the title 'Minuet', it has features of the Ländler, a dance popular at the end of the 18th century. This movement features extensive chromaticism and there are motivic links between the Trio and the Finale. Polyphonic textures are heard throughout the Finale, culminating in a five-part fugato.

Beethoven

Beethoven bridges the Classical and Romantic periods, developing the Classical symphonic form. He cast a long shadow over the Romantic period: composers working in the mid- to late-19th century had to compose in the light of Beethoven's achievements. Symphonies Nos 1 and 2 are fairly Classical in style, but from No. 3 (the *Eroica*) Beethoven began to break the mould.

Suggested listening

Beethoven Symphony No. 3 in E flat (*Eroica*)

► www.youtube.com/watch?v=iZfzQ8L39dl

► Movements:

- 1 Allegro con brio
- 2 Marcia funebre: Adagio assai
- 3 Scherzo: Allegro vivace
- 4 Finale: Allegro molto

► Composed 1803

► Scoring: two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, three horns, two trumpets, timpani and strings

► Approximate duration: 45 minutes

This is 'early Romantic', and is much longer than Beethoven's first two symphonies. It also increases both the size of the orchestra and the harmonic and tonal language, and has the sense of all movements working towards a single purpose. The change in scope and style is evident from the C sharp, following the opening E flat major broken chord idea. The second movement is a funeral march, the third is a scherzo rather than a minuet, and the finale is complex, combining variations, fugue and march. Notable is the use of three fast movements, contrasted by just one at a slower tempo. The title suggests programmatic content (the celebration of a hero – originally Napoleon, but then deleted). The coda and development in the first movement are greatly expanded, to be at least as long as the exposition, and the development contains a new theme. Examples of remote keys reached include A minor (bar 254) and E minor (bar 284, which is treated enharmonically as F flat, the Neapolitan of the tonic E flat). There is a particularly striking semitone dissonance in the flutes in bars 276-9.

Beethoven never abandoned sonata form, though he did expand all the sections, particularly the coda, which often included further development. Symphony No. 5 is probably the most famous symphony in the world. Symphony No. 6 (*Pastoral*) is programmatic, and its five movements each have a title suggesting a countryside scene.

Suggested listening

Beethoven Symphony No. 9 in D minor (*Choral*)

► www.youtube.com/watch?v=5cnQfWBsJqA

► Movements:

- 1 Allegro ma non troppo, un poco maestoso
- 2 Scherzo: molto vivace
- 3 Adagio molto e cantabile
- 4 Presto

► Composed 1822-24

► Scoring: piccolo*, two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons*, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, timpani, bass drum*, triangle*, cymbals*, strings, voices* (SATB soloists and SATB choir) (* used only in Finale)

► Approximate duration: 65 minutes

Here Beethoven completely changed the genre, by introducing soloists and chorus in the finale. It was the longest symphony written by 1824, even though the first movement does not include an exposition repeat. The scherzo is the second movement, where the main idea is used as part of a fugal exposition, the third movement is a set of double variations, and the finale is also a set of variations. It includes some very dissonant fanfares, contrasted with the simple and folk-like 'Ode to Joy' melody.

Schubert

Alone of all the composers included here, Schubert was a native Viennese. Like Beethoven, he bridged the Classical and Romantic periods. He is often thought of as a 'lyrical' composer and explored key relationships other than tonic-dominant and relative keys. Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven were his key influences and he used standard classical structures. His Symphony No. 9 is also well worth studying.

Suggested listening

Schubert Symphony No. 8 in B minor (*Unfinished*)

► www.youtube.com/watch?v=omnrHf7pojM

► Movements:

- 1 Allegro moderato
- 2 Andante con moto
- Composed 1822
- Scoring: two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, three trombones, timpani, strings
- Approximate duration: 25 minutes

This Symphony comprises just two movements, since Schubert left nothing more than sketches for the rest. It was his first large-scale symphony, and it's unclear why he left it unfinished. The key of B minor is not a traditional symphonic key. In the first movement, the first theme is played by wind, accompanied by strings, the transition is only four bars in length and is followed by the second subject Ländler melody in G major, a 3rd down from the tonic. The development explores the thematic material from the introduction, rather than from the exposition. The second movement is in E major, which has an unusual relationship to the key

of the work – it is the subdominant of the tonic major.

Summary

From 1750 to 1830 there were many changes in symphonic music, including:

- ▶ Increased importance of the symphony as a genre. It became the most important form of instrumental music, and the main feature in a concert programme.
- ▶ A change in the position of composers: from servant to an independent creative artist, creating music for fee-paying audiences.
- ▶ Standardisation of the four-movement structure, with sonata form in the first movement and often other movements.
- ▶ Replacement of the minuet and trio by the scherzo and trio.
- ▶ A significant increase in the length of works and individual movements.
- ▶ Addition of a slow introduction to first movements and an increase in the importance of the coda.
- ▶ Changes in phrasing, from regular, balanced four- and eight-bar phrases to longer, unequal phrases.
- ▶ A wider variety of modulations to more distantly related tonalities.
- ▶ Greater use of chromatic harmonies, extended chords, and chords in different inversions.
- ▶ Use of a wider dynamic range, moving from Baroque-style terraced dynamics (*f* and *p* dynamic contrasts only) to gradations and dynamics from (at least) *pp* to *ff*.
- ▶ An increase in the size of the orchestra, with optional woodwind (flutes or oboes and bassoons) being replaced by double woodwind (two each of flutes, oboes, clarinets and bassoons), two horns, two trumpets and timpani and then the addition of further instruments such as the piccolo, trombones and contrabassoon. Early symphonies kept the Baroque continuo, but this eventually dropped out of use.
- ▶ A change in how instruments were used, particularly the woodwind, from doubling the bassline (bassoons) and filling in the harmony (upper woodwind) to being used independently, carrying melodic material, and equal in importance to the strings. Expansion of the string lines from four (basses doubling cellos an octave lower) to five, with separate cello and bass parts.
- ▶ Expansion of the concept of a symphony to include voices.