Illuminations of Viennese Classicism:

An Analysis of Mozart’s Symphony No. 39 in E-flat major

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MUS 351B History of Western Music: Baroque to Classical Period

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December 11, 2008
An analysis of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart’s Symphony No. 39 in E-flat Major (K. 543) illuminates the composer voice during the peak of Viennese Classicism. Completed in Vienna on the 26th of June 1788, the E-flat major Symphony was one of the great last three symphonies he composed. Despite being one of the least analyzed symphonies among the last three (nos. 39, 40, and 41), the E-flat Symphony certainly does not lack elements that epitomized Symphonic Classicism and its subsequent effect beyond the classical era. Besides being seemingly written in haste—evident in the autograph’s elementary mistakes—it does not lack Mozart’s ingenuity and intuitive approach to composition. Additionally, the reason for the composition could arguably be for a subscription concert series. Nevertheless, Mozart’s subtle yet wayward treatment of dissonance, his unprecedented use of enharmonic orchestration, as well as his atypical choice instrumental texture greatly contributed to redefining of Viennese Classicism—subsequently introducing the latter foundations of Romantic self-expression.

Wolfgang Amadeus (or Amadé) Mozart—baptized as Johann Chrysostomus Wolfgangus Theophilus—was born in Salzburg, in his parent’s flat on January 27, 1756. His father was Leopold Mozart and his mother was Maria Anna Pertl. His father was a composer, violinist and theorist—though more of a performer and an instructor, especially for the violin. Since the

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7Ibid., 1.
Catholic Jesuits educated Mozart’s father, Wolfgang and his sister, Nannerl, were educated in music as well as other curriculum.\textsuperscript{13} At age two or three, Mozart already began to shown an inclination to hearing, playing\textsuperscript{14} and even writing music.\textsuperscript{15} Soon after, the prodigious child quickly began a fast-paced career in music. While most children at his age were merely learning to read and write, Mozart was already composing significant pieces in 1761\textsuperscript{16} and in 1762.\textsuperscript{17} That same year, the family began their itinerant life, composing while traveling to perform for nobles and rulers.\textsuperscript{18} Their return in 1763 to Salzburg shortly followed a three-and-a-half year grand tour\textsuperscript{19} all over Europe.\textsuperscript{20}

These tours significantly widened Mozart’s exposure to musical cultures outside of Salzburg. He met several key figures that left significant imprints on his musical language,\textsuperscript{21} particularly Karl Friedrich Abel and Johann Christian Bach.\textsuperscript{22} J.C. Bach’s influence is evident on the young prodigy’s adaptation of the “International Galant Style.”\textsuperscript{23} Additionally while in London in 1764-65, the symphonies of J.C. Bach\textsuperscript{24} and C.F. Abel, became the starting models for Mozart’s first symphonies (K16 and K19), written when he was eight and nine years old.\textsuperscript{25}

By the time Mozart returned to Salzburg in 1769, he was appointed as honorary (non-paid) Konzertmeister\textsuperscript{26} at thirteen.\textsuperscript{27} Staying only a few months in Salzburg, the teenage prodigy

\textsuperscript{14}Sadie, \textit{Mozart}, 7-8.
\textsuperscript{15}Rosselli, \textit{Life of Mozart}, 13.
\textsuperscript{16}Eisen and Sadie, \textit{New Grove Mozart}, 2.
\textsuperscript{17}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{19}Keefe, ed., \textit{Cambridge Companion to Mozart}, xii.
\textsuperscript{20}Sadie, \textit{Mozart}, 168.
\textsuperscript{22}Eisen and Sadie, \textit{New Grove Mozart}, 6.
\textsuperscript{23}Rosselli, \textit{Life of Mozart}, 22.
\textsuperscript{24}Eisen and Keefe, \textit{Cambridge Mozart Encyclopedia}, 1.
\textsuperscript{25}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{26}Keefe, ed., \textit{Cambridge Companion to Mozart}, xii.
and his father visited major musical centers in Italy, being exposed to Italian Opera and was even awarded the “Order of the Golden Spur” by the Pope. \(^{28}\) In 1777, Mozart resigned from his post in Salzburg, in hopes to find better patronage in the Manheim court—resulting in both Leopold and Mozart’s dismissal from Colleredo. \(^{29}\) Unable to find a post from 1777 through 1779, he settled for an organist position back Salzburg. \(^{30}\) Shortly after, he departed for Munich by himself in November 1780 to complete the production of his opera *Idomeneo*—which thereafter was invited to Vienna by the Archbishop, where he later met Franz Joseph Haydn in 1782. \(^{31}\) This meeting was particularly important to Mozart, pertaining to Haydn’s influence especially towards the symphonic genre. \(^{32}\) Abert commented, stating that:

