

5

THE CLASSICAL AGE

1750–1820

The Enlightenment, with its emphasis on clarity and rational thinking, found its purest expression in the music of the three giants of Classical era – Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven. The sonata, in all its forms, embodied the musical discourse that characterized this period, which scaled new heights in operas, symphonies, and concertos.

BEFORE

The highly elaborate compositions and performance styles of the late Baroque period were confined to a court or church setting.

BAROQUE COMPLEXITY

The intricate compositions of **J.S. Bach** << 102–03 and **Handel** << 110–11 were losing their appeal by the mid-18th century.

LIMITED PARTICIPATION

Until the availability of **printed music** << 54–55 and affordable instruments in the 19th century, most music was performed in church or at court by professional musicians.

CLASSICAL INFLUENCES

In art forms other than music, a new simplicity influenced by the Classical antiquity of **Ancient Greece** << 18–21, as well as a growing understanding of fundamental scientific principles, was taking over.

COMPOSER (1735–82)

JOHANN CHRISTIAN BACH



Born in Leipzig, Germany, Johann Christian Bach was the eleventh and final child of J.S. Bach. Johann studied with his father until his death, and then with his brother, Carl Philipp Emanuel. From 1756, he worked in Italy, but in 1762 went to London to premiere three operas at the King's Theatre. He settled there, earning the nickname the "London Bach". Admired by Mozart, he wrote prolifically, promoted concerts, brought the clarinet into the English opera orchestra, and became music teacher to Queen Charlotte at an annual salary of £300. He ran into debt, however, and suffered a nervous breakdown in 1781. When he died the following year, the queen funded his funeral and gave his widow a pension.

A New Clarity

The overthrow of the complex Baroque style in favour of the simplicity of the Classical era was one of music's most important revolutions. Its far-reaching effects still exist, not only in what we listen to and how, but even in the concept of the public concert itself.

Baroque music reached a high peak in the works of J.S. Bach and George Frideric Handel. They composed great music that was performed largely by professionals and marvelled at by listeners. The emergent thinking of the Enlightenment, which encouraged simplicity and clarity, influenced the gradual development of a new, more approachable musical style. While

Europe's oldest public concert hall is the Holywell Music Room in Oxford, which opened in 1748.

Baroque music had depended on harmonies changing on virtually every beat, the new style that was evolving often stayed with the same harmony for an entire bar or more. In addition, composers supported a single melody with simpler, chordal accompaniments.

In instrumental and vocal music, this new approach gave music a more natural, less "learned" quality. This kind of music immediately appealed to a far broader audience.

Strict instructions

To prevent performers from improvising florid embellishments (see p.78), which might interfere with the purity of the original intent, composers began to write down in the score everything that the performer needed to do. This was especially important as composers were no longer writing music just for their immediate associates. The availability and spread of printed scores meant that music was played by musicians whom the composer had never met. The instructions became ever more

detailed, leaving fewer decisions regarding tempo, dynamics, and mood to the performer.

Soon, composers stopped writing an improvised continuo part (the bass line). This meant that the cadenza section of a concerto (when the orchestra pauses to allow the soloist a moment of virtuosity or reflection) was one of the few opportunities left for improvisation. Perhaps as a backlash, performers improvised cadenzas that were ever more elaborate, much to the annoyance of Beethoven who, in his last piano concerto (see pp.152–53), wrote out every note of the cadenza.

Such careful instructions left behind by composers were all part of the desire to achieve balance, which became a

fundamental consideration for composers in structuring their works. For example, an opening phrase (usually four bars long) would typically be answered by a similar –



KEY WORKS

Georg Philipp Telemann Sonata for oboe in A minor, TWV 41: a3

Johann Joachim Quantz Flute Concerto in G minor, QV. 5:196

J.C. Bach Keyboard Concerto, Op. 13, No. 1 in C major

C.P.E. Bach Cello Concerto in A major H. 439, Wq 172

Joseph Haydn Symphony No. 44 in E minor, "Trauer"

New expressiveness

This 1762 grand piano built by the Portuguese maker Manuel Antunes has a hammer mechanism based on Bartolomeo Cristofori's original invention, making it a more expressive alternative to the harpsichord and clavichord.

Natural order

The *fête galante* painting style created by French artist Antoine Watteau (1684–1721), expressed here in *Merry Company in the Open Air* (1720), inspired the *style galante* in music. Both styles share an air of simple elegance, and respect for the natural order.

but slightly different – balancing phrase of the same length. Together these two would form an eight-bar “sentence”, which would then usually be answered by a balancing sentence. This formula ensured that the larger sections of individual movements balanced and complemented each other as well. It also meant that composers had to consider the overall shape of their symphonies, sonatas, and concertos, ensuring that the balance and contrast of individual movements formed a coherent whole.

