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CD 1

- Roman Hoffstetter (1742–1815)**
String Quartet in F major, Op. 3 No. 5
[1] Movement 2: Andante cantabile 5.04
Kodály Quartet 8.555704
- Franz Joseph Haydn (1732–1809)**
Symphony No. 45 in F sharp minor, 'Farewell'
[2] Movement 1: Allegro assai 5.40
Capella Istropolitana / Barry Wordsworth 8.550382
- Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (1714–1788)**
'Hamburg' Symphony No. 3 in C major
[3]–[4] Movements 1 and 2: Allegro assai; Adagio 6.02
Capella Istropolitana / Christian Benda 8.553285
- Carl Ditters von Dittersdorf (1739–1799)**
Sinfonia in A minor, 'The Delirium of the Composers'
[5] Movement 4: Presto (non troppo) 4.33
Failoni Chamber Orchestra / Uwe Grodd 8.553975

- Franz Joseph Haydn**
 6 Piano Variations in F minor 14.56
 Jenő Jandó, piano 8.550845
- Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)**
 7 Piano Concerto No. 24 in C minor, K491 12.52
 Movement 1: Allegro 8.550204
 Jenő Jandó, piano / Concertus Hungaricus / Mátyás Antál
- Carl Stamitz (1745–1801)**
 8 Clarinet Concerto No. 1 in F major 6.10
 Movement 2: Andante moderato 8.553584
 Kálmán Berkes, clarinet & director / Nicolaus Esterházy Sinfonia
- Johann Stamitz (1717–1757)**
 9 Symphony in D major, Op. 3 No. 2 3.08
 Movement 1: Presto 8.553194
 New Zealand Chamber Orchestra / Donald Armstrong
- Johann Georg Albrechtsberger (1736–1809)**
 10 Prelude and Fugue in C major for Organ, Four Hands 5.01
 Phoebe Payne & Joseph Payne, organ 8.550964
- Leopold Mozart (1719–1787)**
 11 Trombone Concerto in G major 5.09
 Movement 3: Allegro 8.553831
 Alain Trudel, trombone & director / Northern Sinfonia
- Luigi Boccherini (1743–1805)**
 12 Cello Concerto No. 3 in G major, G480 6.36
 Movement 2: Allegro 8.553571
 Tim Hugh, cello / Scottish Chamber Orchestra / Anthony Halstead

TT: 76:16

CD 2

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)

Serenata notturna, K239

- [1] **Movement 2: Menuetto – Trio** 4.17
Capella Istropolitana / Wolfgang Sobotka 8.550026

Franz Joseph Haydn (1732–1809)

Missa in angustiis, 'Nelson Mass'

- [2] **Movement 1: Kyrie** 4.25
Viktoria Loukianetz / Gabriele Sima / Kurt Azesberger / Robert Holzer /
Hungarian Radio and Television Chorus and Orchestra / Nicolaus Esterházy Sinfonia /
Béla Drahós 8.554416

Johann Christian Bach (1735–1782)

Sinfonia in B flat major, Op. 18 No. 2, 'Lucio Silla'

- [3] **Part 3: Presto** 1.48
Failoni Chamber Orchestra / Hanspeter Gmür 8.553367

Christoph Willibald von Gluck (1714–1787)

Orfeo ed Euridice

- [4] **Act I, Scene 1: Ah, se intorno a quest'urna funesta** 3.06
- [5] **Act III, Scene 1: Che farò senza Euridice?** 3.29
Ann-Christine Biel / Drottningholm Court Theatre Orchestra / Arnold Östman 8.660064

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**Die Zauberflöte**

6	Act II, No. 15: In diesen heil'gen Hallen	3.55
	Kurt Rydl / Failoni Chamber Orchestra / Michael Halász	8.660031

7	Act II, No. 14: Der Hölle Rache	2.54
	Helen Kwon / Failoni Chamber Orchestra / Michael Halász	8.660031

François-Joseph Gossec (1734–1829)**Grande Messe des morts**

8	9	Dies irae (Grave maestoso); Tuba mirum (Grave – Allegretto)	7.36
		Radio Svizzera Choir and Orchestra / Diego Fasolis	8.554750

Franz Joseph Haydn**Symphony No. 94 in G major, 'Surprise'**

10	Movement 2: Andante	5.34
	Capella Istropolitana / Barry Wordsworth	8.550114

Franz Joseph Haydn**String Quartet in E flat major, Op. 33 No. 2, 'The Joke'**

11	Movement 4: Finale	3.36
	Kodály Quartet	8.550788

Franz Joseph Haydn**String Quartet in D major, Op. 33 No. 6**

12	Movement 3: Scherzo (Allegretto)	2.16
	Kodály Quartet	8.550789

- Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**
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 [13] Movement 4: Allegro vivace 5.29
 Éder Quartet 8.550540
- Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**
 Le nozze di Figaro
 [14] Act I, No. 3: Se vuol ballare, signor Contino 2.42
 Soloists / Nicolaus Esterházy Sinfonia / Michael Halász 8.660102
- Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**
 Don Giovanni
 [15]–[18] Act I, Scene 20: finale 9.16
 Soloists / Nicolaus Esterházy Sinfonia / Michael Halász 8.660081
- Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**
 Symphony No. 40 in G minor, K550
 [19] Movement 4: Allegro assai 5.05
 Capella Istropolitana / Barry Wordsworth 8.550299
- Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)**
 Piano Sonata No. 1 in F minor, Op. 2 No. 1
 [20] Movement 1: Allegro 5.37
 Jenő Jandó, piano 8.550150
- Ludwig van Beethoven**
 Symphony No. 2 in D major, Op. 36
 [21] Movement 4: Allegro molto 6.41
 Nicolaus Esterházy Sinfonia / Béla Drahós 8.553476

TT: 79:18

Music of the **Classical Era**

by

Stephen Johnson

I. What was the Classical Era?



The Death of Marat (stabbed in his bath by Charlotte Corday, Paris, 13 July 1793)
Painting, 1793, by Jacques-Louis David (1748-1825). © AKG Images / Erich Lessing

Broadly speaking, music historians are agreed about when the Classical era occurred. It was that time of extraordinary creativity, dominated by composers from the German-speaking countries, which saw the creation of the masterpieces of Franz Joseph Haydn (1732–1809) and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791), and the first mature works of Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827). In other words, it's a period that stretches from the second half of the eighteenth century to around the first decade of the nineteenth. This was a time of unprecedented social and political upheaval, with the French Revolution of 1789 as its climax and central turning point. It was also a time in which many of the features of the modern world first became defined. While France was purging itself of its old order and establishing the republic, Britain was experiencing the beginnings of its own Industrial Revolution. Both of these phenomena were to have immense consequences for the rest of the western world. So this was an age of epochal transition – or what the much-quoted old Chinese curse calls 'interesting times'.

It's when you get to the question of *what* it is that distinguishes the music of this so-called 'Classical' era, that the arguments start. In the visual arts, commentators tend to be reassuringly clear about what 'Classical' means. One of the most important theorists of the Renaissance, Leon Battista Alberti, defined Classical beauty in painting and architecture as 'the harmony and concord of all the parts achieved by following well-founded rules and resulting in a unity such that nothing could be added or taken away or altered except for the worse'. As an ideal it has frequently been contrasted with Romanticism – not least by the Romantics themselves. The poet John Keats, for example, offers a hymn to ancient Classical beauty in his *Ode to a Grecian Urn* (1819):

Thou still unravished bride of quietness,
Thou foster-child of Silence and slow Time

The German Romantic composer Robert Schumann heard these kind of qualities in Mozart's Fortieth Symphony (1788, see CD 2, track 19), which he praised for its 'Grecian lightness and grace'. In another of his writings he extended the image to Mozart's music as a whole:

Serenity, repose, grace, the characteristics of the antique works of art, are those of Mozart's school. The Greeks gave to 'The Thunderer' [Zeus] a radiant expression, and radiantly does Mozart launch his lightnings.

Mozart's first biographer, Franz Xaver Niemetschek, also extolled him for his 'Classical' qualities: 'The masterpieces of the Romans and Greeks please more and more through repeated reading, and... the same applies for both connoisseur and amateur with regard to the hearing of Mozart's music'. However one of the greatest of all Romantic critics, E.T.A. Hoffmann – a man who loved Mozart so much that he changed one of his forenames from Friedrich to Amadeus – saw it very differently. For Hoffmann, Mozart and Haydn were the first Romantics. What struck him above all else about their music was not 'harmony and concord', but the way it challenged 'well-founded rules', springing dramatic surprises, giving a new freedom to the imagination and allowing the expression of emotions with unprecedented intensity and directness. In an essay written in 1814, Hoffmann groups Haydn and Mozart with Beethoven, contrasting them with what he felt to be their superficial and often false contemporaries:

Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven developed a new art, whose origins first appear in the middle of the eighteenth century. Thoughtlessness and lack of understanding husbanded the acquired treasure badly, and in the end, counterfeits tried to give the impression of the real thing with their tinsel, but it was not the fault of these masters in whom the spirit was so nobly manifest.



Franz Joseph Haydn (1732–1809)

*‘Friends often flatter me that I have some genius,
but Mozart stands far above me.’*

Franz Joseph Haydn



Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)

***‘Melody is the very essence of music.
When I think of a good melodist, I think of a fine
race-horse. A contrapuntist is only a post-horse.’***

Mozart to Michael Kelly, Letter (1786)

The German composer and critic Johann Mattheson, writing in *The Perfect Kapellmeister*, offers advice to budding Mozarts:

A composer must know how to express truly all the heart's inclinations by means merely of carefully chosen sounds and their skilful combination without words, so that a listener can completely grasp and clearly understand the motive, sense, meaning and force, with all the phrases and sentences pertaining thereto, as if it were a real speech. Then it is a delight! Much more art and a stronger power of imagination belong to this achievement without words than with their help.

Clearly Schumann and Hoffmann can't both be right – or can they? Following the tracks for the two CDs that accompany this booklet, listeners may well find they are pulled alternately in both directions. There are times when one is very much aware of an order, balance and elegance that the Romantics seemed intent on destroying. In such moments we are reminded that the eighteenth century was also the era of the intellectual movement known as the 'Enlightenment', which emphasised rationality, the primacy of scientific method. It was the period in which educated men widely believed that the laws of a divinely ordered universe had been laid bare in the theories of Sir Isaac Newton (1642–1727). There was no place in this universe for mind-boggling concepts like quantum mechanics or Einsteinian relativity: order and harmony reigned. This serenely rational view of the universe is beautifully expressed in the words of the hymn by the English essayist Joseph Addison (1672–1719):

The spacious firmament on high,
With all the blue ethereal sky,
And spangled heavens, a shining frame,
Their great original proclaim.
The unwearied sun from day to day
Does his Creator's power display,
And publishes to every land
The work of an almighty hand...

What though in solemn silence all
Move round the dark terrestrial ball;
What though nor real voice nor sound
Amid their radiant orbs be found;
In reason's ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious voice,
For ever singing as they shine,
'The hand that made us is divine'.

The eighteenth century was also a period in which the writings, art and architecture of ancient Greece and Rome were being rediscovered and re-evaluated. The ruins of Pompeii and Herculaneum were excavated, sketched and pondered on by many. This in turn exerted a formative influence on the new art of the age. Many of the great houses and gardens of the royalty and nobility are pervaded by this sense of grand design, underlined with images and symbols drawn from Classical antiquity. And if one wanted to imagine a kind of musical soundtrack to accompany a tour of one of these Arcadian palaces and their exquisitely landscaped surroundings, it might well be the Serenade from the String Quartet published as Haydn's Op. 3 No. 5 (c1777), but probably composed by a minor contemporary, Roman Hoffstetter (1742–1815): in the late eighteenth century the name 'Haydn' on a publication was a virtual cast-iron guarantee of sales. This elegant, tastefully mannered aria for muted violin with simple, regular pizzicato accompaniment is untroubled from first to last. Nothing mars its gentle continuity; sweet reason prevails (**CD 1, track 1**).

II. Nature versus Reason

Turning now to a piece of wholly authentic Haydn: the first movement of the Symphony No. 45 in F sharp minor, nicknamed the *Farewell* Symphony. How Classical – in Alberti's sense of the word – is this? Listening to this volatile, intensely dramatic music we may be tempted to side with Hoffmann and identify the first stirrings of Romanticism. Haydn's *Farewell* Symphony was written in 1772, at a time when a new literary movement was emerging. It became known as *Sturm und Drang* – usually translated as 'Storm and Stress', though the German word *Drang* also has implications of yearning. *Sturm und Drang* was the title of a play by Friedrich Maximilian Klinger, written in 1776 – a turbulent, passionate drama (one of the characters actually has the name 'Wild'), which emphasises emotional truth over and above order and harmony.

Klinger and his fellows were strongly influenced by the Swiss philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778), who rejected rationalism in favour of nature, feeling and emotion, and idealised what he called the 'noble savage' – the type of man whose personality had not been trammelled and emasculated by what the western world was pleased to call civilisation. It was not through 'reason's ear' that God spoke to Rousseau. For this thinker every question of importance to mankind – ethics, politics, even religion – could be answered by the voice of nature. In his widely read *Emile ou Traité d'Education* ('Emile, or Treatise on Education', 1762), Rousseau puts his feelings about religion into the mouth of an idealised and highly unconventional country priest. 'I do not deduce the rules,' he tells us, 'from the principles of a high philosophy, but I find them in the depths of my heart, written by Nature in ineffaceable characters.' 'Thanks be to Heaven,' he concludes, 'we are thus freed from all this terrifying apparatus of philosophy; we can be men without being learned; dispensed from wasting our life in the study of morals, we have at less cost a more assured guide in this immense labyrinth of human opinions.'

Johann Gottfried von Herder muses on the potent but indefinable effect of music:

Music arouses a series of intimate feelings, true but not clear, not even perceptual, only most obscure. You, young man, were in its dark auditorium; it lamented, sighed stormed, exulted; you felt all that, you vibrated with every string. But about what did it – and you with it – lament, sigh, exult, storm? Not a shadow of anything perceptible. Everything stirred only in the darkest abyss of your soul, like a living wind that agitates the depths of the ocean.'

Intriguingly – though also for our purposes, somewhat confusingly – some of Rousseau's followers labelled this new anti-rational, pro-natural thinking as 'Classicism'. They argued that it was through imitation of the ancients – the Greeks and Romans – that one could rediscover primal simplicity and natural truth: hence the frequent use of Classical imagery in the works of the great French painter Jacques-Louis David (1748–1825), who like many of his fellow revolutionary sympathisers revered Rousseau. This notion was developed by the German philosopher Johann Gottfried von Herder, who found his ideal of 'naturally' expressed human emotion in folk poetry and music, and in the recently rediscovered plays of Shakespeare, which were soon to be embraced across Europe as an antidote to what was seen as the over-stylised, overly rational Classicism of the French dramatists Corneille and Racine.

