

Musical Form

Module 2 of *Music: Under the Hood*

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July 2017

Outline

- Musical forms
- Sonata allegro form
- Example – Mozart C major piano sonata

Musical Forms

- The main point is not the specific form
 - The main point is that the music must be **intelligible**
 - The listener should not get **lost**



Musical Forms

- Some basic forms
 - Binary – AB
 - Common in dances
 - Sonata allegro – AABA with development
 - Best known form in Western music
 - Rondo – ABACA
 - Sonata rondo – ABA-C-ABA
 - Theme and variations
 - Passacaglia/chaconne
 - Variations over repeating bass
 - For example, Richard Rogers' *Blue Moon*

Musical Forms

- **Most common musical structure**
 - **Exposition**
 - Introduce the main musical ideas
 - Tonic key
 - **Development**
 - Explore implications of main ideas
 - Other keys
 - **Recapitulation**
 - Return to original ideas with sense of closure
 - Tonic key

Musical Forms

- **Block structure** common in “classical” period
 - Haydn, Mozart, etc.
 - Organic development more common in “Baroque” period
- Blocks correspond to keys
- Makes for easy listening
 - **Still the standard today**
- **Sonata Allegro** form is best known
 - 121 of Beatles’ 211 songs have AABA structure



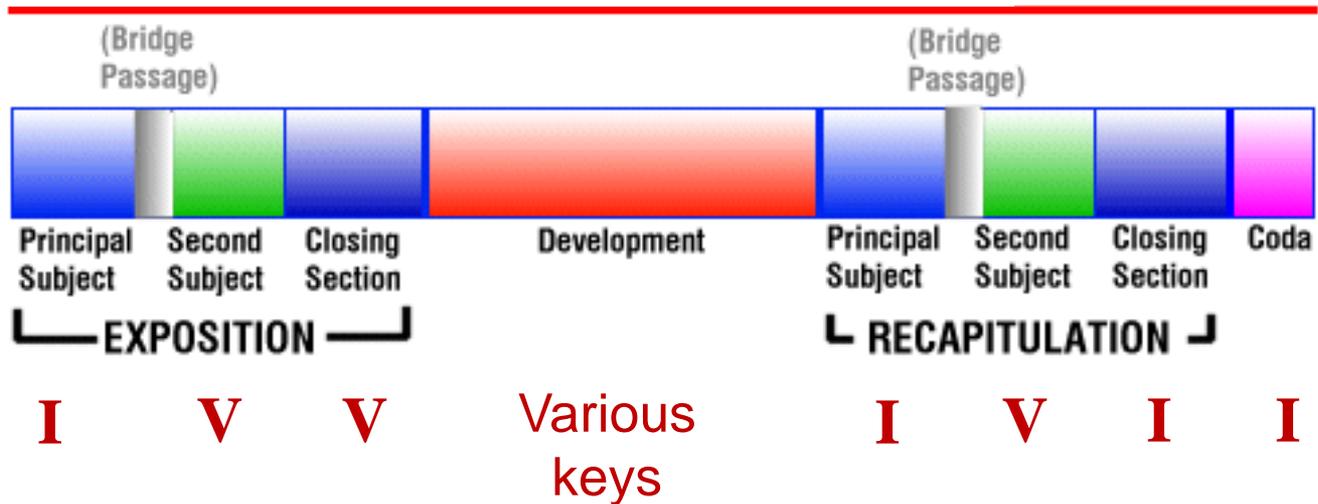
Sonata Allegro Form

- **AABA structure**
 - **AA: Exposition, repeated**
 - Main theme in tonic
 - Secondary theme in dominant
 - **B: Development**
 - Multiple keys, usually minor
 - **A: Recapitulation**
 - Main theme returns in tonic
 - Secondary theme in dominant
 - **Many variations!**



Sonata Allegro Form

Diagram of sonata allegro form



Sonata Allegro Form

- Basic contradiction?
 - Secondary theme in recapitulation is in dominant key.
 - How to return to tonic?



Example

- Mozart's C major piano sonata (1788)
 - 1st movement (Allegro)
 - Learned by all piano students
 - Unusual solution of basic contradiction



Main theme in tonic key
(I - C major)

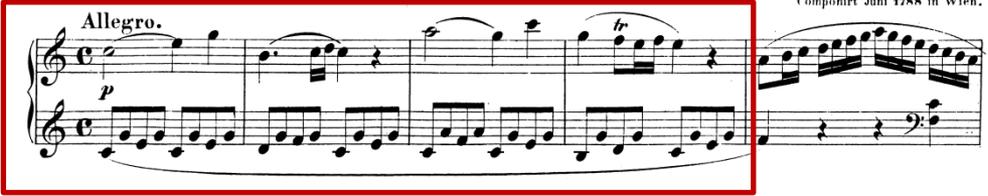
Exposition

Tonic key, modulating
to dominant. Repeated.

Secondary theme
in dominant key
(V – G major)

[Audio file](#)

Allegro.



Modulation to V



Development

Beginning in
v – G minor

Musical score for the Development section, beginning in G minor. The score consists of four systems of piano accompaniment. The first system starts with a forte (f) dynamic. The second system continues the melodic and harmonic development. The third system features a decrescendo (decresc.) marking. The fourth system concludes the development with a final chord.

Main theme returns
in subdominant!
(IV – F major)

Musical score for the Recapitulation section, beginning in F major. The score consists of two systems of piano accompaniment. The first system is highlighted with a red box, indicating the return of the main theme. The second system continues the recapitulation.

Recapitulation

Returning to main theme in IV allows secondary theme (originally in V) to be stated in tonic key I

However, Mozart briefly returns to dominant key of exposition before reverting to tonic.

Secondary theme in tonic key!
(I – C major)

Recapitulation and closing section

