

# The Classical Period-Notes

The Classical period lasted from approximately **1750 – 1810**.

This was a fairly brief period but contains the work of three of the greatest composers of all time. They were....

## **Joseph Haydn (1732-1809) Austrian**

Haydn was one of the most important and prolific composers of the Classical Period. He is viewed as the 'Father' of the period and taught both Mozart and Beethoven.

## **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart(1756 – 1791)Austrian**

Despite his short life, Mozart composed over six hundred works. Mozart showed incredible ability from his earliest childhood, composing and performing in public from the age of five.

## **Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 – 1827) German**

Beethoven was a crucial figure in the transitional period between the Classical and Romantic eras. He began to lose his hearing in the late 1790s, yet he continued to compose, conduct, and perform, even after becoming completely deaf.

Music of the Classical period reflected the qualities associated with Classical Architecture.

•**Grace and beauty of line.** The Melody was very important.

• **Proportion and Shape.**

The music was always in a Formal Structure.

•**Moderation and control.** Within the Formal Structure ,  
•the Classical composer strived for melodic expressiveness .

•**Clarity.** The Polyphonic style of the Baroque Period has fallen from Favour. Now the texture of the music tended to be lighter, clearer, less complicated and basically Homophonic.

## Modulation

Modulation means to change key.

An Accidental needs to be present for a modulation to occur.

There are two keys that a piece of music is most likely to modulate to.

The first is the Dominant Key. This sounds bright, like the music has been 'lifted' and is based on the 5<sup>th</sup> note of the home keys scale.

The Key of C Major modulating to it's Dominant key of G Major  
(1 step up from the Accidental)



The Key of F Major modulating to it's Dominant key of C Major  
(1 step up from the Accidental)



The Key of G Major modulating to it's Dominant key of D Major  
(1 step up from the Accidental)



The second key that a piece of music is most likely to modulate to is it's Relative Minor.  
This is found 3 steps down from the 'Tonic (doh)'.

The accidental always appears in chord V of the new key Cadence.

Key of C Major modulating to A minor (1 step up from the Accidental)



Key of F Major modulating to D minor (1 step up from the Accidental)



Key of G Major modulating to E minor (1 step up from the Accidental)



### General guidelines:-

- A modulation has occurred when you see an **accidental**.
- The name of the new Key is the note **one step up from the Accidental**.
- If the music remains in a Major tonality it has modulated to **The Dominant**.

## The Classical Orchestra

The Continuo fell from use. The String Section increased in size. The Woodwind section became complete with the addition of the Clarinet. The Trombone was not as popular as the now developing, French Horn. The French Horn is a real feature of Classical Orchestral Music. The Percussion Section was still mainly the Timpani but this was expanded at the end of the Classical Period

### The Piano

During the Classical period, for the first time in musical history, music for instruments became more important than music for voices.

Many works were written for the new **Pianoforte** or **Piano** for short.

The Piano replaced the Harpsichord due to its considerable powers of expression.

Not only could a pianist make sudden contrasts between soft and loud, he could also control all the various shades of tone and volume in between.

Further contrasts could also be made between **legato** and **Staccato**.

A player might play an expressive legato melody with his right hand accompanying with a crisp detached left hand.

A favourite kind of accompaniment pattern often used by Classical composers was...

### **Alberti Bass**

This consisted of simple **Broken Chords** repeated in the left hand. This helped to keep the music moving whilst outlining harmonies to support the important Melody. e.g.

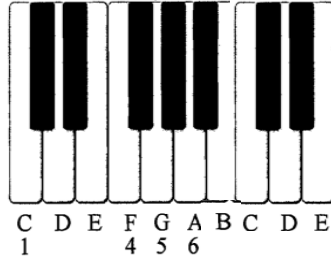


# Chords

- A chord is several notes played together
- Often a chord is made up of Three notes.
- A three note Chord is called a Triad.

**In the key of C major**

C is note 1 of the scale  
 F is note 4 of the scale  
 G is note 5 of the scale  
 A is note 6 of the scale



Roman numerals are traditionally used for naming chords in a key.

**Key of C major**

Here are the notes in chord I



Chord number I  
 Chord name C

Chord notes 

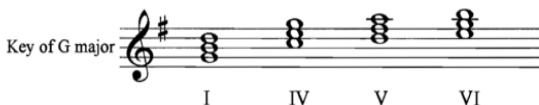
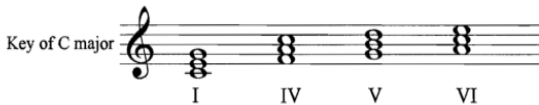
G
E
C

**Roman numeral**

Triad built on note 1	I
Triad built on note 4	IV
Triad built on note 5	V
Triad built on note 6	VI

You will be familiar with chords I, IV, V and VI in the key of C major. Here is how those chords appear in written notation in the keys you are required to know.

