Forms commonly employed in the Classical Era

Sonata form

-typically used in first movements

-can be used in slow movements or final movements

-can be preceded by a slow introduction and concluded with a coda

A :||[:] B A’

Exposition Development Recapitulation

Theme 1 trans. Theme 2 Closing :||[:] fragmentation, new theme, etc. Themes 1 +2 ->Closing

Variation form

- a theme (in this case in binary form or a:||:b) plus other statements of that theme in which different musical elements are changed

A A’ A’’ A’’’ …

Minuet and Trio

-usually third (sometimes second) movement form for symphonies and string quartets

-carry over from Baroque dance pairs

-triple meter dance-inspired movement

A = Minuet B= Trio (contrasting but related key) Minuet da capo

a :||: b a’ c :||: d c’

Rondo

-usually last-movement form for symphonies, sonatas, string quartets, concertos, etc.

-alternating pattern of a rondo theme (tonic) and episodes (other key areas)

-rondo theme can be antecedent/consequent, binary, rounded binary, etc.

A B A C A D A (etc.)

Tonic tonic tonic

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