

Study Guide – Classical History

Terminology & Definitions

- *Age of Enlightenment*: A time when people started believing more in the value of individual rights; 'the greatest happiness for the greatest numbers'
- *Patronage*: A single wealthy patron supports a composer or musician; in exchange, everything that musician produces essentially belongs to the patron and the patron has music available to him at all times
- *Requiem*: a type of Mass that is composed to honour someone who has died and is generally performed at their funeral
- *Symphony*: an extended work for orchestra, usually divided into several movements
- *Theme*: the basic subject matter of a melody
- *Alberti Bass*: a system of harmonic accompaniment in which the chords are arpeggiated; the usual pattern is lowest, highest, middle; creates a smooth, flowing support for the melody

General Characteristics

- *Melody*: singable, clear, short phrases; balanced phrases (2 bars, 4 bars, 8 bars)
- *Harmony*: Diatonic (major and minor scale) with chromaticism for expressive effect; Alberti Bass
- *Texture*: homophonic with chordal accompaniment
- *Timbre*: piano becomes most important keyboard instrument; huge symphony orchestras
- *Form*: **very** structured; Sonata-Allegro Form
- *Dynamics*: Crescendos and decrescendos replace terraced dynamics
- *Rhythm*: Defined and regular

Important Forms

- Sonata-Allegro Form:
 - Introduction (sometimes)
 - Non-thematic material
 - Exposition
 - Theme 1 in I (tonic)
 - Theme 2 in V (dominant)
 - Development
 - Themes 1 and 2 are mixed up and played with in V; gradually moves back to I in preparation for the...
 - Recapitulation
 - Theme 1 in I
 - Theme 2 in I
 - Coda (sometimes)
 - Totally new material that says "DONE!"

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Important Composers

- Franz Joseph Haydn
 - The perfect example of an enlightenment-era composer; balanced, happy, widely capable, treated everyone with respect
 - Haydn's music – like his life – is well-balanced between following the rules and occasional emotional outbursts
 - Worked for Prince Esterhazy for basically his whole life
 - One of the first composers to really clearly use Sonata-Allegro Form
- Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
 - A child prodigy, having mastered both the piano and violin by 5
 - Died young (health problems/ never able to secure a patron) but still composed tonnes and tonnes of music
 - Unlike Haydn, Mozart's music – like his life – is all extremes; his keyboard music, for example, was too hard for most keyboard players
- Ludwig Van Beethoven
 - Probably the most revered composer who ever lived
 - Master piano player; wrote a lot of piano sonatas
 - Wrote 9 symphonies, 4 of them after going deaf
 - Broke all the rules; did whatever he wanted; *extreme* emotion... yet he yearned for Haydn-like singable simplicity
 - A **very** heavy influence on the next generation, the early *Romantic* composers

Historical Implications, Sample Questions & Other Important Stuff

- *Describe the social conditions that led to the increased focus on simpler, more natural artistic expression.*
 - Age of Enlightenment ideals = more focus on human beings = more focus on sounding natural
 - Industrial Revolution = social upheaval and overthrow of nobility and landed gentry
- *Describe some of the ways that Classical is distinctly different from Baroque music.*
 - Cleaner melodic lines; clear phrases ending in cadences
 - No more ornamentation! Well, still some.... But not like before
 - *Alberti Bass* instead of *Basso Continuo*
 - Less harmonic modulation
 - Interest in nature & the outdoors (backlash against Industrial Revolution)
 - Huge symphony orchestras with more brass, winds & percussion