Three-note chords written this way are called triads.



In a major key, chords I, IV and V are major, while chord VI is minor.



In a minor key, chords I and IV are minor, while chords V and VI are major.

Note also that chord V normally requires an accidental to raise the middle note by one semitone.

# Classical Form

Whether a work for a Soloist ,Quartet or Orchestra,  
Classical music followed this 3 to 4 movement Form.

## **MOVEMENT 1:SONATA FORM,ALLEGRO**

First movements were always in Sonata Form. So much so,  
that Sonata Form is also known as First Movement Form. This is the most  
Important structure of the Classical Period.

## **Movement 2:The Slow Movement**

Could be one of a variety of forms but the overall mood was ‘song-like’  
and more lyrical than the First movement.

## **Movement 3:A Minuet or Scherzo**

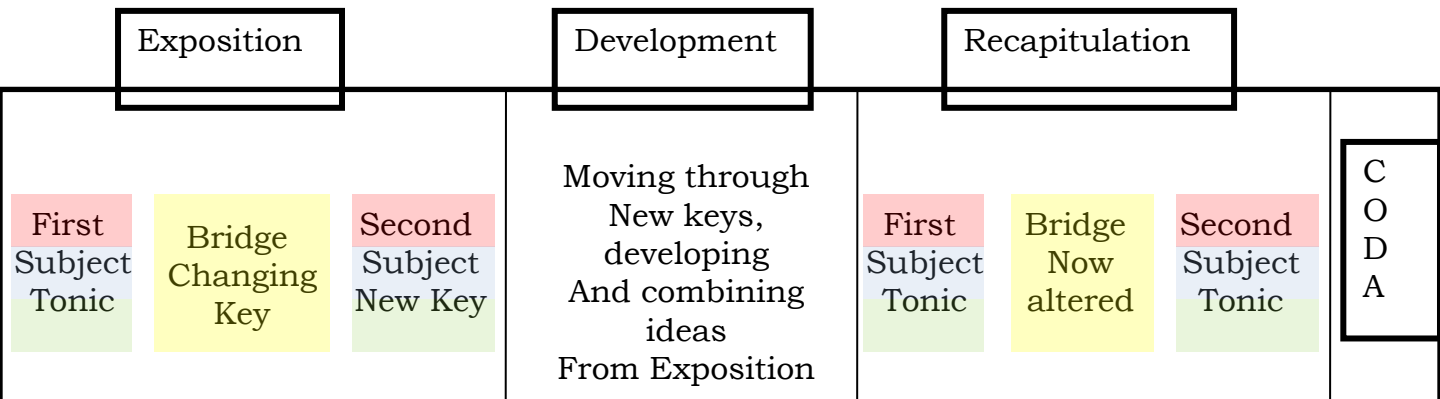
Haydn and Mozart used a Minuet in this movement. Later Beethoven  
Developed it into a Scherzo(This means ‘Joke’ in Italian).It was in  $\frac{3}{4}$  and  
Ternary Form like the Minuet but was faster and light hearted.

## **Movement 4:A Fast finale**

Often in Rondo form(A,B,A,C,A,D,A).

If the Composer only wanted 3 Movements ,they would leave out the Minuet/Scherzo.  
This left the overall Structure: **Fast, Slow, Fast.**

## **MOVEMENT 1:SONATA FORM,ALLEGRO.**



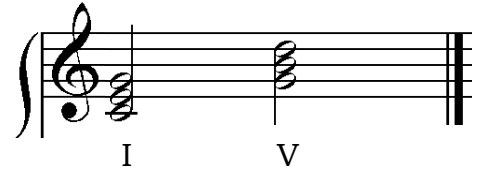
# Cadences

Cadences are like 'musical' punctuation and come at the end of phrases.

They are always made up of two Chords but can sound 'unfinished' like a comma in a sentence, or 'finished' like a full stop in a sentence.

There are two kinds of 'unfinished' Cadence.

Imperfect. The second Chord is always Chord V.  
It is the musical equivalent of a comma.

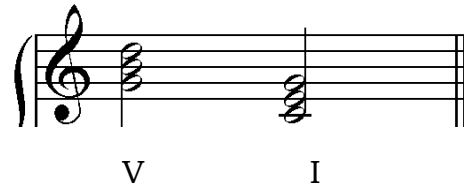


Interrupted. Chord V to VI. This is more of a 'surprise'.  
It sounds like a Perfect Cadence(V-I) has been 'avoided' at the last minute.