Style galante

One of the first of the new Classical styles, popular from the 1720s to the 1770s, the *style galante* was valued for its freshness and accessibility at a time when the high Baroque style was still being heard. Composers of the *style galante* avoided using counterpoint (several voices playing against each other) and wrote beautiful, simple tunes that shone out

polyphony of his father in favour of a single melody with accompaniment. In his many symphonies, sonatas, and operas, his supple melodies hint at the easy fluidity of the *style galante*. English music historian Charles Burney (1726–1814) remarked that Johann Christian was the first composer to

“We must play from the soul, not like trained birds.”

C.P.E. BACH, “TRUE ART OF PLAYING KEYBOARD INSTRUMENTS”, 1753

over their accompaniments, which were simple and transparent. Having begun as an operatic style in Italian *opera seria* (see pp.134–35) the popularity of the *style galante* with the public ensured its use across genres by composers as diverse as Georg Philipp Telemann (1681–1767), Johann Christian Bach (see opposite), and even the young Joseph Haydn (see pp.128–29).

The Bach family

Two generations of the influential Bach family spanned more than a century, covering the transition from Baroque complexity to Classical clarity. Indeed, when father Johann Sebastian died (see pp.102–03), the governing body of his church celebrated the fact that they could appoint a new composer who was less old-fashioned. His son, Johann Christian, largely rejected the complex counterpoint and



composition, which Haydn captured in his 1772 Symphony No. 44 in E minor, known as the “Trauer” (Mourning) Symphony, but even foretold the Romantic movement itself.

Engaging the public

Public concerts started to take place, initially in assembly rooms and meeting halls and, increasingly, in purpose-built concert spaces and theatres. Easier access to musical performances inspired a rise in amateur music-making. This in turn encouraged cheaper and more efficient

instrument manufacture and the widespread publication of music, and eventually arrangements of concert music for domestic performance – most particularly for keyboard. To support

1773 The year in which C.P.E. Bach wrote his autobiography. He was one of the first composers to do so.

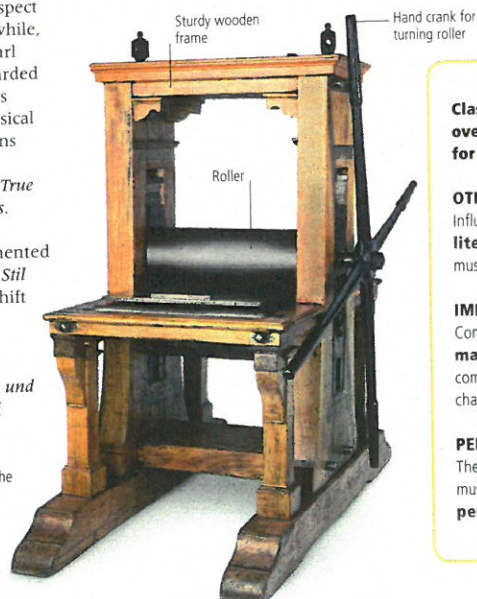
amateur musical study, a number of self-tutor books were written by musicians, including C.P.E. Bach and the German flautist Johann Quantz.

observe contrast (an important aspect of balance) as a principle. Meanwhile, in Germany, his elder brother, Carl Philipp Emanuel (1714–88), regarded the clavichord and harpsichord as excellent vehicles for refined musical expression. He set out his opinions about clarity of expression and technique in his 1753 essay, *The True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments*.

In his keyboard works and symphonies C.P.E. Bach experimented with the so-called *Empfindsamer Stil* (sensitive style), where moods shift dramatically within single movements. This style foreshadowed not only the turbulent emotions of the *Sturm und Drang* (storm and stress) style of

18th-century wooden printing press

With the invention of the printing press and the widespread availability of printed materials, composers could earn money selling their music, and keen amateurs could learn to play using teach-yourself books.



AFTER

Classical restraint was gradually overshadowed by the Romantic desire for emotional expression above all.

OTHER ARTS

Influences of other art forms such as **literature 158–59** were evident in music composed after the 1820s.

IMPROVING INSTRUMENTS

Continuing **advances in instrument manufacture 188–89** encouraged composers to write more technically challenging music.

PERFORMER AS CELEBRITY

The highly expressive, technically dazzling music of the 19th century gave **virtuoso performers 162–63** celebrity status.



Chamber orchestra with singers

In this 18th-century ensemble, the singers, strings, and woodwind players stand. The harpsichordist and violone players, seated, play the continuo, reinforcing the bass line and filling out the harmonies.

The Orchestra

The evolution of the modern orchestra began in the 17th century and continues to this day. Its development was first driven by the search for a large-scale musical medium to convey composers' emotions more expressively, and a desire to impress.

BEFORE

Before the orchestra was established the instruments selected for performance depended on what was available.

ITALIAN AND FRENCH BEGINNINGS

Monteverdi used combinations of various instruments to accompany his **early Italian operas** << 81. In France, at the court of Louis XIV, from 1653, **Lully** (see p.134) developed the *Vingt-quatre violons du roi* (the 24 violins of the king), an ensemble of different-sized string instruments. In his own compositions, Lully often added oboes, drums, trumpets, and bassoons to the ensemble.

