

Classical vs baroque era music

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Baroque Period

Musical texture during the Baroque period was also polyphonic and/or homophonic. Composers used melodic patterns to evoke certain moods. The use of text depiction continued. Rhythmic and melodic patterns are repeated throughout the composition. With the addition of instruments and the development of certain musical techniques such as basso continuo, music during the Baroque period became more intriguing.

Composers during this period were more open to experimentation and improvisation. Major and minor scales and chords were used during this time. Baroque music has unity of mood throughout the composition. Rhythm is also more constant. Rhythmic and melodic patterns tend to be repeated, although beats are more pronounced and there are also pitch changes within a composition. Even the dynamics tends to stay the same for most of the piece, but sometimes there is also an alternation of dynamics.

Classical Period

The themes within a movement of a Classical composition have more contrast of mood and it can change either gradually or suddenly. The rhythm is more flexible and there are at times sudden pauses and changes in beats. Music is more melodic and often homophonic. A change in dynamics is gradual. The piano became a popular instrument during this period and composers showcased the instruments' capabilities. This period also signaled the end of the basso continuo. Instrumental compositions usually had 4 movements and each movement may consist of 1 to 4 themes.

Similarities

In both the Baroque and Classical periods, composers were strongly tied to, connected to, and employed by the court of a Royal or Noble family of some sort, or a church. Mozart was employed by the Emperor of Austria, and Bach was employed by several different chapels in his lifetime. These wealthy patrons, establishments or families usually provided for the composers welfare and lifestyle.

Baroque and Classical music both share basic functional harmony that is not very adventurous in modulation, however, the mid to late Classic period begins to show signs of harmonic exploration to a wider degree. Some Baroque progressions are not commonly found in Classical music, however.

Forms of the Baroque laid ground for many periods to come. Techniques and styles were not forgotten as the Classical period came to noticeable rise around the death of Bach. Composers still wrote famous and striking operas, concertos, masses, and sonatas. Aspects of Classical era opera are: all of the words are sung, the style of singing must be powerful enough to project the words and music throughout the opera house, words are often not in English, and the plots of operas are usually shortened, because more time is required to express a thought in music than simply speaking.

Also, Classical opera requires the suspension of realities that affect any drama. For example, a change of scene most likely means that a large amount of time has passed between these two scenes within the opera. The purpose of Classical opera is not to imitate reality, but rather heighten it to a degree that is not bound by logic. It appeals to the imagination of the audience

The music of an opera consists of recitatives, arias, and choruses. The chorus usually participates on stage from behind the main characters. Several traditions exist about the type of voices and the characters portrayed. The heroine and hero usually a soprano and tenor, and the villain or authority figure is often a bass.

Two types of operas were important during the Classical period: opera seria and opera buffa. Opera seria was the traditional tragic opera that often featured stories about ancient Greek and Roman heroes and gods. Opera buffa (comic opera) was filled with fun and frivolity. It was written in vernacular languages, and used humorous dialogue and sometimes included popular tunes. Homophonic texture was mostly used, with only occasional counterpoint. New forms developed for individual movements: sonata-allegro, theme and variations, rondo, and minuet and trio.

Niccolò Piccinni, Christoph Willibald Gluck, and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart were three well known opera composers during the early Classical era. Famous pieces that they wrote included: *La buona figliuola*, *Orfeo ed Euridice*, and *La finta giardiniera*, respectively.