HIGHER MUSIC

CLASSICAL PERIOD

(1750–1820)



THE CLASSICAL ORCHESTRA

STRINGS

Violin, viola, cello and double bass are **the core** backbone.



WOODWIND

Flute, oboe, **bassoon** and clarinet (newly introduced).



BRASS

Trumpet and French horn. Horns gained valves near the end of the period.



PERCUSSION

Primarily timpani (often playing rhythmic rolls). Occasional additions (e.g. triangle, hand cymbals, bass drum).

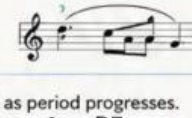


DID YOU KNOW?

Recorders were no longer used in this era.

MUSICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CLASSICAL PERIOD

TEXTURE	Lighter and homophonic (melody with accompaniment), with some polyphony. Alberti bass and broken chords, scale passages are frequent.
MELODY	Short, elegant and balanced phrases (question-and-answer).
HARMONY	Still **DIATONIC** but with increasing colourful chromatic chords as period progresses. DOMINANT 7th and DIMINISHED 7th chords are common.
CONTRAST	Highly varied pieces with frequent changes in mood and timbre.
DYNAMICS	Graded volumes using crescendo / diminuendo, plus sudden sforzando (sfz).
TIMBRE	**Piano completely replaces** the harpsichord in solo, chamber, and orchestral settings.
STYLE / FORM	Purely instrumental music overtakes vocal music in popularity (though opera and oratorio are still popular). The Baroque Concerto Grosso disappears; only the **Solo Concerto** remains (with **CADENZA**).







KEY DEVELOPMENTS

- Rise of the **SYMPHONY**
- Rise of Chamber Music (especially **STRING QUARTET**)
- Development of the **SONATA**

MAIN STYLES OF THE CLASSICAL PERIOD

VOCAL

Opera, Oratorio, Recitative, Aria, Duet, Choruses, Chamber Music

INSTRUMENTAL

Solo concerto, Symphony, String quartet, Sonata, Piano trio

KEY CLASSICAL COMPOSERS



HAYDN (1732–1809)



MOZART (1756–1791)



BEETHOVEN (1770–1827)

MAIN FORMS / STRUCTURE

SONATA FORM

(1st movement of sonatas, symphonies, concerti, chamber music)

EXPOSITION → DEVELOPMENT → RECAPITULATION → CODA

RONDO FORM

(often final movement)

A → B → A → C → A

MINUET & TRIO

(often 3rd movement)

A → B → A

SCHERZO

(sometimes replaces Minuet & Trio)

THEME & VARIATIONS

LISTEN FOR...

✓ Balanced phrases ✓ Clear structure ✓ Gradual dynamics ✓ Alberti bass ✓ Orchestra contrast ✓ Elegant melodies

EXAM TIP

Identify Classical music by its balance, cla[illegible] dir[illegible]

LIVEWORKSHEETS

THE SONATA

A KEY INSTRUMENTAL FORM OF THE CLASSICAL PERIOD



- **ORIGIN:** From the Italian *sonare* ("to sound"). Started in the Baroque era as a trio sonata with **basso continuo** (*so solo instrument with harpsichord and cello*).
- **CLASSICAL RISE:** Gained major prominence during the Classical period alongside the development of the **piano**.
- **INSTRUMENTATION:** Written for **solo piano** OR a **solo instrument** accompanied by piano (occasionally other chordal instruments like harp/guitar).
- **LAYOUT:** Formatted into **3 or 4 movements**, containing at least one movement written in strict **Sonata Form**.

WHAT IS A SONATA?

A sonata is an **instrumental** work written for one or **two instruments.**



It shows off musical ideas, contrast and development in a balanced structure.
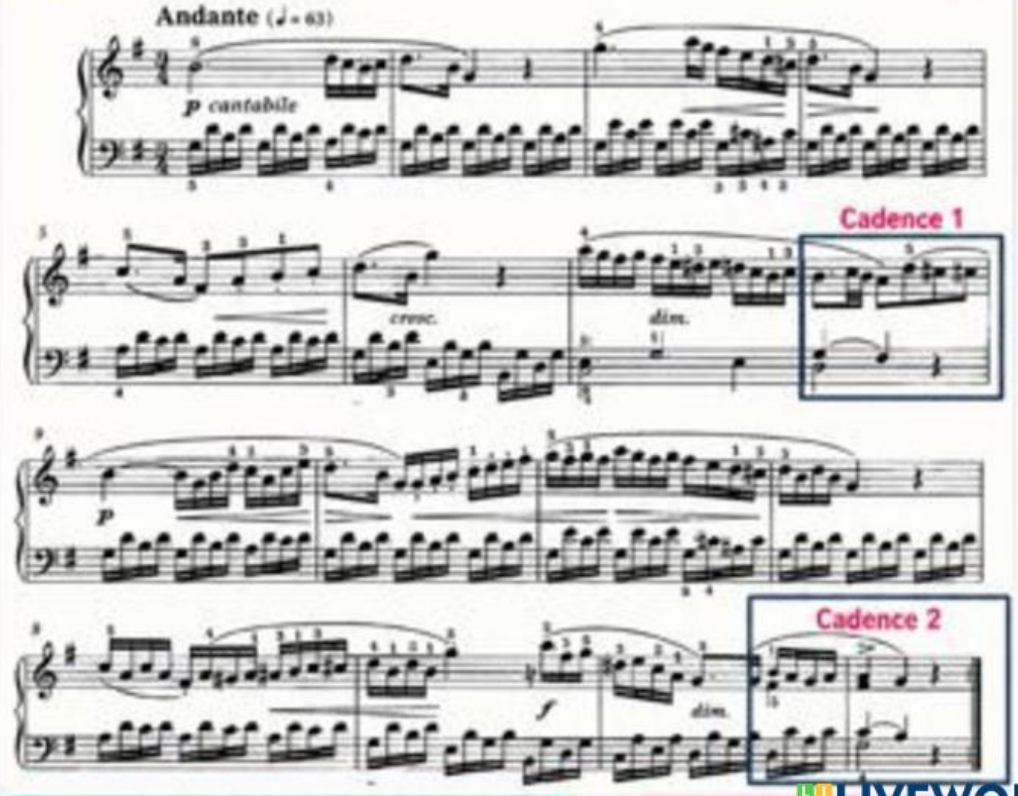
STRUCTURE OF MOVEMENTS IN A SONATA

MOVEMENT	CHARACTER	USUAL FORM
1 Movt 1	Fairly fast (sometimes a slow intro)	Usually SONATA FORM
2 Movt 2	Slow, lyrical, and song-like	Ternary Form (ABA) or Theme and Variations
3 Movt 3	Bright dance in 3/4 time	Minuet and Trio (Haydn/Mozart) or a fast, vigorous Scherzo (Beethoven)
4 Movt 4	Fast, lively, and light-hearted	Rondo Form, Sonata Form, or a hybrid of both

★ REMEMBER!

At least one movement (usually the 1st) is in Sonata Form.

LISTEN TO THE SLOW MOVEMENT OF MOZART'S SONATA IN C MAJOR & ANSWER THE QUESTIONS



LIVEWORKSHEETS

Name the key	
Name the cadences	1. 2
How do lines 1 & 2 compare to lines 3 &4	
What classical features do you see in this sonata?	

1 EXPOSITION

Presents the main musical ideas.

- 1st Subject – in the tonic key (home key)
- **Bridge Passage / Transition** – moves from the tonic key to the related key
- 2nd **Subject** – in the related key (usually the dominant)
- **Closing Section (Codetta)** – prepares the end of the exposition

2 DEVELOPMENT

Develops and explores the musical ideas.

- Ideas from the exposition are varied and developed
- Different keys are used
- The music often becomes more intense and dramatic
- Prepares for the return of the exposition

3 RECAPITULATION

Restates the main ideas.

- Both subjects return in the tonic key

Bridge Passage / Transition
Modified to stay in the tonic key and smoothly lead to the 2nd Subject in the tonic key

- 2nd Subject – in the tonic key
- **Closing Section (Coda)** – final conclusion and strong ending

SONATA FORM AT A GLANCE

EXPOSITION
- 1st Subject (tonic key)
- Bridge Passage / Transition (to related key)
- 2nd Subject (related key)
- Closing Section (Codetta)

→

DEVELOPMENT
- Develops & varies ideas
- Uses different keys
- More dramatic
- Prepares return
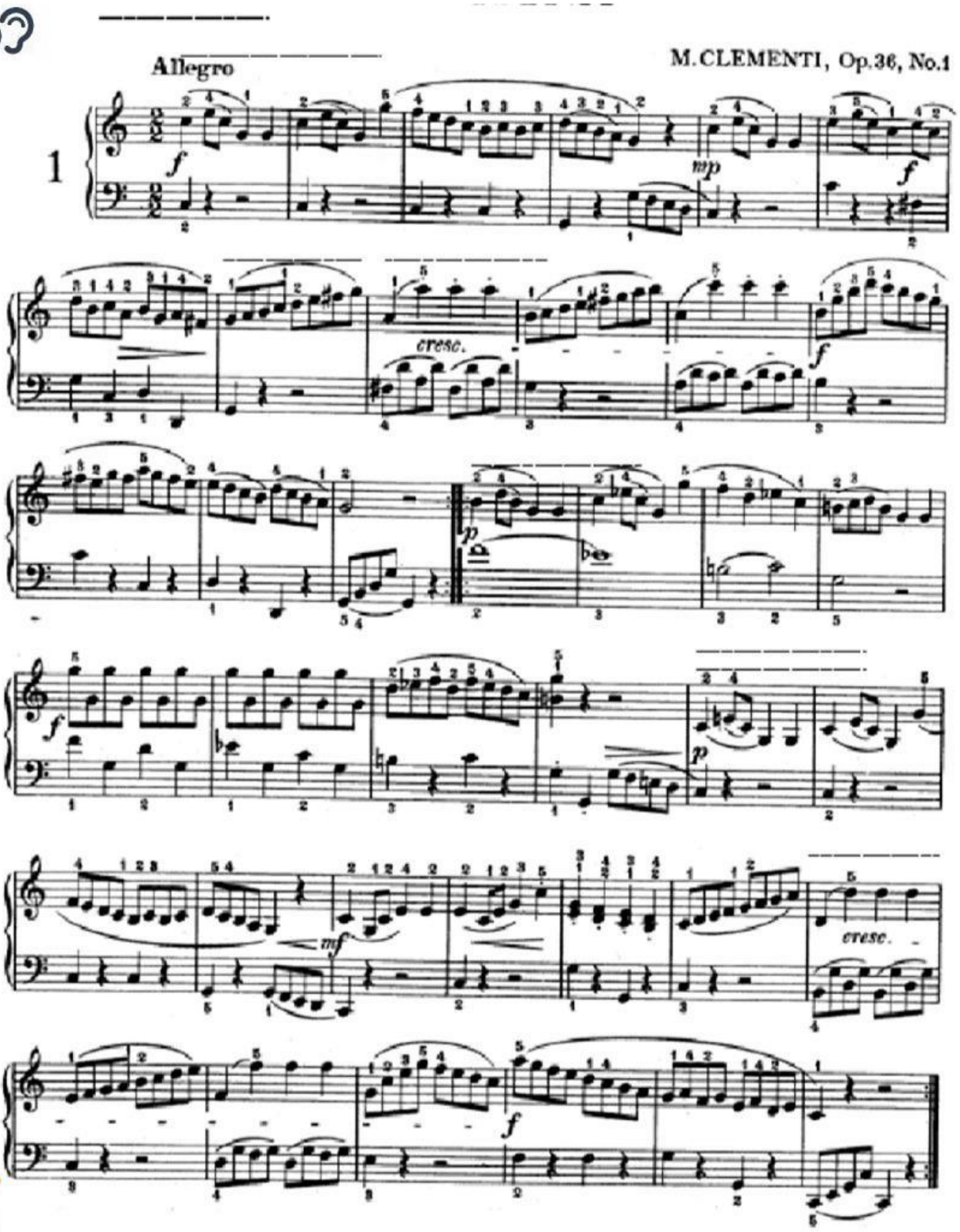
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RECAPITULATION
- 1st & 2nd Subjects (tonic key)
- Bridge / Transition (stays in tonic key)
- Closing Section (Coda)



Listen to the first movement of the piano piece Sonata no 1 by Clementi. This follows a simple short Sonata Form structure. While you listen, try to identify the main sections:

- Exposition
- Development
- Recapitulation
- 1st subject
- 2nd subject
- bridge passage

LIVEWORKSHEETS



Name the key the music has modulated to at the start of the 2nd line	
What classical features do you see in this sonata?	
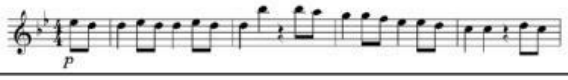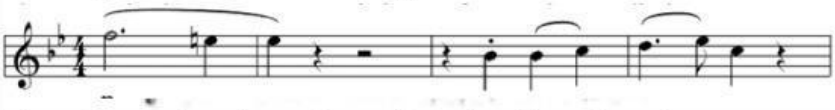
LIVEWORKSHEETS

REVISION: Symphony
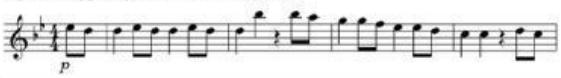
A **Symphony** is a large-scale work written for a **whole orchestra** with no main solo instrument
It is almost always divided into **four movements**:

- *Fast* (usually in **SONATA FORM**).
- *Slow* and lyrical.
- *Dance-like* (a **Minuet and Trio**).
- *Very Fast* and lively (often in **RONDO** form).

Listen to movement 1 of Mozart symphony no 40 in SONATA FORM

EXPOSITION summary	**EXPOSITION**
FIRST SUBJECT	The first subject is in the tonic key of G minor; it is played by the violins in octaves accompanied by repeated quavers from the violas and a bass line from the cellos and double basses. 
BRIDGE PASSAGE	The bridge passage starts by repeating the first subject, but then modulates to a major key – B flat Major – the **relative major of the tonic key of G minor**. The dynamics in this section are loud/forte and the letters sfz mean sforzando – an articulation marking instructing the players to play the notes marked with this symbol with a sudden emphasis. The bridge passage ends with an entire bar's rest.
SECOND SUBJECT	The second subject is in **B flat Major**. The mood of the second subject is much more relaxed than the first subject. The instrumentation and texture are both 'lighter', providing a form of musical contrast – typical in sonata form. The second subject moves by semitones, almost "sliding" about – CHROMATIC MOVEMENT. 
CODETTA	The codetta ends with a **Perfect Cadence in B flat Major**. The entire exposition section is repeated for two reasons: firstly, to balance this section, in terms of number of bars, with the final recapitulation section (order and balance being paramount to Classical composers!) and the repetition of the exposition ensures familiarity with the two main subjects of the movement with listeners.

Development & Recap summary **DEVELOPMENT**
The development section is based entirely on the opening of the first subject. There are frequent changes of harmony and keys – MODULATIONS. There are also changes in dynamics and use of sequences, imitation and pedal notes. This section ends with quiet expectation for the final section

RECAPITULATION	
FIRST SUBJECT	The recapitulation opened with the first subject. This was heard exactly as it was in the opening exposition section. 
BRIDGE PASSAGE	The Bridge Passage in this section is not a direct repeat of that heard in the exposition but it has been extended and a counter-melody has been added.
SECOND SUBJECT	The second subject appears in the recapitulation in the tonic key – here G minor as opposed to B flat major when it was first heard in the exposition.
CODA	Like the bridge passage in the recapitulation, the coda has been extended and lengthened . The word **tutti** means "full orchestra", the texture of the coda is mainly homophonic and the last six bars of the coda are the same as the last six bars of the codetta which ended the exposition section.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

REVISION: Solo Concerto

- A **Concerto** is a large-scale work that features a **solo instrument playing alongside a full orchestra** It is designed to show off the soloist's incredible skill.
- **The Ensemble**: Soloist (e.g., Solo Piano, Violin, or Flute) plus the backing Orchestra.
- **The Structure**: Almost always divided into **three movements** (Fast – Slow – Fast) It skips the dance movement entirely.
- **The Cadenza**: It is a special section usually found near the end of the first movement where the orchestra stops playing completely. The soloist plays a highly difficult, dazzling, and often improvised passage completely alone to show off.

Listen to the 1st and 3rd movements of Mozart clarinet concerto.

