

## 5950--Syllabus: Revisions (10/18/88)

1. First Paper: Due 8 November--no extensions, etc.
2. The onset of Beethoven will be delayed, probably until c. 8 November. Result: probably no class sessions per se on the Eroica. Your own work on that symphony, however, will remain. You are responsible for the Eroica reading assignments (in the syllabus) on your own. Consider them within the context of our general course discussions.
3. Effective immediately: additional reading assignments. Your first paper should show some evidence of having read, studied, and absorbed this material (as well as that on the syllabus). Particularly important for your paper--and requiring close study and thought--are those readings whose page-numbers are underlined.
  - a) John Neubauer, The Emancipation of Music from Language.
 

1) "Introduction"	pp. <u>1-10</u> .
2) [skim through:]	pp. 11-41.
3) [affects]	pp. <u>42-43</u> ; <u>51-59</u> .
4) [imitation]	pp. <u>60-75</u> .
5) ["expression"]	pp. <u>149-67</u> .
6) Kant	pp. 182-92.
7) [To be read as we begin looking into Beethoven, after your first paper:]	pp. <u>193-210</u> .
  - b) Carl Dahlhaus, Esthetics of Music.
 

pp. 1-38.

[Study carefully: very important]

Reminder: Be sure that you understand the basic musical structures of the Prague before you begin to write your paper. Consider the kinds of analyses, etc., that we have been doing in class. And be sure to read Zaslav, Larsen, Ratner, and Rosen.

NB: Before writing your paper, be sure that you have pulled together (at least in your own mind) everything that we have done so far in this class. The class "works" by having you synthesize and make strong links among very different kinds of information: if the paper does not show this process, it cannot be a success.

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- 3) [affects] pp. 42-43; 51-59.
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THE SYMPHONY, 1770-1825:  
MOZART AND BEETHOVEN

REQUIRED PURCHASES

Giorgio Pestelli, The Age of Mozart and Beethoven (1979; trans. E. Cross; Cambridge, 1984).  
Leonard G. Ratner, Classic Music: Expression, Form, and Style (New York, 1980).

Mozart, Symphonies Nos. 27-31 (Kalmus Score).  
Mozart, Later Symphonies (New York: Dover Score).  
Beethoven, First, Second, and Third Symphonies in Full Orchestral Score (New York: Dover Score).  
Beethoven, Symphony No. 5 in C Minor (Ed. Elliott Forbes; New York: Norton Critical Scores, 1971).  
Beethoven, Eighth and Ninth Symphonies in Full Orchestral Score (New York: Dover Score).

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In addition to the above, several ADDITIONAL READINGS will be assigned during the course of the quarter. Most of these readings are brief selections from the writings of musicians, aestheticians, critics, and philosophers of Mozart's and Beethoven's time: Rousseau, D'Alembert, Sulzer, Kant, Burney, Moritz, Schlegel, Wackenroder, Jean Paul, Hoffmann, and so on. The point here is to become acquainted with some principal aesthetic issues of that time through contact with original sources. These readings will prove to be extremely important and will serve as departures for several class sessions, questions, and lectures. They must be read by the appropriate deadlines. See p. 4 below for more details.

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GRADING is based on the compiled results of several indices:

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| 1. CLASS PARTICIPATION/ DISCUSSION/RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS/EVIDENCE OF ONGOING, CAREFUL PREPARATION AND RETENTION OF MATERIAL ALREADY COVERED. Your attendance at class sessions is crucial.                          | 20% |
| 2. WRITTEN WORK: TWO ESSAYS (term papers) (handed in <u>on time</u> : no extensions)<br>a) on some aspect of Mozart's Symphony in D, K. 504 ("Prague").<br>b) on Beethoven's 9th Symphony (probably on the Finale). | 60% |
| 3. LISTENING I.D. QUIZZES   | 20% |

NB: To pass this course you must hand in both essays.  
NB: You are responsible to bring with you to each class session all necessary materials for discussion: texts, scores, and so on. Come equipped.

SCHEDULE OF CLASS SESSIONS  
(mid-quarter modifications are possible)

BRING TO CLASS EVERYTHING THAT YOU THINK MIGHT BE DISCUSSED:  
RELEVANT ORCHESTRAL SCORES, AESTHETIC SOURCE READINGS, ETC.

NB: BRIEF, SPECIFIC LISTENING I.D. QUIZZES ARE POSSIBLE ON  
EACH TUESDAY BEGINNING 11 OCTOBER.

Th	22 Sep	Introduction; Pre-1770 Symphonies; Early Mozart Symphonies; Problems in "1st-Mvmt. Form"
T	27 Sep	"
Th	29 Sep	Two Mozart Symphonies: K. 201 and K. 543 (considered along with various statements of 18th-c. musical aesthetics)
T	4 Oct	"
Th	6 Oct	"
T	11 Oct	"
Th	13 Oct	"
T	18 Oct	"
Th	20 Oct	"
T	25 Oct	Beethoven: Symphony No. 3
Th	27 Oct	"
T	1 Nov	" also: FIRST PAPER DUE
Th	3 Nov	NO CLASS
T	8 Nov	Beethoven: Symphony No. 5
Th	10 Nov	"
T	15 Nov	"
Th	17 Nov	"
T	22 Nov	Beethoven: Symphony No. 9
Th	24 Nov	NO CLASS
T	29 Nov	Beethoven: Symphony No. 9 (continued)
Th	1 Dec	"

FINAL PAPER DUE

(No final exam)

ASSIGNED LISTENING

(Music Library: Reserve Tapes, Records, and CD's)

You are expected to be aurally familiar with all of these pieces by the given dates. (To be "familiar" with them means to be able to recall at least their melodic constituents and relevant structural shapes from memory, and to recognize and identify these constituents when you hear them played--e.g., on Listening I.D. Quizzes.)

