

AQA AoS1: the orchestral music of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven

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Introduction

Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven are collectively sometimes referred to as the 'First Viennese School', since they spent at least some of their working lives in the city of Vienna in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Vienna was a cosmopolitan city and a cultural centre, with a thriving music scene. The three composers all met each other at different times.

This topic is part of Area of Study 1 for AQA GCSE music and includes a 'study piece': the second movement of Haydn's *Clock Symphony* (covered in its own resource, *Music Teacher*, November 2017). Students will listen to unfamiliar excerpts drawn from the orchestral music of the three composers, answer questions about musical elements and context, and read and write in staff notation.

In particular, students should be able to draw out features of the music they hear that are typical of the music of the Classical period. Although it's possible to learn these, students should be aware that only the points relevant to the excerpt they are played will be credited, and that they should focus their answers carefully, as only the number of points equal to the number of marks available will be considered. A scattergun approach, where a student writes 'everything I can remember about Classical music' is therefore likely to backfire.

Classical features students should look out for in the works of these composers include:

- ▶ Balanced phrasing (often four bars, but sometimes extended to more).
- ▶ Conjunct/stepwise melodic movement.
- ▶ Melodic ornamentation (such as appoggiaturas).
- ▶ Chromatic melodic movement.
- ▶ Frequent tonic and dominant chords.
- ▶ Chromatic chords (such as diminished 7ths) used occasionally.
- ▶ Regular cadence points, using mostly perfect and imperfect cadences.
- ▶ A 'classical' orchestra with strings playing most of the melody, while woodwind and horns double or add further accompaniment.
- ▶ Melody-and-accompaniment textures.
- ▶ Movements in a clear structure.
- ▶ Modulations to related keys.
- ▶ Tonic and dominant pedal notes.
- ▶ A range of dynamics, but not huge contrasts.

One work by each composer is discussed below, with their key features highlighted.

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Scores and recordings of the three works are freely available online, though sometimes they do not include bar numbers.

The Classical orchestra

Writers often refer to ‘the classical orchestra’, but at the time of Haydn and Mozart the make-up of the orchestra was not fixed – the number of wind and brass players in particular would depend on the instrumentalists available and the composer’s requirements for a given work.

The string section formed the basis of the orchestra, together with wind instruments drawn from flutes, oboes, clarinets and bassoons, often with trumpets and/or horns and timpani. Even if certain wind and brass instruments were used, they would not necessarily play in every movement. By the time Beethoven was writing, the number of wind and brass had become more standardised as (usually) two of each.

At the time Mozart and Haydn were composing, the clarinet was a relatively new instrument, and composers only sometimes included it in their orchestral works, often instead of other wind instruments (such as oboes). Clarinets in the 18th century did not have as many keys as the ones that are played today, so they couldn’t produce a full range of chromatic notes. To overcome this, clarinets were produced in three versions (in C, B flat and A), with the composer/performer using the instrument best suited to the piece.

Similarly, brass instruments of the time (trumpets and horns) did not have valves, so could only play a limited number of notes. Players were able to change the length of the tubing by inserting crooks, thereby altering the notes available, but for an individual piece (such as a movement of a symphony or concerto) brass instruments mostly played the tonic and dominant notes.

The symphony

The word ‘sinfonia’ had been in use for many years by the time Haydn and Mozart were composing, and had referred to a wide range of instrumental pieces. However, for Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, the term meant a work for orchestra, usually in four movements:

Movement	Usual structure	Usual tempo	Usual key
First	Sonata form	Fast	Tonic (of the whole work)
Second	Binary form, ternary form, sonata form (or abridged sonata form)	Slow	Related key, eg dominant or relative
Third	Minuet and trio (later scherzo and trio)	Moderate to fast	Related key
Fourth	Sonata form, rondo form or sonata rondo	Fast	Tonic

Predictably, all three of these composers delighted in playing with listeners’ expectations, and made changes to the structure and composition of the symphony as a whole and of individual movements.

The concerto

The idea of contrasting a solo instrument with an orchestra had been around for many years. However, Haydn and Mozart standardised the concerto form as having three movements, a convention that was taken up by Beethoven. A concerto misses out the minuet/scherzo and trio from the symphony plan above. The structure of individual movements had to take into account the presence of both a soloist and orchestra, so the use of sonata form was slightly different from that found in the concerto.

Sonata form

This is the form of the first movements of both symphonies and concertos, and sometimes other movements too (either in full or abridged). Although it has three main sections, it grew out of binary form.