Movt 1 is in SONATA FORM while movt 3 is in RONDO form



Movement 1 (SONATA FORM) – fill in relevant concepts			
Melody/ Harmony	Rhythm/ Tempo	Texture/ Structure	Timbre

Movement 3 (RONDO) – fill in relevant concepts			
Melody/ Harmony	Rhythm/ Tempo	Texture/ Structure	Timbre

LIVEWORKSHEETS

CHAMBER MUSIC

MUSIC FOR A SMALL GROUP, BIG IMPACT!
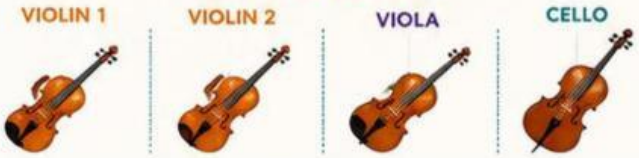
Chamber music is music written to be performed by a **small group** of musicians, in a **small room** rather than in a big hall. In any chamber ensemble only **one musician** would be playing **each part.**



A very popular chamber ensemble in the **Classical** and **Romantic** periods was the **String Quartet.**

The String Quartet contains a very specific combination of instruments: **two violins, one viola and one cello.**

THE STRING QUARTET
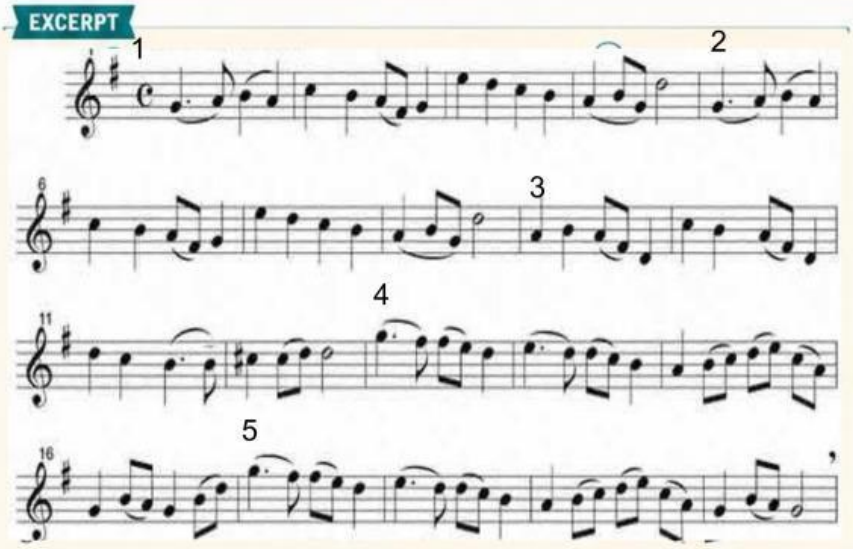


THE STRUCTURE: LIKE A SYMPHONY!

The overall structure of a String Quartet is just like that of a Symphony: four movements contrasted in speed and mood.

1. **Fast** (Allegro)
2. **Slow** (Andante or Adagio)
3. **Minuet** (or Scherzo)
4. **Fast** (Allegro)

Listen to an excerpt from the 2nd movement of the ***Emperor String Quartet*** by Haydn and answer the questions below.

EXCERPT



QUESTIONS

1. Name the key of the piece: .....
2. Explain the time signature: .....
3. Name the ornament in bar 3: .....
4. Name the cadence at bar 4: .....
5. What happens to the key in the 2nd line? .....
6. Name the ornament in line 3, bar 2: .....
7. Name the cadence at the end: .....

COMMON ORNAMENTS & CADENCES

Trill (rapid shake)	Mordent (quick up/down)	Fermata (hold longer)	Perfect Cadence (strong finish)	Imperfect Cadence (less strong finish)

DID YOU KNOW?

The *Emperor String Quartet* gets its nickname because Haydn dedicated it to Emperor Francis II.
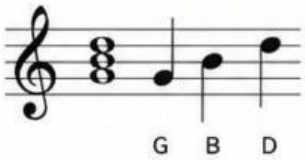
WHY IT MATTERS

Chamber music lets composers explore ideas in a more personal way. It's like a musical conversation – every part is important!

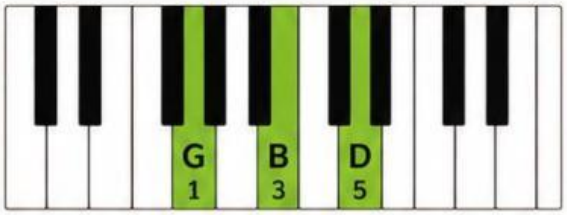
LIVEWORKSHEETS

CHORDS *based on the* MAJOR CHORD

1 THE MAJOR CHORD
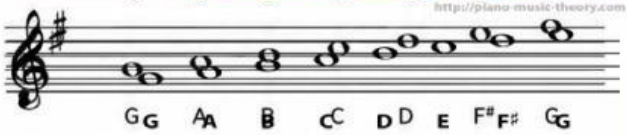


A major chord is made up of the 1st, 3rd and 5th notes of the major scale.



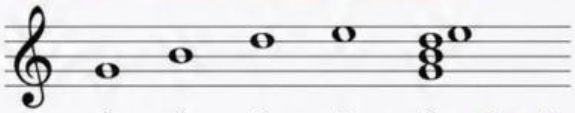
In the key of G major, the major chord (I) is G – B – D (G major)

THE MAJOR SCALE – KEY OF G



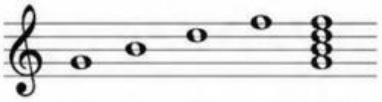


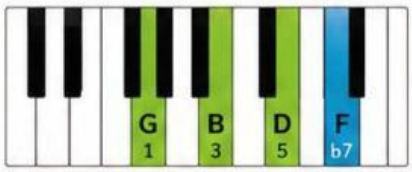
THE I (TONIC) CHORD IN G MAJOR



2 THE DOMINANT 7TH CHORD

G dominant 7th chord

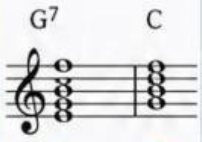




This is the major chord with the 7th note added (a minor 7th – one tone away lower than an octave).
The dominant 7th is used extensively to pull music back to the tonic.