Listening Quizzes (see p. 2 above) will ask you to identify the piece, the movement (by number), and the "section" (e.g., introduction, primary area, transition, secondary area, "closing" area--if relevant--development, minuet, trio, theme [of a set of variations], and so on). Those pieces marked \* will not appear on any Listening Quiz after the second one.

<u>Deadline</u>	<u>Piece(s)</u>
27 Sep	*A. Scarlatti, Ov. ["Sinfonia"] to <u>Griselda</u> (1721) *G.B. Sammartini, Symphony [No. 3] in D major, JC 15 (before 1742) *J. Stamitz, Symphony in D major, Op. 3, No. 2 (1757) *J.C. Bach, Symphony in E-flat major, Op. 18, No. 1 (1781)  Mozart, Symphony [No.29] in A major, K. 201 (1774)
29 Sep	Mozart, Symphony in B-flat major, K. 22 (1765) Mozart, Symphony in F major, K. 43 (1767) Mozart, Symphony in D major, K. 48 (1767) Mozart, Symphony in A major, K. 114 (1771)
4 Oct	Mozart, Symphony [No. 39] in E-flat, K. 543 (1788)
13 Oct	Mozart, Symphony [No. 38] in D major ("Prague"), K. 504 (1786)
25 Oct	Beethoven: Symphony No. 3 in E-flat, Op. 55 ("Eroica") (1803)
3 Nov	Beethoven: Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Op. 67 (1807-08)
17 Nov	Beethoven, Symphony No. 9 in D minor, Op. 125 (1822-24)

(This list is subject to possible slight modification or expansion as the quarter progresses.)

ASSIGNED READING

You are expected to have read the following material by the given dates. Reading marked \*\* is particularly crucial to this course--to our discussions and to your term papers. This material will require especially close and patient study.

For the most part the Pestelli readings are general background and review readings. They provide a context within which the more specific class-topics can arise. Obtaining this context is essential. Although most of the details of the Pestelli readings, then, will not be explicitly "foregrounded" in this class, a general knowledge of this material is assumed by the second week.

Deadline    Reading

- 27 Sep    Pestelli, pp. 1-40; 136-66; 266-68.
- 29 Sep    William S. Newman, "The Concept of 'Sonata' in Classic Writings," in The Sonata in the Classic Era, 3rd ed., (New York, 1980), pp. 19-42 (NB esp. Schulz [1775], pp. 23-4, and above all \*\*Koch, pp. 31-34).  
 Francesco Galeazzi, [A description of first-movement form from] Elementi teorico-pratici di Musica [Part II, 1796], in Pestelli, pp. 275-78.  
 A.F.C. Kollmann, [A description of first-movement form from] An Essay on Practical Musical Composition [1799], in Music in the Western World: A History in Documents, ed. P. Weiss and R. Taruskin (New York, 1984), pp. 316-19.
- 4 Oct    \*\*Ratner, Classic Music, pp. 1-48, 144-56, 207-08, and on "sonata form" pp. 214-47.  
 Jens Peter Larsen, excerpt from "The Symphonies," in The Mozart Companion, ed. Robbins Landon and Mitchell (New York, 1956), at least pp. 156-77. (Get a general sense of Mozart's symphonies up to K. 201; pay special attention to differences between Germanic and Italianate styles, and to the possibility of a concerto/ritornello-influenced "sonata form.") (Later, you will also want to examine pp. 187-90 on K. 504, the "Prague" Symphony, the subject of the first term paper.)
- 6 Oct    \*\*Pestelli, pp. 59-62.  
 Pestelli, pp. 101-11.  
 Ratner, pp. 81-107. (NB: Figurenlehre, pp. 91-95).
- 11 Oct    \*\*Jean-Baptiste DuBos, excerpt from Reflexions critiques sur la poesie et sur la peinture [1719], in Le Huray and Day, Music and Aesthetics in the Eighteenth and Early-Nineteenth Centuries (Cambridge, 1981), pp. 17-22.  
 \*\*Charles Batteux, excerpt from Les beaux-arts réduits à un même principe [1746], in Le Huray-Day, pp. 40-56. (Very important: with DuBos, this is our basic "18th-c." concept of music.)

11 Oct, continued

- \*\*Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Sonata" [1755, 1768], in Weiss-Taruskin, pp. 287-88.
- \*\*Jean Le Rond d'Alembert, extracts from the Oeuvres et correspondances inédites [orig. 1752, c. 1750-60] Transl. JAH: to be distributed in class.
- \*\*Charles Burney, from A General History of Music [1776], in Weiss-Taruskin, pp. 302-03.

