CHAPTER | 4

The Structures of Music

SIMPLE AND COMPLEX MUSICAL RELATIONSHIPS

Basic musical properties such as pitch, dynamic, timbre, and duration do not exist in the abstract. Consequently, music is made up of both simple and complex structures that utilize various combinations of these fundamental elements. This chapter explores a wide range of possibilities for expressing diverse musical relationships.

Melody

When the term "melody" is used, it appears most everyone understands its meaning in relation to music. Yet this term can be rather difficult to put into words. Even so, a *melody* is often recognized as a succession of single pitches going some-where with an appeal to the senses, heard as a recognizable whole. No matter the style, voice type, instrument, or pitch register used, it is usually the most pro-nounced linear aspect of music—that "tune" one goes home singing.

The melodic line may be confined to a relatively narrow pitch range. At the same time, there are many times when its curve may include several large leaps, in addition to several occasions when it progresses by small intervals, covering a rather wide pitch range. Some melodies contain notes that have relatively long durations, while others are characterized by notes that are quite short. Various melodies may move forward using a rhythmic pattern that is repeated, while others will change dramatically. Melodies are sometimes sung or played very softly, other times loudly. Of course, subtle and bold dynamic gradations may exist as well. When a composer takes into account the selection of pitches, or the scale, that will comprise a melody, it is in addition a contemplation that will profoundly contribute to its quality and timbre.

Indeed, there are numerous considerations involved in creating a unique melodic character, as melodies are often used to express an infinite variety of moods, colors, and images. For example, some melodies may convey the blues,

while others communicate joyfulness, playfulness, love, horror, fright, action, celestial contemplation, meditative states, and so forth. Nevertheless, what most melodies appear to hold in common is their potential to encourage the listener's interest in where the succession of notes leads that comprise them, and what moods they relate.

A melody, like any good story, is communicated by a progressive series of thoughts, feelings, or ideas. In literature, for example, words are chosen and organized for a particular purpose. Grammatical structures such as sentences are often based on a linear sequence of words that make up structural units, called phrases, with each one leading logically to the next. Likewise, melodies often consist of smaller parts called *phrases*. A phrase is a sequence of notes grouped together to form a unit in music, each leading sensibly to the next. When text is used in music, the string of words that grammatically form a unit often dictates the musical phrase length and place of pause. For example, when lyrics end with a rhyming word and punctuation mark, the musical phrase will often coincide with, and emphasize, those features. A few examples of two rhyming lines, also marking two symmetrical musical phrases, are:

Twinkle, twinkle, little <u>star</u> [comma]
How I wonder what you <u>are</u> [comma]

   OR

Ring around the <u>rosy</u> [comma]
Pocket full of <u>posy</u> [comma]

FIGURE 4.1 *Au Clair De la Lune*

Frequently, all phrase lengths in a particular piece are two, four, eight, and sixteen measures (or bars). The blues, for example, are fundamentally made up of three, four-bar phrases, commonly referred to as "twelve-bar blues." A familiar folk tune, "By the Moon's Pale Light" ("Au Clair De la Lune") continuously repeats the rhythmic patterns of the first four bars, which are made up of two smaller units of two symmetrical bars (fig. 4.1). All of its phrases add up to sixteen measures or bars. You may notice that lines 1, 2, and 4 are also comprised of identical pitches, though the text changes. This kind of musical repetition may be indicated by means of lowercase letters, signifying the internal relationships of phrase lengths, as opposed to capital letters often used to refer to larger organizational relationships. Hence, the structure of this melody is **a a b a**, its **b** material providing the only contrasting phrase.

In much music, as in much speech, phrase lengths are not always equivalent. The melody "America" has phrases that are not of equal length (fig 4.2). Its first phrase is six measures long, consisting of three, two-bar units; bars 3 and 4 repeat the rhythms of the first two bars. The second phrase begins by repeating the rhythms of the first four measures of the melody, but suddenly introduces different rhythms that cause this phrase to be extended to eight full bars. The melody is fourteen bars long, made up of a six-bar phrase and an eight-bar phrase, with their respective subdivision of units. The melodic form is **a b**.

FIGURE 4.2 *America*

When following a melody's linear contour and mood, we often notice that it builds to a high point, or climax, arriving approximately three quarters of the way into a song, resolving its tension near the end. Sometimes its climax is the result of a steady melodic progression to a high note. Other times, it may be expressed by one large leap upwards. A whole passage may otherwise be used to build to, and sustain, climactic action. The *climax* is the most exciting or important moment, or the point toward which a melody strove. In "Star Spangled Banner," the climax is

boldly professed with the phrase, "and the land of the free." So important is the word "free" that it is assigned the highest note of the song, and the singer or instrumentalist is afforded the liberty to hold it for a very long time, to extend (a musical metaphor) and thus heighten the climax even more. The tension wanes immediately after, with the phrase, "and the home of the brave." Here, the music also leads to a sense of conclusion. Such stopping places in music are called *cadences*. Of course, as in grammatical punctuation, musical stopping or pausing points may reflect many different degrees of finality. Consequently, musical punctuations are found at the end of phrases, melodies, entire sections of larger works, and at their finish.

