



THE CLASSICAL PERIOD

(1750–1820)

Composers

- Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)
- Muzio Clementi (1752–1832)
- Carl Czerny (1791–1857)
- Anton Diabelli (1781–1858)
- Franz Joseph Haydn (1732–1809)
- Friedrich Kuhlau (1786–1832)
- Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)

Keyboard Instruments

- Harpsichord
- Pianoforte

The pianoforte was invented by Bartolommeo Cristofori in 1700. It was originally called “gravicembalo col piano e forte,” which means “harpsichord with soft and loud.”


Typical Forms

- Sonatina
- Sonata
- Concerto
- Minuet & Trio
- Rondo
- Theme & Variations


KEYS TO STYLISTIC MASTERY

Melody


Influenced by vocal music.

 Sing the melody as you play; follow the rise and fall of the line to shape it.




Grouped into two- and four-measure phrases.


 Lift your wrists at phrase endings and breathe.

Often based on short *motives* with two- or three-note slurs.


 As you *articulate* short *motives*, create a long line.

Rhythm

Frequent changes in the subdivisions of the beat from  to  and 


 Write the counting in the music and count aloud (1+2+, etc.).

Rests and fermatas often add humor and drama.


 Observe, count and feel the rests and fermatas.

Harmony

Chord patterns in *closely related keys*; themes often repeated in different keys.


 Determine the key at the beginning and end of each section and when themes repeat.

Surprise harmonies and *non-chord tones* used to enhance musical expression.

 Listen for the notes or harmonies that add color to the music. Highlight these notes by taking a little time on them.


Tempo


Must be steady.

 Learn the music using the metronome.

Texture


Single melody line against a solid or broken chord accompaniment.

 First *block* any broken chords.


 Generally, keep the accompaniment two dynamic levels softer than the melody.

Technique


Many scale patterns and solid and broken chords.


 Practice the notes and fingerings of scales and chords using different dynamics and touches.


Singing melody must project above a softer accompaniment.

 Use arm weight to project the melody. Keep fingers close to the keys to play broken chords softly.

Sound should be clear with precise *articulation* and varied touches.


 Keep fingertips firm for a clear sound.

 Use a small down-up wrist motion on the slurs.


 Observe when there are different touches in each hand.

Dynamics

***Motives* often repeat, suggesting different dynamic levels.**


 Vary the dynamics when the motive repeats.

Range should be between *pp* and *ff* with sharp dynamic contrast.

 *Piano* must be clear and elegant; *forte* should be full and bright.


Expression

Different themes reflect contrasting moods.

 Determine the mood or *character* of each section. In the music, write a word or draw an image that describes the mood.


Pedal

Light touches of *damper pedal* on long notes.


 Listen for long notes that will sing out more with a light touch of pedal.

Additional Considerations

Drama and contrast highlighted by thinking orchestrally.

 In the score, write the instruments you can imagine playing the music.

Influence of Classical dance steps.

 Look for two- and three-note slurs and imagine dancers bowing to each other.