Haydn's middle-period symphonies, of which No. 45 is one of the greatest and most original, are often presented as embodiments of the spirit of Rousseau-inspired *Sturm und Drang* in music. Haydn himself might have raised an eyebrow at the thought of his name being associated with any fashionable artistic movement; in 1761 he had entered the employment of Prince Paul Esterházy at Eisenstadt in Hungary, where, as he put it, 'I was cut off from the world. There was no one to confuse or torment me, and I was forced to become original'. Undoubtedly there is some truth in that; and yet, listening to the first movement of the *Farewell* Symphony it is hard to resist the feeling that the spirit of *Sturm und Drang* had penetrated even as far as insular Eisenstadt. The downward-plunging first theme, each note incisively accented, could hardly be further from the lilting restraint of the Serenade from Op. 3 No. 5. Then there are the sudden loud–soft contrasts (the Serenade has no indications of dynamics at all), the equally sudden changes in texture, the nervous string tremolos and the dramatic use of silence – something Haydn was particularly good at (for example at 3'29" and 4'16"). The nineteenth-century Romantics may have developed and intensified such devices, but this is still clearly a language of emotional extremes (CD 1, track 2).

III. Sensitive Style



Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (1714–1788)

*'It appears to me that it is the special
province of music to move the heart.'*

Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach

Every age has its share of 'isms'. Alongside *Sturm und Drang* another aesthetic tag came to prominence in the German-speaking world: *Empfindsamkeit* ('feeling', 'sensitivity') or, particularly in music, *empfindsame Stil* ('sensitive style'). To some extent *Empfindsamkeit* corresponds to the British cult of 'sensibility', examined with acutely critical wit by Jane Austen in her novel *Sense and Sensibility*. Its followers devoted themselves to the cultivation of feeling in writing and performance, and in music its outstanding exponent was Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (1714–1788), son of the famous J.S. Bach. In 1773 the British music historian Charles Burney visited C.P.E. Bach at his home in Hamburg, where the composer's improvisation at the clavichord made a lasting impression:

After dinner, which was elegantly served, and cheerfully [sic] eaten, I prevailed upon him to sit down again to a clavichord, and he played, with little intermission, till near eleven o'clock at night. During this time, he grew so animated and possessed, that he not only played, but looked like one inspired. His eyes were fixed, his under lip fell, and drops of effervesence [sic] distilled from his countenance. He said, if he were to be set to work frequently, in this manner, he should grow young again.

The idea of making expression of human feelings the highest goal of music was not new. The sixteenth-century Florentine intellectuals, Giovanni de' Bardi, Vincenzo Galilei and Jacopo Peri, who unwittingly created the genre of opera were partly motivated by descriptions they'd read of the music of ancient Greece – and particularly of its almost supernatural emotional impact on its hearers. What was unprecedented about the music of C.P.E. Bach and his 'sensitive' contemporaries was that their efforts to achieve this new intensity of expression centred not on vocal but on instrumental music. The forms in which C.P.E. Bach achieved some of his finest and most characteristic results were the solo keyboard sonata, the concerto and a new medium: the orchestral symphony. In some ways the symphony was the direct descendent of the Baroque orchestral suite: a sequence of contrasted movements adding up to a whole that is felt to be greater than the sum of its parts. But where the individual movements of J.S. Bach's Orchestral Suites are marked by continuity of mood and musical texture, those of a symphony were fluid and changeable, with marked dramatic and expressive contrasts.

C.P.E. Bach's engagement with the symphony did not begin until the 1770s, when he was

nearly sixty. The reason for this late start was not purely artistic. From 1740, Bach spent twenty-eight years as harpsichordist at the court of the Prussian King Frederick the Great, in Berlin. Frederick was a fine and enthusiastic musician, but with time his tastes grew increasingly conservative. It wasn't until 1768, when C.P.E. Bach took up the post of music director in Hamburg, that he at last felt free to explore the new possibilities of his art. His first six symphonies, known as the 'Hamburg' Symphonies, were commissioned by an important, progressive-minded patron, Baron von Swieten. Before sending off the new works to the Baron, Bach decided it would be a good idea to give them a private run-through in front of a group of carefully chosen friends and colleagues. Four decades later, one of them recalled this extraordinary evening in a German musical newspaper:

In the house of Professor Büsch a large band of musicians was assembled by Eberling to make a thorough study of those symphonies before they were sent away. Reichardt led from his violin to the relief of the anxious composer. One could hear with enchantment the original, bold progressions and the great variety and novelty in the forms and modulations, even if they were not entirely appreciated. Seldom has a musical composition of higher, bolder and more witty character flowed from the soul of a genius.

All of those qualities can be heard in the first two movements of the Third *Hamburg* Symphony. This music is anything but predictable, and sudden, bold harmonic and textural changes abound. In the first movement a lively wit prevails: Bach delights in leading the ear to expect one thing, only to veer off in surprising new directions; but then, in mid-flight, comes a dislocating change from *Allegro assai* ('very lively') to *Adagio* ('slow', track 4) and the mood becomes darker, the expression anguished. If we follow Alberti's definition, this is even less Classical than Haydn's *Farewell* Symphony. Instead of soothing us with its 'harmony and concord', the symphony cries out for some kind of interpretation: what is the emotional 'story' that unifies this volatile, eccentric, nervously brilliant music? **(CD 1, tracks 3–4)**

But if we are prompted to analyse this music, we should beware of assuming that the changing moods C.P.E. Bach's represents are a direct reflection of his private emotional life. A C.P.E. Bach symphony is not an autobiography in sound in the way that Berlioz's *Symphonie*

fantastique, Mahler's First Symphony or Shostakovich's Tenth clearly are. In this sense C.P.E. Bach is *not* a Romantic. The aim of the *empfindsame Stil* is the expression of emotion as a common human experience, not an outpouring of personal pain or exultation. It is 'cultivated' feeling, a play of emotions, not without an element of mannerism. In fact for C.P.E. Bach there seems to have been an element of conscious calculation – of deliberate playing for effect – at least as far as certain kinds of audience were concerned. In 1784 he gave this advice to a fellow composer:

Permit me, *in true affection*, to teach you something for the future. In things intended for the press, and thus for the general public, you should be less ingenious and give more *sugar*.

'Mannerism' – in the derogatory sense – is how many came to see this expressively 'sugared' style. By the time Carl Ditters von Dittersdorf (1739–1799) came to write his 'Descriptive Sinfonia', *The Delirium of the Composers*, in the late 1770s, *Empfindsamkeit* was, as Dittersdorf's subtitle slyly notes, 'The Taste of the Day', and a ripe target for mockery. *The Delirium of the Composers* is no masterpiece (compared to the Haydn and C.P.E. Bach examples above it is far too repetitive), but as a comment on its times it is fascinating. It shows that, for some musicians and connoisseurs, *Sturm und Drang* and the *empfindsame Stil* were already drifting towards absurdity. At the same time, parody is a sure indication that something has 'arrived', culturally speaking. Moreover it is sometimes difficult to tell when parody shades over into tribute. Although Dittersdorf makes sure that the ending of this 'Descriptive Sinfonia' is jolly and down-to-earth – all good clean fun, it seems to say – the nervous athleticism of the finale's opening theme (cellos and basses neatly imitating the violins' leading motif) is actually quite impressive. Haydn might have made much of it, and there are some appealing sensitive touches later on, like the violins' sighing descents at 2'37" and 3'56" (CD 1, track 5).



Carl Ditters von Dittersdorf (1739–1799)

IV. New Means to New Ends

Whether it was *Sturm und Drang*, *Empfindsamkeit* or just plain entertainment, the new dramatic style of the Classical era was also highly conducive to instrumental display. Composers continued to produce outstanding music in the concerto form (an innovation of the Baroque period) and in music for solo instruments, especially for the new instrument of the age, the piano – or as the period-instrument movement has taught us to call it, the fortepiano. The name itself reflects a fundamental aspect of its novelty. Unlike the favoured Baroque keyboard instruments, the organ and the harpsichord, the fortepiano was capable of rapid changes in volume – hence ‘forte–piano’: ‘loud–soft’. The player could now use subtle or extreme gradations of dynamic for expressive effect, like the violin or the human voice. C.P.E. Bach’s beloved clavichord had also been able to do this to a limited degree, but the sound produced was generally so small that from a distance of more than a few feet it was virtually inaudible.

The fortepiano now made public performance of dramatic, emotionally complex keyboard music a real possibility. It also greatly enriched private music-making, in particular providing a new opportunity for women. The idea of them as concert soloists was widely regarded as improper in what was still a very patriarchal society; but a woman performing on the keyboard in the home, even before an audience, was more acceptable. In time the ability to play the piano came to be seen as a near-indispensable accomplishment for middle-class young ladies. Some achieved levels of competence comparable to that of the best male musicians of their age – many of the finest piano sonatas of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven were written for women. Haydn’s magnificent Variations in F minor were composed in 1793 for Barbara von Ployer, daughter of a Viennese court official and a star pupil of Mozart. Judging from the instrumental writing, Ployer must have been not only very accomplished but also a highly artistic pianist – the work calls for sophisticated musical understanding as well as technical flair.

Leopold Mozart offers sage advice on the importance of musical taste:

The good delivery of a composition in the present taste is not as simple as those people believe who think they are doing very well if, following their own ideas, they ornament and contort a piece in a truly idiotic fashion and who have no conception whatever of the passion that is supposed to be expressed in it. But who are these people? In the main they are those who, since they can scarcely play in time, even tolerably, begin at once with concertos and solos in order (as they stupidly imagine) to establish themselves as quickly as possible in the company of the virtuosi. Some actually reach such a point that, in a few concertos or solos that they have practiced thoroughly, they play off the most difficult passages with uncommon facility. These they know by heart. But if they are to perform even a few minuets in the *cantabile* style directed by the composer, they are in no position to do so – indeed one sees this already in the concertos they have studied. For as long as they play an *Allegro*, things still go well, but as soon as they come to an *Adagio*, they betray their gross ignorance and their poor judgement in every single measure of the piece. They play without order and without expression; they fail to distinguish the loud and the soft; the embellishments are applied in the wrong places, too thickly crowded and for the most part confused; sometimes, just the other way, the notes are too expressionless and one sees that the player does not know what to do. In such players one can seldom hope any longer for improvement, for of all people they are the most prepossessed in their own favour, and he would incur their highest displeasure who sought, out of the goodness of his heart, to persuade them of their mistakes.

Haydn subtitled the Variations ‘Un piccolo Divertimento’ – ‘a little diversion’ – but as a description that seems decidedly ironic. This is an ambitious work, developing two related themes, one in the minor, the other in the major (2’26”), and showing off the late eighteenth-century piano at its most brilliant and poetic. The roulades and arabesques of the second major-key variation (10’03”) give the pianist plenty of opportunity for scintillating virtuoso display. But it is the extended, searching finale that really tests the player’s artistry. It begins with a return of the minor-key first theme (11’25”), but instead of rounding off neatly, as before, the theme breaks up (12’20”), with long, pregnant silences. After some weirdly searching chromatic harmonies (12’29”) there is an explosive climax, based on fragments of the theme and culminating in high-wheeling right-hand displays (13’01”) before Haydn quietly pieces the elements of the theme back into some kind of order. After the regular, balanced variation structure that precedes it, this finale toys with the possibility of disorder, fragmentation, even the ‘chaos’ Haydn was to represent so imaginatively at the beginning of his oratorio *The Creation* (1796–98). In other words, Classical ‘harmony and concord’ are embraced, mastered and then stretched to breaking point. The Romantic revolution of Beethoven’s so-called middle period now seems only a step or two around the corner (**CD 1, track 6**).

Mozart embraced the new fortepiano as eagerly as Haydn, but whereas the older composer’s most original and profound writing for the instrument is found in his solo and chamber works, Mozart also achieved great things in the form of the piano concerto – perhaps more so here than in his solo piano works. The piano’s new expressive powers also led Mozart towards Romanticism, as we can hear in the first movement of his deeply dramatic Piano Concerto in C minor, K491. Beethoven was deeply impressed by this Concerto. Of one passage towards the end of the finale he is said to have remarked ruefully, ‘We shall never have an idea like that!’ And Beethoven paid direct tribute to this work in the first movement of his own C minor Piano Concerto (No. 3), deliberately imitating Mozart’s stark opening theme and the quietly rippling piano figures that end the movement (12’27”). It’s also easy to imagine Beethoven admiring the piano’s acutely expressive wide melodic leaps (2’43” etc.), and the way the piano’s poetic, lyrical voice is often thrown into extreme contrast with the

orchestra's elemental power. And yet the listener may feel, listening to this movement, that this is not yet fully fledged Romantic music, for all its dramatic intensity and pathos. A remark made by the American composer Aaron Copland about the slow movement of Gabriel Fauré's Second Piano Quartet seems just as apt here: 'its beauty is truly classic if we define Classicism as intensity on a background of calm' (**CD 1, track 7**).

The piano isn't the only instrument new to the eighteenth century that can be heard in Mozart's C minor Piano Concerto. The clarinet (which has its origins in an instrument called the chalumeau) was developed in Germany at the beginning of the eighteenth century, but only began to creep into orchestras in Mozart's time. Mozart loved its range of colour (from sensual warmth to piercing brightness) and phenomenal agility, and he produced several great solo works for it, as well as including it in his later orchestral works as often as possible. In the first movement of the C minor Piano Concerto we hear it chuckling in its lower register (3'22") as well as taking its place as a singer in the woodwind choir (4'23" – and many similar passages). But it was in solo and chamber music that the clarinet really showed what it could do. In fast music it could rival the piano in virtuosity and power, while in melodic music it only just fell short of the human voice in expressive range, as is shown by this slow movement from the First Clarinet Concerto by Carl Stamitz (1745–1801). This concerto was a huge success in its day (it first appeared in print in 1786 but may have been composed in the late 1770s), and it seems to have made a deep impression on Mozart: the eloquent, melancholic slow movement gives some idea why (**CD 1, track 8**).

V. The Emergence of the Orchestra



Johann Stamitz (1717–1757)

Carl Stamitz was a second-generation composer, the son of Johann Stamitz (1717–1757), who was leader and director of the Mannheim Court Orchestra. This pioneering band of musicians has been called ‘the Berlin Philharmonic of its day’, while Charles Burney dubbed it ‘an army of generals’. But it wasn’t just the quality of the musicianship that put Mannheim at the vanguard of orchestral playing in the mid- to late-eighteenth century. The size and instrumental constitution of the orchestra were also innovative. Beside the large, well-drilled string section, there were horns, trumpets, timpani and all the principal woodwind instruments of the time, including the new clarinet. After hearing the orchestra in 1778, the twenty-two-year-old Mozart wrote ecstatically to his father: ‘You cannot imagine the glorious effect of a symphony with flutes, oboes and clarinets’. The experience only increased his frustration at the limited resources and scope allowed him in his native city of Salzburg.