You may have noticed that a melody is the major musical component of a *song*, which is a relatively short composition for solo voice, that is often but not necessarily accompanied, and written in a fairly simple style. A melody is also used often as a central feature in large, complex structures, generally written for ensembles such as the string quartet, symphony orchestra, or choir. When this happens, the melody is referred to as a *theme*, which means "subject" or "topic." As a theme, it usually gets manipulated in various ways. It may have its rhythms exaggerated in length (*augmentation*), or shortened (*diminution*). It may have its overall phrase length shortened repeatedly, reducing it to just a few basic notes (*fragmentation*). It may be presented in different tonalities, or played by different instruments to achieve different colors. In addition, such genres generally include more than one theme, presented as an emotional, tonal, and color contrast. All the same, each principal or basic melodic subject is considered a theme, and is open to thematic exploration.

Motives

Though the term "theme" may apply to a full-blown melody, as "topic," it may too serve to reference a short musical idea. Such thematic material, consisting of at least two notes forming the basis for development in a piece of music, is as well more specifically labeled a *motive*, or *motif*. One way to appreciate the power a musical motive may possess is to initially compare the entire concept to the business world's use of a logo. The most basic of symbols (such as an upward-curved line) can potentially conjure up a company's entire line of products, the places they are sold, their production, and their marketing strategies, as well as any other preexisting knowledge about it. In music, once a motive is introduced, all musical material contributing to its initial mood, character, and capacity is automatically associated with it, even when the briefest and most basic glimpse of its return takes place. The introduction of a motive may also serve as the seed or germ from which an entire piece unfolds. Arguably, the most famous musical motive in classical music repertoire comes from the opening of Ludwig van Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony*.

(Rhythm: short - short - short   —   long)

In this case, the rhythmic motive represents struggle or adversity, and provides the basis for his entire symphony. For those readers who are not familiar with this

symphony, and who can find the courage to reflect on, or to view, or review, the movie *Jaws*, you will quickly appreciate the power that can be generated by a half-step motive presented in a low-pitch register. This motive is introduced and developed at the beginning of the film and utilized throughout, to represent a gigantic shark's imminent appearance and savagery, or at various times to simply, but dramatically, lead the viewer to "only" imagine it. If there are any doubts that remain about the enormous power this particular motive holds after viewing this movie, try rewinding to a place where you know the shark is about to appear, and watch that segment again without audio. Need more evidence? Another, and perhaps more terrifying, example still may be the motive in Bernard Herrmann's score for the famous "shower scene" in the movie *Psycho* [CD 5, #15]. The musical motive here, which simply constitutes repeating a succinct high note, is so poignant that it is sometimes borrowed out of context, by someone often singing it with gestures mimicking a stabbing, to make a very stark point.

Though the examples used in this section may all appear rather bleak, they were selected to demonstrate to the reader that the musical brevity of a motive should in no way suggest its potential, for motives could carry with them a rather serious emotional and psychological wallop. The reader should also realize that motives in music are used to represent any number of things, some involving non-extra-musical associations (instrumental music that is self-contained, showing no reference to outside sources), but with no less poignancy. Then again, following recurring motives and their transformations may simply help guide the listener through musical journeys that are otherwise vague or ambiguous, but endlessly suggestive.

Texture

The term "texture" comes from the word "textile," where it refers to the weave of assorted threads in a piece of cloth. In music, *texture* is a term used to describe the various sounds and melodic lines taking place concurrently. The musical term is often used in the same way one generally describes clothing. The texture of music may be described as thick, when several voices, instruments, or their combination are simultaneously active; a thinly textured work is the opposite. If a piece appears dominated by brass instruments, one might say the work's texture is "brassy"; the texture of another work might simply be described as smooth," or "rough," and so on. Another sense of texture refers to a specific interactive approach utilized.

Monophony

When there is only one unaccompanied melodic line, its texture (or weave) is *monophony*. "Mono" means "one" channel carrying "sound" ("phony"). One may experience this texture quite often, especially if one is prone to sing alone, perhaps while driving a car or taking a shower. In musical repertoire there exist many wonderful melodies that have been intentionally written for unaccompanied solo voice or voices, or solo instrument or instruments, performing the same melody in *unison* (the same notes or melody performed by various voices or instruments in the same octave or in a different octave), which constitute a monophonic texture. For an example, please listen to "Alleluia," from the "Mass for Christmas Day" [CD 1, #2].

