

# Baroque Concerto Grosso

A **BAROQUE CONCERTO GROSSO** is an instrumental form involving two groups of performers: the **CONCERTINO** (or Concertante) featuring a small group of soloists accompanied by an orchestral accompaniment called the **RIPIENO**.

## 1600-1750

### Harmony & Tonality

All Baroque Concerto Grossos have a **CONTINUO** part – an accompaniment which “fills in the harmonies and texture” played by the **HARPSICHORD** (or Organ) (playing **CHORDAL HARMONY** from **FIGURED BASS NOTATION**) with the **CELLO** or **BASSOON** doubling the Bass Line. **MODULATIONS** (changes of key) tended to go to the Dominant key or to the Relative minor of the original key. Tonality was mainly **DIATONIC** and in either clear **MAJOR** or **MINOR** tonalities.

### Form & Structure

**THREE MOVEMENTS** – contrasted by **TEMPO** and a single mood or style within each movement. Movements in

1 <sup>st</sup> Movement	Ritornello or a Fugue	Brisk and purposeful
2 <sup>nd</sup> Movement	Da Capo Aria or Ternary Form	Slow and song-like often dotted rhythms
3 <sup>rd</sup> Movement	Ritornello or a Fugue	Fast and Cheerful

**RITORNELLO FORM** began with a **TUTTI** section which featured a **THEME**. Between appearances of this Ritornello Theme came **EPISODES** (contrasting sections).

Sometimes feature a short **CADENZA** section towards the end of the first movement (unaccompanied).

### Rhythm, Tempo & Metre

The three movements of a Baroque Concerto Grosso were contrasted in **TEMPO** – Fast-Slow-Fast – with a consistent tempo within each movement. Dotted Rhythms were often a feature of the slower/second movements.

### Texture

Mainly **POLYPHONIC** or **CONTRAPUNTAL** textures – complex and interweaving of parts, though some **HOMOPHONIC MELODY & ACCOMPANIMENT** sections for musical contrast.

### Dynamics

**TERRACED DYNAMICS** – clear dynamic contrasts achieved by the whole orchestra changing the volume suddenly (rather than Crescendos or Diminuendos). No building up or fading down of volume in Baroque Concerto Grossos.

### Melody

Melodies are decorated and embellished with **ORNAMENTS** (often by performers) *e.g. trills, turns, mordents and grace notes such as acciacaturas*, which make melodies sound “busy”. Melodies often long and flowing and use **SEQUENCES** (a musical phrase that is repeated at a different pitch either going up or down) and **IMITATION** (where one instrumental part is copied (imitated) by other instruments).

### Soloists

The Baroque Concerto Grosso is a work for two or more soloists. The soloists (**CONCERTINO** – meaning “little ensemble”) were the “stars of the show” and performed demanding and technically difficult parts.

### Soloists vs. Orchestral Accompaniment

The soloists were always “in the spotlight” but sometimes performed with the accompanying orchestra in **TUTTI** sections. Musical contrast between sections is important.

### Venue

Baroque Concerto Grossos were performed either in churches, opera houses or small salons (rooms) or courts of wealthy individuals.

### Baroque Concerto Grosso Composers

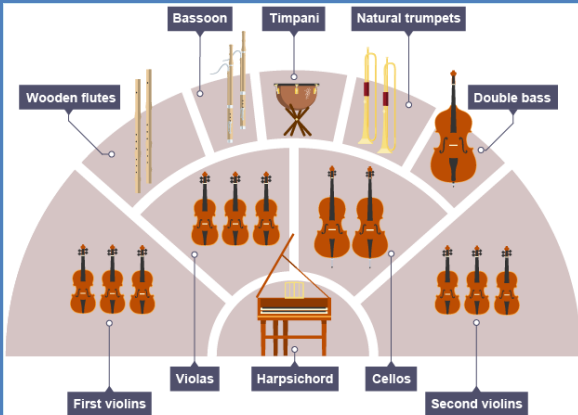


### Instrumentation – Typical Instruments, Timbres and Sonorities

The orchestra used for a Baroque Concerto Grosso was split into two sections: the **RIPIENO** (the main orchestra who provided the accompaniment and less technically-demanding parts) and the **CONCERTINO** (or Concertante) who were the Soloists/Solo Section. The instruments used within the **CONCERTINO** of a Baroque Concerto Grosso can include: Violin, Cello, Recorder, Flute, Oboe, Bassoon, Trumpet and Lute.