- 13 Oct
- \*\*J.G. Sulzer, excerpts from the Allgemeine Theorie der schönen Künste [1771, rev. 1792-94], in Le Huray-Day, pp. 120-39. (Extremely important.)
  - \*\*J.G. Sulzer, excerpts from "Symphony" and "Instrumental Music," also from the ATdsK [transl. JAH: to be distributed in class].
  - \*\*Immanuel Kant, excerpts from "Analytic of the Sublime," from the Critique of Judgment [1790], in Le Huray-Day, pp. 214-16, 220-29. (Extremely important.)

- 18 Oct
- \*\*Karl Philipp Moritz, excerpt from Versuch einer Anleitung aller schönen Künste . . . [1787], in Le Huray-Day, pp. 185-87.
  - \*\*Friedrich von Schlegel, Fragments from Das Athenäum (1798-1800), in Le Huray-Day, pp. 246-47. (Note esp. p. 247!)

For the "Prague" paper:

You may wish to consult Charles Rosen, Sonata Forms, Chapter 8, "Motif and Function" (New York, 1980), pp. 170-221 [contains a discussion of the first movement of K. 504. See also especially Ratner, pp. 26-28, and Larsen, pp. 187-90; and look at Neal Zaslaw's notes to the Hogwood recording of K. 504. Consider the context within which each discussion was written.]

- 25 Oct
- Pestelli, 167-85; 217-40
  - \*\*W. von Wackenroder, extracts from letters (1792) and Phantasien über die Kunst (1799), in Le Huray-Day, pp. 248-50.
  - \*\*Wackenroder, "The Remarkable Musical Life of the Musician Joseph Berglinger," from Herzensergiessungen eines kunstliebenden Klosterbruders, in Strunk, Source Readings in Music History, pp. 750-63.
  - Jean Paul (Richter), extract from the Vorschule der Aesthetik (1804, 2nd ed. 1813), in Strunk, pp. 744-49.
- 1 Nov
- D.F. Tovey, Essays in Musical Analysis, vol. 1
  - David Epstein, Beyond Orpheus (Cambridge MA, 1979) pp. 111-38, 195-99, 188-91.
  - Lewis Lockwood, "Beethoven's Earliest Sketches for the Eroica Symphony," The Musical Quarterly, 67 (1981), 457-78.

- 8 Nov Elliot Forbes, "Historical Background" in the Norton Critical Score to Beethoven's 5th Symphony, pp. 3-16. Tovey's discussion in the Norton Score, pp. 143-50.
- 10 Nov \*\*E.T.A. Hoffmann, [1810 Review of the Fifth Symphony]. in the Norton Critical Score, pp. 150-63. (Extremely important.)  
\*\*Hoffmann, from "Beethoven's Instrumental Music" (1813), in Pestelli, pp. 288-92.
- 15 Nov Robin Wallace, Beethoven's Critics (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 126-43 (a discussion of the reactions of some of Beethoven's contemporaries to the 5th Symphony).
- 17 Nov Heinrich Schenker, Analysis of the first movement of the 5th Symphony, in the Norton Critical Score, pp. 164-82.
- 22 Nov Pestelli, pp. 240-53 (late Beethoven).

For the 9th Symphony paper:

Suggested reading to be announced.

(This list is subject to possible slight modification or expansion as the quarter progresses.)



*Mesto*

Handwritten musical notation on five staves. The notation includes various note values, rests, and some scribbled-out sections. There are some faint markings like "p" and "mf" visible.

Handwritten musical notation on five staves, heavily obscured by dense black scribbles and ink. The word "poco" is written vertically on the left side of the staves. The word "poco" is also written horizontally across the bottom of the staves.

Handwritten musical notation on five staves, showing a more organized section with notes and rests. The word "legium" is written across the staves. There are also some other markings like "p" and "mf".

# Mozart: Early Symphonies (First Movements)

Jakt

K.22

tr  
f p f p f  
→ crescendo  
f p f  
directly to f etc.

K.43

f p etc.  
p etc.

K.48

f p  
[IX pedal in horns]  
A: I6 IV V 4 = 5 IV6

K.114

to f "consequent" restatement  
p etc.  
NB: contrapuntal interplay with violin 2  
f etc.

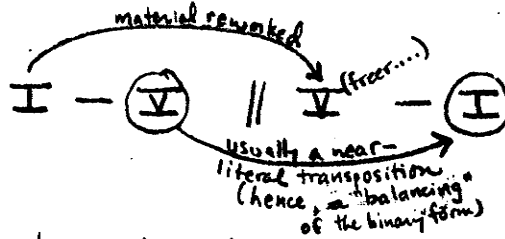
# A Sampling of Some First Movement Schemes: c. 1730-1770 ff

(NB: In Part II, the tonic returns at or around ③, not normally with a reprise of ①)