> “K543 expresses Mozart’s essential nature at its more distinctive. Indeed, the process of drawing closer to Haydn that had begun in 1782 had by this point led to Mozart’s total intellectual and spiritual independence, at least as far as the symphony genre is concerned…” \(^{33}\)

The combination of his Italian travels and experiences, along with his German and French influences and exposures, Mozart progressed exponentially over the remaining decades of his life—far exceeding his childhood musical and compositional abilities. Leopold stated that his son “knew in his eight year” what one “would expect only from a man of forty.” \(^{34}\) By the time Mozart entered into his second decade, he already produced an extraordinary amount of


\(^{29}\) Ibid., xiii.


\(^{34}\) Ibid.

\(^{35}\) Rosselli, *Life of Mozart*, 16.
compositions—being so versatile that he composed all the musical forms that existed during his lifetime. Yet despite all these accomplishments, Mozart was not without struggles.

Since the time he began permanently residing in Vienna after marrying Constanza in 1782, his struggles ranged from the financial to the tragic. The years prior to 1788 were filled with many tragedies, even during his itinerant travels out of his Salzburg hub. Just a year before, his father died on May 28, 1787. Nine years before, his mother died during their stay in Paris in 1778 (at the time when Mozart failed to obtain better employment, after resigning from the Salzburg court in 1777). His opera Don Giovanni composed just after the death of his father was unsuccessful in Vienna. Contrary to its delight from the Prague audience, the Viennese received it with over fifteen performances. It simply did not appeal to the Viennese tastes.

In the year 1787, Mozart spent most of the year composing his opera, Don Giovanni, while also composing other great chamber works (string quartets in C major and G minor), including his greatest violin sonata Eine Kleine Nachtmusik. Upon Mozart and his wife’s return to Vienna, he was pleased to find out that he has been appointed as chamber musician to the court, in place of Gluck (who just passed away the same year his father passed). Yet despite his increase in income, this did not solve Mozart’s financial problems—evident in the correspondent letters between his Freemason brother, Michael Puchberg.

During the spring of 1788, Wolfgang composed the last three great symphonies: No. 39 in E-flat (K543) on June 26, No. 40 in G minor (K550) on July 25, and No. 41 (K551) on August

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37 Ibid., 15.
38 Ibid., 66-67.
39 Ibid.
40 Ibid., 65.
41 Ibid., 66.
42 Ibid.
What is particularly striking about the E flat symphony is its stark contrast to Mozart’s real-life issues at hand. Despite the composer’s deep financial hardships—evident in his pleading letters to Michael Puchberg—Wolfgang seems to vividly express of a different world, one that hovers above his desperate conditions.

Mozart also composed many other pieces that year, such as a divertimento in E-flat major (K563) for string trio on September 27, three keyboard trios—E major (K542), C major (K548), and G major (K545)—completed on June 22, July 14, and October 27 respectively. There were many other compositions during 1788. Evidently, Mozart had planned on providing subscriptions for concerts—which might have been the purpose for composing the last three great symphonies. In his letter to Puchberg, Mozart again begs Michael to lend him some more money, and telling his friend that he had “decided to give subscription concerts at home in order to be able to meet at least my present great and frequent expenses…” Rosselli agrees and notes that, although the “purpose is unknown; he [Mozart] almost certainly had in view a concert series, a tour, or publication, and very likely heard them played.” But more conclusively, H.C. Robbins Landon argued to have found evidence that a subscription “Casino” concert did take place, based on the retrieved tickets, which Mozart originally sent to Michael Puchburg. Due to Landon’s discovery, we can dismiss the romanticized idea of a struggling artist who died before ever hearing of his great symphonic trilogy. In an effort to further analyze the context of

43Ibid., 68-69.
44Abert, Spencer and Eisen, W. A. Mozart, 1115-1116.
45Sadie, Mozart, 68-69.
46Abert, Spencer and Eisen, W. A. Mozart, 1115.
47Sadie, Mozart, 69.
48Ibid.
49Ibid.
50Rosselli, Life of Mozart, 58.
Mozart’s E flat symphony, a score analysis will be discussed to illuminate Mozart’s seemingly
unshakable creative world.

