

Instruments/Ensemble

- Written for a fairly small orchestra
- No percussion
- Only brass are French horn (no trumpets/trombones!)
- Woodwind - seven players (flute, oboe, 2 clarinets and 2 bassoons)
- Original version didn't have clarinets (as they had only just been invented)
- Mozart wrote another later version (the one we are studying) that included them.

Style - Classical Features

- Balanced phrases – often of eight bars
- Graceful melody lines
- Melody dominated texture
- Musical structures had a sense of symmetry (e.g. sonata form)
- Structures defined by clear use of keys
- Harmony was functional (based on I, V, IV, II and VI)
- Ideas of contrast in terms of key, melody and more varied dynamics
- Orchestra was established as a standard instrumental ensemble
- New musical genres emerged – the symphony, concerto and string quartet.

Melodic/Musical Devices

- **Sequence** – used in opening melody in violins. First four bars repeated using a descending sequence. Also in the bridge passage
- **Chromaticism** – used in second subject (moves in semitones – G, F#, F, E, E flat, D)
- **Counter-melody** – used in development.
- **Augmentation** – doubling original notes values (used in codetta)
- **Pathétique** – literally pathetic, overall melancholy mood of the piece, particularly of the second subject that uses chromaticism.

Three musical points about this piece that I like:

Justify your points and use musical vocabulary.

1st subject (G minor)



2nd subject (Bb major)



Symphony No. 40 in G minor – 1st movement



Mozart



Structure

This movement is in **Sonata Form**, which is in three main sections:

Exposition – has two contrasting themes, 1st in G minor and 2nd in B flat major with a bridge or transition section linking them .

Development – themes go through lots of variations and by exploring different keys, instrumentation and dynamics. Mozart also develops the short rhythmic motifs from the 1st subject.

Recapitulation – pulls it all together again and repeats themes of the exposition but both in the tonic (G minor) this time, ends with Coda.

Structure and Tonality

EXPOSITION

- Starts in G minor then modulates(via Bridge/Transition passage) to B flat major for the second subject
- Extra chromatic notes add tension in the bridge passage.

DEVELOPMENT

- Harmonies are more chromatic
- Starts in F# minor, but explores lots of different keys

RECAPITULATION

- Returns to G minor and repeats the first subject
- Bridge passage is longer this time and passes through more keys – provides a link
- Second subject this time in G minor

NB – this is just the first movement. A classical symphony has four movements, each with a different speed – 1st: very fast, 2nd: slow, 3rd moderate and 4th very fast indeed.

Three musical points about this piece that I don't like:

Justify your points and use musical vocabulary.

How are the elements used?

Structure

In sonata form which has three sections. There is no intro. The exposition includes a bridge passage and codetta, then there is a development (contrasting middle section) and the recapitulation repeats the themes of the exposition but all in the tonic key, followed by a coda.

Tonality and Harmony

The first section opens in G minor and then moves to B flat major. The Development section modulates through other keys, before returning to the original key of G minor (for the Recapitulation). Oboes and bassoons provide harmonic filling or play sustained chords.

Timbre and texture

Small classical orchestra (no percussion, only brass is French Horn, no trumpets/trombones). Mainly melody dominated homophony used throughout. Explores other textures too. First and second violins play in octaves at first, also plays in unison. Other parts uses pedals (sustained notes) and it ends with homophonic texture.

Dynamics

Marked soft – *p* - at the beginning which is unusual for a Classical symphony – the opening is normally loud. Second subject has *crescendos*. The bridge is then loud – *f* and has lots of *sforzandos*.

Melody & Pitch

Moves mostly in step/conjunct movement with some leaps. Instruments generally play in their comfortable, middle registers (ranges) .The flute and violin 1 explore a higher range at times

Tempo & Rhythm

Fast *molto allegro* in a 4/4 time signature. Clear pulse which is easy to follow. Opening has a quaver accompaniment in the violas and on-beat crotchet bass notes from the basses. First subject (opening melody) is based on a driving pattern using quavers and semiquavers (pattern= 2 semiquavers + 1 quaver).

Practice questions:

1. Name the instrument playing the melody
2. Which family of instruments can you hear playing? (in the extract)
3. State four key features of the music from the Classical period.
4. Name two different types of texture found in this work
5. What is the purpose of the bridge section in the exposition?
6. What key is the second subject in during the recapitulation?
7. Mention two features of a development section
8. How many other movements are there in the rest of the symphony?
9. What is unusual about the orchestra that Mozart uses in this symphony compared to the standard Classical orchestra of the time?
10. How would you describe the mood of the first movement as a whole? Give musical reasons to back up your argument.
11. What is the role of the horns in this piece? Why is one in the key of G minor and one in B flat major?