

Classic Terms

Alberti Bass: "Broken" arpeggiated triads in a bass line, common in many types of Classic keyboard music; named after Domenico Alberti (1710-1740) who used it extensively but did not invent it.

Aria: A lyrical type of singing with a steady beat, accompanied by orchestra; a songful monologue or duet in an opera or other dramatic vocal work.

Bel Canto: (Italian for "beautiful singing") An Italian singing tradition primarily in opera seria and opera buffa in the late 17th- to early-19th century. Characterized by seamless phrasing (*legato*), great breath control, flexibility, tone, and agility. Most often associated with singing done in the early-Romantic operas of Rossini, Bellini and Donizetti.

Cadenza: An improvised or written-out ornamental virtuosic passage played by a soloist in a concerto. In Classic concertos, a cadenza occurs at a dramatic moment before the end of a movement, when the orchestra stops so the soloist can play in free time, and then after the cadenza is finished the orchestra reenters to bring the movement to its conclusion.

Castrato The term for a male singer who was castrated before puberty to preserve his high soprano range (this practice in Italy lasted until the late 1800s). Today, the rendering of castrato roles is problematic because it requires either a male singing falsetto (weak) or a mezzo-soprano (strong, but woman must impersonate a man).

Counterpoint: Combining two or more independent melodies to make an intricate polyphonic texture.

Empfindsam: (German for "sensitive") The term used to describe a highly-expressive style of German pre-Classic/early Classic instrumental music, that was intended to intensely express true and natural feelings, featuring sudden contrasts of mood. CPE Bach *Sonata in A major* (1765)--written for the clavichord [a very sensitive and expressive keyboard instrument].

Enlightenment: ("The Age of Enlightenment" or "The Age of Reason") An 18th-century philosophical movement in France and later in the American colonies, aimed at improving society by logical thinking, such as the premise that common people could be free from aristocratic rule if they were educated enough to choose their own government and officials. (The American *Declaration of Independence* is based on such enlightened principles.) Enlightenment concepts influenced Classic musical forms and genres based on symmetry and balance, and impacted the types of common characters that were the heroes/heroines of Classic comic operas that spoofed the battle between the upper and lower European classes.

Form: The musical design or shape of a movement or complete work.

Genre: A category (type) of musical composition.

Homophonic Texture: Polyphonic music with all the parts moving rhythmically together (chordal texture).

Minuet: An aristocratic dance in 3/4 time and moderate speed.

Opus: ("Op.;" Latin for "work") Opus numbers are assigned by the publisher in the sequence that a composer's works were actually published--not when they were composed (therefore, opus numbers are not necessarily in chronological order--a piece may have been written many years before it was published).

Recitative: A speech-like manner of singing in a free rhythm

- *Recitativo secco* ("dry recitative") is a term that refers to speech-like singing accompanied sparsely by harpsichord.

- *Recitativo obbligato* is a section of recitative that includes brief yet dramatic moments of orchestral support.

Retransition: In a sonata form, this is the last part of the Development section that sets up the final harmonic return to the home key that happens with the start of the Recapitulation.

Scherzo: ("Scherzo" means "joke") A moderately-fast commoner's dance in 6/8 meter which replaced the aristocratic [Minuet](#) as the preferred 3rd movement used in 4-movement Classic instrumental works after 1810.

Theme: In the Classic era, a "theme" is a melodic idea that stands on its own (has a complete harmonic progression and cadence).

Tutti: ("All" in Italian) In a concerto, this term in the score tells everyone to play together.

Viennese Classic School: Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven are often referred to by this term--They all worked in Vienna, establishing a Classic "school of thought" there.

Classic Genres

Concerto: A 3-movement work that pits a soloist vs. orchestra. In the Classic era, the solo concerto was the most esteemed type of instrumental composition (until the Beethoven symphonies). Mozart composed solo concertos for every traditional instrument of his time (Ex: *Piano Concerto in C minor*, K. 491, 1786). Classic concertos used Classic forms in their structure: -*Solo Concerto*: a 3-movement work for a one solo instrument vs. orchestra

1st movement: Fast, in the home key (Form = Concerto-sonata form, a blending of Baroque Ritornello form and Classic Sonata form)

2nd movement: Slow, in a different but related key (Form= a small-scale form such as Ternary form or 5-part Rondo form)

3rd movement: Very fast, in the home key (Form = Rondo form, blended with Baroque Ritornello elements).

