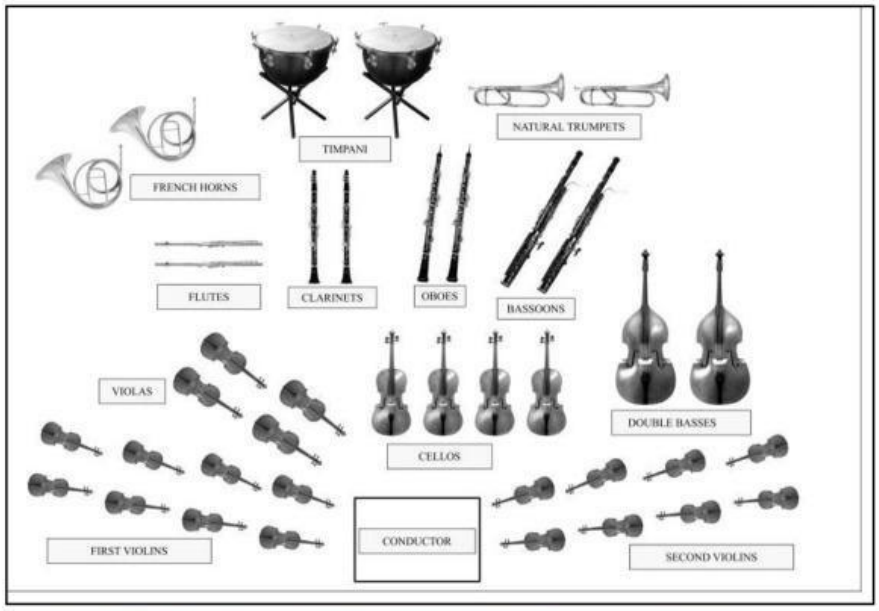
Classical Period

The Classical period was roughly from 1750-1810. A common characteristic of Classical music is “graceful” melodies, in clear-cut and balanced phrases. Classical music was often homophonic, with an emphasis on the elegance and beauty of melody. Popular instrumental forms of the Classical period included the symphony, concerto and string quartet.

Classical Orchestra

- **strings**
- **woodwind** - recorder or wooden flute, oboe, bassoon and clarinet
- **brass** - trumpet, horns (with valves by the end of the period)
- **percussion** - timpani and sometimes triangle, hand cymbals and bass drum

Classical orchestras were bigger in size and as instrument building improved so did the range of dynamics in the performance. The harpsichord was replaced with the fortepiano, the precursor to today’s modern piano.





Haydn



Mozart



Beethoven

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Musical characteristics of Classical period

- Lighter, clearer textures than Baroque – mainly homophonic (melody with accompaniment) but still polyphonic textures in places
- Clear cut, balanced phrases with shorter, elegant melodies
- Harmonies are still **DIATONIC** but with increasing colourful chromatic chords as period progresses – DOMINANT 7th and DIMINISHED 7th
- More variety and contrast within a piece – frequent changes of mood and timbre
- Graded dynamics – use of crescendo and sforzando
- Harpsichord disappears and replaced by piano (solo and chamber music as well as piano concerto)
- Instrumental music becomes more dominant though still vocal music forms
- Concerto grosso disappears – only solo concerti
- Rise of the symphony and string quartet

Main **styles** of Classical period

Vocal

Opera, Oratorio
Recitative, Aria, Duet, Choruses

Instrumental

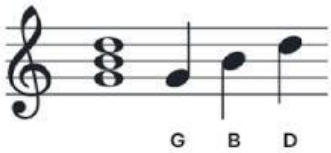
Solo concerto, Symphony, string quartet
Sonata, Piano trio, chamber music

Main **forms/ structure**

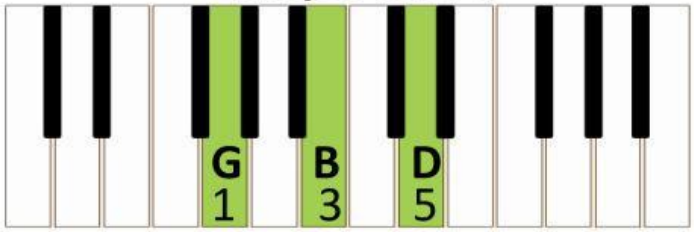
- *Sonata Form (1st movt of sonatas, symphonies, concerti, chamber music)*
- *Rondo form (often final movement*
- *Minuet and Trio (often 3rd movement)*
- Scherzo (sometimes replaces Minuet and Trio
- Theme and Variations

