

Teaching Classic Era Style Through Keyboard Accompaniment

BY PETER SILBERMAN

Stylistic composition often plays a large part in the undergraduate music theory curriculum.¹ Many schools of music, colleges, and universities offer courses in Renaissance or Baroque counterpoint, in which students are taught to imitate the works of Palestrina or Bach.² Many twentieth-century music courses include the composition of free atonal and/or serial works, perhaps in the style of Schoenberg or Webern. However, students less frequently are taught to imitate the repertoire between the Baroque and the twentieth century.

In particular, there are limited resources available that help students learn to write in the Classic era style. This lack of resources is surprising, as the works of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven form the foundation of much theory instruction. While many of the standard undergraduate textbooks include chapters on such Classic era staples as periods, sentence form, and sonata form, few offer any substantial comments on stylistic features.³ In contrast,

¹The author would like to thank Timothy Johnson, Daniel Zimmerman, and several anonymous reviewers for helpful comments on earlier drafts of this article.

²Counterpoint texts often are written with this imitative approach in mind. See for example Robert Gauldin's *A Practical Approach to Sixteenth-Century Counterpoint* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1985) and *A Practical Approach to Eighteenth-Century Counterpoint* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1988), which eschew a rule-based approach to counterpoint in favor of careful study and imitation of musical examples by representative composers.

³I use the term "sentence" form to name an eight-measure unit that consists of a two-measure idea that William Caplin (following Schoenberg and Rufer) calls the Basic Idea, a two-measure repetition, and a four-measure continuation phrase ending with a cadence. See William Caplin, *Classical Form: A Theory of Formal Functions for the Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998). Caplin discusses sentence form on pages 9 – 12 and presents the opening theme of the first movement of Beethoven's Piano Sonata in F minor, op. 2 no. 1, as a representative example. He later discusses sentence form in more detail on pages 35 – 48.

studies of the Classic era style tend to be book length, aimed at the scholar or graduate student rather than the undergraduate, and too in-depth for a unit on Classic era composition that is shorter than a full semester.⁴ What clearly is needed is a step-by-step method that gives students specific guidelines for writing in the Classic style, and which is concise and efficient enough so that students can master that style in a reasonable amount of time, perhaps a half- or quarter-semester unit.

This article will work toward this goal by focusing on one aspect of Classic era style, keyboard accompanimental texture. In my experience, students have little difficulty learning to write melodies that mimic those from the Classic era via the use of period or sentence form.⁵ However, writing an idiomatic accompaniment to such a melody can be quite challenging, particularly for students who have composed in chorale style only. Many textbooks merely suggest the use of Alberti bass or broken-chord arpeggios, while ignoring other accompanimental textures. Alberti bass and arpeggios are certainly common in Classic era keyboard music, but it is a rare composition that uses them exclusively, and even eight-measure periods and sentences can contain changes in accompanimental texture. Further, some textures are better suited

⁴See for example Charles Rosen, *The Classical Style* (New York: Norton, 1972), Leonard Ratner, *Classic Music: Expression, Form, Style* (New York: Schirmer, 1980), James Webster, *Haydn's "Farewell" Symphony and the Idea of Classical Style* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), and Robert Gjerdingen, *Music in the Galant Style* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). Nicholas Cook, *Analysis Through Composition: Principles of the Classical Style* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), a composition textbook, is intended for the advanced student who is highly familiar with the Classic era style, and is meant to be used over two semesters. Robert Gauldin "The Evolution of a Styles Simulation Course for Graduate Theory Students," *Journal of Music Theory Pedagogy* 23 (2009): 101-122, contains valuable composition exercises in the Classic style, but those exercises are designed for graduate students.

⁵For a full discussion of small Classic era forms see Caplin, *Classical Form: A Theory of Formal Functions for the Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven*. Edward Lowinsky shows how Mozart's melodies, often in period or sentence form, are richer and more subtle than those of his contemporaries. Along the way, Lowinsky identifies aspects of Mozart's melodies that could be helpful in stylistic composition. See Edward Lowinsky, "On Mozart's Rhythm," in *The Creative World of Mozart*, edited by Paul Henry Lang, 31-55. New York: Norton, 1963.

to certain melodic characteristics than others, and any method for instructing students should take this observation into account.

Before presenting my method, I will survey several popular undergraduate theory textbooks that include discussion of accompanimental textures that lack the richness and variety of typical Classic era accompaniments. Next, I will discuss the literature on Classic era style briefly to discover what Classic composers actually wrote as accompaniments, and how that differs from most textbooks' approaches. Then I will present my method, with examples from the music of Mozart. This article will conclude with samples of successful writing by my students.

Several popular undergraduate theory textbooks discuss accompanimental patterns, usually in the context of melody harmonization. *Harmony in Context*, by Miguel Roig-Francolí contains a representative section on keyboard texture.⁶ In a passage entitled "Harmonizing a Melody with Keyboard Figuration," Roig-Francolí lists the following types of textures: repeated block chords, bass and afterbeat, repeated broken chords, chordal arpeggios, and Alberti bass. Since his aim is to assist students in harmonizing a melody, his main focus is on chord selection. Chords are then arranged in one of the aforementioned patterns. Example 1 reproduces Roig-Francolí's two sample harmonizations of a Schubert melody, one with a bass and afterbeat accompaniment and one with an Alberti bass.⁷

⁶Miguel Roig-Francolí, *Harmony in Context* (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2003), 367-373.

⁷*Ibid.*, 372.

Example 1: Accompaniments from Roig-Francolí (2003), p. 372
Miguel Roig-Francolí, *Harmony in Context*. ©2003, McGraw-Hill.
(Reproduced with permission of The McGraw-Hill Companies.)

Note that, as befits a harmony textbook, the focus here is on harmony rather than on creating an interesting accompaniment. As a result, while the accompaniments are appropriate for nineteenth century piano works, they are monotonous and lack the variety of textures commonly found in actual compositions from that era. Although Roig-Francolí provides examples of accompaniments from the works of Mozart and Beethoven, he does not show students how to use Classic era textures. None of his examples show more than one accompaniment pattern, and give the misleading impression that Classic and early Romantic era piano works rarely include changes in accompaniment patterns.

Tonality and Design in Music Theory, by Earl Henry and Michael Rogers, contains similar suggestions for accompanimental patterns. Henry and Rogers include a chapter on sonata form, and at the end of that chapter describe a project that teaches students to write a sonata form exposition for piano.⁸ Henry and Rogers suggest the use of repeated chords, Alberti bass, or a more contrapuntal texture as accompaniments to sonata form themes. Example 2 shows their sample accompaniments.⁹

⁸ Earl Henry and Michael Rogers, *Tonality and Design in Music Theory* (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 2005), vol. 2, 227-230.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 228.

Example 2: Accompaniments from Henry and Rogers (2005), p. 228
Henry, D.J.; Rogers, Michael, *Tonality and Design in Music Theory*, Volume 2, 1st Edition, ©2005.
(Reprinted by permission of Pearson Education, Inc., Upper Saddle River, NJ.)

All three examples consist of four-measure antecedent phrases followed by the first measure of a consequent phrase, suggesting an unfinished parallel period. These examples would not be out of place in a Classic era composition, but the authors provide no guidelines for choosing accompaniments. The Alberti bass example is puzzling, as the Alberti bass breaks off in measure 3 without comment from the authors. The “More Independent Accompaniment” is interesting and musical, although it contains a different type of accompaniment in each measure, but the authors do not describe how a student could write such an accompaniment. These three musical examples, while useful, do not begin to display the wide variety of accompaniments found in Classic era keyboard music, and the authors offer no assistance for a student wishing to imitate the Classic style.