But the Mannheim Court Orchestra also boasted something else: in effect its own ‘house style’. Composers, following the lead of Johann Stamitz, began to exploit the new possibilities of this stunningly accomplished, colour-enriched band. In this they were encouraged by the orchestra’s master, the Elector of Mannheim, Carl Theodor – an aristocrat, certainly, and in that respect a representative of the old feudal order, but also a man of enlightened, forward-looking beliefs and tastes. Even Carl Theodor’s gardens at his palace in nearby Schwetzingen show how keen he was to feature challenging new ideas, in particular the element of dramatic surprise. The Schwetzingen Grotto, for instance, incorporates a striking visual illusion: the eye is momentarily tricked into believing that it is viewing a landscape from a great distance, when in reality it is only a few feet away. One can understand how much Carl Theodor would have appreciated the innovations that became hallmarks of the Mannheim symphonic style: the thrilling, upward-surgings ‘Mannheim skyrocket’ (see CD 2, tracks 19 and 20), the languishing ‘Mannheim sigh’, and most of all the ‘Mannheim crescendo’. In all of these Johann Stamitz was the trailblazer, and it is indicative of how much his efforts were valued that in the court record of his death (aged just thirty-nine) he is described as ‘director of court music, so expert in his art that his equal will hardly be found’. Time has taken the edge off some of Stamitz’s novel effects, but in the first movement of his Symphony in D major, Op. 3 No. 2, we can still appreciate the vitality and assurance of his art. The

symphony begins with six punchy chords followed by a sustained crescendo (a gradual soft-to-loud build up, 0'07"–0'18") for the full orchestra. For modern listeners, used to the elemental climaxes of Bruckner and Mahler, this will probably seem very mild; but to audiences brought up on the evenly regulated dynamics of Baroque orchestral music it was an astounding novelty. It is said that at some performances, crescendos like this actually made people rise up spontaneously from their seats! **(CD 1, track 9)**



Johann Georg Albrechtsberger
(1736–1809)

While effects like this were easy for the eighteenth-century orchestra or the fortepiano, they were beyond the reach of long-established keyboard instruments like the harpsichord and the organ. Not surprisingly, forward-looking composers began to lose interest in those Baroque favourites. Attempts to adapt their mechanisms to accommodate the new style were failures. The decline in the number of compositions for organ, and still more for harpsichord, is a striking trend of the late eighteenth century. A masterpiece such as Mozart's organ Fantasia in F minor, K608 (1791, originally for mechanical organ) was a rare exception. The Prelude and Fugue in C major for organ duet (i.e. four hands at one set of keyboards) by Johann Georg Albrechtsberger (1736–1809), is hardly on the same level as Mozart's Fantasia, but it does illustrate the problem rather entertainingly. Albrechtsberger was organist and Kapellmeister at St Stephen's Cathedral, Vienna (a post he took up on Mozart's recommendation in 1793), and contemporary accounts make it clear that he was an exceptionally gifted player. So one would have thought that he would know well enough what the organ could and couldn't do. But hearing the instrument that inspired some of J.S. Bach's loftiest thoughts reduced to piping out little rococo roulades and pirouettes has an element of pathos – how are the mighty fallen! **(CD 1, track 10)**

The organ was not the only venerable instrument that found itself being asked to perform strange new feats in the late eighteenth century. Nowadays there is a tendency to think of the trombone as the orchestra's resident comedian; but in the Baroque era it was an instrument of some dignity, used in church music (where it often supported the choral voices) and – by association – to illustrate weighty supernatural events in opera: hence their use to accompany the voice of the oracle in Mozart's *Idomeneo*, or the appearances of the spectrally animated statue in *Don Giovanni*. Trombones did not make their appearance in orchestral concert music until Beethoven's Fifth Symphony (1808), where their connotations of religious pomp and power lend weight to the triumph of the finale's 'revolutionary' first theme. But in the finale of the Concerto in G major by Mozart's father, Leopold Mozart (1719–1787), the trombone becomes a surprisingly agile soloist **(CD 1, track 11)**.



Leopold Mozart (1719–1787)

VI. Old and New: Conflict or Co-existence?



Luigi Boccherini (1743–1805)

Some of the more dignified elements of the Baroque style do survive, in the old form of the concerto more than in the new medium of the symphony. The Italian cellist and composer Luigi Boccherini (1743–1805), for example, could be said to have incorporated expressive elements from the *empfindsame Stil* into a basically conservative attitude to musical form, as can be seen in his twelve surviving cello concertos. Even when he employs dramatic contrast, order and elegance tend to prevail. Alongside these goes an expressive style that in the old patriarchal world used to be called ‘feminine charm’. Instructions like *soave* (‘softly’, ‘gently’), *con grazia* (‘gracefully’) or *dolcissimo* (‘very sweetly’) fill his scores, characteristics which led to charges of ‘effeminacy’, and to his being nicknamed ‘Haydn’s wife’. However, listening to the exquisite but also deeply serious slow movement of his Cello Concerto No. 3 in G major (c1770), it is hard to resist the impression that Boccherini comes closer than many of his so-called ‘Classical’ contemporaries to Alberti’s ideal of ‘the harmony and concord of all the parts achieved by following well-founded rules’ – in other words, Boccherini was a Classicist at heart, by nature set apart from the turbulent fashion of his time (**CD 1, track 12**).

The great flautist, composer and musical commentator, J.J. Quantz, whose life straddled the Baroque and Classical eras, offers a contemporary perspective on the striking differences between music of different countries:

The Italians were formerly accustomed to call the German taste in music *un gusto barbaro* – ‘a barbarous taste’. But now that it has come to pass that several German composers have been in Italy, where they have had opportunities to perform works of theirs with success, both operas and instrumental music, and since at the present time the operas which the Italians find most tasteful, and rightly so, are actually the productions of a German pen [that of Johann Adolf Hasse], the prejudice has gradually been removed. It must be said, however, that the Germans are indebted – deeply to the Italians and somewhat to the French – for this favourable change in their taste. Everyone knows that, for more than a century, Italian and French composers, singers, and instrumentalists have been in service and have performed operas at various German courts – at Vienna, Dresden, Berlin, Hanover, Munich, Ansbach, and many others. Everyone knows that great lords have sent many of their musicians to Italy and France and that, as I have said before, many of the improvers of German taste have visited one or both of these countries. These have adopted the taste of the one or the other and have hit upon a mixture which has enabled them to write and to perform with success, not only German, but also Italian, French, and English operas and other *Singspiele*, each in its own language and taste. We cannot say as much of the Italian composers or of the French. It is not that they lacked the necessary talent, but rather that they gave themselves little pains to learn foreign languages and that they could not persuade themselves that, apart from them and without their language, respectable accomplishment in vocal music was still a possibility.

However we must be clear about one thing: ‘fashion’ here means the forward-looking movements of the late eighteenth century. Not all musical patrons were as progressive in their thinking as Mannheim’s Carl Theodor – as the young Mozart knew only too well. Count Heironymus von Colloredo, Archbishop of Salzburg and Mozart’s employer until one fateful day in 1881, was a man of decidedly old-fashioned tastes and attitudes. For the Archbishop a composer was a servant, with a job to perform, and he had little patience with the young Mozart’s social aspirations, or for his musical tours with his father – ‘travelling around like beggars’ was the Archbishop’s verdict. When Mozart expressed the wish to be allowed to work in Vienna, Colloredo’s response was contemptuous. Matters came to a head in June 1781, when Mozart attempted to present his petition for release from the Archbishop’s service to his official, Count Arco. The events of that day were vividly recorded by Mozart in a letter to his father:

Instead of taking my petition or procuring me an audience or advising me to send in the document later or persuading me to let the matter lie and to consider things more carefully – *enfin*, whatever he wanted – Count Arco hurls me out of the room and gives me a kick on my behind. Well, that means in our language that Salzburg is no longer the place for me, except to give me a favourable opportunity of returning the Count’s kick, even if it should have to be in the public street.

The *Serenata notturna*, K239, was written in 1776, when Mozart was still in the Archbishop’s service, and it gives some idea of the kind of ‘functional’ music he was expected to provide. Though Mozart does allow himself some impish humour in the finale (possibly in reference to a topical theme), the Minuet is stately and well mannered, with a Baroque neatness in its formal layout – there’s no room here for ear-catching brilliance or surprises. On the whole Mozart seems to have regarded this sort of commission as hackwork; though if that is the case, he performs the task with distinction (**CD 2, track 1**).

But while the old feudal world continued to preen itself to the accompaniment of music like Mozart’s *Serenata notturna*, there must have been some figures at that Salzburg society gathering in 1776 who were aware that change was in the air. In that same year the British economist Adam Smith published *The Wealth of Nations*, a milestone in the rise of liberal

capitalism and the commercial middle classes. And Joseph II of Austria, titular ruler of that elusive entity, The Holy Roman Empire, was soon to begin the process of abolishing serfdom and secularising church property – for which the young Beethoven was to honour him in one of the most impressive of his early works, the *Cantata on the death of the Emperor Joseph II* (1790). Also in 1776, under pressure from the privileged classes, the King of France, Louis XVI, dismissed his Controller General of Finances, Anne Robert Jacques Turgot, who had been demanding economic reform. But far from calming the situation, Louis's reactionary measures caused a surge of resentment, culminating in the outbreak of revolution in 1789, his execution, and proclamation of the First Republic in 1793. Before long the Napoleonic Wars were spreading terror and confusion throughout the continent of Europe. Napoleon was finally defeated at Waterloo in 1815, but although the great European powers made a half-concerted attempt to re-impose pre-revolutionary order, the world had changed too much during those intervening years. The middle classes now held far greater shares of power and influence, and composers across the world had thrown off the shackles of liveried service in exchange for financial independence and the possibility of a new, enhanced social status as Romantic 'genius'. Mozart's departure from the service of Archbishop Colloredo may have been undignified, and his subsequent attempts to make a living as a freelance composer may have ended in tragic failure, but with hindsight both can be seen as important steps towards the elevation of the composer as artist-hero.

It would have been extraordinary if music had not registered the shock waves of all this epochal change. Indeed, examples are not hard to find. Take the opening 'Kyrie' movement from Haydn's Mass in D minor (1798), widely known by its nickname of *Nelson Mass*, though originally entitled *Missa in angustiis* – 'Mass in Time of Fear'. Haydn had already written a 'Mass in Time of War' (*Missa in tempore belli*) two years earlier; but compared to the 'Kyrie' of that earlier work, the opening movement of the *Nelson Mass* is extraordinarily dramatic, and clearly bears the imprint of its time. Haydn is said to have written the *Missa in angustiis* after hearing news of Nelson's victory over Napoleon in the sea battle at Aboukir, off the coast of Egypt, and ultimately the work's mood is one of celebration – it was performed in Nelson's honour when the Admiral and Lady Emma Hamilton passed through Austria in 1800.

According to legend, Haydn added the apocalyptic trumpet call in the 'Benedictus' in response to the courier's own trumpet fanfare when the news was announced at the palace of Haydn's employer, Prince Nikolaus Esterházy, who had succeeded Prince Paul in 1762. But in the 'Kyrie' the mood is far from triumphant. The stark repeated-note trumpet and drum tattoos, the chorus's anguished shouts of 'Kyrie eleison' ('Lord have mercy') and the rising desperation of the soprano solo towards the end would not have been out of place in the opera house. In church the effect must have been electrifying **(CD 2, track 2)**.

VII. Revolution in the Opera House



Johann Christian Bach (1735–1782)

As so often in history, the church lagged behind the secular cultural institutions in adapting to the spirit of the times. Big changes had been registered in the opera houses long before the first performance of Haydn's *Nelson* Mass. Composers still made use of the old Classical themes: myths or historical events from ancient Greece and Rome continued to form the basis of operatic plots – as for instance in Mozart's last opera, *La clemenza di Tito* ('The clemency of Titus') of 1791. But the highly formalised character of early eighteenth-century *opera seria* had begun to develop into something more dramatically fluid. The influence of the new symphonic style was one force for change, as were the innovations of comic opera – way ahead of tragedy in incorporating the new elements of surprise, formal freedom and even sensitive expressive style. It is striking that three of Mozart's four best-loved – and most would say greatest – operas, *Le nozze di Figaro* ('The Marriage of Figaro'), *Don Giovanni* and *Così fan tutte*, are comedies (despite the deep seriousness of some of their content): this was the form in which Mozart the dramatist clearly felt at his most free.

Mozart had also been impressed by the new formal suppleness brought to serious opera by the great German innovator Christoph Willibald von Gluck (1714–1787) and to a certain extent by C.P.E. Bach's younger brother Johann Christian Bach (1735–1782). In 1778, Mozart informed his father:

For practice, I have just set to music the aria 'Non so d'onde viene', which has been so beautifully composed by [J.C.] Bach. Just because I know Bach's setting so well and like it so much, and because it is always ringing in my ears, I wished to see whether in spite of all this I could not write an aria totally unlike his.

Mozart was particularly taken with J.C. Bach's opera *Lucio Silla*, written in 1772. Listening to the final part of the Overture one can appreciate how the freshness and vitality of Bach's writing would have appealed to the younger man. Clearly Mozart wasn't always so intent on sounding 'totally unlike' his older contemporary (**CD 2, track 3**).

A new spirit was blowing through the Classical groves and grottos that formed the settings of *opera seria*. And while J.C. Bach played his part in the freeing up of serious opera, the



Christoph Willibald von Gluck (1714–1787)

***‘There is no musical rule that I have not willingly
sacrificed to dramatic effect.’***

Preface to *Alceste* (1767)

decisive challenge came with the works of Gluck. While maintaining Classical plots and characters, Gluck was anything but Classical (in the early eighteenth-century sense) when it came to the music with which he fleshed them out. 'There is no musical rule that I have not willingly sacrificed to dramatic effect,' he said on one occasion. On being told about another composer's recent operatic success he retorted: 'Yes, but does it draw blood?' Gluck's apparent disregard for the well-founded rules of operatic composition is said to have drawn exasperated criticism from that towering master of Baroque *opera seria*, George Frideric Handel: 'My cook knows more about counterpoint than he does!' But Handel – who introduced several striking dramatic innovations into his operas and oratorios – was more admiring of Gluck's pioneering spirit than that remark suggests. And Gluck made no secret of his own sense of indebtedness to the older German Meister, as the Irish tenor Michael Kelly noted in his *Reminiscences* (published in 1826):

One morning, after I had been singing with him, he said, 'Follow me up stairs, Sir, and I will introduce you to one, whom, all my life, I have made my study, and endeavoured to imitate.' I followed him into his bed-room, and, opposite to the head of the bed, saw a full-length picture of Handel, in a rich frame. 'There, Sir,' said he, 'is the portrait of the inspired master of our art; when I open my eyes in the morning, I look upon him with reverential awe, and acknowledge him as such, and the highest praise is due to your country for having distinguished and cherished his gigantic genius.'