The **BAROQUE ORCHESTRA** typically numbered between 10-30 players. The main and largest section was the **STRINGS** (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Violins, Violas, Cellos and Double Bases) who played most of the ‘main melody’. A small **WOODWIND** section could consist of 2 Wooden Flutes, 2 Oboes and 2 Bassoons. The **BRASS** section may feature 2 “Natural” Trumpets and 2 Horns and the **PERCUSSION SECTION** featured only **TIMPANI** which were used only for dramatic effects. The **CONTINUO** player led and directed the Baroque Orchestra from the Harpsichord (no conductor).



# Baroque Solo Concerto

The **BAROQUE SOLO CONCERTO** grew out of the **BAROQUE CONCERTO GROSSO** in which a single solo instrument is accompanied by an orchestra.

# 1600-1750

### Harmony & Tonality

All Baroque Solo Concertos have a **CONTINUO** part – an accompaniment which “fills in the harmonies and texture” played by the **HARPSICHORD** (or Organ) (playing **CHORDAL HARMONY** from **FIGURED BASS NOTATION**) with the **CELLO** or **BASSOON** doubling the Bass Line. **MODULATIONS** (changes of key) tended to go to the Dominant key or to the Relative minor of the original key. Tonality was mainly **DIATONIC** and in either clear **MAJOR** or **MINOR** tonalities.

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### Texture

Mainly **POLYPHONIC** or **CONTRAPUNTAL** textures – complex and interweaving of parts, though some **HOMOPHONIC MELODY & ACCOMPANIMENT** sections for musical contrast.

### Dynamics

**TERRACED DYNAMICS** – clear dynamic contrasts achieved by the whole orchestra changing the volume suddenly (rather than Crescendos or Diminuendos). No building up or fading down of volume in Baroque Solo Concertos.

### Melody

Melodies are decorated and embellished with **ORNAMENTS** (often by the soloist) *e.g. trills, turns, mordents and grace notes such as acciaccaturas*, which make melodies sound “busy”. Melodies often long and flowing and use **SEQUENCES** (a musical phrase that is repeated at a different pitch either going up or down) and **IMITATION** (where one instrumental part is copied (imitated) by other instruments).

### Soloists

The Baroque Solo Concerto is a work for a single solo instrument. The soloist’s parts were often very technically difficult with a chance for the solo performer to “show off” their technical ability and skill.

### Soloist vs. Orchestral Accompaniment

The soloist was always “in the spotlight” but sometimes performed with the accompanying orchestra in **TUTTI** sections. Musical contrast between sections became more important than in Concerto Grossos.

### Venue

Baroque Solo Concertos were performed either in churches, opera houses or small salons (rooms) or courts of wealthy individuals.

### Baroque Solo Concerto Composers



J. S. Bach



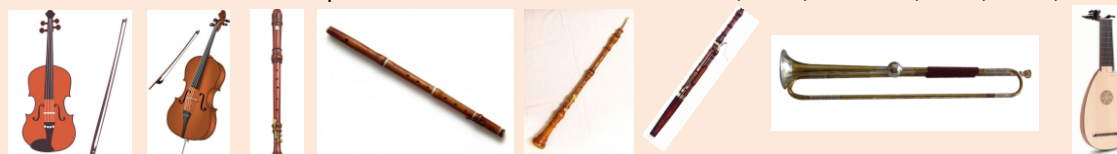
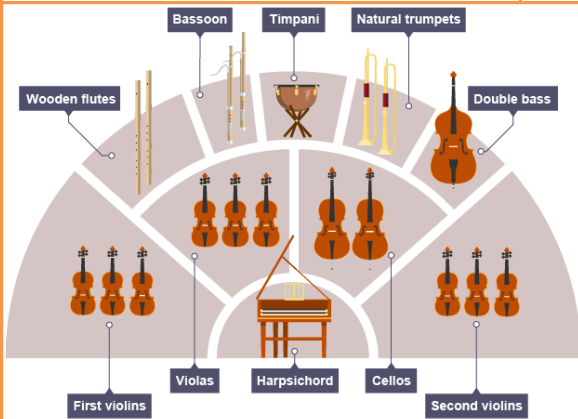
Handel



