

Des Menschen Wesen und Wirken ist Ton, ist Sprache. Musik ist gleichfalls Sprache, *allegemeine*; die *erste* des Menschen. Die vorhandenen Sprachen sind Individualisirungen des Musik; nicht individualisirte Musik, sondern, die zur Musik sich verhalten, wie die einzelnen Organe zum organisch Ganzen.

Johann Wilhelm Ritter, *Fragmente aus dem Nachlasse eines jungen Physikers*, 1810.

[The essence and the activity of man is tone, is language. Music is also language, general language, the original one of man. The extant languages are individualizations of music—not individualized music, but related to music like the separate organs to the organic whole.]

Charles Rosen
The Classical Style
New York: W.W.
Norton, (1997).

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The Coherence of the Musical Language

The classical style appears inevitable only after the event. Looking back today we can see its creation as a natural one, not an outgrowth of the preceding style (in relation to which it seems more like a leap, or a revolutionary break), but a step in the progressive realization of the musical language as it had existed and developed since the fifteenth century. At the time, nothing would have seemed less logical; the period from 1750 to 1775 was penetrated by eccentricity, hit-or-miss experimentation, resulting in works which are still difficult to accept today because of their oddities. Yet each experiment that succeeded, each stylistic development that became an integral part of music for the next half-century or more was characterized by its aptness for a dramatic style based on tonality.

It is a useful hypothesis to think of one element of a new style as a germinal force, appearing in an older style at a moment of crisis, and gradually transforming all the other elements over the years, into an aesthetic harmony until the new style becomes an integral whole, as the rib-vault is said to have been the creative, or precipitating element in the formation of the Gothic style. In this way the historical development of a style seems to follow a perfectly logical pattern. In practice, things are rarely so simple. Most of the characteristic features of the classical style did not appear one by one in an orderly fashion, but sporadically, sometimes together and sometimes apart, and with a progress despairingly irregular to those who prefer a hard-edged result. The final product does, however, have a logical coherence, as even the irregularities of a language, once investigated, become consistent. So the procedure of isolating the elements and considering how one leads to the other, implying the other elements and completing them, is unhistorical but helpful.

The clearest of these elements in the formation of the early classical style (or proto-classical, if we reserve the term classical for Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven) is the short, periodic, articulated phrase. When it first appears, it is a disruptive element in the Baroque style, which relied generally on an encompassing and sweeping continuity. The paradigm is, of course, the four-measure phrase, but historically this is not the model, but only, at the end, the most common. Two-measure phrases are almost a trademark with Domenico Scarlatti, becoming four-measure phrases when they are, in turn, grouped by twos. Haydn's Quartet op. 20 no. 4 starts with seven completely independent

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six-measure phrases, and this is only one example among thousands. Three- and five-measure phrases appear frequently from the very beginning, and 'real' seven-measure phrases become possible in the latter part of the century ('real' as opposed to eight-measure phrases where the last measure disappears by overlapping with the beginning of a new phrase). Not until about 1820 did the four-measure phrase gain its stronghold on rhythmic structure. Before then, its supremacy was purely practical—it was neither too short nor too long, and it was easily divisible into balanced and symmetrical halves as three- and five-measure phrases were not. But there is no magic in the number four, and what is important is the periodic breaking of continuity.

Naturally, the periodicity makes this possible by providing a continuity of its own. The periodic phrase is related to the dance, with its need for a phrase pattern that corresponds to the steps and to groupings. In Italian instrumental music of the early eighteenth century, this phrase grouping is reinforced by the harmonic sequence, and it is amusing to see the most basic device of High Baroque rhythm contribute to the effectiveness of an element that was eventually to lead to the fall of the Baroque system. Not that the sequence was ever abandoned; it has remained an important part of music until our own day. In the classical style, however, it loses its primacy as a force for movement (some of which it regained during the nineteenth century). A Baroque fugue is kept moving largely by sequence: a classical sonata has other means of locomotion as well. In a classical work, in fact, a sequence is often a means of decreasing tension: after a series of surprising modulations, it is a way of calling a halt, and is often used for this purpose, placed over a pedal point, particularly toward the end of a development section. All large-scale movement has ceased, and the sequence is only a kind of pulsation. In this way the basic impulsive element of the Baroque is employed but downgraded in the classical system.

Articulated, periodic phrasing brought about two fundamental alterations in the nature of eighteenth-century music: one was a heightened, indeed overwhelming, sensitivity to symmetry, and the second was a rhythmic texture of great variety, with the different rhythms not contrasted or superimposed, but passing logically and easily into each other. The dominance of symmetry came from the periodic nature of the classical phrase: a period imposes a larger, slower pulse upon the rhythm, and just as two similar measures are almost always necessary for us to understand the rhythm of the music and to identify the downbeat, so now a comparable symmetry of phrase structure was necessary to hear and to feel the larger pulse. The preference for articulation also increased the aesthetic need for symmetry. When the main consideration was rhythmic flow, as in the High Baroque, the balancing of one half of a phrase by another was not of predominant concern; it was more important for the end of each phrase to lead imperceptibly and urgently to the next. As each phrase assumed a more independent existence, the question of balance asserted itself with greater clarity. One

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example, the opening measures of perhaps the first unequivocal masterpiece in a classical style purified of all mannerist traces, Mozart's Concerto for Piano and Orchestra K. 271, will show how this balance was achieved, and also illuminate the variety and integration of rhythmic textures:

Measures 1-3 and 4-6 are the extreme form of balance, absolute identity. Yet it would be a mistake to think that the identical halves are identical in meaning. The repetition has greater urgency (a third would be exasperating), and gives the phrase greater definition, a clearer existence as an element of

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the work we are about to hear. This is an astonishing and delightful opening, surprising not only for its use of the soloist at the very outset, but also for the wit with which he enters, as he replies to the orchestral fanfare. For this wit, the exquisite balance of the phrase is essential: the orchestra falls an octave and rises a fifth, the piano then rises an octave and falls a fifth within an equal length of time. We are not by any means intended to hear this as an inversion, as would be the case with a theme inverted in a fugue. That is the last thing the style requires, and the most ruinous of effect. The symmetry is concealed, delicate, and full of charm.