LIVEWORKSHEETS

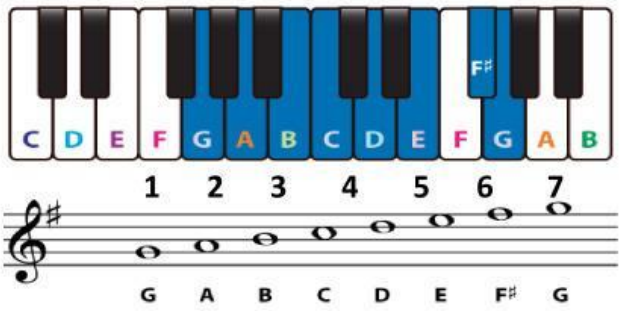
Chords based on the major chord
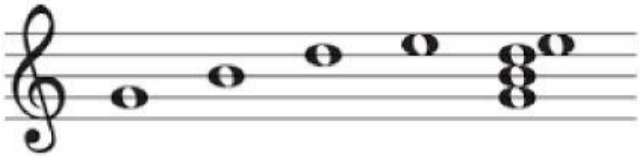


Major chord



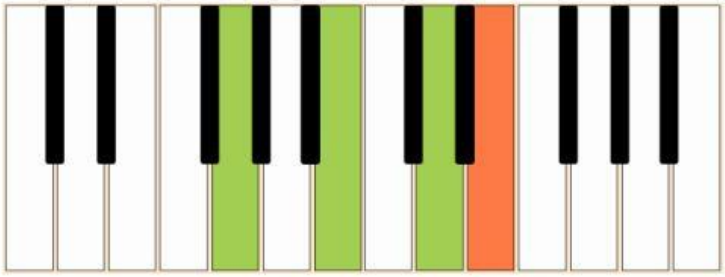
This consists of the 1st-3rd and 5th notes of the major scale
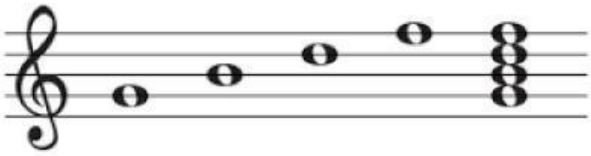




G B D E G maj6

Added 6th



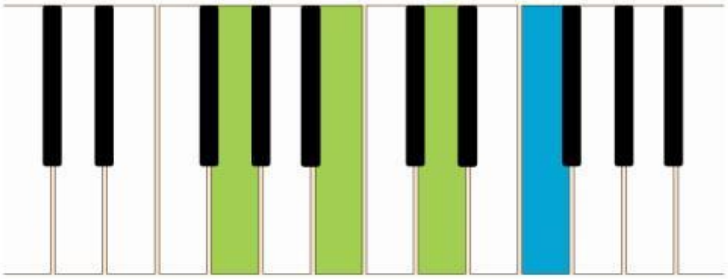
This is the major chord with the 6th note added – this makes it sound jazzy

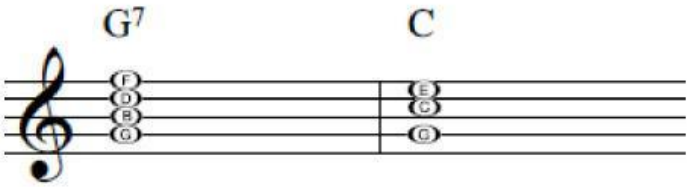
G dominant 7th chord



G B D F G dom7

Dominant 7th



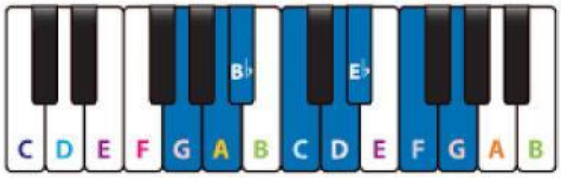


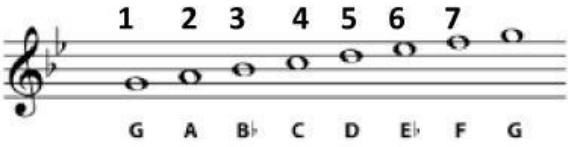
This is the major chord with the 7th note added. NB this is a minor 7th – one tone away lower than an octave. The dominant 7th is used extensively to pull music back to the tonic. The chord above is G7, which functions as a Dominant 7th in the key of C.