Listening to any of Handel's greatest operas, with their extended, highly expressive recitative and innovative rhythmic freedom, it's easy to understand why Gluck found Handel so inspiring. But what he built on those foundations is just as impressive. One of Gluck's greatest breakthroughs came with his opera *Orfeo ed Euridice* (1762), which re-tells the ancient Greek legend of the divinely inspired musician Orpheus and his descent into Hades to rescue the soul of his beloved Eurydice. *Orfeo ed Euridice* has the distinction of being the first opera never to have left the repertoire since its first performance. The arch-Romantics Berlioz and Wagner both revered and imitated it and listening to the opening chorus it's not difficult to understand why. The poised symmetry of Baroque opera is discarded in favour of a new

The composer A.E.M. Grétry, writing in his memoirs in 1797, recalls the thrill of Gluck's operatic genius:

Beyond doubt we owe much to the Chevalier Gluck for the masterpieces with which he has enriched our theatre. To his truly dramatic genius should have been confided the administration of a form of entertainment to which he had given a new birth by his immortal productions and of which he would have maintained the order and the vigour by his intelligence and by that transcendence which the superiority of talents confers. It is especially by encouraging men of letters, by having referred to himself the different poems that they compose, that it would be easy for a director like Gluck to employ each musician in his own genre. It often happens that a young composer or performer loses several years, perhaps his whole life, seeking what is suitable for him, whereas he could have been settled in a moment.

economy and directness of expression. In this first scene Orpheus and the chorus are gathered at Eurydice's tomb. The orchestral introduction immediately sets the lamenting tone, which the chorus intensifies with sharply expressive dissonances. But most devastating of all are Orpheus's desperate interjections (originally high countertenor but sung on this recording by a female soprano). Orpheus simply cries out the name 'Euridice' – this is no longer a formalised 'attitude' of grief: it is naked emotion (**CD 2, track 4**).

Gluck's innovations also affected the very structure of the aria. In *opera seria*, arias were normally laid out on a static, neatly balanced A – B – A pattern. Section A usually deals with one aspect of the character's situation; section B then views it from another angle before a straight recapitulation of A, though with scope for the singer to decorate and expressively enhance the melodic line. But the arias of *Orfeo* abandon such elegant formal decorum. Abrupt tempo changes, sudden interjections of animated recitative and strikingly varied recapitulations give a sense of emotional flux – a more lifelike portrayal of a human being in the throes of passion. We also find a new simplicity, with a minimum of superfluous ornament. According to Charles Burney, this is at least partly a result of what Gluck heard during his visit to London during the years 1745–46:

He then studied the English taste; remarked particularly what the audience seemed most to feel; and finding that plainness and simplicity had the greatest effect upon them, he has, ever since that time, endeavoured to write for the voice, more in the natural tones of the human affections and passions, than to flatter the lovers of deep science or difficult execution; and it may be remarked, that most of his airs in *Orfeo* are as plain and simple as English ballads.

But what mattered above all else in opera, Gluck wrote to the editor of the French journal *Mercure de France* in 1773, was the composer's engagement with the words. In this, said Gluck, he had been particularly fortunate in his choice of librettist, Ranieri de' Calzabigi:

This author, full of genius and talent, has in his poems of *Orfeo*, of *Alceste* and of *Paride* followed a path little known to the Italians. These works are filled with those happy situations, those terrible and pathetic strokes, which furnish to the composer the means of expressing the great passions and of creating a music energetic and touching. Whatever the talent of the composer, he will never compose any but mediocre music if the poet does not arouse in him that enthusiasm without which the productions of all the arts are feeble and languid; the imitation of nature is by general agreement their common object. It is this which I seek to attain. Always simple and natural, so far as is within my power, my music is directed only to the greatest expression and to the reinforcement of the declamation of poetry.

'Always simple and natural...', 'the greatest expression and the reinforcement of the declamation'. Nowhere are these qualities more evident than in Orpheus's famous aria 'Che farò senza Euridice?' ('What shall I do without Euridice?') that forms the climax of Act Three. It begins with one of Gluck's most beguiling melodies, but at 0'44" the vocal line breaks down into simple declamations of the name 'Euridice'; later the melody is interrupted by broken, impassioned recitative (1'57"), leading to lamenting falling phrases at 'Ah non m'avanza' ('Ah there is no one to help me'). The first melody returns, but this time Orpheus's outpourings of grief culminate in wide-leaping phrases at the repetition of 'Dove andro' ('Where shall I go?' 2'52"). The words set the scene which is then intensified by the music (**CD 2, track 5**).

VIII. Mass Movements and Secret Societies

Gluck's remarks on nature, simplicity and the direct expression of emotion represent the artistic end of the spectrum of ideas associated with the writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau (mentioned above). But Rousseau wasn't only interested in freeing the soul in a spiritual or psychological sense. There was an important political dimension too, as Rousseau spelt out in his book *The Social Contract* (1762). The book's first sentence – 'Man is born free, yet everywhere he is in chains' – has become a sacred saying for political revolutionaries from Rousseau's time to the present day. The old order viewed *The Social Contract* with undisguised horror. Rousseau's writings were banned and warrants for his arrest were published in Geneva and Paris. Though Rousseau did not live to see the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789, for many of the revolutionaries he was simply *the* modern philosopher. The proclamations of Louis de Saint-Just, collaborator with Robespierre in the French Republic's notorious Committee of Public Safety (1793–94), are saturated in Rousseau's language, with its central stress on nature:

Soon the enlightened nations will put on trial those who have hitherto ruled over them. The kings shall flee into the deserts, into the company of the wild beasts whom they resemble; and Nature shall resume her rights.

The Swiss philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau muses on man and force in a chapter entitled 'The Right of the Strongest' from his classic political treatise, *The Social Contract*:

The strongest man is never strong enough to be master all the time, unless he transforms force into right and obedience into duty. Hence 'the right of the strongest' – a 'right' that sounds like something intended ironically, but is actually laid down as a principle. But shall we never have this phrase explained? Force is a physical power; I do not see how its effects could produce morality. To yield to force is an act of necessity, not of will; it is at best an act of prudence. In what sense can it be a moral duty?

Let us grant, for a moment, that this so-called right exists. I suggest it can only produce a tissue of bewildering nonsense; for once might is made to be right, cause and effect are reversed, and every force which overcomes another force inherits the right which belonged to the vanquished. As soon as man can disobey with impunity, his disobedience becomes legitimate; and as the strongest is always right, the only problem is how to become the strongest. But what can be the validity of a right which perishes with the force on which it rests? If force compels obedience, there is no need to invoke a duty to obey, and if force ceases to compel obedience, there is no longer any obligation. Thus the word 'right' adds nothing to what is said by 'force'; it is meaningless.

'Obey those in power.' If this means 'yield to force' the precept is sound, but superfluous; it will never, I suggest, be violated. All power comes from God, I agree; but so does every disease, and no one forbids us to summon a physician. If I am held up by a robber at the edge of a wood, force compels me to hand over my purse. But if I could somehow contrive to keep the purse from him, would I still be obliged in conscience to surrender it? After all, the pistol in the robber's hand is undoubtedly a *power*.

Surely it must be admitted, then, that might does not make right, and that the duty of obedience is owed only to legitimate powers. Thus we are constantly led back to my original question.

Meanwhile in Mozart's Austria, another movement was gaining pace among the intellectual elite: Freemasonry. Suppressed in some countries, and condemned by a Papal Bull in 1738, Freemasonry thrived in Catholic Austria, thanks to the patronage of the Duke Franz Stephan – later Emperor Franz I. Lists of members of Austrian Masonic Lodges contain an impressive array of prominent citizens, ranging from the aristocracy, the military and civil servants, to bankers, merchants, writers and musicians. Mozart joined the Freemasons in December 1784. Desire for professional advancement may have been partly responsible for this move, and Mozart certainly looked to fellow members of his Lodge for help in times of financial stress. Twenty letters from Mozart to a rich fellow-mason and music lover, Michael Puchberg, survive. They make distressing reading, revealing how often Mozart had to swallow his pride and beg for help. These extracts from letters to Puchberg, all dated 1788, are all too typical:

Dearest Brother,

Your true friendship and brotherly love emboldens me to ask you for a great favour: I still owe you 8 ducats – and not only am I unable at the moment to repay them, but my confidence in you is so great that I venture to beg you to help me, only until next week (when my concerts at the Casino begin), with the loan of 100 fl.; the subscription money cannot fail to be in my hands by that time, and I can quite easily repay you 136 fl., with my warmest thanks...

Now I look forward eagerly to your reply – and truly, to a *favourable reply*; and I do not know, but I take you for a *man* who, *like myself*, when he can do so, will surely assist his friend, if he is a *true friend*, his brother if *indeed his brother*. Should you perhaps be unable to spare such a sum at once, I entreat you to lend me until tomorrow *at least a couple of hundred guilders*, for my landlord in the Landstrasse was so insistent that I was obliged to pay him on the spot (to avoid unpleasantness), which has greatly upset my finances...

Amid my toils and anxieties I have brought my affairs to such a pass that I must needs raise a little money on these 2 pawnbroker's tickets. I implore you by our friendship to do me this favour, but it must be done instantly. Forgive my importunity, but you know my circumstance. Ah, had you but done as I asked you! If you do it even now, all will go as I wish...

Letters like these have been put forward as evidence that Mozart's devotion to his Masonic Lodge was really a disguise for cynical, opportunistic motives. But surely it is easy to forgive him trying for to exploit the ideal of brotherhood when his now completely freelance career as composer and pianist looked so precarious. And Puchberg's own faith in Mozart seems to have survived the stream of begging letters. It was to Puchberg that Haydn wrote from London when he heard the news of Mozart's death in 1791:

For some time I was beside myself about his death and could not believe that Providence would soon claim the life of such an indispensable man. I only regret that before his death he could not convince the English, who are benighted in this respect, of his greatness – a subject about which I have been preaching to them every single day.

All the evidence is that Puchberg agreed wholeheartedly with Haydn about the 'indispensability' of his brother-mason. Would he have thought so if he had suspected Mozart of insincerity? No, there are plenty of indications that Mozart took the teachings of the Masonic Lodge very seriously. A letter to his father, dated 4 April 1787, shows Mozart immersing himself in the Masonic philosophy of death:

As death (considered precisely) is the real purpose of our life, for several years I have become so closely acquainted with this true and best friend of our life, that his image is not only no longer terrifying to me, but rather something very soothing and comforting! And I thank my God for affording me, in His grace, the opportunity (you understand me) of realising that he is the key to our real happiness. I never lie down in bed without thinking that (young as I am) I may not live to see the next day – and yet no one, especially among those who know me, can say that in daily life I am stubborn or sad – and for this happiness I give thanks to my Creator every day and wish every man the same from the bottom of my heart.

But it was not the Freemasons' teaching of death as 'true and best friend' that alarmed conservative authorities; it was their views on brotherhood and social justice. Among the members of Mozart's Viennese Lodge was the writer Johann Caspar Riesbeck, who in 1787

published his *Travel through Germany, in a series of letters*. Nominally a travel book, it was full of inflammatory observations, such as:

The clearest proof that a country is unhappy is the confrontation between the greatest magnificence and the most wretched poverty, and the greater the confrontation, the unhappier the country.

For all its mystical veneer and arcane symbolism, Masonic thinking was more rationalist than Rousseau's naturalism; but its abhorrence of class distinction, anti-clericalism and concern for universal justice made it highly attractive to educated men with revolutionary leanings. And Mozart seems to have made himself very much at home in this intellectual *milieu*, so much so that he continued to be an active member of his Lodge even after the 'reforming' Emperor Joseph II imposed stringent restrictions in the order in 1789. One of his last completed compositions, *Eine kleine Freimaurer-Kantate* ('A little Freemasonic Cantata'), K623, was written especially for his Lodge. Just how deeply Mozart shared the Masons' antipathy to class distinction and injustice becomes clear when we look at his operas *Le nozze di Figaro* and *Don Giovanni*.

But the opera in which Mozart's commitment to Freemasonry is most obvious is *Die Zauberflöte* ('The Magic Flute', 1791). In comparison to *Figaro*, *Don Giovanni* and *Così fan tutte*, this is popular opera, with a text in the vernacular (German) rather than Italian (the preferred language of Court opera), spoken dialogue in place of the more artificial recitative, and clearly intended to be accompanied by plenty of spectacular theatrical effects. And yet it is clear that Mozart felt this lower-class event to be a fitting medium through which to communicate sacred Masonic truths. The very fabric of the music is full of Masonic symbolism, most strikingly the three imposing chords for full orchestra that begin the Overture (the number three has particular significance in Masonic ritual); then there are the mysterious three ladies in attendance on the Queen of the Night, and the three boys who encourage the hero Prince Tamino to undergo various ordeals for admission to the brotherhood. The basis of the plot is a clear contest between good (Sarastro) and evil (the Queen of the Night), with good presented as male and rational, and evil as female and dominated by passion. But there

are more personal connections between *Die Zauberflöte* and Mozart's Freemasonry. Mozart and his librettist Emanuel Schikaneder (a fellow-mason) partly modelled Sarastro on Ignaz von Born, the Master of their Lodge – an outstanding scientist and the author of an essay, *Mysteries of the Freemasons* (1784), which provided some of the wording for Sarastro's utterances. In the dignified, gravely eloquent aria 'In diesen heil'gen Hallen' we could be hearing a portrait of Born elucidating the precepts of Masonry: 'In these holy halls there is no place for revenge, and a man must allow love to lead him to duty' (CD 2, track 6).

In spite of Mozart's and Schikaneder's best efforts, however, the aria most people remember above all from *Die Zauberflöte* is not one of Sarastro's pious, eminently rational homilies, but the Queen of the Night's virtuoso 'Der Hölle Rache' ('Hell's revenge boils in my heart') with its scintillating high Fs and dark, surging orchestral accompaniment. Readers who are familiar with the works of William Blake may well be reminded of Blake's famous verdict on Milton, contained in his *Marriage of Heaven and Hell* – a work almost exactly contemporary with *Die Zauberflöte*: 'The reason Milton wrote in fetters when he wrote of Angels and God, and at liberty when of Devils and Hell, is because he was a true Poet, and of the Devil's party without knowing it.' (CD 2, track 7)

The audiences that thrilled to the first performances of *Die Zauberflöte* in 1791 may have seen it as a simple story of the triumph of good over evil, or perhaps they just relished the fine tunes, the comedy and the special effects. Mozart patently enjoyed entering into the comedic spirit, as he recorded in a letter to his wife dated 7–8 October 1791. As usual Schikaneder was playing the part of the bird-catcher Papageno. For one aria Schikaneder had to mime playing the glockenspiel, which he seems to have done very convincingly, until Mozart caught him out:

I went onto the stage in Papageno's aria with the *Glöckchenspiel*, [sic] because today I felt an impulse to play it myself. I played a joke on Schikaneder: where he has a pause, I played an arpeggio – he started – looked off-stage and saw me. When the second pause came, I did nothing – so he waited and would not go on. I guessed what he was thinking and played another chord – whereat he hit the *Glöckchenspiel* and said "hold your tongue" – at which everybody laughed – I think this joke made many people notice for the first time that he does not play the instrument himself.

