Chapter G

Musical Style

When we listen to a composition without knowing who its composer was or when it was composed, we can often identify characteristic musical elements that allow us to make an "educated guess" of composer and compositional period. The set of distinguishing musical traits which allow us to make such a guess is usually known as **musical style**. Style traits can be characteristic of a particular composer, a musical period, or both. They can also define musical features limited to a specific period of a composer's life (such as, say, "late Beethoven"), or to a group of composers or compositions within a historical period (such as, for instance, seventeenth-century German Lutheran music or nineteenth-century Italian opera). In this book we will often refer to style traits of a composer or a period. In this chapter we will provide basic guidelines for the study of style in Western music, and we will review briefly some of the defining aspects of style in each of the main musical periods.

Not all of the terms used in the following discussion will be defined at present. Most of them, however, will appear (or have already appeared) in chapters devoted to specific stylistic elements (such as rhythm, texture, or form), and in those chapters they will generally receive much more thorough coverage. Although you may not be able to answer fully all the questions posed below until you study some of the later chapters, these stylistic guidelines will help you as you perform or listen to music outside this course.

THE ELEMENTS OF STYLE

In order to determine the style of a composition, we need to ask a number of questions regarding different aspects of the piece. The following are some of the main musical elements we need to examine and some of the questions we can ask about each of them. Notice that, although the following list may appear to break up musical style into seemingly separate or independent components (only for the purpose of pedagogical clarity), some of these features are very closely intertwined in actual music (for instance, rhythm and melody, melody and harmony, or melody, harmony, and tonality).

Rhythm, Meter, and Tempo

These are "temporal" components of music, and they are interrelated. As we studied in chapter B, the term **rhythm** refers to the grouping of pitches (or other musical events) into patterns. **Meter**, on the other hand, is the grouping of musical time into patterns of strong (accented) and weak (nonaccented, or less-accented) beats, whereas **tempo** is the speed at which music is performed. The following considerations will help us define these "temporal" aspects of musical style in specific pieces.

1. Are *rhythmic patterns* varied and contrasting? Or is the music under consideration mostly based on a single rhythmic figure?
2. Are there any *rhythmic motives* (rhythmic patterns that recur)? Are these motives part of the accompanying figures, or are they part of the essential melodic/thematic material?

3. Are there rhythmic figures that *conflict* with the meter of the passage, such as cross rhythms, hemiola, or syncopation?

4. Is *meter* consistent throughout the piece or passage? Or are there any metric changes?

5. Is the meter symmetrical or asymmetrical?

6. Does the music consistently follow and reflect the notated meter, or is there conflict between musical flow and notated meter?

7. What is the *tempo* of the piece? Are there any tempo changes?

8. Are there any tempo alterations notated on the score (such as *rubato*, *accelerando* or *ritardando*)?

Melody

We will consider in this section single melodic lines. This "horizontal" component of music is not only extremely important perceptually (the average listener will perceive melody immediately, along with rhythm, as the primary element of music), but also formally (the thematic material that generates a composition is, more often than not, melodic).

1. Does the **melody** break up into clear *motives* (brief, characteristic figures made up of clearly recognizable rhythmic or pitch patterns)? Or does it flow and unfold without clear motivic definition?

2. Is the *contour* (the shape) of this melody smooth and curvelike, or jagged and abrupt?

3. Does this melody include any *sequences* (that is, sections based on the repeated statement of a melodic segment at different tonal levels, usually in a pattern ascending or descending by steps)?

4. What *intervals* are used in this melody? Is it mostly by steps, with some small leaps, or does it include numerous leaps, some of them large? Is the melody mostly diatonic, or does it include chromaticism?

5. Are melodic motives in this piece important in the *generation of form*? Does this melodic material play an important role in later thematic development?

6. What is the *character* of this melody? Is it rhythmic and vigorous? Is it lyrical and songlike (cantabile)? Is it particularly expressive?

7. What is the *formal function* of this specific melodic passage? Does it present new material, repeat known material, or present contrasting material? Does it function as a *refrain* (a passage that recurs more or less periodically)? Does it have a *developmental* character?

Harmony and Harmonic Rhythm

We could say that this constitutes the "vertical" component of music. **Harmony** is closely associated with melody, in that it both "accompanies" and generates melody. Harmony also moves forward melodically. That is, the connection of chords with one another introduces a linear, melodic component (which we call *voice leading*) into the realm of harmonic sonority.

1. What is the *harmonic style* of this piece? Is it *functional* (chord roots related mostly by 5ths and steps, following the principles of functional harmony which we will study throughout the first part of this book)? Is it *modal* (triadic, but based on modal and contrapuntal principles rather

than on functional tonality)? Is the harmony *non-triadic* (chords are not triads)?

2. What is the *formal function* of harmony? Does it create *tension and motion* towards goals (cadences and points of arrival)? Is it of a more *coloristic and static* nature (roots often related by 3rd)?
3. Is the harmony mostly *diatonic*? Or is it mostly *chromatic*?
4. What is the *role of dissonance* in this harmonic style? Is it used sparingly, controlled, and resolved? Or is prominent dissonance an essential component of this harmonic language?
5. Does harmony in this specific passage have a stable role, or is it a passage of unstable, developmental harmonic relationships?
6. Does this piece include some *harmonic sequences* (harmonic patterns repeated at different tonal levels, in some ascending or descending pattern)?
7. Examine the *harmonic rhythm* in the passage (that is, the rate of harmonic or chordal change). Is it fast (chords changing, say, every beat) or slow (chords changing, say, every measure or even less often)?

Tonality

This section addresses long-range tonal relationships in the piece, and, in a more general sense, the tonal system on which the piece is built.

1. What *set of tonal relationships* is this piece based on? That is, what *tonal system* underlies its structure?
2. Is the piece based on the *functional*, major-minor tonal system? Or is this a *modal* piece? Or is it perhaps a *post-tonal* piece loosely based on non-functional triadic relationships?
3. What is the main *key* of the piece (the "tonic key")? Does the piece *modulate* to other keys?
4. Are there large sections in keys other than the tonic key? What are these important *secondary tonal areas*?
5. What is the long-range *tonal design* of the composition? To what extent does this tonal shape, or *tonal motion*, determine the form of the composition?

Texture

We will examine here the relationship between the horizontal and vertical components of music and between different and simultaneous musical elements.

1. Is the **texture** mostly *homophonic* (a melodic line with chordal accompaniment), *polyphonic* or *contrapuntal* (different independent lines moving simultaneously), or a combination of both?
2. Is the texture *homorhythmic* (all voices have the same, or very similar, rhythm)?
3. If the texture is mostly homophonic, how is the harmonic accompaniment presented? Is it written in keyboard style? Or is it written as sustained chords?
4. If it is polyphonic, does the contrapuntal texture follow a functional harmonic design? This is the type of counterpoint we call "tonal counterpoint." In "modal counterpoint," on the other

hand, voices are related by the principles of consonance and dissonance, but the resulting triads do not necessarily follow functional progressions.

5. Is the counterpoint imitative (motives appear in different voices in imitation of each other)?

Form and Formal Growth

In this section we will examine how the composition unfolds in time, and how different sections are related tonally and thematically.

1. What *techniques of thematic growth* are used in this composition? Some of the most frequent techniques which you may find are repetition, sequence, fragmentation, and variation.
2. Is the thematic material organized in clearly articulated *phrases and periods*, or does it seem to *spin out* without clear breaks?
3. Is the composition based on a *single motive* or theme, or are there statements of *contrasting thematic material*? Is the contrasting material presented in the form of an independent section?
4. How are the different sections of this composition related thematically? What is the *formal design* or formal type that results from sectional relationships? Some possible formal types are binary, ternary, sonata form, and rondo.
5. How do the *thematic formal design* and the *long-range tonal design* correlate?

Dynamics

This term refers to the levels of loudness in music.

1. Does the score include *dynamic markings*?
2. If it does not, how would you make *performance decisions* regarding **dynamics**? You may want to listen to a recorded performance of the piece, and determine whether or not you agree with that rendition.
3. If dynamic markings are included, how *detailed* are they? Are they so detailed that they become an indispensable part of musical expression as imagined by the composer (as you will find, for instance, in late-Romantic orchestral compositions)?
4. Do dynamic marks *correlate* with other musical events (such as motivic or thematic units, rhythmic figures, harmonic motion)?

Timbre and Instrumentation

We will finally examine sound quality (**timbre**) as a stylistic feature, as represented by instrumentation and orchestration.

1. Is this composition *vocal*, *instrumental*, or both?
2. What voice or voices, instrument or instruments is the piece written for?
3. Were the specific *technical and idiomatic characteristics* of the instrument taken into account by the composer?
4. What kind of *ensemble* is the piece written for? Is it a small chamber ensemble? Are all instruments of the same family (say, strings), or is it a mixed ensemble?

5. Are any instruments used as *soloists*, or in a soloistic style? Are other instruments used in a subordinate, accompanying role?

6. What kind of *orchestra* did the composer write for? Is it a small or a large orchestra? What size of woodwind, brass, and percussion sections are required?

7. What orchestral instruments are used with prominent *melodic functions*? Does the composer exploit the characteristic *timbre of instruments* and the characteristic *color of instrumental families*? Examine instrumental doublings.

8. Is there any correlation between *formal sections and orchestration*?

9. In how much *detail* does the composer indicate *articulations, bowings, and special effects* such as mutes, harmonics, and different colors within the same instrument?

Again, you should remember that you may not be able to address fully each of the questions asked in the above discussion until you have studied all of the textbook, or at least most of it. But you should keep referring to the above guidelines as you advance in your study of music and as you listen to music with an increasingly discerning musical mind.