Other textbook authors who discuss keyboard accompaniment include Laitz (2012), Clendinning and Marvin (2011), Steinke and Harder (2010), and Turek (2007).¹⁰ With the exception of Steinke and

¹⁰ Steven Laitz, *The Complete Musician*, 3rd edition (New York: Oxford

Harder, these authors' discussions are quite general. None mention any aspects of musical style, Classical or otherwise, none show more than just a few basic accompanimental types, such as Alberti bass, and none provide the student with suggestions for choosing one accompanimental type instead of another. Turek alone suggests that students vary accompaniment patterns during a phrase instead of using the same pattern throughout, but his musical examples do not do so. Steinke and Harder's list of accompaniment types is much longer than those in other books, with multiple examples of each type and helpful guidelines for preserving correct voice-leading. Steinke and Harder also provide very general stylistic suggestions (bass and afterbeat patterns work well in waltzes and mazurkas, block chord accompaniments sound stately), but do not mention historical styles or melodic cues that might suggest a particular accompaniment or a change in accompaniment.

Students using the aforementioned textbooks as guides often write unimaginative, unstylistic accompaniments. Such student-written accompaniments appear in an article by Sylvia Parker.¹¹ Parker describes an innovative approach to teaching students to write sonata forms. She asked students to select two melodies from *Music For Sight Singing* by Robert Ottman.¹² Students used one melody as the primary key area and the other as the secondary key

University Press, 2012), 72-78; Jane Clendinning and Elizabeth West Marvin, *The Musician's Guide to Theory and Analysis*, 2nd edition (New York: Norton, 2011), 167-169, 239-241, and 253-256; Greg Steinke and Paul Harder, *Harmonic Materials in Tonal Music, Part 1*, 10th edition (Upper Saddle River: Prentice-Hall, 2010), 357-368; and Ralph Turek, *Theory for Today's Musician* (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2007), 651-654. Leonard Ratner's textbook, *Harmony: Structure and Style* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962), which is long out of print, contains a chapter entitled "Varieties of Texture" (pp. 148-156) that illustrates many of the ideas about texture found in Ratner's more academic studies of the classic era in a format more accessible to students. Using examples from the works of Classic and Romantic era composers, Ratner shows various textures containing broken chords, repeated notes, ornamental notes, rhythmic punctuation, countermelody, and imitation. He also provides suggestions for maintaining correct voice-leading when writing accompaniments.

¹¹ Sylvia Parker, "Understanding Sonata Form Through Model Composition," *Journal of Music Theory Pedagogy* 20 (2006): 119-137.

¹² Parker used the 5th edition of this book, Robert Ottman, *Music for Sight Singing* (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 2001).

area, transposing them to the appropriate keys and adding keyboard accompaniment in a Classical style. Students then connected the melodies with a transition and added closing material to finish the exposition. Parker guided the students in writing accompaniments by using examples from Mozart's music and from the Roig-Francolí and the Henry and Rogers books, along with a few very general suggestions, such as putting strong notes (chord roots, for instance) on strong beats. Students were allowed to change accompanimental patterns during their sonata forms.

Example 3 shows sections of a sonata exposition written by one of Parker's students.¹³

¹³ Parker, "Understanding Sonata Form Through Model Composition," 126.

Example 3: Sonata Exposition written by student from Parker (2006).

The student provided an accompaniment that combines an arpeggio with Alberti bass for her primary key area, the beginning of the chorus "See, the conqu'ring hero comes!" from Handel's *Judas Maccabeus*. While perfectly acceptable given the assignment

instructions, the student's accompaniment does not evoke any particular historical style.¹⁴ Further, the low bass note on each downbeat is too prominent, interrupting the melodic flow, and would be difficult to play given the large jump preceding it. Also, the low B $\flat$ would be unusual in a Classic era composition. The student's accompaniment in her secondary key area, an adaptation of a melody from Mozart's *Serenade*, K. 203, is somewhat more stylistic in that it provides more variety, but still contains problems, discussed below. The closing material returns to the nondescript accompaniment pattern of the primary key area, temporarily enlivened by a chain of descending thirds in measure 26.

The secondary key area's accompaniment is quite problematic. Measures 18 and 19 of the secondary key area clearly belong together as a subphrase, while measure 20 starts something new. However, the accompaniment undermines the melodic organization. Measures 18 and 19 have different accompanimental patterns despite their melodic similarities, while the accompaniment in measure 20 returns to the pattern of measure 18 rather than changing to match the new melody. Further, the rests in the melody in measures 18 and 19 provide an opportunity for the accompaniment to fill in the silence with something more melodic. Mozart's original version, shown in Example 4, does just that. (This filler material is circled on the score.)

¹⁴ A problem arises with this type of assignment if a student selects a Baroque melody but attempts to write an accompaniment in a Classical style. Although the excerpt from "See, the conqu'ring hero comes!" functions conveniently as a contrasting period, many Baroque melodies suggest phrasing and harmonic rhythm that would be out of place in a Classical composition, thus hampering efforts to write an idiomatic Classic era accompaniment. Handel's accompaniment to "See, the conqu'ring hero comes" consists of a straightforward chorale-like texture. A typical Handelian walking bass also would fit well with this melody.

Example 4: Excerpt from Mozart's *Serenade*, K. 203, mm. 7–12, showing accompaniment.

The accompaniment in measures 18–20 is too low to sound clear, and there is too much space between the melody and accompaniment, particularly in measures 20–22. Octaves on the downbeats of measures 18–20 sound too empty. Finally, the steady eighth note rhythm of the student's accompaniment is too monotonous.

In contrast to accompaniments presented in harmony textbooks, actual Classic era accompaniments exhibit great richness and variety. Thus, any study of Classic era accompaniment should include an examination of solo keyboard and chamber works by Haydn, Mozart, and their contemporaries. Several studies of Classic era music mention aspects of keyboard accompaniment, and can act as excellent commentaries on works by these composers and others.¹⁵ Leonard Ratner's book *Classic Music: Expression, Form, and Style* includes many valuable insights on accompaniment. Ratner introduces the concept of topics: "materials which composers, performers, and listeners at that time associated with various moods, attitudes, and images."¹⁶ While Ratner specifically mentions only two types of keyboard accompaniment, Alberti bass and murky bass, "a bass in broken octaves" (p. 135), many types of accompaniments appear in his topics. Also, many of his non-

¹⁵ Classic era theorists and composers seem to have written little about accompaniment texture. Joel Lester, *Compositional Theory in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), which discusses eighteenth-century compositional treatises by Kirnberger, Koch, Riepel, and others, does not cite any discussions of accompaniment texture in these works. Mozart's well-known exercises for Thomas Attwood and Barbara Ployer consist mainly of two-part counterpoint, but also include several settings for string quartet. However, the string quartets offer few interesting accompanimental features. See "Thomas Attwoods Theorie- und Kompositionsstudien bei Mozart," in *W.A. Mozart Neue Ausgabe* X, 30, 1 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1965) and "Barbara Ployers Theorie- und Kompositionsstudien bei Mozart," in *W.A. Mozart Neue Ausgabe* X, 30, 2 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1989).

¹⁶ Ratner (1980), *Classic Music: Expression, Form, and Style*, 1. Another article, Leonard Ratner, "Topical Content in Mozart's Keyboard Sonatas," *Early Music* 19 (1991): 615–619, identifies topics in the exposition of the first movement of Mozart's Piano Sonata in D major, K. 284. Very clear examples of Classic era topics can be found in Elaine Sisman, "After the Heroic Style: Fantasia and the 'Characteristic' Sonatas of 1809," *Beethoven Forum* 6 (1998): 67–96. Sisman lists topics used by Beethoven in the Fantasy, op. 77 on p. 77 corresponding to musical examples on pages 72–75.

keyboard examples have accompaniment patterns that also appear in keyboard music. Ratner discusses dance types, military and hunt music, the singing style, the brilliant style, and many other styles that have typical accompanimental features. Ratner also includes several chapters that discuss basic concepts of texture in chamber music, orchestral music, and vocal music.