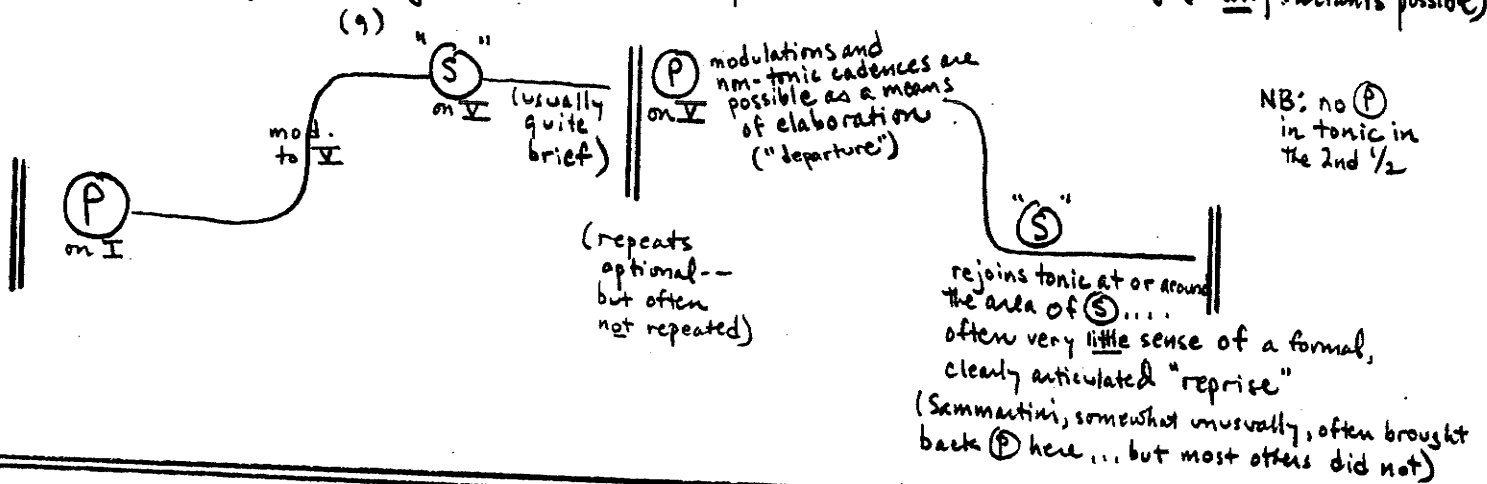
## Binary ("Italianate"; Sammartini, etc.) [cf. Scarlatti hpschd. sonatas]

2 halves I - V // V - I, in which the 2nd 1/2 presents essentially the same ideas as the 1st 1/2. (same thematic ordering)

Balances work out thus:  
(balanced binary)

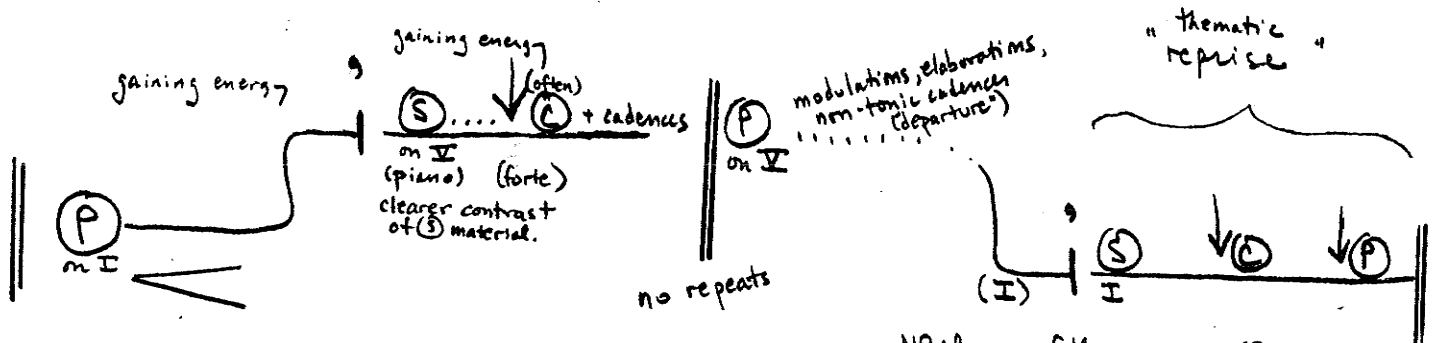


Or, diagrammatically, with reference to possible thematic material (Many variants possible):



## "Mannheim" Binary (Stamitz) [residues of Concerto "Ritornello" form in the treatment of the ① appearances?]

Again, a flexible form subject to individual variation. One possibility:



NB: because of the contrasting ③ and preceding strong articulation, one gets more of a sense of a thematic reprise. Yet the entry into the tonic itself is often unmarked by a clear articulation, and a tonic ① is added at the very end. (Hence the ritornello "flavor")

Name these pitches

Which subsequent pitch is the "same" as the first given?

①

Which pitch needs to be changed to make this into a major scale?

Which major key is indicated here?

Which subsequent time-value "adds" up to the first given?

Which measure is incorrect in some respect?

What are the marks above the notes called, and what do they mean?

Name the "interval" (4th, 5th, octave, etc.)

Define: Allegro, Andante, Largo, Adagio, Presto

piano (p)    forte (f)    pp    ff    sforzando (sf)

Instruments of the orchestra? (Oboe, clarinet, flute, violin, viola, etc...)

Sammartini, Symphony [No. 3] in D major (before 1742).

1st mvmt. Allegro

(P)

2nd mvmt. Largo

3rd mvmt.

Stamitz, Symphony in D major, Op. 3, No. 2 (1757)

1st mvmt. Presto

(P) (after chords)

crescendo

2nd mvmt. Andantino

3rd mvmt. Menuetto

Trio

4th mvmt. Prestissimo

mf

cresc.

p

etc.

