



Development of the Symphony

Essay Exemplar (year 12)

This 15-mark essay should include brief references to roughly half a dozen works from wider listening as well as a more detailed discussion of Haydn 104, referring to relevant features using bar numbers. A good essay will cover the whole period from 1750 to 1900 with detailed, relevant features from a range of symphonies. A really good essay will manage to use these examples to explain clearly how the symphony has changed in the area addressed by the question. In other words it will move from elegant list to a properly developed discussion of the question. Features should be relevant and explained clearly. Your essay should not give the impression that the symphonies to which you refer are anything more than good examples of general trends. Note that it is usual to refer to composers themselves in the past tense but always to describe actual music in the present tense.

(year 13 essays need to include reference to Mendelssohn 4 in addition to Haydn 104)

Discuss the development of the Minuet and its related forms in the third movement of symphony. You should refer to the Haydn set work and range of other relevant symphonies in the period from 1750-1900.

Introduction and early Classical (explain topic and outline scope of examples)

The inclusion of a Minuet in instrumental pieces is a feature carried over from the dance suites that are common in the Baroque and Renaissance eras. The Minuet is originally a stately court dance, which is typically the third of four movements. In the course of the period from 1750 to 1900, we see changes in tempo, character and later even the type of dance.

In the early Classical period, Minuets are sometimes the final movement (even as late as Haydn's Symphony No. 26), but they tend to be quite simple with a Minuet in binary form followed by trio before a repeat of the Minuet. **Stamitz's Op. 3 No. 2** is a good example and also presents the trio in reduced instrumentation, another old fashioned feature from when the minuet was used as an actual dance. Taking advantage of the forces available at the Mannheim court, Stamitz does however make more independent use of the woodwind than is typical in early Classical orchestral works.

Haydn played a vital role in the development of the symphony overall and many important trends can be traced in his work. In his **Symphony No. 47**, we see Haydn's typically sophisticated humour at work as both Minuet and Trio are structured as palindromes, the first clumsy and full of awkward accents and the second smoothly sophisticated. His **Symphony No. 94** is one of many that includes the rather faster and more robust minuets that became typical in the later Classical period. [note the brief one-sentence reference to a further work that gives the essay a little more depth]

Haydn 104 (make some detailed points from the set work with bar numbers)

Haydn's Symphony 104 shows the composer developing the Minuet into something both more sophisticated and more playful. For example, in both the Minuet and the Trio, Haydn unexpectedly starts modulating into the subdominant in the reprise of the A section (bar 43) before breaking off into silence, which is a feature of this symphony more generally. In the Minuet, this silence is broken by a comically extended version of a tutti trill idea introduced first in bar 7.

The overall tonal structure is also surprising, with the Trio in the flat submediant. This makes it necessary for Haydn to write a link section from the Trio back to the Minuet reprise at bar 95, via a series of chromatic chords, including an augmented sixth at bar 99.

The movement is marked Allegro and this relatively fast tempo, along with accents and syncopations, results, as in No. 94, in a something more like the Scherzos often found in Beethoven's symphonies.

A Beethoven example (at least one Beethoven symphony will be relevant and important to all topics)

The fast and aggressive third movement from **Beethoven's Symphony No. 3** is a good example of this tendency to move from minuets to scherzi. Although still in triple time and following the same basic outline (Scherzo - Trio - Scherzo) this is a very long way from the courtly origins of the Minuet.

Romantic examples (briefly outline features from a couple of Romantic examples)

In **Berlioz's Symphonie fantastique** we see a quite different approach. The dance movement, which is played second rather than third, is part of a complicated narrative involving the romantic exploits of an unidentified artist that is clearly supposed to be Berlioz. It takes the form of a waltz rather than a minuet, portraying the artist's 'beloved' dancing at a ball with another. An *idée fixe* representing the artist's obsession with the beloved is combined with the waltz theme, creating a sense of unease.

Tchaikovsky also replaces the third movement of both his **fifth and sixth symphonies** with waltzes. The orchestration is much more lavish, with much more use of orchestral colours and contrasts. Waltzes, like minuets are generally in triple time but tend to be quite a bit faster. However, in his sixth symphony, Tchaikovsky writes the third movement in 5/4, a much more unusual and irregular time signature. Like so much in Tchaikovsky's sixth symphony there is something rather tragic about this broken waltz-like movement.

Conclusions (summarise at least one clear contrast across the period and at least one common thread – you can save time and space by combing this paragraph with your last Romantic example)

This waltz is a long way from a traditional minuet movement such as the Stamitz discussed at the beginning of this essay, not least in the orchestration, length and unusual time signature. Even further away in spirit is the sinister 3/8 Scherzo movement from **Mahler's Symphony No. 2**. The relentless rhythms and distorted melodies eventually lead to a loud, dissonant chord that has been likened to a shriek of pain. Quite apart from the contrast in scale, the terrifying dramatic impact of this moment, which reappears in the finale, shows the very different purpose that dance movements can serve in the late Romantic period.