A movement in sonata form would contain most, if not all the following elements:

Possibly a slow introduction			
EXPOSITION	1st subject	Tonic	(In a concerto, the first exposition features only the orchestra)
	Transition or bridge passage	Modulating from the tonic to either the dominant or relative key	
	2nd subject	Dominant or relative	
	Codetta	Dominant or relative	
In a symphony the exposition is simply repeated. In a concerto a second (different) exposition is heard, where the both the soloist and orchestra play, usually using ideas from the first exposition.			
DEVELOPMENT	Exploration of ideas from the exposition	A wide range of keys, usually closely related to the tonic	
RECAPITULATION	1st subject	Tonic	
	Transition or bridge passage	Remaining in the tonic	
	2nd subject	Tonic	
	Coda	Tonic	

Sonata-rondo form combines sonata and rondo form, usually resulting in a form along the lines of ABACABA, with C as the development section.

Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)

Haydn's musical career began in Vienna, as a choirboy at St Stephen's Cathedral. He really struck lucky at the age of 29, when he was appointed as Kapellmeister to the Esterházy family. The family was both wealthy and musical, and paid for the full-time services of an orchestra of about 10 to 15 musicians. Haydn's duties included directing the orchestra and writing new music for it to perform in the concerts that took place twice a week. When a third prince, who was less interested in music, took over, Haydn continued to be paid, but was set free to pursue other interests. It was at this point that he undertook his two extended trips to the UK, for which his *London* symphonies were written (including the study work, the *Clock* Symphony).

Haydn spent the last years of his life in Vienna, but did not write any further orchestral music, preferring instead to concentrate on string quartets. However, given that he had by then written 106 symphonies, there is plenty of his music to listen to. Many of Haydn's symphonies have names as well as numbers, but these were often added by enterprising publishers.

Today Haydn's symphonies are more famous than his concertos, but a small number of concertos are performed regularly. These include the two concertos for cello and the Trumpet Concerto, written for his friend Anton Weidinger, who had a keyed trumpet. Haydn also wrote up to 11 keyboard concertos, but it is not clear whether these were intended for harpsichord or fortepiano.

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

This Symphony dates from 1772, when Haydn was Kapellmeister. Many of his Esterházy symphonies are rarely played now, but this one, with its accompanying story, has always been popular. It was written in November when the Prince was still in his summer residence in Eszterháza. This was obviously some time past the end of the summer, and the musicians wanted to return to Eisenstadt to see their families. By writing a minor-key symphony with an unusual ending, Haydn conveyed this message to the Prince, who returned to Eisenstadt soon after the first performance.

Kapellmeister literally means 'chapel master', but Haydn was director of music for the Esterházy family, in charge of all musical performances, including concerts and operas.

Confusingly, the names of the family and the place are spelt slightly differently: the Esterházy family lived in Eszterháza.

Orchestration

The Symphony is scored for two oboes, bassoon (although this almost entirely doubles the cello line and is used in just the final movement), two horns and strings. In the first, second and fourth movements, the horns are in A, sounding a minor 3rd lower than written. However, in the third movement they are in F sharp. Apparently, Haydn had to order specially made crooks to enable the horns to play in this key. Except for the unusual ending section, throughout the work the strings are dominant, with the wind either doubling or playing an accompanying role. In the third movement the horns take the lead role at the start of the trio, helping to provide a strong contrast with the preceding minuet.

In the final movement, the bassoon begins by doubling the cello line, but from the Adagio section at the end has its own line. In this section the first oboe and second horn have a double barline way before the end of the movement and cease to play further. The story goes that at this point in the premiere, they blew out their candles and left the room. After just a few bars of emancipation from the cellos, the bassoon does the same, followed by the second oboe. A long double bass solo draws attention to this instrument when it is the next to stop playing. Cellos, second violins and violas then drop out until just the first violins are heard in two parts, both muted.

Structure

The Symphony has the expected four movements, in closely related keys. The first movement is in sonata form, though there is not an obvious second subject as the material heard once the key has modulated to the dominant is simply a one-bar fragment heard in imitation between the first violins and cellos. A possible second subject is the lyrical melody heard from bar 108 in the development, in the submediant key of D major.

The second movement is also in sonata form, while the third movement is a minuet and trio with the standard repeats. The final movement is again in sonata form, but with an extra final Adagio section, which introduces completely new material.

Harmony and tonality

This Symphony is in the unusual key of F sharp minor, giving an ominous feeling to the opening. In the first movement, Haydn visits the keys of A (the relative major), E, A minor, C sharp minor (the dominant minor) and D (the submediant). There is use of a C sharp 7th chord in the first time bar (leading back to the repeat of the exposition) and a diminished 7th chord in bars 138-139.

The second movement is in the relative major, with modulations to the dominant (E) and a sudden change to the dominant minor (E minor) at bar 31.