Mass: The approximately 25 prayers that lead to and follow the taking of communion. There are two types of mass prayers: The "Ordinary" (5 everyday prayers--Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, Agnus Dei) and The "Proper" (20 prayers that are appropriate only for a certain day, such as Easter or Christmas, according to the liturgical calendar of saints and holy days). A "musical Mass" often refers to a musical setting of just the Mass Ordinary (Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, Agnus Dei). In the Classic era, Masses continued to be written by Catholic composers such as Haydn and Mozart.

Motet: A sacred polyphonic choral setting usually with a Latin text, sometimes in imitative counterpoint. In the Classic era, motets continued to be written by Catholic composers such as Haydn and Mozart.

Opera: Invented by Italians in the early Baroque, this is a large-scale fully-staged dramatic theatrical work involving solo singers, chorus, and orchestra. In the Classic era, several types of opera thrived in various countries, both serious and comic:

- **Opera seria:** A type of serious Italian opera in three acts, sung all the way through, based on dramatic alternating scenes of recitative and aria. In the Classic era, this continued to be the most prestigious type of Italian opera.

- **Ballad Opera:** A type of common-level theatre introduced in England in the late 1720s, featuring spoken English dialogue interspersed with popular songs.

John Gay introduced this new kind of comic opera with common characters speaking English street dialect and singing popular songs with funny new words (such as *in The Beggar's Opera*, 1729). His simpler, more direct style of theater began the transition to the Classic era.

- **Intermezzo:** In the early 1700s, these were short 2-act comic works with reduced performance requirements, staged in front of the curtain during the between-act set changes of an opera seria; this developed into opera buffa.

- **Opera buffa:** Comic Italian opera usually in two acts, sung in Italian all the way through (no spoken dialogue), such as Mozart's *Così fan tutte* (1790).

- **Opéra comique:** Comic French opera in two acts, with spoken French dialogue and simple French arias, such as Rousseau's *Le devin du village* (1752).

- **Singspiel:** A type of German-language comic opera in two acts, with spoken German dialogue and silly catchy songs; Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* (*The Magic Flute*, 1791) brought this usually low-level genre to new heights of sophistication.

- **Reform opera:** With changes brought by the overblown spectacle of some serious French opera and the various types of comic opera that developed in the first half of the 1700s, Christoph Glück "reformed" opera, by going back to the original ancient Greek stories, and streamlining the music and staging so only what directly enhanced the drama was included. (Glück's *Orfeo ed Euridice*, 1762)

- **Dramma giocoso:** A type of Italian opera that blends comic and tragic elements, such as Mozart's *Don Giovanni* (1787).

Serenade: In the Classic period, a little chamber symphony for a small group of string or winds. Mozart *Eine kleine Nachtmusik* (1787).

Sonata: In the Classic period, a multi-movement instrumental work for a solo piano, or for a single instrument with piano accompaniment. Beethoven *Piano Sonata in C minor*, Op. 13 "Pathétique" (1797-98).

String Quartet: A chamber ensemble of four string players (2 violins, viola, cello); also the term for a 4-movement work for string quartet. Haydn *String Quartet in C major*, Op. 76, No. 3 "Emperor" (1796-97).

Symphony: In the Classic era, this was usually a 4-movement work for orchestra. Beethoven *Symphony No. 3 in E-flat*, Op. 55 "Eroica" (1803-4).

Classic Forms (internal designs of individual movements)

Binary Form: A form comprised of two distinctly opposing musical sections ("A" vs. "B")

--it is the musical reflection of traveling a straight line from "Point A" to "Point B".

In Binary Forms, each section is usually repeated: ||: A :|| ||: B :||
I - V V - I

"Rounded Binary Form" is created when the main melody returns at the end of the "B" section:

||: A :|| ||: B A :||
I - V V - I

Classic 4-movement Instrumental Design: In the Classic era, this 4-movement design became standardized:

<i>Movement</i>	<i>Tempo (usual character)</i>	<i>Form</i>	<i>Harmonic Center</i>
1	Fast (strong)	Sonata Form	"Home" key (I)
2	Slow (lyrical)	Ternary	Another key (usually IV)
3	Moderate (3/4 dance)	Minuet & Trio	"Home" key (I) [trio can be in another key]
4	Very fast (light/cheerful)	Rondo Form	"Home" key (I)

Coda: A (means "tail" in Italian) A brief, final musical section often appended to a movement to bring it to a satisfying conclusion.