THE MUSICAL STYLE PERIODS

Writing about the historical style periods can easily lead into a number of pitfalls. We will thus begin this section with several disclaimers.

1. The development of musical style through the centuries has been *gradual*, with *overlapping trends* rather than abrupt change. It would be misleading, then, to think of style periods as closed compartments. Quite to the contrary, they are open on both ends. Take, for instance, the Classical period, which is preceded by the baroque period and followed by the Romantic period. The end of the baroque era, however, overlaps with the styles we call preclassical and galant, which prefigure the classical style. Classical style traits, on the other hand, can be traced in composers well into the Romantic period (such as Schubert, Mendelssohn, and Brahms, especially in their symphonic compositions and chamber music).

2. Because *periods overlap*, it is misleading to think of them as beginning and ending on some specific years or coinciding with some specific events (in the case of the baroque period, for instance, one often reads that it begins in 1600 and ends the year Bach dies, 1750).

3. The division of music history into major style periods (such as Renaissance, baroque, Classical, and Romantic) does not take sufficiently into account the wealth of *intermediate, transitional developments*.

4. Discussions of style within one period often disregard the fact that several *different, sometimes contrasting, styles coexist within each period*. Periods such as the Renaissance and the twentieth century, in particular, are especially rich in their abundance of contrasting styles. Discussing only mainstream developments usually does not serve the stylistic wealth of a period.

5. Within the same period, musical style may vary drastically, depending on the genre in which a work was composed, the musicians and listeners likely to play and hear it, and the social function or occasion for which it was intended (e.g., dance music, as opposed to sacred music for liturgical use).

Having thus warned you about these potential pitfalls, we will proceed to fall into each one of them in the following pages. We will knowingly need to do so in order to present a summarized account

of style through the ages. As inadequate and simplified as this outline may be, it will provide you with some ideas and principles to (1) listen to music from each period with some basic knowledge of what to expect in terms of mainstream style (against which you may compare the composition at hand), and (2) research and study on your own the style of composers or schools that may not quite fit the mainstream stylistic traits put forth in our discussion.

Because musical styles in the Middle Ages are quite different, in almost every aspect, from the styles we will study in this book, we will begin our discussion with the Renaissance. And, here again, the Renaissance is too rich a period for us to be able to account for all coexisting styles, especially because this book is not meant to cover Renaissance music. We will thus focus on one specific style of the late Renaissance, which had a substantial impact on later compositional styles: sixteenth-century sacred vocal polyphony. Before we begin with each period, we should also note that instead of listing style characteristics in an abstract way, we will focus on the style of one or two representative pieces for each period, from which we should be able to extrapolate some general stylistic traits. Our discussion of each of these pieces will not necessarily follow in an orderly way each of the stylistic categories we have outlined in the section "The Elements of Style," but will rather focus on stylistic categories pertinent to the specific pieces and periods.

A CHARACTERISTIC RENAISSANCE STYLE: SACRED VOCAL POLYPHONY

The term *Renaissance* ("rebirth") refers to the renewed interest in the art and culture of ancient Greece and Rome, a period usually known as "classical antiquity." The Renaissance in general comprises the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The musical Renaissance spans approximately from the year 1430 to the year 1600. Among the many styles we can find in Renaissance music, the style of sacred vocal polyphony has become a model of compositional restraint, perfection of craft, purity of sound, and expressive serenity and objectivity. Several generations of composers practiced and developed this international style throughout the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries. The last of these generations, best represented by Palestrina, Victoria, and Lassus (second half of the sixteenth century), achieved the highest level of stylistic consistency in sacred vocal polyphony. The contrapuntal techniques we studied in chapter F (species counterpoint) are a pedagogical adaptation by Fux of the contrapuntal style practiced by these composers.

We will now examine the characteristics of this style as illustrated by Spanish composer Tomás Luis de Victoria's Kyrie, from the Mass *O magnum mysterium* (anthology, no. 1). This Mass movement is clearly structured in three sections (which we will label I, II, and III), corresponding with the three sentences of the text: "Kyrie eleison. Christe eleison. Kyrie eleison" ("Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy").

Texture

1. The prevalent texture in this style is **imitative counterpoint**. Each of the three sections begins with a point of imitation (mm. 1, 13, and 20) in which an opening *motive* is presented by each of the four voices. Are there any inner points of imitation? (Explain, for instance, mm. 25-27.) The intervals of imitation are unison, 8ve, 5th, and 4th.
2. Other than the points of imitation, *lines are thoroughly independent* from the point of view of contour and shape, and each of them is melodically self-sufficient.

Melodic lines

1. *Melodic curves are smooth and wavelike*. A characteristic shape for phrases is to build up to a single, *high focal point* (zenith), and then to descend back gradually.
2. A lot of the *melodic motion* is stepwise, although there are also numerous 3rds, and some 5ths, 4ths, and 8ves. Every time there is a leap it is balanced by motion in the opposite direction immediately before or after the leap.
3. Melodic lines flow freely: repetition of motivic cells and sequences is *not* idiomatic in this style. The *overall rhythm* of the combined voices also produces a flowing effect: Victoria avoids simultaneous attacks in all four voices, in such a way that when some of the voices move at least one of the other voices is sustained (this type of rhythmic relationship among voices is called *complementary rhythm*).