18TH-CENTURY DEVELOPMENTS

The suites and *concerti grossi* of **J.S. Bach** << 102-03 and **Handel** << 110-11 showed the potential of the orchestra for creating complex works.

From the 1600s, many European courts maintained a group of musicians to perform music for worship in their chapel, and to provide entertainment at social events. To be able to afford to employ an ensemble of instrumentalists and a composer to write and conduct high-quality music was a potent symbol of status and wealth.

The number and capability of the musicians involved depended on the enthusiasm and determination of their patron, whether king, duke, elector, or any other kind of wealthy aristocrat. Court composers tended to write music to be performed by the musicians at their

disposal in their particular court, and it was not intended to be playable by others. For this reason, George Frideric Handel, who travelled widely in the first half of the 18th century (mainly to London and in Italy), had to rescore his works for the instruments that

were available to him in any given location, or simply compose the work all over again.

Birth of an orchestra

In 1720, the court of Charles III Philip, Elector Palatine, arrived in the small German city of Mannheim from Heidelberg, bringing with them a large ensemble of very accomplished instrumentalists. In 1742, when Karl

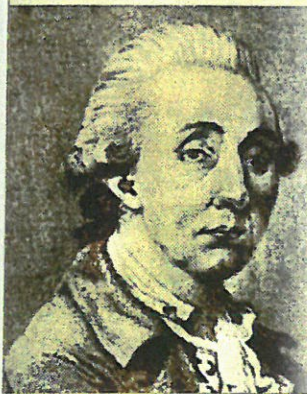


Pair of timpani (kettle drums)

Used in pairs, tuned to two different notes, timpani give extra emphasis to the bass notes of the harmony and, when played with rapidly rolling sticks, add increasing musical excitement.

COMPOSER AND CONDUCTOR (1731–98)

CHRISTIAN CANNABICH



Born in Mannheim, Germany, the son of a court musician, Cannabich was made a "scholar" member of the city's orchestra at the age of 12. In 1757, after studying in Italy, he returned to Mannheim to be first violinist in the orchestra. By 1774, he was director of instrumental music.

A prolific composer, Cannabich was admired as a conductor and orchestra trainer. The writer Christian Schubart (1739–91) said he originated "even execution" (bowing) and discovered "all magic tricks". On a trip to Paris, he met Mozart, who later lived briefly in Cannabich's home. Mozart wrote his piano sonata K306 for his host's daughter, Rosa.

Theodore, Duke of Saxony, succeeded Charles Philip as elector, he appointed violinist and composer Johann Stamitz (1715–57) as concertmaster. The duke had ambitions to establish the greatest orchestra in Europe, so he instructed Stamitz to find the finest musicians.

By 1777, the Mannheim Orchestra consisted of 20–22 violins (grouped into first and second violins), four violas, four cellos, four double basses, two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, four bassoons, two horns, and timpani.

While earlier 18th-century ensemble performances were directed from the

keyboard by the player providing the continuo, at Mannheim the leading violinist assumed the role, using the bow to indicate starts and finishes of pieces, and to give the pulse of the music to the other players.

Stamitz and other composers, notably Christian Cannabich (see above), Ignaz Holzbauer, and Franz Xaver Richter, formed a group of composers now known as the Mannheim School. Their unique approach to performance and composition had two far-reaching consequences. The Mannheim Orchestra was soon known and

emulated across Europe, and the symphony dominated orchestral music for a century (see p.126–27).

Mannheim mannerisms

Stamitz and his fellow composers gradually developed the symphony from the three-movement Baroque *sinfonia*, adding an extra movement before the finale. They also used compositional "special effects", which are now regarded as trademarks of the Mannheim School. The Mannheim

Rocket, apparently inspired by a Roman candle firework, was a swiftly ascending melody, while a gradual build-up in

volume by the entire orchestra, often followed by an abrupt *piano* (quiet) or a long pause, was called a Mannheim Crescendo. The Mannheim Roller featured a gradual crescendo through a rising melody over an *ostinato* (repeating) bass line, while the Mannheim Sigh consisted of a falling two-note phrase with the emphasis on the first note. There was even the twittering Mannheim Bird.

Other features included sudden and unexpected *fortissimo* (very loud) music, *tremolo* (rapid repetition of the same note), and the playing of rapid arpeggios (notes of a chord played in sequence) to create a growing sense of musical urgency.

Mozart (see pp.138–39) visited Mannheim and was very impressed by the orchestra, writing to his father: "The

orchestra is very good and numerous... and should give fine music." The influence of the Mannheim School appears in the carefully managed dynamics of Mozart's *Sinfonia Concertante* for violin and viola (1779), and in the rocket-like opening of the finale of his 40th symphony (1778).

