

Impact of mozart and beethoven on classical music



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To what extent did Mozart's symphony No. 40 and Beethoven's symphony No. 5 help shape the classical music period?

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Introduction:

The classical music, which took place from around 1730 to 1820, was a significant time period in music history with groundbreaking innovations. It came after the Baroque Period where there was a lighter texture, more simplicity, and few dynamics. Classical music chords did not have as frequent harmonic changes as the baroque period which gave it a more graceful tone (Classical music period). There were new techniques such as playing off the string. Most of the performances were involved in luxurious <https://assignbuster.com/impact-of-mozart-and-beethoven-on-classical-music/>

small settings in Western Europe (Classical Period). This period also emphasized formality so the performances were usually very serious. The emergence of the symphony orchestra was a significant tradition that is still continued to this day. Most of Classical music pieces had more emotionally restrained styles as opposed to the romantic style where composers could openly express their emotions (Ferris 183). Classical music pieces experimented with more extreme dynamics such as fortissimo and pianissimo as well as perfecting the use of crescendo and decrescendo (Ferris 190). The crescendos and decrescendos were often used in ascending and descending scale patterns respectively. Most of the phrasing was left up to interpretation for the orchestra.

There were many new instruments and styles invented during the classical music period. One new instrument invented during this time period was the pianoforte. Before the piano, most pieces required the harpsichord which had limitations because every note played was played at the same dynamic level. The harpsichord played a huge role in baroque music but it slowly became less relevant in classical music. Eventually, it was no longer used in classical music. With the pianoforte, pieces now had more expression and dynamic contrast. The piano contained pedals which allowed notes to be played more legato. This period also foresaw the emergence of chamber music which was basically a string quartet which usually consisted of a violin, one viola, one cello, and one bass in a conductorless setting. Some chamber music settings also contained quintets or triplets.

One important element that emerged was the symphony and sonatas.

Sonatas were usually composed for one two solos usually for the violin or <https://assignbuster.com/impact-of-mozart-and-beethoven-on-classical-music/>

piano. Symphonies consisted of a full orchestra with strings and band instruments. Symphonies were the most popular form of music and were the foundation for the classical music period. They are technically sonatas for orchestras (Bratman, Introduction to Symphonic Form). Overtures were the introductory orchestra pieces. The earliest symphonies were short pieces which consisted of the fast slow fast format written for a small number of instruments. Classical music composers lengthened these early symphonies and made it four movements instead (Ferris 190). The orchestras also expanded and became larger with woodwinds and brass added to the string section. The strings still mainly got the center of attention during the classical music period. Symphonies was usually comprised of four movements with the first movement usually allegro, the second movement is often slow. The third movement is usually a scherzo, trio, or minuet that is usually in triple meter while the fourth movement is the grand finale that is in rondo form or in Sonata-Allegro form (Machlis 236).

Mozart and Beethoven were two of the most prominent composers during the classical music period. Mozart was known for composing many symphony orchestra pieces that emphasized light articulation and harmonies.

Beethoven was influenced by Mozart but also created his own unique style. Both of their musical styles were known as Viennese because they were inspired by the culture of Vienna and they spent most of their time there (Ferris 183). Mozart composed his music during the peak of the classical music period while Beethoven composed his pieces near the end of the classical music period. Mozart's Symphony number 40 and Beethoven's

Symphony number 5 significantly contributed to the evolution of the classical music period.

Mozart Background:

One famous composer during this period was Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. He was born in Salzburg, Austria. He started composing at the age of 6 and was influenced by the Paris and London Sonatas (Sadie, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart). His pieces tend to make the strings have a light and bouncy tone. He wrote 41 symphonies for the orchestra. He ended up writing over 600 concertos during his short musical career. His musical career was mainly spent in Vienna so he mainly utilized Viennese style. Most of his pieces contained light harmonies which were also influenced from the Baroque Period (Sadie, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart).

Mozart was one of the most successful child prodigies in music history. By the time he was 6, he already learned how to play the violin, harpsichord, and compose his own minuets and fugues (Kamien 229). He is largely influenced by his father Leopold who was a court musician. Mozart spent most of his childhood touring Europe and playing for Empress Maria Theresa in Vienna, Louis XV in Versailles, and King George III in London.