Polyphony

Polyphony is a texture that describes two or more melodies being sung or played simultaneously. "Poly" means "two or more" channels conveying "sound." The interest here is how each independent melodic line weaves in and out of the other. Many may have experienced using this texture while singing children's songs. Two examples include "Row, Row, Row Your Boat" and "Frère Jacque." Both songs are intentionally written to be sung with staggered vocal entrances. For example, in "Row, Row, Row Your Boat," after the first person or group (singing in unison) begins, the second person or group joins in from the beginning of the melody only after the first has completed singing the first two measures. A third person or group may begin after the second person or group has finished singing the first two measures. Each person or group, once arriving at the end, may repeat the entire song as many times as desired. The example in figure 4.3 illustrates how this works. The bracketed staffs show the individual parts, occurring simultaneously.

Clearly, after singing the same melody, one person or group cannot justifiably claim that this melody was any more important than another. Instead, the overall result from singing this polyphony hopefully produced a richer sonority and greater

FIGURE 4.3 "Row, Row, Row Your Boat"

attention to how the individual parts functioned together, compared to singing this melody monophonically. Because all voice parts sang the same melody and one person or group imitated each of the others, this polyphonic texture may more accurately be described as "imitative." *Imitative polyphony* takes place when two or more simultaneous melodic lines use the same or quite similar melodies, but with staggered entrances. As well, composers or performers often use imitation for just the first few notes or phrase of a melody, a practice that has come to be called *points of imitation*. For an example of this practice, please listen to Josquin des Prez's, "Agnus Dei," from *Missa Hercules dux Ferrarie* [CD 1, #11].

So far we have only briefly examined polyphonic textures that have been structured using the same or quite similar melodies, or a portion of them. Be that as it may, composers and performers may also use very different melodies to create polyphony, a texture that is called *nonimitative polyphony*. A familiar nonimitative performance practice often occurs in jazz, when each instrumentalist begins improvising (making up music on the spur of the moment) at the same time as another. Although each performer may be exploring both the melodic and harmonic possibilities of a particular melody, individual ideas and personalities often lead to divergent melodic episodes. Such examples of nonimitative polyphony may be heard in New Orleans–style jazz. Also, you may listen to Philippe de Vitry's "Garrit Gallus/In Nova Fert/Neuma" [CD 1, #5], which incorporates an early-notated use of this technique. Here, there are three vocal lines that are based on different poetry performed simultaneously, and each melodic line has different phrase lengths.

Homophony

Another kind of texture takes place when only one melody of real interest is presented with other sounds that do not really stand up on their own, but are used in such a way as to be harmoniously supportive of the melody. This texture is called *homophony*, and is perhaps the most commonly used today. Most pop songs, folk songs, blues songs, as well as textural sections within larger works such as a symphony, utilize it.

The subordinate sounds of the "accompaniment" often consist of chords. A *chord* is comprised of three or more notes played or sung simultaneously to harmonize and embellish a melody. When presented in their respective pitch order, each tone is usually the interval of a third apart. Sometimes the harmonic style outlines each chord by playing the notes one at a time. Sometimes the harmony will only consist of an interval (two pitches), suggesting an entire chord. Nonetheless, when we begin to focus our attention on the harmonic progression of chords, we will notice that some chords appear to demand resolution to another chord that seems at rest. Such examples are perhaps most obvious at the very end of a piece, as the listener is often led to a sense of final conclusiveness. The term *dissonance* or *discord* is used in such cases to describe intervals or chords, or any other musical sounds, that sound relatively unstable and needing resolution. *Consonance* refers to intervals or chords, or any other musical sound combinations that sound free of tension or discord.

Even so, we will come to understand in the historical chapters of this book how the meanings of the terms "consonance" and "dissonance" have changed profoundly through time. To serve as an example, a general survey would look something like this:

In ancient Greek culture, the numerical system of musical sounds and rhythms epitomized the harmony of the cosmos and thus corresponded to it. Any pitch that was not in agreement with the natural order of the universe was viewed as discordant, or a disturbance within it, and was therefore perceived as something producing chaos. In early medieval times, the concept of consonance and dissonance was appreciated by the relationship of any two successive notes in a melodic line. They even held superstitious notions about certain intervals. For example, the "augmented fourth" or "diminished fifth" (an interval constituting seven half steps; for example, the notes C to F#) was seen as the "devil's interval," and most certainly avoided.

