

DT501/1  
History of Music: Classical/Romantic

Dr Adrian Smith

Lecture 1: Introduction and the  
Gallant Style

# The Classical Period

- Preceded by the Baroque Period (1600-1750)
- The Classical Period lasts from around (1750 to 1800)
- Followed by the Romantic Period (1800-1910)
- Years given are approximations. All stylistic periods always show considerable overlapping.

## Why Classical?

- Should be distinguished from the term 'Classical Music'.
- Parallels movements in other arts of the time: architecture, literature, painting.
- Emulates the ideals of Classical Antiquity.
- Stresses balance, harmony, formality in contrast to Baroque complexity and ornamentation.

# Main differences between music from the Baroque and Classical periods

## Baroque

- Mood stays constant
- Melody: one melodic idea 'spun-out' for the entire piece, irregular phrase structure and infrequent cadences
- Rhythm: continuous forward motion

## Classical

- More dramatic changes
- Melody: several contrasting themes, regular and **periodic** phrase structure (2,3,4 bars), frequent cadences
- Rhythm: multiplicity of rhythmic patterns

# Main differences between music from the Baroque and Classical periods

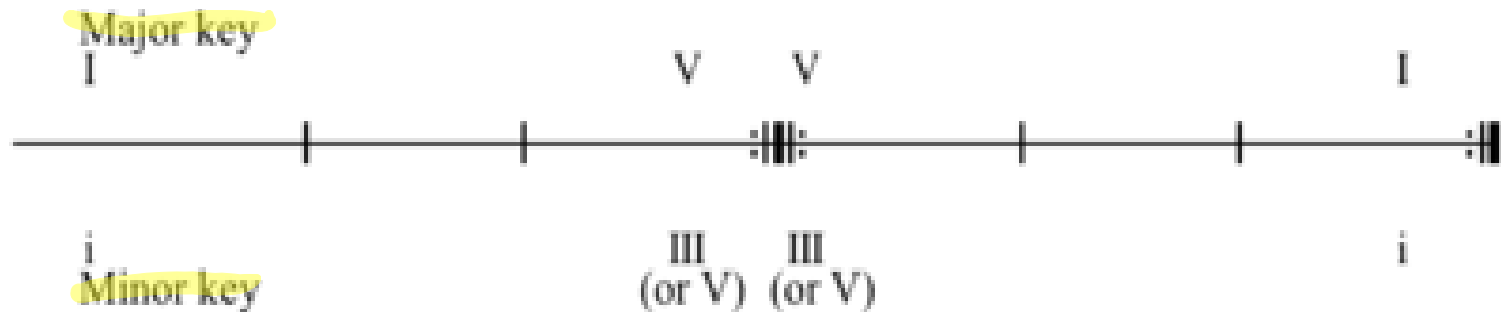
## Baroque

- Texture: polyphonic - two or more simultaneous independent lines
- Dynamics: terraced, sudden and sharp distinctions between loud and soft
- Form: binary dance forms, fugue, ritornello form.

