

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart – *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*, third movement

Analysis & Questions

This resource explores the third movement of Mozart's *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*, offering a summary of the movement and a bank of quick and in-depth questions aimed at GCSE-level students (it appears on the WJEC/Eduqas 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.

Eine Kleine Nachtmusik, third movement: Minuet and Trio (1787)

Form: The full piece is a 'serenade' – a light, multi-movement instrumental piece that would have been performed at special occasions or celebration events

In simple triple time: 3/4

Instrumentation: Initially 2 violins, 2 violas, cello and bass. Now, string orchestra

Structure: Ternary: A – B – A or Minuet – Trio – Minuet

Minuet is made of two repeating themes, Trio also has two repeating themes so structure can be shown as:

A	B	A
aabb	aabb	ab

Analysis:

Bars 1–8	<p>Minuet – A section</p> <p>Key: G major</p> <p>Minuet Theme a</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8-bar theme made of two balanced four-bar phrases • Begins with an anacrusis (upbeat), ends with a perfect cadence • Melody is made of detached crotchets and legato quavers • In bars 6 and 7 there are trills in the violin parts • Minuet Theme a repeats
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Bars 9–16	<p>Minuet Theme b</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8-bar theme made of two four-bar phrases • Melody of first four bars is made of slurred (legato) quavers, with chromatic movement • Second four bars very similar to second phrase in Theme a • Begins with an anacrusis, ends with a perfect cadence • Minuet Theme b repeats
Bars 17–24	<p>Trio – B section</p> <p>Key: D major (dominant key of G)</p> <p>Trio Theme a</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8-bar phrase begins with an anacrusis • Mozart creates a three-part texture (violin 1: melody, violin 2 & viola: accompaniment, cello & bass: bassline) • Ends with a perfect cadence in D major • Trio Theme a repeats
Bars 25–36	<p>Trio Theme b</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four bars of new material then recap of Trio Theme a with chromatic movement • Ends with perfect cadence in D major • Trio Theme b repeats
Da capo	<p>Minuet – A section (again)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minuet is then played again, without repeats • Ends with perfect cadence back in home key of G major

Find the bar

In which bar can you find... (give beat number where appropriate, e.g. Bar 1, beat 1)

1. The first time we hear a perfect cadence at the end of a phrase?	
2. The first time we hear a trill?	
3. An indication in the music to get louder?	
4. A descending scalar passage indicating the key of E minor?	
5. The first time we hear an appoggiatura?	
6. The first time we hear a dominant 7th chord?	
7. The first time there is a repeat mark?	
8. The beginning of a section in D major?	
9. The start of a quaver accompaniment playing alternating thirds?	
10. The first time we have a dotted crotchet?	

Quick Quiz

1. What year was this piece composed in? What period is this?	
2. What type of musical piece is <i>Eine Kleine Nachtmusik</i> (e.g. sonata, oratorio)?	
3. Which orchestral family do all the instruments featured in <i>Eine Kleine Nachtmusik</i> belong to?	
4. Name the cadence and key at the end of Bar 23 into Bar 24.	
5. What does 'Da capo' mean?	
6. What is the tempo marking of this movement and what does it mean?	
7. In Bars 7–8, the violas play two notes at once – what is this technique called?	
8. How would you describe the texture of Bars 1–3?	
9. How would you describe the texture of the first half of the Trio section?	
10. Which instruments play the bottom (bass) line in this piece?	

In depth

1. What is an anacrusis? Where is this device used in this movement?
2. What is the difference between 'legato' and 'staccato'? Find examples in the score.
3. Describe the similarities and differences between the Minuet and Trio sections of this movement.
4. The melody is mainly conjunct. What does conjunct mean and what is its opposite?
5. Describe the harmonic structure of this movement, including keys and main cadences in each section.