# Mozart: Early Symphonies (First Movements)

Jatt

K.22

Violin 1 (V1) and Trombone (TR) parts for K.22. Dynamics: *f*, *p*, *f*, *p*, *f*. Markings: *t*, *tr*, *crescendo*, *f*, *p*, *f*, *p*, *f*. Note: *p* [NB: over V]. Direction: *directly to*.

K.13

Violin 1 (V1) and Trombone (TR) parts for K.13. Dynamics: *f*, *p*. Markings: *tr*, *etc.*

K.48

Violin 1 (V1) and Trombone (TR) parts for K.48. Dynamics: *f*, *p*. Markings: *tr*, *etc.*

K.114

Violin 1 (V1), Violin 2 (V2), and Trombone (TR) parts for K.114. Dynamics: *p*, *f*. Markings: *tr*, *etc.*, *to f consequent restatement*. Note: NB: contrapuntal interplay with violin 2.

W. A. MOZART  
Sinfonie in A  
KV 201 (186<sup>a</sup>)

Allegro moderato

Vollendet Salzburg, 6. April 1774

Oboi

Corni in La

Violino I

Violino II

Viola

Violoncello e Basso

7

tr

f

14

20

1

sf

p

f

sf

f

p

f

sf

27

sf

p

sf

32

p

p

tr

tr

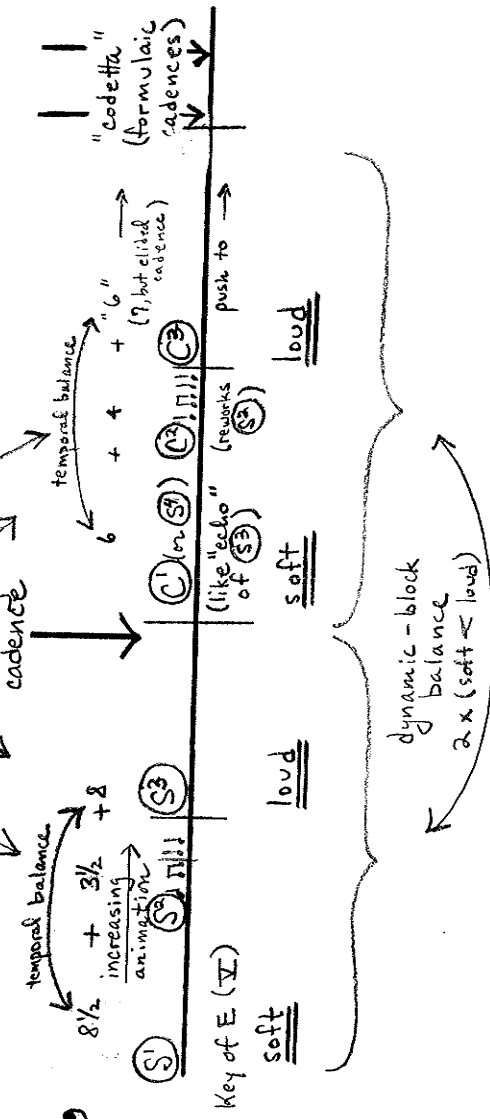
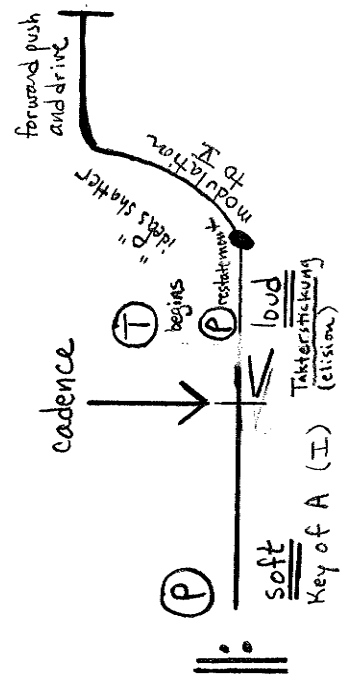
\*) Vgl. Krit. Bericht.



