

A page of handwritten musical notation on aged, stained paper. The paper is yellowed and has several large brown stains, particularly a large one in the lower-left quadrant. The musical notation is written in dark ink on five-line staves. The notes and symbols are somewhat faded and difficult to read due to the age and staining. A yellow rectangular box is superimposed at the top of the page, containing the text "Classical Music" in a black, italicized serif font.

Classical Music

1770-1820

Final exam question

What of Mozart's view of the world, his feelings about the human condition, and his personality can we detect in his instrumental music?

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What of Mozart's view of the world, his feelings about the human condition, and his personality can we detect in his instrumental music? Read the textbook's section on Mozart and listen to the Mozart selections on the textbook CD (Symphony No 25, first movement; *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*, 1st and 3rd movements; and the variations for piano on '*Ah, vous dirais-je, Maman*'). Comment on each piece of music. How does each piece rate on the scale from 'perfect realization of the expected pattern' to challenging the audience, then and now? Can you relate these pieces to information about Mozart's life and personality (presented in lecture and in the textbook)? Of these four examples, does one stand out as most or least appealing to you?

Robert Levin & Mozart on the fortepiano

Key points:

Performer choices:

how should knowledge of historical instruments change interpretation?

Improvisation & spontaneity

Mozart is a rude bad boy. How?

*EMPATHY &
IMAGINATION*

Act!

Two aspects of Mozart's musical language

Robert Levin, Charles Rosen:

'perfect realization of the expected pattern'

Unexpected combination of different ideas, the number and density of those ideas

consciously follow, aware of as
much as possible (looking at the
score helps!)

attentively listen, but not
analytically

processed on some level

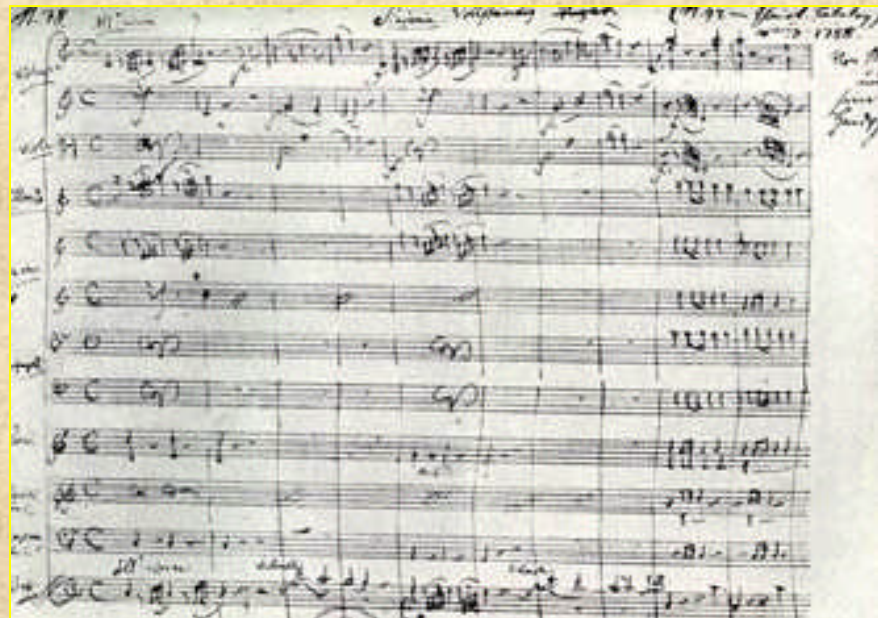
or not at all

Mozart's hidden craftsmanship

"One does not believe it is difficult, one believes one can easily imitate it, and that is the test"

Mozart, in a letter

Mozart



< 35 years on
the planet

Mozart



40+ symphonies

23 string quartets

19 piano sonatas

27 piano concertos

masses

20 operas

LIFE-TIME-LINES

BACH d.1750



BEETHOVEN 1770-1827



MOZART 1756-1791



HAYDN 1732-1809



1770

1820

Compare Bach, Beethoven

J.S. **Bach**, English Suite #3 in G minor

- consistent working out of single idea (the Baroque ideal aesthetic of Affect, one mood or emotion per piece)