The third movement is in the tonic major (F sharp). Although this has more sharps in the key signature than students are expected to cope with, it is relatively easy to follow. The trio is in the same key as the minuet, with the first section modulating to the dominant and the second section returning to the tonic, via the tonic minor at bar 61.

The fourth movement begins in the tonic key of F sharp minor, but the extra Adagio section at the end begins in A and ends in F sharp major.

Melody

Though melodies are often conjunct, the Symphony opens with a melodic shape that outlines broken chords. The submediant melody at bar 108 is much more lyrical, beginning with a leap followed by conjunct movement. Melodies are frequently four bars in length, with antecedent and consequent phrases and regular cadences.

Texture

Throughout the Symphony, melody-and-accompaniment textures dominate. There is an example of a monophonic texture in the first movement from bar 85, where the strings play in octaves. In the final movement the texture gradually reduces, until there are just two violin parts.

Rhythm

The Symphony opens with syncopation in second violins, which helps to create the ominous feeling. Syncopation is also used in the second movement, in the second half of the second subject. The second movement uses a Scotch snap rhythm from bar 17, initially just as part of the transition. However, this reappears in the codetta and forms a significant part of the development.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Mozart has a well-deserved reputation as a child prodigy, and from a young age went on tour around Europe. He performed, composed and improvised for many important people of the day. During this time, he would have been exposed to a great deal of music, in the popular styles of the places he visited.

As an adult, Mozart gained employment with the Bishop of Salzburg. However, he was not happy and eventually left, moving to Vienna to make his own way. Here he composed, performed and taught, earning money wherever he could.

Mozart produced superb works in a wide variety of genres (including many symphonies), but his piano concertos are particularly highly regarded. He wrote at least 27 of these, many of which he premiered himself, in concerts in Viennese halls. These were written for the fortepiano, an instrument rather different from today's pianos, but capable of producing a range of dynamics, unlike the harpsichord.

Piano Concerto No. 23 in A, K488

Mozart began composing this Concerto in 1784 but did not complete it then. When he returned to it in 1786, he replaced the oboes with clarinets, completing the work on 2 March, and it's thought that he performed it at the end of the month. This Concerto is unusual in that a cadenza written by Mozart exists. For most of his concertos he would have improvised the cadenza himself and so would not have written it down. Performance of the three movements usually lasts around 25 minutes.

Orchestration

The work is scored for flute, two clarinets (in A), two bassoons, two horns (in A) and strings, with solo piano. Right from the start of the Concerto, the wind are used as an independent section: in bars 9-18 they repeat and extend the material played by the strings at the start.

In the second movement, the wind have the main melodic material from bar 92. This theme was heard earlier, with the wind and strings playing together, but here the wind are allowed to present it with the piano and strings accompanying. The wind also have solo passages in the third movement, for example bars 278-285, with the piano accompanying. In the third movement the strings play pizzicato from bar 176, returning to arco at bar 188.

Structure

The first movement is in sonata form, with two expositions (the first for orchestra alone, and the second for solo piano with orchestra). However, some writers suggest that elements of the Baroque concerto form can be seen, with orchestral ritornellos and solo episodes. The development does not meet expectations, as an entirely new theme is introduced, which appears again in the recapitulation.

The first movement includes a cadenza: at bar 297 the orchestra pause on a second inversion tonic chord, followed by the cadenza played by the soloist. Mozart's cadenza is initially based on another new idea that was introduced in the development (but which does not appear in the recapitulation). The cadenza then moves into pure virtuosity, including use of a Neapolitan and diminished 7th chord, before the orchestra concludes the movement.

The second movement is in ternary form, while the finale is in sonata-rondo.

Metre and rhythm

This slow movement, with its 6/8 time signature, would provide an ideal opportunity for students to work out the time signature aurally. This is a frequently used question, and compound time signatures are always less well recognised than those in simple time. Despite the compound time signature, triplets are used in this movement (eg triplet semiquavers in the left hand of the piano from bar 39).

Melody

The melody at the start of the work uses mostly stepwise movement, or leaps of a 3rd. There is an example of an ascending sequence in bars 5-6. When the melody is repeated by the wind, the earlier four-bar phrases are extended to five. The second subject theme (from bar 30) features chromatic passing notes. There is a good example of a chromatic scale covering more than an octave in the piano in bar 197. The opening melody of the second movement is mostly conjunct, but with a large leap of a 7th in bar 2. The final movement includes a great deal of ornamentation in the piano part (trills, turns, appoggiaturas and acciaccaturas).

Tonality and harmony

The key of the work is A major, with the first and third movements in this key. The middle movement is in the relative minor. As would be expected, the first exposition in the first movement stays in the tonic, while the second modulates to the dominant. The middle section of the second movement is in A major. The third movement passes through more distantly related keys, such as E minor from bar 106, leading to C at bar 125.