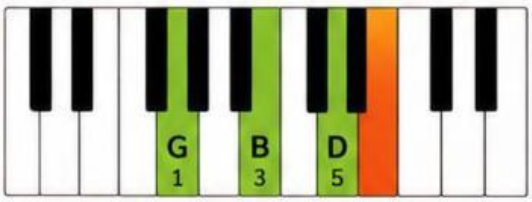
EXAMPLE

The chord above is G7, which functions as a Dominant 7th in the key of C.



pulls back to the tonic

3 THE ADDED 6TH CHORD



This is the major chord with the 6th note added – this makes it sound jazzy.

SOUND TIP

★ The added 6th (E in G major) gives a smooth, relaxed colour often used in jazz and popular music.



PRACTICE QUESTION

What would be the dominant 7th in the key of G?



Chord V	
Notes in V7	

HELPFUL HINTS

In the key of G, the scale is:
G A B C D E F♯ G

- The V chord is built on the 5th note.
- Then add the minor 7th (one tone below the octave).

QUICK RECAP

1 MAJOR CHORD (I)
- 1st, 3rd and 5th notes
- In G major: G – B – D

2 DOMINANT 7TH (V7)
- 1st, 3rd, 5th and b7
- Creates tension
- Pulls back to the tonic
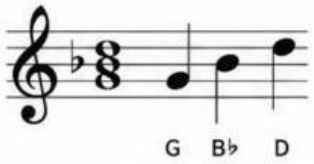
3 ADDED 6TH
- Major chord + 6th note
- Smooth, jazzy sound



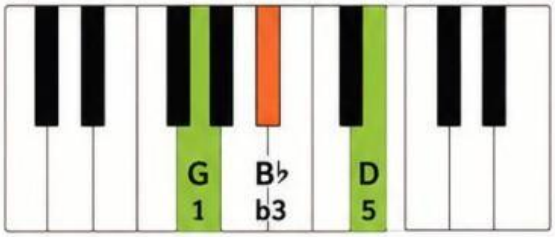
LIVEWORKSHEETS

CHORDS based on the MINOR CHORD

1 THE MINOR CHORD

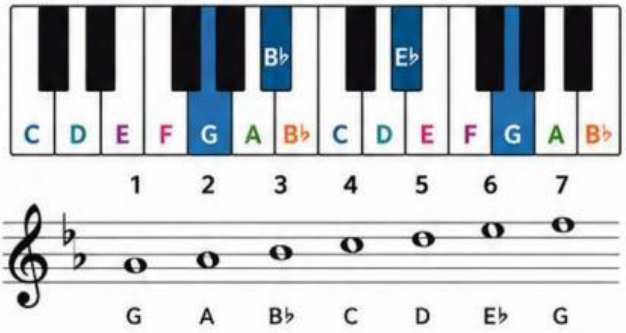


A minor chord is made up of the 1st, 3rd and 5th notes of the minor scale.
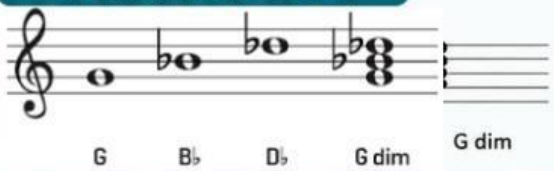


This consists of the 1st, 3rd and 5th notes of the minor scale – NB this is the same as the major except the middle note (3rd) is a semitone lower.

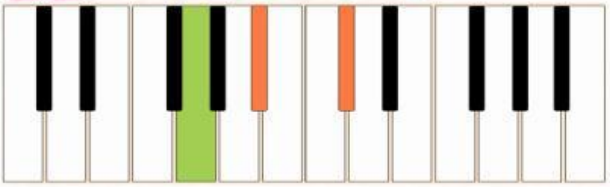
THE MINOR SCALE – KEY OF G MINOR



G DIMINISHED CHORD



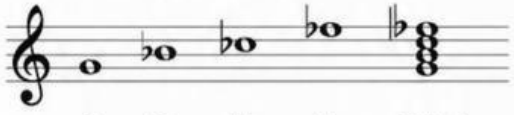
2 DIMINISHED CHORD

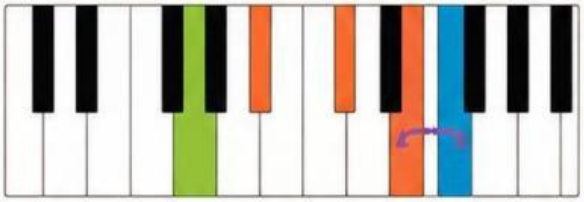


This is the same as the minor chord except that the top note (5th) is a semitone lower. So, compared to the major chord, both the 3rd and the 5th are a semitone lower.

3 DIMINISHED 7TH CHORD

G diminished 7th chord





This is the same as the diminished chord but with an added 7th. This 7th is a semitone less than the minor 7th that we saw in the dominant 7th. So, it is 3 semitones off the octave.

QUICK QUIZZES – TEST YOURSELF!

Try some online quizzes to help you identify these chords:

https://mymusiconline.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/hotpots/i7_higher_chords_1.htm

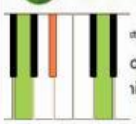
https://tonedear.com/ear-training/chord-identification

https://www.musictheory.net/exercises/chord/batyay5ryynvmv

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OAw4umXbRgA

KEY POINTS

1 MINOR CHORD



st, 3rd (♭3) and 5th notes of the minor scale.

2 DIMINISHED CHORD



Same as minor, but the 5th (top note) is a semitone lower.

3 DIMINISHED 7TH



iminished chord ith an added 7th ♭7) – 3 semitones ff the octave.

REMEMBER

Lowering the 3rd and 5th by a semitone creates a darker, more tense sound.

TIP: Diminished chords create **tension** and are often used to lead **(resolve)** to another chord.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

OTHER FORMS IN THE CLASSICAL PERIOD

BINARY	Two main sections.	A → B	Structure: A → B
TERNARY	Three main sections.	A → B → A	Structure: A → B → A
RONDO FORM	Main theme returns several times.	A → B → A → C → A	Structure: A → B → A → C → A
THEME & VARIATIONS	One main theme, followed by variations.	Main Theme | Variation 1 | Variation 2 | Variation 3 | Variation 4 etc.	Structure: Theme → Var. 1 → Var. 2 → Var. 3 → Var. 4 ...

BINARY FORM

A piece of music in Binary Form divides into two clear sections.

A → B

Each section is often repeated.

‖: I → V :‖ V → I :‖
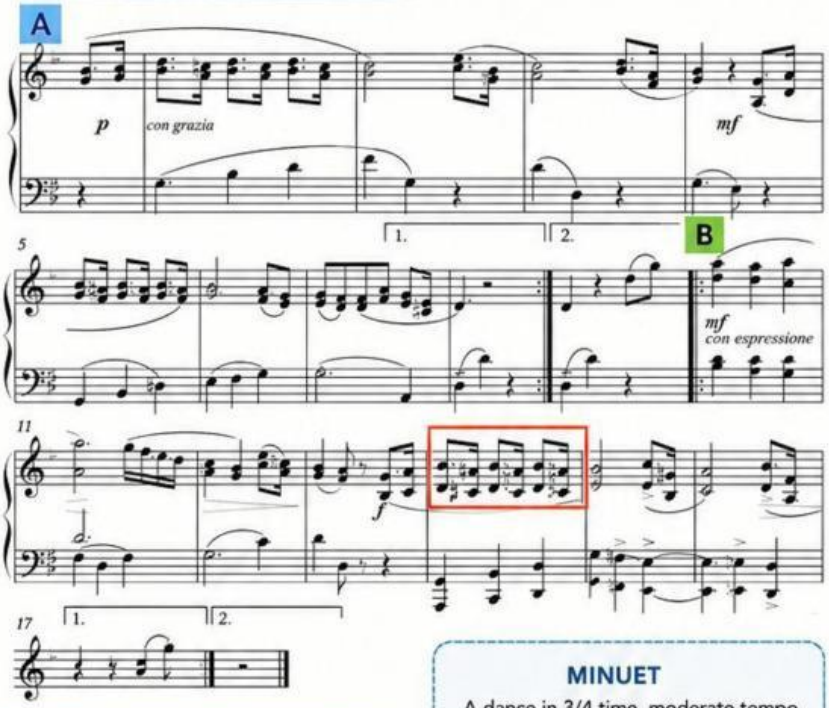
KEY POINTS

- ✓ Two contrasting ideas.
- ✓ A usually establishes the tonic key.
- ✓ B contrasts in character or harmony.
- ✓ Clear ending in the tonic.

Listen to this Classical Minuet by Mozart and answer the questions below.
Look out for the two sections; A and B.



1st part of Beethoven Minuet in G



QUESTIONS

1. Name the key
2. Is there an anacrusis?
3. Circle a bar where the LH outlines a G major chord
4. Name the key of bars 7-8
5. What accidental shows this key?
6. What is the texture?
7. Name the interval in the RH bar 14

LISTEN OUT FOR...

- ♪ The contrast between A and B.
- ♫ The key change in the B section.
- ♫ Repeating patterns and cadences.

MINUET

A dance in 3/4 time, moderate tempo. Elegant and graceful in character with a strong emphasis on the first beat.

3/4 ONE–TWO–THREE (Strong–weak–weak)