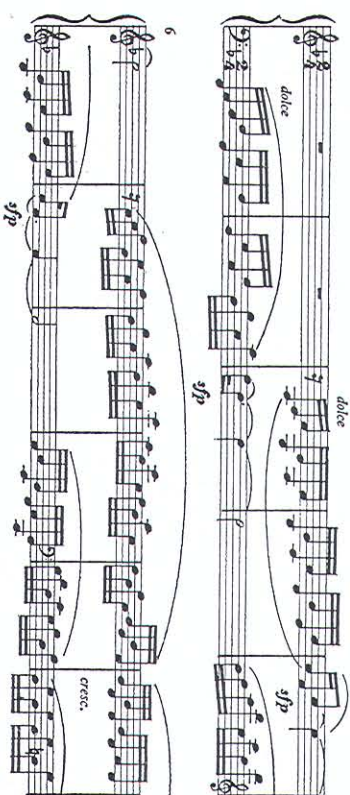
The concealment and, above all, the charm depend on the rhythmic variety: in effect the orchestra is in *alla breve*, with two long beats to the bar, while the piano is in a clear four (C and C). The stately is opposed to the impertinent, and balanced perfectly by it. The High Baroque is capable of such contrast, but rarely aimed at this kind of balance. The extent of the classical achievement is not, however, seen in the first half-dozen measures but in the ones that follow, where a convincing fusion of the two kinds of pulse is heard. The phrasing in measure 8 is a synthesis; it beautifully combines the pulse of *alla breve* and common time, while the melody in the first violins in measures 7-11 combines the opening motives of both the piano and the orchestra. It is this that makes the transition from measures 6 to 7 masterly: the urgency of the repeated phrase justifies the increased movement in eighth notes of the accompaniment in measure 7, while the first violins, who play the repeated Bb's of the first measure half as fast, keep the change from being obtrusive and draw the two phrases together. With this seventh measure, the animation begins to increase, but the transition is imperceptible, a natural growth of what comes before. This kind of rhythmic transition is the touchstone of the classical style; never before in the history of music had it been possible to move from one kind of pulse to another so naturally and with such grace.

The High Baroque preferred music with a homogeneous rhythmic texture, using different kinds of rhythmic movement only under certain conditions. Contrast of rhythm could occur in two ways: by the superimposition of one rhythm over another, in which case the dominant rhythm of the piece inevitably becomes the faster one; and by the placing of large blocks of one kind of rhythm next to another (as in the plague of flies from *Israel in Egypt*), in which case the two or even three sorts of rhythm are superimposed before the end, generally at the climax, thus being reduced to the first case. In both cases, the rhythms remain essentially distinct; no transition is envisaged or attempted. A sudden and violent change in the rhythmic texture is sometimes attempted by Bach and other composers for dramatic reasons, as in the organ chorale-*prelude* *O Lamm Gottes* and in the last movement of the Fourth Brandenburg Concerto. Here the effect is one of wilful rhythmic eccentricity, always giving a moment of shock to the listener, deeply emotional in the one piece, dramatic but amiable in the other. But even these works

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are exceptions:¹ the most common Baroque form is one of simple and unified rhythmic texture. When a rhythm has been established, it is generally continued relentlessly until the end, or at least until the pause before the final cadence (at which point a change of rhythm is possible without giving the impression that something very out-of-the-way is happening). A fugue theme, for example, may open with long notes and finish with ones of smaller value (rarely the other way round), and it is the faster notes that become the basic texture of the whole: the longer notes of the theme are invariably accompanied by the faster rhythm in the other voices. Once the piece is under way an impression of *perpetuum mobile* is not uncommon.

The *perpetuum mobile* is occasionally found in classical works, and it is interesting to compare the difference in treatment. The chief rhythmic interest of the classical *perpetuum mobile* is focused on the irregular aspects: that is, the rhythmic variety is as great as in any other classical work. In the finale of Haydn's *Lark* Quartet op. 64 no. 5, the phrases are clearly articulated and never overlap, in spite of the continuous movement; the strong off-beat accents of the middle section in the minor provide still greater assurance of variety. The syncopated accents of the finale of Beethoven's F major Sonata op. 54 are even more surprising: they occur alternately on the second and third sixteenth notes of groups of four as follows:



This provides two contradictory forces that challenge the weight of the downbeat. The *sforzando* on the tonic in the bass reinforces the second sixteenth note, which is the weakest in the measure, making the accent most destructive to a sense of unvaried flow. For a classical composer the *perpetuum mobile* is only an added challenge to his desire to break up the rhythmic texture, and the tension adds dramatic force. It is, however, typically a device for finales, where the greater rhythmic stability of a continuous

¹ The one real exception that I know in the High Baroque, where a form of rhythmic transition, as opposed to contrast, is attempted, is the 'Confiteor' of the *B minor Mass*. In this profound work, the means used are, however, almost anti-classical, and a gradual change of tempo is meant, not a fusion of different pulses.

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movement can serve as an alternative to a squarely articulated melody. The *perpetuum mobile* of the last movement of the *Appassionata*, a piece more stable than the first movement, has its dynamic share of rhythmic violence, and finally breaks down just before the return to the tonic in an access of passion followed by a moment of complete exhaustion. Indeed, the rhythmic violence of this movement often makes us forget its ceaseless flow. The Baroque *perpetuum mobile*, on the other hand, is not a dramatic form, or one that generates any particular tension. It is the normal procedure, and there are so many examples that citation is unnecessary—any work in which the thematic material moves evenly (almost any Allemande, for example) will do.