Renaissance composers were certainly concerned about the pitches that make up a melody, but focused as well on maintaining consonant pitch relationships between two or more melodic lines occurring at the same time. Later, Baroque musicians looked to the relationship existing between the pitches occurring in a melody, as well as all others, to those in the bass. It was Classical period composers who really shed attention on particular chord qualities and their progressions, as discussed. Toward the end of the Romantic period, chord progressions had begun serving as a vehicle for extended harmonic journeys (achieved by suspending their succession in various ways, so as to avoid resolutions, and returns back "home" to the tonic). As most are aware, by the early twentieth century, all traditional distinctions representing dissonance as something so unstable that it needed to be both anticipated and resolved relatively quickly to a consonance has been completely abandoned. In addition, generalized labels assigned to consonance and dissonance, such as "pretty" and "harsh," become inappropriate. For example, the medievalists' interval "which belonged to the devil," is now used to begin Leonard Bernstein's very famous and "beautiful" song, "Maria," from *West Side Story*. Also, the half-step motive utilized in the movie *Jaws*, already explained in some detail, would never be described by anyone as "beautiful," "peaceful," or musically stable. As the twentieth-century composer Igor Stravinsky so eloquently stated:

> *Dissonance is no longer tied down to its former function. Having become an entity in itself, it frequently happens that dissonance neither prepares nor anticipates anything. Dissonance is thus no more an agent of disorder than consonance is a guarantee of security.*

This said, an appreciation of consonance and dissonance in musical repertory is now largely dependent on the listener's ability to decipher the composer's intent, or to experience a specific work with some preexisting knowledge about the composer's style.

Finally, the listener should be aware that the texture of any given work might, and often does, change. This is especially true of lengthier compositions, for changes of texture sustain interest as they create variety and contrast.

Musical Style and Form

To varying degrees, all human expression takes place within the cerebral, spiritual, emotional, and visceral realms. Utterances of any kind can be expressed freely, subtly, or boldly, and without any pre-thought or consideration. Yes, a simple "grunt" can be a means of meaningful communication! Even the boldest outcries

could often be impulsively expressed by making use of recognized structural patterns. For example, when someone spontaneously yells out "I hate this!" we may still observe the declaration as an outburst; because the person professing it utilized known linguistic speech patterns, we are more aware of its specific emotional meaning, as the statement also intimates that the particular person or group to whom it is generally directed understands what "this" is referring to. Recognized units of expression often serve as a more direct or specific means of communicating human ideas and feelings.

Human expression through music may be understood and appreciated by means of a performer freely articulating sounds used solely for their unique quality and purpose. Musical compositions are often assembled into specific structural patterns, easily recognized as a learned means of communication. Sometimes a composer will alternate the methods and of course, both manners may successfully coexist. A few concurrent examples are when a musical manuscript directs a performer to execute a foot-stamp within an otherwise traditional sounding instrumental piece, or, when we hear the great soul-singer, James Brown, freely sing, "OW! I feel good," at the beginning of his tune. The initial vocalization by James Brown in the last example could have easily been interpreted in a variety of ways. It was only after he vocally professed, "I feel good," that the intent was somewhat qualified. Clearly, the initial outcry not only captures the listener's attention from the beginning, but also proves to be an integral, meaningful, and exuberant addition to what might have otherwise appeared as a mundane musical phrase in the hands of another singer. In the first example, we observe that an instrumental piece (a musical work without text lines sung or spoken) cannot in and of itself be as specific as a work utilizing text. Instrumental sounds may nevertheless be appreciated as free from the strict definitions of words and syntax of sentence (much like a good deal of poetry and visual art), and may therefore become infinitely suggestive. Essentially, then, in the instrumental example specified, interjecting a foot-stamp within a more traditional, learned means of interaction could effectively accent, color, and dramatize other musical material associated with it.

Interactions of every kind mostly rely on generating recognizable shapes for expression, appearing in infinite variety and size. We have already explored how the basic elements of music may be used to construct larger shapes such as a phrase, melody, or texture. These musical constructions frequently become the building blocks for still larger contemplations, incorporated into the overall shape or planned design of a large musical composition. The ways in which the various musical sections are deployed in linear time dictate the composition's form.

Form in music is often associated with any musical interactions that produce a sense of overall shape and structure. This effect may be achieved by any of the methods described. Sometimes music is spontaneous; other times it may be predetermined, while still other means reflect combinations.

Because such considerations deal with large, integrated structural forms, calling to mind various structural differences in housing construction might make a helpful comparison. Upon completion, we readily recognize the overall shape or form of the composition as a house. We also understand that houses appear in an assortment of shapes and sizes, and that each is made up of several smaller parts, which may be appreciated separately. For example, the type of wood and the nails that hold it together are a few of its fundamental elements. Larger units—the windows, the roof, entranceways, and so forth—all maintain unique shapes as well.

Essentially, the overall form (the house) is recognized as a complex structure that represents a synthesis of several smaller shapes. *Style* is the recognized way in which the formal elements (the form) of a composition have been handled so as to provide the whole with expressive effect.