Example 5 shows two examples of Ratner's topics showing typical accompaniment patterns.

a. Hunting topic – Mozart Quintet, K. 614, I, mm. 1 - 4



b. *Empfindsamkeit* - Mozart Fantasia in D minor, K. 397, mm 12 -24



Example 5: Two examples of Classic era topics from Ratner (1980).

The fanfare from the first movement of Mozart's Quintet, K. 614, Example 5a, is accompanied by "horn fifths," mimicking hunting horns.¹⁷ The horn fifths are bracketed in the example. The opening of Mozart's Fantasia in D minor, K. 397, Example 5b, exhibits the sensibility style, also known as *empfindsamkeit*, a style used

frequently by C.P.E. Bach.¹⁸ Ratner writes that this style "has rapid changes in mood, broken figures, interrupted continuity, elaborate ornamentation, pregnant pauses, [and] shifting, uncertain, often dissonant harmony."¹⁹ Not all of these characteristics are present in the example, but several features give the flavor of this style. The sudden change from piano to forte dynamic in measure 16, the emphasized diminished seventh chords interrupted by rests in measures 16 and 17 (shown in boxes), the descending chromatic lines (also in boxes), and the highly dissonant non-chord tones on the downbeat of measure 22 (circled) are all common markers of *empfindsamkeit*. Mozart's accompaniment helps emphasize these features. The diminished seventh chords appear as block chords rather than arpeggios or some other figuration, which heightens their dissonant sound. The accompaniment to the descending chromatic melody in measure 18 alternates rhythmically with the melody so that each note of the chromatic line is more noticeable because the accompaniment rests as each melody note is struck. The following chromatic line, in measures 20 – 22, is brought out by octave doubling. In measure 22 the lack of rhythmic activity in the accompaniment allows the dissonant A and D# to be heard. Finally, much of the accompaniment is in a high register, reinforcing the unstable nature of much of this passage. A listener would expect an accompaniment to appear in a lower register, and an expectation of a future registral descent amplifies the feeling of instability.

Mark Radice examines eighteenth-century keyboard works written in the *styl galant*, or galant style. Radice limits his study to those works containing the word "galant" in the title. Thus, his study encompasses a limited repertoire, written for amateurs primarily between 1735 and 1770. As a result, familiar later composers such as Mozart and Haydn are omitted. Radice lists a number of features of this repertoire, including four types of accompaniment patterns: parallel thirds and sixths; murky bass; moving bass line; and trommelbass ("drum bass"): "a drone adapted to a keyboard instrument other than organ," distinguished from a true drone because it consists of a repeated pitch, often in eighth notes, rather than a long held out note.²⁰

¹⁸ Ibid., 22.

¹⁹ Ibid., 22.

²⁰ Mark Radice, "The Nature of the 'Style Galant': Evidence from the Repertoire," *The Musical Quarterly* 83/4 (1999): 635.

¹⁷ Ratner, *Classic Music: Expression, Form, Style*, 18.

Example 6 shows a murky bass, a moving bass line, and a trommelbass.²¹

murky bass

Haydn, Piano Sonata H. XVI: 35, III, mm. 54 – 59

moving bass line

Mozart, Piano Sonata K. 333, III, mm. 1 – 7

Allegretto grazioso.

trommelbass – “drum bass”

Mozart, Piano Sonata K. 284, I, mm. 6 - 13

Example 6: Examples of a murky bass, a moving bass line, and a trommelbass, each enclosed in a box.

²¹ According to Czeslaw Halski, the origin of the term “murky bass” is obscure. Halski suggests that the name may have come from the Polish village of Murcki, in which eighteenth-century villagers played bass string instruments on which the murky bass is idiomatic. He also notes that the Polish word “murek” (plural “murki”) describes a muttering man, and the Polish word “murkot” means a growl. Either of those words could have been used to describe the sound of the murky bass, and thus could have given the murky bass its name. See Czeslaw Halski, “Murky: A Polish Musical Freak,” *Music & Letters* 39/1 (1958): 35-37.

A more comprehensive list of Classic era accompaniment types, with musical examples, appears below as Example 9.

Four authors relate types of texture to specific locations in Classic era compositions. Instructors can use these articles, or the information therein, in creating longer composition assignments. The articles discussed below complement the works of Ratner and Radice nicely. While Ratner and Radice discuss settings of individual melodies, Frank Lorince, William Caplin, Janet Levy, and Paul van Reijen discuss how accompaniment interacts with form.²²

Frank Lorince, in a comprehensive study of texture in Classic era keyboard music, examines aspects of melody, counterpoint, dynamics, and register in addition to accompaniment. He lists the following types of accompaniments: block chords, arpeggios, pedal tones, trills, parallel thirds and sixths, and moving bass line. Lorince limits his investigation to compositions in sonata form in order to determine to what extent a melody retains the same texture (including accompaniment) upon its subsequent appearances. He concludes “It is clear ... that each musical idea within a work characteristically has a textural identity. The consistent practice is to reserve the textural setting, which originally occurs with a theme for use with subsequent entries of that material. Definition of form is therefore achieved not only through melodic-rhythmic-tonal relationships, but through the handling of textural elements as well.”²³ Lorince’s observation about textural identity is useful for any sort of extended composition assignment, and his musical examples amply illustrate textural identity in many works by C.P.E. Bach, Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven.

William Caplin observes that changes in texture occur at boundaries between events, and at beginnings of new events. At

²² Frank Lorince, *A Study of Musical Texture in Relation to Sonata-Form as Evidenced in Selected Keyboard Sonatas from C.P.E. Bach Through Beethoven* (Ph.D.dissertation, Eastman School of Music, 1966); Caplin, *Classical Form: A Theory of Formal Functions for the Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven*; Janet Levy, “Texture as a Sign in Classic and Early Romantic Music,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 35/3 (1982): 482-531; Paul van Reijen, “Zur Klassifizierung und Position der Murkybässe in den Klavier-sonaten von Haydn, Mozart, und Beethoven” in *Konzepte der Musikwissenschaft*, Vol. 2, edited by Kathrin Eberl and Wolfgang Ruf, 411-420 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2000).

²³ Lorince, *A Study of Musical Texture in Relation to Sonata-Form as Evidenced in Selected Keyboard Sonatas from C.P.E. Bach Through Beethoven*, i.

the phrase level, changes in accompaniment are used to create contrast between phrases. At an even lower level, accompaniments frequently change in the middle of a period's consequent phrase. That is often the place in a parallel period where the consequent phrase departs melodically from the antecedent phrase, and this location also begins the approach to the period's cadence. The change in accompaniment thus alerts the listener to both the change in melody and the upcoming cadence. Example 7 shows such an example, an eight-measure parallel period by Mozart from the opening of the third movement of the Piano Sonata in B $\flat$ major, K. 570, that features a change in accompaniment in measure 7, in the consequent phrase.

Example 7: Parallel period by Mozart showing change in accompaniment in measure 7. Piano Sonata in B $\flat$ major, K. 570, III, mm. 1 - 8

Measures 5 and 6 repeat measures 1 and 2, but the melody in measure 7 is new, underscored by the change in accompaniment. Further, Caplin lists locations at which texture tends to be thinned: the ends of the transition and development in sonata form, and the end of the middle section of a ternary form.

Janet Levy, in a much broader article, explores how texture interacts with other aspects of the music. She writes, "it is possible to explore certain aspects of texture's role in the syntax of particular movements, and, especially, its capacity to function as a sign — both for where we are in the piece and for what may or may not happen next."²⁴ Example 8 reproduces Levy's Example 2, a sentence form

from the beginning of an anonymous sonatina movement that may have been written by Beethoven.