Concerto-Sonata Form: A design used in the first movements of Classic concertos that merges aspects of Baroque Ritornello form with Classic Sonata form:

It still features the Exposition, Development and Recapitulation sections of the traditional sonata form, but has to make considerations for whether the "tutti" (orchestra) or "solo" plays the main themes and makes the critical harmonic modulations, and where the soloist does a cadenza:

Exposition 1 (Orchestra)

- Theme 1 (in home key)
- Theme 2 (in V)

Exposition 2 (Soloist + Orchestra)--this is called a "double exposition"

- Theme 1 (in home key)
- Theme 2 (in V)

[solo trills]

Development (Soloist + Orchestra)

- other keys
- [solo trills]

Recapitulation (Orchestra, then Soloist with Orchestra)

- Theme 1 (orchestra in home key)
- Theme 2 (soloist with orchestra in home key)

[orchestra pauses]

- soloist does a cadenza (on V)

[solo trills]

-Coda (solo and orchestra in home key)

Minuet & Trio Form: Before 1810, this design was the usual third movement of the Classic four-movement design.

This form features a moderate dance in 3/4 meter with two opposing sections:

- "Minuet" section [A B A] [repeated]
- "Trio" section: [repeated] sweeter-sounding with reduced scoring (lighter than the "Minuet") [C D C] [repeated]
- "Minuet" returns [with no repeat] [A B A]

Ritornello Form: ("Return") A Baroque formal design based on the dramatic alternation of two opposing entities: A "returning" big group ("Tutti") and a contrasting small one ("solo")--Tutti-Solo-Tutti-Solo-Tutti-Solo-Tutti, etc. In the Classic era, ritornello form was superseded by Classic forms, but it was still used in the alternating "tutti vs. solo" structure in Classic concertos.

Rondo Form: A form that has its main melodic idea--the fast and catchy "rondo" theme [A]--return two or three times after contrasting melodic material and key. There is a 5-part Rondo (A B A C A) used in slower movements, and a 7-part Rondo (A B A C A B A) used in faster movements.

Scherzo & Trio Form: ("Scherzo" means "joke") After 1810, this design was the usual third movement of four-movement works.

- This form features a moderately-fast commoner's dance in 6/8 meter with two opposing sections:
- "Scherzo" section (a circular dance "in a 2 with a triplet feel" [6/8], quite different than a "Minuet")
 - "Trio" section: sweeter-sounding with reduced scoring
 - "Scherzo" returns

Sonata Form: The most important structural design of the Classic era, denoted by three dramatic divisions:

- Exposition: Two themes in opposing keys--Theme 1 (home key), Theme 2 (other key)
- Development: Harmonically unstable (explores distant keys from home)
- Recapitulation: Return of Theme 1 and Theme 2 in the home key

Sonata-Rondo Form: A form that blends the essential features of both sonata form and rondo form.

In the diagram below, the rondo form elements are in large capital letters:

Exposition

- Theme 1 in home key [A]
- Theme 2 in V [B]
- Theme 1 in V [A] --In sonata-rondo, Theme 1 is brought back here (but is in V, not I)

Development (other keys) [C]

Recapitulation

- Theme 1 in home key [A]
- Theme 2 in home key [B]
- Theme 1 (Coda) home [A]

Ternary Form: A form having both opposition and return ("A B A")--it is the musical reflection of a circle (start at "A" at the top, go around the circle to "B" at the bottom, then continue around the circle back to "A")

Theme & Variations Form: A form that presents a musical "theme" and then a series of variations on that theme:

- Theme 1 - Variation 1 - Variation 2 - Variation 3 - Variation 4 (etc.)

Classic Composers and Theorists (in chronological order)

Early-Classic Composers

John Gay (1685-1732): This English poet and entrepreneur is best-known for organizing the theatrical structure and popular songs used in the famous ballad opera *The Beggar's Opera* (1728), with musical arrangements added by Johann Pepusch.

Giovanni Pergolesi (1710-36): Despite his tragically short life, this Italian composer/violinist/organist had a major impact on the development of Classic opera with his comic masterpiece *La serva padrona* [intermezzo] 1733.

Domenico Scarlatti (1685-1757): This Italian-born pre-Classic composer is best known for his 1-movement keyboard sonatas. *Sonata in D major*, K. 119 [sonata] c1740s

Johann Stamitz (1717-57): This German composer wrote important small-scale early symphonies that helped establish the Classic model and the structure of sonata form. His symphonies often featured an exciting crescendo effect known as the "Mannheim rocket." *Symphony in E-flat major* (mid-1750s).

