

Tafelmusik

THE CLASSICAL CONCERT STUDY GUIDE

TEACHER AND STUDENT MATERIALS

This guide was created by Patrick G. Jordan to accompany Tafelmusik's music education initiatives.

The CD referred to in this guide is not publicly available. Pieces include:

Mozart: *The Magic Flute*, K. 620, Overture

Mozart: *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*, K. 525

Haydn: *Symphony in F-sharp minor*, Hob. 1:45

Tafelmusik has recorded these works with Sony Classical: Vivarte

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The following section on The Classical Period will help you figure out where this period fits into history, and how the events that were taking place at the time changed the way music was written.

The Classical Period

Very often when we refer to Western art music, like the music of Bach, Beethoven, Brahms and Shostakovich, we call it all “classical music”. There is a slightly more refined definition of the word Classical, though, which refers to one relatively brief period from roughly 1750 to 1827, and which spanned the working lives of Franz Joseph Haydn, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and ends generally around the death of Ludwig van Beethoven.

Not everyone agrees precisely on when the periods of music begin and end, probably because the creative spirit, the force that compels people to create art of any sort, doesn’t lend itself to neat compartmentalization. That being said, here, in rough terms, is a time line of the history of Western art music:

? - 700 A.D.	Period of Antiquity
700 - 1450 A.D.	Period of the middle ages
1450 - 1600	Renaissance Period
1600 - 1750	Baroque Period
1750 - 1827	Classical Period
1827 - 1908	Romantic Period
1908 - present	Contemporary Period

Tafelmusik specializes in the almost exclusively European music of the Baroque and Classical periods, from 1600-1827. This study guide focuses particularly on the Classical period.

What was happening? Historical Context of the Classical Period

The years between 1750 and 1827 saw immense changes in Europe, changes that came about by turns as a result of relative calm and unrest. Probably the biggest single event in Europe during this period is the French Revolution, which came to a head in 1789. In that revolution, the monarchy of France was deposed, and the citizenry of the country seized power. A few years before that, in 1776, the 13 American colonies began a war to throw off the yoke of British rule: The American Revolution. In both cases, a citizenry that had begun to amass enough wealth, through peaceful trade, commerce, and manufacturing, found the restrictions of monarchic rule too constraining.

How did this change what music was about?

The accumulation of more money and the emergence of a middle class drove many of the changes in the music of the Classical era. While the monarchies of Europe, closely tied to powerful churches, had a monopoly on power, they also had a monopoly on the means to produce music. In fact, about one hundred years before the French Revolution, Louis XIV, the king of France from 1643-1715, issued a royal edict preventing anyone except the king's composer, Jean-Baptiste Lully, from mounting an opera anywhere in France that involved more than five people (the average opera involves at least 35!).

As European societies became slightly more liberal, and as the middle classes had more disposable income, one of the things they wanted was music. Among the most popular forms of entertainment at the time was theatre, and opera in particular. Imagine the

18th century world – no television, no movies, no CD's, no DVD's, even books were rarer and more expensive than they are today. Just like we have sit-coms and soap operas on television or movies that are thrillers or tearjerkers, there were many kinds of operas: serious, funny, and even puppet operas. The growing middle class demanded all of these things, and that demand changed the music and drama itself.

For example... the opera!

While the monarchies held absolute sway, virtually every opera was dedicated to the glory of whichever king or queen was in power. Think about it, if you were a composer and the only person around who had any money to hire you wanted an opera in which their own glory was portrayed, wouldn't you figure out pretty quickly how to make the boss look good?

One of the most popular models for Baroque opera, the period immediately preceding the Classical, was the retelling of a Greek or Roman myth, which represented the heroes and heroines in the myths as versions of the ruling monarchy. Under the new influence that the middle class began to exert, the market for music was becoming different. This middle class wanted by turns to escape, or to be told tales of their own, or at least to see the aristocracy represented as real and fallible people.