Vivaldi

### Instrumentation – Typical Instruments, Timbres and Sonorities

The orchestra used to accompany Baroque Solo Concertos was slightly larger than the Baroque Concerto Grosso but typically numbered between 10-30 players. The main and largest section was the **STRINGS** (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Violins, Violas, Cellos and Double Basses) who played most of the ‘main melody’. A small **WOODWIND** section could consist of 2 Wooden Flutes, 2 Oboes and 2 Bassoons. The **BRASS** section may feature 2 “Natural” Trumpets and 2 Horns and the **PERCUSSION SECTION** featured only **TIMPANI** which were used only for dramatic effects. The **CONTINUO** player led and directed the Baroque Orchestra from the Harpsichord (no conductor). The instruments used as soloists within Baroque Solo Concertos included the Violin, Cello, Recorder, Flute, Oboe, Bassoon, Trumpet and Lute.



# Classical Solo Concerto

During the **CLASSICAL PERIOD**, the Baroque Concerto Grosso went “out of fashion” and Classical composers continued to write **SOLO CONCERTOS** for a single solo instrument with more difficult and technically demanding solo parts (**VIRTUOSIC**), accompanied by a now, much larger and more developed, orchestra.





# 1750-1820

Harmony & Tonality	Venue	Form & Structure										
<p><b>SIMPLE HARMONY</b> making use of mainly <b>PRIMARY CHORDS – I, IV and V</b>. <b>DIATONIC</b> harmony in either clear <b>MAJOR</b> or <b>MINOR</b> tonalities. <b>MODULATIONS to RELATED KEYS</b> (relative major/minor, subdominant major and minor and dominant major/minor).</p>	<p>Performance spaces were becoming larger than in the Baroque period due to size of orchestras. Recital and Concert Halls and Opera Houses were popular venues for performing Concertos.</p>	<p><b>THREE MOVEMENTS</b> – contrasted by <b>TEMPO</b> and style/mood. <b>RONDO</b> form now popular (ABACADA...) where A is the recurring <b>THEME</b> between contrasting <b>EPISODES</b> (B, C, D...) and <b>SONATA FORM (EXPOSITION, DEVELOPMENT, RECAPITULATION, CODA)</b> now popular. Classical Solo Concertos often have long orchestral sections before the soloist enters – “delayed entry of the soloist”. Movements longer than Baroque.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="922 316 1720 507"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="922 316 1189 355">1<sup>st</sup> Movement</th> <th data-bbox="1189 316 1453 355">Sonata Form</th> <th data-bbox="1453 316 1720 355">Brisk and purposeful</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="922 355 1189 432">2<sup>nd</sup> Movement</td> <td data-bbox="1189 355 1453 432">Ternary or Variation Form</td> <td data-bbox="1453 355 1720 432">Slow, lyrical and song-like</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="922 432 1189 507">3<sup>rd</sup> Movement</td> <td data-bbox="1189 432 1453 507">Rondo, Variation Form or Sonata Form</td> <td data-bbox="1453 432 1720 507">Fast and Cheerful</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		1 <sup>st</sup> Movement	Sonata Form	Brisk and purposeful	2 <sup>nd</sup> Movement	Ternary or Variation Form	Slow, lyrical and song-like	3 <sup>rd</sup> Movement	Rondo, Variation Form or Sonata Form	Fast and Cheerful
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Rhythm, Tempo & Metre	Texture	Dynamics	Melody									
<p>The three movements of a Classical Solo Concerto were contrasted in <b>TEMPO</b> – Fast-Slow-Fast and style/mood. Some changes of <b>TEMPO</b> for effect/expression.</p>	<p>Busy Baroque Polyphonic Textures now replaced with clearer <b>HOMOPHONIC (MELODY AND ACCOMPANIMENT)</b> textures.</p>	<p>Wider range of Dynamics – <b>pp, ff, mp, mf</b> <b>CRESCENDOS</b> and <b>DECRESCENDOS</b> or <b>DIMINUENDOS</b> now used showing an increasing range of dynamics and more emphasis on expression in the music.</p>	<p>The melodies in Classical Solo Concertos were <b>LIGHT, SIMPLE</b> and <b>ELEGANT</b> and continue to use <b>SEQUENCES</b> and <b>ORNAMENTS</b> (although not as much as in the Baroque period). Musical phrases are <b>BALANCED</b> and <b>EVEN</b> (e.g. 4 or 8 bars) maybe with some <b>QUESTION AND ANSWER</b> phrases.</p>									
Soloist		Soloist vs. Orchestral Accompaniment										
<p><b>CADENZA</b> – became integral to the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> movement (and sometimes last movement) – very difficult and <b>VIRTUOSIC</b> unaccompanied sections allowing the soloist to show off their technical skill often containing lots of fast scale passages, broken chords and decorated and ornamented melodies. Often cadenza sections end with a long, held <b>TRILL</b> to signal to the orchestra to enter again for the final <b>CODA</b> section. Cadenzas were improvised by the soloists during performance, however, composers such as Beethoven wrote cadenzas out on the score. The soloist’s part was more technically demanding and <b>VIRTUOSIC</b> than in Baroque Concertos.</p>		<p>Sometimes the soloist and orchestra perform sections in <b>DIALOGUE</b> with each other. <b>The conductor follows the soloist and the orchestra follow the conductor</b> depending on the soloist’s <b>INTERPRETATION</b> of the piece (which requires rehearsal).</p>										
Classical Solo Concerto Composers												
		<p><b>Instrumentation – Typical Instruments, Timbres and Sonorities</b></p> <p>As the Harpsichord declined in popularity, Classical composers no longer added <b>CONTINUO</b> parts to the orchestral accompaniment and a <b>CONDUCTOR</b> was now established to lead the orchestra. The <b>CLASSICAL ORCHESTRA</b> grew in size and new instruments such as the Clarinet were added. The <b>CLASSICAL ORCHESTRA</b> typically numbered between 30-60 players. The <b>STRINGS</b> (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Violins, Violas, Cellos and Double Basses) continued to be the ‘main section’ playing most of the ‘main melody’ and contained more players than in Baroque orchestras. The <b>WOODWIND</b> now typically featured 2 x <b>METAL</b> Flutes, 2 x Oboes, 2 x Bassoons, and 2 x (<b>newly invented</b>) Clarinets. <b>BRASS</b> continued to consist of 2 x Horns and 2 (<b>now valved</b>) Trumpets and the <b>PERCUSSION</b> continued to feature only the <b>TIMPANI</b>. Classical composers wrote Solo Concertos for instruments including the <b>PIANO</b> (newly invented and replacing the Baroque Harpsichord), <b>VIOLIN, CELLO, FLUTE, OBOE, CLARINET</b> (also newly invented), <b>BASSOON</b> and <b>FRENCH HORN</b>.</p>										
<p><b>Haydn</b> Solo Trumpet, Flute, Oboe, Bassoon, Violin, Cello and Piano Concertos</p>		<p><b>Mozart</b> 27 Solo Piano Concertos and Concertos for Solo Violin, Clarinet, Horn and Flute.</p> <p><b>Beethoven</b> Solo Concertos for Piano and Violin. Early style was “Classical”.</p>										

# Romantic Solo Concerto

ROMANTIC SOLO CONCERTOS continued to be instrumental works for a **single solo instrument** with orchestral accompaniment but became much more **DRAMATIC** sounding and emotive. Sometimes **DOUBLE CONCERTOS** were written for 2 solo instruments.

# 1820-1900

Harmony & Tonality		Form & Structure		
Harmony continued to be mainly <b>DIATONIC</b> but much more use of <b>CHROMATIC HARMONY</b> , <b>DISSONANCE</b> ( <i>clashing notes and chords</i> ) and <b>ADDED NOTE CHORDS</b> e.g. 9ths to create dramatic effects.	1 <sup>st</sup> Movement	Sonata Form	Allegro – soloist plays virtually throughout	
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Movement	Ternary or Variation Form	Slow, lyrical and song-like, often short and acting mainly as an introduction to the very fast and virtuosic finales. Sometimes linked to final movement with a pause.	
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Movement	Rondo, Variation or Sonata Form	Fast and Cheerful	
<b>THREE MOVEMENTS</b> – (sometimes “linked” (Mendelssohn) or even in just one movement (Liszt))				
Rhythm, Tempo & Metre	Texture	Dynamics	Melody	
Frequent changes of time signature and tempo.	<b>HOMOPHONIC (MELODY AND ACCOMPANIMENT)</b> but more complex than in Classical Concertos.	Extremes of dynamics common ( <i>ppp, fff</i> ) and specific <b>EXPRESSION MARKINGS</b> e.g. <i>espressivo, dolce, appassionato</i>	The regular and balanced phrases of the Classical Concerto were less important with composers giving more freedom to expression within their melodies which were now often long and dramatic, loud and powerful or warm and emotional.	
Soloists (and Articulation)	Soloists vs. Orchestral Accompaniment		Venue	Romantic Solo Concerto Composers
The soloist’s part became even more difficult, <b>VIRTUOSIC</b> and technically difficult to play. <b>CADENZA</b> sections continued to allow the soloist to “show off” becoming more complex and difficult with lots of <b>MELODIC DECORATION, ORNAMENTATION</b> and <b>FAST SCALE PASSAGE</b> and demanding playing techniques particular to the solo instrument e.g. <i>glissandi on the piano, double stopping and harmonics on the violin</i> . Cadenzas were now written out and not improvised by the performer. Soloist often enters immediately ( <b>NO ORCHESTRAL INTRODUCTIONS</b> ) at the start of the 1 <sup>st</sup> movement sharing themes with the orchestra.	In the Romantic period, the soloist stepped forward as a “heroic figure” with the orchestra slipping back into a more “subordinate” role, but these changing roles also added to excitement and drama and more “competition” between soloist and orchestra. The conductor continues to follow the soloist and the orchestra follows the conductor. The soloist’s interpretation of the music is now more important due to the music being more dramatic and powerful.		Many Romantic Solo Concerto composers were also <b>VIRTUOSO PERFORMERS</b> e.g. <i>Franz Liszt, Chopin, Clara Schumann</i> and <i>Niccolo Paganini (Violin Virtuoso)</i> who wrote and performed in large-scale public concerts, subscription concerts and festivals. Larger concert halls had to be built due to the rise of the “middle class” concert goer.	 <p><b>Beethoven</b> Late Concertos</p>  <p><b>Liszt</b> Piano Concertos</p>
				 <p><b>Brahms</b> Violin and Piano Concertos</p>  <p><b>Mendelssohn</b> Solo Violin Concerto</p>



### Instrumentation – Typical Instruments, Timbres and Sonorities

The Romantic orchestra was large and often contrasted dramatically with the soloist. With the growth of the Romantic orchestra, new **TIMBRES** and **SONORITIES** became available to composers who explored rich and colourful orchestration. The **STRINGS** section was enlarged again, often with the addition of Harps. New instruments were added to the **WOODWIND** section such as the Double Bassoon, Cor Anglais, Bass Clarinet and Piccolo. The **BRASS** section saw Trombones and a Tuba added along with an extra Trumpet and two further French Horns and the **PERCUSSION** section now featured a vast array of Drums, Cymbals, Pitched Percussion and other instruments which could be hit, struck, banged or plucked! There could be between 90-100 players in a Romantic orchestra. Romantic composers wrote Solo Concertos for almost any orchestral instrument, but the **PIANO** and **VIOLIN** continued to be popular choices as solo instruments.