

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart – Clarinet Concerto, third movement

Analysis & Questions

This resource explores the third movement of Mozart's Clarinet Concerto, offering a summary of the movement and a bank of quick and in-depth questions aimed at GCSE-level students (it appears on the AQA syllabus). This resource accompanies the London Philharmonic Orchestra's performance and analysis video of the piece, which can be found on our website. You will need a score of the movement to complete the questions.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)



Mozart, taught by his father, began composing at the age of five, was famous around Europe by the age of eight and, by his death at age 35 had composed some of the most iconic works of the Classical period. Many say he was a genius. He was known for being extravagant, loud and rebellious but at the end of his life he was burnt out, exhausted and pretty much penniless. Mozart wrote over 600 works and all of them are pinnacles of the Classical style, a style defined by perfect structures, light textures, singable melodies and clear harmonies. Mozart added a large dash of personality and flair to the rules and made some of the greatest music ever produced.

Clarinet Concerto, third movement (1791)

- Form:** A movement from a concerto. A concerto is a piece for solo instrumentalist, with an accompanying orchestra
- Instrumentation:** Solo clarinet in A, with orchestra (small orchestra – no trumpets, oboes, timpani)
- Structure:** This movement is in Rondo form in compound duple time (6/8)
A – B – C – (a-b) – A – Coda

Analysis:

	<p>Rondo theme: Section A (Key: A major)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8-bar theme made of two balanced four-bar phrases: bars 1–4 'question' ending on the dominant (E); bars 5–8 'answer' ending with a perfect cadence in A Begins with an anacrusis Chamber feel, just solo clarinet and strings
Bars 1–8	
Bars 9–16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opening theme repeated by full orchestra, with contrasts in dynamics
Bar 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solo clarinet virtuosic passage, also starts with anacrusis. Accompanied by strings
Bar 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section ends with return of Rondo theme

Bar 31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linking passage featuring sequence of descending scales in upper strings • Alternation between chords I and V, leading to a perfect cadence into Bar 51
Bar 36	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarinet melody, mainly step-wise, answered by full orchestra at Bar 40, with syncopation in 1st violins
Bar 51	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cadential figure ending rondo theme, starts with horns (doubled in lower strings) and answered by 1st violins, alternating dominant and tonic chords ending in cadence at Bar 55–56 where section A ends
Bar 57	<p>Section B (first episode)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduced by clarinet with ‘chamber’ orchestra (lighter texture)
Bar 65	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarinet melody repeats down an octave and with tonic pedal in violas, cellos and basses
Bar 73	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strings introduce a new idea which is developed, including with a flute solo at Bar 77 • Bassoons and violas play same falling semitone melody at Bars 73–76
Bar 84	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtuoso semiquaver arpeggio passages from the clarinet over string accompaniment, in dominant key of E major
Bar 97	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short conversation across the orchestra, with declamatory phrase in Horns answered by dramatic dominant 7th with flattened 9th chord in Bars 98 and 102
Bar 111	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mozart uses an augmented 6th chord resolving to chord V, which leads back to chord I for return of Section A
Bar 114	<p>Section A returns on clarinet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This time, orchestra respond at Bar 121 with the cadential figure from Bar 51 • Then develop ideas from Section A further using sequential patterns and hemiola (Bars 131–2)
Bar 138	<p>Section C (second episode)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In relative minor key of F# minor • Begins with anacrusis, clarinet melody then repeats down an octave
Bar 161	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Huge leaps from clarinet in subdominant key of D which contrasts the different registers of the clarinet
Bar 178	<p>Small repeat of Section A</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mozart uses Bar 1 for development
Bar 188	<p>Section B melody returns (from bar 57)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeats down an octave in the tonic minor key in bar 196

Bar 219	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pause bars take us to dominant key of E • Ideas return from earlier including 'conversation' with horns followed by complex dominant 7th chord with flattened 9th (Bar 231) played <i>sfp</i> for emphasis, and augmented 6th chord (Bar 244)
Bar 247	Section A returns in full
Bar 301	<p>Coda (ending)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes ideas from earlier. Lots of virtuosity in clarinet part • Dialogue between clarinet and 1st violins from Bar 307–310 • Final repeat of rondo theme A at Bar 334
Bar 346	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cadential figure heard first at Bar 51 • Movement ends with a figure based on a broken chord of A major in Bar 351, with two tonic chords in the final two bars

Find the bar

In which bar can you find...

1. The first anacrusis? Which instrumental part it is in?	
2. The beginning of section B (first episode)?	
3. The first time we hear a flute solo?	
4. The first time we hear a dominant 7th chord with a flattened 9th?	
5. The first time we hear an augmented 6th chord?	
6. A hemiola?	
7. The beginning of a section in F# minor?	
8. The widest leap between notes in the clarinet part?	
9. The first time we see a pause (or fermata) in the score?	
10. Every instrument in the orchestra plays a unison note A?	

Quick Quiz

1. What key is this movement in?	
2. Although originally most likely written for a basset horn, in modern times this concerto is written for and performed by Clarinet in A. What does 'in A' mean?	
3. This movement is a typical third movement of a Classical concerto. Summarise the movements of a typical three-movement concerto of this period.	
4. This movement is a rondo. What is rondo form?	
5. Mozart composed this piece for an orchestra that is slightly smaller than a typical Classical-sized orchestra. Which instruments from the usual classical sized orchestra are not used here?	
6. In Bar 9, 'Tutti' is written on the score. What does this mean?	
7. How would you describe the texture at Bars 17–22?	
8. In Bars 51 and 53, the first violins have two diagonal lines crossed through some of the note stems. What does this indicate?	
9. At Bar 129 in the flute part, 'a 2' is written above the music. What does this mean?	
10. There is one instrument that, when it plays, always doubles another part. Which instrument is this?	

In depth

1. What is an anacrusis? Where is this used in this movement?
2. What musical features show us that this piece is from the Classical period?
3. How and where does Mozart show off the range of the clarinet in this movement?
4. What is 'rondo' form, and how is it used in this movement?