

Music history paper assignment

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**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

A magnificent classical composer, Johann Sebastian Bach is revered through the ages for his work's musical complexities and stylistic innovations. Born on March 21, 1685, in Eisenach, Germany, Johann Sebastian Bach had a prestigious musical lineage and took on various organist positions during the early 18th century, creating famous compositions like "Tocatta and Fugue in D minor." Some of his best-known compositions are the "Mass in B Minor," and the "Brandenburg Concertos". The Brandenburg Concertos are a collection of six instrumental works presented by Bach to Christian Ludwig, Margrave of Brandenburg-Ansbach.

They are widely regarded as some of the best orchestral compositions of the Baroque era. Most likely, Bach composed the concertos over several years while employed at Köthen, and possibly extending back to his employment at Weimar (Boyd, 14-47). Each Brandenburg follows the convention of a concerto grosso, in which two or more solo instruments are contrasted with a full ensemble, and where a slow movement in the relative minor is bracketed by two fast movements, mostly structured as a ritornello.

The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment plays the Brandenburg Concertos in which the opening ritornello (played by the full ensemble) reappears as a formal marker between episodes of display by the concerti (solo instruments) and again as a conclusion, thus producing a psychologically satisfying structure. Vivaldi and others who established the concerto grosso model used nuances of texture, tone coloration and novel figuration's to contrast the ensemble's ritornello and the solo episodes. Bach, though, tends to fluently blend and integrate them.

The concerto grosso form was pioneered by Italian composers like Arcangelo Corelli, but Bach's Brandenburg took the form to new heights. They changed music by demonstrating the potential of an already-established form. The only Brandenburg Concerto in four movements, the First may appear to be the conventional fast-slow-fast form to which a final dance section was added, but scholars trace a more complex origin, in which the first, second and fourth movements comprised a "confusion" to introduce a 1713 Hunting Cantata and thus was more like a standard suite of the time.

To create the character of a concerto, Bach later added the present third movement with its prominent violin line, the short phrasing of which suggests separate origin as a now-lost choral piece. The overall orchestration is unusual. The sheer number of instruments gives the Music History paper by Dana-Butler "concerto symphony' (Sulzberger, 18, 37-90). To expand the range of the sonority, Bach specifies in lieu of his standard violin a "violone grosso" played an octave below the bass staff.

Despite its immediate appeal to conservative ears, each movement has a remarkable feature typical of Bach's irrepressible sense of invention. The first movement is four minutes of pure sprightly swaggering infectious elation, yet there's subtext of discomfort. The two natural horns appear to be making their first solo appearance in a concerto yet, their raucous disturbs the otherwise carefully-balanced texture and their insistent bellowing hunting calls disrupt the overall rhythm. Joseph Haydn was a prominent and prolific composer of the Classical period.

He was instrumental in the development of chamber music such as the piano trio and his contributions to musical form have earned him the epithets “Father of the Symphony” and “Father of the String Quartet”. James Webster summarizes Haydn’s role in the history of classical music as follows: “He excelled in every musical genre... He is familiarly known as the father of the symphony’ and could with greater justice be thus regarded for the string quartet; no other composer approaches his combination of productivity, quality and historical importance in these genres. A central characteristic of Haydn’s music is the development of larger structures out of very short, simple musical motifs, often derived from standard accompanying figures. The music is often quite formally concentrated, and the important musical events of movement can unfold rather quickly. Haydn’s work was central to the development of what came to be called sonata form. Haydn was particularly fond of the so-called “monotheistic exposition”, in which the music that establishes the dominant key is similar or identical to the opening theme.

Haydn also differs from Mozart and Beethoven in his recapitulation sections, where he often rearranges the order of themes compared to the exposition and uses extensive thematic development (Clark, 15-21). Perhaps more than any other composer’s, Haydn’s music is known for its humor. The most famous example is the sudden loud chord in the slow movement of his “Surprise” symphony; Haydn’s many other musical jokes include numerous false endings and the remarkable rhythmic illusion placed in the trio section of the third movement of Op. 50 No. 1. The Symphony No. 4 in G major is the second of the twelve so-called London symphonies and popularly known

as The “ Surprise” symphony. The Surprise Symphony is scored for a Classical-era orchestra consisting of two each of flutes, oboes, bassoons, horns, trumpets, plus timpani, and the usual string section consisting of violins (first and second), violas, cellos, and double basses. Haydn’s music contains many jokes, and the Surprise Symphony includes probably the most famous of all: a sudden fortissimo chord at the end of the otherwise piano opening theme in the variation-form second movement.

The music then returns to its original quiet dynamic, as if nothing had happened, and the ensuing variations do not repeat the joke. Like much of Haydn’s work, it is written in so-called “ monotheistic” sonata form; that is, the movement to the dominant key in the exposition is not marked by a second theme” (London, 36-55). The second, “ surprise”, movement, is an andante theme and variations in 2/4 time in the subordination key of C major. The theme is in pianissimo with pizzicato in the lower strings to set up the surprise.

The third movement is a minuet and trio, in ternary form in the tonic key (G major). The tempo, allegro molto (very quickly), is of note since it marks the historical shift away from the old minuet (which was played at a slower, danceable, tempo) toward the scherzo; by his last quartets Haydn had started marking his minuets presto. The fourth movement is a characteristically rhythmic, energetic and propulsive Haydn finale. The movement is written in sonata rondo form with the opening bars appearing both at the beginning and in the middle of the development section.

The classical style is a style in which form plays a more important part than earlier or later styles. The use of sonata form is almost the defining characteristic of the style. Haydn did not create sonata form, but he was a master of it. His grasp of form was excellent, and at the same time, he took a few liberties with his conception of it. Aside from a false capitulation, Haydn was fond of surprising the listener with many unexpected turns and twists.

Sudden key changes, unexpected shifts of rhythm or harmony, a phrase that leads into something totally different than what is expected; these are a few items in the bag of tricks that Haydn had up his sleeve. He was a genius at surprising the listener with unexpected things, yet still adhering to sonata form. His music is full of idiosyncrasies and eccentric ideas. He experimented constantly with new ways of surprising listeners. It is difficult to describe the appeal and popularity which surrounds the Brandenburg Concertos of Johann Sebastian Bach.

Of the six works which comprise the entire set, no two are alike in their instrumentation, and in two of them (the Third and Sixth), there aren't even any "soloists", but only a band of stringed instruments in complex musical intercourse. Normally, the format calls for three movements following the pattern fast-slow-fast. The Brandenburg incorporate all of these senses and more, in a way that no one had done before Bach, who modestly labeled the package "concertos with several instruments"—one of the great understatements in the history of music (Cares, 42).