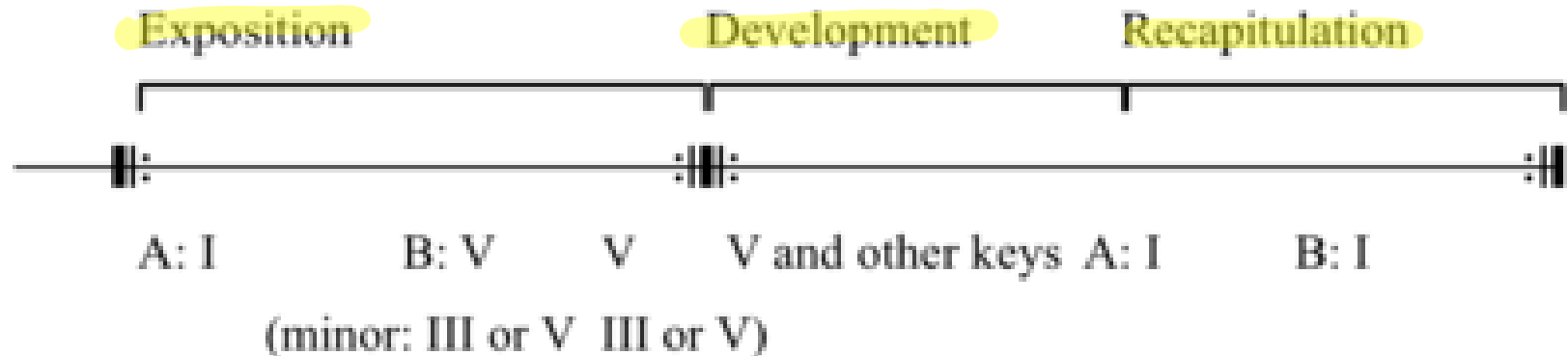
## Classical

- Texture: homophonic - one dominant melodic voice accompanied by chords
- Dynamics: greater range of dynamics, crescendos and decrescendos
- Form: the development of large-scale sonata form

# Binary Form



# Sonata form



# 启蒙运动

## What is the Enlightenment?



Enlightenment is man's emergence from his self-imposed immaturity. <sup>自我加强</sup> Immaturity is the inability to use one's understanding without guidance from another. This immaturity is self-imposed when its cause lies not in lack of understanding, but in lack of resolve and courage to use it without guidance from another. Sapere Aude! [dare to know] "Have courage to use your own understanding!"—that is the motto of enlightenment.

*What is Enlightenment?* (1784)

# Europe during the 18th century

## The Age of the Enlightenment (1620s-1780s)

### Reason

Verification

Logic

Science

Autonomous thinking

vs

遗传的

### Inherited Wisdom

Tradition and Custom

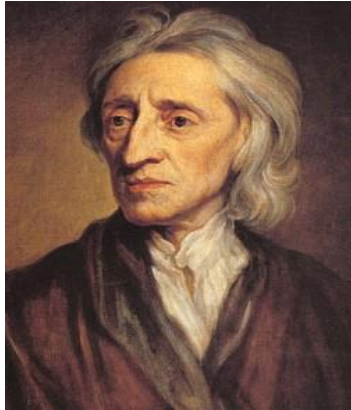
Belief

迷信  
Superstition

- Enlightenment thinkers applied reason to various branches of knowledge: ethics, politics, art, science, philosophy.
- Natural law: the belief that individuals have certain inalienable rights which are common to all humankind and that are derived from nature rather than the conventions of a particular society.
- Largely began the quest for universal ideals: freedom, universal education and social equality

# English Empiricism

John Locke



Bishop Berkeley



David Hume



## The *Philosophes*

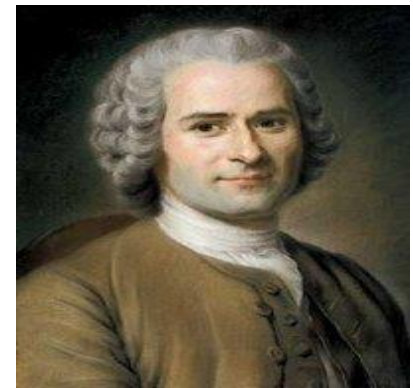
Denis Diderot



Voltaire



Rousseau





# Europe during the 18th century

## The Age of Absolutism

- Term not quite accurate
- The century exhibited a range of regimes from the decentralised republican confederation of Switzerland, constitutional monarchies in Britain and Sweden and republics in Venice and Poland-Lithuania.
- Absolutist regimes confined to Prussia, Russia and Austro-Hungary
- Enlightened Despots: Catherine (the Great )in Russia, Frederick II (the Great) in Prussia, and Emperor Joseph II in Austria
- Combined absolutism with the enlightenment emphasis on rationality. Promoted religious toleration, limited freedom of expression and education and the cultivation of the arts.

# Frederick the Great playing the flute



The Enlightenment Legacy?

