

Chapter 6

Form and Structure

Chapter Summary

Chapter 6 outlines some basic musical forms that have evolved throughout recorded music. It investigates musical form's connection to dance, defines various classical forms, and offers basic exercises on form and structure for dance students. Chapter 6 also identifies components of musical form, how composers sequence phrases and sections, how composers introduce melodies or themes, how they manipulate melodic or thematic elements, and how they conclude a work.

Glossary Terms With Definitions

a cappella—An Italian term translated as “in chapel style,” meaning vocalists sing without accompaniment. Today the term implies that a soloist, a small number of singers, or a chorus performs with no instrumental accompaniment.

air—A free-form, lyrical, nondance movement often included in a baroque-era suite. The term originally meant a tune or a song.

allemande—A dance form originating in Germany during the Renaissance era (1400-1600 C.E.). Its music is a moderate duple or rapid triple meter. The name *allemande* is the French word for “German.”

anglaise—A 17th-century French dance form from the late Middle Ages and early Renaissance era that evolved from English country dance. The name *Anglaise* is the French word for “English.” Its music is quick and in duple time, and the dance steps begin on the first beat. In the 18th century, the music form became a movement in some suites.

aria—A vocal solo usually from a musical work such as an opera or cantata from the Renaissance through the 21st century.

binary form—A work that is divided into two distinct sections.

bourrée—A baroque-era court dance style that French King Louis XIV's court composer Jean Baptiste Lully created. It was usually written in duple time, with a rapid tempo, and in binary form. The melody usually begins on the third beat of a measure.

cantata—A full-length vocal work for a chorus, soloists, and orchestra. The text of a cantata is biblical and is performed without scenery or costumes.

1 From N. Nolen Holland, 2013, *Music fundamentals for dance web resource* (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics).

chaconne—A 16th-century Spanish dance form. In music the chaconne is a continuous variation form composed of musical variations written over a repeating bass line. It is based on a harmonic theme, a set of chords. Therefore, it has a multivoice harmonic ostinato. The repeating bass line form refers to the melodic, single-voiced ostinato and the harmonic ostinato of the chaconne.

chamber orchestra—Uses many of the instruments of the orchestra but in smaller numbers, often omitting some of the groups of a full orchestra.

character pieces—Short solo piano pieces from the 19th century which are often in binary form. Examples of character pieces include nocturnes, preludes, romances, intermezzi, fantasias, bagatelles, waltzes, mazurkas, and polonaises and were romantic-era compositions for virtuoso performance often presented in a private home, palace, chateau, or castle. Lesser character pieces (e.g., those that are overly sentimental) are also known as salon pieces.

coda—An ending. In sonata allegro form, it is the first movement's ending section.

codetta—A shorter ending.

concerto—A three-movement work for a solo instrument and an orchestra or chamber orchestra. It is a type of duet between the solo instrument and an orchestra.

contrast—Describes a melody, phrase, or theme that is different from a preceding melody, phrase, or theme.

courante—A court dance form originating in the Renaissance era in France. The music was slow, originally in 3/2 time, and then evolved to become fast paced.

da capo—Return to the beginning (in Italian, literally “to the head”).

da capo aria—The operatic vocal form that evolved by the late 17th century and which contains two main sections: A and B. The B section is followed by the words “da capo” which direct the performers to the song's beginning, literally “to the head,” to repeat the A section. The da capo aria is the vocal counterpart of the instrumental minuet and trio and was common in baroque-era opera.

development—The second component of sonata-allegro form. In the development section of a movement, the composer applies various thematic treatments, manipulating and expanding the movement's theme(s).

episode—A musical passage between statements of a main theme. Also another term for the digression from one section to the next.

exposition—The first component of sonata allegro form after the introduction. The composer uses the exposition to state the themes, the second of which includes a key change.

first-movement form—See *sonata allegro form*.

form—The outline, the overall design of a piece of music. It also refers to the overall organization of a piece of music.

fourth-movement form—May be theme and variations form, sonata allegro form, fantasy form (a free form), or rondo form.

free form—A form of music in which a composer determines the music's form. It means that the composer does not follow a standard form and structure.

gavotte—A French Renaissance-era court dance style that originated as a folk dance from the Dauphiné region in southeast France. Its duple-meter music endured through the 19th century as an instrumental form.

genre—A type (style) of music. May also be used to describe the various types or styles of dance.

gigue—An English dance form (jig) that was adopted by the French. Its music is in a rapid duple compound meter.