LIVEWORKSHEETS
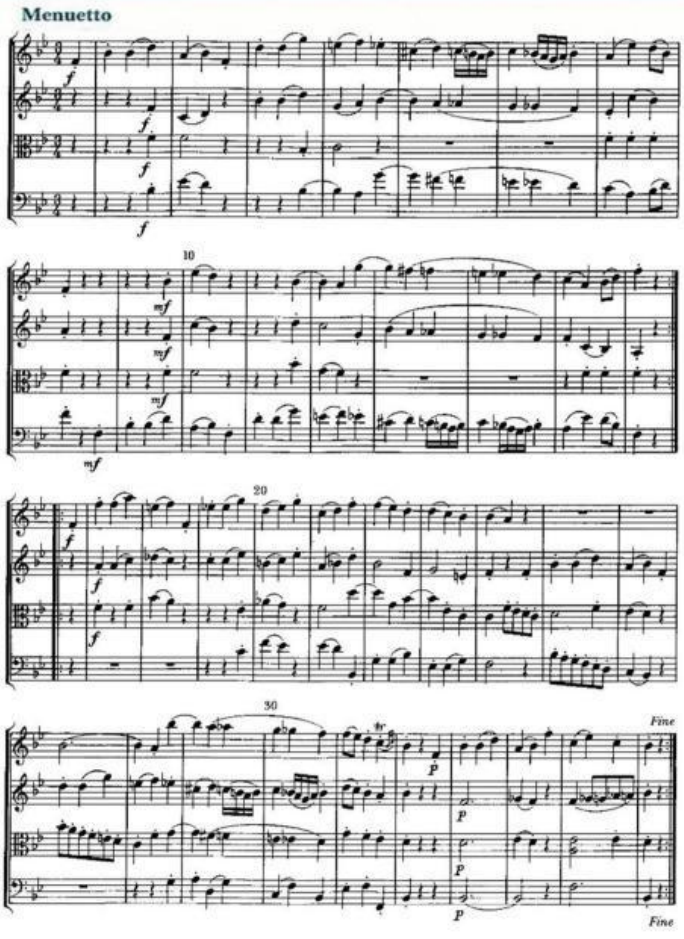
TERNARY FORM

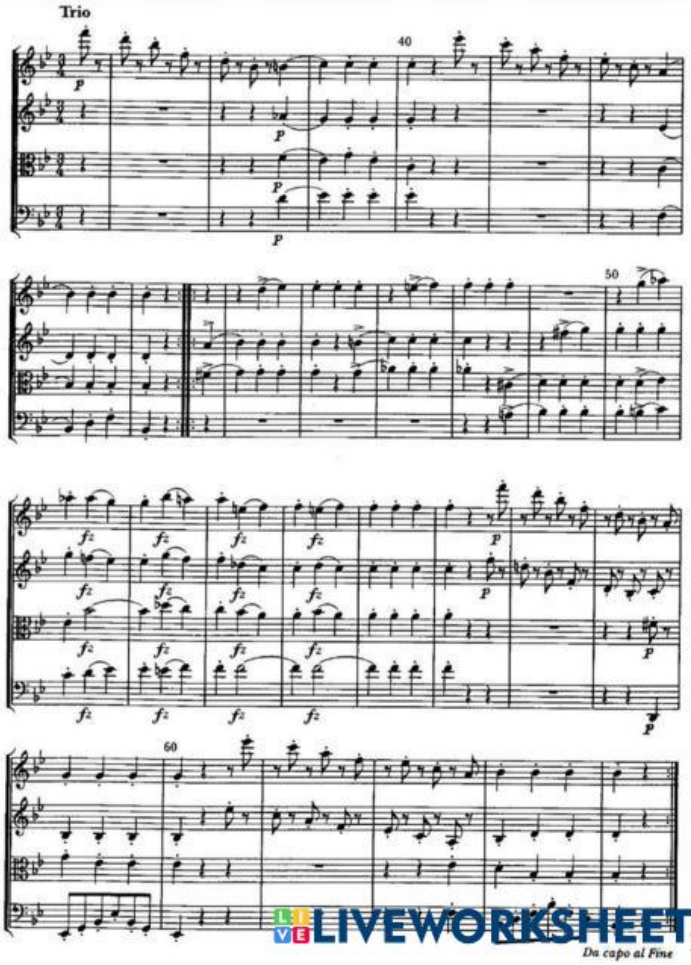
MINUET & TRIO

(string quartet)

Listen to Haydn's Minuet and Trio from String Quartet in B flat No. 1 answering the questions below. Haydn's **MINUET** structure in **BINARY FORM** and is based on a single **MELODY**.

1. How many bars long is this melody? _____
2. How many times is this melody heard during the Minuet? _____
3. Name the instruments playing this melody, in turn. _____
4. How does the beginning of the **TRIO** provide a musical **CONTRAST** to the Minuet? _____
5. Would you describe the **STRUCTURE** of the Trio as **BINARY** or **TERNARY** form? Give a reason for your choice. _____ _____
6. What is **STRUCTURE** of the entire movement? Give a reason for your choice. _____ _____





LIVEWORKSHEETS

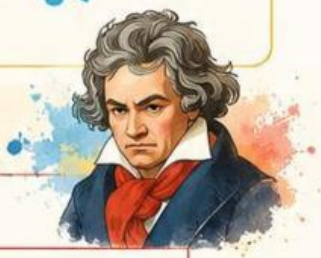
RONDO FORM

A B A C A



- In Rondo form the main theme (A) keeps returning with contrasting sections known as **'episodes'**. The A theme begins and ends in the **TONIC** key each time while the Episodes are in related keys (e.g. Dominant, relative minor/ major, subdominant)
- Rondo form is used for the final movement in a concerto, symphony, sonata etc.





LISTEN TO BEETHOVEN'S FAMOUS *'RONDO A LA TURKA'*, THE FINAL MOVEMENT OF HIS SONATA IN A.

1 Name the key it starts in	
2 What does 'Allegretto' mean?	
3 Name the cadence at bar 8 The music has modulated to the dominant. Name this key	
4 Name the key of the first episode (B) bar 9	
5 In bar 26, there is the 2nd episode (C) What musical features do you notice here that give it a feeling of strength?	
6 Name any other MELODIC features you notice	



LISTEN TO THE 3RD MOVEMENT OF MOZART'S *HORN CONCERTO NO. 4 IN EB* AND FILL IN THE TABLE WITH RELEVANT CONCEPTS THAT YOU NOTICE:

Melody/ Harmony	Rhythm/ Tempo	Texture/ Structure	Timbre



LIVEWORKSHEETS
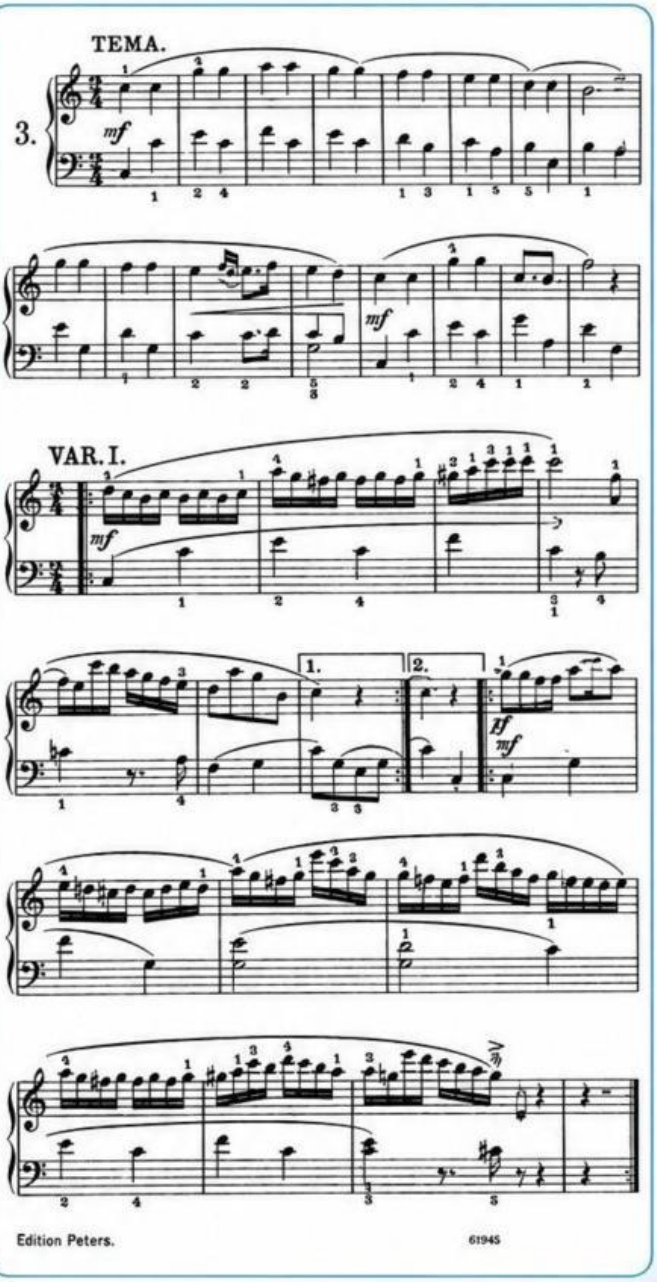
THEME AND VARIATIONS

The **theme** is a melody, a tune which is the main idea for a composition.

The **variations** occur when the main theme or tune is altered perhaps by adding extra notes, changing from major to minor or vice versa, changing harmony, rhythm, time signature, or when the theme is played in the bass, etc.

Listen to Mozart's variations on ***Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star*** – first the theme and then some of the variations. Try and identify what has been done in each of the variations.

THEME	
Bars 8, 16 and other features?	
VARIATION 1	
What is different?	
VARIATION 2	
What is different?	
VARIATION 3	
What is different?	
VARIATION 4	
What is different?	
VARIATION 5	
What is different?	
VARIATION 6	
What is different?	
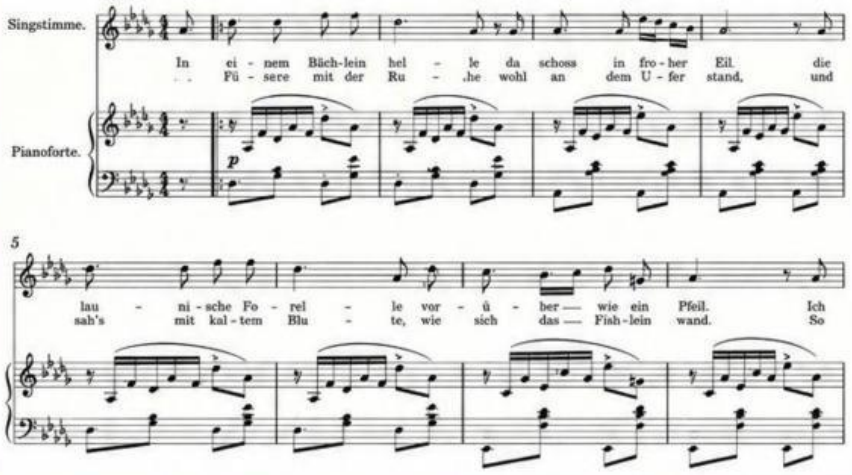


Schubert's THE TROUT



What features in the piano accompaniment in the lied helps portray the bubbling, rushing water?
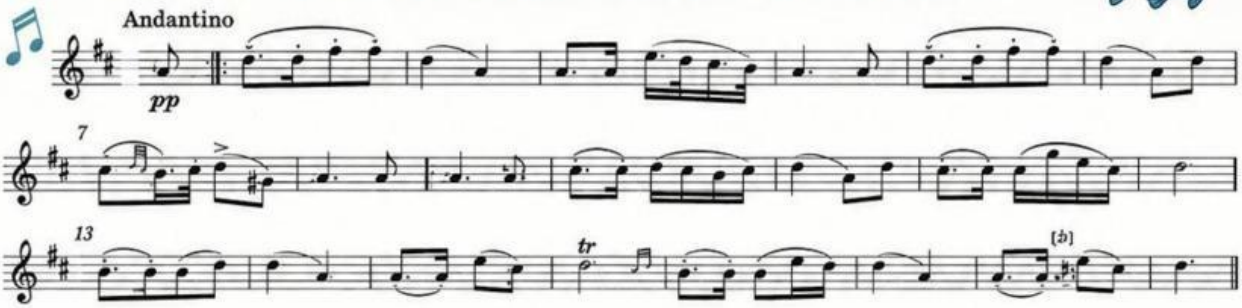
_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

The fourth movement of Schubert's *Trout Quintet* is a **Theme and Variations** based on his own German art song (*Lied*), **"Die Forelle"** ("The Trout").



Schubert uses the intimate textures of **chamber music** and a unique **piano quintet** line-up – piano, violin, viola, cello, and double bass – to portray the **graceful swimming** of a fish in a **rippling stream.**



Now listen to the theme in his piano quintet and answer the following questions:



1. Insert the correct time signature ☐

2. Insert the appropriate musical markings to make the printed music match what you hear

3. Name TWO RHYTHMIC features in the music _____ _____

4. Name TWO MELODIC features in the music _____ _____

5. What form is this theme? ☐ Binary ☐ Ternary ☐ Rondo ☐ Sonata form

6. Now listen to some of each of the variations. How does Schubert use musical means to change the mood in the variations?

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Classical period - Concept checklist

Fill in your own definitions of each of these concepts you have looked at in this unit.

STYLE	
Symphony	
String Quartet	
Concerto	
Sonata	
Chamber music	
Texture/Structure/Form	
Cadenza	
Binary	
Ternary	
Rondo	
Theme & Variations	
Sonata Form	
Episode	
Alberti bass	
Subject	
Exposition	



Now complete the following quizzes:

- Symphony and Concerto Quiz
- Sonata and Sonata Form
- Strings and Chamber Music Quiz

LIVEWORKSHEETS