Unfortunately, Mozart was more renowned during his childhood years than his adult years (Kamien 229). He rose to stardom at a young age but he also depended on his father so much that he could not take initiative himself (Kamien 229). Overall, he was one of the most successful musicians during the classical music period and left a lasting legacy for the 3000 plus pieces he wrote.

Most of Mozart's music utilized the strings and winds. He did not utilize the brass section as much because it was often too harsh for his music. He also wrote many different operas in addition to his symphonies. He was able to write in all different forms of music from operas to orchestra music. He wrote many piano concertos. His symphonies mostly had little dynamic change and most of the dynamics are up for interpretation for the orchestra. Most of his music was heard in churches and other religious settings so he could have a limited amount of band instruments.

Beethoven Background:

Another significant composer during the classical music period is Ludwig Van Beethoven. He wrote pieces that provided the transition from the classical to the romantic period (The Classical Period). Beethoven's works were divided into three periods. He wrote nine symphonies and they tended to have more emotions and drastic dynamics changes. Beethoven was a very hard working musician as he was self educated and he was able to deal with adversity. He was courageous in that he rebelled against social conventions because he believed that an artist deserved just as much respect as the aristocracy (Kamien 254). He had an outgoing personality which was clearly reflected throughout his nine symphonies.

Beethoven was inspired by the classical style of Mozart. He mixed in both Classical music and provided a bridge between the classical and romantic periods. (The Classical Period). Beethoven improvised some of Mozart's pieces during his childhood in Vienna. Mozart praised Beethoven and thought that he has a very high potential to become a world class musician and

composer (Kamien 254). Beethoven also studied with Haydn during the first half of his musical career. Unfortunately, Beethoven experienced his first symptoms of deafness at age 29 and there was nothing he could do about it. His hearing got gradually worse and worse until he finally fell completely deaf which caused him to go into a deep depression. Despite this, he was able to feel the vibrations and visualize what his music would sound like. His pieces contained much more drama and emotion than Mozart. Most of his pieces had anger and wrath in it due to his hearing loss.

Beethoven always strived for perfection in his writing. He would meticulously criticize his own pieces. Unlike Mozart who could write multiple pieces in one week, Beethoven often spent years on just one symphony. He never gave up composing and even composed when he was completely deaf which shows his dedication and perseverance. He was able to hear the musical notes in his head to compose the pieces.

Symphony Number 40 in G minor by Mozart:

I will be analyzing Mozart Concerto number 40 the first movement. The entire symphony has 4 movements. This concerto is in the key of G minor and it was one of the only concertos that Mozart wrote in a minor key. It is in the Sonata-Allegro form. The Sonata Allegro form is the design of the first movement of a composition. It usually follows the ABA form with an exposition, development, and recapitulation (Ferris 191). The exposition usually sets the theme which contains two melodies of contrasting styles. The development usually includes a modulation and a secondary theme. The recapitulation goes back to the original theme without any new modulations.

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One notable transition is in measure 101 when the chord is a G major chord. Then, in measure 104, the motif is briefly in A major with C sharps and G sharps as accidentals which is an example of another secondary theme.

The tempo of the first movement is *molto allegro* which means that the piece is played with fiery and quickness. The tempo mostly stays at a constant *allegro* throughout the piece with no significant tempo changes. It is in duple meter. The tonic key is G minor. The violins start out with the rhythmic motif in the first few measures which starts out *piano* but then gradually gets louder as the motif gets higher in pitch. The melody has a somber tone with the flutes ending each motif with 2 notes one half step apart such as in measures 16-20. It starts off mysteriously but then there is a crescendo to measure 16 where it is *forte*. As the pitch gets higher, the rhythmic motif is played louder for example in measures 76-80, the violins start at a high e flat and this part is played *forte*. In the development section, the key modulates to B flat major which is the relative major key. He stays in A major for a brief period of time during measures 103-106 in the violin sections. Mozart adds some chromatic scale passages in the bridge section which signals the transition to the development. The development is also a little bit slower than the exposition. The secondary theme is similar to the main theme but it has a more lyrical tone. In the development section, there is more chromatic harmony as shown in measures 34-36. The secondary theme is similar to the main motif but happens an octave higher and has the dotted quarter note to eighth note pattern afterward which is seen in measures 84-86.

