

EXPLANATION 4.3: THE CLASSIC SONATA AND SONATA FORM

THE CLASSICAL SONATA

The classical sonata as found in Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven is a musical work that generally has 3 or 4 movements of contrasting moods and tempos. Their tempos (speed) are fast - slow - fast, like Allegro, Andante and Presto, or an Allegro, Adagio, Allegretto, etc. If there are 4 movements there is usually a "minuetto" (dance) in one of the central movements.

SONATA FORM AND ITS EVOLUTION

In 1787 it is described that the first movement of the sonata has 2 sections. It is these 2 sections that later received the name "sonata form". It is important not to confuse "sonata" which is the whole work, with "sonata form" which is the form of the first movement of a sonata.

The three parts of the sonata form

The sonata form has 2 parts, each one can be repeated, or not, but over the years the second part evolved and was divided into two parts. Thus, due to this three part form all in all, since 1830 until today it is accepted that sonata form has 3 parts. It is, then, a tripartite form.

Its parts are called:

- Exposition (theme 1 + bridge + theme 2) in which everything is repeated from the beginning.
- Development (transition period)
- Reexposition (theme 1 + bridge + theme 2). This time the repetition goes from the beginning of the Development.

Evolution of sonata form from the baroque suite

The two parts (1 and 2) are the two parts that had all the dances of a Baroque suite. The outline of a dance was: (The |: :| sign means that the section is repeated).

- |: part 1: | whose theme begins in the Tonic and ends in Dominant.
- |: part 2: | whose theme begins in the Dominant and ends in the Tonic.

These dances in two parts had a single theme, they were mono thematic. The equivalent to the previous scheme in the sonata form is:

- The first part - has one period or section.
- The second part - has two periods or sections.

It follows that part 2 of the baroque dances was extended to become two sections in the sonata form. When this extension was given the sonatas still had only one theme, but around 1730 there began to be seen sketches of second themes in the symphonies.

His evolution was like this:

- |: Part 1 :| → |:theme 1 in the Tonic and theme 2 in the Dominant :|
- |: Part 2 :| → |: theme 1 in Dominant and theme 2 in the Tonic :|

Subsequently, in part 2, a small period of transition emerged when theme 2 is repeated in the Tonic and back to Dominant theme 1. Like this:

- |: part 1: | → |: theme 1 in Tonic + theme 2 in Dominant :|
- |: part 2: | → |: transition period + theme 1 in the Dominant + theme 2 in Tonic :|

Now it can be seen that the sonata form has 3 sections and has 2 themes. It is a three-part bipartite form.

The three periods or sections of the sonata form (with its themes and repetitions) are called:

- Exhibition (theme 1 + bridge + theme 2) with a repetition from the beginning.
- Development (transition period).
- Recapitulation (theme 1 + bridge + theme 2) and all is repeated from the Development.

Sometimes there is usually a bridge between the themes, and a "Coda" ("tail" in Italian) which is a small extra part, at the end of each section.

With Beethoven the sonata form reaches its culmination by incorporating new elements in the Development. This type of musical scheme will also be used for the first movement of the symphonies. Not all sonatas have sonata form in the first movement like Mozart's No. 11 sonata that has theme and variations in its first movement.

COMPREHENSION TEXT QUESTIONS

1. **How many movements does the classical sonata have?**
2. **What contrasts in the movements of the classical sonata?**
3. **What is called sonata form?**
4. **How many parts or sections are accepted that have the sonata form?**
5. **Where does the sonata form evolve?**
6. **How many sections and themes do Baroque dances have?**
7. **In what part of the dance does the transition period that will later be called Development arise?**
8. **Name the 3 periods or sections of the sonata form.**
9. **What is a coda?**
10. **What other musical form does the sonata form use?**