Mozart’s E-flat major symphony consists of four movements. It has an *Adagio-Allegro*
first movement, followed by an *Andante con moto* second movement. The third, set by a
*Menuetto Allegro and Trio*, and closed by an *Allegro* for the final movement. The structure of
this symphony typifies one of the many four-movement symphonies in the Classical Era.

It begins with a standard sonata-allegro form in the first movement, followed by a
seemingly binary-form movement. Although it appears to be in a binary form, the second
movement can arguably be another “sonata form without a development”\(^{52}\) —possibly likened to
a *rounded binary form*, which contains a digression in between the restatements of the A and A’.
The third movement clearly is in a minuet and trio form, while the finale ends with a rondo form.
Zaslaw argues that this symphony seems to be modeled after Michael Haydn’s E-flat major
symphony, Perger No. 17, because it has similar movement structures.\(^ {53} \)
Yet what is more comparable is its resemblance to Franz Joseph Haydn’s E-flat symphony, no. 84 (of which a
comparison shall be later discuss in their similarities).

Essentially, from start to finish, there seems to be a clear juxtaposition of various musical
influences. Evident aspects include French overtures (such as the dotted rhythms\(^ {54} \)), stark use of
chromaticism, wayward enharmonic spellings\(^ {55} \) (seen in the slow movement), while
foundationally encompassing *Stil Galant*—all juxtaposed throughout this symphony.

The first movement begins with an unusual *Adagio* introduction, in the key of E-flat
major, followed immediately by an *Allegro* in a sonata form. As the Adagio introduction begins

\(^{53}\) Zaslaw, *Mozart’s Symphonies*, 435.
\(^{54}\) Abert, Spencer and Eisen, *W. A. Mozart*, 1116.
with a homophonic E-flat chord, these stately and majestic phrases are brought out by the French-influenced dotted rhythms (see Ex. 1).

Ex. 1. Introduction, mm. 1-4, Symphony No. 39 in E-flat major, first movement

Clearly, the use of Still Galant is evident in the transparency and elegance of the introduction. Upon its first statements, these stately dotted rhythms are reminiscent of a French monarch’s inaugurate entrance. Each phrase in the introduction is presented in a well-balanced manner, following a typical I-V-I progression—signified with definitive cadences. The periodic structures clearly answers each antecedent phrases with transparent cadential consequences. Additionally, the structure of the introduction follows a thin texture, which allows the audience to hear the stately melody throughout every section. As seen in the first four measures (refer to example 1), the homophonic texture allows the melody to be transparent—not convoluted with muddy counterpoint or a wall of sound.

Note the instrumentation of this symphony. Mozart did not utilize the typical oboes of a classical orchestra. Instead, the composer chose to use clarinets—possibly to bring out a less reedy timbre, besides merely favoring the instrument. As the introduction progresses its stately theme, the dotted rhythms are continually expanded subtly, overlaying on a V-pedal that allows the woodwinds to further add color. Assumingly, the oboes were probably not chosen by the

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56Compare to Abert, Spencer and Eisen, W. A. Mozart, 235, regarding the exposition about Jean Baptiste Lully and the dotted rhythms.
composer, who instead used clarinets to possibly not overpower the resonant timbre he was aiming for.

As seen in mm. 9-13, the melodic phrasing and harmonic support that the woodwinds bring, permits a more vivid and colorful orchestration. While the violins continue to deploy the harmonically outlining descending scales, the violas, cellos and double basses lay the foundational V-pedal in E-flat major. All of this seems to prepare the listener for the upcoming dissonant forte cluster (a C and a D-flat note) found in measure 18, which resolves immediately to a secondary functioning V⁷ chord of the IV. After the stark use of dissonance, Mozart resolves the tension he previously created by bringing the subtle chaos to a balance—using the woodwinds and the horn’s resonant character.

Having introduced most of the conceptual characteristics of this symphony, Mozart begins the sonata form Allegro movement with a thin and transparent texture—balancing the richness of the strings and the resonance of the horns, simultaneously with the reedy bassoons. Beginning on measure 26, the first violins, cellos and basses blends alongside with the horns bassoons in a dance-like motive (see Ex. 2). These interplays between each orchestral choir beautifully introduce the primary A-theme in the exposition. The following excerpt from the Allegro movement expressly depicts Mozart’s “Singing Allegro”⁵⁷ voice.

Ex. 2. Measures 26-30 of the first movement, Symphony No. 39 in E-flat major

⁵⁷Abert, Spencer and Eisen, *W. A. Mozart*, 1117.
As the instrumentation varies from the previously mentioned orchestral choirs, Mozart slowly adds more voices in the melody (mm. 26-53). Upon the tutti in measure 54, the fire of the Allegro ignites, and the primary A-theme is further added to and embellished by the transitional materials, beginning at measure 54 and continuing throughout measure 110. In these measures, Mozart utilizes new melodic material (mm. 54-60)—which can arguably be an A’ variation of the main A-theme. This A-prime motive is further developed in mm. 61-71, while subsequently adding similar material to it from the introduction (mm. 72-97)—particularly the descending scales in the strings. This outlining descending scale progression will eventually modulate out of the tonic E-flat major tonal center to the dominant, B-flat major tonal center.

At the start of the secondary B-theme in m. 110, the second tonal area has been clearly established in the dominant, B-flat major tonal center. Interestingly, despite louder and brighter dynamics (beginning at the tutti in measure 54), the melodic structure is never lost during the transitional sections (mm. 54-109) as well as the well-balanced phrases of each material (whether it’s the primary A-theme or merely a transitional or bridge-like material). By the time the closing material surfaces in mm. 97-109, the B-flat major tonal center has been clearly established. The E-flat major tonality seems almost forgotten, due to the repeated and strongly established dominant in the transition materials prior to the secondary B-theme in m. 110 (see Ex. 3).

Ex. 3. Measures 110-114 of the first movement, Symphony No. 39 in E-flat major
Here at the secondary B-theme, Mozart utilized similar coloration that was executed by the string and the woodwind choirs within the primary A-theme, but emphasizing the clarinets (for example, mm. 117-118). As the secondary B-theme approaches to a close at the repeat double bar in measure 142, it continues to establish the dominant tonal center, while climactically concluding the exposition with a fortissimo.

The entrance of the development in measure 143 continues seamlessly from the secondary B-theme of the exposition’s closing material. This material primarily is the use of an eight-note and two sixteenth note rhythmic motives (comparing measures 89 to 96 versus measures 141 to 142). Note the excerpt below, pertaining to this rhythmic motive (see Ex. 4).

**Ex. 4.** Rhythmic motive from mm. 89-92, Symphony No. 39, first movement

Mozart apparently takes this rhythmic motive and subtly develops it in the development section, while also taking the secondary B-theme from the exposition, using it as one of the primary materials for the development section (mm. 143-183). Although the development is relatively short (beginning in A-flat major), it is not without sheer complexity and constant shifts. Mozart ventures to other tonalities in his development by using secondary functions, layering on top of each other—which allow this section to jump from one tonality to another. Essentially, the composer utilizes motivic materials from the exposition and its introduction to quickly thwart the listener in ambiguous and seemingly unstable tonal centers.
In measure 184, the recapitulation begins with the tonality brought back out of ambiguity to E-flat major, having reestablished the first tonal area of the primary A-theme. The recapitulation of the first theme is almost verbatim as the previous exposition of it, but modulates to A-flat major before it enters the transition materials (mm. 224-228). This is evident by comparing the E-flat major tonal center in measure 72, versus measure 229, which is in A-flat major. By Mozart’s modulation of the transitional materials, between the A and the B themes (a perfect fourth above the tonic), he is able to recapitulate the secondary B-theme from the dominant to the tonic in E-flat major (beginning at measure 267).

By the time the B-theme is recapitulated, some of its transitional materials are skipped, such as the previously mentioned clarinets and their resonant emphasis (mm. 117-118). At the closing section of the recapitulation, Mozart deploys rhythmic and melodically motivic materials from all sections. He takes materials from the introduction and the exposition, then merges and condenses these materials to not only further reestablish the tonic, but also to somewhat frame the entire sonata form all together. Through the use of sequences (mm. 294-296), pattern figurations such as the descending scales from the introduction and exposition (mm. 298, 300), and similar closing materials, Mozart ends the Allegro movement on a triumphant note.

As the symphony moves towards the second movement, Mozart structures this Andante con moto by framing it within a “sonata without a development.” Clearly, both the A-section (in A-flat major, mm. 1-37) and the B-section (in E-flat major, 53-67) in the exposition are established, but without a development. Zaslaw argues that this movement is in a binary-form. Nevertheless, there certainly are clear indications of both an A and a B theme, which seems to be recapitulated in measures 68-132. Technically speaking, a sonata form does not

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59 Ibid.
60 Zaslaw, *Mozart’s Symphonies*, 434.
necessarily have to have a development form just that something from that exposition that was once in a dominant or major-median relationship of the tonic, has to return in the recapitulation in the tonic tonal center. In Mozart’ 39th symphony, this movement fits this category. The primary theme from the *Andante con moto* second movement can be found in example 5 below.