Gregorian chant—In the history of Western music, the early Christian church adopted and adapted ancient Jewish and Islamic chants for the Mass. During the early medieval era, Pope Gregory I (c. 540-604 C.E.) called for these monophonic chants to be notated. This marked the beginning of Western music notation.

infinite canon—Commonly known as a round and is usually repeated many times.

loure—A French baroque-era court dance form whose music is written in triple meter. Well-known composers of loures are Jean Baptiste Lully and J.S. Bach.

madrigal—An unaccompanied, contrapuntal secular song dating to the late Middle Ages.

mass—Music form based on the sequence of the religious service. Its five components are the kyrie, gloria, credo, sanctus, and agnus dei.

minuet—A court dance form from the late baroque era whose originator is disputed (some say Jean Baptiste Lully created the form while others say Louis Pecour was its creator). It was a moderate-tempo triple-meter dance that evolved into the waltz in the 19th century. Many composers used the musical form for the third movement of symphonies.

minuet and trio—A ternary music form (ABA) that evolved from how minuets were grouped in pairs during the baroque era. A first minuet was played with some or all of its sections being repeated. Then a second minuet was played, originally by only three musicians. When the second minuet finished, the first minuet was played again without any of its sections being repeated. Composers in the 18th century adopted the minuet and trio ternary form for the third movement in their symphonies.

modulation—Moving from one key to another within a song or a piece of music.

motet—From the late Middle Ages, a contrapuntal vocal form for two or more voices that was based on biblical text.

movement—A melody's pace, how quickly it combines or divides beats. Also describes a main section of a longer musical work such as a symphony, concerto, mass, oratorio, cantata, suite, string quartet, or sonata. Movements are considered closed in form, meaning that they can stand alone harmonically and as a form. They can also be divided into sections themselves.

neoclassicism—Refers to the influence of classicism's precepts on composers in the early to mid-20th century. In music, classicism's precepts were beauty, order, clarity, restrained emotion, and succinct statement (the classical era in music was approximately 1750 to 1820 C.E.). Neoclassic music blends classicism with contemporary music ideas.

octet—A song or piece of music for eight voices or instruments.

opera—A dramatic or comic stage production with costuming and sets. It is a production for a chorus and solo vocalists who sing and act out an elaborate story set to orchestral accompaniment.

oratorio—A full-length vocal work for a chorus, soloists, and orchestra. The text of an oratorio is biblical and is usually performed without scenery or costumes.

ostinato—Repeated bass, melodic, or harmonic patterns.

ostinato forms—Music forms based on the late Renaissance dance forms of the chaconne and the passacaglia.

passacaglia—A 17th-century Spanish dance form. It is a continuous variation form of musical variations written over a repeating bass line. The passacaglia has a melodic, single-voiced ostinato with no harmonies in its first entry.

passepied—A French baroque dance form whose music is written in a quick triple meter.

polonaise—A Polish court processional dance form originating in the 17th century. It is in a moderate triple meter with a strong accent on the first beat of each measure.

prelude—An introductory musical section or a short musical piece that may stand alone.

quartet—Four instruments or voices or the music for four instruments or voices. The instrumentation for a string quartet is usually two violins, a viola, and a cello.

quintet—Five instruments or voices or the music for five instruments or voices. A classical-era quintet typically calls for two violins, two violas, and a cello, or two violins, one viola, and two cellos.

recapitulation—The third section of sonata allegro form. In the recapitulation, the composer restates the original theme(s). The recapitulation may be literal or varied.

recitative—A style of singing in which the singer uses the rhythms of ordinary speech so that exposition may be delivered or the plot of an opera moved forward quickly.

repetition—The restatement of a melody, phrase, or theme in music. Repetition may be literal, meaning exactly the same, or it may be varied. Repetition can be used to create longer, more developed works.

restatement—The first part of a song or musical work (A) is repeated after a contrasting section (B).

rigaudon—A baroque-era French court dance that originated in the southeast of France. Its music is in a fast duple meter.

ritornello—A short, recurring passage.

ritornello form—Baroque musical form that includes a short, recurring passage.

rondo—Form that is composed of at least three sections (A, B, and C). The A, B, and C sections are performed in the order of ABACA. *Rondo* means return and it is the return of the A theme that gives this form its name.

round—See *infinite canon*.

sarabande—A Spanish baroque-era court dance. Its music is in a slow triple meter with an accent on the second beat.

scherzo—Literally means “joke” in Italian. In some 19th-century symphonies, the minuet of the third movement was replaced by a scherzo movement, a quick-paced movement in 3/4 time.

second-movement form—Changes key and tempo from the first movement, has an emphasis on lyric melody, and is often in a theme and variations form. A second movement may also be free form, sonata form, rondo form, or ternary form.