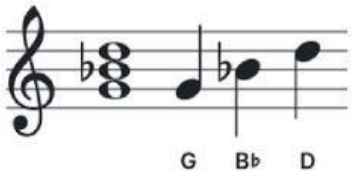
What would be the dominant 7th in the key of G?	
Chord V	
Notes in V7	

LIVEWORKSHEETS

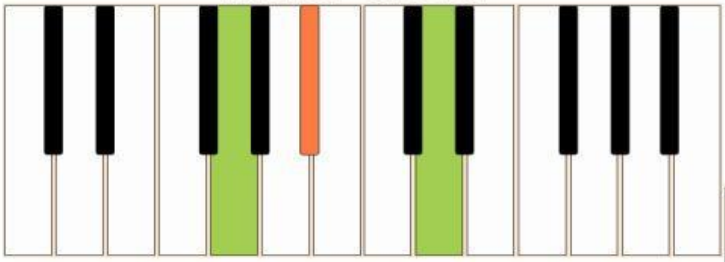
Chords based on the minor chord





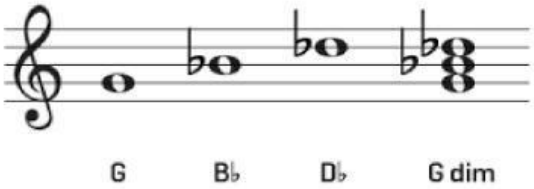


Minor chord

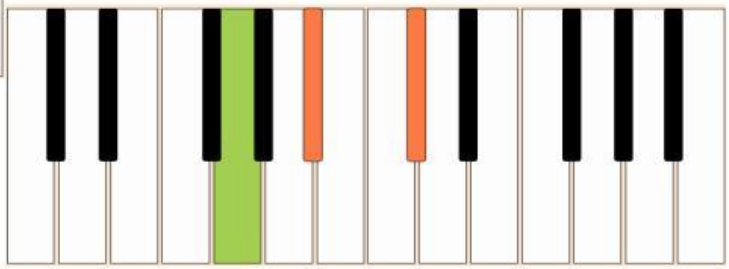


This consists of the 1st-3rd and 5th notes of the minor scale – NB this is the same as the major except the middle note (3rd) is a semitone lower

G diminished chord

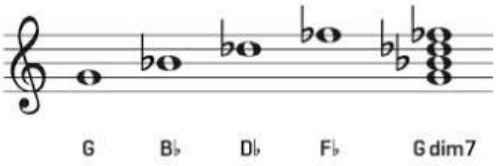


Diminished chord

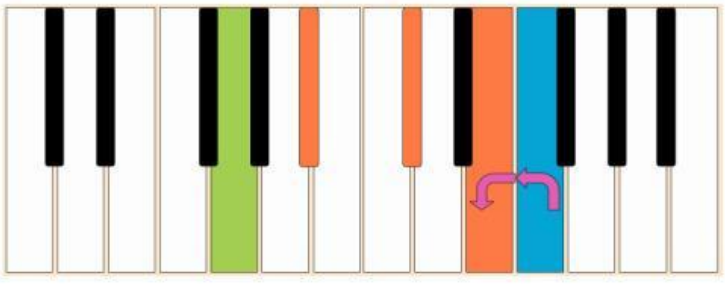


This is the same as the minor except that the top note (5th) is a semitone lower. So, compare to the major chord, both the 3rd and the 5th are a semitone lower