galt

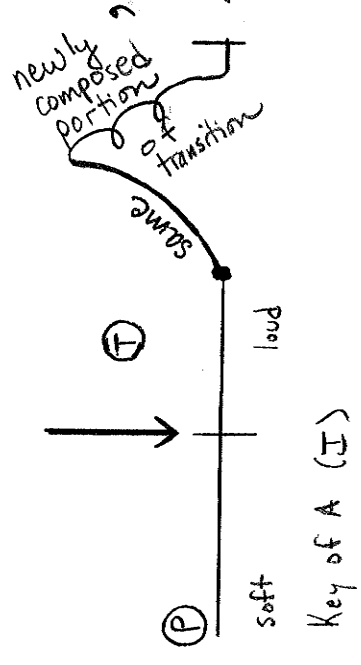
# K. 201, 1st mvmt,

## Part I ("Exposition")

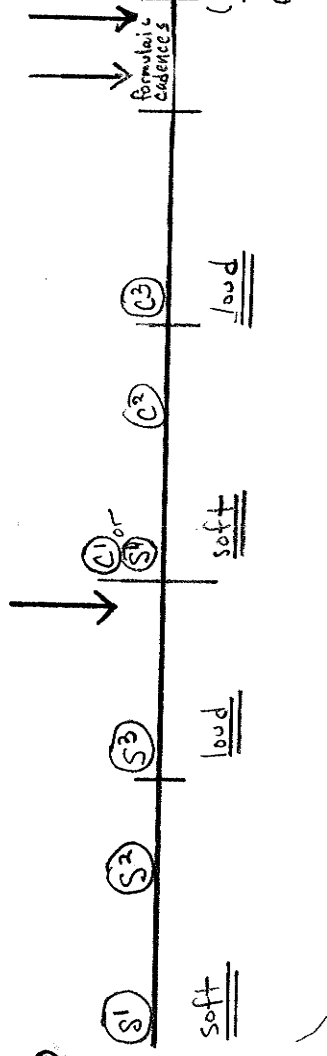


to Part II, First Section ("Development")

## Part II, Second Section (Reprise or "Recapitulation")



nearly exact repetition of this portion of the exposition



repetition back to the beginning of the development (sometimes omitted)

CODA (based on P)

(cf. Mannheim binary 1st-mvt form)

nearly exact transposition of this portion of the exposition to the tonic (down a fifth -- or up a fourth)

K. 201, first movement, Allegro moderato -- thematic material

Zeit

The image shows a handwritten musical score for the first movement of K. 201, Allegro moderato. The score is written on a grand staff with treble and bass clefs and a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The notation includes various musical elements such as notes, rests, dynamics (p, f), and articulation marks (accents, slurs). The score is divided into several sections, each labeled with a circled letter:

- P**: The first section, starting with a piano (p) dynamic. It features a melodic line with eighth-note patterns and a bass line with quarter notes. It ends with "etc.".
- S**: The second section, starting with a piano (p) dynamic. It features a melodic line with eighth-note patterns and a bass line with quarter notes. It ends with "etc.".
- S<sup>2</sup>**: The third section, starting with a piano (p) dynamic. It features a melodic line with eighth-note patterns and a bass line with quarter notes. It ends with "to S<sup>3</sup>".
- S<sup>3</sup>**: The fourth section, starting with a piano (p) dynamic. It features a melodic line with eighth-note patterns and a bass line with quarter notes. It ends with "etc.".
- C<sup>2</sup>**: The fifth section, starting with a piano (p) dynamic. It features a melodic line with eighth-note patterns and a bass line with quarter notes. It ends with "etc.".
- C<sup>3</sup>**: The sixth section, starting with a piano (p) dynamic. It features a melodic line with eighth-note patterns and a bass line with quarter notes. It ends with "to 'codetta' (formulaic cadences)".
- cadences**: The seventh section, starting with a piano (p) dynamic. It features a melodic line with eighth-note patterns and a bass line with quarter notes. It ends with "repeated (cf. rhythm of P)".

There are also some additional markings and annotations:

- A large curved arrow labeled "echo" points from the end of S<sup>2</sup> to the beginning of C<sup>2</sup>.
- A smaller curved arrow labeled "echo (varied)" points from the end of S<sup>3</sup> to the beginning of C<sup>2</sup>.
- The word "etc." appears at the end of sections P, S, S<sup>3</sup>, and C<sup>2</sup>.
- The word "cadences" is written at the beginning of the final section.
- The word "repeated" is written above the final section, with a reference to the rhythm of section P.

Entrance to recapitulation from "point of furthest return"

Mozart K. 201, opening.

Handwritten musical notation for the first system of Mozart's K. 201 opening. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The music features a melodic line in the treble staff and a supporting bass line in the bass staff.

Handwritten musical notation for the second system of Mozart's K. 201 opening. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff contains a melodic line with some complex rhythmic patterns and a trill-like figure. The bass staff contains a supporting bass line.

Entrance to recapitulation from "point of furthest return"

Handwritten musical notation for the first system of the recapitulation section. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff contains a melodic line with some complex rhythmic patterns. The bass staff contains a supporting bass line.

Handwritten musical notation for the second system of the recapitulation section. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff contains a melodic line with some complex rhythmic patterns. The bass staff contains a supporting bass line.

Handwritten musical notation for the third system of the recapitulation section. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff contains a melodic line with some complex rhythmic patterns. The bass staff contains a supporting bass line.

W. A. MOZART  
Sinfonie in A  
KV 201 (186<sup>a</sup>)

Vollendet Salzburg, 6. April 1774

*Allegro moderato*

Oboi

Corni in La

Violino I

Violino II

Viola

Violoncello e Basso

7

14

first only their general outline was preserved. But the Italians were not slow in freeing themselves from that encumbrance, and they at present distribute their overtures in another manner. They begin by a striking, lively piece in double or common time; then they give an *Andante à demi-jeu* [i.e., softly] in which they aim at displaying all the graces of lovely singing; and they conclude with a brilliant *Allegro*, generally in triple time.