Example 8: Example from Levy (1982)
Beethoven, Sonatina in G, Anh. 5 no. 1, mm. 1 - 8 (sentence)

Levy describes how its accompaniment signals an increase in stability as the eight-measure unit progresses from two-measure phrases to its final four-measure phrase.

The change [in a sentence] from an unfigured homophonic accompaniment (mm. 1 – 4) to a conventional Alberti bass pattern (m. 5) is an instantaneous instruction to perform and/or to take in what follows as a more fully formed statement than what we have heard so far. The beginning of the accompaniment pattern makes it highly probable that motion will coalesce into a longer unit of musical action; and so it does. The sign value of the beginning of the accompaniment is particularly evident here since the melody in measure 5 is identical with that in measure 1. Because of the cues for stability given by the appearance of the Alberti bass, we understand the nature of the passage the moment it begins (beats 1 and 2), even before we hear the harmonic motion to V7/IV [in measure 5]. Moreover, the beginning of a regular accompaniment pattern cues us to what we will *not* hear. The passage is not likely to be the beginning of a transition, for example, or even of a phrase-group that is complementary to the first, with two-measure units matching measures 1-2 and 3-4.²⁵

²⁴ Levy, "Texture as a Sign in Classic and Early Romantic Music," 529.

²⁵ Ibid., 489-490, italics Levy's.

Levy's description focuses on what accompaniment communicates. In the musical example, the accompaniment tells the listener about such features as the function of the passage (stable passage versus transition) and the grouping of measures. Thus, an effective use of texture should strive to reinforce such musical features rather than contradict them.

Van Reijen's study takes an opposite approach to those of Lorince, Caplin, and Levy. Those three authors present broad studies of accompaniment and form, and sometimes subsume accompaniment under the larger category of texture. In contrast, van Reijen traces just one accompaniment type, murky bass (a bass in broken octaves), through several Classic era sonata form compositions to discover where it is used. He observes that murky bass is most commonly found in the secondary key area of a sonata form, sometimes in developments, and less often in other locations. Any use of murky bass in a student composition should conform to van Reijen's observations.

The above authors mention many different accompaniment types and comment on their use including their affect on the listener (when used in various topics), their ability to communicate the music's structure, their interaction with melody, and their most common locations. Example 9 compiles all of this information in one list. The list includes the name of the accompaniment, a brief description if necessary, and a short musical example. Within each musical example the specific accompaniment type is enclosed in a box.

1. Alberti bass

Mozart, Piano Sonata K. 545, II, mm. 1 - 3



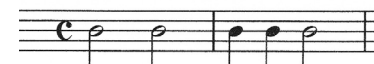
2. accented offbeats – common in agitato style

Haydn, Piano Sonata H. XVI: 49, I, mm. 193 – 201



Example 9: List of Classic era keyboard accompaniment types.

3. *alla turca* – characteristic rhythm:



Mozart, Piano Sonata K. 331, III ("Alla Turca"), mm. 25 – 29



4. *alla zoppa* ("limping") – characteristic rhythm:



Haydn, Piano Trio H. XV:25, III ("Rondo all'Ongarese"), mm. 130 – 135



5. bass and afterbeat

Mozart, Piano Sonata K. 332, II, mm. 19 – 26



6. chordal arpeggios

Mozart, Piano Sonata K. 545, I, mm. 10 – 13



Example 9 (continued): List of Classic era keyboard accompaniment types.

7. chromatic stepwise bass – fantasia style, ombra (supernatural) style

Mozart, Fantasia K. 397, mm. 17 – 24

**8. counter melody**

Mozart, Piano Sonata K. 333, I, mm. 59 – 63

**9. counterpoint** – strict style, learned style (church)Haydn, Piano Sonata H. XVI: 37, I, mm. 45 – 50
chain of suspensions – fourth species

Example 9 (continued) : List of Classic era keyboard accompaniment types.

10. drone on a single note or open fifth/pedal tone – musette or pastoralHaydn, “A Pastoral Song” from *VI Original Canzonettas*, H. XXVla: 27, mm. 1 – 4**11. horn fifths** – hunting style

Mozart, Piano Sonata K. 332, I, mm. 10 – 18

**12. imitation**

Mozart, Piano Sonata K. 545, III, mm. 1 – 4

**13. moving bass line**

Mozart, Piano Sonata K. 333, III, mm. 1 – 7

**14. murky bass** – broken octaves – rustic style; in sonata form, secondary key area or less often development

Haydn, Piano Sonata H. XVI: 35, III, mm. 54 – 59



Example 9 (continued) : List of Classic era keyboard accompaniment types.

15. ornamental notes such as trills

Mozart, Piano Sonata K. 281, III, mm. 117 – 123

**16. parallel thirds and sixths**Mozart, Piano Sonata K. 331, I, mm. 1 – 6
bass creates parallel thirds with melody

Andante grazioso.

**17. punctuating bass – accents on strong beats – Italian style**

Mozart, Piano Sonata K. 332, I, mm. 60 – 66

**18. rapid passages – brilliant style**

Mozart, Piano Sonata K. 310, mm. 43 – 49



Example 9 (continued) : List of Classic era keyboard accompaniment types.

19. reinforcement of melody (octave doubling) – Italian style

Mozart, Piano Sonata K. 309, mm. 1 – 5

**20. repeated block chords**

Mozart, Piano Sonata K. 310, I, mm. 1 – 4

Allegro maestoso.

**21. repeated broken chords – singing allegro style; Italian style**

Haydn, Piano Sonata H. XVI: 52, I, mm. 4 – 9



Example 9 (continued) : List of Classic era keyboard accompaniment types.

22. repeated notes (trommelbass – “drum bass”) – singing allegro style

Mozart, Piano Sonata K. 284, I, mm. 6 - 13

**23. rhythmic punctuation – accompaniment plays in melody's rests**

Mozart, Piano Sonata K. 331, I, mm. 19 – 22

**24. true bass – bass line in quarter notes separated by quarter rests, changes with harmonies**

Mozart, Piano Sonata K. 331, I, mm. 128 - 134



Example 9 (continued) : List of Classic era keyboard accompaniment types.

The twenty-four accompaniment types listed show the breadth and diversity of Classic era keyboard accompaniment patterns found in actual music, rather than the three or four types found in many undergraduate textbooks. A student could craft an idiomatic Classic era composition by choosing accompanimental patterns from this list.

Several aspects of this list deserve comment. Some of the accompaniment types are fairly generic, and can be found in many different styles of music. Bass and afterbeat, chordal arpeggios, countermelody, counterpoint, imitation, and parallel thirds and sixths, for example, are not specific to the Classic style. Other accompaniment types, in contrast, are found rarely in other styles of music. Alberti bass and the *alla turca* rhythm are emblematic of Classic era music. A composition that includes them would sound more stylistic than one that merely employs chordal arpeggios, for example.

Various characteristics of accompaniment types suggest their suitability for certain types of melodies. Or, given a particular melody, an accompaniment can be selected on the basis of how it interacts with that melody. Some accompaniment types, notably *alla turca* and *alla zoppa*, are rhythmic patterns, and melodies they accompany should not have rhythms that conflict with them. The *alla turca* rhythm often appears in the melody itself; Mozart's well-known rondo "Alla Turca" from the Piano Sonata K. 331 is a good example. Rhythmic punctuation, in which the accompaniment sounds only during the melody's rests, requires particular care in its use so that the melody and accompaniment can dovetail properly. If a student wishes to use rhythmic punctuation, it is often best for the student to write melody and accompaniment at the same time. In contrast, some accompaniment types are primarily harmonic, such as chordal arpeggios and repeated block or broken chords, and some are melodic, such as countermelody, counterpoint, moving bass line, parallel thirds and sixths, and reinforcement of melody (octave doubling). Harmonic accompaniments can be paired with simple rhythms and thus are good choices for rhythmically complicated melodies, and for melodies with running sixteenth notes or other short rhythmic values. Melodic accompaniments either emphasize the melody, a good choice for a climactic moment, or provide strong contrast to it, perhaps appropriate for developmental passages. Finally, some accompaniment types combine pitch and rhythmic patterns, such as Alberti bass, bass and afterbeat, and murky bass.