But, amid all the fun and theatrical excitement, there must have been some who heard echoes of sensational recent events in *Die Zauberflöte*, not least in Sarastro's final eulogy: 'The sun's rays expel night and destroy the insidious power of hypocrisy'. In 1789, just two years earlier, a massed uprising by the citizens of Paris had culminated in the storming of the state prison, the Bastille, on July 14 – a date still celebrated as a public holiday in modern France. Less than a month later, on August 6, the Revolution honoured its martyred dead with a performance of the *Grande Messe des Morts* ('Grand Mass for the Dead') by François-Joseph Gossec (1734–1829), a French composer of Walloon (French-Netherlands) birth, who had made no secret of his revolutionary sympathies. In 1769 Gossec had founded the Concert des Amateurs, which soon acquired a reputation as one of the world's finest orchestras. The use of the word 'Amateur' is significant. It is here used in its original sense of 'lover', with suggestions of 'connoisseur'. The Amateur was a new phenomenon – a sign of the way in which society was changing. Though generally educated and affluent, Amateurs were as likely to come from the emergent middle classes as from the old nobility. Amateur events were supported not by noble or royal patronage but by public subscription. Something much closer to the modern bourgeois concert hall had been born.

Gossec had written his *Grande Messe des Morts* in 1760, but the work really came into its own with the dawning of the Revolution. Stylistically, the music is fascinatingly poised between the old and the new. This is well illustrated by the first two sections of the *Dies irae* ('Day of wrath'), that part of the old Latin Requiem rite that deals with the Day of Judgement. It begins with jagged string rhythms, strongly Baroque in flavour. The chorus then vividly depicts the terror of Divine wrath. At the words 'Quantus tremor est futurus' ('What trembling there will be: 1'46"), chorus and strings create a 'trembling' effect with quick repeated notes on each syllable. Then massed brass instruments (track 9), placed apart from the main chorus and orchestra, depict the sounding of the Last Trumpet in the 'Tuba mirum', impressively punctuating the awe-struck bass solo. Berlioz is said to have got the idea for the use of massed offstage brass bands in his own *Grande Messe des Morts* (1837) from this passage. And it must have sounded thrillingly apt to the victorious Parisian revolutionaries at that 1789 performance – Judgement Day for the old order (**CD 2, tracks 8–9**).



François-Joseph Gossec (1734–1829)

IX. Surprises and Subversion

Not all the forward-looking composers of the late eighteenth century were as ready to identify with the French Revolution as François-Joseph Gossec. But there were other ways in which music could pose a challenge to old ways of thinking – not unlike the way conceptual artists of modern times have attempted to challenge pre-conceived ideas and perceptions. It was precisely this exciting, challenging quality in Haydn's music that made him such a sensation on his first visit to London in 1791–92. After years in servitude, even to such an appreciative master as Prince Nikolaus Esterházy, Haydn found his new celebrity status more than a little overwhelming, as this letter dated 8 January 1791 makes clear:

My arrival made a great stir all over the town. For 3 days I was bandied about in all the papers. Everyone is curious to meet me. I have already been obliged to eat out 6 times, and might be invited every day if I would, but I must consider first my health and my work. Except for the mylords I receive no visitors until 2 o'clock in the afternoon, at 4 o'clock I eat at home with Mon. Salomon. I have a small, convenient but costly lodging. My landlord is an Italian, and a cook as well, he serves me 4 very good meals, we pay 1 fl. 30 kr. each per day, without wine and beer, but everything is terribly dear. Yesterday I went to a big amateur concert, but I arrived rather too late, and when I handed over my ticket they would not let me in, but led me into a neighbouring room, where I had to remain until the piece then being performed in the hall was over. They then opened the doors and I was led, on the arm of the Manager, amid general hand-clapping down the middle of the hall to the front of the pit, where I was gaped at and admired with a host of English compliments.

An enthusiastic account in *The Morning Chronicle* on 9 April 1794 of a concert given under the aegis of the influential impresario Johann Peter Salomon:

Though under the necessity of repeating the same names (for where are their equals?) and the same praises, which never sufficiently express the delicious sensations that these Performers at some moments excite, yet to be silent would be flagrant injustice... Another new Symphony, by Haydn, was performed for the second time; and the middle movement was again received with absolute shouts of applause. Encore! encore! encore! resounded from every seat: the Ladies themselves could not forbear. It is the advancing to battle; and the march of men, the sounding of the charge, the thundering of the onset, the clash of arms, the groans of the wounded, and what may well be called the hellish roar of war increase to a climax of horrid sublimity! which, if others can conceive, he alone can execute; at least he alone hitherto has effected these wonders.

People assured me that this honour had not been shown to anyone for 50 years. After the concert I was taken to another fine room next to the hall, where a large table enough to take 200 people stood ready for the whole company of amateurs, with a great number of places laid, and they desired me to sit at the head of it. Only, as I that very day had dined out and eaten more than usual, I refused this honour, with the excuse that I felt a little unwell, despite which, however, I had to drink in Burgundy wine to the harmonious health of all those present, who returned the toast, and then they allowed me to be driven home. All this was very flattering to me, yet I wished I might escape to Vienna for a little while, to work in greater quiet, for the noise in the streets, from all the various tradesfolk, is intolerable.

But with time Haydn began to enjoy London, his new-found fame, and something else – something that reflected a change, not only in his own status, but in that of the composer as a social rank. Perfect strangers, he reported with astonishment, walked up to him in the street, extolling his greatness. He expands on this in a letter to his close friend Anna Maria von Genzinger:

I have been residing in the country, amid lovely scenery, with a banker, whose heart and family resemble the Genzingers, and where I live as in a monastery. God be praised! I am in good health, with the exception of my usual rheumatic state. I work hard, and in the early mornings, when I walk in the wood alone with my English grammar, I think of my Creator, of my family, and of all the friends I have left – and of these you are the most valued of all... Oh, my dear good lady, how sweet is some degree of liberty! I had a good Prince, but was obliged at times to be dependent on base souls. I often sighed for release, and now I have it in some measure. I am quite sensible of this benefit, though my mind is burdened with more work. The consciousness of being no longer a bond-servant sweetens all my toils.

As well as being fêted virtually everywhere he went, Haydn received the kind of notices of which most composers can only dream. If there were any dissenting voices, their opinions have not survived. A good example of the general tone can be found in a review of a London concert given on 17 February 1792. The programme, which included the first performance of Haydn's Symphony No. 93 in D major, was directed by the brilliant violinist and impresario Johann Peter Salomon – the 'Mon. Salomon' mentioned in the above-quoted letter:

SALOMON'S CONCERT

The first Subscription Concert took place last Friday, at Hanover Square. The established musical judges present all agreed that it went off with surprising effect and rigid exactness. No Band in the World can go better. A new Overture [Symphony] from the pen of the incomparable *Haydn*, formed one considerable branch of this stupendous musical tree. Such a combination of excellence was contained in every movement, as inspired all the performers as well as the audience with enthusiastic ardour. Novelty of idea, agreeable caprice, and whim combined with all *Haydn's* sublime and wanton [sic] grandeur, gave additional consequence to the *soul* and feelings of every individual present.

Certain words and phrases in that review are particularly telling. Note the critic's initial stress on 'surprising effect'. Surprise is a key element in Haydn's symphonic style; it is no accident that Haydn's next symphony, No. 94 in G major, bears the nickname *Surprise*. But the critic praises the music's 'novelty' and 'agreeable caprice', too, and also – in a particularly memorable phrase – its 'sublime and wanton grandeur'. In later years Haydn may have gained a reputation as a prankster, one who delighted in making ladies jump out of their seats with sudden *fortissimo* chords. For that unnamed London critic, 'caprice and whim' are only one side of the coin, the other being the 'sublime'. The meaning of this word has changed significantly since Haydn's day. Nowadays it tends to mean anything from 'loftily spiritual' to simply 'impressive', or even 'soothing'. But in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries it was more often used to indicate something 'awe-inspiring', a 'terrifying grandeur' that shook the beholder to the core. On one level, the optical illusion in Elector Carl

Theodor's Grotto at Schwetzingen (referred to earlier) was an 'agreeable caprice'. But on another it was meant to shock: to make the spectators lose their bearings for a moment, to doubt the accuracy of their perceptions and perhaps to question their place in a supposedly rational, predictable universe. This vogue for sublime surprise, extending even to landscape gardening, was lampooned by the English satirical novelist Thomas Love Peacock in his *Headlong Hall* (1816). The first speaker is Sir Patrick O'Prism, champion of what he calls 'the picturesque':

'I distinguish the picturesque and the beautiful, and I add to them, in the laying out of grounds, a third and distinct character, which I call *unexpectedness*.'

'Pray sir,' said Mr Milestone, 'by what name do you distinguish this character, when a person walks round the grounds for the second time?'

It is true that repeated performances have robbed the most famous surprise in Haydn's Symphony No. 94 of some of its original shock value. The moment in question comes near the start of the slow movement (CD 2, track 10). A sudden *fortissimo*, reinforced by trumpets and drums (0'29"), in the middle of an innocuous quiet tune for strings, is unlikely to cause many tremors in audiences accustomed to twenty-first-century horror movies. But this is only an appetiser. With the sudden stark change to the minor key (1'56") the phrase 'sublime and wanton grandeur' becomes more plausible. Still more impressive is the first theme's massively scored major-key apotheosis (3'55"), all the more unexpected after the delicately scored version of the theme for flute, oboe and violins that precedes it. Beethoven almost certainly remembered this moment when he made the full orchestra break out in triumphant C major fanfares in the slow movement of his own Fifth Symphony (1804–08) – Beethoven's revolutionary 'sublime' and Haydn's 'agreeable caprice' are more closely related than we might initially suspect (**CD 2, track 10**).

Haydn's music also poses challenges through his highly developed, often subtly subversive musical wit. There are examples of this in the symphonies, but the medium in which we encounter it most often is in that form beloved of connoisseurs: the string quartet. This, at

least in the form we know it, is another invention of the so-called Classical era. The use of four solo strings – most conveniently two violins, viola and cello – as a vehicle for private, intimate performance of orchestral works was established before Haydn. In some of Haydn's earlier sets of quartets (also published as 'Divertimentos') it isn't clear whether Haydn had solo or multiple strings specifically in mind. But it was Haydn, above all, who realised the solo string quartet's potential for the communication of a more sophisticated kind of symphonic thought. It is a measure of the scale and consequence of Haydn's achievement that his pupil Beethoven eventually came to regard the quartet as a fitting medium for the most profound utterances of his last years. What Beethoven achieved may have gone beyond Haydn's imaginings, but it was Haydn who laid the foundations on which he built.

In the late eighteenth century, quartets were commonly published in sets of three or six – hence the somewhat confusing numbering: 'Op. 33 No. 2' actually means the second of six quartets Haydn completed as Op. 33 in the year 1781. The publication of the Op. 33 Quartets was a key event in the history of instrumental music. Haydn had already attracted much favourable attention through his impressive set of six Op. 20 Quartets; but in the letters that announced the appearance of Op. 33, Haydn declared that he had written these new quartets 'in a new and special way'. This was, of course, shrewd marketing; but it was also grounded in fact. Certainly we find Haydn taking risks and teasing audience expectations as never before in quartet music. A striking example comes in the finale of Op. 33 No. 2 in E flat, nicknamed *The Joke*. The movement starts out as a sprightly, dancing *Presto* and for a while it all seems plain sailing. Then at 2'55" comes a pause, and the four strings play a portentous *Adagio* ('Slow') theme. This seems to come to a full stop. Another pause – then the *Presto* resumes its dance (3'12"); but now the silences surrounding the *Adagio* theme seem to have infected the music, breaking up the dance tune into nervous, isolated little phrases. What next? Well, don't press the stop button until you are *sure* the track has ended (**CD 2, track 11**).

But enhanced power to joke isn't the only way in which Haydn's Op. 33 Quartets could be said to be 'new and special'. Op. 33 No. 1, for instance, also begins with a kind of joke – we don't know initially what key the music is in, and it is only after the cello storms in with an insistent repeated figure that we realise the quartet is in fact in B minor. If this is a joke, it is

J.F. Reichardt, writing in 1808, looks back on Haydn as the father of the string quartet:

10 December 1808

Today I must speak to you about a very fine quartet series that Herr Schuppanzigh, an excellent violinist in the service of Prince von Rasoumowsky, the former Russian envoy to the imperial court, has opened by subscription for the winter. The concerts will take place in a private house every Thursday from twelve to two. Last Thursday we heard the first one; there was as yet no great company in attendance, but what there was consisted entirely of ardent and attentive friends of music, precisely the proper public for this most elegant and most congenial of all musical combinations. Had Haydn given us only the quartet, inspiring other genial artists to follow his example, it would already have been enough to make him a great benefactor of the whole world of music. Difficult as it is to bring this sort of music to perfection in performance – for the whole and each of its single parts are heard in their entirety and satisfy only in the most perfect intonation, ensemble, and blending – it is the first variety to be provided wherever good friends of music meet to play together. And since it is charitably rooted in the human make-up that expectation and capacity as a rule keep more or less in step and go hand in hand, each one takes at least some degree of pleasure in the performance, once he has brought to it all that he can offer it individually or through his immediate background. On this account the exacting connoisseur and critic not infrequently finds such groups working away with great enthusiasm, perfectly at home, when he himself, spurred by his overtrained artistic nature, would like to run away.

humour for connoisseurs. And in any case, the edgy minor-key character of the music gives this music an altogether darker emotional character than anything in the Second Quartet in the set. But there is another new element in the quartet-writing at the start of Op. 33 No. 1, an element that becomes even more pronounced in the Scherzo third movement of the Sixth Quartet in D major (the use of the fast 'Scherzo' – literally 'Joke' – in place of the customary, more stately Minuet was another innovation of the Op. 33 Quartets). Here Haydn experiments with a new democratisation of the string quartet: the leader no longer dominates and the contributions of the second violin, viola and cello are of much greater significance. Right at the start, the two violins' quick five-note figure is imitated in the bass by the cello. Then at 0'15", second violin and viola take the lead, violin I and cello now imitating. From 0'22" the texture becomes more complex, with the five-note figure passed rapidly around the ensemble. At the beginning of the central Trio section the cello leads (0'50"), lightly accompanied in the treble. Then at 1'09" the viola imitates the leader, second violin joining on a held note a few seconds later. All four strings combine to end the Trio (1'22"), before the repeat of the Scherzo. The effect is rather like listening to a civilised discussion around a dinner table: the host initiates, but everyone has their own contribution to make **(CD 2, track 12)**.

In 1782, the year Haydn's Op. 33 was published, Mozart was just setting out on his perilous career as a freelance composer in Vienna. He was so impressed by what Haydn had achieved in these quartets that he immediately started working on a set of six quartets of his own. He didn't finish them until 1785 (there was the small matter of having to make a living for himself and his new wife), but when he had, he sent them to Haydn with an accompanying letter – surely one of the most touching dedications from one composer to another in the history of music:

Vienna, 1 September 1785

To my dear friend Haydn.

A father who had decided to send out his sons into the great world, thought it his duty to entrust them to the protection and guidance of a man who was very celebrated at the time and who, moreover, happened to be his best friend.

In like manner I send my six sons to you, most celebrated and very dear friend. They are, indeed, the fruit of a long and laborious study; but the hope which many friends have given me that this toil will be in some degree rewarded, encourages me and flatters me with the thought that these children may one day prove a source of consolation to me.

During your last stay in this capital you yourself, my very dear friend, expressed to me your approval of these compositions. Your good opinion encourages me to offer them to you and leads me to hope that you will not consider them wholly unworthy of your favour. Please then receive them kindly and be to them a father, guide and friend! From this moment I surrender to you all my rights over them. I entreat you, however, to be indulgent to those faults which may have escaped a father's partial eye, and, in spite of them, to continue your generous friendship towards one who so highly appreciates it. Meanwhile, I remain with all my heart, dearest friend, your most sincere friend.

W.A. Mozart

Haydn's reaction to Mozart's six quartets was equally generous, as a delighted Leopold wrote in a letter to Mozart's sister Maria Anna ('Nannerl') on 16 February 1785:

On Saturday Herr *Joseph Haydn* and the two Barons Tinti visited us, the new quartets were played, but only the 3 new ones [presumably Op. 33 Nos 4–6], which he has composed in addition to the other 3, which we already have – it is true they are a little easier, but most excellently composed. Herr Haydn said to me: 'I say to you before God, on my word of honour, *your son is the greatest composer whom I know personally or by name*; he has taste and the greatest skill in composition as well.'

The six quartets Mozart wrote as a reaction to Haydn's Op. 33 set have come to be known – somewhat confusingly – as the 'Haydn' Quartets. But the nickname is justified. Mozart clearly learned a great deal from the Op. 33 set, not least in terms of wit and the move towards greater equality in the quartet ensemble. We can hear both of those 'Haydnish' characteristics in the finale of Mozart's third 'Haydn' Quartet – K428 in E flat major. At the beginning we hear a cheeky tune – or, rather, little scraps of a tune punctuated by silences. At 0'27" the tune returns, with the scraps now passed rapidly between the four instruments. Throughout this lively movement one can hear the ideas moving around the texture like this, alongside several examples of gentle Haydnesque teasing of the listener's expectations. But near the end comes a particularly delicious touch. At 4'31" the thematic scraps are again passed around the ensemble, breaking up as the music slows down. Then the first theme returns at 4'46", but only a few seconds later it is shown to be not so much a theme as an accompaniment to a soaring violin melody (4'53"). There's a feeling in this moment that something has been completed. What could be more exquisitely natural than that this late lyrical flowering should herald the end of the movement? **(CD 2, track 13)**

X. Democracy moves Centre Stage

From the subversive wit and democratisation of texture in Haydn's Op. 33 and Mozart's 'Haydn' Quartets it is only a short step to the comic masterpiece *Le nozze di Figaro*, begun in October 1785 – the month after that dedicatory letter to Haydn – and completed the following year. Mozart's choice of subject was extremely daring. He and his librettist Lorenzo da Ponte adapted the play by French dramatist Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais *La folle journée, ou Le mariage de Figaro* – then only a year old and banned by the Viennese censors. It wasn't so much the play's licentiousness that caused this as its political content. Mozart and da Ponte had to remove several of Figaro's more subversive remarks before the Emperor could be persuaded to relax the ban, but there wasn't much they could do about the story. For a start the hero and heroine of the opera are a valet and a lady's maid, who thwart the erotic schemes of their employer, the Count, and who ultimately force him to beg forgiveness from the Countess. Figaro has been described as 'opera's first yuppie hero' – and upwardly mobile he certainly is. But the shock for an upper-class audience in eighteenth-century Vienna would have been in seeing the lower orders presented as people to be identified with, rather than as figures of ridicule, and in seeing them beat an aristocrat at his own games. Imagine how uncomfortable some of those rich and respectable persons in the 1786 Burgtheater audience must have felt as they listened to the Cavatina from Act One of *Figaro*. To a delicious accompaniment of horns and pizzicato strings – a kind of marionette's minuet – Figaro reveals his master plan. The implications were appalling: could their own servants be harbouring similar secret thoughts?

Se vuol ballare,
Signor Contino
Il chitarrino
Le suonerò.
Se vuol venire
Nella mia scuola,
La capriola
Le insegnerò.

If you feel like dancing,
My dear Count,
It is I
Who will call the tune.
If you'll come
To my school,
I'll teach you
How to caper.

And then, in a faster tempo (1'02"), we hear Figaro's delight as he contemplates his impending triumph (**CD 2, track 14**):

L'arte schermando,
L'arte adoprando,
Di qua pungendo,
Di là scherzando,
Tutte le macchinè
Rovescierò.

Acting by stealth,
Or openly,
Here stinging,
There mocking,
All your plots
I'll overturn.

On the face of it, Mozart's and da Ponte's next operatic collaboration, *Don Giovanni* (1787), was less politically explosive. Although it, too, tells of the punishment of a dissolute nobleman, Don Giovanni remains heroically defiant when confronted with his supernatural nemesis, even when faced with the prospect of Hellfire and choruses of salivating demons. But in the midst of the final scene of Act One comes a passage that Mozart must have realised would cause a *frisson* in late eighteenth-century courtly circles. The setting is Don Giovanni's house, lit up and decorated for a festive ball (track 15). Donna Anna, her betrothed, Don Ottavio and Donna Elvira (one of Don Giovanni's discarded conquests) enter in disguise, and bent on revenge. Don Giovanni then joins them in a toast to Liberty (track 16). This might have passed unnoticed, if Mozart hadn't underlined the phrase 'Viva la libertà' ('Long live Liberty') with rousing martial trumpets and drums and repeated it so impressively. The result would not be out of place in Beethoven's overtly political opera *Fidelio* (1805, revised 1806

and 1814). Even the dance music that follows (1'31") contains an element of social comment: Anna and Ottavio (minuet) are both nobles, Zerlina (contredanse, 2'35") is peasantry, though her dancing with Giovanni makes this middle class, while Leporello and Masetto (rustic dance, 3'05") are both of a lower order. But as the three bands end up playing all three dances at the same time, the 'social distinctions' are blurred. Zerlina's calls for help result in a general unmasking, then the avengers unite in the chorus 'Trema, trema, o scellerato!' ('Tremble, vile seducer!', track 18). That calls for justice against a wicked aristocrat should follow a hymn to Liberty and a musical representation of the breakdown of class distinction might not be clear a message as Figaro's 'Se vuol ballare', but once you know it's there the import is unmistakable.

Another feature of this Act One finale shows how far the fluid dramatic style of opera pioneered by Gluck had developed under Mozart. Though aria and freer recitative are brought together in numbers such as Gluck's 'Che farò senza Euridice', it is usually quite easy to tell the two styles apart: arias are melodic; recitative passages are broken and declamatory, often with simple chordal accompaniments from orchestra or keyboard. But in the Act One finale of *Don Giovanni*, aria, ensemble, chorus and recitative flow into each other so naturally that it's often hard to say exactly where one kind of writing begins and another ends. The Hymn to Liberty leads, via a brief but telling recitative passage (track 16, 1'25"), to the dance music (1'31", just as Don Giovanni escorts his guests onto the floor). Zerlina's cry for help (3'31") cuts through the mingled dance tunes, setting in motion a thrilling passage for all the assembled characters and the full orchestra, as everyone reacts to Zerlina's news of Don Giovanni's attempt to rape her. The music is turbulent, harmonically restless, always in a state of flux. It culminates in a silent pause, then Don Giovanni swaggers in (track 17), brazenly attempting to put the blame on Leporello. The sudden change of harmony and character at the beginning of track 17 brilliantly emphasise the dramatic incongruity of the Don's behaviour, as well as his staggering bravado. In the passage that follows you can hear how each cast member pitches in with his or her own comments on the Don's actions, before they all unite for the final chorus (track 18). To call these intense, dramatically supple passages 'recitatives' seems almost to belittle them. What Mozart creates here feels closer to the

continually developing music drama of Wagner (**CD 2, tracks 15–18**).

In music like this, one can hear Mozart fulfilling an ambition he had expressed in a letter to his father nine years before he composed *Don Giovanni*. On one of his visits to Carl Theodor's Court at Mannheim in 1778, Mozart heard an experiment in a new kind of musical melodrama:

I have always wanted to write a drama of this kind. I cannot remember whether I told you anything about this type of drama the first time I was here? On that occasion I saw a piece of this sort performed twice and was absolutely delighted. Indeed, nothing has ever surprised me so much, for I had always imagined that such a piece would be quite ineffective. You know, of course, that there is no singing in it, only recitation, to which the music is like a sort of obbligato accompaniment to a recitative. Now and then words are spoken while the music goes on, and this produces the finest effect... Do you know what I think? I think that most operatic recitatives should be treated in this way – and only sung occasionally, when the words *can be perfectly expressed by the music*.

No doubt the twenty-two-year-old Mozart was still reacting against the absurd formality of much *opera seria* recitative. But his desire for something more lifelike, more psychologically penetrating, is clear. Fortunately for us, by the time he came to write *Don Giovanni* he had found the means through which the entire declamatory content of an opera could 'be perfectly expressed by the music'. In doing so he prepared the way for opera to move forward into the Romantic era. Without Mozart, Beethoven's *Fidelio* and the music dramas of Wagner might well have been impossible.

Friedrich Wilhelm Marpurg (1718–95), a German composer and theorist, offers a timely reminder that inspiration is all well and good, but that in vocal music it is the words that matter most:

In pieces for singing let us seek first to study and determine exactly which affection resides in the words; how high the degree of affection; from what sort of feelings it is composed... Then let us be concerned to inspect closely the essence of this affection and what sort of motions the soul may be exposed to; how the body may even suffer from it; what sort of motions may be caused in the body... Only then, after having considered, tested, measured and settled all this exactly, thoroughly and carefully, then may we entrust ourselves to our genius, our power of imagination and invention.

XI. The First Romantics?

Even if Mozart's supposedly comic operas at times come close to the political rhetoric and volcanic emotional directness of *Fidelio*, there is still something – *pace* E.T.A. Hoffmann – which renders Mozart distinct from the full-blooded revolutionary Romanticism of Beethoven's middle period, and still more from Wagner. For one thing, the Romantic stress on artistic *originality* was still largely undeveloped in Mozart's day. It was in the early nineteenth century that critics began to place a premium on the distinctiveness of an artist's work – the element that was him and him alone. Without that, he could not truly be accounted a 'genius' (a term that seems to have been understood in a rather different sense by Mozart and his older contemporaries). Listening to the music on the accompanying CDs, it is striking how often the works of these different composers resemble each other in manner or detail. To a certain extent there even seems to be a common style, within which a composer may achieve original things without feeling the need to strive for a personal 'voice'. J.C. Bach's Overture to *Lucio Silla* not only contained elements that sound like Mozart, at times it could easily have been the work of the younger Mozart. For many of the nineteenth century's young generation of Romantics this absence of an immediately identifiable *personal* style was a fatal problem. For Robert Schumann, for example, even Haydn had lost the very power to surprise that had once made him so sensationally successful:

Today it is impossible to learn anything new from him. He is like a familiar friend of the house whom all greet with pleasure and with esteem but who has ceased to arouse any particular interest.

It is salutary to think that Schumann is here describing a composer who, only a generation earlier had sent London audiences into ecstasies, and had drawn praise from the press for his

‘astounding inexhaustible, and sublime’ genius.

It wasn’t only stylistic traits that were common property in the late eighteenth century: specific themes were used and re-used, often in very different contexts. One of these was the so-called ‘Mannheim Skyrocket’ mentioned earlier. This was a theme that shot upwards on the notes of the common chord, often with a little tail figure that fell backwards, like the sparks from an exploding firework. One of the most famous examples of this is at the opening of the finale in Mozart’s Symphony No. 40 in G minor. The idea has such a distinctive shape that Mozart’s later treatment of it is easy to follow, especially in the passage at the beginning of the central development section (2’03”), where the skyrocket seems to break up into jerky fragments, pulling the music into strange new harmonic territory. After this the skyrocket leads us through an extraordinary sequence of remote keys – like a flight over ever wilder territory – until the twist back to the home key of G minor, and (at 3’21”) the beginning of the recapitulation (**CD 2, track 19**).

We turn now to Beethoven, and to the first movement of his Piano Sonata in F minor, Op. 2 No. 1. He began it in 1793, just five years after Mozart wrote his Fortieth Symphony. By then Mozart was dead, carried off by a mystery illness at the age of just thirty-five, and there may well have been an element of memorial tribute in Beethoven’s choice of the same skyrocket theme as appeared in the older man’s still-recent G minor Symphony. Whatever the motivation, the young Beethoven was clearly intent on making an impression in this, his first piano sonata, and it is conceived on an ambitious scale: four movements, instead of the three or two favoured by his teacher Haydn, and all of them filled with weighty, serious emotional content. The only difference in the theme itself is that Beethoven slightly extends the falling tail-figure at the end, with a little turn. But almost immediately the theme begins to fragment, splitting into ever-smaller pieces and finally coming to a pause on a much expanded version of the final turn (0’07”). The dramatic ‘break-up’ effect that Mozart reserved for a key moment at the heart of his finale is used here by Beethoven at the very beginning. Mozart glances at Romanticism in passing; Beethoven makes it his starting point (**CD 2, track 20**).

XII. Prometheus Unbound



Carl Czerny (1791–1857)

It is no surprise to find the young Beethoven being especially daring in a work for the piano. This was his own instrument, one on which he had already built up a reputation for a highly novel kind of mastery as a performer. Beethoven's approach to playing the piano was aptly summed up by his younger friend, the composer and pianist Carl Czerny (1791–1857). Czerny contrasted Beethoven style at the keyboard with that of Mozart:

Mozart's school: clear and markedly brilliant playing based more on *staccato* [detached] than *legato* [smooth]; a witty and lively execution. The pedal is rarely used and never necessary.

Beethoven's manner: characteristic and passionate strength, alternating with all the charms of a smooth *cantabile* [singing], is its outstanding feature...

Beethoven, who appeared around 1790, drew entirely new and daring passages from the Fortepiano by the use of the pedal, by an exceptionally characteristic way of playing, particularly distinguished by a strict *legato* of the chords, and thus created a new type of singing tone and many hitherto unimagined effects. His playing did not possess that clean and brilliant elegance of certain other pianists. On the other hand, it was spirited, grandiose and, especially in *adagio*, very full of feeling and Romantic. His performance, like his compositions, was a tone-painting of a very high order and conceived only for a total effect.

