Chapter 12
Instrumental Music in the Classical Era
The Language of Instrumental Music

• since antiquity, theorists and musicians considered vocal music superior to purely instrumental music

• without words music could please the senses but could not embody concepts or reason

• Rousseau said: “The words to be sung usually provide us with the means to determine the object being imitated, and it is through the touching sounds of the human voice that this image awakens ... the sentiment it is intended to arouse.” (Bonds p. 315)

• Kant believed that instrumental music was “more pleasure than culture.” (Bonds p. 316)

• Nevertheless, the idea emerged that instrumental music had a syntax and rhetoric of its own
Form and Genre in the Instrumental Music of the Classical Era

- Most important genres of Classical era were: sonata, string quartet, symphony, concerto consisting of three or four movements providing contrasts of tempo.

- First and last movements were fast; middle movement (or one of the middle movements) was slower.

- Slow movements could take many forms: sonata form, theme and variations, ternary.
Form and Genre in the Instrumental Music of the Classical Era

• in four movement cycles, one of the interior movements (usually the third) was almost always a minuet

• minuet is in triple meter and almost always consists of two juxtaposed binary (or rounded binary) forms
  
  – first of these binary (or rounded binary) forms is minuet proper and the second is trio
  
  – a *da capo* of the minuet makes the complete movement a compound ternary
Form and Genre in the Instrumental Music of the Classical Era

- finales can take on a variety of forms, most common of which are sonata form and rondo
- rondos involve alternation of recurring theme with contrasting material
- 5-part rondo can be diagramed as ABACA, where A is the refrain, B & C represent contrasting ideas (often called episodes or couplets)
- 7-part rondo can be diagramed ABACABA

Thursday, February 7, 13
Form and Genre in the Instrumental Music of the Classical Era

- **sonata-rondo form** blends aspects of both sonata form and 7-part rondo form

- it may be diagramed as:

  - **Expo**
    - A B A
  - **Dev**
    - “C”
    - unstable and development like
  - **Recap**
    - A B A
Form and Genre in the Instrumental Music of the Classical Era

Sonata

- remained essential domestic genre of instrumental music
- keyboard sonata flourished due to growing availability of piano
Piano by Johann Andreas Stein, Augsburg, 1790.

Mozart praised the responsive action of Stein’s pianos, which had a keyboard of 61 notes. The dampers were controlled by a sideways-moving lever operated by the player’s right knee.

(see Bonds p. 321)
Form and Genre in the Instrumental Music of the Classical Era

Sonata

- Haydn Piano Sonata in Cm, first mvmt.
  - three movement sonata
  - first movement is 100 measures showing an increasing length in sonatas
  - exhibits aesthetic features common to “Sturm und Drang”
Form and Genre in the Instrumental Music of the Classical Era

- *Sturm und Drang* (storm and stress) - characteristics include:
  - use of minor mode
  - large melodic leaps
  - jagged syncopations
  - sudden dynamic contrasts

- result is sense of heightened emotional intensity and drama

- According to Umberto Eco, *Sturm und Drang* was a literary movement in Germany ca. 1767-1786 -- (see Eco *History of Beauty* chapter 12.4)
  - Friedrich Maximilian Klinger wrote the play *Sturm und Drang* (1776) which dealt with two families in the American Revolution
  - Goethe and Schiller are also important to this movement
Form and Genre in the Instrumental Music of the Classical Era

- Sturm und Drang
  - German literary movement
  - aesthetic matches the Romantic period
  - “rebelled against the formal structure and order of Neo-Classicism, replacing it with an emphasis on originality, imagination, and feelings.”
  - “Its chief subjects were nature, primitive emotions, and protest against established authority.”

[source: Culture and Values p. 451]
Form and Genre in the Instrumental Music of the Classical Era

String Quartet

• genre develops new in the Classical era
• its performance forces - two violins, viola, violoncello - are from same family giving a homogeneous timbre
• no basso continuo line
• domestic genre for performance in the house or salon to a small select audience
Form and Genre in the Instrumental Music of the Classical Era

String Quartet

• early examples consists of three, four or five movements
• four-movement format emerges as the standard
• Haydn is credited with setting this standard for string quartets by 1760 (Bonds p. 320)
Form and Genre in the Instrumental Music of the Classical Era

String Quartet

- Haydn String Quartet in C, Op. 33, No. 3
  - first movement -- fast in sonata form
  - second mvmt. -- scherzo trio
  - third mvmt. -- slow in sonata form
  - fourth mvmt. -- fast in rondo form
Form and Genre in the Instrumental Music of the Classical Era

**Symphony**

- around 1720s, these three-movement works (fast-slow-fast) began to appear independent of any opera or oratorio for which they had been written

- concert symphony was intensely cultivated throughout the Classical era

- quality of orchestras varied within Europe, but their size grew during second half of 18th century
Form and Genre in the Instrumental Music of the Classical Era

Symphony

- familiar four-movement structure became standard after c. 1768
- first movement - typically the weightiest and sets the expressive tone, usually in sonata form sometimes with slow introduction
- second movement - usually slow takes a variety of forms, including sonata form, sonatina, theme and variations or ABA
Form and Genre in the Instrumental Music of the Classical Era

*Symphony*

- third movement - minuet & trio type form
- second and third movements may be interchanged
- finale - last movement; usually relatively light often in sonata form, rondo or sonata-rondo form
- slow introductions - in addition to their musical qualities, served a practical purpose: to dampen noise of the audience
Form and Genre in the Instrumental Music of the Classical Era

Symphony

- Haydn Symphony No. 103 in Eb, first movement (1795)
  - sonata form with a slow introduction
  - one of Haydn’s London Symphonies
  - Haydn wrote ca. 104 symphonies
  - this slow intro may relate to notions of the sublime (tends to be associated with the Romantics)
Haydn corrects Beethoven’s counterpoint exercises. Haydn has marked voice leading errors with an “X” above the staves. To the right he has written out a preferred solution.
Form and Genre in the Instrumental Music of the Classical Era

*Concerto*

- principal genre for instrumental virtuosos to showcase their talents
- ideals of spontaneity and improvisation exerted a powerful influence - cadenzas in most movements
Form and Genre in the Instrumental Music of the Classical Era

Concerto

- first movements employ a variant of sonata form called double-exposition concerto form
- presents two expositions - first for full orchestra (tutti exposition) and a second for soloist (solo exposition)
Form and Genre in the Instrumental Music of the Classical Era

Concerto

- tutti exposition does not modulate, remaining in the tonic for Th-1 and Th-2
- solo exposition begins in tonic and moves to secondary key area
- development and recapitulation proceed along lines of conventional sonata form with opportunity for solo cadenza toward the end of the recapitulation
Form and Genre in the Instrumental Music of the Classical Era

Concerto

- Mozart *Piano Concerto No. 1 in D* (K. 107), first movement
  - first movement based on J.C. Bach’s *Piano Sonata in D*, Op. 5, No. 2
  - uses a typical “double exposition” of the concerto-sonata form
Form and Genre in the Instrumental Music of the Classical Era

Concerto

- Mozart *Piano Concerto in Eb*, (K. 271), first movement
  - “double exposition” type sonata form in the first movement
  - Mozart wrote out two cadenzas for this piece