Certain accompaniment types are appropriate for some styles but not others. The chromatic stepwise bass suggests either a fantasia or the supernatural, and would be out of place accompanying a pastoral melody, for example. A contrapuntal accompaniment consisting of simultaneous independent melodic lines works best for liturgical music, a drone for a musette or a pastoral style, horn fifths for hunting music, and so forth. Students should consider the stylistic implications of a melody in order to choose an appropriate accompaniment.

Accompaniment types on this list are not mutually exclusive. One could combine two or more to craft a stylistic accompaniment. Some accompaniment types combine better than others. For example, one good choice is to combine an accompaniment type that is primarily rhythmic with one based primarily on pitch. The beginning of Mozart's Piano Sonata in C Major, K. 545, shown as Example 10a, illustrates one such instance.

a) Piano Sonata in C Major, K. 545, I, mm. 1 – 24 (primary and secondary key areas)

Allegro.

Example 10: Excerpts from Mozart's piano sonatas with accompaniment types identified

b) Piano Sonata in B $\flat$ Major, K. 333, I, mm. 59 – 63 (closing material)

c) Piano Sonata in A Major, K. 331, I, mm. 19 – 22

Var. I.

Example 10: (continued) Excerpts from Mozart's piano sonatas with accompaniment types identified

The passage from measures 18 to 21 of the excerpt uses three simultaneous accompaniment patterns: rhythmic punctuation (rhythmic), in which the accompaniment is active (sixteenth notes) during the melody's quarter notes and rests; chordal arpeggios (harmonic); and rhythmic imitation, which describes the interaction of melody and accompaniment.

How does one present this material to students? I provided students in my third-semester theory course with excerpts from three Mozart piano sonatas, shown in Example 10. Beneath each staff, I bracketed and numbered different types of accompaniment. Note that in the excerpt from K. 545, Example 10a, eight distinct accompaniment patterns occur in twenty-four measures, in contrast to the single type often found in textbook examples. Example 11, which I also gave students, shows my explanation of accompaniment types found in Example 10. Numbers that identify accompaniment types in Example 10 correspond to descriptions of accompaniments in Example 11 in the same order (bracketed accompaniment 1 in Example 10 is explained by description 1 in Example 11, etc.). Example 11 also contains suggestions for use of accompaniments, which I will discuss below.

Types of accompaniment textures (including but not limited to these!):

1. Alberti bass – Named after Domenico Alberti (1710-1746), Italian composer, harpsichordist, and singer, who frequently used this type of accompaniment. Alberti bass is an arpeggiated chord: low – high – middle – high. Treat this as a compound melody – each note is a voice, connected to a similar note in the next chord (for example, connect all lows, all middles, all highs). Follow all rules for voice-leading (resolving tendency tones, etc.). Use as 8th notes or 16th notes, never quarters. This is the default accompaniment for the Classic era; when in doubt, use Alberti bass.
2. “get out of the way” accompaniment – use when you have a complicated melody, or you want to emphasize the melody
3. bass line – especially used at a cadence, often quarter notes
4. arpeggio – most often low to high – 8th notes or 16th notes, never quarters
5. countermelody – often a moving line, or a moving line alternating with a recurring note – 8th notes or 16th notes
6. rhythmic alternation – accompaniment alternates with melody, also called countertime or complementary rhythm
7. repeated block chords – use sparingly, otherwise your composition will sound too heavy
8. rhythmic punctuation – accompaniment plays in melody’s rests
9. imitation – use sparingly, avoid Baroque textures such as fugal writing or excessive counterpoint
10. parallel 3rd and 6^{ths} with melody – don’t overuse!

Suggestions for use:

- Use several different types, not just one or two. Try not to have more than four measures with the same type, and occasionally change more frequently than that (but no more than two types per measure). You can use accompaniment types in any combination.
- Change on strong beats only.
- Include some cadences with rests.
- Add passing tones, neighbor tones, and other non-chord tones, as needed. Some can be chromatic, but don’t obscure the harmony!
- When in doubt, keep the texture thin; thick textures in the left hand tend to imply multiple voices and often create voice-leading problems, and also make your composition sound too heavy.
- Harmonic rhythm should be supported (not contradicted) by the accompaniment.

Example 11: Explanations of accompaniment types identified in Example 10 with guidelines for their use

The excerpt from K. 545, Example 10a, begins with an Alberti bass, probably the most stereotypical Classic era accompaniment. Because it is ubiquitous in Classic era keyboard compositions, I suggest students use it as a “default” when imitating the Classic style. One difficulty in writing Alberti bass is that each note in each arpeggiated chord usually acts as a contrapuntal voice and therefore must follow conventional voice-leading rules. K. 545 offers excellent examples of proper Alberti bass voice-leading. F, the seventh of the V4/3 chord at the beginning of measure 2, appears in the Alberti

bass’s middle voice. The F then resolves correctly to the middle voice E in the second half of measure 2, shown in the example by an arrow. Likewise, the leading tone B in the lowest voice at the beginning of measure 4 resolves to the tonic in the lowest voice in the second half of measure 4, also shown by an arrow.

Mozart proceeds in measure 5 to what I call the “get out of the way” texture, in which the accompaniment is reduced so that it does not interfere with a florid passage in the melody. A rhythmically complicated accompaniment might have produced a texture that would have obscured the busy sixteenth-note rhythms in the melody. Instead, slower rhythmic values balance and complement faster ones. Mozart slows activity in the accompaniment two ways here: by using rests, and then by writing a whole note. (Mozart also slows the harmonic rhythm during this passage.) Alternately, a “get out of the way” accompaniment can be used to provide greater emphasis on the melody. A limited accompaniment (again possibly containing rests or sustained notes) competes less with a melody for the listener’s attention.

Measures 10 and 12 contain a moving bass line, often written (although not here) in quarter notes. (A more typical example appears at the end of the excerpt from K. 333, Example 10b.) Moving bass lines appear frequently at cadences, assisting the melody in driving towards a goal. Measure 11 of Example 10a interrupts with a new accompaniment pattern, chordal arpeggios, delaying the cadence and extending the phrase. The arpeggios are written in a typical manner — low to high using sixteenth notes. Sixteenth and eighth note chordal arpeggios are common, while the use of other rhythmic values is rare. Arpeggios moving instead from high notes to low notes appear more commonly in nineteenth-century music (for example Brahms’s *Intermezzo* in B minor, op. 119, no. 1) and also are rare in the Classic era.

Measures 13 – 17 present a somewhat disguised countermelody. Notes of the countermelody alternate with a recurring D. The countermelody notes are more prominent in measures 15 and 17 during the melody’s rests (for example, the moving line C B A B C B C A in measure 15), providing interest while the melody is absent. The excerpt from K. 333, Example 10b, shows a clearer example of a countermelody in the left hand in measures 59-61. There is only one measure, measure 60, in which the countermelody notes alternate with a recurring note (F).

Measures 18 – 21 of K. 545 contain a combination of accompaniment types commented on above. Repeated chords (in this case the third and fifth of the chord arpeggiated by the melody) appear in measures 22 and 23 in the left hand. This type of accompaniment is less interesting than many of the others, and I advise students to use it sparingly. Perhaps Mozart chooses it here to emphasize the slowing of the harmonic rhythm approaching the arrival on the tonic of the sonata form's secondary key area in measure 26 (not shown in the example), which ends the secondary key area and begins the closing material.