Baroque dynamics provide a perfect analogy with Baroque rhythm, perhaps because dynamic inflection is as much a part of rhythm as it is of melodic expression. Just as the rhythmic motion may be constant throughout the work, or different rhythms may be either superimposed horizontally or juxtaposed vertically without mediation, in the same way a Baroque work may be played at a fairly constant level of sound, or two levels may be superimposed or juxtaposed without any use (at least structurally) of *crescendo* and *diminuendo*.¹ A great deal has been written about 'terraced dynamics,' but the typical performance, except when a solo or several soloists were to be contrasted with a larger group, was probably at a constant level: 'terraced dynamics' were not a necessity but a luxury of Baroque music. Most harpsichords were built with only one keyboard, so that two levels of sound were impossible at the same time, and sometimes even the quick juxtaposition of two levels was made more than difficult by the inconvenient placing of the stops at the side of the instrument. Changes in registration on the organ during the middle of a piece generally required the presence of an assistant with a plan of operations: only an important virtuoso work would have been performed in this way, and then only when practicable. It should be remembered, too, that the use of two keyboards does not imply two dynamic levels, but rather two kinds of sonority. In reality, this contrast of sonority is more fundamental to High Baroque music than the contrast of dynamic levels, which is only a special form of it. The division between tutti and soli in the concerto grosso is less an opposition of loud and soft than of two different qualities of sound, which clarify the structure as the two keyboards clarify the voice-leading in those of the *Goldberg Variations* where the voices cross each other. Equally matched levels are, however, normal in the Baroque, though we are sometimes prevented from realizing it by nineteenth-century habits that have led us to demand greater dynamic variety from music. Often we badly distort the music even when we do not exceed what was possible on an early eighteenth-century instrument. Much of Domenico Scarlatti's

¹ *Crescendo* and *diminuendo* as ornamental and expressive nuances were, of course, important to the Baroque period, particularly in vocal music.

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music, for example, is made up of short passages played twice or even three times in a row; to play these repetitions as loud-soft echoes is to betray the music, for much of the effect should come from its insistence. The belief that everything that appears twice should be differentiated is an unconscious and sometimes noxious principle in the mind of almost every performer today. The High Baroque looked for variety mainly through ornamentation and not through dynamic contrast, 'terraced' or not.

Even here circumspection is necessary. Some music (a great deal of Handel's) needs heavy ornamentation even the first time round; other music (most of Scarlatti's and almost all of Bach's) needs very little or absolutely none. Scarlatti had worked out an early form of the more articulated classical style, and an indiscriminate application of ornament would cause his phrases to overlap. And it was already a contemporary complaint against Bach that he wrote everything out and left no space for the performer to add his ornaments; the answer, quite rightly made at the time, was that this is one of the great beauties of his music. It is sometimes held that the repeats of all the *Goldberg Variations* should be decorated. This is what comes of reading eighteenth-century theorists (or about them) and paying no attention to the music. A few of the variations could indeed be ornamented, but most of them resist any attempt beyond the addition of a mordent or two, and this would only make the performance sound fussy. The problem is that performance has become largely a public affair since the eighteenth century: and with the formality has come a need for variety of effect and dramatization. The purpose of ornamentation (except in opera) was not to capture and retain the attention of a large audience: one ornamented to please oneself and one's patron and friends. The *Well-Tempered Keyboard* and the *Art of Fugue*, for example, were indeed intended to be performed, but only in private, as many fugues at a time as one wanted, on any keyboard instrument that was handy. It is obvious from suites and partitas that the early eighteenth century could bear longer stretches of the same tonality than any succeeding period, along with lengthier works in the same rhythm and at the same dynamic level.¹ The chamber music of the High Baroque was certainly played with subtle dynamic inflections, and required, what is most difficult to recapture, a *rubato* proper to the style and a decorative system for emphasizing these inflections, for its expression, in fact. But it was not an art that relied heavily upon large dynamic contrasts, or in any way at all upon transition between dynamic levels. What dynamic contrasts there were can be found mainly in the public genres: opera, oratorio, and concerto. This distinction between genres developed greater importance in the middle of the eighteenth century, becoming blurred only at the end. The symphony, for example, demanded a greater overlapping of phrases—i.e., less articulation and more directional movement—than the solo sonata, but by the time the late eighteenth-century

¹ Even if these suites were treated to some extent as anthologies, a work like the Handel Chaconne, which *was* played in its entirety, makes a modern ear impatient.

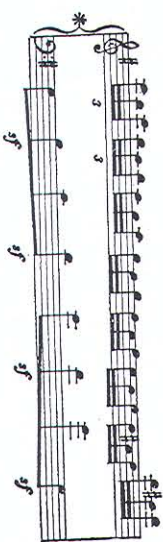
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theorists had pointed this out, Haydn and Mozart were already writing their solo works in a more symphonic style.

The articulated phrase required its individual elements to be discrete and set off from each other in order that its shape and symmetry might be clearly audible, and this in turn brought about a greater variety of rhythmic texture and a much larger range of dynamic accent. In the opening phrase of the Mozart Concerto K. 271, cited above (p. 59), the Baroque contrast between a section of music for orchestra and a new section for solo has been concentrated into a single phrase. When the most emphatic extremes are forced into one detail, then a style must be found that can mediate between them: a work made up of such contrasts so dramatically juxtaposed at close range with no possibility of long-range transition between them would either be very short or intolerable. It is this style of transition or mediation that the later eighteenth century created. The development of the *crescendo* in orchestral music, particularly at Mannheim, is well known, but also the possibility of mediating between different kinds of rhythms now appeared for the first time. One of the most common practices of the classical period was to introduce a faster rhythm first into the accompaniment and only some measures later into the main voices, thus smoothing over the join until no break is felt. Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto opens with a feeling of two slow beats to a measure:



and by the end of the exposition we hear eight quick beats per measure:



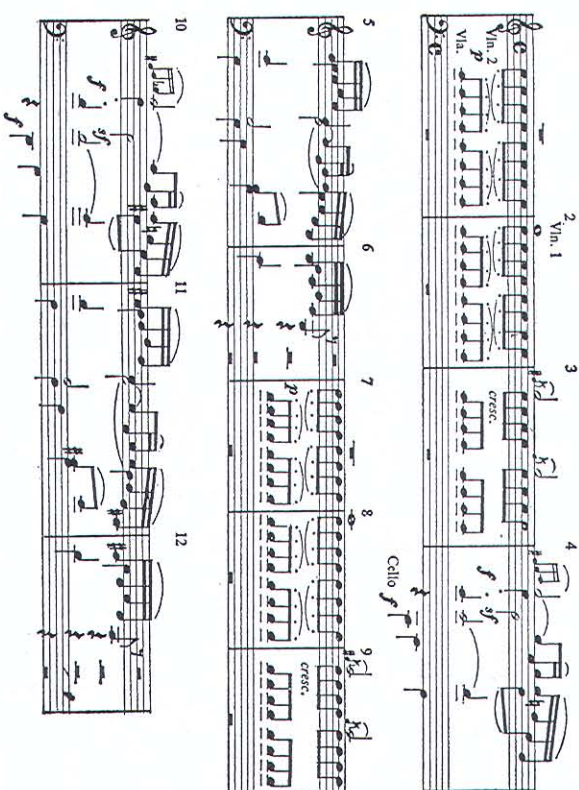
where the *sforzandi* on the weak eighth notes double the pulse from the previous four. As the movement proceeds, the transition from two to eight is imperceptible.

Rhythmic transition in the late eighteenth century is achieved with discrete, well-defined elements, generally related to one another by each in turn being twice as fast, or half as fast, as the preceding, so that all the rates of speed tend to come from the series 2, 4, 8, 16, etc. But the movement from one rhythm to another is felt as a transition and not as a contrast. This sense of unbroken continuity is achieved not only by starting the faster rhythm in a subsidiary

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or accompanying voice so that its entrance is less noticeable, or by subtle nuances of phrasing, as in the above example from Mozart, but also by the placing of accents and by harmonic means as well. Mozart and Haydn were the first composers to understand the new demands on harmonic movement made by the periodic phrase, and it is in their works that a convincing relation is first heard. Much of their success hangs on a comprehension of dissonance and harmonic tension: it is often an exceptionally dissonant chord that introduces a new and faster rhythm,¹ and both composers made full use of the added animation that is so natural at the end of a musical paragraph in its drive toward a cadence and resolution. Both also succeeded after 1775 in handling the introduction of triplets into dupe time convincingly—always a difficult matter in a style so heavily concerned with symmetry and with the clear independence of the individual elements.

With the classical style, a means of transition can even become a thematic element. In Haydn's Quartet in C major op. 33 no. 3 of 1781, the *crescendo* is perhaps the most important element of the main theme:



Here is the classical style during its first years of perfection; not only is there symmetry from phrase to phrase, but even within the phrase itself. The *crescendo* of the first three measures (to which the grace notes and turn in the violin are a contribution) is balanced by the descent of the first violin in measures 4 to 6, itself counterbalanced by the rising figure of the cello, so

¹ See the new triplet rhythm introduced at the end of the example from Mozart's D major Quintet K. 593 on p. 283.

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that the general effect is still one of ascending. More important, the opening measures are not only a *crescendo* but also a gradual acceleration little by little from the uninflected pulsation of the opening measure to the sixteenth-note rhythm of measures 4 to 6. The first four bars represent an increase of pulse (0, 1, 2, and 4 in each successive measure) within the same tempo. The *sforzando* on the second beat that accompanies the entrance of the cello strengthens the sense of four beats in that bar, and also foreshadows the emphatic halt of the first violin on the second beat in the next bar. Even the transition back to the feeling of zero beats per measure is beautifully handled. Bar 4 has a *sforzando* on the second beat, bar 5 has only the accent that comes from the sustained notes, and bar 6 withholds all accent from the second beat and follows it with a surprising silence; all this prepares the return to the uninflected pulsation of the opening. The silence is as much a part of the theme as the *crescendo*; it is even developed afterwards, first by being filled up with the violin's decorated notes from bar 3 played twice as fast:

and later by being doubled in length:

These examples introduce another kind of transition, thematic transition, which is sometimes used for development. In this movement, a closing theme of the exposition quoted on the following page is derived from the same violin motif of bars 2 and 3, played at double tempo, and its connection with the opening is made through measures 31-32 quoted above and the surrounding section. In this way, each theme appears to grow from the preceding one, gaining an independent identity and still keeping its relationship to the whole. This delightful five-measure theme (or four-measure theme with an echo in the middle) demonstrates a kind of thematic relationship in which the logical steps are successively spelled out in the music itself.

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It should be noted here that the quartet's opening six-measure phrase (quoted p. 65) can be looked at either as a four-measure phrase with a one-bar introduction and an echo at the end, or (since a new figure is introduced at the climax at the opening of bar 4) as two three-measure phrases. Both interpretations, of course, are right; or, rather, we hear the rhythmic tension between these two patterns as part of the phrase. The harmony of this opening phrase is more subtle than it appears at first: nothing but tonic with a little dominant thrown in at the end to define the key, it sounds grandly simple, but tension is introduced by withholding the root position of the tonic, so necessary to this style, until the end of the *crescendo* and then by bringing it in on an off-beat. The spaciousness is tempered with wit: no chamber music before this had ever achieved such a combination.

The capacity of the classical style to go imperceptibly from one dynamic level to another, from one kind of rhythm to another, was limited only in the direction of how slowly it could be done: how fast was unimportant, since, at a very fast rate of change, a transition disappears and becomes a contrast. A slow transition, however, was always more difficult, and the immensely long and very gradual changes that Wagner was to perfect were impossible within a classical scheme. The stability of the tonal sense and the need for balance were there as a barrier; not until nineteenth-century tonality became less stable could the pace at which things happened (as opposed to the tempo) be slowed down. The third act of *Parsifal* is, in a formal sense, an enormous modulation from B major back to the A flat major of the Prelude to the first act, and Wagner can make it last so long because he is able to take so much time defining his first key: the third act prelude is in a vague region floating between B flat minor and B major, and this lack of tonal definition allows Wagner's rhythm to proceed in a series of waves and the tension to be increased at a very slow pace. The dynamic level can then be raised at a similarly slow rate, and the range can be greatly enlarged.

For Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, no such technique was available or even conceivable, although Beethoven extends the power of the style and slows the rate of change almost miraculously in such places as the slow *crescendo* and *accelerando* ('poi a poi di nuovo vivente') in the finale of the A flat Sonata, op. 110, from the inversion of the fugue to the end. Here all the discrete thematic units of the classical style are used so that they appear to blend with each other, and to achieve this continuum Beethoven uses an abnormal harmonic movement, modulating from the key of the leading tone

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to the tonic (G minor-major to A flat). The distance of the relationship, although classically lucid, blurs the force of the tonic and allows for a great expanse of time so that its eventual return and re-establishment may carry the full weight demanded by the triumph of the last pages. Beethoven's method, with the relationships sharply defined, has nothing to do with the Romantic procedure of withholding the tonic. In general, for an event to happen in slow motion we must wait for the middle of the nineteenth century: the classical style is capable of very slow tempi, but the music is always eventful, and a single continuous movement longer than twenty minutes is beyond its reach.

There is, however, a sense in which the classical style moves more slowly than is sometimes thought. The modulation to the dominant is not always an affair of a few measures; sometimes it starts with the opening phrase, and the whole first page of a movement may be a series of successively stronger approaches and withdrawals. In Haydn's E flat major Quartet op. 20 no. 1, bars 7-10 are already in the dominant and there is a return to the dominant in bars 14 and 15; the tonic reappears after each of these places, and the final move to the dominant is not made until bars 21-24. All this must, of course, be changed in the recapitulation, which is completely rewritten. We can speak here of a long dominant preparation, but it is more accurate to describe it as a general drift to the dominant made articulate at a given moment. The extent of the drift is often obscured by the terminology of 'sonata form,' which concentrates on the moment of articulation: what are called 'bridge passages' between tonic and dominant are common enough in classical expositions (how could they not be?), but there are innumerable cases where the movement to the dominant begins right at the opening, with the establishment of the tonic. This is often found in Haydn and is even more frequent with Beethoven. The drift away from the tonic starts at the opening of the *Eroica* Symphony, and the *Waldstein* Sonata establishes the tonic only after the movement away from it has apparently started. The Sonata in A major op. 101 marks the extreme development of this technique as Beethoven here starts directly with the movement to the dominant. The tonic is established by implication with an extraordinarily poetic effect of beginning in the middle, and only a firmness that is taken for granted without being emphasized could make possible the emotion that is built on it.

Sometimes the change of key is startling and abrupt, and the new tonality is introduced without modulation. When this happens, something in the opening section has made it possible. The first of Haydn's op. 33 Quartets, in B minor, restates the main theme in D, the relative major (the 'normal' secondary key for a movement in the minor after 1770), after a fermata and without any modulation at all.¹ This is possible because the main theme was originally announced, at the very opening of the work, in what appeared to

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be the relative major, the B minor becoming clear only in the third bar. The movement to the new key is therefore accomplished simply by reharmonizing the melody in the way already implied by the first two measures. The preparation of the new key is not explicit, but implicit in the material itself.

We can see from this example both how free classical form was, and how closely it was tied to tonal relationships. At this point Haydn is drawing the logical conclusion of his opening. He is bound less by the practices of his contemporaries than by a sensitivity to harmonic implication; the suggestion of D major placed at a point as critical as the opening measure makes Haydn realize that he can dispense with a modulation. The same sensitivity will lead Mozart, after *La Finta Giardiniera*, to write each opera in a definite tonality, beginning and ending with it, and organizing the sequence of numbers around it.

An articulate movement to the dominant (or its substitute) is all that is required harmonically of a sonata exposition: how it is done is completely free, or, rather, bound only by the nature and material of each individual work. There is a movement toward the dominant in most Baroque music, too, even in the early Baroque, but it is rarely made either articulate—that is, decisive—or dramatic. What the late eighteenth century did was to intensify this movement toward the dominant and give it a stronger feeling of direction.

A clear hierarchy of tonal strength was demanded by the classical style. Tovey and others have commented on the difference between being *on* a tonality and being *in* it. In reality, a subtle series of degrees is set up by the classical composers: stronger than being *in* a key, is its establishment as a secondary key, a weaker pole of force reacting against the tonic. Still stronger, of course, is the tonic itself. This hierarchy (a continuous one, with each stage blending into the next) explains how Mozart's G minor Symphony K. 550, for example, can have a development section which goes through a kaleidoscopic succession of keys, without ever reaching the stability achieved by the relative major at the end of the exposition. As an example of even greater resourcefulness, the first tutti of Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto also goes through a series of tonalities but without once really leaving the tonic. It is a mistake to speak of classical modulation without specifying an order of magnitude; unfortunately, we lack a concise technical language. A Baroque *composition* moves to another tonality in much the same way that a late eighteenth-century *phrase* goes normally from tonic to dominant or back. In the classical style, modulation is given a power commensurate with its role.

In short, the larger harmonic structure was transformed in order to make it fit the proportions as well as the nature of the classical phrase. It had, indeed, already been remarked in the eighteenth century that a sonata exposition was an expanded dance-phrase. This expansion was accomplished not merely in the Baroque fashion of extending and repeating the motion of individual motifs, but by dramatization as well.

¹ Quoted on page 116.

