

## **CLASSICAL MUSIC INTRODUCTION: PART 2 HISTORY**

### **EARLY**

One of the main problems in early classical music was that the masters of the older style had the technique, but the public wanted the new style. Older Baroque forms were composed with a new style: simpler parts, more notated ornamentation and more emphatic division into sections. This new style caused radical effects in how pieces were put together, and the basic layouts changed. The radical overhaul of opera allowed for greater freedom of expression and emotion in the music. Vocal music and opera were considered the most important kinds of music for public performance, and as such, enjoyed the greatest success from the public.

The length and weight of pieces was still set with some Baroque characteristics: individual movements still focused on one affect or had only one sharply contrasting middle section, and their length was not significantly greater than Baroque movements. This was another problem in presenting Classical music, as there was no clear way or form of composing in the Classical style. Of great importance was a phase in the arts “storm and stress”, in which obvious emotionalism was a stylistic preference. Although this period faded away, it was a major influence in music of later decades.

### **MIDDLE**

One of the works of the Classical composer Franz Joseph Haydn had major importance by integrating melody and harmony, which changed the way the ensemble works between dramatic moments of transition and climatic sections. Another composer, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, brought Haydn’s ideas and applied them to both opera and the virtuoso concerto.

War and inflation forced changes in both larger and theater orchestras. This led to further changes in Classical music, seeking greater ensemble and technical challenge. It also placed a premium on chamber music for more public performance, increasing the string quartet and other small ensemble groupings. By the end of the 1780s, changes in performance practice, the relative standing of instrumental and vocal music, technical demands on musicians and stylistic unity had become established. London held greater importance and significance for Classical composers, as it served as the home to the Broadwood’s factory for piano manufacturing and the base for composers who had a major influence on later music. London’s taste for virtuosity may have encouraged the complex passage work and extended statements on the tonic and dominant (1<sup>st</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> notes of a scale).

### **LATE**

The late Classical period saw many social changes: international publication and touring and grown explosively, concert societies were beginning to be formed, notation had been made more specific and descriptive and schematics for works (compositional planning) had been simplified. The late Classical music was seeing music that was internally more complex. The continuing growth of concert societies and amateur orchestras, contributed to a booming market for pianos, piano music, and virtuosi. Direct influence of the Baroque continued to fade: the figured bass became less important in performance and the performances practices of the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century continued to die out. Brass instruments became more important, as well as the increased detail and specificity in notation.

### **INFLUENCE ON LATER COMPOSERS**

The Classical style did not die out, rather it transformed in every area: the use of flatward keys (using keys with flats rather than sharps), focus on major keys, greater use of chromaticism in modulation, and the use of minor keys for contrasting sections. The use of rhythm was also of great importance by having a continuous and rhythmically uniform accompanying figuration. This allowed for a shifting movement of a rhythmic figure providing the emotional and dramatic aspect of the work, while a melody drifts among it. Other important characteristics include greater knowledge of works, greater instrumental expertise, increasing variety of instruments, the growth of concert societies, and the greater importance of piano and writing piano works, which all created a huge audience for sophisticated music.

Drawing a line between the end of Classical and beginning of Romantic music is difficult. This line is generally regarded as the fall of Vienna as the most important musical center for orchestral composition as the final collapse of Classical music. Many composers moved on to new ideas and new forms to contain the large world of musical expression and performance in which they lived. As well, some composers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century took an interest in the elements and style of Classical music and developed their own style "Neoclassicism."