How a change in philosophy led to a change in musical forms

To be able to imagine the aristocracy as real and fallible people, instead of an extension of God's order, meant that the way people thought was changing, too. That change

came about in part because of a set of philosophies we now call the Enlightenment. In general, the philosophers of the Enlightenment, men like John Locke and David Hume, believed that the material accomplishments of science could be translated into a philosophy, and that the rational and systematic pursuit of truth would free mankind to accomplish the greatest tasks. Although both of those philosophers flourished in the 17th century, their work was unquestionably important in the 18th century, as well. The simplicity and order of these philosophers is very much reflected in the musical taste of the Classical period, as we shall see in looking more closely at one of the most important musical forms that emerged during this time, which we know by the name of **Sonata Form**.

This next section describes the most important musical FORMS of the Classical Period. The "form" is the overall organizational structure of a piece of music. The Sonata Form and the Symphonic Form were two very important developments of this period. They changed the way music was written for generations to come.

Two Classical Forms

Sonata Form

In music, form is the means by which we organize musical ideas. Pop songs have a form, symphonies have a form, rap songs have a form, although not all pop songs/symphonies/rap songs have exactly the same form.

The Sonata form is a very important development of the Classical Period. It became an important part of symphonies, concertos and string quartets, and changed the way people thought about composing music. It is a very dramatic form in that it is laid out rather like a story, which has three big parts, outlined below:

Part 1. The introduction of hero and of a challenging character or situation

Part 2. The challenge is worked through

Part 3. The hero survives and is transformed (along with the other character or situation) by the experience.

But since it is a story in music, composers used melodies instead of words to represent the various characters or situations. Usually, Part 1 of the story features two distinct melodies in two contrasting keys, representing the hero and the challenge. Part 2 usually mixes those two distinct melodies up, or makes them into smaller but

identifiable pieces. Part 3 returns to the original melodies, but wraps them together by putting them in the same key.

There are more technical ways of explaining Sonata Form, but it is easy to remember the basic structure if you think of it as a story. Composers did not have a set of rules that they followed to create works in sonata form. Rather, the "rules" of sonata form were later determined in hindsight by studying the works that had been written and finding similarities between them. For these early composers, the sonata form was just a natural form of musical expression.

The Sonata Form and the contrast of different keys will be explored in further detail at the Tafelmusik concert.

The Classical Symphony

The Classical era changed many things in the world of European music, and perhaps the biggest change was the development of the symphony. The word symphony comes from Greek, meaning “sounding together”. Over time, it has had many meanings. In the early 18th century, a form of the word, “sinfonia” or “sinfony” was used to describe a short introduction or overture to an opera or oratorio (a large choral work). Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven and others in their time used the term to describe longer, usually multi-movement pieces of music (Mozart’s Symphony No. 40, for example). Today, we also use the word to name a group which plays those pieces (the Toronto Symphony Orchestra), but that usage came along because there were so many great pieces to play!

Although today we can look back and see the pieces called symphonies emerge, the composers at that time were feeling their way; no one gave Haydn or Mozart a book that told them “here’s how you write a symphony.” Like most creative endeavours, the symphony emerged from various traditions, and was a matter of trial and error. And again, like most creative endeavours it defies perfect definition.

Where did the Symphony come from?

One of the forerunners of the symphony is the orchestral suite. It was one of the most popular kinds of orchestral music in the early 18th century, which corresponds to the end of the Baroque Period. Most orchestral suites have several movements.

Movements in a piece of music correspond roughly to chapters or sections in a novel;

they are distinct elements, but are closely related, and telling the same overall story. The suites usually begin with an overture, which is followed by several unrelated dance movements and the occasional more whimsical or fantastical movement. Although sometimes a movement was extracted from the much longer score of an opera, there were always a number of dances. Moving toward the middle of the 18th century, a number of other kinds of pieces appear, with names like Divertimento or Serenade. They were generally less formal, meant often as rather casual public music. These pieces never really achieved a standard form, but they often included an overture, some song-like tunes (sometimes from an opera) and almost always had a few dances thrown in, especially minuets, which were very popular then.

Haydn sets the standard

After several years of successful experimentation during his first years at the Esterhazy court (1768-1772), Haydn settled on an arrangement of movements that suited him and was very well received. He rarely changed the form for the rest of his life, and it was so successful that other composers, like Mozart and Beethoven, adopted it as well. Haydn's plan for the symphony became almost standard for the next 75 years.

What did the Symphony look like?

The Classical symphony usually has four movements:

- The first movement is almost always marked Allegro (an Italian word meaning merry, quick or lively), and is almost always in Sonata Form.

- The second movement is usually slower, as a contrast to the quick first movement. It is almost always in a contrasting key. Sometimes the second movement is a theme with variations, which means that a relatively simple tune is played first, and then in each subsequent section, the composer finds some new element of the tune to elaborate upon. Sometimes the second movement is a simple ABA form, and sometimes in Sonata Form.
- The third movement is usually a minuet and trio, which is a holdover from the Orchestral suites mentioned above. A minuet is a triple metre dance (count to yourself three even beats 1-2-3, 1-2-3); the trio is usually in the same metre, but in a contrasting key, with a contrasting character. For example, if the minuet is in a major key, and quite bombastic, the trio might be in a minor key and somewhat subdued. In practice, one usually hears the minuet, the trio, and then the minuet again. The minuet is usually in the same key as the first movement, pulling us back home after the contrast of the second movement.
- The last movement is usually lively again, and often marked Allegro, and usually in the same key as the first movement and the minuet. It is often in Sonata Form, but can also be a rondo. A rondo is best described schematically as ABACADA, which means that the rondo theme keeps coming back in the same key throughout the movement, interspersed with variations.

There are a number of exceptions to the outline above. Sometimes the first movement begins with a slow introduction before it gets to the lively part. Sometimes the minuet and trio come before the slow middle movement. Sometimes parts of the middle

movements appear in the last movement (see the listening guide notes to the Haydn's Symphony No. 45, included on the accompanying CD). There is also a version of the rondo that moves the theme from the home key to a contrasting key, mimicking a sonata form (it is called, very cleverly, sonata-rondo form).

This section explores the lives and careers of the Classical Period's two most important composers: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Franz Joseph Haydn.

Two Classical Composers

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

was born on 27 January 1756 in Salzburg, Austria, and died on 5 December 1791 in Vienna. His father, Leopold, was a musician and a teacher, and he very quickly discovered the immense talent that his young son possessed. The young Wolfgang spent most of his childhood travelling in Germany, Austria, France, Holland, England and Italy with his father, playing the harpsichord, organ, violin and piano for wealthy patrons and potential patrons. His reputation as a child prodigy (*wunderkind* in German) was probably the most famous thing about him in his lifetime.

From about age 18-25 he lived again in his hometown, Salzburg, in the employ of the Archbishop. In the 18th century, most musicians and composers sought positions either at courts or churches, and they were often jobs that offered the musicians a degree of security. After his time in Salzburg, Mozart moved to Vienna, a larger and far more active musical city.

Vienna proved to be very stimulating for Mozart artistically, and he made many friends, perhaps the most important of which was Franz Joseph Haydn. By the time Mozart composed the pieces you will hear today, he had been living in Vienna with his

family for five or more years. He never enjoyed the security of a well-paid position in Vienna, but was still able to make a tenuous living, and enjoyed some great successes, especially with his operas, *The Abduction from the Seraglio* and *The Marriage of Figaro*.