Most of the articulation of the piece has some shortness and lightness. Most of the phrases ended with a nice decrescendo. However, there are other

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parts of the piece where the notes are accented especially in the quarter note passages in measures 30-32 in the violin sections. The transition happens in the staccato section starts the modulation with the descending and ascending scale patterns which is in measure 46. It is easier to spot the transition by using staccato due to the shortness of the notes.

Mozart mainly uses major chords in this symphony. He rarely uses diminished chords because it would create more dissonance in the piece. He had polyphonic texture with mainly one dominant melody with accompanying smaller chords. He ends most of the main motifs on the seventh chords which create an eerie tone.

Mozart's piece had good balance between all of the instruments as every instrument can be heard clearly. Mozart wanted to put an equal number of each stringed instrument so the orchestra would look symmetrical. This symphony was one of Mozart's unique symphonies in that it expressed more emotion than his other symphonies. The flutes also have a good portion of the melody but they mainly serve as a soft harmony at the top. The brass is the most neglected section as they are not featured as much.

Symphony Number 5 in C Minor by Beethoven:

I am also analyzing Beethoven's Symphony number 5 in C minor the first movement. It is also in the Sonata-Allegro form which follows the ABA Form but he sometimes would go out of the boundaries allowed by this form. The entire symphony has 4 movements. This is one of Beethoven's most famous symphonies which was written when he was starting to lose his hearing. This

symphony was composed in 1808 but he worked on it for 4 years before finally publishing it.

The tempo of the first movement is Allegro con brio which means that it is played quickly with liveliness and spirit. The tonic key of the piece is C minor. It is in duple meter. The four note motif sets the tone of the piece. This motif was specifically known as the short short short long motif. The violins start out fortissimo during the first couple of measures. There is a fermata at the end of each motif to showcase the suspense and drama of the piece. There is also a secondary motif where there is a run of sixteenth notes played short and staccato. He repeats the motif through different instruments so they each have it at some point in the piece but it is more noticeable in the violins. The different instruments echo off each other but the motif is noticeably softer each time. One of the main themes is the ascending scale pattern with slurs on the first 2 notes and the other two notes played staccato which is first seen in measures 37-43. There was lots of martele and long legato phrases in the beginning for the violins. His short phrases were accented heavily. He also mixes in some legato phrases such as in measure 71. The key of the piece is C minor which evokes a mysterious tone throughout the piece.

The rhythm of the piece contained many phrases with short and long with the most notable pattern being the triplet eighth note followed by a long quarter note. He often added tenuto markings to the quarter notes to make them more sustained. The cellos provide the metronome for the piece to keep the steady beat. There was usually a grand pause before the start of the development section to signal the transition. The development is lengthy

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and starts at measure 77 where there are some added accidentals such as d flat and g flat. Beethoven also briefly uses the same main motif but it is written in C major which is the parallel key which shows these contrasting keys. The Motif can be used to express the victory in the piece. Beethoven's development section often had lots of experimentation of different keys. The key modulates from C minor to E flat major which is the relative key. The recapitulation goes back to C minor and repeats with the four note motif. The trombones set the tone for the modulation. The coda provides a triumphant ending. The overall mood of the piece is melancholy and represents someone going through difficult challenges and trying to overcome them.

Beethoven's symphony also had a good balance between all of the stringed instruments. He was able to give each instrument a turn in having the motif. This symphony finally utilized the brass section to importance. The brass have the solo melody starting in measure 59 and it is fortissimo which puts significance on the brass section.

Beethoven used a variety of chord types in this symphony. The trombones also signal the transition to the development in measure 34. The clarinet also has an important solo excerpt which also emphasizes the theme change.

This symphony has a variety of chord types and harmonies. He also used chromatic scale patterns. Beethoven often used more harsh sounding chords to intensify the plot within his music. He mainly used different variations of the C minor chords to create the mysterious mood.

