Binary & Ternary Forms

Formal Element Review

- **Motive:** A motive is the smallest recognizable musical idea.
  - labeled with lowercase letters starting at the end of the alphabet

- **Phrase:** a relatively independent musical idea that moves towards a cadence as its goal; a complete musical thought
  - labeled with lowercase letters starting at the beginning of the alphabet
  - *subphrase*: a musical unit smaller than a phrase but still a coherent gesture
  - *sentence*: a particular type of phrase or phrase group with an internal structure of 1+1+2

- **Period:** a pair of phrases that specifically work together in an antecedent-consequent relationship
  - First phrase (*anteecedent*) will have an inconclusive cadence (half cadence or IAC)
  - Second phrase (*consequent*) will have a conclusive cadence (usually a PAC)

Formal Structures

- Formal structures are larger sections of music made up of these formal elements (phrases, periods, etc.)
  - typically labeled with uppercase letters starting at the beginning of the alphabet

  - Each standard formal structures contains a specific pattern of these larger sections (with minor variations)

Factors to Consider in Formal Analysis

- Key areas: in which key a phrase or section starts and/or ends
  - closed vs. open sections
    - a closed section is self-contained
    - ends in the same key in which it begins with a conclusive cadence
    - an open section is not self-contained
    - often features a half-cadence, modulation to the dominant, or modulation to the relative major

- Motivic use: similar or contrasting motivic use within phrases or sections

- Formal elements: phrases, cadences, periods, etc.

Simple Binary Form

- Two larger sections – called **reprises** or **refrains**
  - each reprise is typically repeated
  - second reprise is often longer than the first
  - each reprise usually consists of several phrases
    - reprise 1 – typically two phrases (often a period)
    - reprise 2 – typically two sections, each potentially more than one phrase

  - Common form in dance movements of Baroque suites and also used in Classical period music

Binary Harmonic Structure

- Sectional binary
  - features two closed sections
    - reprise 1 closes with a PAC in the tonic key
    - reprise 2 typically continues in tonic, reaches the dominant near the middle, then closes in tonic
  - anthology example: *Minuet* from the Notebook for Anna Magdalena Bach

- Continuous binary
  - features an open first section; suggests continuation to the second section
    - reprise 1 closes with a HC in tonic or an IAC or PAC in a closely related key
    - reprise 2 typically continues in the dominant or new key then returns to close in tonic
  - anthology examples:
    - *Minuet* from Divertimento in C Major by Haydn – dominant type
    - *Evening Song* by Turk – relative major type
Binary Phrase Structure
- Simple Binary
  - features no reprise of the original material at the tonic level at the end of reprise 2
    - typical phrase analysis of a-a-b-b or a-b-a-c
  - anthology example: Minuet from the Notebook for Anna Magdalena Bach
- Rounded Binary
  - features a return of the initial material (closing on tonic) at the end of reprise 2
    - typical phrase analysis of a-a-b-a, a-a-b-aa, or a-b-c-a
  - first half of the second refrain is dependent on the return of initial material for closure
  - anthology example: Theme from Piano Sonata in D Major by Mozart
- Balanced Binary
  - features a return of the second phrase of the A section at the tonic level as closing material
    - typical phrase analysis of a₁-a₂-b-a₂
  - both sections end with the same material (in continuous binary the sections will end in different keys)
  - anthology example: Evening Song by Turk

Simple Ternary Form
- Three closed independent sections – called reprises or refrains (as in binary)
  - three reprises may be related (i.e. A-A-B, A-B-A, etc.) or unrelated (A-B-C)
  - most typical is A-B-A (or A’)
    - both A sections are tonally closed
    - the B section is contrasting, tonally closed, and often in a closely related key
      - also typically longer, more independent, and more harmonically stable than in rounded binary
    - the second A section is complete and often identical to the original or minimally altered
  - simple ternary is much less common than rounded binary
  - anthology example: Humming Song by Schumann

Compound Ternary
- A ternary design is more common as compound formal structure
- Functions as a means of creating larger forms (Minuet and Trio; Da Capo Aria)
  - each section is typically in binary form
  - combined as minuet-trio-minuet or A-B-da capo A
  - anthology examples: Minuet & Trio from Divertimento in C Major by Haydn

Larger Formal Structures
- Sonata form is related to binary with the addition of a development section
- Rondo form is related to ternary with the incorporation of additional contrasting episodes
Evening Song - Daniel Gottlob Turk

Minuet from the notebook of Anna Magdelana Bach
Minuet and Trio from *Divertimento in C Major* (Hob. XVI:1) - Joseph Haydn
Theme from Piano Sonata in D Major (K. 284) - Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart