

By comparing and contrasting instrumental tones, orchestral textures, harmony and structural devices in Haydn's symphony No.26 and Wagner's Prelude to Tristan, show how far approaches to composition have changed between Classical and Romantic eras. Give detailed examples to support your observations.

The first obvious difference between the instrumentation of these two pieces is that the Haydn is arranged for a small orchestra. This contrasts with the Wagner which has 10/12 violins and large sections including a bass clarinet and 3 bassoons. The sections are far more independent in the Wagner, shown by the brass not being dependant on the strings. It also exploits individual colour with far more exposed parts e.g the solo cello at the beginning of the piece. The melodic work in the Wagner is often given to the Wind whereas in the Haydn the melody remains in the violins (bars 24-31) with the wind mostly either doubling the strings or having sustaining parts, though occasionally the wind does break free e.g at bar 96-99. Consequently the Haydn is of prominently homophonic texture and consists of largely two part writing at the beginning. In contrast the Wagner is largely four part work and has much contrapuntal complexity. It contains a host of compositional devices such as the imitation in the violins, bars 63-64. There is a great deal more doubling in the Wagner than the Haydn giving it a much thicker texture. However, there is much contrast in the texture within the Haydn, sections of thick texture contrast with silent bars e.g paused rest at bar 11. This is also evident in the contrasting dynamics, with dramatic climaxes and softer passages. The Haydn is far more uniform and continuous in its texture with few rests to be found in the parts. There is also much less dynamic variation.

The Haydn is Diatonic whereas the Wagner is much more ambiguous in its key, the keys are implied rather than stated. The use of chromatic harmony (1-26), imperfect cadences (bar 16) and dissonant chords remaining unresolved or being irregularly resolved results in the Wagner sounding much more unsettled than the Haydn. The fluidity of the Haydn comes from the use of simple primary triads (bar 17), the predominant use of perfect cadences to close the sections (bars 15-16) and the continuous chord pattern of I-Vb in bars 9-12. However, the Haydn does contain the occasional chromatic chord and secondary dominant and there are moments of unprepared modulations such as the move to F major for the second subject. The Wagner in contrast uses much more colourful harmonies, such as the augmented 6th, which is regularly used at climactic moments.

The structure of the Haydn is in obvious sonata form, consisting of three sections and a coda (exposition, recapitulation, development). The Wagner is similarly structured, three sections and a coda (tertiary form) but this is less apparent due to the extensive motivic development which creates an unending melody, thus it is harder to make the distinction between sections than in the Haydn. The entire of the Wagner is based on three motifs, every phrase is in some way related to one of the motifs. These motifs are found at: bar 1-2 in cellos, bar 2 in wind (this is an inversion of the 1st motif), bar 17 in cellos. Whilst there is occasional motivic development in the Haydn in the development section from bar 45, it is not as extravagant as in the Wagner.