G diminished 7th chord



Diminished 7th



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

Try some different quizzes on identifying 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/bgtygy5ryynynyy
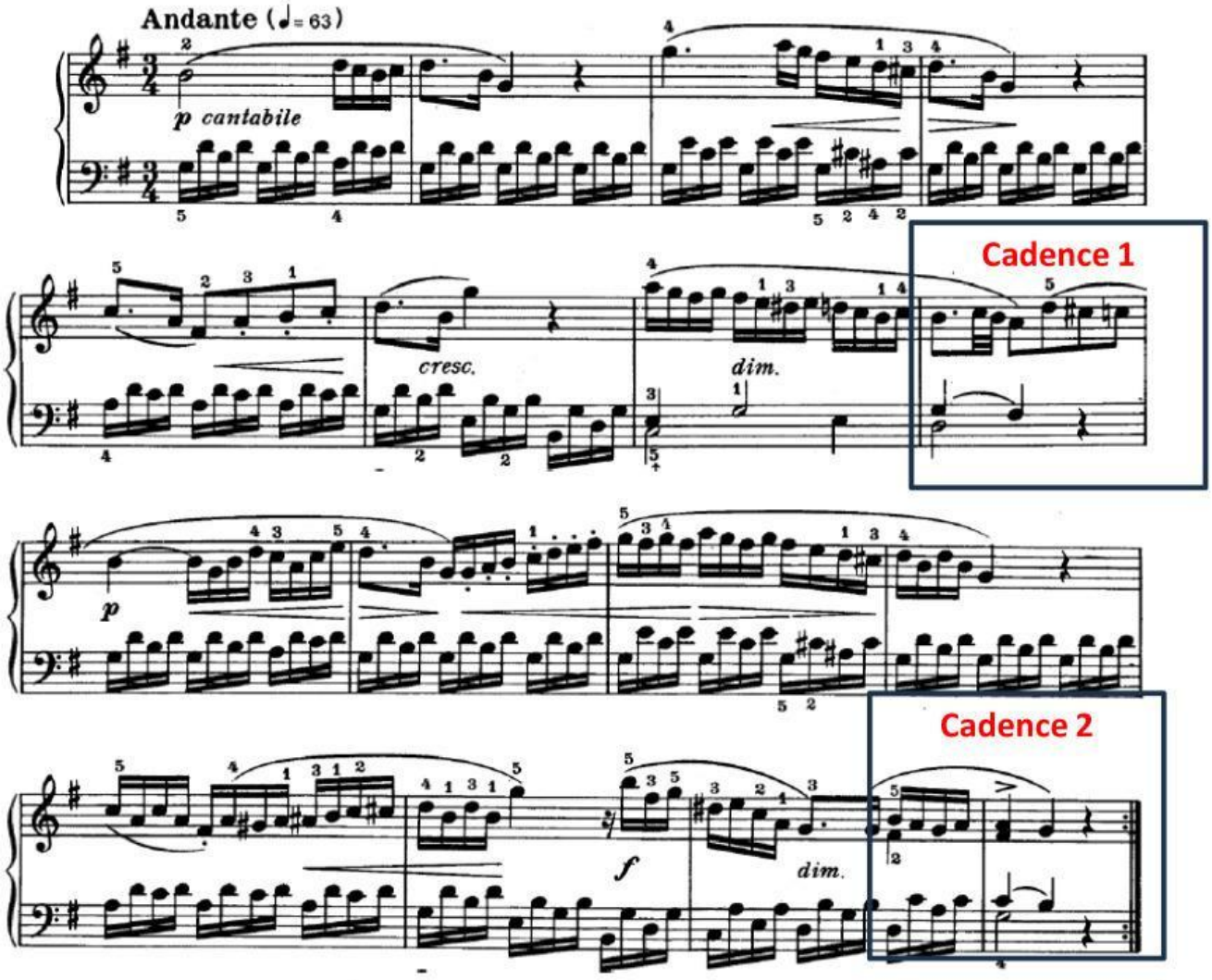
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OAw4umXbRgA

LIVEWORKSHEETS

A common characteristic of Classical music is “graceful” melodies, in clear-cut and balanced phrases.

The piano was a relatively new keyboard instrument in the Classical period.

A popular musical feature used by Classical composers is the **alberti bass**. This is a type of broken chord accompaniment repeated in the left hand.



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?	

LIVEWORKSHEETS

The Sonata

- The word "sonata" comes from the Italian verb *sonare* which means "to sound". It originated in the Baroque period, mainly as a trio sonata, with solo instrument & basso continuo (harpsichord & cello/ bassoon).
- The sonata came to prominence in the classical period, particularly with the development of the piano.
- A Sonata is a piece for **solo piano or solo instrument & piano**. Occasionally it can be for another chordal instrument such as harp or guitar .
- It is in three or four movements mostly for one instrument, with at least one movement in Sonata Form.