While the special effects were exciting to listen to, the compositions themselves were not particularly innovative. Individual instrumental parts were musically uninteresting, but difficult to play, so the highly skilled orchestra members relished the challenge. Fast music was played at top speed – the faster the better – and the exaggerated mannerisms were even more overlaid for dramatic effect.

Lasting legacy

Mannheim's influence continued with a new generation of composers, including Johann Stamitz's son, Carl (1745–1801). A violin and viola virtuoso, Carl left Mannheim in 1770 for Paris, where he composed for the court and performed at the city's famous *Concerts Spirituel*, one of the first ever series of public concerts.

Inspired by the success of the Mannheim Orchestra, other European cities established identical ensembles. Music could now be played by an orchestra other than the one for which it had originally been composed, and concert promoters were soon cashing in on the new demand among audiences for orchestral concerts.

Mannheim seating arrangement

The basic orchestral seating plan still used today was established in Mannheim. Positioning the wind, brass, and percussion instruments behind the strings enables the instrumentalists to play effectively as an ensemble.



KEY

| | | | |
|---------------------|----------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Red square | Conductor | Green square | Oboes |
| Orange square | First violins | Light green square | Flutes |
| Yellow square | Second violins | Dark green square | Bassoons |
| Light blue square | Violas | Blue square | Clarinets |
| Dark blue square | Cellos | Dark blue square | Horns |
| Light purple square | Double basses | Light purple square | Trumpets |
| | | Dark purple square | Trombones and tubas |
| | | Very dark purple square | Other percussion |
| | | Black square | Drums |
| | | White square | Harp |
| | | White square | Piano |

KEY WORKS

- Johann Stamitz** *Symphony in D major*, Op. 3, No. 2
- Christian Cannabich** *Symphony No. 59 in D major*
- Ignaz Holzbauer** *Symphony in D minor*
- Franz Xaver Richter** *Sinfonia No. 63 in B flat major* (No. 1 of *Grandes Symphonies*)
- Carl Stamitz** *Symphony in G*, Op. 13, No. 4
- Mozart** *Symphony No. 40 in G minor*, K550

The desire to compose more varied, expressive, and complex music drove the development of the orchestra.

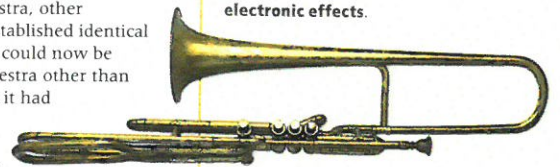
MORE SUBSTANTIAL SOUND

Extra weight was given to the 19th-century orchestra by adding more string instruments. Whereas Haydn had written for orchestras with six first violins playing the same part, **Mahler 192–93** >> called for as many as 16. Composers also added new instruments to their scores, including piccolo, cor anglais (English horn), E flat and bass clarinet, tuba, contrabassoon, and trombone, including the unusual 19th-century French valve trombone.

19TH CENTURY AND ONWARDS

Percussion instruments, such as gongs, xylophone, celeste, and exotic drums, added extra bite to orchestral music.

Modest Mussorgsky 180–81 >> used the saxophone in his *Pictures at an Exhibition* (1874). **Gustav Mahler** and **Vaughan Williams 214** >> occasionally included choruses in their orchestral works, while **Richard Strauss 223** >> and **Edward Elgar 214** >> added orchestral organ. Later, **Pierre Boulez** and **Karlheinz Stockhausen 270–71** >> introduced electronic effects.



TENOR VALVE TROMBONE

Orchestral Woodwind

Unlike string and brass sections, where instruments share similar sounds, the woodwind section is full of variety. Composers artfully exploit the different tone colours of its four main members – flutes, oboes, clarinets, and bassoons.

1 Bass flute The metal tubing on this 20th-century bass flute is more than 100 cm (39 in) long, and looped into a J-shape to bring the mouthpiece within easy reach of the player. **2** One-keyed flute A soft-toned, four-piece flute with a single key, this instrument was widely played in the 18th century. **3** Flute This type of simple wooden flute was popular at the turn of the 19th century in Europe and the United States for home and dance music. **4** Alto flute In this 19th-century wooden example, an angled head lengthens the tubing to create lower notes. **5** Piccolo The highest-pitched wind instrument, the piccolo sparkles at the top of the orchestra. **6** Modern concert flute This three-piece design has remained largely unchanged since 1847, when German flautist Theobald Boehm (1794–1881) devised a new system of keys that allowed for more precise playing. **7** Pratten system flute The designs of English flautist and inventor Robert Sidney Pratten (1824–68) attempted to perfect a simple key system. **8** Oboe Dating

from 1680, this three-keyed boxwood oboe is the kind used for early Baroque music. **9** Cor anglais Neither English nor a horn, the cor anglais is a large oboe with a bulbous bell. **10** Bassoon A 254 cm (100 in) long tube produces low notes in the main wind group. **11** Bassoon The limited number of keys on the 18th-century bassoon restricted its range of notes. **12** Contrabassoon Larger and lower than the bassoon, the contrabassoon produces an edgy buzz. **13** Octavin Resembling a saxophone, the rare 19th-century octavin has a conical, bent wooden tube, and is played with a single reed. **14** Contrabass clarinet A late 19th-century French example of the largest and lowest-pitched of all the clarinets, it has a simple system of keywork. **15** B flat clarinet The most common modern clarinet, the B flat uses the same Boehm key system that was developed for the concert flute. **16** Clarinet d'amour Popular in the 18th century, this clarinet has a large bulbous bell that gives its sound a veiled beauty.



