CHAPTER15

CHAPTER 15: THE EARLY CLASSIC PERIOD: INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

Chapter Outline

Prelude. (CHWM 330)

The new musical idiom of the mid-eighteenth century, developed primarily in opera, became pervasive in instrumental music, which gained new independence. The era saw a rise in works for piano, string quartets, and symphonies, as well as the development of sonata form.

I. Sonata (CHWM 330–33, NAWM 106)

In the Classic period, *sonata*had different meanings, including a compositional form or procedure.

1. Koch’s sonata form   
   German theorist Heinrich Christoph Koch described first-movement form (*sonata form*) as an expanded *binary form*, with both sections normally repeated. The first section, with one main period, presents the movement’s main idea in the tonic and modulates to the dominant or relative major. The second section, with two main periods, modulates back to the tonic, then restates material from the first section in the tonic.
2. Keyboard sonata   
   Keyboard works were in great demand by amateurs in the middle and late eighteenth century, and sonatas were considered the most challenging genre for performers and listeners.
3. Domenico Scarlatti   
   *Domenico Scarlatti*(1685–1757), son of Alessandro Scarlatti, worked in Portugal and Spain and composed many keyboard works, including 555 sonatas.
4. Sonatas   
   In his keyboard sonatas, Scarlatti typically used *balanced binary form*, and although his style is not galant, he did use a great variety of figuration. **Music: NAWM 106**

**A Closer Look: Binary Forms**   
Most forms of the Classic era modulate from the tonic to the dominant and then return to the tonic. *Simple binary form*features two sections, each repeated, roughly equal in length, and featuring different musical material. *Balanced binary form* presents new material in the dominant at the end of the first section and repeats it in the tonic at the end of the second section. *Rounded binary form*highlights the return of the tonic by repeating the material that opened the first section.

1. Paired sonatas   
   After 1745, Scarlatti paired sonatas together in his manuscripts.

II. Symphony (CHWM 334–36, NAWM 108–9)

1. Early symphonies   
   The earliest *symphonies,*dating from around 1730, originated from the opera overture and were influenced by the late Baroque concerto, the orchestral suite, and the trio sonata.
2. Sammartini   
   *Giovanni Battista Sammartini*(1701–1775) was one of the first symphony composers, whose three-movement works contained a variety of contrasting ideas. **Music: NAWM 108**
3. Mannheim orchestra   
   The *Mannheim*orchestra, led by *Johann Stamitz*(1717–1757), was renowned for its discipline, technique, dynamic range, and crescendos.
4. Johann Stamitz   
   Stamitz was the first composer to consistently use four movements and a theme after the modulation in his symphonies. **Music: NAWM 109**
5. Berlin   
   Berlin symphonists preferred less contrast and adopted a more serious tone marked by thematic development and counterpoint.

**A Closer Look: Symphony Orchestras**  
Italian orchestras consisted mostly of strings and were primarily used to support vocalists. By the middle of the eighteenth century, wind and brass instruments were regularly used for doubling the strings, adding color, and filling out harmonies.

1. Vienna and Paris   
   Vienna and Paris were also important centers of symphonic activity.

III. The EmpfindsamStyle (CHWM 336–37, NAWM 107)

The *empfindsam style* was adopted by several German composers around the middle of the eighteenth century.

1. Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach   
   *Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach*(1714–1788) composed in many vocal and instrumental genres, but he is best known for his keyboard works.
2. *Sturm und Drang*  
   Empfindsamstyle reached a climax in the 1760s and 1770s and has been linked to the literary movement *Sturm und Drang*(storm and stress).
3. Main characteristics of empfindsamstyle   
   Empfindsamstyle is characterized by sudden surprising changes. **Music: NAWM 107**

IV. Concerto (CHWM 338–39, NAWM 110)

1. Johann Christian Bach   
   *Johann Christian Bach*(1735–1782), Johann Sebastian Bach’s youngest son, studied and worked in Italy before going to London. There, he had a successful career and met the young Mozart, on whom he had a profound influence. The first-movement form of concertos was a combination of Baroque ritornello form (involving orchestral ritornellos alternating with solo episodes) and Classical sonata form (involving contrasts in key and thematic material). **Music: NAWM 110**
2. Cadenza   
   By the late eighteenth century, the soloist improvised a cadenza just before the final orchestral ritornello.

Postlude (CHWM 340-41)

In the eighteenth century, composers combined new styles of vocal music with existing traditions within the instrumental repertory to create new genres and forms. Individual compositions had wide and instant appeal, but they were replaced quickly and often by new music. The prolonged popularity of a few composers, such as C. P. E. Bach and J. C. Bach, was later overshadowed by Haydn and Mozart.