**Ex. 5.** Primary A theme, measures 1-8, from the *Andante con moto*

![Ex. 5. Primary A theme, measures 1-8, from the *Andante con moto*](image)

Structurally, as second movement’s exposition begins, the A-theme is found in measures 1-27, while subsequently having a bridge in measures 28-37 (both of which are in the key of A-flat major). A retransition exists in measures 38-45, clearly stated by the V-pedal of vi progression, while using the same rhythmic idea that has been previously introduced in the A-theme’s exposition (see mm. 1-8). But when upon arriving at measure 46, Mozart adds another retransition in measures 46-52, which seems like a variation of the first initial retransition seen in measures 38-45. After which, the B-theme is found in measures 53-67 in the dominant, E-flat major tonal center (see Ex. 6):

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Ex. 6. Secondary B theme excerpt, measures 53-57, from the *Andante con moto*

![Ex. 6. Secondary B theme excerpt](image)

While a normal sonata form goes into a development after the exposition, this *Andante con moto* movement recapitulates an A-prime in the tonic in A-flat major (mm. 68-95) and strikingly modulates the bridge section (mm. 96-107) into a wayward b-minor tonal center (quite different from the previous f-minor bridge in the exposition).⁶² After this, the B-prime theme is brought back to A-flat major in measures 108-32, followed with a transition in measures 32-44.

From looking at the start of this slow second movement, *Stil Galant* is clearly evident—seen in the well-balanced, periodic phrases in the first eight measures. The first four acts as an antecedent in a period structure, ending with a half-cadence, while the following four measures essentially answers the previous antecedent with a clear consequence (mm. 1-4). The first double bar is followed by a V-pedal, with a transparent counterpoint—aptly named as a “Galant Counterpoint.”⁶³ It employs light counterpoint, through the use of imitation of rhythmic elements as well as melodic phrases (mm. 9-13).⁶⁴ This seemingly contradictory term is later demonstrated in measures 53-67. Generally speaking, the A-section is filled with light-textures, and sustained by the use of pedals and appoggiaturas—outlining the chord progressions.

What seemed noticeably important was Mozart’s deeper use of the woodwind section in this *Andante con moto* movement. Retrospectively, this movement clearly features the woodwind

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⁶⁴Ibid.
choir, since the majority of the brass are not included—with the exception of the Horn (or Corni), which is a much more resonant sounding brass instrument (hence typically paired with the woodwind choir). Additionally, this movement also embodies quite a lot of chromaticism, especially in the unusual enharmonic modulation of the bridge section—originally from $f$-minor (mm. 28-27), then modulated to $b$-minor (mm. 96-107). Overall, this “sonata without a development” has the most resonant sounding timbre in comparison to the other movements of this symphony.

Moving along to the third movement, we will find a Menuetto and Trio in E-flat major, in an obvious minuet and trio form. It features the use of all orchestral instruments, and is structured primarily in an ABA binary form (the minuet as the A, mm. 1-44; the trio as the B, mm. 45-68). See Ex. 7 the theme in Menuetto:

**Ex. 7. Menuetto theme from the Symphony No. 39 in E-flat major**

![Menuetto theme from Symphony No. 39 in E-flat major](image)

This movement very much embodies *Stil Galant*. Its passages are quite elegant, full of charm, using balanced harmonic structures (I-V-I progression), periodic phrases, and is largely transparent in texture. While being mostly homophonic in its rhythm, it beautifully emphasizes Mozart’s “Singing Allegro” in the beautiful melodies—especially in the clarinet solo in measures 45-52 and as well as in measures 61-68 in the Trio B-section (see Ex. 8).

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65 Wen, “A Tritone Key Relationship,” 59-84.
66 Ibid.
67 Ibid.
Ex. 8. *Trio* theme from the *Symphony No. 39 in E-flat major*

As far as tonal centers, it is not adventurous—following the basic tonic-to-dominant-to-tonic pattern. Although there maybe a temporary tonicization, it generally functions to merely take the progression momentarily outside of the E-flat major tonal center (for example, mm. 14-16; especially mm. 53-60). It ends elegantly at the return to the *da capo* and a *fine* at the end of the *Menuetto* A-section at measure 44.