The funny side of Mozart

Despite the images we see of him, in powdered wigs and fancy clothing, he was, by many accounts, capable of being a bit of a cut-up, who enjoyed all kinds of jokes, rude, practical and otherwise. His existing letters, particularly to his sister and his wife, are full of his ribald humour. For example, he wrote to his wife during the days that *The Magic Flute* was being performed for the first time, and tells the story of a joke he played on one of the singers, Shikaneder, who played the role of Papageno. In the opera, Papageno has to play a small xylophone-like instrument called the *glockenspiel*; only, the part is almost always played by another musician off-stage, and the actor just pretends to play the part. Mozart writes:

I went behind the stage for Papageno's aria with the Glockenspiel, because I had an urge to play it myself. I then made a joke and when Shikaneder had a speech, I played an arpeggio – he jumped – looked behind the scenery and saw me – when it happened the 2nd time – I didn't play – now he stopped and didn't want to go on – I read his thoughts and played a chord again – then he struck his Glockenspiel and said "Shut up!" – whereupon everyone laughed – as a result of the joke, many people I think realized for the first time that he didn't play the instrument himself.

Was he always so famous?

"Mozart" is probably one of the best known names in the world of music today; his hometown even has a particular kind of chocolate named after the man. It is ironic

that in his lifetime, he was not nearly as well known as many other composers in Vienna, much less the world. However, his friend and admirer, Franz Joseph Haydn, knew talent when he saw it. At a string quartet party in 1785, Haydn made the following remark to Mozart's father, Leopold:

I tell you before God and as an honest man, that your son is the greatest composer I know, either personally or by reputation: he has taste and moreover the greatest knowledge of the science of composition.

(quoted from a letter written by Leopold Mozart, to his daughter, Mozart's sister).

For those interested in finding out more about his life, a selection of his letters can be found in most libraries. Another fun starting place is a video entitled *Amadeus*; while not flawlessly factual (it speculates wildly on Mozart's cause of death, for example), it does an excellent job of bringing Mozart and many of the people and places around him to life. Another place to start might be the following website:

[<http://www.wamozartfan.com/bio.html>].

The Magic Flute was one of Mozart's many famous works. It is used as an example on the CD that is included in this package, and will also be heard in the Tafelmusik concert.

The Magic Flute (*Die Zauberflöte* in German) was first performed at the Theatre auf der Wieden in the suburbs of Vienna on 30 September 1791, and by the time Mozart died, on 5 December 1791, it had been presented about 45 times. The theatre was also called the Freyhaustheatre, or Free House Theatre, since it was located within a rambling complex called the Free House, located on an island in the river Wien.

The opera was a collaboration between Mozart, who wrote the music, and Emanuel Schikaneder, who wrote the text or libretto, an Italian word meaning “little book” that we use to describe the text of an opera. Schikaneder was a friend of Mozart's, an actor, playwright and impresario; he also owned the Theatre auf der Wieden. He approached Mozart in the spring of 1791 to create a new opera on this libretto, which was a stroke of good luck for Mozart; Mozart's previous librettist, Lorenzo DaPonte, with whom Mozart had had good success had been fired from his job at the Court Theatre, having been involved in one too many scandals.

The Magic Flute tells the tale of Tamino, the hero, who makes the acquaintance of the Queen of the Night. She sends him on a quest to rescue her daughter, Pamina, who is being held captive by Sarastro, a wicked sorcerer, and Tamino takes along the Magic Flute, which is supposed to aid him in Pamina's rescue.

It turns out that the Queen of the Night is not nearly as nice as Tamino first believed, in fact she's quite nasty; it also happens that the wicked sorcerer is not as bad as he's cracked up to be. Nevertheless, after succeeding in a number of trials, Tamino rescues Pamina and they end up united in love. Through the ordeal, he learns the value of doubt and seeking a higher truth; she learns to love (along with its opposite, despair), as well as the profound freedom from parents who don't necessarily have her best interests at heart. Its message is more than the triumph of good over evil, or of order over chaos, but ultimately it is a message of redemption for humanity.