The reason they give for this distribution is that in a numerous assembly, where the spectators make great noise, it is necessary at first to persuade them to silence and arrest their attention by means of a glittering, striking beginning. They say that the *grave* of our overtures is neither heard nor listened to by anyone; and that our first stroke of the fiddle-stick, which we boast of with so great emphasis, less noisy than the tuning of instruments which precedes it, and with which it is confused, is more suitable for persuading the audience to slumber than attention. They add, that after having rendered the spectator attentive, it is necessary that he should be interested with less noise by an agreeable and flattering air, which may dispose him to the tenderness with which he is to be inspired; and lastly, to conclude the Overture with a piece of a different character which, contrasting with the beginning of the drama, may, by its loud end, mark the silence which the actor, at his entrance on the stage, requires of the spectators.

### Taste

Genius creates, but taste selects: and a too abundant genius is often in want of a severe censor to prevent it from abusing its valuable riches. One can do great things without taste; but it is taste which makes them interesting. It is taste which makes the composer catch the ideas of the poet; it is taste which makes the performer catch the ideas of the composer; it is taste which furnishes to each whatever may adorn and enliven their subject; and it is taste which gives the listener the perception of all these agreements. Yet taste is not sensibility. It is possible to have much taste, with a frigid soul; and a man transported with things really passionate is little touched by merely graceful things. It seems that taste attaches itself rather to the smaller expressions, and sensibility to the greater.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *A Complete Dictionary of Music*, trans. William Waring, 2nd. ed. (London, 1779). Corrected and revised on the basis of the French original.

## PART VI The Classical Period

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#### A Side Trip into Aesthetics

The latter part of the eighteenth century witnessed a momentous development in musical thought. The grip of the imitation theory founded on Plato and Aristotle, which had held firm sway since the late Renaissance and had been a crucial factor in bringing about the birth of the Baroque, was decisively broken, and in its place there emerged a theory of music as "expression," which was to remain dominant into the twentieth century (and in some quarters, up to the present). This new view was intimately bound up with the style changes that led to the dissolution of Baroque music and the establishment of the periods in music history that we now term the Classic and the Romantic. The imitation theory, in which music took its place alongside all the other arts as a medium for the stylized representation of reality, was chiefly associated with vocal music. In its earlier manifestations it had fathered the recitative and, through it, the opera, and later it had been responsible for the formulation of the "doctrine of affections" of the late Baroque. The first major challenge to its authority came from the stream of "abstract" instrumental sonatas and concertos that originated among the violinists of Italy and turned into a veritable flood by the early eighteenth century. This music did not fit at all into the categories of imitation, and caused a great consternation among the upholders of the older doctrine, among whom the ever-rationalistic French were loudest. The classic expression of this consternation was given by Rousseau, who took the opportunity of railing against this "meaningless" instrumental music in his *Dictionnaire de musique*.

### Sonata

Nowadays, when instrumental music is the most important branch of the art, *sonatas* are extremely fashionable, along with *Symphonies*

[that is, instrumental compositions generally] of all kinds. Vocal music is hardly anything but an accessory to it, and song merely accompanies its accompaniment. We have adopted this poor taste from those who, wishing to introduce the manner of Italian music in a language alien to it, have forced us to try to do with instruments what we cannot accomplish with our voices. I dare predict that so unnatural a taste will not last. Purely harmonic music [i.e., without text] is short on substance; in order to be continually pleasing and avoid boredom, music must raise itself to the level of the imitative arts; but its imitation is not always immediate like that of poetry or painting; the word is the means through which music most frequently determines the object whose image it offers us, and it is by means of sounds in conjunction with the human voice that this image awakens at the bottom of our hearts the sentiment it is its purpose to produce. Who does not sense how far pure *Symphonie*, in which nothing is sought but instrumental brilliance, is from such an effect? Can all the violinistic fireworks of M. Mondonville [1711-72, foremost French violinist and director of the Concert Spirituel] evoke in me the tenderness the voice of a great singer produces in two notes? *Symphonie* can enliven song and add to its expressiveness, but it cannot supplant it. In order to know what all these heaps of sonatas mean, one would have to follow the example of the inept painter who must label his figures: *this is a tree, this is a man, this is a horse*. I shall never forget the sally of the celebrated Fontenelle [1657-1757, French academician], who, finding himself overburdened with these interminable *Symphonies*, cried out in a fit of impatience, "*Sonate, que me veux-tu?*" [Sonata, what do you want of me?]."

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Dictionnaire de musique* (Paris, 1768), 451-52. Trans. R. T.

Even before Rousseau wrote these lines, however, there had appeared in England what was to prove a very influential little book: *An Essay on Musical Expression* (1752, revised in 1753) by the organist, composer, and impresario Charles Avison (1709-70). Avison rejected (or to be more precise, ignored) the imitation theory of music except insofar as it involved "sounds and motions." In so doing, he restricted musical imitation to the fairly paltry level of "madrigalism," and viewed the true aim of music as something quite unrelated to imitation: the direct "raising" or exciting of the passions in the listener. This could be accomplished by "air and harmony" well enough without any pretense at imitation. It was this that Corelli (and Geminiani, his pupil residing in England) did so effectively in their music. In Avison's formulation, music acted directly on the emotions and seemed to bypass the intellect. This idea was anathema not only to the French, but also to British rationalists, some of whom went to the trouble of publishing rebuttals to Avison's *Essay*.

*Expression* arises from a combination of *Air* and *Harmony*; and is no other than a strong and proper application of them to the intended sub-

From this definition it will plainly appear, that *Air* and *Harmony* are never to be deserted for the sake of *Expression*: because *Expression* is founded on them. And if we should attempt any thing in defiance of these, it would cease to be *Musical Expression*. Still less can the horrid dissonance of cat-calls deserve this appellation, though the *Expression* or *Imitation* be ever so strong and natural.