Beethoven's Impact:

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Beethoven helped with the transition from the classical period to the romantic period. He retained some of the elements Mozart used such as short notes played with staccato. He started to experiment with some new elements such as more *martele* and accented notes. His pieces started to add more emotions which includes extreme dynamic contrasts. It could be argued that Beethoven should be considered more of a romantic composer than a classical music composer because he employed more romantic elements. Most of his pieces did not have the lightness. Most of his pieces had a heavy tone to it. Beethoven mainly built on Mozart's accomplishments so without Mozart, Beethoven's symphonies may not have been as notable. Beethoven's style was mostly a combination of Mozart and some of his own added elements so he made some contribution but not a lot. Even though Beethoven did use mostly classical forms, he altered it to the extent that it was more romantic than classical.

Beethoven's Symphony number 5 showcases some similarities with Mozart's Symphony number 40. Both symphonies were written in a minor key and had lots of dynamic expression. There are similarities in articulation in some spots such as their uses of staccato. Beethoven's symphony number 5 is similar to a story with an exposition, a climax, and a resolution. This symphony also represents Beethoven's struggle writing music in his later life. Beethoven built upon Mozart's use of sonata allegro form by expanding it. His development section of Symphony number 5 was more complex than Mozart's Symphony number 40.

Beethoven followed Sonata Allegro form with this symphony but he added more complexity to it. He often had more than two main themes which <https://assignbuster.com/impact-of-mozart-and-beethoven-on-classical-music/>

makes the music feel chaotic sometimes. His development section was much more lengthy than Mozart's because he was able to experiment with more modulations. Beethoven effectively used ritardandos and accelerandos to emphasize tempo changes in this symphony. He also put a break in between different sections to let the audience have a break and soak in the emotions. He also utilized fermatas to increase the suspense and signal transitions within the piece.

Beethoven had a huge impact on society during this time because he was used as a model for future Romantic composers. He was probably the biggest and most famous composers during the end of the classical music to romantic period because he was able to write this symphony up to its full potential. His willingness to take the Sonata Allegro form to new limits really brought out the energy of his piece.

Mozart's Impact:

Mozart's music was well known for its lightness and smooth tone. It had a good balance of dynamics where it was not too extreme yet there was some emotional expression. He helped create a good balance in the orchestra where every instrument had the melody at different points in his music. Mozart's Symphony number 40 showcases that Mozart was willing to experiment with new things such as writing in a minor key. This was the only symphony that he wrote which contained a little bit of a heavy tone which could have been a slight hint for the Romantic Period style.

Mozart helped impact the society during this time period because he was able to challenge people that classical music could make people more intelligent. He showed that his music could be used as an educational tool.

Mozart contributed more to the classical music period because he was the one who made the symphonic form famous. He also put emphasis for playing the notes with a light tone such as using spiccato. Short bow strokes on the violin were emphasized. Mozart's symphony had a little more restraint and was not dramatic as Beethoven. Mozart's Symphony number 40 was successful because Mozart made a bold statement that he could write in different styles that were not his usual classical style like his other symphonies. This symphony showcased bits of romantic elements as well with the use of more connected phrases.

Mozart was more formulaic with the Sonata Allegro form due to that this time period he had to be more restrained. He was the one who made this structure prominent and the other classical composers built off of it. This symphony worked with one main theme and one sub theme in the development. Mozart's music was very organized so it was easy for the audience to follow.

Conclusion:

Mozart had a greater impact on the classical music period than Beethoven did. Both of them helped enhance the development of the symphony during this period. Both composers influenced each other and crossed paths during their musical careers. They both praised each other and were not rivals.

Mozart has the slight edge because he was able to effectively balance his
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passion and emotion of the piece with delicacy and grace. Beethoven had a bigger impact on the romantic period than the classical music period because of the more freedom in his techniques and the more extreme dynamics and expression. His Symphony number 5 helped evolve the classical music period in that it adds new wrinkles of expression in classical music. He was able to express his emotions more openly than Mozart due to the transition in social lifestyle. His symphony number 40 helped evolve the classical music period because it added more long phrases and legatos. This Mozart piece introduced a heavier tone which is usually not seen in most of classical music There is also increased use of minor chords.

The classical music period was able to evolve from these examples of Mozart and Beethoven symphonies by creating more freedom of dynamic expression, experimenting with a variety of articulation techniques such as staccato and accents, and establish the orchestra setting seen around the world today. The Sonata Allegro form was made popular thanks to Mozart and Beethoven but they both took this form in different directions. Both composers helped contribute to the classical music period which established lasting legacies for both of them.

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