

Knowledge organiser AoS2: The Concerto Through Time

Key ideas and concepts

Key terms

1. Solo and orchestra	A concerto involves a solo instrument (solo concerto) OR group of solo instruments (concerto grosso) with an orchestral accompaniment .	1. Acciaccatura	Pronounced a-chak-a-toora. An ornament : a very quick, 'crushed' grace note .
2. Three movements	Most concertos are in three movements : 1. Fast 2. Slow 2. Fast	2. Appoggiatura	Pronounced a-poj-a-toora. A slightly longer grace note .
3. Virtuosity	One of the main ideas of a concerto is to show off the capabilities of the solo instrument and/or the solo performer.	3. Binary form	In two sections: A B.
4. Interplay between solo and orchestra	How the solo instrument(s) interact with the orchestra is very important. The orchestra may play the main melody or have an accompanying role.	4. Cadenza	The orchestra stops and the soloist has a virtuosic solo section that sounds improvised
		5. Chromatic harmony	Harmony that uses more complex chords, with notes from outside of the major/minor scale.

Concertos timeline

1. Baroque 1600-1750	1. Small orchestra , consisting of strings and continuo	6. Circle of fifths	A chord progression where the root notes are a fifth apart, i.e. E-A-D-G-C.
	2. Concerto grosso very popular	7. Commission	When someone pays a composer to write a specific piece
	3. Ritornello form often used for 1 st movement. 2 nd movement often very short, sometimes improvised .	8. Concertino	The group of soloists in a concerto grosso
	4. Diatonic harmony , mostly based on chords I, IV, and V, and circles of fifths	9. Concerto grosso	A concerto with a group of soloists (not just one soloist)
	5. Use of ornaments – mostly left to performer to decide	10. Continuo	Continuous bass line , played by a bass instrument (often cello) and a chord instrument (often harpichord)
	6. Often used contrapuntal textures , terraced dynamics and melodic sequences		
	7. Music feels continuous , each movement has a set tempo/mood that does not change	11. Contrapuntal	Polyphonic. Independent lines of music combined together.
	8. Composers usually employed by nobility or the church: had to write pieces their employers approved of	12. Diatonic harmony	In a major or minor key . Based on chords I, IV and V .
	9. J.S.Bach, Vivaldi, Corelli	13. Freelance	Self-employed .
2. Classical 1750-1810	1. Medium-sized orchestra . Now has separate woodwind section including clarinets . No continuo . May have horns and timpani .	14. Melody-dominated homophony	A texture where there is a melody and an accompaniment .
	2. Nearly all concertos solo . Piano and clarinet concertos very popular as new instruments.	15. Ornament	Decorative notes, i.e. acciaccaturas , appoggiaturas , trills .
	3. Slightly longer concertos . Sonata form often used for 1 st movement. Written-out 2 nd movements. Rondo form often used in 3 rd movement.	16. Periodic phrasing	Pairs of phrases organised in a question-answer format.
	4. Diatonic harmony	17. Ripieno	The orchestral backing in a concerto grosso.
	5. Ornaments used but often indicated by composer	18. Ritornello	A recurring section .
	6. Melody-dominated homophony . Periodic phrasing . More subtle changes of dynamics shown in score.	19. Rondo	A structure with a recurring section: A B A C A D A
	7. Composers employed but beginning to put on own concerts in new concert halls .	20. Sequence	Where a motif is repeated higher or lower each time .
	8. Use of cadenzas .	21. Solo concerto	A concerto with only one soloist.
	9. Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven .	22. Sonata form	A structure with three sections: exposition, development and recapitulation .
3. Romantic 1810-1910	1. Large orchestra . May include large brass and percussion section, and even harp . Brass instruments now have valves .	23. Terraced dynamics	Either loud or soft . No crescendos or diminuendos.
	2. Solo concertos , often much longer and more virtuosic . Cadenzas very important. Piano, violin and cello popular. Celebrity performers. Large concert halls.	24. Ternary form	In three sections: A B A
	3. Chromatic harmony	25. Trill	Alternating quickly between two adjacent notes.
	4. Dramatic, emotional music, often with big contrasts of mood, dynamics and tempo.	26. Tutti	A section in which everybody plays.
	5. Most composers freelance and relying on commissions .	27. Valves	On brass instruments, they allow playing of every chromatic note .
	6. Mendelssohn, Rachmaninov, Tchaikovsky .	28. Virtuoso	Difficult to play.

