



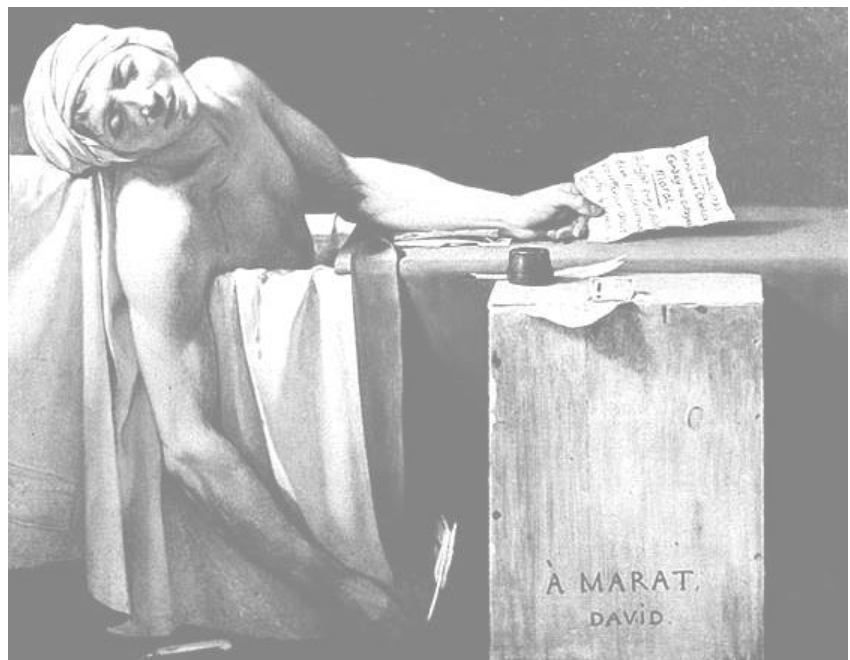
The Classical Era, which centered mainly around the Austrian city of Vienna, was an attempt to reject the highly complex and ornamented music and art of the Baroque. Classicism can best be described as having qualities of balance and order. In contrast to the music, this was also a time of massive social change: the Industrial, American and French Revolutions changed the way society as a whole was constructed.

This political and social change had its effect on musicians. In the early Classical Era, musicians were still considered to be servants dependent on the wealthy and the Church for

employment (PATRONAGE). Gradually, this began to change. By 1800, composers were writing mainly for the general public. This can be seen in the life experiences of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven.

The music of the Classical Era reflects the society from which it comes: it is elegant and formal. People dressed in elaborate clothes and wigs. The furniture and homes were designed for their formal beauty. The music of the time, likewise, follows rather formal structures. Composers began to exercise further control over compositions by being more specific (e.g. writing out cadenzas) and limiting the excessive ornamentation added by performers that was common in the Baroque.

For Wind Bands, the adoption of “Turkish” music (oboes, fifes, side drums, kettledrums, cymbals, triangles, bass drum, etc) was a huge development. By the end of the 18th century military bands were increasing in size, mainly as a result of adding extra percussion instruments. This made it necessary, for purposes of audibility, to increase the wind section! The newly invented clarinets were introduced into military bands and soon outnumbered any other instrument as they were easier to play while marching than the oboe and had the volume to compete with the brass.



Some General Characteristics of Classical Music

MELODY	Short and clearly defined musical phrases with two or more contrasting themes. Melodies are characterized as singable and lyrical with simple, diatonic harmonies supporting them
RHYTHM	Very defined and regular
TEXTURE	Mainly homophonic
TIMBRE	The symphony orchestra was organized into four sections – strings, woodwinds, brass, and percussion. The harpsichord was very seldom used (outside of opera)
DYNAMICS	The changes in dynamics and dynamic contrasts that we now expect in music were ‘invented’ during this period. Crescendo and Decrescendo are used for the first time

Some Important Definitions

Chamber music	Music written for a small number of musicians, one player per part, more than one, but fewer than 12 musicians in total. Chamber music is meant to be played in a ‘chamber’ or small room
Homophonic	Musical texture which is characterized by chordal support of a melodic line. The harmony is not independent of the melody, but is there as a support to the melody
Binary Form	Music composed of two different sections (AB)
Ternary Form	Music in three sections, the last section being a repetition of the first (ABA)
Symphony	An extended work for orchestra, often divided into several movements
Concerto	A piece for soloist, with accompaniment (frequently orchestral)
Theme	Basic subject matter of a melody
Motives	Short melodic or rhythmic fragments which contribute to the theme
Alberti Bass	“Broken” chords are used as a lightly-textured harmony in piano music.
Murky Bass	“Implied” chords, where octaves are played and repeated to outline the harmony.

Some Important Composers

Joseph Haydn	1732-1809
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart	1756-1791
Ludwig Van Beethoven	1770-1827