When the concept of form is applied to music, it could represent the overall shape of a relatively short work such as a folk song or pop tune. Form can also apply to the organization of a large, self-contained unit within a sizable work such as a symphony. In such cases, the term "movement" is used in referring to one of these sections. The meaning and purpose of a movement's relationship to a larger work might be thought of in much the same way as we appreciate the connection that a "chapter" has to a novel (as opposed to a short story, which may perhaps equate to the pop tune). If the reader prefers to return to the initial analogy, a movement may be compared to a self-contained housing unit within a larger composition such as a duplex or triplex.

In any case, the overall plan or method of organization relies on our memory to recognize various parts of music and how they relate to each other when they return. They generally return by exact repetition, altered recurrences, or within contrasts taking place among other material. The pleasure the listener receives by recognizing the return of a musical pattern, such as an entire melody, becomes a useful tool for organizing entire sections of a particular work. The time it takes for a passage to return influences the listener's reaction to it. For example, when a melody that is introduced at the beginning of a lengthy work does not return in its entirety until the end, the melody is not strictly appreciated as repetition, but more importantly with an added sense of balance, symmetry, and, in some cases, resolution.

The word "return" most obviously suggests some kind of departure. This may simply be reflected by a shift of mood in the music, often achieved by a change of tempo, dynamics, color, a new melody, and so on. Sometimes the idea is demonstrated by outright musical conflict. Simply, the music must create noticeable *contrast,* for the listener to perceive a sense of departure from earlier material, and to then appreciate when that musical material returns.

Let's consider a few well-established, predetermined methods for structuring musical forms. For purposes of introduction, the forms are explored as basic outlines. Hopefully, the reader has already begun to appreciate that musical interactions of every kind are subject to artistic license and integrity. In addition, significant modifications to each have resulted from prevailing historical preferences. A medieval house has a roof, walls, windows, doors, and so on, but it appears much different stylistically from more modern versions.

Various Types of Musical Structure

Theme and Variations Form

As the structural name clearly indicates, a melody will be introduced at the beginning of a composition, or movement within a larger piece, to serve as theme. This opening material will then be followed by multiple sets of variations on it. The intent is also to allow the listener to recognize the theme presented over and over again, although various decorative notes are often added to it as the variations proceed. In addition, interest is sometimes sustained in variations by contrasting the texture, timbre, tempo, and so on. Sometimes the particular ordering of variations will lead progressively to variations that are more and more animated, creating a sense of climax. Regardless, the number of variations differs from work to work,

since they may continue until the composer feels he or she has fully explored all of the musical possibilities a particular theme may hold, or when the numbers of variations following a theme are composed in proportion to the length of other movements.

Like all forms, small musical sections may be tagged on to the beginning, as well as the end. A section added to the beginning is called an *introduction*. The section placed at the end is called a *coda*, Italian for "tail." Both introduction and coda do not represent part of the described form, but serve as additions to it. In theme and variations form, for example, an introduction would not be used as part of the theme, nor would a coda placed at the end be used to represent another variation. This musical concept may be appreciated by using our earlier analogy, for it is very much like the optional front and back porch an architect may choose to add to the overall structure of a house.

The third movement of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's Piano Concerto Number 17, is in theme and variation form, and can be found on CD 2, #12. Mozart adds a coda section to conclude this movement. (The term "concerto" is explained in the next section of this chapter under "ritornello form and the concerto." Also, all musical examples used in this chapter with CD references will be explored in more detail in corresponding historical chapters.)

Ritornello Form and the Concerto

Typically, *ritornello form* is often applied to the first and frequently the last movements of the baroque concerto. The term *ritornello* has a double meaning. It refers to the orchestral material introducing the theme (called the "ritornello") within a homophonic texture at the beginning of the movement. Also, because its name means "little return," the opening material will come back throughout the movement, but in fragments ("little") and in different keys until the end, when it is usually presented again in its entirety and in the original key. In essence, ritornello form depends on the return of recognizable musical material throughout the movement and as such lends the movement a structural coherence.

The word *concerto* means "to contend," and is an instrumental work for soloist and orchestra, which essentially compete on equal terms. Here, the soloist provides sharp contrast between the orchestral returns of the ritornello in the first and often last movements of a baroque concerto. When utilizing a small group of solo instruments in a baroque *concerto grosso* ("group"), additional contrast, or contention, is provided between the varied orchestral returns of the ritornello. Though the soloists often utilize ritornello material as well, they toss various ideas and embellished treatments of it back and forth between themselves in imitation as opposed to the homophonic orchestral returns. Contrast between the orchestra and group of soloists is also achieved by dynamic variance, since the small group of soloists will naturally sound softer than the orchestral *tutti*, meaning that everyone plays. As wind instruments were not a standard part of the baroque string orchestra, they offered further contrast in timbre when employed as soloist.