I also wanted students to see an example of rhythmic punctuation, in which a rest in the melody is filled in by the accompaniment. This pattern does not occur clearly in K. 545 (the melody and accompaniment overlap during the rhythmic alternation in measures 18 – 21), so I added another excerpt, shown as Example 10c. The beginning of the first variation of K. 331's first movement displays a straightforward use of rhythmic punctuation. In measures 19 – 21 the accompaniment sounds only during the melody's rests.

In addition to its descriptions of accompaniments shown in Example 10, Example 11 contains several suggestions for accompaniment use. Students were encouraged to use several different accompaniment types and to change types at least every four measures. However, too frequent changes are as unstylistic as changes that are not frequent enough, so students were given a limit of no more than two accompaniment types per measure. Further, changes in accompaniment should reinforce the meter, so I instructed students to change accompaniments only on strong beats. The remaining instructions remind students that rests in the accompaniment are acceptable (students whose theoretical training primarily consists of writing in four-part chorale texture are often reluctant to use rests in freer textures), suggest the use of non-chord tones in the accompaniment, and warn students of the problems that arise from too-thick accompaniment textures.

A helpful exercise for students would be to ask them to identify types of accompaniments in a Classic era keyboard work in the manner of Example 10 and then discuss why a certain accompaniment is appropriate for a particular melody or location in the work. This exercise could help prepare students to choose accompaniment types and then write accompaniments of their own.

Classic era keyboard music contains typical melodic and rhythmic patterns at cadences, and in order to imitate the Classic style students must learn to write those cadential patterns.

Therefore, I taught students to write what I call a “Mozart cadence” – a weak cadence with double or triple non-chord tones, either appoggiaturas, accented passing tones, suspensions, retardations, or some combination.²⁶ Example 12 shows three such cadences, each enclosed in a box.

a) Mozart, Piano Sonata in D major, K. 576, I, mm. 1 - 10

b) Mozart, Variations on “Dieu d’amour,” K. 352, mm. 1 - 10

c) Beethoven, Piano Sonata in B♭ major, op. 22, III, mm. 1 - 4

Example 12: “Mozart cadences”

²⁶ The eighteenth-century theorist Heinrich Koch called this type of cadence an “overhang.” See Heinrich Koch, *Introductory Essay on Composition: The Mechanical Rules of Melody, Sections 3 and 4*, translated by Nancy Kovaleff Baker (New Haven: Yale University Press: 1983), 24.

(See also the last measure of the excerpt from Mozart's K. 333 shown in Example 10a.) Examples 12a and 12b contain perfect authentic cadences, one approached from above, one from below. Example 12c contains a half cadence. About this sort of cadence Ratner writes "The qualities in classic harmony that enabled the appoggiatura to play a prominent role also led to another striking treatment of dissonance – the *simultaneous sounding of two harmonies*. ... The double or triple appoggiatura is generally found at a cadence to emphasize the arrival effect, and thus it serves a rhetorical and expressive purpose."²⁷

I gave my third-semester theory students the assignment of writing a sonata form exposition for piano, with appropriate Classic era accompaniment. My students had studied species counterpoint, four-part writing with diatonic and secondary chords, harmonic sequences, and modulation to closely related keys during their first two semesters of theory study, and also completed a short unit on Baroque counterpoint. Harmonic topics in the third semester included augmented sixth chords and the Neapolitan chord, which were required to appear in the sonata exposition assignment.

The first half of the third semester was devoted to preparing students for the sonata assignment by gradually shifting from four-part to freer accompanimental textures. Along the way students examined sentences and periods by Classic era composers noting typical harmonic choices before beginning to compose their own sentences and periods. Sample assignments included writing a melody in sentence or period form and harmonizing it with Roman numerals, and harmonizing a pre-existing melody with Roman numerals and later an appropriate accompaniment.²⁸ These

²⁷Ratner, *Classic Music: Expression, Form, Style*, 64, italics Ratner's. For more information on Classic era cadences see William Caplin, "The Classical Cadence: Conceptions and Misconceptions," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 57 (2004): 51-117, and Robert Gjerdingen, *Music in the Galant Style* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). Gjerdingen's book in particular could be useful in pedagogy. Gjerdingen shows stereotypical schema (scale degree patterns) in the works of many Classic era composers. These schema could be used by students to craft stylistically appropriate compositions. His chapter 11 (pages 139-176) discusses schema appearing at cadences. Several of his musical examples therein contain a "Mozart cadence," especially Example 11.9 on page 145.

²⁸Other possible exercises include writing a melody over a given chord progression; writing a composition following a diagram that could include information about phrases, cadences, and keys; and writing modulating passages given starting and ending keys.

assignments allowed us to visit other topics such as harmonic rhythm, phrase rhythm and hypermeter, and motivic connections. Finally, students analyzed keyboard sonata form movements by Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven.

I taught my students to write what Caplin would call "tight knit" melodies. Caplin defines "tight knit" as "a formal organization characterized by the use of conventional theme-types, harmonic-tonal stability, a symmetrical grouping structure, form-functional efficiency, and a unity of melodic-motivic material."²⁹ Since I wanted my students to imitate the most typical aspects of Classic era music, we studied and wrote primarily tight-knit melodies, which have more in common with each other than do their opposites, "loose" melodies. Most of the Classic era excerpts in this article are tight knit.

Example 13 shows my composition assignment, which was due at midterm.

²⁹Caplin, *Classical Form: A Theory of Formal Functions for the Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven*, 257.

Write the exposition only of a sonata form for keyboard in the Classic era style. Choose either any major key (in which case you will modulate to V) or any minor key (modulate to III). Do not choose keys with lots of sharps or flats. Classic era composers usually avoided these keys.

Your sonata exposition should look like this:

Meter – 4
4

Primary key area – sentence or parallel period, eight measures long, ending with a perfect authentic cadence (PAC). Melodies in the primary key area are often strong or forceful, at least compared to melodies in the secondary key area.

Transition – dependent, at least eight measures long, ending with a medial caesura.

Medial caesura – should be a half cadence in the new key. The half cadence's V chord must be preceded by an augmented sixth chord (any type).

Secondary key area – sentence or parallel period, eight measures long ending with a PAC, but not the same form as the primary key area. (In other words, if your primary key area is a sentence, your secondary key area must be a parallel period; if your primary key area is a parallel period, your secondary key area must be a sentence.) Melodies in the secondary key area are often song-like or graceful, at least compared to primary key area melodies. Make sure your secondary key area provides some melodic contrast to your primary key area. You may, however, want to include the same rhythmic or pitch motives in both areas.

Closing material – at least eight measures long ending with a PAC in the new key.

All cadences except the medial caesura must be typical Classic era cadences ("Mozart cadences").

Also, if you choose to write a sonata exposition in minor, you must use a Neapolitan chord somewhere in your primary key area or transition.

Deadlines:

Friday, 10/15 – primary and secondary key areas due, with accompaniment

Wednesday, 10/20 – primary and secondary key areas returned to you

Friday, 10/22 – Thursday, 10/28 – Individual meetings with instructor. Please have as much finished as you can before the meeting.

Friday, 10/29 – composition due

which would have made the composition too short, and because many of the works we had studied were in 4/4. Students were required to write both a sentence and a period, one in the primary key area and one in the secondary key area. (Students could choose which key area contained which form although the more dramatic nature of the sentence is a better fit with the primary key area, while the more flowing period works best in the secondary key area.) The transition, which was required to be at least eight measures long, had to end with a medial caesura on a half cadence in the key of the secondary key area preceded by any type of augmented sixth chord. The closing area was also required to be at least eight measures long, and end with a PAC in the new key. Additionally, I required all cadences except the medial caesura to be "Mozart cadences," described above, and all sonata expositions in minor to contain a Neapolitan chord.

Example 14 shows a sonata exposition diagram that could be given to students to supplement written instructions.

