FORMS IN INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC
prepared by Vaclav Nelhybel

Music Examples By Chamber Orchestra And Piano
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Narrator: WILLIAM GEIB

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The purpose of this record is to outline the basic principles of form in instrumental music.

The chart at the end of this script gives some examples of compositions in the respective forms.

Not included are contrapuntal forms.

SIDE ONE

Band 1:

We are going to consider the basic principles of form in instrumental music.

Music has two dimensions: one is vertical, that is, the simultaneity of two or more musical sounds; the other is horizontal, which means the progression of music in time.

Musical form coordinates the vertical and horizontal elements of music according to certain rules.

Figure (or motif)

The smallest unit among the musical forms is called the figure. A figure consists of only a few notes forming the nucleus from which a longer melodic line is developed.

Here is such a figure: Music 1

Theme

A series of four different versions of the same figure can create a complete melodic line, a theme. Such a melodic line has to contain a latent logical progression of chords based on the principle of the classical cadence. We shall play a theme consisting of four versions of the figure from example number 1.

The first version represents the tonic, the second version the sub-dominant, the third version the dominant, and the fourth version represents the stronger form of the dominant resolved to its final tonic.

The second version is an exact transposition of the basic figure one fourth higher; the third version is a melodically-varied inverted form, and the fourth version is melodically-varied in order to realize the conclusion of the theme on the tonic.

The rhythmical pattern of a figure has to be significant enough to make the melodic variations recognizable as modifications of the basic figure. Here is the example. Music 2

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\[\text{Example notation}\]
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Band 2:

Dividing of a figure

We shall use a passage from the third Leonore Overture by Beethoven to demonstrate a different technique of developing a melodic line from one figure.

The passage opens with the basic figure, followed by its repetition which is freely transposed one third higher. Music 3

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\[\text{Example notation}\]
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From now on, only certain parts of the figure are repeated. The next four measures contain two modified repeats of the first two measures of the basic figure. Music 4

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\[\text{Example notation}\]
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Each of the remaining sixteen measures contains a modified version of the first measure of the basic figure. Music 5

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\[\text{Example notation}\]
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The latent harmony of this melodic line consists of eight measures tonic and twenty measures dominant in C major. Our first musical example had a periodic construction based on the classical cadence.

The example from Beethoven’s Leonore Overture, on the other hand, is non-periodic.

The technique of dividing a figure into fragments and repeating them is often used in the development section of the sonata form.

Band 3:

Period

A period consists of two parts which are called phrases. In most cases the phrases are of the same length, four and four or eight and eight measures long. Music 6
As demonstrated in that example, the simplest form of a period consists, melodically, of two identical phrases with different cadences at their respective ends. The first phrase ends on the dominant, thus creating an imperfect cadence; the second phrase ends in a perfect cadence on the tonic. Music 7.

The theme from the first movement of Mozart's A major Sonata for piano is a perfect example of a regular period which consists of sixteen modified statements of one figure (in the sonata this period is repeated; therefore, sixteen statements).

Music 8

Extended, symmetrical period

The next example is also a regular period consisting of two phrases, each four measures long. Music 9

This is merely an adaptation for piano of the minuet theme from Haydn's String Quartet in G major. In Haydn's composition, each phrase actually has five measures. The extension of the phrases is realized by the prolongation of their cadences. This type of period is called an extended symmetrical period.

Music 10

Extended, asymmetrical period

Yet, if only one phrase is extended, we call it an extended asymmetrical period. Music 11
Double period

The theme of the last movement from Beethoven's Ninth Symphony is a complete musical thought consisting of four phrases. The first two phrases create a regular period; the third phrase, based (harmonically) almost entirely on the dominant, is followed by the repetition of the second phrase. Such a succession of two periods containing one musical thought is called double period. Music 12

Band 4:

COMPOSITION WITH ONE THEME

Song form in two parts (Binary form)

The simplest musical form with one theme is called song form in two parts. The name "song form" from the German "Liedform" does not mean a vocal composition but an instrumental composition with a single theme.

The figure is the basic unit in the hierarchy of musical form elements. As we have seen, several repeats of a figure can create a period consisting of two phrases with different cadences.

The succession of two periods with different cadences is the basic pattern of the song form (in two parts).

The next example, which is a song form in two parts, consists of two periods, the first ending on the dominant, the second on the tonic. In the next example, an Air by Handel, both periods are repeated. Music 13

Song form in three parts (Ternary form)

A song form in three parts consists of a period followed by a contrasting section of the length of a phrase, and concluded by the repetition of the second phrase of the initial period (or of the whole period). In other words, it is a double period whose third phrase is replaced by a section which introduces new melodic and harmonic elements.

A typical example is the minuet from the Sonata in G major for piano by Beethoven. (The contrasting middle section is followed by the repetition of the whole initial period). Music 14

Extended song form in two parts

The song form in two or three parts is suited for miniature compositions only. In its extended
The extended song form is the basic pattern for many compositions of considerable length and importance. An extended song form in two parts consists of two extended periods. In our next example, a Courante from a Suite by Johann Pachelbel, the first extended period is fourteen measures long, the second period fifteen measures.

Music 15

Extended song form in three parts

In the extended song form in three parts all three sections are extended. The contrasting middle part is often developed from the main theme, as demonstrated in our next example, Mendelssohn's Song Without Words, Opus 30, No. 4, for piano. Music 16 (The score not included in the script.)

Baud 5:

Variations

The name variations applies to a musical composition, divided into several sections, based on one theme.

The first section introduces a complete, self-contained theme. All of the following sections contain various modifications of some aspects of the theme, for example, of the tune, the bass, the harmonic progression or polyphonic texture, the rhythmical or metrical patterns, and of the key.

The principle of this form is that of creating variety within the unity of one theme.

As a theme let's take a passage of four measures played by strings. Music 17

In the following variation several aspects of the theme are modified. The key is changed from C major to D minor. The new bass in the variation is derived from the rhythmical pattern of the first two notes in the theme. The melody in the variation is rhythmically augmented. The original forte sound of the strings is soft and muted in the variation. Music 18

The second variation, played pizzicato by the strings, changes the meter from the original 4/8 to 3/8 measures. Music 19

Now we shall hear excerpts from a well-known composition, the Sonata No. 12 by Corelli, called Pollicia con Variazioni.

This composition has twenty three variations. We shall hear the theme and the last variation entirely. From variations No. 1, 2, 3, 6, 11, and 15, we shall hear only the initial four measures which briefly demonstrate the modifications of the theme.
The adaptation for strings of the original composition for violin and piano magnifies and emphasizes the changes which the theme is undergoing in the course of the variations. Music 20
Chaconne and Passacaglia

The Chaconne and Passacaglia are both variations which use generally contrapuntal variation devices. There are some unresolved controversies about how to define the difference between the two.

The Chaconne, originally a Spanish dance, is usually in 3/4 time with the accent on the second beat of the bar. (Note the theme of Corelli's Follia). It is most of the time a series of variations on a theme in the bass (ground bass), and usually eight measures long.

The Passacaglia, also of Spanish origin (pasear means to walk), is a series of variations with the theme in any of the voices involved. The Passacaglia is more solemn than the Chaconne and is never vocal.

SIDE TWO

Band 1:

COMPOSITION WITH TWO OR MORE THEMES

Rondo

The name Rondo is derived from French Rondeau which means a "round dance". The original French rondeau contained a main section, performed by all dancers, alternating with couplets danced by solo pairs. Rondo as a musical form has a main subject followed by an episode in a different key, and is concluded by the return of the main subject. This is the basic principle of a Rondo.

It may remind you of the three-part song form, but it is more developed. In the song form, the middle section is derived thematically from the initial (main) section. In the Rondo, on the other hand, the second section contains a new, contrasting theme. In the small three-part song form the first part is a period, the second part often only a contrasting phrase, and the third part again a period. In the Rondo, all sections are double periods or three-part song forms. A Rondo consisting of one main subject followed by one episode and concluded by the return of the main subject is called Small Rondo. If the main subject is repeated several times and each time is followed by a different episode, we call this form Large Rondo. It is also called Rondo of the second, third or fourth form, depending on the number of episodic themes. In the large Rondo the final statement of the main theme is followed by a coda.

Our musical example demonstrating the Rondo is the Rondo in B flat major by Francois Couperin. It is a Rondo of the third form with three episodic couplets. It is a very condensed Rondo form in which both the main subject and the episodes are periods.

The first eight measures, which are repeated, contain the main subject, and are followed by the first episode in measures 8 to 12.

Measures 12 to 20 contain the exact repeat of the main subject (without repetition). Measures 20 to 28 introduce the second episode in the mediant key
of G minor; and again the exact repetition of the main subject in measures 26 to 38 is followed by the third episode, with the tendency to modulate into C minor in measures 36 to 50.