Tonality

1. The piece is "in G," but the signature features a single ♭, so it is not Gm. G with a single ♭ means that it is a "minor" type of key, but with a raised $\hat{6}$ (E♮). Of course, we know that *Dorian* fits this definition. The example is indeed in the Dorian mode on G, that is, Dorian transposed up a 4th.
2. Most of this music is based on the Church modes rather than on major-minor tonality.

Harmony

1. This music functions, above all, *linearly*. That is, the essential musical concept in this style is the independence of horizontal lines.
2. Vertical sonorities are *triadic*, although not ruled by the principles of functional tonality we will study in this book. What propels the music forward is not the play of chordal tensions we find in later functional progressions, but the abundance of *contrapuntal dissonance* and its tendency to resolve to consonance.
3. *Dissonance is strictly controlled* (prepared and resolved), following the same type of principles we studied in chapter F. That is, dissonances are mostly passing tones, occasional lower neighbor notes, and suspensions.

Chromaticism

1. This music is *essentially diatonic*.
2. The main chromatic alterations in this piece are (a)scale degree $\hat{7}$ raised to become the *leading tone* (a half-step below the final or tonic) at cadences (in our example, F♯ resolving to G), (b) scale degree $\hat{6}$ lowered to become ♭$\hat{6}$ (E♭), normally functioning as an upper neighbor to $\hat{5}$ (D-E♭-D). The occasional alterations (two, to be exact) of scale degree $\hat{3}$ which we find in sections II and III are unusual in Dorian.

Form

The two main genres composers of sacred vocal polyphony practiced were *the Mass and the motet*. Masses use the text from the Mass (the central liturgical service of the Roman Catholic Church), whereas motets use other sacred Latin texts.

1. From a formal point of view, both Mass movements and motets often consist of a succession of sections, each of which begins with a point of imitation and closes on a cadence on one of the main degrees of the mode.

2. Each of the three sections in our example begins with a point of imitation, and ends on a cadence. The cadential scheme, considering final cadences in each section, is G-D-G (the main degrees in transposed Dorian mode).

3. If you compare initial subjects in each of the sections, you will see that there is an interesting thematic symmetry in the movement: subject I (mm. 1-2) and subject III (mm. 20-21) are related by inversion (the same intervals, but in opposite directions). This A-B-A formal scheme mirrors the symmetrical shape of the three-sentence text.

THE BAROQUE STYLE

The baroque period may be said to begin around 1600 and to end in mid-eighteenth century. Some major baroque composers are Claudio Monteverdi, Jean-Baptiste Lully, Archangelo Corelli, Antonio Vivaldi, Johann Sebastian Bach, Jean-Philippe Rameau, and George Frideric Handel. The following are some of the general characteristics of this musical period:

1. Music in the baroque period focuses around two major areas: the development of *opera* as a musical-dramatic genre, and the development of *instrumental virtuosity*.

2. *Opera* and the musical techniques associated with it (especially the recitative) allow composers to depict human passions and the emotional states of the soul in a musical setting. Operas and other dramatic genres (such as *oratorios* and *cantatas*) make use of a great variety of styles and vocal settings (from solo voice to multiple choirs).

3. *Instrumental virtuosity* allows for the development of numerous instrumental genres, both for solo instruments and for various instrumental ensembles.

4. Common to both vocal and instrumental genres is the ***concertato* style**, in which different vocal or instrumental groups are combined and contrasted. The instrumental concerto is one possible manifestation of the *concertato* style. Baroque concertos are either of the solo type, for a single solo instrument and ensemble accompaniment, or the *concerto grosso* type, for a group of solo instruments (the *concertino*) and ensemble accompaniment (the *ripieno*).

We will now examine some of the specific aspects of baroque style, using four pieces from the anthology as references: Henry Purcell's "Ah, Belinda" (anthology, no. 3), Vivaldi's Concerto, op. 3, no. 3, II (anthology, no. 5), and Bach's Invention no. 3 in DM (anthology, no. 13) and Fugue no. 2 in Cm, from *The Well-Tempered Clavier* I (anthology, no. 14).

Texture

1. Perhaps the most significant innovation in seventeenth-century music was the ***basso continuo*** or **thoroughbass**. We have already discussed this technique in chapter E, and demonstrated it in examples E.4 and E.5. Composers using thoroughbass techniques wrote a two-voice frame consisting of a melody and a figured bass. The figures, indicating intervals above the bass, are realized as chordal, harmonic accompaniment, usually at the keyboard.