Mozart uses mostly diatonic harmony, with occasional chromatic chords (eg a Neapolitan 6th in bar 14 and a Neapolitan and diminished 7th chord in the cadenza).

Texture

As in the Haydn Symphony, most of the texture is melody and accompaniment (the accompaniment sometimes consisting of a left-hand Alberti bass in the piano, or held or broken chords). There are also examples of instruments playing in 3rds (eg first movement first and second violins bars 7-8). Imitation is used between the flute and first clarinet in the first movement in bars 170-176.

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Born in Bonn, Beethoven first visited Vienna in the spring of 1787, when he probably met Mozart. He moved there permanently in 1792 and began to have lessons from Haydn, though it seems that these were short-lived, due to the men's different temperaments. Beethoven led a turbulent life, and understandably his increasing deafness (which he first noted in 1801) caused him great anguish. As with Haydn and Mozart, Beethoven spent some time without a regular income, just that garnered from teaching, performing and composing. However, the offer of a Kapellmeister position elsewhere enabled him to persuade three members of Viennese aristocracy to provide him with money for life.

In contrast to the large number of symphonies written by Haydn and Mozart, Beethoven wrote just nine. However, these were deeply personal works and (from Symphony No. 3 onwards) on a far broader scale. Beethoven's concertos include five for piano and a concerto for violin. With his music, Beethoven effectively ushers in the age of Romanticism in music.

Symphony No. 6 in F (*Pastoral*)

The Sixth Symphony, also known as the *Pastoral* Symphony, is one of Beethoven's most famous works and was composed in 1808. It is an example of programme music, with each movement having a descriptive title and the music representing those ideas. There are five movements rather than the usual four, and the third and fourth movements run straight into the next, without a break.

The titles of the movements are:

- ▶ 1 Awakening of happy feelings on arrival in the countryside
- ▶ 2 Scene by the brook
- ▶ 3 Happy gathering of villagers
- ▶ 4 Storm
- ▶ 5 Shepherd's Song: joyful, grateful feelings after the storm

A performance usually lasts about 40 minutes, and the key of the work is F major.

Orchestration

Not all instruments appear in every movement, but the work is scored for piccolo, double woodwind, two each of horns, trumpets and trombones, timpani and strings. In the second movement, two muted cellos play separately from the rest of the cellos and basses, giving a much richer sound. The piccolo appears in the fourth movement from bar 82 to suggest whistling wind.

Structure

Both the first and last movements are in sonata form, with a very long coda, in which Beethoven continues to develop ideas. The second movement is also in sonata form, while the fourth movement does not follow any typical Classical structure, but is through-composed.

Though not marked as such, the third movement has many of the features of a scherzo and trio. In his symphonies, Beethoven moved away from Haydn and Mozart's use of a minuet and trio, initially by speeding up the tempo and then by replacing the minuet with a scherzo. This movement has a first section in fast triple time, in binary form, but the sections are not repeated. The trio is unusually in 2/4, which is probably a reference to folk music, and is also in binary form. Beethoven then breaks with convention again by repeating both the scherzo and trio (rather than just a simple da capo of the scherzo). After the repeat, there is a coda, which uses material from the scherzo to link to the next movement.

Tonality and harmony

The movements are in keys related to the tonic, with the second in the subdominant key of B flat, the third in the tonic key, the fourth in the tonic minor (F minor) and the fifth back in the tonic. Beethoven's harmony is not particularly chromatic in this work, presumably as he is trying to evoke folk music.

The notation in the second movement is interesting from bar 80: the second bassoon and first violins are notated in B major, while the rest of the instruments are in C flat major (the enharmonic equivalent). Beethoven then accomplishes a reasonably fast modulation back towards the tonic, leading to a dominant pedal in preparation for the recapitulation.

The fourth movement does not begin immediately in F minor, but an interrupted cadence between the preceding scherzo and this movement leads to D flat major, which then chromatically modulates to F minor, involving several diminished 7th chords. Most of the other keys used by Beethoven in this movement are closely related to the tonic, but there is a section using A and D, with the contrast in keys possibly suggesting that the storm dies down briefly. The piccolo appears in the fourth movement from bar 82 to suggest whistling wind.

Texture

Beethoven makes frequent use of pedal points in this work, to suggest the drone of folk instruments. He also (unusually for Beethoven) has several ostinato patterns (such as in the first movement from bar 402), again a reference to folk music.

Summary

Although the lifetimes of the three composers overlapped, a clear progression can be seen from the music of Haydn and Mozart to that of Beethoven. Though many Classical features can be found in the works of all three, they all also experimented with ideas and moved the course of music forward.