Some of those who took an early interest in Beethoven saw him as a potential heir to the legacy of Mozart and Haydn, not a rebel in the making. When Beethoven set off from his native Bonn to Vienna in 1792, with a view to studying with Haydn (his hopes of studying with Mozart had been dashed by the latter's death in 1791), his patron, Count Ferdinand von Waldstein, wrote these words in his private album:

Dear Beethoven,

You are now going to Vienna in fulfilment of a wish that has for so long been thwarted. The genius of Mozart still mourns and weeps for the death of its protégé. It has found a refuge in the inexhaustible Haydn, but no permanent abode. Through him it desires once more to find a union with someone. Through your unceasing diligence, *receive the spirit of Mozart from the hands of Haydn.*

It may well be that Beethoven saw it that way too. But it was a while before he was able to realise the full implications of what he had evoked in passages like the opening of the Sonata, Op. 2 No. 1. This is not to be taken as a criticism of Beethoven's earlier work *en masse*; and yet one of the most exciting characteristics of early and – according to some – Classical Beethoven is the feeling that at any moment this new Romantic spirit might be unleashed – that Napoleon's troops might come storming into the Viennese rococo drawing room. And the closer one gets to Beethoven's Napoleonic masterpiece, the *Eroica* Symphony (No. 3, 1803–04), the more the element of surprise, so exquisitely cultivated by Haydn, takes on a heroic, revolutionary aspect. The spirit of this new revolutionary Romanticism is superbly captured by the English poet Percy Bysshe Shelley in his lyrical drama *Prometheus Unbound* (1818–19). Prometheus was the legendary Titan who stole fire from the gods to give to mankind, and was hideously punished for his rebellion. He became a potent symbol for the early revolutionaries, and it is no coincidence that the finale of Beethoven's *Eroica* Symphony is based on music written for a ballet about Prometheus. One can imagine Beethoven enthusiastically endorsing Shelley's hymn to the 'Unbound' Titan at the end of his poem:

To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite;
To forgive wrongs darker than death of night;
To defy Power that seems omnipotent;
To love, and bear; to hope till Hope creates
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates;
Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent;
This, like thy glory, Titan, is to be
Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free;
This is alone Life, Joy, Empire, and Victory.

The urge to embrace this new spirit can be heard in the finale of Beethoven's Second Symphony in D major, Op. 36 (1801–02). At times it's as though the transformation from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century were happening in front of our ears. At first glance, Beethoven's Second appears to be a reasonably Classically behaved symphony. It is scored for an orchestra no larger than that used by Haydn in several of his 'London' Symphonies, and laid out on the familiar four-movement plan (incorporating Haydn's innovation, the Scherzo, as a third movement). Its proportions are also Classical, apart from the first movement's unusually long and dramatic slow introduction. But the language is in a state of transition – of upheaval, one might say. Something of Haydn's humour survives in the finale's brusquely emphatic first theme (track 21), but it has a harder edge than anything in Haydn's symphonic finales. The scoring is often deliberately incisive, the soft-loud contrasts increasingly unsettling. Towards the end comes an almost brutal surprise: after a long, hushed passage there's a sudden full orchestral *fortissimo* (5'30") – like the defiant slam of a fist. From here until the end of the movement the music swings rapidly between the high spirits of a comic overture and something altogether more tigerish. Listening to the sudden pauses (4'54" and 6'06"), each followed by a long intense crescendo, we can hear how much symphonic drama has progressed and intensified since the once-sensational 'Mannheim crescendos' of Johann Stamitz. We may also wonder whether the 'background of calm' that Aaron Copland defined as essential to Classicism has not itself begun to fracture. Prometheus may not be wholly free yet, but those fetters clearly cannot hold him much longer (**CD 2, track 21**).

Personal Struggle

There is something else about Beethoven's Second that marks it out from previous Classical symphonies – something that was to become far more pronounced in the *Eroica* and Fifth Symphonies, but which is already beginning to make itself felt here. Beethoven began to write his Second Symphony in 1801. By this time he had a new cause for concern, of more pressing personal significance than the fate of the revolutionary movement in France. In June 1800, at the age of thirty, he spelt it out for the first time in a letter to a close friend, the violinist and theology student Karl Amenda:

Your Beethoven is living most unhappily at odds with Nature and his Creator; several times already I have cursed the latter for exposing His Creatures to the most trifling, whereby the finest flowers are often destroyed and broken. You must know that the noblest part of me, my hearing, has greatly declined; while you were still with me I already had some inkling of this, but said nothing; and now it has grown steadily worse. Whether it is curable remains to be seen; they say it is caused by the condition of my bowels. In that respect I am almost completely cured. As to whether my hearing will now improve as well, I indeed hope so, but faintly: such diseases are the most persistent. How sad my life will be henceforth, deprived of all I love and value, and withal surrounded by such miserable, selfish people...

How happy I should now be, if only my hearing were unimpaired. Melancholy resignation, in which I must now take refuge; I have indeed resolved to disregard all this, but how shall I be able to do so? *I beg you to keep this matter of my hearing a great secret and not to confide it to anyone whatsoever.*

The following year, at about the time he was completing the Second Symphony, Beethoven penned the so-called 'Heiligenstadt Testament'. An enigmatic document, apparently addressed to his brothers Carl and Johann but, it seems, never sent, it wavers in tone between a last will and testament, a suicide note and a private confession. At one point Beethoven appears to be struggling to come to terms with a grim realisation:

Just think, for the last six years I have been afflicted with an incurable complaint which has been made worse by incompetent doctors. From year to year my hopes of being cured have gradually been shattered and finally I have been forced to accept the prospect of a *permanent infirmity* (the curing of which may take years and may even prove to be impossible). Though endowed with a passionate and lively temperament and even fond of the distractions offered by society I was soon obliged to seclude myself and live in solitude. If at times I decided just to ignore my infirmity, alas! how cruelly was I then driven back by the intensified sad experience of my poor hearing. Yet I could not bring myself to say to people: 'Speak up, shout, for I am deaf'. Alas! how could I possibly refer to the *impairing of a sense* which in me should be more perfectly developed than in other people, a sense which at one time I possessed in the greatest perfection, even to a degree of perfection such as assuredly few in my profession possess or have ever possessed.



Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

***‘To us musicians the work of Beethoven parallels
the pillars of smoke and fire which led the
Israelites through the desert.’***

Franz Liszt, letter to Wilhelm von Lenz (1852)

The tone of bitter reproach – at human society, at God, at himself – continues. But then another illustration of the alienating horror of deafness leads to a highly significant remark.

My sensible doctor by suggesting that I should spare my hearing as much as possible has more or less encouraged my present natural inclination, though indeed when carried away now and then more by my instinctive desire for human society, I have let myself be tempted to seek it. But how humiliated I have felt if somebody standing beside me heard the sound of a flute in the distance and *I heard nothing*, or if somebody heard a *shepherd sing* and again I heard nothing. Such experiences almost made me despair, and I was on the point of putting an end to my life – the only thing that held me back was *my art*.

Goethe, in a letter to the composer and conductor Karl Friedrich Zelter, warns of the dangers of 'symbolism for the ear' (what we would now call word-painting) – a favourite device of Haydn and Beethoven:

Only one thing I want to mention, that you have made use in a very significant way of that for which I have no name but which is called imitation, painting and I know not what else, and which in others becomes very faulty and degenerates unduly. It is a symbolism for the ear, through which the subject, to the extent that it is in motion or not in motion, is neither imitated nor painted but is brought forth in the imagination in a quite particular and incomprehensible way, that which is expressed seeming to bear almost no relationship to that which expresses it.

It was composing, Beethoven tells us, and the absolute conviction of his artistic vocation that stopped him from committing suicide. Beethoven may not have been the first composer in history to feel something like that. What makes his music new is that for the first time that personal struggle becomes part of the living tissue of the music. The fact that the Second Symphony was probably being finished at around the time the Heiligenstadt Testament was written is therefore crucial. That sense of spiritual battle in the Symphony's finale, that sense of determination to keep on exulting even if it can only be accomplished via something like the slamming down of a clenched fist (track 21; 5'30") – in this the music directly reflects Beethoven's attempts to grapple with his fate. This, perhaps above all else, is what marks the mature Beethoven out from his 'Classical' predecessors, Haydn and Mozart. Efforts have been made to 'explain' the grim intensity of Don Giovanni's last moments as an expression of some internal conflict in Mozart himself; similarly others have tried to account for the nervous, shadowy elements in Haydn's middle-period *Sturm und Drang* symphonies in terms of some notional personal crisis. But such attempts always seem to fail. Something in the emotional nature of Haydn's and Mozart's music remains objective – not so much impersonal as supra-personal: transcendent. Perhaps that is what Aaron Copland meant when he defined Classical in music as 'intensity on a background of calm'. In which case, with the more subjective, Romantic Beethoven – the composer whose famous Fifth Symphony could have been written to illustrate his famous remark 'I will take Fate by the throat', and who wrote over one of his sketches, 'Let your deafness no longer be a secret, in Art as in life' – the history of music can truly be said to have entered a new era.

Sources of featured panels

Page 15: *Esthetics of Music* by Carl Dalhaus; Cambridge University Press (1982)

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A Timeline of the Classical Era

	Music	History
1750	J.S. Bach dies; Salieri born; Johann Stamitz appointed director of instrumental music at court of Mannheim	
1751		first volume of Diderot's <i>Encyclopédie</i> published in France
1752	Clementi born; Rousseau <i>Le Devin du village</i>	
1753		
1754		
1755	Johann Stamitz <i>Orchestral Trios, Op. 1</i>	
1756	Mozart born	Seven Years War begins: Britain and Prussia allied against France and Austria
1757	Scarlatti dies; Johann Stamitz dies	
1758		
1759	Handel dies	
1760	Cherubini born	

Art and Architecture**Literature**

Giovanni Battista Tiepolo begins frescoes for Residenz, Würzburg

Richard Brinsley Sheridan born

John Nash born

Fanny Burney born

John Soane born; François Boucher *Rising of the Sun*; Horace Walpole begins to build Gothic revival villa at Strawberry Hill

Henry Fielding dies; David Hume *History of Great Britain* (Volume 1)

Samuel Johnson *Dictionary*

Thomas Rowlandson born

Panthéon in Paris begun (Germain Soufflot)

William Blake born

Boucher *Madame de Pompadour*

Robert Burns born; Voltaire *Candide*; Johnson *Rasselas*

Laurence Sterne *Tristram Shandy* (first part)

	Music	History
1761	Haydn begins thirty-year period of employment with Esterházy family	
1762	Gluck <i>Orfeo ed Euridice</i> ; J.C. Bach appointed composer to King's Theatre, London	
1763	Mozart begins travels as child virtuoso, staying in Paris and London	Seven Years War ends
1764	Rameau dies; J.C. Bach and C.F. Abel found a series of subscription concerts in London	James Hargreaves invents Spinning Jenny
1765		
1766		reign of Habsburg Emperor Joseph II begins in Austria
1767	Telemann dies; Gluck <i>Alceste</i>	
1768	C.P.E. Bach succeeds Telemann as director of music for the five principal churches in Hamburg	
1769	Mozart <i>La finta semplice</i>	Napoleon Bonaparte born; James Watt's steam engine patented
1770	Beethoven born; Vanhal Six Symphonies, Op. 7	
1771	Carl Stamitz Six Symphonies, Op. 6	
1772	Haydn Symphony No. 45 ('Farewell'), String Quartets, Op. 20; Mozart <i>Lucio Silla</i>	
1773	C.P.E. Bach Six Symphonies	

Art and Architecture**Literature**

William Cobbett born; Jean-Jacques Rousseau
The Social Contract

William Hogarth dies

Jean-Honoré Fragonard *The Swing*

Thomas Gainsborough *Johann Christian Bach*

Canaletto dies; Royal Academy, London founded

Sterne dies

Tiepolo dies; Boucher dies; Gainsborough *The Blue Boy*

William Wordsworth born; Oliver Goldsmith
The Deserted Village

Walter Scott born; Charles Burney *The Present
State of Music in France and Italy*

Pierre Choderlos de Laclos *Les liaisons
dangereuses*

Coleridge born

	Music	History
1774		accession of Louis XVI to French throne
1775	Mozart Violin Concertos, K216, 218 & 219	
1776		Declaration of American Independence
1777	Mozart travels to Mannheim and Paris	
1778	Hummel born	
1779	Mozart <i>Sinfonia concertante</i> , K364	
1780	Vanhal Three Symphonies, Op. 10	
1781	Mozart <i>Idomeneo</i>	Leipzig Gewandhaus built
1782	Paganini born; J.C. Bach dies; Haydn String Quartets, Op. 33; Paisiello <i>Il barbiere di Siviglia</i>	
1783		Russia annexes Crimea
1784	Mozart Piano Concertos, K449, 450, 451 & 456	
1785	Mozart Piano Concertos, K466 & 467, dedicates set of six string quartets to Haydn	Edmund Cartwright's power loom mechanises cotton industry

Art and Architecture**Literature**

Caspar David Friedrich born

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe *The Sorrows of Young Werther*Joseph Mallord William Turner born;
Fragonard *The Fête at Saint-Cloud*Jane Austen born; Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais *Le barbier de Séville*; Samuel Johnson *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*

John Constable born

E.T.A. Hoffmann born; Hume dies; Edward Gibbon *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (Volume 1); Adam Smith *The Wealth of Nations*Sheridan *The School for Scandal*

Giovanni Piranesi dies

Rousseau dies; Voltaire dies; Fanny Burney *Evelina*Henry Fuseli *The Nightmare*Johann von Schiller *The Robbers*; Immanuel Kant *Critique of Pure Reason*

Stendhal born

Jacques-Louis David *Oath of the Horatii*Johnson dies; Beaumarchais *Le mariage de Figaro*James Boswell *Tour of the Hebrides*

	Music	History
1786	Mozart <i>Le nozze di Figaro</i> , Piano Concertos, K488 & 491, Symphony, K504 ('Prague')	
1787	Mozart <i>Don Giovanni</i>	
1788	C.P.E. Bach dies; Mozart Symphonies, K543, 550 & 551 ('Jupiter')	
1789		French Revolution begins; George Washington first US President
1790	Mozart <i>Così fan tutte</i>	
1791	Mozart <i>Die Zauberflöte</i> ; Mozart dies; Haydn's first visit to England	
1792	Rossini born; Haydn Symphony No. 94 ('Surprise')	French republic declared; France at war with Austria and Prussia
1793		Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette executed in Paris; France at war with Britain, Spain and Netherlands
1794		France abolishes slavery in its colonies
1795	Haydn completes 12 'London' Symphonies; Beethoven Piano Trios, Op. 1	
1796	Haydn <i>Missa in tempore belli</i>	Napoleon leads French army, invades Italy
1797	Schubert born; Donizetti born	Venice surrenders to French
1798	Haydn <i>The Creation</i> , <i>Nelson Mass</i>	French capture Rome; English fleet under Nelson defeat French at battle of Nile

