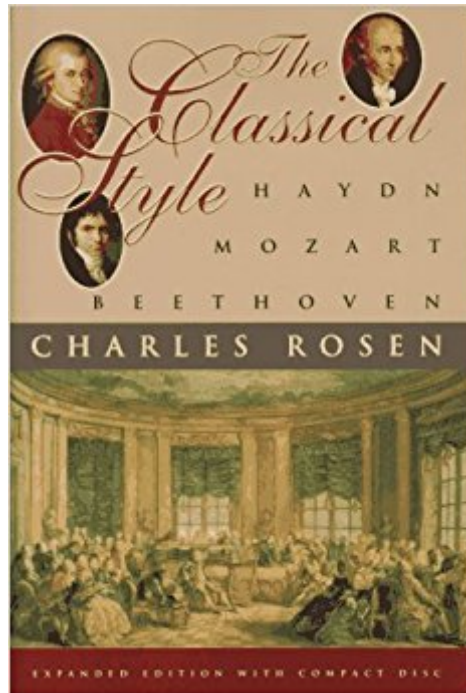




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The Classical Style: Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven



Synopsis

Winner of the 1972 National Book Award. A reissue of a masterpiece by a world-class pianist and top-rank thinker now expanded and with a compact disc. This outstanding book focusing on the three most-beloved composers of the Vienna School is considered basic to any study of the music from their era. Drawing on his rich experience and intimate familiarity with the works of these giants, Charles Rosen presents his keen insights in language that is clear, persuasive, and nontechnical. For this reissue of *The Classical Style*, Rosen provides a comprehensive new introduction that incorporates ideas he has formulated in the past twenty-five years and responds to the reactions of others writers to the book during that time. Readers are also treated to a compact disc, recorded by Rosen in 1996 and produced especially to accompany this new version of the book. The CD offers complete performances of two late sonatas of Beethoven that are discussed extensively in the text: the Opus 106 in Bb major (the Hammerklavier) and the Opus 110 in C minor.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The Classical Style: Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven is a revised and enlarged version of Charles Rosen's landmark 1970 work on the compositions of the trio of musical geniuses who formed the Viennese Classical School and forever changed the face of music. Along with clarifications, expansions, and new insights into the composers and their music, the book has been enriched by the addition of a compact disc containing two of the Beethoven piano sonatas of which the author writes. Rosen's books are always shot through with musical examples, so you'll get a great deal

more out of this one if you can read music. *The Classical Style* is a brilliant book, composed by a genuine artist, sometimes provocative, but never sloppy in its thinking.

The first edition of this book won the 1972 National Book Award and remained available in paperback for more than two decades. For this edition, Rosen adds a 14-page preface answering some of his friendly critics and a 26-page essay on Beethoven which includes 44 musical examples, not seen that emphasizes the composer's indebtedness to Haydn and Mozart. Otherwise, the text of the original edition remains unchanged. A CD (not heard) of Rosen playing two Beethoven piano sonatas (opp. 106 and 110) is also included. Libraries successful in keeping together the book and CD of Rosen's *Romantic Generation* (LJ 4/1/95) may want to attempt the same with this set, but once the CD is lost, the price seems high for only two new essays if the older edition is still serviceable. Bonnie Jo Dopp, Univ. of Maryland Lib., College Park Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc.

In *The Classical Style* Charles Rosen does a marvelous job characterizing the music epitomized by Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven. Of all the formal principles that have defined any period, the elements of classical style are perhaps most amenable to formal analysis. The classical period is principally characterized by sonata form and tonality. We can agree with Sir Donald Tovey that we do violence to compositions by interpreting them as if sonata form constitutes a set of binding rules rather than a post-facto abstraction of what the masters of the classical period actually did. Nonetheless, the principles of tonality may be expressed with an intellectual clarity which is more elusive when characterizing, say, a canon or polyphonic mass. This is a reflection of the ideals of the classical period, whose audiences delighted in elegance and structural economy. Classical composers highlighted the structural contours defining works by emphasizing modulation and calling attention sectional boundaries with an intensified emphasis cadence. Elegance of structure was taken by the classical masters as an end in itself, and their harmonies glide on a framework they trace and enact. That is in itself a large part of the game of classical composition. An understanding of the classical period is not only relatively easy to acquire, but of central importance to understanding nearly all subsequent composition. With the arguable exceptions of minimalism and some wings of the avant garde, nearly every important composition in the Occident since Haydn is either tonal or a reaction against tonality. Tonal harmony is the very foundation of our music theory to this day, and understanding its history and development can open up a deeper understanding of everything from Verdi to Schoenberg to Robert Johnson to Kylie Minogue. Rosen

makes all of this remarkably evident and comprehensible in dazzling prose that astonishes the reader with his insight on every page. I'm not a musicologist and browsed through a lot of the close passage analysis that comprises a big chunk of the book, but I still got my money's worth many times over.

A history centering on sonata form written by an eminent scholar and pianist. I read much of as an adjunct to Jonathan Biss's MOOC from the Curtis Institute on Exploring Beethoven's Sonatas. It's well written, but challenging reading. Advanced knowledge of musical form would be helpful.

I own everything Charles Rosen has written. The original Classical Style was one of my first books. I have had the great good fortune to have worked with him as a conductor. He was a great man and this expanded version of his earlier masterpiece should be in your library

I needed a concise book giving me information on the classical style by the top three composers at the time. This book is it.

I bought this as a gift for my husband. He is a musician and music conductor. He enjoyed it very much as he loves to compare the old masters and their works.

A very good book for non-musicians as it is very detailed.

Gave it as a gift to a professional cellist. He told me he found it not only informative and useful, but also an enjoyable read.

Yes! It is a very good book. A bit technical at times.

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