

Musical Form

Module 2 of *Music: Under the Hood*

John Hooker
Carnegie Mellon University

Osher Course
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1

Outline

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

2

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**



3

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
 - Variations over repeating bass
 - For example, Richard Rogers' *Blue Moon*

4

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

5

Musical Forms


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



6

Sonata Allegro Form

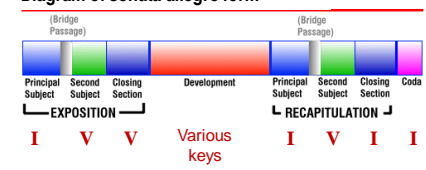
- **AABA structure**
 - **AA: Exposition, repeated**
 - Main theme in tonic
 - Secondary theme in dominant
 - **B: Development**
 - Multiple keys, usually minor
 - **A: Recapitulation**
 - Main theme returns in tonic
 - Secondary theme in dominant
 - Many variations!



7

Sonata Allegro Form


Diagram of sonata allegro form



8

Sonata Allegro Form


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



9


Example

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



10


Main theme in tonic key (I - C major)



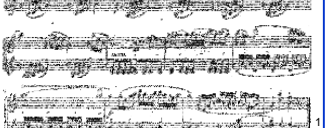
Exposition
Tonic key, modulating to dominant. Repeated.

Modulation to V


Secondary theme in dominant key (V - G major)



[Audio file](#)

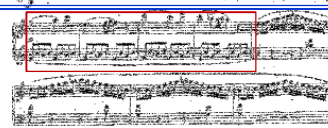


Development
Beginning in v - G minor

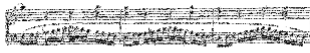


Main theme returns in subdominant! (IV - F major)


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



3