2. The *basso continuo* is not only a technique, but also a texture. The Purcell and Vivaldi examples in the anthology illustrate what we can call *continuo texture*: an outer-voice duet constitutes the main structure of the piece, and the inner voices provide the harmonic accompaniment. In the Purcell example the melody is vocal, whereas Vivaldi's upper voice is a solo violin.

Harmony and Tonality

1. Although the principles of *functional tonality* were not formulated until 1722 (in Rameau's *Traité de l'harmonie*), throughout the seventeenth century functional tonality and the *major-minor tonal system* became progressively established and refined. What we hear in the Purcell and Vivaldi examples are functional harmonic progressions of the type we will study in this book.

Counterpoint

1. In the mature or late baroque, composers often favored *highly contrapuntal textures*, as illustrated by the two Bach examples mentioned above. The two voices in the invention, and the three voices in the fugue, function as independent lines, all sharing an equal melodic status.
2. Baroque counterpoint is **tonal counterpoint**. That is, it proceeds according to the principles of functional tonality. Baroque counterpoint can be reduced to functional harmonic progressions.
3. Baroque counterpoint is highly *imitative and motivic*. If you examine the invention or the fugue, you will see that each of them in based almost exclusively on a single theme or motive, and that there are numerous cases of imitation among the voices, both at the beginning and within the pieces.

Melody and Rhythm

1. A look at the melodies in the Vivaldi and Bach examples will tell us that complete compositions or movements could be generated by a *single theme*, or by one or two very characteristic motivic figures.
2. We will also see that instrumental melodies become much more *angular and jagged* than the type of Renaissance vocal line we discussed above. Notice, particularly, the contour of Vivaldi's violin part. In mm. 5-6 (top voice) of the Bach fugue you will see a melody which, as a matter of fact, is actually like two independent lines in different registers. This type of "double melody" presented as a single melody is called a **compound melody** and is often found in baroque music. Can you identify any passages of compound melody in the Vivaldi example?
3. Unlike melody in the Renaissance, baroque melody has its basis to a great extent in *motivic repetition and sequences*. Notice especially the numerous sequences in Bach's fugue.
4. Unlike Renaissance flowing rhythms, baroque composers do not hesitate to write complete movements on a *repeated rhythmic figure*. See the rhythmic repetitions in the Vivaldi example and the almost constant (and almost obsessive) string of sixteenth notes in both of Bach's examples.

Thematic and Formal Growth

1. Although baroque composers used preestablished formal types, especially in their dance suites and concertos, they also favored freer types of form, which were generated either by text interpretation or by purely musical unfolding of ideas.
2. We will soon see that composers in the Classical period often organized their music in symmetrical phrases and periods. Baroque composers frequently favored instead a melodic technique known as **Fortspinnung**, or "spinning out." In Vivaldi's example you can see that the complete movement seems to freely "spin out" of the motives in mm. 1-2. The music grows naturally and freely, without clear phrase articulations or sectional divisions. Bach's fugue conveys the same effect of a continuous, almost uninterrupted flow of music generated by the

initial motivic gesture.

3. In Purcell's example, two contrasting techniques of formal growth are presented simultaneously. The bass features a repeated four-measure phrase (a bass *ostinato*, or ground bass). The voice, on the other hand, "spins out" its melody in a much freer style, aside from some motivic repetitions associated with the words "Peace and I."

THE CLASSICAL STYLE

The musical period we know as Classical overlaps the previous period (the baroque) in the mid-eighteenth-century decades, and with the following period, the Romantic, in the early decades of the nineteenth century. Major Classical composers are Joseph Haydn, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, and Ludwig van Beethoven, although the life and stylistic development of the latter overlap the transition from the Classical to the Romantic periods. Classical composers are generally concerned with form, formal and tonal symmetry and balance, and the simplification of melodic, harmonic, and textural means (although simplified means can, of course, lead to richly complex results, as in the best works of Mozart). This is the period in which such formal types as binary, ternary, sonata form, and rondo became the standard models for movements of instrumental sonatas, concertos, and symphonies.

NOTE

The term classical *is often used to refer to several different concepts. Here, it means a specific historical and stylistic period, and this is what the term will usually mean in this book. Thus, when we refer to* classical composers*, we mean "composers of the Classical period." We can also use the term to refer to a more general approach to art and music (as in "classical antiquity"). Finally, the term* classical music *is commonly used to refer to Western art music of the past (as in "this radio station plays classical music"), as opposed to popular music, jazz, and so on. We will not use the term in the latter way in this book.*

Our musical references for the following discussion of classical style will be Haydn's Minuet and Trio from the Divertimento in CM, Hob. XVI:1 (anthology, no. 19), Mozart's Piano Sonata K. 333 in B♭M, III (anthology, no. 28), and Maria Theresia von Paradis's *Sicilienne* (anthology, no. 31).