The fourth and final movement of this great symphony culminates the motivic ideas, influences and other factors that contributed to this symphony. Evidently, *Allegro* finale is in a rondo form with its monothematic motive varied and developed. Among the others, this is the fastest movement with a racing two-meter feel. The long spun-out development of its single theme is hinged together with transitional materials that function as musical conjunctions—essentially highlighting the string section’s agility. This seems to be accomplished by a juxtaposition of counterpoint, imitation, melodic variations, and several other varied themes—functioning as contrapuntal devices to contrast the repeated monothematic motive. See Ex. 9 for the monothematic theme, rapidly developed throughout this movement.

Ex. 9. Monothematic rondo theme of the *Allegro* fourth movement
What’s interesting in this movement is that it can be viewed as a contrasting continuous binary form—since it seems to have a clear A-section (albeit all the repeated and developed contrasting themes) and a clear separated A-prime section (using the same but varied thematic idea). Retrospectively, it is probably more appropriate to frame this movement as a rondo form, since contrasting materials are layered over the repeated mono thematic motive (see mm. 41-44; 47-50; especially mm. 52-61, etc). The contrasting variations of the single theme seemed to be connected to other sections, by a closing and transitional section, found in measures 62-78 as well as in measures 79-102. After the double-repeat bar in measure 104, the string section further exploits the mono thematic motive, and continues to produce contrasting materials, juxtaposed together to comment on the main theme itself.

As the Allegro movement progresses, the harmonic progressions and the tonal centers are delineated through Mozart’s ingenious use of sequential modulations—while imbedding fugal imitation throughout the varied voices (mm. 114-125). A vivid way to simplify the analysis of this movement and its mono thematic motive can be likened to a game of basketball (the ball itself being the main motive). While surrounded with friends at the basketball court, everyone is out after the ball, attempting to gain points by obtaining the ball and making the shots. Simultaneously, while one person might have the ball, another person comes up with an idea to divert the ball (contrastingly developed theme). Whoever is successful takes the ball (monothematic motive) and gains points from successfully shooting the basketball (the developing of a contrasting and varied material).

Hence, Mozart essentially took an idea and ran with it—taking a single theme and somehow creating a way for it to not become so mundane and repetitive. He accomplishes this by foreshadowing it alongside other contrastingly developed materials, by the use of several
compositional devices. The remaining segments of the Allegro finale continues to use imitative counterpoint, sequences, and other compositional techniques—such as the elision of contrastingly developed material along with the main monothematic motive (mm. 126-266). At its closing statement, the ending seems unlike most classical symphonies—merely completing the end of the monothematic phrase, without any pomp of repeated major triads. Not only is the Allegro finale superb in its thematic developments, it culminates without losing its elegance. Hence, this symphony is quite superb in its elegant expression, being full of melodic fervor—especially when Mozart’s “Singing Allegro” voice is heard.

From comparing Mozart’s 39th Symphony in E-flat major, Zaslaw argued that it seems to be modeled after Michael Haydn’s 17th Symphony in E-flat major (Perger No. 17). 68 He commented that both the form and movement structures are similar. 69 Additionally, this E-flat symphony is characteristic of Mozart’s recently composed Don Giovanni—especially pertaining to the use of dotted rhythms in the introduction section of the first movement. 70 But even more comparably, the use of an Adagio introduction in the first movement (which motes to a faster Allegro tempo) is characteristic of Joseph Haydn’s symphonies. 71 From looking at the entire 39th Symphony, the four-movement sonata-form based symphony is not only typical of Viennese Classicism by the time Mozart composed his last symphonic trilogy, but it also paints a great light about the composer’s assimilation of surrounding styles—including the French aspect (as previously mentioned, the use of dotted rhythms 72 ), the Italian aspect (the harmonious use of the

68Zaslaw, Mozart’s Symphonies, 435.
69Ibid.
70Abert, Spencer and Eisen, W. A. Mozart, 1117.
71Zaslaw, Mozart’s Symphonies, 434-435.
72Abert, Spencer and Eisen, W. A. Mozart, 1116.
key of E flat, according to Abert, is significantly Italian in style), as well as the pristine Austro-German musical upbringing that Mozart was raised in. 

