

LESSON 15

THE CLASSICAL PERIOD

The Classical Period of music took place from approximately 1750-1830. Music from the Classical Period includes the following characteristics:

- a. **Homophonic Texture:** Much of the music of the Classical Period has an obvious melody.
- b. **Harmonic structure easily recognizable:** Quite often, the harmony of a piece from the Classical period is easy to hear, uncluttered by extra notes.
- c. **Rests:** Before a new theme or section is introduced, rests are often used to set off the new section.
- d. **Alberti Bass:** A common type of accompaniment for the left hand part of piano music from the Classical Period is Alberti Bass, a repeated pattern using the specific pattern of low, high, middle, high.



- e. **Sonata and Sonatina forms:** A sonata or sonatina may contain several movements (usually 2, 3, or 4), with the first movement having an Exposition, Development, and Recapitulation. When there are three movements, the second is usually a slow movement in a different but related key, and the third is often a Rondo (ABACABA form), in the same key as the first movement.

This example, from *Sonatina, Op. 36, No. 3* by Clementi, shows these characteristics: Homophonic texture, clear melody and harmony, use of rests.





Four well known composers from the Classical Period are:

Franz Josef Haydn: Born in Austria

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart: Born in Austria

Muzio Clementi: Born in Italy

Ludwig van Beethoven: Born in Germany

Answer these questions.

1. What musical form was developed during the Classical Period?

Sonata, Sonata Forms

2. What type of texture is common in music of the Classical Period?

Homophonic Texture

3. Name the repeated bass pattern developed during the Classical Period.

Alberti Bass

4. What is one way that composers of the Classical Period used rests?

Set off new section

?? 5. Describe the way in which melody and harmony are used in music of the Classical Period.

6. Name four composers of the Classical Period and their birthplaces.

F.J. Haydn - Austria

W.A. Mozart - Austria

Muzio Clementi - Italy

L.V. Beethoven - Germany