1 BASS FLUTE
Length 84 cm (33 in)



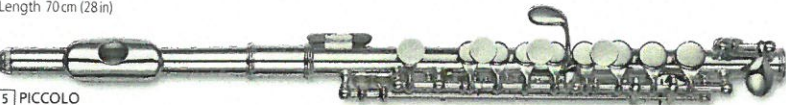
2 ONE-KEYED FLUTE
Length 60 cm (24 in)



3 FLUTE
Length 59 cm (23 in)



4 ALTO FLUTE
Length 70 cm (28 in)



5 PICCOLO
Length 33 cm (13 in)



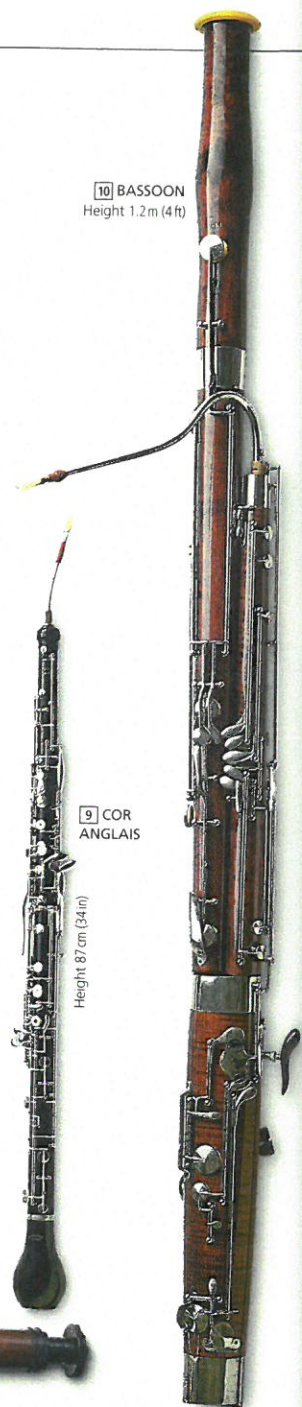
6 MODERN CONCERT FLUTE
Length 67 cm (26 in)

7 PRATTEN SYSTEM FLUTE
Length 67 cm (26 in)

8 OBOE
Height 60 cm (24 in)



10 BASSOON
Height 1.2 m (4 ft)



9 COR ANGLAIS
Height 87 cm (34 in)

ORCHESTRAL WOODWIND

12 CONTRABASSOON
Height 1.7 m (67 in)



11 BASSOON
Height 1.2 m (48 in)



13 OCTAVIN
Height 43 cm (17 in)



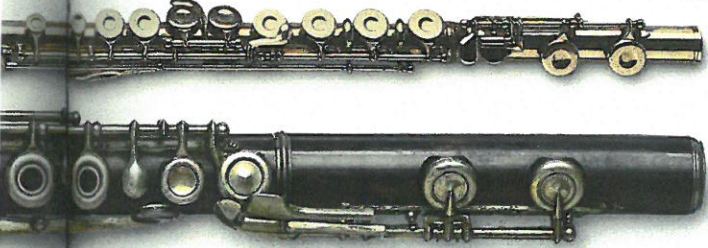
15 B FLAT CLARINET
Height 67 cm (26 in)



16 CLARINET D'AMOUR
Height 77 cm (30 in)



14 CONTRABASS CLARINET
Height 1.1 m (3 ft 7 in)



COMPOSER Born 1732 Died 1809

Joseph Haydn

“I was set **apart** from the **world...** so I was forced to become **original...**”

FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN, TO HIS BIOGRAPHER, GEORG AUGUST VON GRIESINGER

The life of Haydn spanned almost 80 years of unprecedented musical activity in Europe. A key figure in the development of the Classical style, he laid the foundations for the symphony and string quartet, and paved the way for Beethoven and Mozart. His prodigious output included music in almost every genre.

Modest beginnings

Born into a musical but not musically educated family in Rohrau, Austria, the young Haydn had an excellent singing voice. This earned him a place at the choir school in Vienna's St. Stephen's Cathedral. After his voice



Esterházy employee

A livery coat worn by Esterházy servants rests on the chair in Haydn's study in his house (now a museum) in Eisenstadt, Austria. Haydn wore such livery while employed by the Esterházy family.

broke, he made a modest living from teaching, and serenading party-goers, and continued his education by studying musical theory and taking lessons in composition from his teacher Nicola Porpora.