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The Baroque and classical styles are sometimes contrasted as decorative and dramatic respectively. This leads to misunderstanding only if taken to refer to expressive character rather than to the technical procedures of the two styles. A Baroque work is undramatic in that its tension remains fairly constant until the final cadence, and only rarely rises above the level set at the beginning. Nothing can be more dramatic in character than the opening chorus in E minor of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*, yet it achieves its dramatic effect by transcending the variation (chorale prelude), a decorative form, and the concerto grosso form (which, like the Baroque rondo, works by alternation and generally does not build to a specific area of climax). This chorus moves like a sonata from the minor to the relative major, but the cadence on G major actually lowers the dramatic energy, which is recaptured only with the entrance of the third chorus singing the chorale. Through its throbbing rhythm, anguished harmonies, and the cumulative effect of its three choruses, the music acts as a dramatic image, not as a scenario. On the other hand, in a classical sonata in a minor key the apparent relaxation of the relative major is always compensated for by Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, who make certain that the tension is raised, not lowered, at this point. The second subject of Beethoven's *Appassionata* is both more lyrical and more nervous than the opening; it moves faster and the bass steadily mounts. There were, of course, no rules about second subjects in the late eighteenth century, nor were second subjects even necessary, but when they occur in Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, they are usually more intense than the first subject. The dramatic character of the sonata calls for contrast, and when the main theme is vigorous, some of the succeeding themes generally take on a softer character. But then their harmonic movement tends to be faster (as in Beethoven's opp. 53, 57), more agitated (Mozart K. 310, Beethoven op. 31 no. 2) or more chromatic and passionate (Beethoven op. 109). Haydn preters themes of equal intensity and relies on harmonic movement for the necessary dramatic effect. It is true that in Schumann and Chopin, the second themes are generally more relaxed in every way than the first, but by that time the sonata was an archaic form, fundamentally unsuited to contemporary style, with the initial tonic section so unstable emotionally that a decrease in tension was inevitable.

The stability and clarity of the opening and closing pages of a classical sonata are essential to its form, and they make the increased tension of the middle sections possible. The difference between the Baroque movement toward the dominant and the classical modulation is not only one of degree: the classical style dramatizes this movement—in other words, it becomes an event as well as a directional force. The simplest way to mark this event, to articulate it, in fact, is by a pause on the dominant of the dominant before continuing, and sophisticated versions of this device can be found even in the latest works of Beethoven.

This event can be further articulated in two ways: it can be emphasized

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by the introduction of a new theme (the practice of Mozart and the majority of his contemporaries), or by the repetition of the opening theme, preferably in such a way that its new significance at the dominant is clear (the device preferred by Haydn). Beethoven and Haydn often combine both methods, first restating the main theme with changes and new details that show how it is reinterpreted by being transposed from the tonic, and then adding a new theme. The presence or absence of a new melody is of less moment than the extent to which the new key is dramatized, and how continuity is achieved to offset the articulated structure.

This moment of dramatization and where it occurs make an essential contrast with the Baroque style. Modulation already exists in all dance-forms of the early eighteenth century; but in High Baroque style a pause to mark the arrival at the dominant is hardly ever placed in the middle of the first half but at the end of it: the music is a gradual flow to the dominant with a resolution at the end of the section. Early in a sonata, however, there must be a moment, more or less dramatic, of awareness of the new tonality: it may be a pause, a strong cadence, an explosion, a new theme, or anything else that the composer wishes. This moment of dramatization is more fundamental than any compositional device.

For this reason, the classical style needed more forcible means of emphasizing new keys than the Baroque, and it used for this purpose a quantity of 'filling' almost unparalleled until then in the history of music except in pieces of an improvisatory character. By 'filling' I mean purely conventional material, superficially unrelated to the content of the piece, and apparently (and in some cases, actually) transferable bodily from one work to another. Every musical style, naturally, relies on conventional material, principally at cadences, which almost always follow traditional formulas. The classical style, however, further magnified and elongated the cadence in order to strengthen the modulation. A Baroque composer worked mostly with vertical filling (the figured bass), and the classical composer with horizontal: long phrases of conventional passagework. Aside from accompaniment figures and cadential ornaments, the two basic forms of conventional material are scales and arpeggios, and they fill classical works to a degree that would only have been possible for a Baroque composer in a toccata, or in a form that tried to sound improvised rather than composed. The means employed by an early eighteenth-century composer to give the impression of freedom were needed by Mozart to organize the form; he used whole phrases of scales and arpeggios the way Handel used sequences—to tie sections of the work together. But in the finest Baroque work the sequence is generally clothed and covered by thematic material, while even in the greatest works of Haydn and Mozart the 'filling' is displayed nakedly, and appears to have been prefabricated in large pieces.

Another reason for the use of large conventional phrases and their deployment in block-form was the increase of instrumental virtuosity, although

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it is moot whether the instrumentalist inspired the composer or vice versa: probably both. In any case, the following passage from one of Mozart's finest works, the Sonata for Piano K. 333, is absolutely conventional:



It could be transferred to any work in common time which needs an F major cadence. The passage has a certain amount of brilliance and is obviously derived from concerto style. It also provides a climax by sounding the first high F in the piece, the top note of Mozart's piano. But that is not its only *raison d'être*; it is placed where it is because Mozart needs four bars of emphatic cadence. In fact, less conventional, more thematic material will not do; thematic interest would distract from the essential—which is exactly what it appears to be: four bars of cadence. We have reached a style in which proportion has become a major interest. Starting with conventional passages, such as the one in K. 333, we shall end with the unbelievably long final cadence of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, where fifty-four measures of pure C major are needed to ground the extreme tension of that immense work. But already in Mozart, the length of this conventional material is sometimes astounding.

It should be remarked that this passage in Mozart is not arbitrary but grows logically out of the phrase that precedes it. The block use of conventional material often goes, however, much further in this style. The opening movement of Mozart's C major Symphony K. 338 has no melody at all in the first forty measures. There is nothing but completely conventional march-like flourishes and a harmonic pattern that eventually moves to the dominant, and only at this point are we finally given a melody. Yet it is one of Mozart's most brilliantly laid-out pages, serving not only to define tonally as a Baroque opening would do, but also to set up an area of great stability: much of the power of this opening comes from its avoidance of any thematic expressivity. (This is also why a good part of this first page is reserved for the end and not the beginning of the recapitulation: the classical style demands a resolution midway through the second half of a movement but a resolution of such magnitude would make the remainder of the recapitulation an anticlimax.)