The composition is concluded by the exact repetition of the main subject in measures 50 to 58.

As we can see, the individual sections are mostly simple, not extended periods. However, the over-all lay-out of the composition is a typical Rondo. In more elaborate Rondos, as we know from the last movements of sonatas and symphonies, the individual sections are very often large three-part song forms of considerable length.

Now we shall hear the miniature Rondeau by François Couperin. Music 21

Rondeau by François Couperin

The application of the Rondo form in the Sonata or Symphony offers a great variety of deviations from the basic Rondo form. The most complicated Rondo form, also called Grand Rondo, contains a section in which the main subject and one of the episodes create the development as we shall see it in the Sonata form.

Band 2:

Sonata

In Italian, the expression Sonata originally meant a "sounded musical piece" in contrast to a Cantata, which meant a "sung piece". We are going to discuss the Classical Sonata, which means either a cyclical form of three or four movements, or the organization of one movement.

The Sonata, as the form of a movement, contains two main themes and is divided into four sections: the exposition, development, recapitulation and coda.

A Sonata is a rather elaborate composition, and since composers seldom follow exact rules when creating a composition, it would require more time than we can devote to it to take one of the existing sonata movements and to analyze all of its many deviations from and modifications of the established basic form. So we will demonstrate the form with a "fabricated" movement containing the basic principles in a very simple, unsophisticated way. The most important sections of the movement will first be demonstrated on the piano, and then the entire movement will be played by the orchestra.

At the end of the script you will find the complete orchestral score of the Sonata movement with all measures numbered. In the lines beneath the score there is a detailed thematic analysis with indications of the keys involved. At the bottom is the piano score.

Exposition

The first section of the Sonata form is the exposition. It begins, sometimes after a slow introduction, with the statement of the first theme (or subject) in the main key of the movement. (Piano score measures 1 to 10) Music 22

The first subject is the strong, energetic, so to
The subject of music will now be illustrated in contrast to the second subject, which will be described as the expression and melodic "female" element.

The subject is introduced in measures 12 to 17 and repeated in different orchestration in measures 18 to 23. Measures 10 and 11 of the orchestral score contain a short bridge between the two main subjects. In more elaborate forms of this bridge section can be quite long and may contain thematic material which is independent to a certain degree. In such cases we speak of the first group of themes. If the second subject is also extended by some thematic material, we speak of the first and second thematic groups in the Sonata form.

Here is the piano demonstration of the second subject.

(Piano score measures 12 to 24) Music 23

The second subject in a Sonata is always in the dominant key. The key of the main theme in our demonstration is C minor; the second subject is in G major.

In most cases the exposition has a third theme which creates the concluding coda section of the exposition. In our demonstration the third theme is derived from the first subject. It is repeated twice, in different orchestration, in measures 24 to 31: (Music 26)

In classical Sonatas the exposition is almost always repeated. However, we shall proceed directly to the description of the second section of the Sonata form: the development.

**Development**

It starts with the modulation from G minor to E minor. Thematic, the section is based on the first subject. On the piano we shall demonstrate measures 32 to 42. (Music 29)

In measures 43 to 46 there is a modulation from E minor to A minor, using the abbreviating form of the second subject. (Music 28)

Measure 46 is a short bridge which introduces the regular motion in eighth notes derived from the second subject. (Music 27)

In the following six measures a combination of typical, rhythmic patterns from the first and second subjects is employed. This section modulates into the dominant of B minor. The regular motion of eighth notes which introduced this section acquires a very strong formulation in measures 52 in the last three measures. (Piano score measures 47 to 56) (Music 30)

Above the pulsation in eighth notes of the B minor dominant (F sharp) the first subject is presented in a smooth, graceful form. The eighth-note motion is interrupted at the end of this section (measures 52 to 56) by a rhythmic pattern derived from the initial figure of the second subject. (Piano score measures 52 to 56) (Music 30)

Measures 56 to 59 are the transposition of measures 52 to 56 into A minor: (Music 30)

The following seven measures (59 to 65) are three sequential repeats of the middle part of the first subject. (Music 31)

In measures 65 to 68 the first part of the first subject is repeated twice in A minor. (Music 36)

The next two measures modulate from A minor into the dominant of B minor. Melodically, a combination of the first figure from the first and second subjects is used. (Piano score measures 69 to 70) (Music 33)

The regular eighth-note motion in complementary rhythmic patterns creates a bridge leading into the tonic of D minor. (Piano score measures 71 to 73) (Music 34)

Measures 74 to 78 are the transposition of measures 69 to 73 one tone lower. It is a modulation from B minor to G minor. (Piano score measures 74 to 78) (Music 35)

A fragment of the first figure from the first subject creates a sequential progression on the dominants of the keys of F, B flat, and E flat. It ends on the tonic in E flat minor. (Piano score measures 79 to 81) (Music 36)

In measures 82 to 88 the partially inverted form of the coda subject is employed. It ends on the dominant of E flat minor. (Piano score measures 89 to 90) (Music 37)

Measures 90 to 98 are a free, transposed repetition of measures 52 to 59.