Melody and Phrase Structure

1. As you listen to the three examples listed above you will hear that a common trait among them is the organization of the thematic and melodic material. Melodies are modular, built on distinctive *motivic gestures*.
2. All three examples begin with modular phrase structures in which thematic units or phrases are preferably grouped by multiples of two measures (2 + 2, 4 + 4, 8 + 8).
3. This music is often organized in eight-measure symmetrical periods (combinations of two phrases) which end on a cadence. See, for instance, Mozart's mm. 1-8 and 9-16, and Haydn's mm. 1-8.

Form and Formal Growth

1. The Mozart example is an excellent illustration of the classical approach to form. Two of the

main elements of formal growth in this music are **variation and contrast**.

2. For an example of *variation*, compare mm. 1-8 with 9-16.

3. *Thematic and motivic contrast* is built into this music at every step. First, compare mm. 1-2 with 3-4 (the first phrase) for two contrasting motivic ideas. Then, compare mm. 1-16 (the first section) with mm. 16-24 (a transitional section, with new thematic material), and with mm. 24-36 (the second section, itself based on new, contrasting material). Notice also the variety of rhythmic figures in these two initial sections.

4. When you listen to the complete movement (in *rondo* form), you will notice that its form is based on the periodic return of the opening material (the *refrain*). Sections in between refrains are based on contrasting thematic material.

Harmony and Tonality

1. Classical music is firmly rooted in the *major-minor tonal system*.

2. Opening thematic gestures normally establish the key of the piece or movement unequivocally. Phrases are based on clear *functional progressions*, which normally produce strong harmonic *motion directed toward the cadence*.

3. *Harmonic rhythm* tends to be slow in classical music. Often the chords change every measure or half-measure (see the Mozart and Paradis examples).

4. Formal contrast is not only thematic, but also *tonal*. In the Mozart example, for instance, the refrain is always in the tonic key, B♭M. The first contrasting section (mm. 24-36) is in the key of the dominant, FM. The second contrasting section begins in the relative minor key, Gm (m. 65) and moves through several keys before returning to B♭M and the refrain in m. 112.

5. In other words, **classical form** *is closely associated with* **tonal design**. The standard classical tonal design is based on the following principle: *the tonic key is established, tension is created by moving away from the tonic key, tension is released by a return to the tonic key*.

Texture

1. Classical composers strove for *simple, transparent textures*, as illustrated by our three examples.

2. The preferred texture was usually **homophonic**, in which a melodic-thematic line is supported by a harmonic accompaniment.

3. The *harmonic accompaniment* is often in *block chords* (as in the Paradis example) or in *arpeggiated chords* (as in much of Mozart's example).

Dynamics and Articulation

1. Although *dynamics and articulation* are rarely indicated on Renaissance and baroque scores (which is not the same as saying that these scores should be performed without recourse to dynamics and articulation!), they become an essential element in the notation of classical music.

2. Dynamics provide a further element of contrast. In the Mozart example, the first statement of the initial phrase (mm. 1-8) is marked *p*, whereas its varied restatement (mm. 9-16) is marked *f*.

3. Articulation can be used to stress the contrast between different themes, or also as an element of variation used for expressive variety. Compare, for instance, the initial theme in the Mozart movement (mm. 1-4) with the transitional contrasting theme in mm. 16-20. What is the role of articulation as an element of contrast between these two themes? Now look at mm. 24-25, and to the variation of the same motive, which appears in mm. 26-27. Is articulation a factor in this

variation?

4. Effects such as *crescendo, diminuendo*, and *sforzando* are often used by classical composers.

THE ROMANTIC STYLE

The leading composers of the Romantic age (early nineteenth century to early twentieth century) turn away from formal and objective models. They focus on their inner world, where they usually find contradiction, complexity, irrationality, and unresolved tension. Some of the notable Romantic composers are Franz Schubert, Felix Mendelssohn, Hector Berlioz, Frédéric Chopin, Robert Schumann, Clara Schumann, Johannes Brahms, Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, Anton Bruckner, Richard Wagner, Franz Liszt, Giuseppe Verdi, and Gustav Mahler. Romantic music is an art of intense personal and subjective expression. Its essence is well represented by the Lied (song) and by the short character pieces for piano. Both of these genres are used to depict and capture intimate moods and emotions. (There was also a complementary tendency toward creating very long works for massive ensembles, well represented, for instance, by Bruckner's and Mahler's symphonies).

Our examples for the following discussion will be the songs "Bitte," by Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel (anthology, no. 43), and "Am leuchtenden Sommermorgen" by Robert Schumann (anthology, no. 49).

Melody and Rhythm

1. A salient feature of Romantic music is its **lyricism**: melody is often the most important element, and harmony helps enhance the beauty of melody.
2. *Romantic melody* is often nonmotivic. It unfolds and spins out in a similar way as Baroque melody did, but not necessarily from an initial motive. Romantic melodies are often *through-composed* (that is, without any motivic recurrences). This is indeed the case of the melody by Fanny Mendelssohn, and, to a great extent also, of the Schumann song.
3. The classical wealth of contrasting rhythms is often lost in Romantic music. *Rhythms often become repetitive and obsessive*. Rather than pursuing rhythmic contrast, Romantic composers often pursue rhythmic homogeneity.