Franz Joseph Haydn

was born on 31 March 1732 in an Austrian village called Rohrau, near the Hungarian border, and died in Vienna on 31 May 1809. The son of a somewhat musically inclined wheel and wagon-builder, the young Haydn's musical talents were noticed early by the headmaster of a neighbouring town, and at age eight, he became a choir boy at the St. Thomas Kirche in Vienna, remaining there until he was sixteen. Later in his life, he complained that while a choir boy, he was never fed enough and got more beatings than useful musical instruction.

Haydn was fortunate enough, over time, to secure a position at a court that would provide him a decent living. Prince Paul Anton Esterhazy took the young Haydn on as an assistant Kapellmeister (choir master), and he eventually became the senior musician at the Esterhazy court in Eisenstadt, Austria.

Why is he called the “Father of the Symphony”?

From our vantage point in the 21st century, it is easy to imagine that groups like the Tafelmusik have always existed. In truth, Tafelmusik, and even larger groups like the Toronto Symphony Orchestra owe part of their existence to Haydn. He, along with a few other composers at first, created the music for and the idea of the symphony orchestra. In his long career, he composed 104 symphonies. In the centuries that have followed, many hundreds of composers have emulated and developed the symphony, but without Haydn, it is unlikely it would ever have become as popular. Not only that,

Haydn is considered the to have created the string quartet, as well, for much the same reason; he wrote some of the very first string quartets, and by the time he retired in 1802, he had written 83 quartets (a string quartet is composed of two violins, viola and cello). We could just as easily regard him as the Father of Sonata form. In fact, he is been often referred to as “Papa” Haydn, reflecting his great contributions to European music in the 18th century.

Although Haydn was employed full-time at the Esterhazy court, he was still an active part of the musical life in Vienna (it is about 70 km from Esterhazy to Vienna). While on a trip to the capital in 1781, Haydn met the young Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, who immediately idolized the older master, and began studying his compositions. A few years later, Mozart dedicated six of his most famous string quartets to Haydn (the fact that he even wrote string quartets is a testament to Haydn’s importance).

In 1790, Prince Esterhazy died, and after many years of devoted service, Haydn was free to pursue numerous offers to give concerts, especially in London, that he had been unable to take advantage of for years. Haydn’s last twelve symphonies are known collectively as the London Symphonies, as they were composed for his series of concerts there. Although he was already quite well-known in Europe, these travels made him even more famous; in fact by the time of his death in 1809, he was one of the best known composers in Europe, if not the best known.

Ironically, just before he left for his first trip to London in 1790, he spent his last few days in Vienna in the company of other composers, most importantly, Mozart. When they were saying their good-byes, Mozart began to cry, saying “I fear we will not meet again in this life!”. Haydn’s reaction, reported by the others there, was to expect that he, Haydn would be the one to die first, since he was substantially older. In fact, within the year, Mozart had died, and his prediction was true.

To find out more about this great composer, try the following websites:

http://wawa.essortment.com/franzjosephhay_rwml.htm

<http://home.wxs.nl/~cmr/haydn/biograph/main.htm>

Sources

For those interested in finding out more about Mozart, a selection of his letters can be found in most libraries. There is also a book by Eduard Morike entitled Mozart on the Way to Prague which is a fictional, but very interesting story of Mozart in the 18th century. Another fun starting place is a movie (available on video) entitled *Amadeus*; while not flawlessly factual (it speculates wildly on Mozart's cause of death, for example), it does an excellent job of bringing Mozart and many of the people and places around him to life. Another place to start might be the following website:

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http://wawa.essortment.com/franzjosephhay_rwml.htm

An introduction to Sonata Form can be found at:

<http://library.thinkquest.org/22673/forms1.html>

An overview of music history in general, and the Classical period in particular can be found at your library in Donald Jay Grout's The History of Western Music, or at:

<http://library.thinkquest.org/27110/noframes/periods/classical.html>