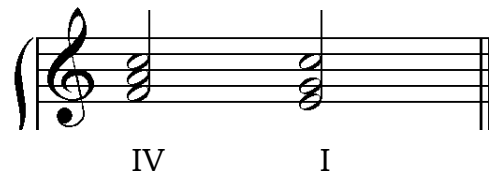


There are two kinds of 'finished' Cadence.

Perfect. V-I. Sounds like "The End".  
It is the musical equivalent of a Full Stop.



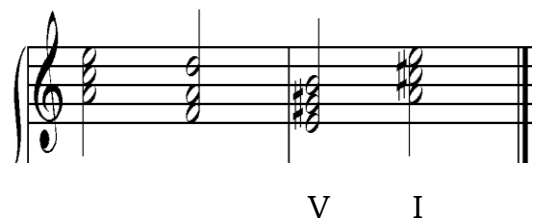
Plagal. IV-I. Sounds like "Amen". The 5<sup>th</sup> of IV and the root of I are the same note and are often in the same 'voice' in this Cadence.  
In this example it is the note 'C'.



This final Cadence is called a Tierce de Picardie.  
It is a type of Perfect Cadence which only occurs at the end of a Minor piece of music.  
The 3<sup>rd</sup> of the final chord is raised a semitone to make the chord Major instead of Minor.

It is like the sun coming out after the rain.

The last chord is now A major, not A Minor.



## Chamber Music

**Chamber Music** is music written for a small group of instruments.

It includes any music that is performed by a small number of performers with one performer to a part.

The word "**chamber**" signifies that the music can be performed in a small room, often in a private salon with an intimate atmosphere.

This group of Ensembles includes Trios(3), Quartets(4) and Quintets(5).

## The Sonata

**Sonata** was the name a Classical composer gave to a work for **Piano** or a **Solo instrument** with **Piano Accompaniment**.

For example a Piano Sonata or a Violin Sonata(This included piano accompaniment). This followed the Classical Form but usually used only the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and Last movements in a **Fast, Slow, Fast** Pattern.

## The Classical Concerto

The Baroque Concerto Grosso , contrasted two different sized ensembles within the Orchestra. This now gave way to the Classical Concerto. The Contrast was now between the Orchestra and a Soloist.

The soloist was the 'star' and was given plenty opportunity to 'show-off' their playing skills, especially during the Cadenza.

During the Cadenza, The Orchestra stops playing and the soloist plays/improvises a technically demanding passage, showcasing their skills.

The soloist signalled to the Orchestra to come back in by playing a Trill.

## The Symphony

A Symphony is a large work for Orchestra.

Unlike the Concerto, it has no soloists.

It exemplifies the Classical Form.

All the Classical composers wrote Symphonies.

## Classical Opera

Mozart wrote 22 Operas. They were very popular entertainment. They were full of Drama, Love, Intrigue and Comedy. They included...

•**Overture**-The Orchestral Music at the Start

•**Recitative**-Sung Speech.

•**Choruses**- These were not a huge feature of Mozart's Operas. They were like Soap Operas and Focused on the main characters.

•**Arias**-Songs for the main characters to sing.

Mozart particularly liked to write **Arias** for **Coloratura Sopranos** to sing. A **Coloratura Soprano** specialises in music that is distinguished by agile runs and leaps. The term **Coloratura** refers to the elaborate ornamentation of a melody.

### Mass

A Mass as we have already learned, is a Roman Catholic Church Service.

Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven all wrote Masses.

All Masses follow the same text. The sections are...

❖**Kyrie Eleison**

❖**Gloria**

❖**Credo**

❖ **Sanctus, Hosanna, Benedictus** (These are interchangeable)

❖**Agnus Dei**

### Beethoven

Beethoven is a massive figure in the History of Music.

He strides across two Eras and has been described as the last of the Classical Composers and, at the same time, the first of the Romantics.

It is usual to divide Beethoven's life and works into three periods.

The first shows the influence of Haydn and Mozart.

The works of the second period are written in a more individual personal style, on a grander scale and with great depth of feeling.

The third period was when Beethoven was totally deaf, completely cutting him off from the world of sound except in his imagination.

Drama and conflict are essential ingredients in Beethoven's style, stemming from a powerful rhythmic drive, a sharper use of discords, frequently marked Sforzando and striking contrasts.

Beethoven increased the size of the Orchestra. He adds more horns, piccolo, Double Bassoon, Trombones, Bass drum, cymbals and triangle.