It is the classical sense for large areas of stability, impossible before and lost since, that establishes what might seem to be the one fixed rule of sonata recapitulation: material originally exposed in the dominant must be represented in the tonic fairly completely, even if rewritten and reordered, and only material exposed in the tonic may be omitted. This is, of course, not a rule at all but a sensitivity to tonal relationships. (It is amusing to recall that

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Chopin was censured by contemporary academic critics—and called unorthodox even by some in the twentieth century—for omitting the recapitulation of much of the first subject in his sonatas, a well-worn eighteenth-century device.) Material presented outside the tonic must have created, in the eighteenth century, a feeling of instability which demanded to be resolved. When the tonic was reaffirmed in the second half of the piece, the material already presented in the tonic could be, and often was, drastically cut, but the rest of the exposition cried out for resolution in the tonic. Today, our harmonic sensibilities have become coarsened by the tonal instability of music after the death of Beethoven, and the strength of this feeling is perhaps difficult to recapture.

It is worth examining this in some detail, at least briefly. First for an exception to prove a rule. There is one Haydn quartet, op. 64 no. 3 in B flat, in which one of the second subjects appears nowhere in the recapitulation. It is a strange quartet with an eccentric and comic opening. The first melody in the dominant, F major, is also the first regular-sounding melody in the quartet (mm. 33-42). A four-measure phrase, it is played first in the major and immediately repeated in the minor, and it clearly functions in the exposition to reaffirm the dominant. (It is not the only theme so used: the opening theme is replayed in the new tonality, and yet another new theme is then introduced, also in F major.) The repeated four-measure phrase does not, as I said, reappear in the recapitulation, but it does, however, reappear *in its full form* in the development section, *and on the tonic*. This time the phrase is played twice in the minor. In this way the theme is satisfactorily recapitulated, as one half of it was already in minor to begin with; in addition, the tonic major is avoided in the development. All the various classical demands for balance and tonal resolution have thus been reconciled.

A use of the tonic minor after the recapitulation has been reached invariably means a reduction in stability, and this explains Haydn's reluctance to employ it.¹ In another quartet, op. 50 no. 6 in D major, four measures of the exposition (26-29) are in the dominant minor, and again they are not in the recapitulation; again, however, they appear in the *tonic* minor in the development section. In this way, Haydn manages to avert a difficult situation: the tonic minor may be used towards the end of a recapitulation in major only if its effect is successfully countered. In the first movement of the *Waldstein* Sonata, for example, Beethoven has a phrase in the exposition that is played twice in the minor; it is played twice in the recapitulation, but the second time in the major (mm. 235-243).

The danger of using the tonic major in the development is obvious, as it weakens the dramatic effect of its return. Unless it occurs briefly in passing, it, too, needs to be offset, generally by following it with the tonic minor. The

¹ In Symphony no. 85 (*La Reine*), a section of the exposition in the dominant minor is also avoided in the recapitulation, and there are other examples.

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most important use of it in a development is naturally the false reprise, or false recapitulation. But this dramatic effect of incongruity cannot be used with impunity if it lasts beyond a few measures; when it does, Haydn makes it do an important part of the work of the main reprise. In the Quartet, op. 77 no. 1 in G major the opening subject is repeated in the exposition at the dominant with the theme in the cello; this is the way it appears in the tonic in the false reprise, and accordingly it does not have to be recapitulated in this form later. In this same movement there is a further example of the absence of a theme in the 'second group' from the recapitulation: again it is played in the tonic (major) in the development, but only at the end of the development, as it is used to re-establish the tonic and reintroduce the main theme.

These are the rare cases in the Haydn quartets of material exposed in the dominant and missing from the recapitulation, and at each point we have seen that some form of tonic recapitulation has been provided. This is not a rule of form but a rule of the classical aesthetic—a part of the age's, or of Haydn's, musical sensibility. The amount of material exposed in the *tonic* and omitted from the recapitulation could be as much or as little as the composer wished. In one earlier form of the sonata, of course, current around 1750, the recapitulation normally began with the second subject (did Chopin use this form because Warsaw, provincial by comparison with Vienna and Paris, preserved the older version?), and Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven generally shortened the tonic material in the recapitulation, or omitted part of it and intensified what remained.

Remarkably, the quartets of Haydn mentioned in the past few pages are almost the only ones in which the recapitulations¹ are noticeably shorter than the developments. In most of the others (and there are more than eighty in all), the two sections are approximately equal in length, or else the recapitulations are longer, sometimes very much so. In the examples just given, we have seen that the development has taken over, even tonally, part of the role of the recapitulation. That is, we are dealing here not only with the rare exceptions of thematic material remaining unresolved after the return to the tonic, but also with the infrequent cases where the final area of stability is somewhat shorter than the area of dramatic tension called development with which the second part of a sonata begins. This firm area of final stability is an essential part of the classical style, as vital to it as the dramatic tension that precedes it; its proportions are vital, too, and they are demanded by the articulated nature of the form and required for the balance and symmetry central to the expression.

The emotional force of the classical style is clearly bound up with this contrast between dramatic tension and stability. In this respect, a fundamental

¹ I use 'recapitulation' here to mean everything that follows the final reintroduction of the tonic, including what is generally called a coda, if there is one.

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change took place towards the middle of the century. In most Baroque music, a relatively low level of tension is created and sustained, with certain fluctuations, only to be resolved at the end of the piece: the music works cumulatively—it is rare that one moment is notably more dramatic than another. The middle section of a da capo aria, however, unlike the center of a sonata movement, is almost always less brilliant and intense, if more expressive, than the outside sections: it is often in a more relaxed key (the relative minor, for example) and scored for a reduced orchestra, sometimes for continuo alone. This lessening of tension and weight towards the center is characteristic of the High Baroque sectional work: Bach's Chaconne for unaccompanied violin, for example, or the great A minor Fugue for organ, where the central section omits the pedal—when the pedal re-enters in the tonic to accompany the return of the main subject, the effect of the recapitulation is not the classical one of resolution, but of a fresh injection of energy. The climax of a Baroque work is to be found in the increase of motion towards the final cadence: a stretto is one of its typical manifestations.