The typical structure of a sonata is very similar to a symphony:

1	A fairly **fast tempo** (sometimes with a slow introduction) Making use of structure known as Sonata Form.
2	A **slow tempo**, more lyrical and song-like. Often in **Ternary Form (ABA),** or **Theme and Variations**.
3	Haydn and Mozart wrote a **Minuet and Trio** at this point; a bright dance with **three beats in the bar**. Beethoven transformed it into a much faster and more vigorous **Scherzo**.
4	A **fast tempo**, and often light-hearted in mood. Commonly structured in **Rondo Form**, or Sonata Form, or even a mixture of both.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

The Symphony



The word **Symphony** literally means "sounding together". In the Baroque period the term was used to describe a number of different kinds of instrumental pieces. In the **Classical** period, however, the **Symphony** as we know it today was developed.

The **Symphony** is a large-scale work for full orchestra, generally comprising four separate movements, although it is possible to find symphonies with different numbers of movements.

The four movements of a **Classical Symphony**, contrasted in speed and mood, generally followed the same basic plan:

1	A fairly **fast tempo** (sometimes with a slow introduction) Making use of structure known as Sonata Form.
2	A **slow tempo**, more lyrical and song-like. Often in **Ternary Form (ABA),** or **Theme and Variations**.
3	Haydn and Mozart wrote a **Minuet and Trio** at this point; a bright dance with **three beats in the bar**. Beethoven transformed it into a much faster and more vigorous **Scherzo**.
4	A **fast tempo**, and often light-hearted in mood. Commonly structured in **Rondo Form**, or Sonata Form, or even a mixture of both.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

The Concerto



The **Concerto** is a large-scale work for a solo instrument and orchestra, generally comprising three separate movements. There were many concertos composed throughout the Baroque, Classical and Romantic periods.

An important feature of a **Concerto** is the **Cadenza**. A **Cadenza** is a "showy" passage in the music designed to give the soloist the opportunity to demonstrate their musical technique. The **Cadenza** is played without orchestral accompaniment and often ends with a trill, as a signal to the orchestra to play again.

The three movements of a typical **Concerto**, contrasted in speed and mood, generally followed the same basic plan:

1	A fairly **fast tempo**, making use of structure known as Sonata Form. During this movement there is usually a **Cadenza**.
2	A **slow tempo**, more lyrical and song-like. Often in **Ternary Form (ABA),** or **Theme and Variations**.
3	A fast tempo, and often light-hearted in mood. Commonly structured in **Rondo Form**, or Sonata Form, or even a mixture of both.

Notice that three movements of a **Concerto** are just like the movements of a **Symphony**, but without the **Minuet and Trio**.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Chamber Music

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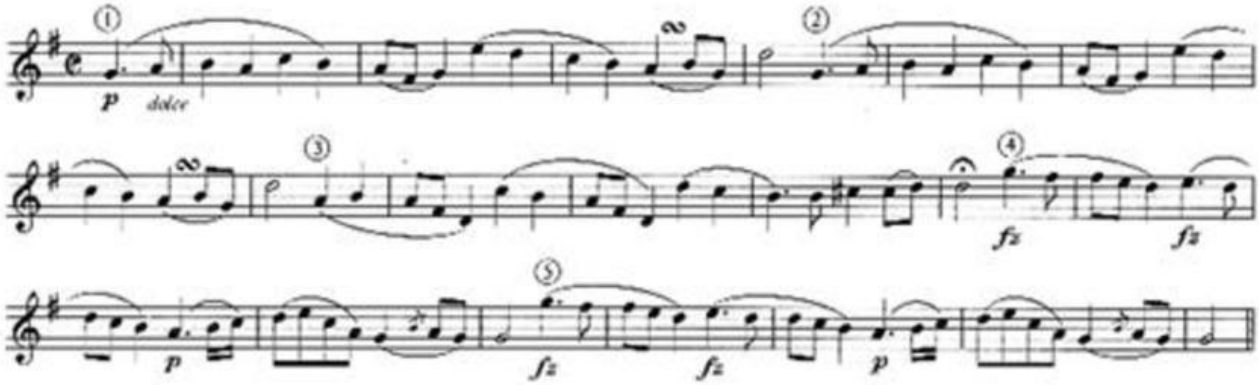
A very popular chamber ensemble in the **Classical** and **Romantic** periods was the String Quartet.



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

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

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



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:_____.

LIVEWORKSHEETS