Ludwig van **Beethoven**, Piano Sonata No. 26 in E flat major, opus 81a, "Lebewohl" (1809-1810), 3rd movement



- abruptly contrasting character

Mozart listening example

a string quartet (a composition for two violins, viola and cello)

the Quartet in E-flat Major, K 428, 1st movement

(one of the 6 “Haydn” quartets)

Music made of music?

Does this piece connect to Mozart's life and world, or is it "music made of music," in the words of a famous commentator on Mozart, Alfred Einstein?

Mozart **textbook CD** listening example

Variations on '*Ah, vous dirais-je, Maman*'

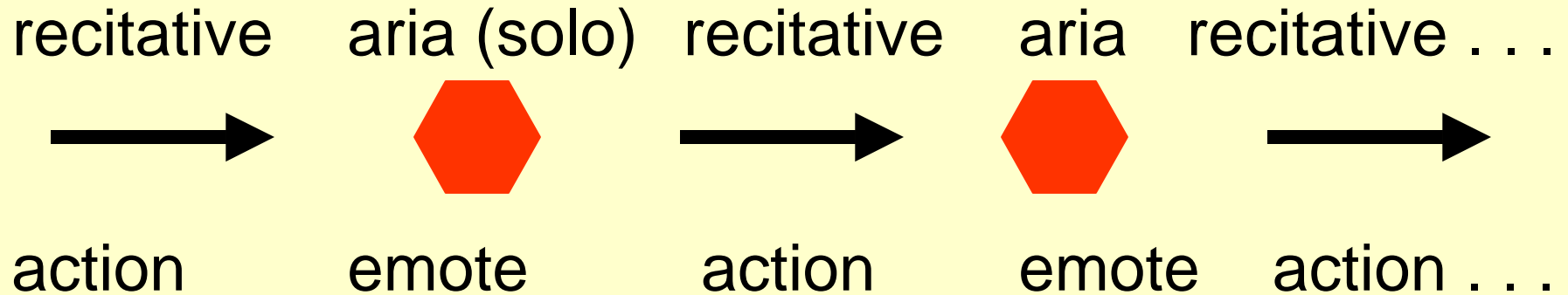
Variations a “light” form

Variations training the mind for hearing connections under transformations?

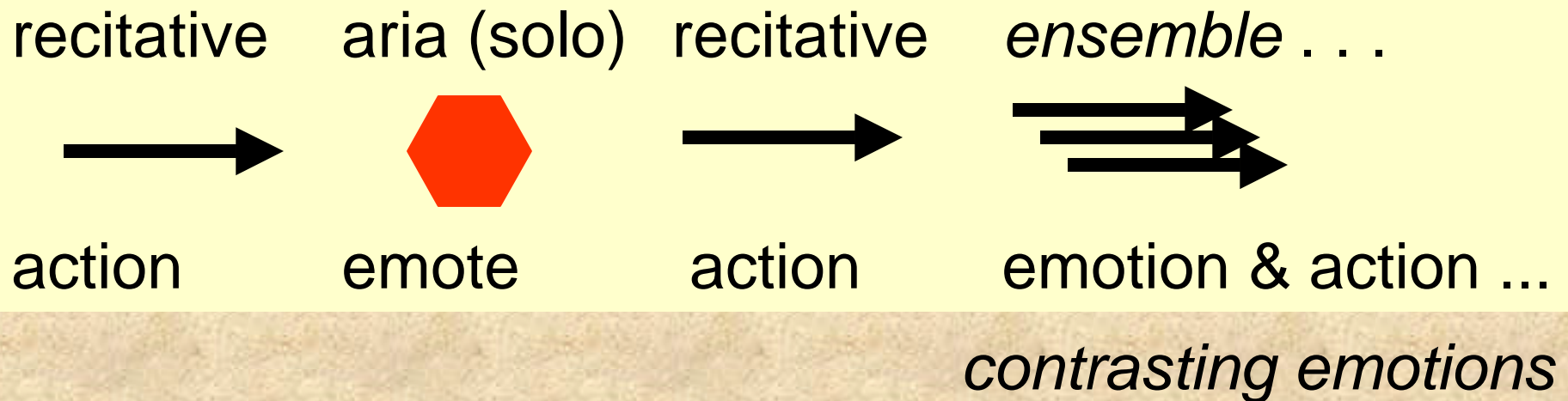
Imagine this improvised.