Art and Architecture**Literature**

Art and Architecture	Literature
	Burns <i>Poems Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect</i>
	Friedrich von Schiller <i>Don Carlos</i>
Gainsborough dies; John Soane begins to rebuild and extend the Bank of England	Byron born; Goethe <i>Egmont</i>
Francisco de Goya appointed court painter in Madrid, paints first royal portraits	Blake <i>Songs of Innocence</i>
	Edmund Burke <i>Reflections on the Revolution in France</i>
Charlotte Square, Edinburgh begun (Robert Adam)	Thomas Paine <i>Rights of Man</i> ; Boswell <i>Life of Samuel Johnson</i>
Joshua Reynolds dies	Percy Bysshe Shelley born; Mary Wollstonecraft <i>A Vindication of the Rights of Women</i>
David <i>The Death of Marat</i>	J.P.F. Richter ('Jean Paul') <i>The Invisible Lodge</i>
	Gibbon dies; Blake <i>Songs of Experience</i>
	John Keats born; Goethe <i>Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre</i>
Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot born	Burns dies
	Coleridge <i>Kubla Khan</i>
Eugene Delacroix born	Wordsworth and Coleridge <i>Lyrical Ballads</i>

	Music	History
1799		French driven from Italy by alliance of Britain, Austria, Russia, Naples, Turkey; Napoleon appointed First Consul in France
1800	Beethoven Symphony No. 1	
1801	Bellini born	
1802		
1803	Berlioz born; Beethoven Symphony No. 3 ('Eroica')	France sells Louisiana to USA; John Dalton proposes atomic theory
1804		Napoleon crowned Emperor in France
1805	Boccherini dies; Beethoven <i>Fidelio</i>	Nelson dies at Battle of Trafalgar
1806	Beethoven String Quartets, Op. 59 ('Rasumovsky')	
1807		slavery outlawed by British Parliament
1808	Beethoven Symphonies Nos 5 & 6 ('Pastoral')	Napoleon's troops occupy Spain
1809	Mendelssohn born; Haydn dies; Beethoven Piano Concerto No. 5 ('Emperor')	British forces under Wellesley (later Wellington) sent to defend Portugal
1810	Chopin born; Schumann born; Paganini makes first tour of Europe	
1811	Liszt born	
1812		Wellington finally drives French from Spain; Napoleon's disastrous retreat from Moscow

Art and Architecture**Literature**

Goya *Los Caprichos*

Friedrich Hölderlin *Hyperion*

Goya *Family of Charles IV*; sculptures taken from the Parthenon and brought to London by Lord Elgin

Alexandre Dumas born; Victor Hugo born;
Madame de Staël *Delphine*

Schiller *William Tell*

Schiller dies; Wordsworth *The Prelude*

Fragonard dies

David *Coronation of Napoleon*

Goethe *Faust Part 1*; Walter Scott *Marmion*

Caspar David Friedrich *Cross in the Mountains*

Austen *Sense and Sensibility*

Byron *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (first part)

	Music	History
1813	Wagner born; Verdi born	Austria and Prussia declare war on France; Mexico declares independence from Spain
1814		allied forces enter Paris; Napoleon abdicates
1815		Napoleon returns from exile, defeated at Waterloo
1816	Rossini <i>Il barbiere di Siviglia</i>	

Art and Architecture

Literature

Austen Pride and Prejudice

Further Listening

C.P.E. Bach

Sinfonias Nos 1–4	8.553289
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Complete Flute Concertos	8.555715–16 (2 CDs)
Keyboard Sonatas	8.553640

J.C. Bach

Sinfonias, Volume 1	8.553083
Sinfonias, Volume 2	8.553084
Sinfonias, Volume 3	8.553085

Beethoven

Piano Trios, Op. 1 Nos 1 & 2	8.550946
Cello Sonatas, Op. 5 Nos 1 & 2	8.555785
String Quartets, Op. 18 Nos 1 & 2	8.550558
String Quartets, Op. 18 Nos 3 & 4	8.550559
String Quartets, Op. 18 Nos 5 & 6	8.550560

Cannabich

Symphonies Nos 47–52	8.554340
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Clementi

Piano Sonatas, Op. 40	8.553500
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Franz Xaver Dussek

Sinfonias	8.555878
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Jan Ladislav Dussek, Wagenseil, Krumpholtz

Harp Concertos

8.553622

Gluck

Alceste

8.660066–68 (3 CDs)

Haydn

Symphonies Nos 6–8

8.550722

Symphonies Nos 43, 46 & 47

8.554767

Symphonies Nos 44, 88 & 104, 'London'

8.550287

Symphony Nos 82, 'The Bear', 96 & 100, 'Military'

8.550139

Symphonies Nos 83, 'The Hen', 94 & 101, 'The Clock'

8.550114

Symphonies Nos 85, 92 & 103, 'Drumroll'

8.550387

Cello Concertos

8.555041

The Seven Last Words of Jesus Christ

8.550346

String Quartets, Op. 64 Nos 1–3

8.550673

String Quartets, Op. 64 Nos 4–6

8.550674

String Quartets, Op. 76 Nos 1–3

8.550314

String Quartets, Op. 76 Nos 4–6

8.550315

Piano Sonatas Nos 42–47

8.550844

Piano Sonatas Nos 48–52

8.553128

Hoffmeister

String Quartets, Op. 14 Nos 1–3

8.555952

Hofmann

Violin Concertos

8.554233

Mozart

Cosi fan tutte

8.660008–10 (3 CDs)

Coronation Mass; Ave verum corpus; Exsultate jubilate

8.550495

Mass in C minor

8.554421

Requiem

8.550235

Mozart (continued)

Symphonies Nos 29, 30 & 38, 'Prague'	8.550119
Symphonies Nos 34, 35 & 39	8.550186
Violin Concertos Nos 3 & 5	8.550418
Piano Concertos Nos 13 & 20	8.550201
Piano Concertos Nos 12, 14 & 21	8.550202
Piano Concertos Nos 11 & 22	8.550206
Piano Concertos Nos 16 & 25	8.550207
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String Quintets Nos 5 & 6	8.553105
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Pleyel

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Rosetti

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Salieri

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Carl Stamitz

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Johann Stamitz

Symphonies, Volume 2	8.554447
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Viotti

Violin Concerto No. 23; Sinfonie concertante Nos 1 & 2	8.553861
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Composers of the Classical Era

Please note: countries of birth/death are given according to modern names/boundaries.

Johann Georg Albrechtsberger (1736–1809)

(*b.* Klosterneuberg, Austria; *d.* Vienna Austria)

Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (1714–1788)

(*b.* Weimar, Germany; *d.* Hamburg, Germany)

Johann Christian Bach (1735–1782)

(*b.* Leipzig, Germany; *d.* London, England)

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

(*b.* Bonn, Germany; *d.* Vienna, Austria)

Luigi Boccherini (1743–1805)

(*b.* Lucca, Italy; *d.* Madrid, Spain)

Carl Czerny (1791–1857)

(*b.* Vienna, Austria; *d.* Vienna, Austria)

Carl Ditters von Dittersdorf (1739–1799)

(*b.* Vienna, Austria; *d.* Neuhof, Czech Republic)

Christoph Willibald von Gluck (1714–1787)

(*b.* Erabach, Germany; *d.* Vienna, Austria)

François-Joseph Gossec (1734–1829)

(b. Vergnies, Belgium; d. Passy, France)

Franz Joseph Haydn (1732–1809)

(b. Rohrau, Austria; d. Vienna, Austria)

Roman Hoffstetter (1742–1815)

(b. Laudenbach, Germany; d. Miltenberg, Germany)

Leopold Mozart (1719–1787)

(b. Augsburg, Germany; d. Salzburg, Austria)

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)

(b. Salzburg, Austria; d. Vienna, Austria)

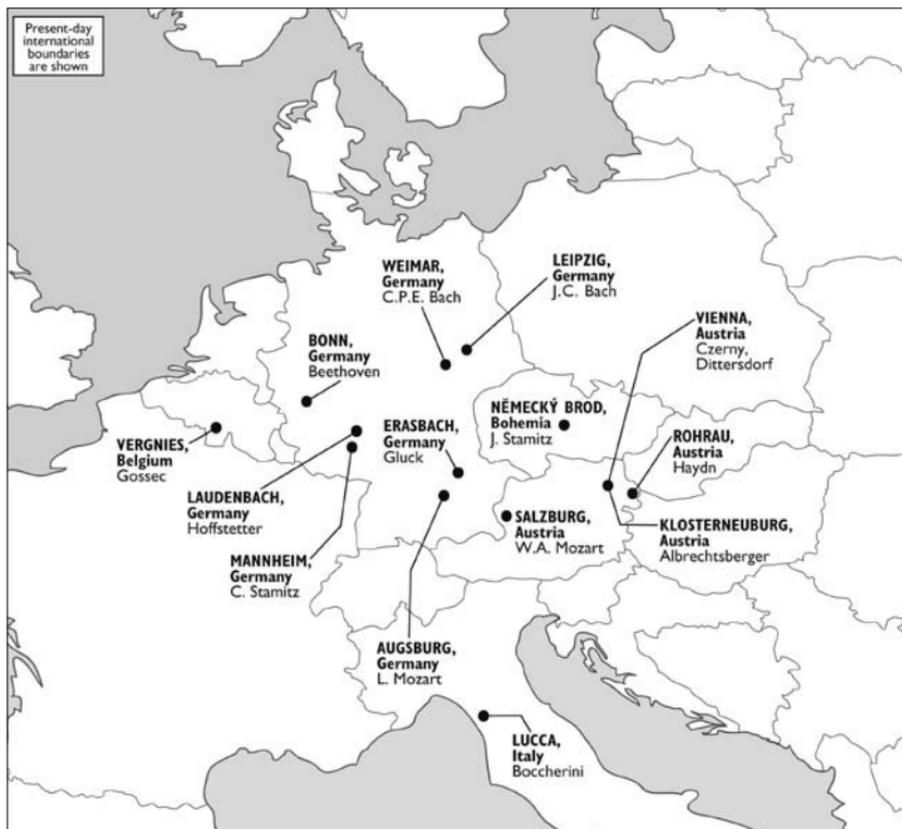
Carl Stamitz (1745–1801)

(b. Mannheim, Germany; d. Jena, Germany)

Johann Stamitz (1717–1757)

(b. Německý Brod, Czech Republic; d. Mannheim, Germany)

Opposite: map showing birthplaces of Classical Era composers



Glossary

Please note: definitions are mostly given in the sense they had or acquired during the Classical Era.

Allegro

Lively, quick, fast

Assai

Very

Aria

A substantial piece for solo voice with orchestra or solo instrument(s), most commonly found in operas, oratorios and cantatas

Cantata

Literally 'sung'. In the eighteenth century cantatas were normally works for soloist(s), chorus and orchestra, shorter than either operas or oratorios, on sacred or secular subjects

Con grazia

Gracefully

Crescendo

Literally 'growing'. Not (as it is often understood today) a climax, but the process of building towards a climax; a gradual loudening

Clavichord

A small keyboard instrument, especially popular in the Baroque and early Classical periods, in which the strings are pressed and released. As the sound produced was very quiet, it was suitable only for private performance

Concerto

Literally a 'concerted performance'. The Classical concerto is normally a work in several movements (most commonly three) for virtuoso soloist and orchestra

Counterpoint

A style of writing in which each part or 'voice' is independent and has significance in itself, as well as in the context of the whole texture. The supreme contrapuntal form is the Fugue

Divertimento	Amusement, diversion. A piece for ensemble or solo instrument of light character, often intended for open-air performance
<i>Dolcissimo</i>	Very sweetly
Fantasia	A work for solo instrument or ensemble, in which familiar forms are either abandoned or treated with striking freedom
<i>Forte</i>	Strong, loud
<i>Fortissimo</i>	Very strong/loud
Glockenspiel	Literally, 'Bell-play'. A set of small metal bars, often arranged like the keys on a piano, and struck with hand-held hammers. It emits a high-pitched, tinkling sound
<i>Legato</i>	Bound together, smoothly
Melodrama	Dramatic composition or section of opera or play in which words are spoken to a varying musical accompaniment
Minuet	A dance with three beats to the bar, usually in A–B–A form, with the central B section often called 'trio'. Minuets appear in many Classical symphonies, normally as the third movement, or as the second or third movement of a chamber work
<i>Opera seria</i>	Literally 'serious opera'. Mainly based on mythological subjects, by the eighteenth century the form had become highly formalised, with much use of the so-called 'da capo aria' – a kind of aria on a symmetrical A–B–A pattern
Oratorio	A work on a religious subject for soloist(s), chorus and orchestra
Overture	An orchestral piece preceding an opera or oratorio. In the eighteenth century the term was sometimes interchangeable with 'Symphony'
<i>Piano</i>	Soft, quiet
<i>Pianissimo</i>	Very soft/quiet
<i>Pizzicato</i>	Playing a stringed instrument by plucking the strings with the fingers
<i>Presto</i>	Quick, normally faster than 'allegro'

Recapitulation	The section of an extended work or movement in which earlier themes are heard again in full
Recitative	Speech-like, rhythmically free singing, used especially in opera and oratorio. In <i>opera seria</i> , recitative was clearly separated from arias, which were often dramatically static and reflective. But in the operas of Gluck and Mozart the boundaries begin to blur, with heightened dramatic effect
Scherzo	Literally 'joke'. Generally the liveliest movement in a symphony or chamber work, in three beats to the bar, the scherzo begins to replace the more stately minuet in Haydn's string quartets, and more dramatically in the symphonies and quartets of Beethoven
Serenade/Serenata	Literally 'evening music', e.g. the kind of song a man might sing beneath his beloved's window. By Mozart's time it also came to mean a kind of 'divertimento' written for an evening's entertainment
Soave	Suave, gentle
Sonata	Instrumental composition, usually in more than one movement, for keyboard or another solo instrument with keyboard
Staccato	Notes played in a short, detached style
Symphony	Originally interchangeable with 'Overture', by the late eighteenth-century 'symphony' had come to mean a relatively serious concert work for orchestra in several movements, typically four, including a Minuet or Scherzo and a slow(er) more lyrical movement
Tattoo	Military music for trumpets or bugles with drums, or a military display featuring mock battles
Tremolo	Literally 'shaking', 'trembling'. Rapid reiteration of a note or chord, especially on stringed instruments, where the bow is drawn forward and backward across the string as quickly as possible

Credits

Music compiled by Stephen Johnson
Editor: Sarah Butcher
Literary Editor: Harriet Smith
Map illustrator: Arthur Ka Wai Jenkins
Timeline: Hugh Griffith
All composer photographs courtesy of Lebrecht Music & Arts Photo Library
Designer: Hannah Davies

Front cover score extract: Haydn Symphony No. 94, 'Surprise'

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