

# The Symphony

# Symphony - Etymology

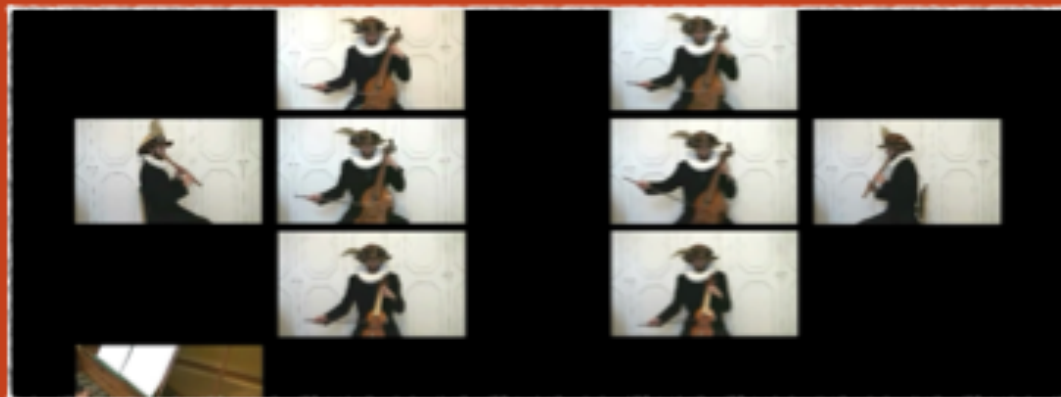
---



- The word derives from Syn-phonē in Greek meaning together sounding
- In the middle ages, the word synphone was applied to instruments that could play two lines at once like the Hurdy Gurdy pictured opposite
- Not until the very late renaissance and early baroque that it came to refer to a small mixed ensemble

# Trio sonata, dance suites and operatic sinfonia

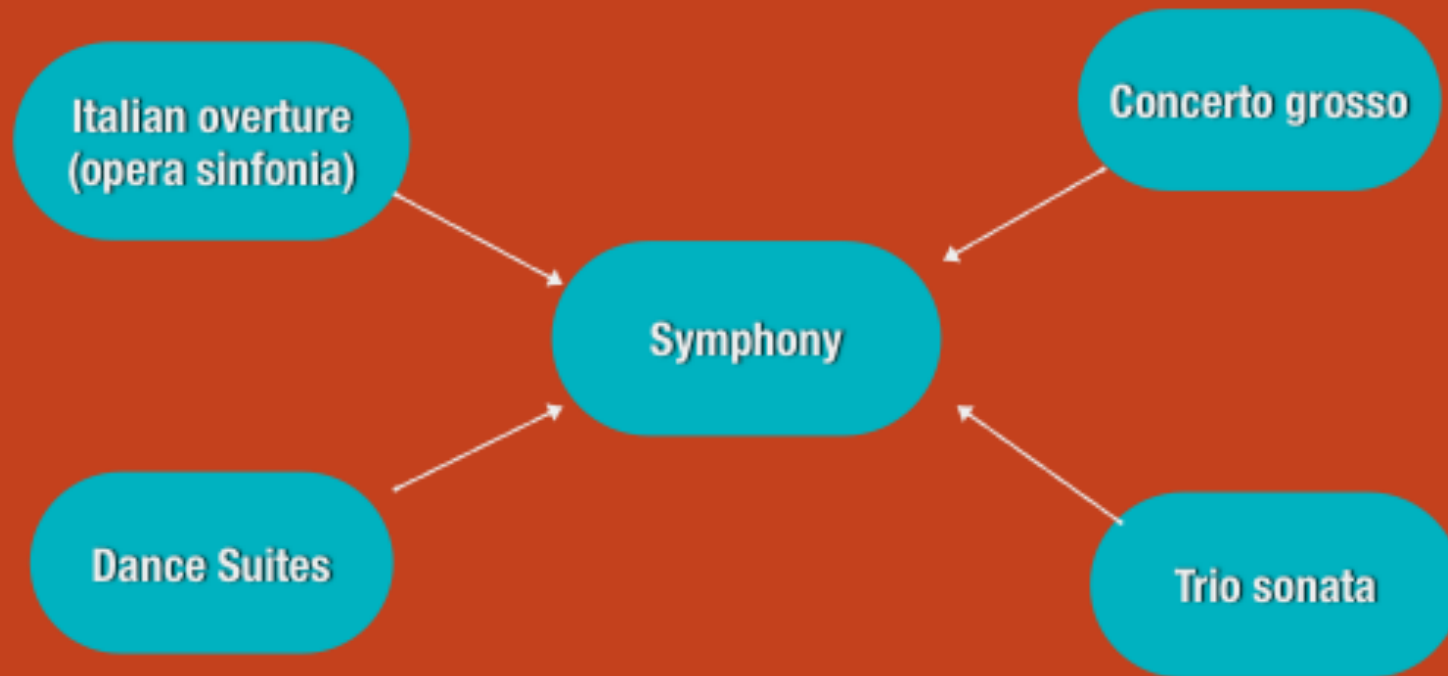
---



- Italian and French courts of the 1600s used a common combination of two violins and basso continuo. These trio sonatas comprised dance like movements of the fast, slow fast structure that led to the concerto gross
- At this time, instrumental music (secular) was associated with dances. Choral music with its purity of sound was associated with the church (sacred music)
- Parallel development was occurring in opera. The term sinfonia was used to indicate an instrumental only interlude either to accompany a dance or to smooth over scene transitions