# Classicism in the Arts: Architecture



Murcia Cathedral, Spain



Panthéon, Paris



# Classicism in the Arts: Painting



Jean-Antoine Watteau  
*Pilgrimage to Cythera*



Jacques-Louis David  
*Oath of the Horatii*

# Classicism in the Arts: Literature

True Ease in Writing comes from Art, not Chance,  
As those move easiest who have learned to dance.  
'Tis not enough no Harshness gives Offence,  
The *Sound* must seem an *Echo* to the *Sense*.

All nature is but art, unknown to thee;  
All chance, direction, which thou canst not see;  
All discord, harmony not understood;  
All partial evil, universal good.  
And, spite of pride, in erring reason's spite,  
One truth is clear, Whatever is, is right.  
Alexander Pope (1688-1744) – Essays on Man

# Changes in Music's Social Role and Mode of Production

- The newly-emergent middle class created a new market for music publishers.
- Amateur music-making and connoisseurship.
- The new institution of the public concert alongside traditional sources of patronage (church, court, state)
- Demand for simple, accessible, entertaining music vs. the complexity of the Baroque style.
- Emergence of the Galant Style

# The Galant Style (c.1720-1770)

- Derived from the French term 'galant' meaning fashionable, chic, elegant, convivial.
- Originated however in Italian operas and concertos
- Inspired by the 'natural' melodic quality of song.

## Musical Characteristics

- Simplified song-like melodies.
- Periodic phrase structure - short melodic phrases in 2,3 or 4 measures with frequent cadences.
- Simplified harmony emphasising tonic and dominant.
- Decreased use of polyphony.
- Homophonic – lighter accompaniment (pulsing chords, figurations such as Alberti bass).



# Johann Christian Bach (1735-1782)



- The youngest son of J. S. Bach.
- Studied in Bologna and worked as organist in Milan.
- Known as the 'London' or 'English' Bach. He moved to London in 1762 where he worked as composer, performer, teacher and impresario.
- Founded the successful Bach-Abel concerts in London.
- In his day one of the most famous composers in Europe.
- Influence on the young Mozart.
- Recommended Listening: Keyboard Sonata in D major, Op. 5, no. 2

# Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (1714-1788)



- Fifth child and second (surviving) son of J. S. Bach.
- One of the greatest harpsichordists of his time.
- Became harpsichordist to the Crown Prince of Prussia, later Frederick the Great, and left his service in 1767
- Succeeded his godfather Telemann as director of music of the five city churches of Hamburg.
- Most famous exponent of both the *empfindsamer* style.

# *Empfindsamkeit*

- Derived from the German word *Empfindung* meaning 'sensation'.
- An aesthetic which depicted inward, subjective feelings with frequent changes of mood. Sought to capture the way 'real' people felt.
- Literary origins in the poetry of Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock (1724-1803), C. P. E. Bach's neighbour in Hamburg.
- Usually composed for small ensembles in a private setting, e. g. solo keyboard.
- Characteristics of music in the *Empfindsamkeit* style
  - Improvised quality
  - Rhapsodic melodic style
  - Unpredictable rhythms
  - Use of dissonant harmonies
- Most associated with the keyboard fantasias and slow movements of C. P. E. Bach.

Since a musician cannot move others unless he himself is moved, he must of necessity feel all of the affects that he hopes to arouse in his listeners. He communicates his own feelings to them and thus most effectively moves them to sympathy. In languishing, sad passages, the performer must languish and grow sad.... Similarly, lively, joyous passages, the executant must again put himself in the appropriate mood. And so, constantly varying the passion he will barely quiet one before he rouses another.

C. P. E. Bach: *An Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments*.

# Prescribed Reading

Essential Reading:

(*A History of Western Music*,) chapter 20 pp. 463-476 and chapter 22, pp. 499-512.

Supplementary Reading:

Downs, Philip G., *Classical Music: the Era of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven* (London/New York: W. W. Norton, 1992), chapter 3, pp. 32-72.

Taruskin, Richard, *Music in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 399–444.

# Prescribed Listening

C. P. E. Bach: Sonata in F major 'Prussian' (all three movements)

J. C. Bach: Keyboard Sonata in D major, Op. 5, no. 2

(links sent via email)