Harmony and Tonality

1. Whereas the classical composer was concerned with establishing tonality at the outset of the piece (with both a clear key-defining thematic gesture and an early strong cadence in the tonic key), *clear tonal definition is not the concern of the Romantic composer*.
2. **Tonal ambiguity** (often in the service of some poetic purpose), on the other hand, is favored by Romantic composers. The Fanny Mendelssohn song is in A♭M, and it begins with a tonic chord. We do not find, however, a cadence in A♭M in the whole song, until the very final cadence. The cadence in mm. 6-7 resolves to A♭m, not A♭M. In the Schumann song, in B♭M, we hear an opening measure which is unusually ambiguous from the tonal point of view.
3. As illustrated by both songs, Romantic harmony is *highly chromatic*. Not only are chordal progressions chromatic, but modulations are often to unexpected and distant keys.
4. *Coloristic, nonfunctional harmonic progressions* (for instance, using third-related root motion) are often used to depict mood.

Form and Formal Growth

1. Romantic composers often focus more on *spontaneous poetic expression* than on the abstract constructive and thematic aspects of music. Form may grow from a text, or a poetic or programmatic idea.
2. *Phrases and phrase structure* are not symmetrical or clearly delimited by cadences. Standard formal types are often avoided or used in nonconventional ways.
3. *Long-range tonal relationships* often obscure rather than clarify the formal structure. Tonal designs are not conventional or standard. In the Schumann song, for instance, the main key is B♭M and secondary key areas are EM (only suggested, mm. 9-10) and GM (m. 17), both distant and unexpected keys.

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

The study of twentieth-century post-tonal art music falls beyond the scope of this book. Stylistically, the twentieth century is one of the most complex, rich, and fragmented periods in music history. Any attempt to summarize it in a few paragraphs would fall short of doing justice to this stylistic wealth and complexity. Rather than attempt such a general summary, then, we will simply point out some stylistic aspects that are relevant to (and connect with) our discussion of style and tonality in previous periods.

1. The progressive *weakening (and eventual breakdown) of the tonal system* which we find in much late-nineteenth-century music led some early twentieth-century composers to look for *alternative methods of pitch organization*. Composers such as Arnold Schoenberg, Alban Berg, and Anton Webern based their music on radically new approaches to pitch organization, including *nontonal* (or **atonal**) intervallic and motivic cells and nontriadic sonorities. In the early 1920s, Schoenberg (followed by Berg and Webern) began to use a new system of pitch organization, which we know as the *twelve-tone system* or **serialism**. From a general point of view, a lot of Schoenberg's atonal music, as well as Berg's, is a continuation of Romantic stylistic features. Webern's music, on the other hand, and some of Schoenberg's twelve-tone music, displays strongly classical stylistic traits.
2. After World War II, some composers first continued to investigate serial compositional techniques in the tradition of Schoenberg, Berg, and Webern. Soon, however, a variety of other compositonal styles replaced serialism as the technique of choice for many European composers. *Postserial styles* in the 1960s and 1970s place great emphasis on elements such as texture, timbre, and dynamics, whereas pitch or rhythm structures are often not exactly determined by the composer. Major European composers in this period are Pierre Boulez, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Luciano Berio, Witold Lutoslawski, György Ligeti, and Krzysztof Penderecki. In the United States, composers such as Milton Babbitt have continued to develop serial techniques in their music, whereas other composers, such as Elliott Carter, George Crumb, Morton Feldman, or Pauline Oliveros, have explored a variety of postserial techniques and styles in their compositions.
3. Some prominent twentieth-century composers defy classification, because of their very personal, individualistic approaches to composition and style. Among these, we will mention Charles Ives, Edgard Varèse, Olivier Messiaen, and John Cage.
4. Rather than break away with the tonal system, other composers in the first half of the century sought to **extend the concept of tonality** in a variety of ways, and at the same time break away from the Romantic tenets of style. Among the composers who somehow

preserved the concept of **pitch centricity** in their music (that is, who used various methods of organizing the pitch content of their compositions around some central pitch or collection of pitches) are Claude Debussy, Igor Stravinsky, Béla Bartók, Benjamin Britten, Sergei Prokofiev, Dmitri Shostakovich, Darius Milhaud, and Paul Hindemith, to name just a few. Modal, pentatonic, whole-tone, and other nonfunctional scales, as well as nonfunctional tertian (or or at times nontertian) harmony, are some of the alternative methods of pitch organization used by some of these composers.

5. *Rhythm, timbre, and dynamics* often became essential elements in the music of composers such as Stravinsky, Bartók, and Prokofiev. The general approach to texture, form, and types of genres in much of the music by these and other composers of the first half of the century also leads to their frequent characterization as **neoclassical**.