As far as Mozart’s contribution to the Viennese Classicism, it seems evident that Mozart’s 39th symphony can not only be expressively “Haydnesque” as Abert calls it, but in light of the “context” of when he wrote this piece in 1788, it is astoundingly clear to see Mozart’s Freemasonic influence. The idea of not expressing his outward struggles but rather write about something greater than himself seems indicative of this fraternity’s influence. The fact that Mozart may have written his last great three symphonies for a subscription concert series in London may explain the Haydn-like characteristic of this E-flat Symphony. Mozart, knowing of Haydn’s success in his London symphonies, must have been intentional about writing something that would be readily accepted. To expound further of my theory, a comparison will be made with Mozart’s 39th Symphony in E-flat to Joseph Haydn’s 84th Symphony in E-flat.

In Haydn’s Largo-Allegro first movement, the introduction opening statement utilizes homophonic gestures of the E-flat major chord instances. Being that this is staged in a slow largo movement, it bears similarities to Mozart's first movement in his 39th Symphony. Yet, unlike Mozart's slow introduction, Haydn does not seem to use prominent dissonant sonorities (such as Mozart’s vagrant minor second in the strings, leading to a V-chord in mm. 18). Despite this indifference, both composers do use suspended leading tones; though Haydn seems to be more careful to use them as mere passing tones, and not as overlapping suspensions. Additionally, Haydn does not use the French-influenced dotted rhythms that Mozart utilizes in his slow-

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73Ibid., 1116-7.
74Ibid., 1117.
75Ibid., 1116-7.
76Ibid., 33.
77Ibid., 33.
78Landon, 1791: Mozart’s Last Year, 33-35.
moving introduction for the first movement. Haydn also does not use any pedals, compared to Mozart's introduction. Yet, it is clear that Haydn’s chord progression are standard, moving from the I in E-flat to the V—which makes a clear statement of its V-7 secondary function. This is similar with Mozart’s first movement; although he uses several pedals to sustain the tension, both composers make clear use of the I to V key progressions in their slow introductions.

Comparatively, unlike Haydn, Mozart does not use a whole lot of silence—except with one quarter-note rest at the 4th beat of measure 21 in his 39th Symphony E-flat major. Additionally, Haydn’s introduction seems even more transparent than Mozart’s.

After Haydn’s short introduction in E-flat, the first movement’s Allegro begins with the first theme, clearly stated in I of E-flat. Unlike Mozart, Haydn repeats the same A theme, without adding more themes in the exposition section. Haydn clearly establishes the A theme in the I of E-flat major, while making a clear transition to the V. Mozart, on the other hand, utilizes several transitional themes that continue to add more tension to resolve in the V of E-flat major. Haydn is much simpler to his approach.

Rather than using extended diminished-chromaticism within pedals (as secondary functions), Haydn utilizes a simple and momentary mode mixture and brief uses of diminished-chords to transition to the B theme in dominant of E-flat major. Haydn’s development begins with the A theme, but quickly uses mode mixture, sequential modulations, and creates tension by using augmented sixth chords—but utilizes a tonicization within the augmented sixth chord as a secondary function. Yet, the tension Haydn created is quickly resolved—releasing the sense of longing back to its more familiar themes. The sonata form then closes the recapitulation, taking both the A and B theme to the tonic.
Haydn’s Andante in the key of B-flat, seems more standard than Mozart’s A-flat—a IV chord in E-flat major tonal center, rather than the typical dominant tonal center. Though both movements are in an Andante, they differ quite strikingly in their uses of modulations. Clearly, this illuminates that stark difference with Hayden’s provincial compositional technique, compared to Mozart’s universal compositional technique. As previously mentioned, Mozart’s second movement (Andante con moto) uses atypical enharmonic orchestration, while Haydn simply uses mode mixtures while positioning first in the V of E-flat major. While Mozart’s Andante con moto progresses from major to minor modes in a non-developing sonata form, Haydn’s Andante encompasses a “pastoral theme with variations that turns majestic.” Yet, in comparing both composers’ Andante movement, Haydn’s orchestration seems more transparent—especially when he utilizes the woodwind timbre to create different colors for his theme and variation movement. It is also notable that Haydn does use the oboe for his 84th symphony, while Mozart uses the clarinets instead of oboes.

By looking further in Haydn’s 84th Symphony in E-flat, one can clearly see the transparent use of silence in Haydn’s composition. His minuet and trio movement is certainly more humble, compared to Mozart’s majestic and resonantly warm Menuetto and Trio. Mozart’s third movement has a much fuller sound, using the orchestra at a tutti and then creates contrasts by the use of the woodwind’s colorful and resonant attributes. Mozart beautifully uses the clarinet’s solo to stand out in the Trio section, being supported with light texture with the strings, horns, bassoons, second clarinets and flutes (saving the other brass instruments for the tutti at the minuet section). Zaslaw comments that these clarinet solos were actually derived from a “Ländler tune,” for two clarinets which are favored by Alpine village instruments. Yet, overall,

79Zaslaw, Mozart’s Symphonies, 434.
both composers use clear and transparent sonorities in their minuet and trio movements—focusing on simplistic harmonic progressions, being more homophonic than contrapuntal.