Example 13: Sonata exposition composition assignment

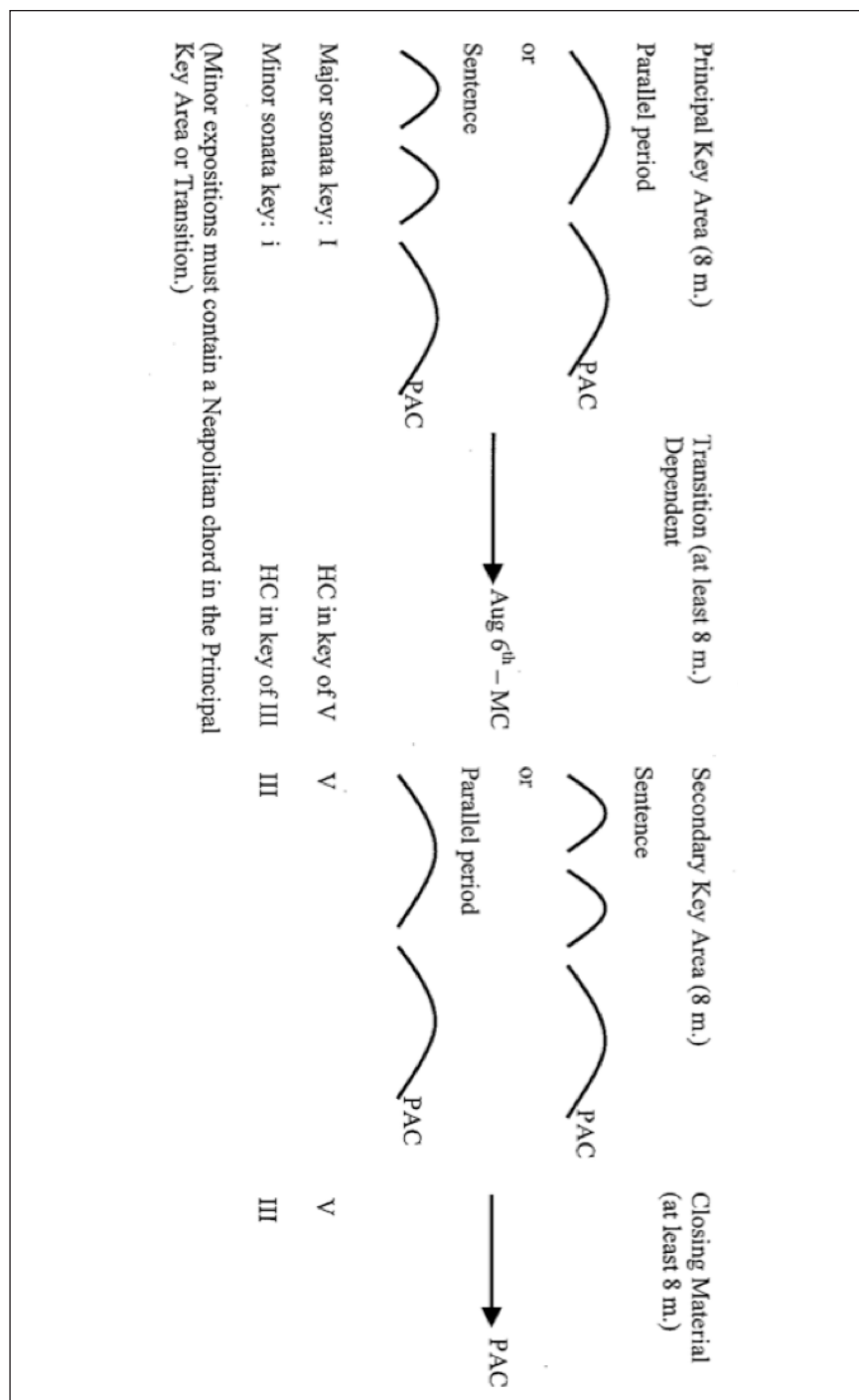
Students could choose either a major key (in which case their composition would modulate to V) or a minor key (modulation to III). In either case they were instructed to choose a key with few sharps or flats, keys commonly found in Classic era compositions. I specified 4/4 meter to prevent students from choosing 2/4 meter,

The diagram contains all the information in the assignment shown in Example 13 in a visual format. Parts of the sonata form, phrases, lengths in number of measures, keys, and cadences are all shown.

The assignment was due in two stages. The primary and secondary key areas (the sentence and period) were due first. I suggested changes to these portions of the assignment and returned them to the students. The entire assignment was due two weeks later. Approximately one week before the assignment was due I met with each student individually (I had a small class of nineteen students) to look over as much of the exposition as they could finish and to offer assistance as needed. Additionally, students completed a listening assignment to ensure that they were as familiar as possible with Classic era keyboard compositions. Students listened to the first movements of Haydn's Piano Sonata in A major, H. XVI:26, Mozart's piano sonatas K. 332, K. 333, and K. 545, Beethoven's piano sonatas op. 2 no. 1 and op. 13, and the first and last movements of Mozart's Symphony no. 41, "Jupiter." A few days before the composition was due students turned in a brief written description of each work they had heard.

My sonata exposition assignment was designed for liberal arts students, many of whom were enrolled in a B.A. program in music. A few of my students were pursuing a minor in music, and a few were taking music theory as an elective. Most were sophomores. This assignment could be adapted easily for other student populations. Bachelor of music students could be required to perform their own compositions (my students were not), non-keyboardists perhaps writing for their own instrument or voice with piano accompaniment. Composition majors or more advanced students could write an entire sonata form. Students with less preparation could be provided with pre-existing melodies, and could be instructed to harmonize and devise accompaniments for those melodies in the manner of the assignment created by Sylvia Parker, described above.

The following examples show successful excerpts by my students taken from their sonata exposition assignments. Example 15 shows two student themes, both from the secondary key area.



Example 14: Sonata exposition layout

a) Student 1, secondary key area, measures 17-24 - parallel period

b) Student 2, secondary key area, measures 17-24 - sentence

Example 15: Two student themes

Example 15a, written by Student 1, a trombonist and pianist, is a parallel period. Its first phrase ends with a half cadence, while the second phrase begins like the first, departs at the end of measure 6, and finishes with a perfect authentic cadence. Student 1's theme is accompanied by Alberti bass followed by a moving bass line at both cadences. Note the "Mozart cadence" in measure 8. Example 15b, written by Student 2, a pianist, displays a typical sentence construction: a two-measure idea (measures 1 and 2) answered in measures 3 and 4, followed by a four-measure continuation phrase and a cadence. Of interest here are the accompanimental scales filling in the melody's rests in measures 2 and 4, and the "Mozart cadence" at the end.

The next examples (16 – 19) show further excerpts from

three student sonata projects that contain a greater variety of accompaniments than those shown in Example 15. Example 16 shows a theme from the primary key area in sentence form, written by Student 3, a pianist.

Example 16: Student 3, primary key area, measures 1 – 8, with accompaniment types identified

I have bracketed portions of his accompaniment and labeled each bracket with the number of the accompaniment type from Example 11, the list of accompaniment types that students used in writing this assignment. Student 3 relies mostly on type 7, repeated chords, type 10, intervals of thirds/sixths, and a bass and afterbeat pattern not listed in Example 11. Even those limited accompaniment patterns produce an idiomatic Classic era piano texture. Student 3's changes in accompaniment are particularly effective, as they help delineate the motivic structure and form. The parallel thirds and sixths at the beginning of measures 2 and 4 reinforce the eighth-note melodic figure they accompany, an excellent choice since this eighth-note motive returns as the primary material of the continuation phrase, measures 5 – 8. (However, Student 3 should have resolved measure 3's bass leading tone in measure 4.) The change in measure 5 to type 6, rhythmic alternation, announces the beginning of the continuation phrase, separating it from the two subphrases in measures 1 - 4. Rhythmic alternation also complements the melody nicely in measure 5. Student 3's final cadence is underscored by an appropriate accompaniment, type 3, a bass line. An additional interesting feature of this composition is the stepwise rising melodic line G – A – B in measures 1 – 4, which is answered by the stepwise

descent from E to G in measures 5 – 8.