Opera evolution

Baroque



Classical/Mozart



Mozart and opera



Da Ponte – librettist

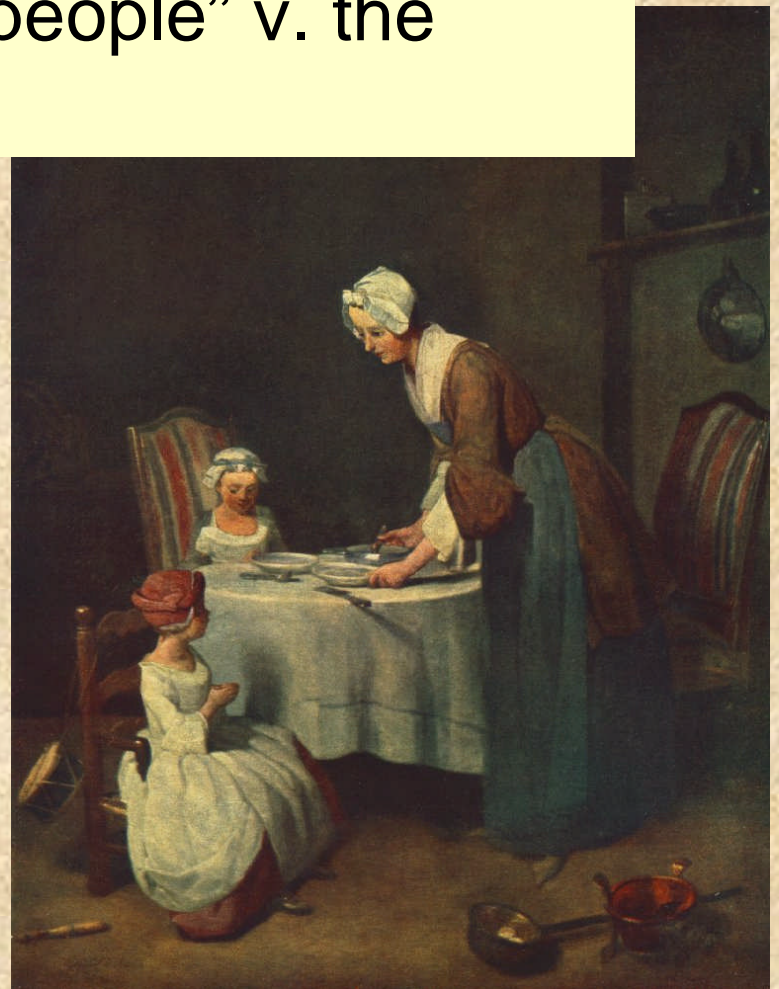
- all voice ranges used (instead of the Baroque's treble + bass preference)
- ensembles (groups of solo voices) now contrasted with arias and recitative
- several operas about contemporary characters, not mythological figures or ancient history from Rome or Greece (although he did a few of those, too)
- biting social commentary: the decadent aristocracy is compared to the normal, happy, healthy lust and love of the common folk
- recitative still used
- some in German with spoken dialogue

The Marriage of Figaro

- celebration of “common people” v. the decadent aristocracy

Bourgeois (Genre)

Chardin
The Prayer before Meal
1744



Still from *Amadeus*



Joseph II



Joseph II



Still from *Amadeus*



Baron van Swieten



Still from *Amadeus*



Baron van Swieten

Dad (Leopold Mozart)



Still from *Amadeus*

Dad (Leopold Mozart)



Still from *Amadeus*

Mozart viewing example
film by Joseph Losey

Don Giovanni

Don Juan as anti-hero – critique of aristocracy?
The opera starts with an attempted rape & a murder, yet it is “*dramma giocoso* – comic drama”

Rarely performed in the 1800s – now regarded as one of Mozart’s finest operas

1787



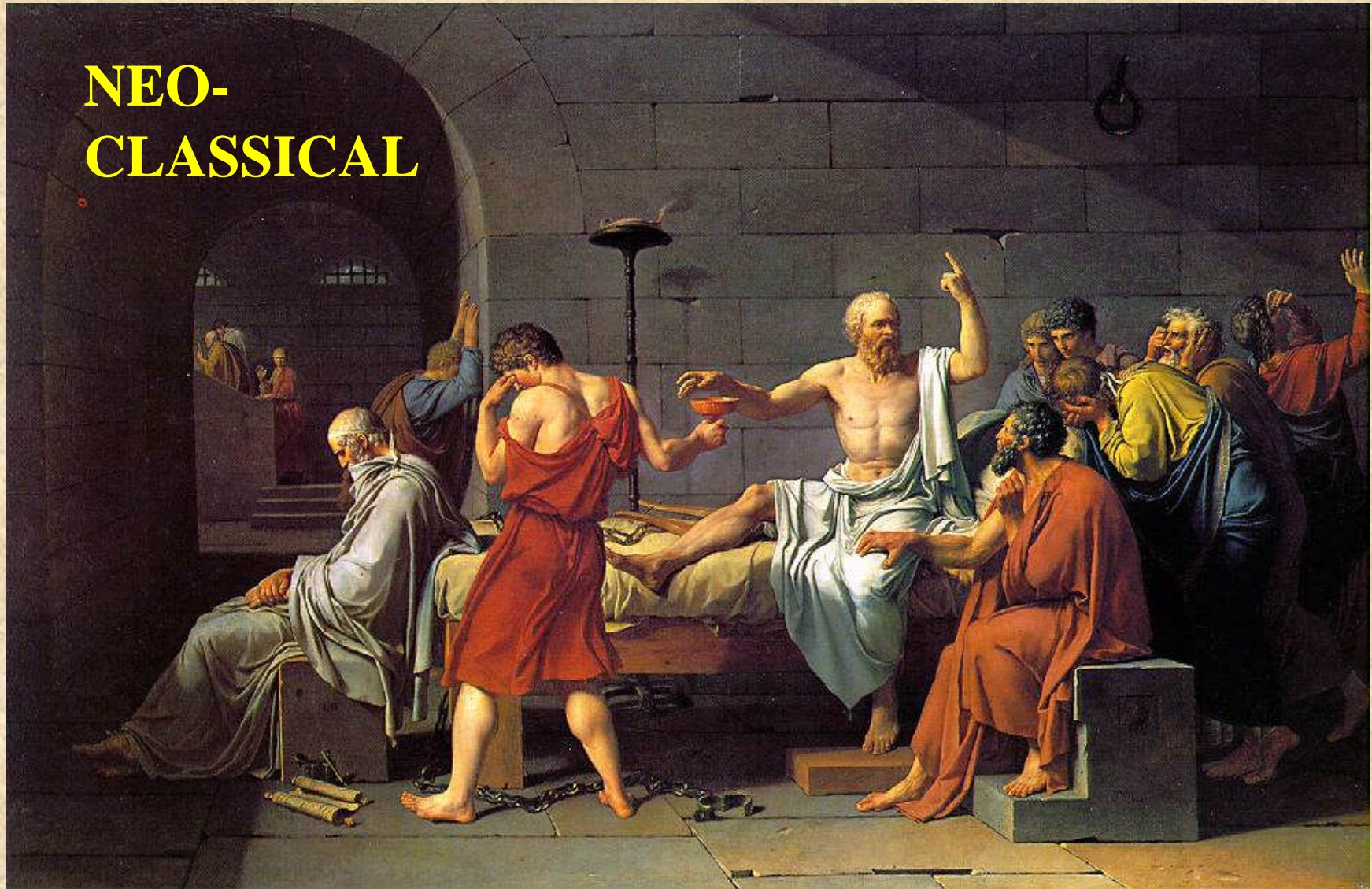
BAROQUE ERA



BAROQUE ERA

David, *The Death of Socrates*, 1787

**NEO-
CLASSICAL**



Don Giovanni
characters are multi-faceted;
not just good or bad

Don Giovanni a sexual predator – but brave

Leporello – likable servant easily swayed by \$\$\$ (or €€€)

Donna Anna – obsessed with vengeance (justly), but
loses sight of love

Don Ottavio – noble blowhard; ineffectual

Donna Elvira – noble woman but foolish in love

Zerlina & Masetto – peasants & moral center but easily
led astray

Don Giovanni
“catalog aria”

recitative

Text/tone painting

- orchestral laughter
- big women, little women
- **turn to minor key – moral commentary**

Don Giovanni
voice types

Don Giovanni – baritone

Leporello – bass

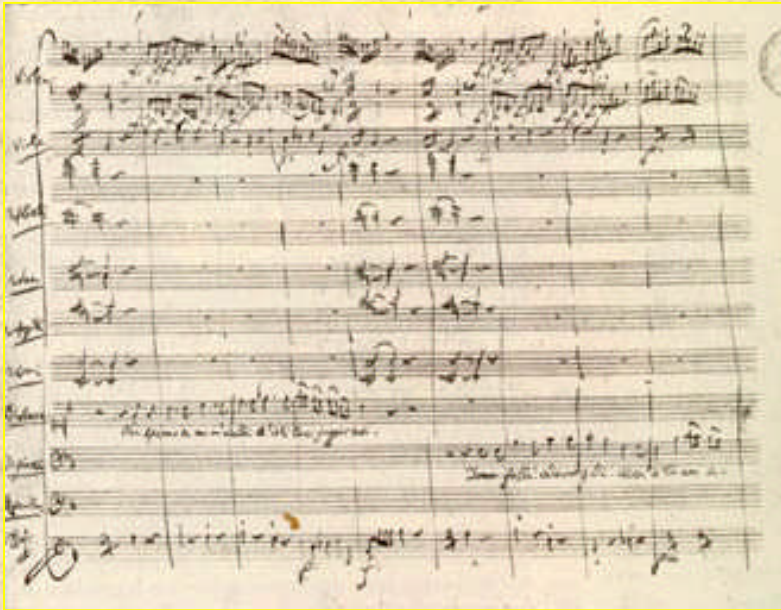
Donna Anna – soprano

Don Ottavio – tenor

Donna Elvira – soprano

Zerlina & Masetto – soprano & bass

Mozart listening example



-- finale from Act II of ***The Marriage of Figaro***

-- an ensemble scene (six voices)

-- contrasting emotions presented simultaneously (compare that to the Baroque ideal aesthetic of Affect, one mood or emotion per piece)

Mozart viewing example

Così fan Tutte (they all do it)

3 pairs of voices – symmetry of design appeals to the Classical mind

Rococo moral stance

Rarely performed in the 1800s – now regarded as one of Mozart's finest operas

Petit Trianon, Versailles, France 1764 (Louis XVI)

NEO-CLASSICAL





Fragonard,
The Swing,
1769

Rococo

SUMMARY

- Mozart has values & opinions about sex, morality, justice, tolerance and politics
- Can we detect, feel and hear them in his instrumental music?