Measures 98 to 101 contain a Largo based melodically on the first figure of the first subject. (Piano score measures 98 to 101) (Music 38)

The next three measures (101 to 103) prepare the concluding part of the development based on the diminished form of the first figure of the second subject. The piano will play this figure as it is repeated in measures 104 and 105. (Music 39)

The concluding section of the development prepares the entrance of the third section of the Sonata form, the recapitulation, which starts with measure 114.

The development is the most sophisticated section of the Sonata. To introduce the subjects many technical devices are employed such as fragmentation and melodic modifications of the subjects, constant modulation into keys other than that of either the first or second subject. Long sections of rhythmic patterns on one note are established as harmonic focal points around which the thematic material is centered; unison in octaves alternates with homophonic settings in full chords or with a contrapuntal figure. In the course of the development the regular flow of eighth notes is developed into a significant driving force of the music. The development is based on the antagonism of the two main subjects.

**Recapitulation**

The third section of the Sonata form, the recapitulation, represents the reconciliation of the thematic duality established in the exposition and in the development. The recapitulation begins with the first subject. In our example the first subject is an exact repeat of the exposition measures 114 to 116). Measure 116 represents the dominant in the key of C. The following measures, 117 to 130, contain the second subject (F major). In the exposition the second subject was in the dominant key (G major). The change of key of the second subject, which is always played in the same key as the first subject, is typical for the reconciliation of the thematic duality (in the recapitulation).

The first subject in our demonstration is C minor; the second subject in the recapitulation is in C major. As you will observe, the tonic note is the same for both themes; however, the major-minor character of the keys is retained.

In measures 130 to 146 the coda subject, also in the key of C, is introduced.

**Coda**

The fourth section, the coda, starts with measure 146 and functions as an epilogue of the movement. In our example, the coda stresses the reconciliation of the two main subjects. It employs the initial fragments of both subjects, this time both in C major. A substantial part of the coda employs cadence devices to prepare the conclusion of the movement.

Now the entire movement will be played by the orchestra. This movement is "dramatic" in order to demonstrate the skeleton of a symphonic movement in Sonata form. Its purpose is purely demonstrative.
The most common devices are used in an extremely unsophisticated way. This accumulation of architectural principles of the Sonata form transformed into musical sound creates a series of prototype devices; these, aesthetically speaking, result in an over-simplified form of the "Grand Symphony" rather than in an inspired musical composition. After long deliberation, this way of demonstrating the highest musical form was chosen with the hope that it might help the listener to a better understanding of the complexities of a symphony, and thus to bring him more aesthetic pleasure when listening to real symphonic music.
Coda: Cadencing, no thematic material from 14th-15th, 15th Subject used.

C major.

Final perfect cadence in C major.
FIGURE

PERIOD

a) Regular
\[ 2 + 2 + 2 + 2 \]
1st phrase
4
2nd phrase
4
4 measures

b) Extended asymmetrical
5
5 measures

Music 10

c) Extended asymmetrical
4
6 measures

Music 11

DOUBBLE PERIOD
\[ \frac{1}{4} \] \[ \frac{1}{4} \] \[ \frac{1}{4} \] \[ \frac{1}{4} \]
\[ a \] \[ b \] \[ a' \] \[ b' \]

Music 12

VARIATIONS

Corelli: Folia con Variazioni.
J.S. Bach: Goldberg Variations.
Handel: Harmonious Blacksmith.
Mozart: Sonata A minor for piano.
Beethoven: 3) Variations on a Waltz
by Diabelli, Op. 120
Brahms: Variations and Fugue on a
theme by Handel, by Paganini.
Dvorak: Symphonic Variations.
C. Franck: Variations Symphoniques.
Elgar: Enigma Variations.
R. Strauss: Don Quixote.
Copland: Jubilee Variation.
Schuman: Variations on a
Recitative.