6. Other composers, on the other hand, stayed even *closer to the traditional tonal system*, while also extending it in their own way. Maurice Ravel, Manuel de Falla, Jean Sibelius, Sergei Rachmaninoff, George Gershwin, Aaron Copland, Samuel Barber, and Ralph Vaughan Williams represent in many ways the continuation of the tonal and stylistic traditions we will study in this book.

7. Similarly, we find in the late twentieth century numerous composers who base their music on extensions of the concept of tonality and pitch centricity (in styles that have often been called **neotonal** or "neo-Romantic"), in some cases featuring a clear *revitalization of traditional tonality*. This rediscovery of tonality and its expressive power in the late years of the century is patent in (otherwise stylistically diverse) works by composers such as David Del Tredici, George Rochberg, Joan Tower, and "minimalist" composers Philip Glass, Steve Reich, and John Adams, or in recent works by Penderecki and Hans Werner Henze.

8. The tonal tradition, moreover, underlies the music of several other mainstream twentieth-century styles. **Musical comedies, film music, jazz, pop, and rock** are all based to a great extent on the principles of functional tonality that we will study in this book, and as such these repertoires will be broadly represented in the book's musical examples.

CONCLUSIONS

We should stress again that the history of musical style, in spite of the contrasting approaches we have identified in the different periods, constitutes an unbroken continuum. Periods overlap, and transitions from one style to the next are often extended over decades. Although we have pointed out important differences between musical style in the Classical and Romantic periods, for instance, some Romantic composers preserved various classical principles in certain of their compositions. This has led some authors to stress not so much the differences, but rather the continuities between the two periods. Both differences and continuities do exist between periods, and the above discussions on stylistic elements will perhaps help you to determine to what extent a particular composition does or does not fulfill the standard characterizations of style for the period it belongs to.

Terms for Review

Musical style:
- Rhythm
- Meter
- Tempo
- Melody
- Harmony
- Tonality
- Texture
- Form and formal growth
- Dymanics
- Timbre

Musical style periods

Renaissance style:
- Sacred vocal polyphony
- Imitative counterpoint

Baroque style:
- *Concertato* style
- *Basso continuo*, thoroughbass
- Tonal counterpoint
- Compound melody
- *Fortspinnung*

Classical style:
- Variation and contrast
- Classical form and tonal design
- Homophonic textures

Romantic style:
- Lyricism
- Tonal ambiguity

Twentieth-century styles:
- Atonality
- Serialism
- Extended tonality
- Pitch centricity
- Neoclassicism
- Neotonal styles in late twentieth century Musical comedies, film music, jazz,
  pop, and rock

Worksheet G

LISTENING ASSIGNMENT Your assignment for this chapter will be to listen to as much of the music listed below as possible (the recordings should be available at your school's music library). As you listen to each composition, follow the score, if it is available at the music library.[1] The composers are listed in alphabetical order. Find the dates for each composer, and place him or her in the appropriate historical period. Then determine whether or not each of the compositions is representative of the period it belongs to, based on the general stylistic guidelines for each period that you have learned in this chapter. Take notes on the style characteristics for each piece, and be ready to discuss in class why each piece is or is not a good example of its period's style.

Notice that the following list does not intend to represent all the major styles and genres for each period. To be minimally representative, such a list would be of a much larger size than what is intended here. This also applies, of course, to twentieth-century compositions. Rather than being representative in any way, the few twentieth-century compositions in the list simply sample some of the main stylistic trends in the first half of the century.

1. Johann Sebastian Bach, Brandenburg Concerto no. 5
2. J. S. Bach, Cantata no. 4, "Christ lag in Todesbanden"
3. Béla Bartók, *Concerto for Orchestra*
4. Archangelo Corelli, *Concerti Grossi*, op. 6 (selected concertos)
5. Claude Debussy, La mer
6. George Frideric Handel, *Water Music*
7. Joseph Haydn, Symphony no. 99, in E♭M
8. Elizabeth Jacquet de la Guerre, Suite in Dm
9. Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel, *Lieder*, op. 9
10. Gustav Mahler, Symphony no. 5, I
11. Marianne Martinez, Piano Sonata in EM
12. Wolfgang A. Mozart, Symphonies no. 39, in E♭M, K. 543, and 40, in Gm, K. 550
13. Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, *Missa Brevis*
14. Arnold Schoenberg, *Pierrot Lunaire*, selected songs
15. Franz Schubert, *Winterreise*, selected songs
16. Robert Schumann, *Davidsbündlertänze*
17. Igor Stravinsky, *Symphony of Psalms*
18. Richard Wagner, *Tristan und Isolde*, "Prelude and Transfiguration"
19. Anton Webern, Concerto, op. 24

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[1] If individual scores or recordings of the works by women composers such as Jacquet de la Guerre, Mendelssohn Hensel, or Martinez are not available at your school's library, you can find examples of their compositions in James Briscoe, ed., *Historical Anthology of Music by Women* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987).