Finally, comparing Mozart and Haydn’s fourth movement, both composers concluded their symphony in a rondo form—although Haydn’s finale casts his rondo movement in a sonata form.\(^8\) I argued previously that Mozart’s finale movement is also in a monothematic rondo form, since the motivic ideas he uses are utilized throughout the entire finale—whether in full motivic statement or in fragments, he delegates both the melodic and rhythmic motive in other voices, while creating contrasts with other voices in homophonic texture. This is evident in mm. 52-78, where the melodic and rhythmic theme is voiced contrapuntally in the woodwinds, while the first violins layers a syncopated isorhythmic patterns. On the other hand, Haydn takes his theme and frames it within a sonata form—having a clear statement of the primary A theme, but is ambiguous in stating the secondary B theme—which he resolves during the recapitulation of the B theme in the tonic.\(^8\) In retrospect, these two movements are generally similar, with only minor differences by the approach that each composer decides to develop and vary their motivic ideas. In retrospect, Mozart appears to be influenced by Haydn’s compositional techniques and aesthetics, but foreshadowed the “self-expressing” Romanticism through his mixture of numerous styles.

In conclusion, I believe that Mozart not only contributed greatly in the ideals of Viennese Classicism (evident from his adherence and innovations to Classicism), but also founded the beginnings of Romanticism for composers that followed after him. Ludwig van Beethoven benefited from composers such as Haydn and Mozart because they helped establish and solidify genres—such as the symphony (Haydn), string quartet (Haydn), piano concerto (Mozart), and

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\(^8\)Brown, *Symphonic Repertoire*, 216.
\(^8\)Ibid., 217.
especially opera (Mozart). Although Mozart went through a great deal of hardships during the time that he composed his last great symphonic trilogy in 1788, he still had to express something outside of his own context—just so that he can make ends meet.

For the composer to write such a beautiful masterpiece—while his wife was ill, his daughter just recently died as well as his father the year before (1787), and while buried in debt—is just absolutely unthinkable! As a composer myself, I am unable to fathom Mozart’s ability to “hear” music in his head that is outside of his own context. I can only conclude that the reason why he was able to do such a feat was due to his innumerable gift for composition. Due to his adaptation of the surrounding cultural musical styles (Italian, French, and German) makes him also more than capable to write in any aesthetic at the time for which he writes for. In light of Landon’s discovery of the “Casino” tickets for a subscription concert in London, Mozart’s *Symphony No. 39 in E-flat major* (along with nos. 40 and 41) might have been composed with London in mind. Yet, despite Mozart’s continuous efforts in obtaining patronage (such as in Haydn’s success), his luck never truly turned—and did not live long enough to benefit from the public patronage that Beethoven enjoy subsequently.

I believe Mozart’s subtle, yet rebellious use of dissonance, briefly illuminates his “person,” vaguely attempting to express himself, but without the public ears’ permission (Viennese Classicism). His use of unusual enharmonic orchestration as well as his atypical choice of orchestral instrumentation (using clarinets in place of oboes) may also be indicative to his latter contribution and influence to Romantic composers after him—particularly Beethoven. At the age of thirty-two, Mozart’s innovative compositional techniques evidently began to break

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83 Abert, Spencer and Eisen, *W. A. Mozart*, 1115-6.
84 Ibid.
85 Landon, *1791: Mozart’s Last Year*, 33-35.
the confines of Classicism’s treatment of dissonance. Without a doubt, had he lived to be eighty years old, I believe it would have been Mozart that catapulted the transition from Classicism to Romanticism—not Beethoven. If only Mozart lived past 1815 when the Congress of Vienna established the New World Order, he would have greatly benefited from the public patronage. Therefore, Symphony No. 39 in E-flat major illuminates Mozart’s contribution and early deviation from Viennese Classicism. The comparison revealed Mozart’s universal and adaptive style, differing from Haydn’s more provincial Classicism. And with his use of dissonance and uncommon methods of orchestration, Mozart clearly looked forward to Romanticism.
Bibliography