J.S. Bach: IV Sonata for Violin Solo.
Handel: Suite de Pieces.
J.S. Bach: Passacaglia in C minor for
Organ.
Copland: Passacaglia for Piano Solo.

CHACONNE

PASSACAGLIA

SCHEN Kick in Three Parts (Ternary Form)

a) Simple
\[ 4 \] \[ 4 \] \[ 4 \] \[ 4 \]
\[ 4 \] \[ 4 \] \[ 4 \] \[ 4 \]
\[ 8 \] \[ 4 \] \[ 4 \] \[ 4 \]
\[ 8 \] \[ 4 \] \[ 4 \] \[ 4 \]
8 measures
Period
Phrase
Period
A
B
A

b) Extended
\[ 8 \] \[ 4 \] \[ 8 \] \[ 4 \] \[ 8 \] \[ 4 \]
Simple Form
Extension by repetition
\[ A \] \[ B \] \[ A \] \[ B' \] \[ Coda \]
\[ 8 \] \[ 8 \] \[ 8 \] \[ 10 \] \[ 20 \]

The middle part B is extended from the regular phrase into a period.
The adding of B' and a long Coda affects an extended ABA form.
A composition of 1k7 measures based on one theme. The extension of
all three parts (A B A) is achieved by the use of the techniques
typical for the development section of the Sonata Form.

DA CAPO TERNARY FORM

A Menuetto (G minor)
\[ 14 \] \[ 26 \]
\[ 14 \] \[ 26 \]
Extended binary form

B Trio (G major)
\[ 14 \] \[ 26 \]
\[ 14 \] \[ 26 \]
Extended binary form

A Da Capo Menuetto (G minor)

This creates a Ternary form, each part consisting of an extended binary form.

Music 14

R. Schumann:
Op. 68, No. 6
Album for Youth

R. Schumann:
Op. 68, No. 23
Album for Youth

Music 16

Mendelssohn:
Song Without Words
Opus 30, No. 4.

Mozart: Minuet from
Symphony in G minor

Minuets and Scherzos
in classical symphonies.
Marches
Dances such as polka or waltz.
COMPOSITION WITH ONE THEME

**SONG FORM IN TWO PARTS (BINARY FORM)**

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<th></th>
<th>a) Simple</th>
<th>b) Extended</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 measures</td>
<td>a  b</td>
<td>a  8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
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</tbody>
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The extended Binary Form is the basic form of SUITES in the 17th and 18th Centuries. Both parts (A and B) are repeated.

**MUSIC 13**

**also:**

Handel: Water Music
VIII Hornpipe

Handel: Music For The Royal Fireworks
La Paix and Mignon

Music 15

Handel: Water Music
VII. Bourree

Handel: Music For The Royal Fireworks
Bourree

J. S. Bach:
French Suite No. 1
1) Allemande
2) Courante
3) Sarabande
4) Menuet I.
5) Gigue

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COMPOSITION WITH TWO OR MORE THEMES

**RONDO**

a) as separate composition

b) as fast last movement in the Sonata or Symphony

c) as slow movement

**SONATA (as composition in several movements)**

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<th>Sonata form</th>
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<td>1st mvnt.</td>
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<td>2nd mvnt.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3rd mvnt.</td>
<td>Scherzo</td>
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<td>4th mvnt.</td>
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<td>2nd mvnt.</td>
<td>Sonata (Short development)</td>
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<td>4th mvnt.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1st mvnt.</td>
<td>Variations</td>
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<tr>
<td>2nd mvnt.</td>
<td>Scherzo</td>
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<tr>
<td>3rd mvnt.</td>
<td>Funeral march</td>
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<tr>
<td>4th mvnt.</td>
<td>Rondo (Sonata)</td>
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**MUSIC 21**

Fr. Couperin: Rondo
C. M. Weiler: Rondo brilliant (Aufforderung zum Tanz) Op. 62
Beethoven: Rondo a Caprice in D major
("Rage o'er a lost penny, vented in a caprice.")

**Mozart:** Violin Sonata in B flat major, Adagio, 2nd movement.

Mendelssohn: Violin Concerto, second movement.

**Mozart:** Symphony No. 38, in D major, called "Symphony without a Minuet".

**Mozart:** Sonata in A major for piano, No. 12.

Beethoven: Symphony No. 3, "Eroica".

**Mozart:** Symphony in E flat major, No. 39.

Beethoven: Sonata No. 12 in A flat major for piano.