And, as dissonance and shocking sounds cannot be called *Musical Expression*, so neither do I think, can mere *Imitation* of several other things be entitled to this name, which, however, among the generality of mankind hath often obtained it. Thus the gradual rising or falling of the notes in a long succession, is often used to denote ascent or descent; broken intervals, to denote an interrupted motion; a number of quick divisions [flurries of rapid notes], to describe swiftness or flying; sounds resembling laughter, to describe laughter; with a number of other contrivances of a parallel kind, which it is needless here to mention. Now all these I should choose to style *Imitation*, rather than *Expression*: because, it seems to me, that their tendency is rather to fix the hearer's attention on the similitude between the sounds and the thing which they describe, and thereby to excite a reflex act of understanding, than to affect the heart and raise the passions of the soul.

Here then we see a defect or impropriety, similar to those which have been above observed to arise from a too particular attachment either to the modulation or harmony. For as in the first case, the master often attaches himself so strongly to the beauty of *Air* or modulation [i.e., melody], as to neglect the *Harmony*; and in the second case, pursues his *Harmony* or *Fugues* so as to destroy the beauty of modulation; so in this third case, for the sake of a forced, and (if I may so speak) an unmeaning *Imitation*, he neglects both *Air* and *Harmony*, on which alone true *Musical Expression* can be founded.

This distinction seems more worthy our notice at present, because some very eminent composers have attached themselves chiefly to the method here mentioned; and seem to think they have exhausted all the depths of *Expression*, by a dextrous *Imitation* of the meaning of a few particular words, that occur in the hymns or songs which they set to music. Thus, were one of these gentlemen to express the following words of Milton:

Their Songs  
Divide the Night, and lift our Thoughts to Heav'n.

It is highly probable, that upon the word *divide*, he would run a *division* of half a dozen bars; and on the subsequent part of the sentence, he would not think he had done the poet justice, or risen to that *Height* of sublimity which he ought to express, till he had climbed up to the very top of his instrument, or at least as far as a human voice could follow him. And this would pass with a great part of mankind for *Musical Expression*, instead of that noble mixture of

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 Jean Le Rond d'Alembert: Remarks on Instrumental Music

(from Oeuvres et correspondances inédites [Paris, 1887; rpt. Geneva, 1967])

1. From "Fragment sur l'opéra" [c. 1750-60], p. 155-56:

Opera is the true theater of music. In order to acquire the expression of which it is capable, [music] needs to be joined with words and dances. Indeed, it can hardly produce the same effect in purely instrumental music. . . . Music that one does not understand is useless. Any instrumental work [symphonie] that says nothing to the soul is more or less like a discourse in German delivered before someone who understands only French. Strictly considered, a sonata is a dictionary of words whose collection makes no sense--or, if you like, it is a series of features whose colors represent nothing. And it is even worse when (as happens far too often) the merit of that sonata consists only in the conquering of [technical and performance] difficulties. . . . About thirty years ago we saw a celebrated virtuoso hissed at a concert spirituel. The spectators were wrong not to give the justice due to an admirable performance; and the virtuoso was not right to play for such listeners a music so little made for their ears. . . .

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2. From "Fragment sur la musique en général" [1752] pp. 182-83:

Music is not merely an "agreeable noise," although many people seem to limit it to this idea. It is a language or a type of language made to produce some feeling in the soul. But this language is such that, when it is alone and not joined to anything else [i.e., instrumental music], it can excite no more than rather vague feelings. The three principal means that music uses when not linked with words are: the tempo, the nature of the sounds, and the [sounds] of the instruments. Thus [rapid] tempo indicates gaiety [only] in general; slowness linked with [a certain] gravity of sound indicates [only] something majestic. The flute is the instrument of tenderness; the bassoon, with its tormented sounds [sons déchirés], that of sadness or horror. It follows from this, first, that what is called a separate instrumental work [symphonie isolée], like a sonata or a concerto--and something that is not capable of exciting some [specific] feeling in the soul--is rather bad music. . . .

Our famous violins [in Paris] are no more than dancers on the strings. I compare them with a man reciting by heart, and out-of-order, the words of a dictionary. The taste for sonatas has spoiled us, and the most philosophical of our writers is right to say, "Sonate, que me veux-tu?"



An instrumental work made to be played by itself could thus not have a sharply determined character, however harmonious and well-composed it might otherwise be. And this is a great fault--not putting the spectator into the state of saying, "It is such and such that the musician wanted to depict." I maintain that it is extremely difficult, and perhaps even impossible, for [instrumental music] to detail feeling beyond a certain point, because music . . . is a language without vowels--and it is difficult to say what the musician wanted to depict unless one learns of it in advance. Only then will one be in a position to judge whether the musician perfectly depicted that which has been proposed.

Thus, in general I believe that separate instrumental works, when not joined to any action [or text], can make [only] a very insignificant music. . . . [But within the context of the dance or in an opera] the spectator, knowing the [true] subject better, is all the more in a position, so to speak, to apply the music to the action and to see whether the one is a faithful translation of the other. . . .