sonata—Originally a composition that was to be played as opposed to a cantata, a composition that was to be sung. Since the classical period, it is a multimovement work with at least one movement in sonata allegro form. It is now a composition or piece of music for a solo instrument or a solo instrument with piano accompaniment.

sonata allegro form—There are four components to sonata allegro form, which is also known as first-movement form: exposition, development, recapitulation, and coda.

sonata form—See *sonata allegro form*.

structure—Refers not only to the tonal or harmonic organization of a piece of music but also to the components of the form. Structure involves the details of the overall design of a piece of music. A work's structure reveals the way in which a composer created and linked sections.

suite—A musical work grouping movements that originated as dance styles.

symphony—A multimovement musical composition for orchestra in which at least one movement is in sonata allegro form.

symphony orchestra—May have up to 100 musicians playing the instruments from the woodwind, brass, percussion, and string families.

ternary form—A song, a movement of a multimovement work, or an operatic aria that has three distinct and complete sections.

theme and variations—Also known as *variations on a theme*. A form that expands a musical idea to create a longer work through either sectional (pauses after each variation) or continuous variations where one variation leads into the next.

third-movement form—A form based on the minuet and trio. In the 19th century, Beethoven added an option of using a scherzo and trio for third-movement form.

variation form—See *theme and variations*.

Glossary Terms Without Definitions

a cappella—

air—

allemande—

anglaise—

aria—

binary form—

bourée—

cantata—

chaconne—

chamber orchestra—

character pieces—

coda—

codetta—

concerto—

contrast—

courante—

da capo—

da capo aria—

development—

episode—

exposition—

first-movement form—

form—

fourth-movement form—

free form—

gavotte—

genre—

gigue—

Gregorian chant—

infinite canon—

loure—

madrigal—

mass—

minuet—

minuet and trio—

modulation—

motet—

movement—

neoclassicism—

octet—

opera—

oratorio—

ostinato—

ostinato forms—

passacaglia—

passepied—

polonaise—

prelude—

quartet—

quintet—

recapitulation—

recitative—

repetition—

restatement—

rigaudon—

ritornello—

ritornello form—

rondo—

round—

sarabande—

scherzo—

second-movement form—

sonata—

sonata allegro form—

sonata form—

structure—

suite—

symphony—

symphony orchestra—

ternary form—

theme and variations—

third-movement form—

variation form—

Web Links

- Course Notes has a discussion of basic musical forms. This page lists composed, binary, and ternary forms. www.course-notes.org/Music_Theory/Basic_Musical_Forms
- Music Theory blog explains how music sections are assigned letters to designate the sections. <http://musictheoryblog.blogspot.com/2007/02/musical-form.html>
- Study Guide for Musical Form is an outline of musical forms. www.robertkelleyphd.com/form.htm
- Baroque Music Defined explains the genre. www.baroquemusic.org/bardefn.html
- BaroqueDance presents a discussion of the dance genre. <http://baroquedance.info/what.html>
- The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians Online should be available through your school library's database. The 29-volume reference set is a music encyclopedia that can be a starting point for music research.

- The International Encyclopedia of Dance is a reference work that should be available in your school's library. At this time there is no online database for this work.

Extended Learning Activities

1. **Dance music in binary form:** Research a particular Renaissance or baroque dance. Prepare a paper on it and locate an example of that particular dance's music to accompany the paper as well as a video re-creation. Present your findings in class. Try to re-create the dance either from video or notation.
2. **Analysis of a multimovement work:** Individually, locate a multimovement work and determine the movements' forms, or locate a study guide for a particular multimovement work (the instructor may hand out a list) and follow the guide while you listen to the work.
3. **Theme and variations project:** In the dance studio, work with a group of students to compose a short dance work using the form of theme and variations. The group may work on the entire composition, or one student can compose a short dance (theme) and the remaining students or student groups compose one variation each. (See the Chopin variation compositions mentioned in chapter 3 or the variations mentioned in chapter 6 if you need suggestions for music to use for this exercise.)
4. With the assistance of the instructor or independently, listen to examples of world music. Are these examples similar in any way to the forms discussed in this chapter? Are the form and structure discernible since the music is different from Western music? In a world culture song, for example, is there a verse and chorus form? In an Asian instrumental piece, are there clearly discernible sections? Do the sections of the instrumental music have recognizable structures? How does the music inspire you to dance? Create a dance work using one of the selections you have found and teach it to the rest of the class.
5. Either individually as an assignment or with the class, listen to examples of world music as accompaniment for the dances of specific cultures. Investigate whether the music stands alone in the culture (or has evolved beyond its roots in the culture by being presented in concerts) or whether the music is essential and specific to a particular cultural dance form and is heard only when the dances are performed.