The Esterházys

In 1761, Haydn was appointed Vice-Kapellmeister (deputy music director) at the court of the Esterházys, an aristocratic Hungarian family. Promoted to Kapellmeister in 1766, he took full charge of music, running the orchestra, playing chamber music, and composing and presenting operas.

Most summers were spent at the Esterházy summer palace at

Admired and respected

Widely considered hard-working, generous, and popular, Haydn enjoyed convivial relations with fellow composers and patrons alike. His marriage, however, was a failure

Est
Har
mu
Vie
flu
the
she
Sy
ex
em
tha
ex
sto
th
pri
da
ho
I
a
er
m
vi
pe
de
pl
de
pe
w
th
ir
le
T
co
si
L
A
d
in
c
a
S
c
s
J
l
y
c
T



Sketch for *Armida*

Giacomo Pregliasco's costume sketch for Haydn's *Armida*. Between 1784 and 1788, the opera was performed 54 times at the Esterháza Court Theatre.

exploit the distinctive tone of each instrument, as well as the development of melodic themes, and bold use of keys, especially minor. The symphonies became more ambitious, expanding from an orchestra of 20 to 60 musicians.

Choral works

Haydn returned to Vienna as an international star. He resumed working for the Esterházs but mostly pursued his own projects, such as writing choral works that included a new mass

Esterháza in rural Hungary, where Haydn developed his own particular musical voice, largely unaffected by Viennese fashions. He composed fluently, and his early symphonies, though breaking little new ground, show graceful wit and charm. In his Symphony No. 45, "Farewell", for example, he set out to show his employer, Prince Nikolaus Esterházy, that the court musicians were exhausted. In the finale, the musicians stop playing one by one, snuff out their candles, and leave the room. The prince took the hint and the following day the musicians were allowed to go home for a holiday.

Haydn excelled in the string quartet, a medium he effectively invented and enjoyed playing with other court musicians. In the combination of two violins, viola, and cello he found the perfect vehicle for musical argument, deep emotional expression, and pleasurable social engagement – described by Goethe as "four rational people conversing". Over 40 years he wrote 68 quartets, gradually giving the four instruments equal importance, with the first violin no longer always having the limelight. These developments were noticed and copied by Mozart, who dedicated his six 1785 quartets to Haydn.

London calls

After Prince Nikolaus's death in 1790, an invitation to visit London came from the violinist and impresario Johann Salomon. It included a commission to provide six symphonies, one new opera, and 20 smaller works for a fee of £1,200. Haydn readily accepted. He made two visits, in 1791–92 and 1794–95, both of which were artistic and financial triumphs. While there, he wrote the 12 London Symphonies, the last of his 104 symphonies. They completed a development of increasingly independent instrumental lines that



Haydn's harpsichord

More than 60 keyboard sonatas are attributed to Haydn. The early ones were for harpsichord, but markings in the scores of later works indicate they were written for the new, more versatile pianoforte.

KEY WORKS

Piano Sonata in C
Piano Trio No. 39 in G, "Gypsy"
Symphony No. 44 in E minor, "Trauer"
Symphony No. 104 in D, "London"
Concerto for Trumpet in E flat
Concerto No. 1 for Cello in C
Harmoniemesse (Wind band Mass)
No. 14 in B flat
The Creation

Last performance

By 1803, Haydn's health began to fail. On 26 December of that year, he conducted his final public concert, his oratorio-like *Seven Last Words*. Five years later, he attended a celebration of his 75th birthday in the Old University in Vienna in which Antonio Salieri conducted *The Creation*. The concert was attended by Beethoven, who is

"That will make the ladies scream!"

HAYDN, ON THE UNEXPECTED MOMENT IN HIS "SURPRISE" SYMPHONY, 1791

each year for 8 September, the name day of Princess Maria Theresa. During this period he also composed his oratorio *The Creation*, regarded as his greatest masterpiece and widely performed today. The darkly dramatic orchestral opening, "Representation of Chaos", is followed by a sequence of robust, joyous choruses interspersed with beguiling arias depicting scenes from nature.

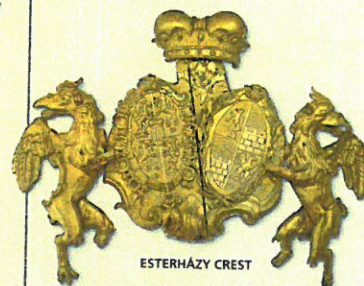
said to have knelt down and kissed the hands of his former teacher.

Haydn died quietly at home in 1809. The diary of Joseph Carl Rosenbaum, a former secretary of the Esterházs, records that the memorial service held two weeks later included a performance of Mozart's Requiem:

"The whole art-loving world of Vienna was present. Everything was very solemn, and worthy of Haydn."