The climax of a classical work is closer to its center, and that is why the proportions of the final area of stability are so important. Temporal proportions are not like spatial ones: we cannot refer back and forth at a performance, and we must rely on memory, emotional and sensuous as well as intellectual, for comparison. The sense of balance in music is not arithmetical; a set of factors larger and more complex than a mere count of measures come into play. As we have seen, if a phrase is played twice, the effect is not like that of the repetition of an architectural motif on a facade; each playing has a different weight. In addition, the resolution of harmonic tension, and the symmetry of material (and of phrase) were not the only questions affecting classical proportions: the variety of large-scale rhythmic elements within a dramatic pattern demanded the resolution of rhythmic tension, a resolution that had to be combined with the need for keeping the piece moving until the end. With all of these forces interacting, the proportions of each classical work are individual, torn in every case between drama and symmetry. One requirement remains fixed: a long, firm, and unequivocally resolved section in the tonic at the end, dramatic if need be, but clearly reducing all the harmonic tensions of the work.

Common technical terms are often exasperating in their inappropriateness to particular cases, and none more so than 'recapitulation.' If we use it to mean a simple repeat of the exposition with the secondary material put into the tonic, then the whole idea must be thrown out as unclassical: this type of recapitulation is the exception rather than the rule in the mature works of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven. There is always a reinterpretation of the exposition after the return to the tonic. Even Mozart, who uses polythematic expositions with long melodies, and who can therefore afford a more literal repeat, often reinterprets considerably. An added short development section following the reappearance of the first theme is a common feature in his

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works, and by no means is it always used as a replacement for the exposition's modulation to the dominant. Haydn, who tends to the monothematic and whose motifs are shorter, needs even greater reinterpretation: the whole exposition has generally been conceived as a dramatic move to the dominant so that a literal repetition at the tonic would be nonsensical. It is understandable that Tovey, irritated by the academic use of 'recapitulation,' should write that 'the very idea utterly breaks down' in late Haydn, and that he 'used fully developed codas instead of recapitulations.' This is only to substitute one injudicious term for another in the hope of correcting an abuse: if 'coda' is to have any meaning for audible experience, then it is not possible to use the word for everything that comes in Haydn after the return to the tonic. Although Haydn's music is too dramatic in conception for an exact repeat transposed to the tonic, he never neglected the function of 'recapitulation' as 'resolution.' By this I mean not merely a firm re-establishment and concluding reassertion of the tonic—a 'coda' could indeed do that, as in Chopin's G minor Ballade—but a 'resolution' of material, that is, of the 'exposition' as well as of the 'development.' There is a moment in the exposition when the dominant appears established as a secondary pole, and everything that occurs after that moment invariably has its counterpart in a Haydn 'recapitulation,' rewritten, reinterpreted, rearranged in another order, perhaps. Haydn had understood that there are more complex forms of symmetry than naive repetition. 'Recapitulation' may be a poor term, but we still need it to describe the resolution of the exposition, of which a literal repeat at the tonic is only a limiting form.

This insistence on stability at the beginning and, above all, at the end of each work followed the classical style to create and integrate forms with a dramatic violence that the preceding Baroque style never attempted and that the Romantic style that followed preferred to leave unresolved, the musical tensions unreconciled. For this reason, a classical composer did not always need themes of any particular harmonic or melodic energy for a dramatic work: the drama is in the structure. A Baroque composition reveals its dramatic character in its first measure by the nature and shape of its melody, but nothing except the pianissimo of the opening two measures of the *Appassionata* would allow us to suspect the storm to be unleashed, and even the dissonance in the third measure adds only another hint. In particular, the most placid Baroque melody becomes more urgent as it proceeds; even when it rises and falls as in the first fugue of the *Well-Tempered Keyboard*:



the effect of its fall is annulled by the second voice's appearing to grow from the first and to continue its rise. Classical melodies for the most part are rounded off, resolved as they end—and the fact that they end at all sets them

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apart so clearly from many themes of the Baroque. The Baroque melody (like Baroque structure) is extensible, almost indefinitely so; none of the three great classical composers could have written a melody anywhere near as long as the one in the slow movement of Bach's *Italian Concerto*; such a melody seems to end only when compelled to, when a tonic cadence is at last unavoidable, while the climax is left largely undefined, the tension diffused rather than concentrated—this diffusion making it possible to sustain the melody at such length. Both the energy and the tension of a classical theme (often uniting a variety of rhythmic elements) are much more clearly concentrated, and this climax logically demanded a symmetrical resolution of the melody.¹ Historically, symmetry preceded drama. It was the symmetrical organization of the Rococo style² from the early eighteenth century on that made the dramatic concentration of the later classical style a reality. The balance and the stability provided a framework for the drama.

The classical recapitulation does not differ from the exposition for the sake of variety; the changes made are rarely ornamental, except in slow movements and in some rondos. Even variation form begins to be conceived dramatically. This is not to say that ornamentation did not exist, or that it was not occasionally added by performers (a subject best considered in relation to concertos and the operas, where a long virtuoso tradition was still influential). But the music itself implies that at no time in history had musicians less objection to hearing the same thing twice the same way. Beethoven, for example, insisted upon the repeat of the exposition of the *Eroica* Symphony (still often omitted in performance today) in spite of the abnormal length of the movement. The Baroque tradition of improvised ornamentation was certainly moribund, if not actually dead, except in opera; even there it is sometimes difficult to say whether the composers wanted the ornaments that the singers were certain to add, or whether they merely tolerated them because they were forced to. (About the appoggiaturas in recitatives, there is no question; the composers expected them, but recitatives are a special case, and have little to do with the other forms of the late eighteenth century.)

Haydn's symphonies before 1790 generally have recapitulations that follow the expositions more closely than do those of the quartets, although much of the tonic section or 'first group' is likely to be cut, and a good deal of development added. The melodies themselves reappear with less change than in the quartets, but this is not because Haydn was less concerned with variety and interest in his more public compositions, which would be astonishing. It is because the symphonies, written for larger audiences, are composed with

¹ The concentration of tension without clear resolution could be achieved only at the cost of weakening the firm tonal foundations of the style. It took many years for this to happen (with Schumann and Liszt), and much else in music had to change as well, the large rhythmic conceptions in particular.

² The Rococo in the other arts (painting and architectural decoration) tends to the asymmetrical, and no comparison is intended.