**In overview you can view the symphony at this time as a confluence of all of these influences and instrumental forms**

---



# Early Classical Symphony

---



- An early innovator of the symphony was the Italian composer Giovanni Sammartini (1700 - 75)
- He wrote in a Galant style which was the return to simplicity after the complexity of the late baroque
- Simpler singable melodies
- Focus on homophony
- Short periodic phrases
- Reduced harmonic vocabulary emphasising tonic and dominant

# Court of Mannheim



- In Germany at this time, at the enlightened court of Mannheim, the Bohemian born Johann Stamitz was also experimenting with techniques that would become synonymous with many Classical symphonies
- The Mannheim Rocket: surging ascending arpeggios led by the strings
- The Mannheim Sigh: emphasising the first of two slurred descending notes sounding like a sigh
- The Mannheim Steamroller: long crescendo over a bass pedal, often pulsing with repeated notes

# Joseph Haydn 1732 - 1809

## A.K.A Papa Haydn - Father of the Symphony and String Quartet

---



- Born in Rohrau Austria
- Neither of his parents could read music, however his father was an enthusiastic folk musician and could play the harp
- He was sent to Hainburg at 6 to train as a chorister where he also learnt the harpsichord and violin
- In 1739 he was brought to the attention of the director of music at St Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna and after passing an audition moved there in 1740 where he worked for the next 9 years as a chorister

# Haydn in Vienna



- Haydn learnt Latin while a choir boy however he had very little in the way of music theory or composition instruction
- After his voice had matured and lost some of its attractiveness, Haydn found himself dismissed after playing a prank on a mother choir boy
- He struggled for the next three years as a freelance musician until he became the accompanist for Nicola Porpora from whom he learnt the fundamentals of composition
- He began to carefully study the works of composers like C.P.E. Bach and to write music of his own that started to garner public interest
- In 1756 Baron Fürnberg employed Haydn at his country estate and later recommended him to Count Morzin who became his first full time employer in 1757



# The Esterhazy Years

---



- As the Kapelmeister for Count Morzin, Haydn was able to marry. Unfortunately it was a childless and loveless marriage for both of them. This was where Haydn wrote his first symphonies and string quartets
- Haydn was dismissed in 1761 after the Count suffered financial difficulties but he was offered a position almost immediately by Prince Paul Anton, head of the very wealthy Esterhazy family in Hungary
- He was employed as the vice-kapelmeister but the prince liked his music so much that he put Haydn in charge of all music except church music and when the old kapellmeister died in 1766 Haydn was elevated to his role

**Prince Anton and then his son Nikolaus I loved Haydn's music and they gave him a large amount of freedom to essentially play with his own small orchestra. Haydn's Daily responsibilities were still considerable and included**

- **Composition**
- **Running the orchestra**
- **Playing chamber music for his patron**
- **Producing operas**

# Esterhazy Compositions

---

- Haydn was to spend nearly 30 years in this position, the stability of which, and the availability of his 'own' orchestra led to the cementing of the Symphony in its mature form
- He was also the driving force behind the development of the string quartet and was instrumental in it becoming one of the most important and widely used chamber music forms of the next 200 years
- Haydn wrote 104 symphonies - 89 of them at Esterhazy
- He also wrote some 68 string quartets around 50 were written while in his position there.

# Symphonic Structure

---

- Early Classical symphonies being influenced by the Italian baroque forms mentioned earlier, used a three movement structure following the same fast, slow, fast form of trio sonatas and concerti grossi
- This structure was used by Stamitz, Haydn and even early Mozart
- Gradually this form was expanded to include a dance like movement between the slow 2nd and fast 3rd. This was perhaps a reference to the influence of the baroque dance suites. The upper classes of the 18th century certainly loved dancing so this may have something to do with it as well
- The symphonies of Haydn and Mozart most often used a minuet and trio as their third movement. Beethoven also used this style of dance but also used the faster scherzo form in some of his symphonies

By the 1780s, the symphony was a mature form being used by composers all over Europe. They, along with operas were at the very height of sophistication and were used by composers to demonstrate their ability and prowess. The structure at this time would most often follow

Movement	Speed	Form
<b>1</b>	<b>Allegro</b>	<b>Sonata</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Adagio/Lento</b>	Normally ternary or theme and variation. Always lyrical and slow
<b>3</b>	<b>Allegretto/Con Brio</b>	Minuet and trio or scherzo and trio
<b>4</b>	<b>Allegro</b>	<b>Rondo or sonata-rondo</b>

# The move towards romanticism

---



Fourth movement 6th symphony  
"Thunder Storm"

- Although he only wrote 9 symphonies, Beethoven continued to build on the work of Haydn and Mozart and started to introduce many Romantic characteristics that would be taken up by 19th Century composers
- Symphony number 6 "Pastoral" symphony had 5 movements rather than the usual 4 and had a programmatic title to accompany each movement
- While largely keeping to the classical forms, Beethoven expanded his writing within, extending the length as well as instrumentation and development of themes
- Where an earlier classical symphony would last for 20 to 25 minutes, some of Beethovens would last up to 40