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-78): This Swiss philosopher/composer/theorist (who lived much of his life in Paris) influenced the French Revolution with his philosophical writings, and made significant contributions to French comic opera with *Le devin du village* [opera comique] (1752). He also published the first French music dictionary.

Johann Christian Bach (1735-1782): The youngest son of JS Bach (worked in Italy and England); his keyboard concertos had a strong influence on Mozart. *Keyboard Concerto in E-flat* [concerto] 1770

Carl Phillip Emmanuel Bach (1714-1788): The second-oldest son of JS Bach (worked for King Frederick the Great of Prussia [a large German-Russian kingdom]); his highly-chromatic keyboard sonatas and symphonies are representative of the German Empfindsam style. *Sonata in A major* [sonata] 1765

Christoph Glück (1714-1787): This German composer who worked in both Vienna and Paris is best known for his "reform operas," such as *Orfeo ed Euridice* (1762).

Classic Composers

Franz Josef Haydn (1732-1809): An Austro-Hungarian composer who established the standards of the string quartet and symphony in the Classic era. *String Quartet in C major*, Op.76 No. 3 [string quartet] (1796-97)

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791): This child genius grew to master every genre known in his day, but excelled particularly in opera and concerto. *Piano Concerto in C minor* [concerto] 1786; *Don Giovanni* [dramma giocoso] 1787; *Die Zauberflöte* [Singspiel] 1791.

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827): This German-born composer was the most revolutionary musician of the Classic and early Romantic eras. He excelled especially at the symphony, sonata, and string quartet, and brought music to powerful new heights of expression and socio-political influence--despite spending most of his career in complete deafness. *Symphony No. 3 "Eroica"* [symphony] 1803-4

Transition to early Romanticism c1815

Giocchino Rossini (1792-1868): This Italian opera composer wrote several of his earliest works in an early Romantic style before 1820. *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* [opera buffa] 1816

late Baroque goes until c.1750

click on names, work titles and underlined terms for more info or to view a YouTube clip of the work



early Classical (pre-Classical)

Classical

early Romantic

England	1730	1750	1770	1800	1815
[early Classical]	GAY (Pepusch) — "early Classical" style starts with "Ballad opera" in England [late Baroque] — HANDEL — <u>Giulio Cesare (1724)</u> <u>Messiah (1741)</u> opera seria oratorio				
France					
	ROUSSEAU <u>Le devin du village</u> opera comique				
Italy	[early Classical] PERGOLESI <u>La serva padrona (1733)</u> intermezzo/opera buffa		J.C. BACH (worked in Italy; he influenced Mozart) <u>Keyboard Concerto in E-flat</u> solo concerto		ROSSINI <u>Il Barbiere di Siviglia (1816)</u> opera buffa
Spain			D. SCARLATTI (Italian but worked in Spain) <u>Sonata in D major, K. 119</u> sonata 1-movement keyboard sonatas		
Germany & Austria	[late Baroque] JS BACH <u>Cantata No. 140</u> cantata	[early Classical] STAMITZ <u>Symphony in E-flat major</u> early symphony	GLUCK <u>Orfeo ed Euridice</u> reform opera	MOZART <u>Piano Concerto in C minor, K. 491</u> concerto	HAYDN, MOZART, BEETHOVEN Wrote symphonies, concertos, operas, string quartets, sonatas, etc., and are the height of the Classic era—all worked in Vienna. They are often referred to as "The Viennese Classic School". HAYDN <u>String Quartet in C major</u> string quartet MOZART <u>Piano Sonata in C minor ("Pathétique")</u> sonata BEETHOVEN <u>Symphony No. 3 in E-flat ("Eroica")</u> symphony
THEORISTS TREATISES TERMS	Alberti Bass (broken triads arpeggiated in bass line)	Cadenza (ornate solo section in concerto just before the recapitulation in mvmt 1)	Classical Forms - Sonata form - Theme and Variations Form - Minuet and Trio Form - Rondo Form also: - Scherzo and Trio Form - Sonata-Rondo Form	MOZART <u>Don Giovanni</u> MOZART <u>Die Zauberflöte (The Magic Flute)</u> Singspiel (German comic opera with spoken dialogue)	Classical Instrumental Genres - Symphony - Serenade - String Quartet - Concerto - Sonata
		Enlightenment	Classical Forms		Classical 4-movement Design 1: Fast (Sonata form) 2: Slow (ABA or short form) 3: Moderato (Minuet & Trio form) 4: Very fast (Rondo form)