

November 7, 2007

Binary vs. Ternary form:

- Binary form is characterized by unity and continuity. The continuity is the result of the tonally open first section. Ternary form, contrastingly, is characterized by variety and discontinuity. This discontinuity is brought on by the continuation of music (in a different key) after a tonally closed section.
- This is not to imply, however, that ternary form is entirely devoid of unity and continuity. These are the elements that make for good composition. The difference here is that they are not as prominently featured in the form.

The key of the ternary B section:

- The B section of a ternary form is not typically the same as the expected goal of modulation in a binary form. In other words, the key of the ternary B section is usually NOT the dominant. A few possible (common) B-section keys are
  - the relative minor,
  - the sub-dominant,
  - the flat mediant,
  - and the flat submediant
- Ternary form matured later than binary form. This is the reason for the permissibility of more distantly-related keys of the sections. (Remember, earlier pieces did not stray too far from the home key, modulating only to keys with a difference of one or two pitches.)

Sonata form:

- In a sense, covering sonata form *after* ternary form is a step backwards. This is because sonata form is rooted in binary form. On the other hand, the element of contrast is as important here as it is in ternary form.
- The first section of a sonata form is open. It ends in the complementary key (usually the dominant or the relative major if in minor).

A brief history of sonata form:

- Sonata form truly begins with C.P.E. Bach in pieces such as his Prussian sonatas. These sonatas from the 1740s are commonly viewed as the progenitors of sonata form. They are for solo instruments and characteristically contain virtuosic show passages. Heightened expression starts to become more important at this point. This is evident in the music.
- The height of sonata form was in the late 1700s (~1780s). At this point, sonatas are also taking cues from orchestral music.
- Sonata form became much bigger than just a form. It became a style and a phenomenon showing its influence even on Mozart arias.

Structural functions in sonata form:

- These are not necessarily intentionally composed, but are certainly present in sonata form:
  - Introductory
  - Expository (stable, with theme)
  - Transitional (dissolving theme/tonality)
  - Developmental (thematic material is worked out)
  - Terminative (conclusive, cadences, flourishes)

Haydn, Hob. 37/I (1778-80)

- (see handout)
- When approaching a piece in sonata form, there are several questions that you should consider:
  - Where are the boundaries?
  - What is the key scheme?
  - What and where is the thematic material?
  - Can we locate and identify structural functions?
  - What can we expect and what do we hear?
- In this case, we have a piece in D major. Typically, we would expect this to modulate to A major (V) and perhaps B minor (vi). In this case the sonata follows our expectations:
  - In mm. 1-8 we get some expository material, presenting the main theme twice.
  - In mm. 9-16 there is a transitional passage that eliminates the theme and brings us to A major. The dominant chord forming the half cadence is followed by a big caesura (a pause or rest) and is then reinterpreted as the tonic of the dominant key.
  - In mm. 17-35 we find another expository section, this time with a new theme. This theme contrasts the opening material (it is very tight and stepwise instead of the leaps at the beginning and now has sixteenth notes instead of eighth notes). This section ends with a perfect authentic cadence in the new key.
  - Mm. 35-40 are terminative in function. They do present a new (closing) theme, but one that is diminutive in size compared to main themes of the exposition. (This terminative section, we will see, will become greatly expanded in Beethoven's sonata forms.)
  - The development section begins in m. 41 and continues through m. 60. As expected, the music does modulate to B minor (vi) by m. 50 via a sequential passage.