Essentially, ritornello form encourages the listener to anticipate the orchestral returns of the ritornello, though altered in treatment, as recognized phrases between contrasting material provided by the soloist or group of soloists. As this form is frequently applied to the first and last movements of a baroque concerto and concerto grosso, the composer often has the orchestral material build to an emotional climax three quarters through the movement, where a soloist is traditionally featured. Here, the soloist is asked to play an improvised passage,

unaccompanied, that is usually based on previous material. An improvised solo within a larger work such as a concerto or a concerto grosso is called a *cadenza*.

The outline in figure 4.4 reflects the general scheme of this form, and may be a helpful listening tool. For a musical example, please listen to the first movement of *Brandenburg Concerto Number 2*, by Johann Sebastian Bach [CD 2, #6].
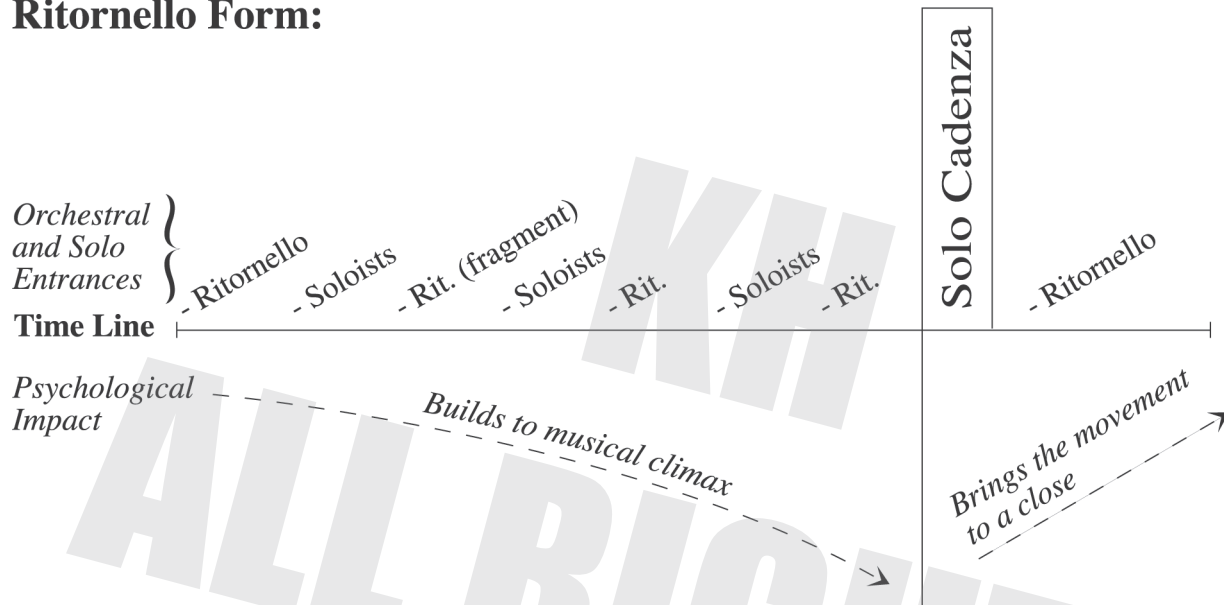
Ritornello Form:

FIGURE 4.4 Ritornello form

The Fugue

The fugue is more of a style, or technique, or way of writing, than a specific form. As a result, it is extremely flexible and varied. A fugue could represent a single work, a movement within a larger composition, or a section within any movement. It could be written for various voices or instruments, or for a solo keyboard instrument, utilized to execute multiple melodic lines. In any case, each linear line in a fugue is referred to as a *voice*.

The *fugue* is a polyphonic composition for an established number of voices, built on a single principal theme called the *subject*, as all parts will be based on the same linear material. The fugue subject is relatively brief, but distinctively bold, usually consisting of relatively few pitches and clear rhythms, for easy recognition. In addition, the subject is almost always noticeably presented in one voice at a time at the beginning, with each entrance staggered. The opening section of the fugue, in which all the voices introduce the subject in an orderly manner, is called the *exposition*. If a particular fugue is comprised of two parts, each voice will commence with the subject in turn. If it is a three-part fugue, or four-part fugue, and so on, the exposition will systematically continue until all voices have entered with the subject.

Each voice utilizes a different pitch register, the highest being the soprano and the lowest the bass. The introductory orderings of the subject will not necessarily be from the bottom voice part up, or top voice down. Instead, it may originate in

any voice. For example, in a four-part fugue, the first entrance may very well commence in the alto voice, the second in the bass, and the third in soprano, followed by the tenor. Irrespective of their arrangement, the first voice entrance is always in the tonic or home key, while the second voice, often called the *answer*, enters in a second key as contrast. When a fugue incorporates multiple voice parts, the following entrances will usually continue to alternate between the tonic and second key, which is frequently the *dominant*, located five scale steps higher in the chosen major or minor key.