TIMELINE

- **1732** Born in Rohrau, Austria, near the modern-day border with Slovakia and Hungary. He is the second of 12 children born to a wheelwright and the daughter of a market inspector.
- **1740** Becomes chorister at St Stephen's Cathedral, Vienna.
- **1753** The composer and teacher Nicola Porpora gives him instruction in composition.
- **1759** Composes Symphony No. 1.
- **1760** Marries Maria Anna Keller, but the marriage is unhappy and childless.
- **1761** Appointed as Vice-Kapellmeister (deputy musical director) to the Esterházy family.
- **1766** Promoted to Kapellmeister (musical director).

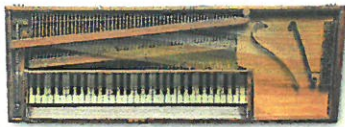


ESTERHÁZY CREST

- **1772** "Farewell" Symphony No. 45 is premiered.
- **1784** Meets and befriends Mozart in Vienna. They play chamber music together.
- **1791** Visits London, where he is commissioned by the violinist and impresario Johann Salomon. Writes and directs numerous works, including an opera, six symphonies – among which is the "Surprise" Symphony – and smaller pieces. Arranges around 400 English, Welsh, and Scottish folk songs.
- **1792** Returns to Vienna, where he meets and starts to teach Beethoven.
- **1794** On another invitation from Salomon, he returns to London and composes his final set of symphonies, including the set known as the "London" symphonies. Commissioned to write the oratorio *The Creation*.
- **1795** Period of prolific choral writing begins, including the masses *Maria Theresa* and *In tempore belli* (In Time of War).
- **1796** Writes Trumpet Concerto for Anton Weidinger's new keyed trumpet, which makes high notes, rapid runs, and lyrical melodies more easily playable.
- **1798** *The Creation* is first performed in Vienna. It becomes an overwhelming success in both England and Germany.
- **1803** Begins his final string quartet, but it is left unfinished. His health declines, and he ceases most work for the Esterházy family, though continues to attend occasional performances.
- **1809** Dies in his sleep on 31 May, attended by a guard of honour outside his house.

BEFORE

Before the 18th century, ensembles of musicians performed mostly for the rich, and on instruments that had evolved during the Middle Ages.



ENGLISH SQUARE PIANO

SOUNDS ON THE VERGE OF CHANGE

Courtiers in the 16th and 17th centuries listened to **consort music** ◀ 68-69 that was often played by groups of **viols** – fretted instruments related to the guitar and played with a bow ◀ 90-91. The **harpsichord** and **early piano** ◀ 106-09 took a background role in ensembles, as they lacked the capability to project sustained melody lines unless supported by other instruments.

Playing Music Among Friends

By the 18th century, music-making had already begun to spread from the courts of kings and nobles into the home. A confident new class had the desire, means, and ability to play together and entertain each other in duets, trios, quartets, or quintets.

Small groups of varied instruments in which each player has an individual part define chamber music. It grew in the late 18th century as an amateur pursuit when players met together in a room (“chamber”).

The Industrial Revolution helped to trigger chamber music’s popularity. Instruments were better made, their cost reduced, and the growing middle classes, with more money and leisure time, wanted to raise their status by

playing music. It became fashionable to play chamber music in ensembles, and composers responded by writing for combinations of instruments that worked well together.

German-speaking countries in particular embraced this communal activity – above all in Vienna, where a genteel Sunday’s entertainment was incomplete without a group performance. Eventually, chamber music became so important as a genre,

and so loved by the public, that it moved on to the professional recital platform. It remains a treasured amateur pastime the world over and composers continue to write chamber ensemble pieces.

Music for string quartets

The similar sounds of stringed instruments blend so harmoniously that the string quartet (two violins, viola, and cello) has proved the most

**All eyes on the leader**

Joseph Haydn is credited with inventing the string quartet. This fanciful painting by German artist Julius Schmid (1854–1935) depicts Haydn examining the score while guests listen attentively.

UNDERSTANDING MUSIC

HARMONIE

From the 1770s, diners at banquets were serenaded by pairs of oboes, clarinets, horns, and bassoons in a type of ensemble called *Harmonie*, playing *Harmoniemusik*. This became so popular in the Classical period that Emperor Joseph II founded an "Imperial Wind Ensemble" in Vienna. A *Harmonie* group appears in the banquet scene in Mozart's opera *Don Giovanni*, playing well-known melodies scored for wind instruments. Mozart expanded on this in his *Gran Partita*, a seven-movement serenade for 13 players – *Harmonie* plus two further horns, two basset horns, and double bass. *Harmonie* not only led to the emergence of the military and concert band, but also encouraged a more prominent role for woodwind instruments in the orchestra.



