



The *galant* style of music was a 17th century reaction to the strictures and complexity of baroque music, emphasizing a freer style emphasizing graceful, elegant, melodious, pleasing 'natural' music.

Johann Schiebe in his periodical *Der critische Musikus* (1737-40) considered Johann Sebastian Bach's music as excessively complex, lacking in natural qualities, and allowing too much artifice to obscure the beauties of his music. While these views initiated a controversy with Bach and his supporters, the *galant* style (and the similar emerging *Empfindsamer Stil*) gained popularity and eventually became a path to the emergence of classical and romantic music.

Johann Matheson, the influential German musician, writer, diplomat and musical theorist, apparently originated the term 'style galant' in music. "Matheson's *Galant homme* was a man (or woman) of fashion who was instructed enough in music to make judgements as to what was pleasing to the ears. *Galanterie* he employed in more than one musical sense. He used it to mean tasteful ornamentation of melodies and also as a generic title of short keyboard pieces for which he preferred the clavichord to the harpsichord because its dynamic nuances brought it closer to the voice. *Galanteries* in the sense of small dances or songs were also current in French harpsichord music." – Daniel Hertz, *Music in European Capitals: The Galant Style 1720-1780*; p. 18

The German musical theorist Heinrich Koch distinguished the *galant* style from the strict style as follows:

1. Through many elaborations of the melody, and divisions of the principled melodic tones, through more obvious breaks and pauses in the melody, and through more changes in the rhythmic elements, and especially in the lining up of melodic figures that do not have a close relationship with each other, etc.
2. Through a less interwoven harmony
3. Through the fact that the remaining voices simply serve to accompany the main voice and do not take part in the expression of the sentiments of the piece, etc." (Hertz p 19)