After the subject in the exposition is stated, the melodic line usually moves to a *countersubject*, making room for another subject entrance to be heard. The countersubject is a distinctive polyphonic line that recurrently accompanies the subject in another voice. It almost always proceeds with quicker notes, and with rhythms that are not as poignantly defined as the subject. Though the countersubject is distinctive, its function is descriptively captured by its lesser role of accompanying, or countering, the subject in another voice. Once again, the intent is for the subject to be heard as it is passed from one voice to another. After all the voices of a fugue have entered in turn with the subject, the first section, the exposition, of the fugue is concluded.

Diversionary music called an *episode* follows. Here, the fugue often appears to wander, since all the melodic lines start to move freely, and the tonality constantly modulates. Fugal features may include holding a single note in the bass while other voices progress with a succession of changing harmonies against it. This technique is called *pedal point*, as it most often pertains to an organist's foot ("pedal"), which manipulates a pedal keyboard, used for bass notes on an organ. At times, harmonic resolutions are prolonged by repeatedly holding over one or more pitches from a preceding chord into the next, which would have otherwise resolved the prior harmonic tension. This is called a *chain suspension*.

Though diversionary material is sometimes derived from the subject or countersubject, an episode's particular quality brings contrast to later subject entries. This section of other material seems less solid than the subject entries, as it freely explores harmonic textures and colors. The freedom generated may even cause the listeners to lose the ground beneath them, because there is nothing solid to hold onto. Various returns of the subject are anticipated.

The fugue falls into an alternating pattern of new subject entries and episodes. There is no strict rule as to how the subject returns. Unlike the exposition, it does not return in all voices, nor does it usually return in its entirety. Instead, it appears in fragments, and in different keys. Sometimes one voice will overlap with another, as a second voice may enter before another has finished, a feature called *stretto*. The rhythms of the subject may be lengthened (augmentation) or shortened (diminution). There are times the subject is played note for note in reverse order, or in *retrograde*. Subjects may undergo a process known as *inversion*. Here, if the subject originally moved up a whole step from the first note, the inversion will move down the same interval. This technique continues, with each interval comprising the subject, as all will be reversed in direction, turning or inverting the subject upside-down. No matter the treatment, later subject entrances serve as structural stepping-stones, in an otherwise free-flowing fugal texture. Alternations between subject entrances and episodes continue until the composer, or performer (if the fugue is being improvised), has explored the subject material fully.

Johann Sebastian Bach's "Contrapunctus III," from *Art of the Fugue*, may be found as an example [CD 2, #8].

Sonata Form

Sonata form has so frequently been used for the first movements of sonatas (a multimovement work for one or more instruments; at least one movement is in sonata form), symphonies, string quartets, overtures, and so on, that it is sometimes referred to as "first-movement form" or "sonata-allegro form." Nonetheless, these labels may be misleading, since this form is often used for other movements in many works as well.

A movement structured in *sonata form* consists of three traditionally indicated sections: exposition, development, and recapitulation. These labels are a little misleading as well, since the exposition, which introduces all of the musical ideas before they are developed and afterwards recapitulated, consists of two groups, and is repeated in almost all early applications, causing it to be experienced as a four-part structure. In such cases, the sectional scheme may be indicated as: **A A B A**, with each **A** section being made up of two parts.

The exposition introduces two main themes (though sometimes more), which usually contrast each other in mood and key. The *first theme* is always presented in the tonic key, and is often dramatic or agitated in quality. The *second theme*, usually lyrical, in a second key from the first, commences the second part or *group*. These themes and tonalities are connected by a *bridge*, which is a modulating passage that moves from the tonic key to the second key, normally the key of the dominant if the tonic is major, or the *relative key* (a major and minor key that share the same key signature) if the tonic is minor (for example, if the home key is in C minor, the second key would be in E♭ major, as both share the same three flats in the key signature). The exposition is closed with a *cadence theme*, or "closing material" that is usually less distinct, sometimes consisting of only descending scales or chords.

The psychological impact is one that moves the listener from a sense of stability (even though the first theme may be agitated) to an awareness of conflict, as the melodic lines, moods, and keys are sharply contrasted. Repeating the exposition is aesthetically important, because it helps the listener to remember the themes that serve as bases for the entire movement; the repeat also accents the conflict by literally reiterating its existence. In essence, the listener is led into heightened developmental tension with familiar thematic material. The development section, now positioned as the third of four sections, will be experienced as the musical climax, taking place three quarters of the way into the movement.

The emotional impact of the development section is achieved by musically developing any or all thematic material introduced in the exposition. As discussed earlier in this chapter, various themes may be juxtaposed, augmented, and fragmented, while harmonies rapidly modulate. Various themes, or the motives that comprise them, will often be in inversion, retrograde, and so on. There are no set rules for how a composer will develop thematic material, as artistic freedom, ingenuity, and imagination are employed. As a result, this unknown developmental journey of possibility may give the listener pleasure in following thematic manipulation, while psychologically generating a need, thus anticipation, for resolution. At the end of this section, a modulating passage of *retransition* leads to the recapitulation.