LATE 18TH-CENTURY CLARINET

enduring chamber music combination. Recognizing its intrinsically beautiful sound, the composer Joseph Haydn (see pp.128–29) – a string player himself – wrote around 70 string quartets, most of which have four movements like the Classical symphony (see pp.126–27). Mozart (see pp.138–39) also enjoyed performing and writing quartets, and dedicated six of them to Haydn. In the last of these, the "Dissonance", he experimented with the form by opening it with clashing harmonies. Beethoven (see pp.144–45) extended the emotional range of the string

quartet. His final works, a series of quartets written in the 1820s, are considered to be some of the finest musical achievements, and inspired composers as diverse as Schumann, Schoenberg, and Shostakovich.

Music for two or three parts

The growing popularity of the piano spawned a new form of chamber music – the piano duet for two players at one instrument. Mozart wrote several works for four hands, while Schubert's

BEETHOVEN'S last piece before he succumbed to illness was a string quintet.

extensive output often required players to cross hands with one another. Most major symphonies were transcribed for piano, and until recordings were available the piano duet became the standard means of experiencing new orchestral works.

The piano's popularity encouraged the development of the accompanied

First violin often has the melody

Second violin supports and harmonizes

Viola adds depth and rhythmic support

Cello provides bass line



easier string parts. The frontispieces of Beethoven's early violin sonatas proclaim that they are for piano accompanied by violin. However, by the 1820s, the balance between the piano and other instruments evened out as performers became more skilled and wanted to share the limelight. The sonata, for example, became an interplay of equal partners. Meanwhile,

Notes of a master

Mozart's 1787 serenade *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* (A Little Night Music) is usually performed by a string chamber ensemble. The quartet becomes a quintet if a double bass joins in with the cello part.

KEY WORKS

- Mozart** Serenade No. 10 in B flat major, "Gran Partita", K.361
- Haydn** Quartet No. 53 in D major, "The Lark", Op. 64, No. 5
- Anton Reicha** Wind Quintet in E flat major, Op. 88, No. 2
- Beethoven** Septet in E flat major, Op. 20; String Quartet in C sharp minor, No. 14, Op. 131
- Schubert** Octet in F major, D.803; *Notturmo* (Nocturne), Op. 148, D.897

"The most perfect expression of human behaviour is a string quartet."

BRITISH CONDUCTOR JEFFERY TATE, WRITING IN "THE NEW YORKER", 30 APRIL 1990

sonata and the piano trio. Both had roots in the Baroque keyboard sonata (see pp.104–05), which used the stringed instruments to double the melody and bass of the piano part to cover the rapidly dying sound of early keyboard instruments. When Haydn wrote piano trios he dedicated them to women – he assumed women would have the time to master the intricate piano parts before being joined in the evenings by male family members in

as the piano sound grew in power and individuality, composers such as Schubert and Mendelssohn exploited and celebrated the difference in their trios. In *Notturmo*, the charming piano trio by Schubert (see pp.156–57), violin and cello alternate with the piano in a lyrical melody, delighting in the contrast between the sustained string sound and the chords of the piano.

A fifth element

The addition of a further instrument to the string quartet produced a surprisingly richer sound. In Schubert's "Trout" Quintet, a double bass underlies the watery rippling of the piano part with a delicate gravitas.

Further combinations included woodwind quintets (flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, and horn), and diverse combinations of strings and wind instruments with or without piano. Anton Reicha's quintets show his understanding of the special quirks of woodwind, while Beethoven and Schubert wrote pieces for various combinations of wind and strings. However, mixed ensembles were in the minority, as not all composers could rise to the challenge of taming the fundamental differences in tone between wind, strings, and piano.

AFTER

Chamber music became a favourite medium for listeners and performers, both amateur and professional.

ON THE PUBLIC STAGE

In the mid-19th century, professional ensembles emerged, including the **Hellmesberger** and the **Joachim** string quartets, founded by the violinists Joseph Hellmesberger, Sr. and Joseph Joachim. They premiered chamber works by **Brahms 172–73** and **Dvořák**, whose popular Slavonic and Hungarian Dances for piano duet also underlined the growing interest in **musical nationalism 176–77**.

POPULARITY OF THE PIANO

The piano continued to evolve, gaining a more sonorous note and winning **equal status** with other instruments. The invention of the **upright piano** allowed more households to own the instrument **170–71**.

GALLIC FLAIR

New instruments added novelty to the genre in the 20th century, especially through French composers such as **Francis Poulenc** and **Darius Milhaud 204–05**.

COMPOSER (1770–1836)

ANTON REICHA

Composer, theorist, and flute player, Anton Reicha was one of many Bohemian musicians who left Prague (see pp.146–47) in search of wider musical horizons. At 15, he joined the Bonn Court orchestra, before moving to Vienna where he befriended Mozart and Beethoven. He was appointed professor of theory at the Paris Conservatoire in 1818 and taught Berlioz, Liszt, Gounod, and César Franck. Reicha applied his views on theory and composition in his many fugues and studies for piano. He also wrote substantially for wind quintets

