

Baroque vs classical assignment

[History](#)



Baroque vs. Classical Music form the period of approximately 1600-1750 is usually referred to as “ baroque. ” This was a time when the doctrine of the “ divine right of kings” ensured the absolute rule of “ God-chosen” monarchs. During this time, Louis XIV became the most powerful and praised monarch in all of European history. Discoveries in science stimulated both technology and philosophy. People began to think about ordinary matters in a new way, affected by the newly acquired habits of scientific experimentation and proof. The mental climate stimulated by science significantly affected the art and the music we call Baroque.

Science is at work in even the most flamboyant and dazzling of Baroque artistic efforts. There was a dual influence of extravagance and scientist, of the splendid and the schematic, that is found in Baroque art and music. Bach and Handel were both of the Baroque period. In the second part of the eighteenth century, the classical style emerged in Europe, principally in Vienna, Austria. Joseph II, an “ enlightened” ruler, emancipated the peasantry, furthered education, and reduced the power of the clergy; he supported music and literature with his patronage and encouraged a free press.

Joseph II derived his principles of governance from an important intellectual movement of the eighteenth century known as the Enlightenment, a movement that also helped define the music that flourished under his reign. The original source of the Enlightenment was the faith in reason that led to the great scientific discoveries of the Baroque period. Then the emphasis went away from the purely intellectual and scientific toward the social

sphere. People were less intent on controlling natural forces by science than on turning these forces to universal benefit.

People also began to apply the same intelligence that solved scientific problems to problems of public morality, education, and politics. Music during this period was meant to please and entertain rather than to instruct, impress, or even express, as had been the case in the Baroque period. Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven were composers of the Classical period. The main musical vehicle of the Baroque period was the opera. Opera is an expensive entertainment in which a drama is presented with music and elaborate stage spectacle. Comic opera, or opera buffa, became the most progressive operatic form of the later part of the century.

One central characteristic of the music of the late Baroque period is its thorough, methodical quality. Baroque composers preferred thoroughness and homogeneity. The main concepts of Classical music are "natural" and "pleasing variety." The "variety" was used as a guard against boredom, but it was also used to invite complexity, and complexity seemed to be the opposite of "natural" simplicity and clarity. The most prominent change in music between Baroque and Classical periods may have come in rhythm. Baroque music is brimming with energy, and this energy is channeled into a highly regular, determined sort of motion.

Baroque music gets its rhythmic vitality by playing off distinctive rhythms against a very steady beat. The meter always stands out, emphasized by certain instruments playing in a clear, incisive way, usually the moves in absolutely even notes, usually eighths or quarters. Baroque music also tends

to have a steady harmonic rhythm, that is it tends to change chords at every measure, every beat, or at some other set interval. In this area in the Classical period the artistic ideal of “pleasing variety” was supreme. The unvarying rhythms of Baroque music were considered dreary, obvious, and boring.

Baroque music’s dynamics were steady as well. Once a dynamic was chosen or set, it remained at about the same level for the whole section, or sometimes, whole composition. In the Classical period, variety and flexibility were also introduced into dynamics. There are distinctive and attractive “Baroque sounds” such as the harpsichord, the bright Baroque organ, the recorder, and high trumpets and drums in the “festive” Baroque orchestra. The Classical orchestra was setup much like the Baroque orchestra, however woodwinds and brass were given clearly defined regular roles.

These instruments provided “pleasing variety” by playing certain melodies and other passages in their own characteristic tone color. Baroque melody tends toward complexity, while Classical melody demand was for simplicity and clarity, a relief from the complex, richly ornamented lines of the Baroque period. The people Anted “natural” melodies. The texture of Baroque music is polyphonic, and the texture of Classical music is homophobic. There are some similarities between the arouse and the Classical period, but the Classical period took what they wanted from the Baroque period and then added new things.