As the name indicates, recapitulation restates the main points of something, and in this case, all the thematic material of the exposition returns in its original order. However, all of the themes now appear in the tonic, as opposed to moving to the second key utilized in the exposition. Though the first theme remains more dramatic than the lyrical second theme, their harmonic qualities have come together in the home key of the tonic. So, the listener not only appreciates the return of the

exposition's thematic material as a welcomed and conclusive arrival, generating stability, but the tonic commonality of the themes provide for them a similar character, which gives the listener an added sense of resolving all of the conflict that had taken place between them.

A coda is usually added to this form as an additional closing statement, though in the hands of composers such as Beethoven—for example, the first movement of his *Symphony #3 in E-flat Major ("Eroica")*, Opus 55 [CD 3, #1]—it is often utilized as a second development section, saving any feeling of conclusiveness and resolution for the last movement.

The schematic roadmap of this form (fig. 4.5) may be a helpful listening tool. *Symphony #56* by Joseph Haydn may serve as an example from the recorded anthology [CD 2, #11].
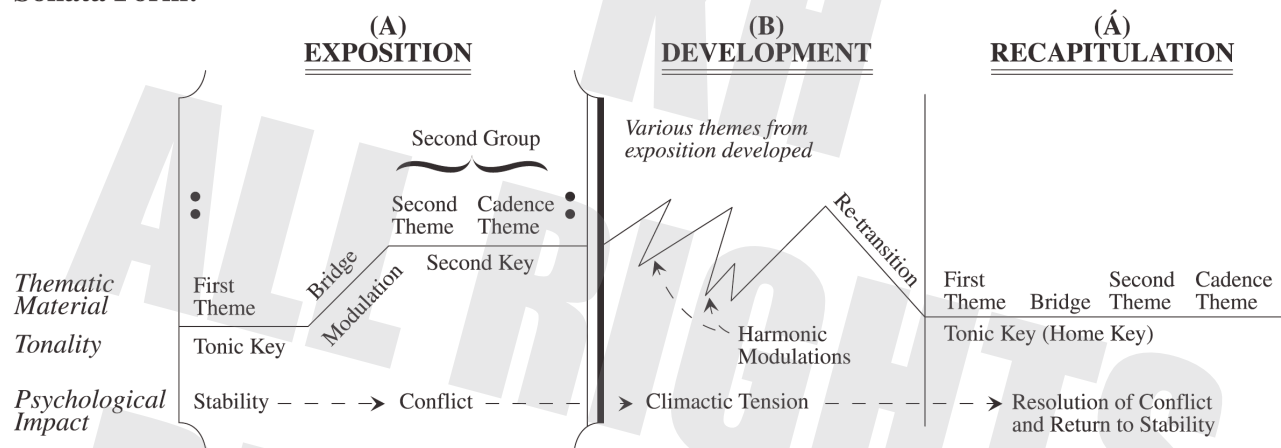
Sonata Form:

FIGURE 4.5 Sonata form

Rondo Form

The *rondo* is a relatively joyful, simple form that was frequently used (along with theme and variations form) for the last movements of multimovement classical period works such as sonatas, symphonies, and concertos. Its often lighthearted playfulness provided a desired contrast to the dramatic sonata-allegro scheme of the first movement; the slow, lyric quality of the second movement; and the third movement's minuet. The psychological and emotional effect of the concluding rondo would send their aristocratic audiences away with a smile. Of course, composers would sometimes require more intense and gripping finishes, and choose other structures, such as sonata form, to conclude; the overall scheme of a movement, with its relationship to other movements, has always remained a primary consideration for artistic expression.

In rondo form, the fundamental principle is the unvaried repetition of a main theme, commonly called the *tune*, because of its typical playful character. The tune is almost always presented in homophonic texture. The recurrent tuneful section is frequently called *rondo*. Intermediate sections are labeled *episodes*, or *diversions*. When the internal phrases of the tune fall into a typical ⁝a⁝⁝bá⁝ pattern (the

middle phrase indicated as **b** reflects new material, while the last phrase **a'** shows a return of the first phrase, slightly altered), subsequent returns may only come back with a portion of it. For example, it may return simply as: **a b a'** (no repeats), or **a b**, or **b a'**. Whatever the case, the tune's distinctive nature will always be easy to recognize.

Common patterns for rondo form are **A B A C A** and **A B A C A B' A**. The latter ordering is really an extension of sonata form, inasmuch as the middle section **C** is used as development, with the first and last groupings, respectively **A B A** and **A B' A** corresponding to the exposition and recapitulation. When used for such purposes, it is more appropriately called sonata-rondo form. Composer Robert Schumann uses sonata-rondo form for his "Aufschwung" from *Fantasiestucke* [CD 3, #7].