Mozart’s Orchestration Techniques

Instrumentation

• In the later Mozart symphonies, the number of instruments grew from what was available in the baroque orchestra.
• Wind instruments became more independent from the strings and were given a more melodic function.
• Timpani was used more (tuned mostly to the tonic and dominant of the key).
• Two horns were added and functioned mainly as background harmonic support.
• The flute was used more in general.
• The clarinet was introduced.
• Wind instruments were used in pairs.
• Upper woodwinds usually double the strings an octave higher.
• The cello became more distinct from the double bass.
• The bassoon had more independence from the bass line and was even used for melody.

Texture

• More homophonic.
• Most of the melodic activity took place in the highest voice.
• There became a greater variety of rhythms. The sameness of rhythm in the baroque (e.g. constant eighth-notes) was now transformed into repeated notes in the accompaniment.

Orchestration Techniques

• “highlighting” - Certain notes are emphasized by doubling in another instrument.
• “linking” (also called “overlapping”) - A continuous melody is broken into fragments and played by different instruments. When it occurs between instruments of contrasting timbre a klangfarben quality is created.
• “intensification” - Each appearance of the main theme is scored for more instruments than before.
• octave doubling - Octave doubling became more common within families of instruments (e.g. cello and bass; between 2 clarinets; between 2 oboes, etc.).