Example 17 shows a theme from the secondary key area written by Student 4, a violinist.³⁰

Example 17: Student 4, secondary key area, measures 21-28, with accompaniment types identified

This theme displays a greater variety and more skilled use of accompaniment types, also bracketed and numbered. The theme is a parallel period, and its antecedent phrase, measures 21-24, contains four different accompaniments: type 1, Alberti bass; type 7, repeated chords; type 4, arpeggio; and type 3, bass line. The antecedent phrase is itself a sentence, with a one-measure subphrase, measure 21, that is varied in measure 22 and continued in measures 23 and 24. This phrase displays a sophisticated interaction of melody and accompaniment. The left hand imitates the right hand's group of four eighth notes in measures 21 and 22. Further, the two consecutive rhythmic motives in the melody in measure 21 – four eighth notes followed by a dotted note – appear simultaneously as melody and accompaniment in measure 23.

Student 4's consequent phrase also contains interesting features. Measures 21 and 22 return as measures 25 and 26. Measure 27, the point at which the consequent phrase departs melodically and harmonically from the antecedent phrase, is emphasized by the introduction of a new accompaniment pattern. This feature of antecedent phrases is noted by William Caplin, as described above. The new pattern is type 2, what I call the "get out of the

³⁰ The pitch content of Student 4's melody is reminiscent of that of the first eight measures of the first movement of Mozart's Piano Sonata in A major, K. 331.

way" accompaniment, which lightens the texture giving more prominence to the new idea in the melody. The period ends with a "Mozart cadence" accompanied by type 3, the bass line.

Despite skilled accompanimental writing, there are a few small problems in Student 4's theme. The right hand of measure 22 is a sequence of the right hand in measure 21, and the left hand should be in sequence as well. The accompaniment in measure 22 should have started with Alberti bass rather than an arpeggio to mimic the accompaniment of measure 21. In measure 24, the D in the bass on beat 2 arrives too early since the change to dominant harmony does not occur until beat 3. G or C would have been a better bass note there. The melody in measure 27, a straightforward arpeggiation of tonic and dominant harmonies, is not interesting or florid enough to merit its "get out of the way" accompaniment. The final cadence would benefit by the addition of a middle C to the first chord in measure 28. Despite these small errors, though, this composition is an excellent example of the Classic era style, in part due to its fluent use of idiomatic accompaniment patterns.

Example 18 shows a theme from the primary key area written by Student 5, a percussionist.

Example 18: Student 5, primary key area, measures 1-8, with accompaniment types identified

It shares some features with Student 4's theme: it is also a parallel period, and its first four measures are a sentence. Student 5 also uses a wide variety of accompaniment types, and even combines them. Measures 1 and 2 begin with type 7, block chords, and then switch to a combination of type 4, arpeggio, and type 6, rhythmic alternation, an imitation of the melody's rhythm in the first half of both measures. A particularly nice feature in measures 1 and 2 is the bass passing tone, the last eighth note in each measure, which smoothly connects to the bass of the next chord. (Also the accented chromatic passing tones in the melody in measures 1 and 2 provide additional interest.) Measure 3 contains block chords and then the "get out of the way" texture, used to avoid any conflict with the busy sixteenth-note melody. Measure 4 contains type 5, a countermelody, whose rhythm refers to that of the melody in the previous measure. Block chords follow at the cadence rather than the more typical bass line. Since this phrase is a parallel period, measures 1 and 2 are repeated as measure 5 and 6. As Student 4 also did, Student 5 changes the texture dramatically in measure 7, where the consequent phrase departs from the antecedent phrase. Student 5 also chooses type 2, the "get out of the way" texture, to emphasize the new melodic idea. Student 5 then cadences with type 7, block chords, followed by a combination of type 4, arpeggio, and type 6, rhythmic alternation, reminiscent of the accompaniment in measures 1 and 2. Despite errors in the melodic writing in measure 3 (the harmonies implied by the melody don't match those of the accompaniment) and the absence of "Mozart cadences," overall this is a successful theme due to its skilled handling of accompaniment patterns.

I will conclude by presenting an entire student sonata exposition written by Student 3, shown in Example 19.³¹

Example 19: Student 3's sonata exposition

³¹ This sonata exposition corresponds to Hepokoski and Darcy's Type 3 sonata, the most typical of sonata form types. See James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006). Hepokoski and Darcy describe Type 3 sonatas as "standard 'textbook' structures, with expositions, developments, and recapitulations that normally begin on the tonic." (p. 344) The exposition of a Type 3 sonata contains a primary key area in the tonic, a modulating transition ending with a cadence (often a half cadence in the new key), a secondary key area in the new key, and closing material in the new key.

Example 19: (*continued*) Student 3's sonata exposition

Sections of the sonata form have been marked on the score. I already have discussed the primary key area (Example 16), and therefore will begin my comments with the transition (measure 9). Student 3's dependent transition begins with the same accompaniment as the principal theme, but departs from that previous accompaniment as early as measure 10, signaling in retrospect that measure 9 began a new section of the work. In measure 10, the accompaniment countermelody of measure 2 is replaced by a continuation of the bass and afterbeat pattern, alerting the listener that the succeeding passage will be different from the primary key area. Later in the transition, the accompaniment is significantly different from that of the primary key area as the transition melody strays farther. For example, measure 13 contains a chordal arpeggio and rhythmic alternation between the melody and the accompaniment. The prominent rhythmic figure in measure 13, two sixteenth notes and an eighth note, is the retrograde of the rhythmic figure in the bass of measure 5 (primary key area), an eighth note and two sixteenth notes – a particularly elegant compositional detail. The transition culminates with a half cadence in the new key in measure 17. The cessation of rhythmic motion at this cadence is too abrupt, but the murky bass that leads to it is quite effective, focusing attention on the descending chromatic line that drives to the arrival on the note A. Murky bass is atypical at this location, but other typical features

compensate, including the progression augmented sixth – V and the repeated sixteenth-note patterns in the melody that assist in the drive to the cadence.

The secondary key area, which starts in measure 18, is accompanied by a gentle Alberti bass, in keeping with its more lyrical character, setting it apart from the more energetic accompaniments of the primary key area and transition. The secondary key area is a parallel period, a nice contrast with the sentence structure of the primary key area. The ending of the secondary key area features an appropriate bass line accompaniment and a "Mozart cadence." The closing material returns to the bass and afterbeat pattern, changing to block chords during a brief codetta (measure 34) for more emphasis at the end. While the closing material is perhaps too long for an exposition of this length, it clearly accomplishes what it must as closing material. It reinforces the new key by presenting a repeated cadential gesture (the progression I ii6 V7 I), followed by a dramatic finish created by the acceleration of melodic and harmonic rhythm accompanied by the alternation of I and V chords.

These student compositions seem to me to compare favorably with the keyboard works of some Classic era composers, if not masters like Mozart and Haydn then some of their lesser contemporaries. At the least, my students were able to get beyond the use of stock accompaniment formulas to create something more idiomatic. Further, they were able to incorporate accompaniment into their compositional choices as an equal of rather than an accessory to melody, harmony, and form. They discovered how much accompaniment patterns contribute to musical style, and how various components of musical texture interact with each other. Most importantly, they learned that just because something is not melodic does not mean that it should be unmusical.

A careful study of the keyboard works of Mozart and other composers from the Classic era reveals a richness of accompaniment types not often found in undergraduate harmony textbooks. I have shown that with some help undergraduates can learn these accompaniment types and use them with skill, thus furthering their understanding of the Classic era style. Students can gain a greater sensitivity to all elements of musical texture, not just melody and harmony, which will help them grow as performers, composers, and listeners.

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