

Form in Classical Music

Binary Form | Ternary Form

A B A B A

Minuet/Scherzo and Trio (triple time)

A B A
Minuet Trio Da Capo

Rondo

A B A C A D A ...

Theme and Variations

A¹ A² A³ A⁴ ...

Double Theme and Variations

A B A¹ B¹ A² B² A³ B³ ...

Sonata Form

INTRO	A : EXPOSITION :	B DEVELOPMENT	A RECAPITULATION	CODA
Optional. Played at a slow tempo.	<p>Duality: Two Keys</p> <p>Two or more main themes are exposed.</p> <p>Theme 1 (Key #1) ↓ Bridge ↓ Theme 2 (Key #2) ↓ Closing Material</p>	<p>Plurality: Several Keys</p> <p>The main themes are fragmented and transformed in music that is harmonically unstable. Listeners will probably notice great variation in the harmonic structure and no strong sense of the tonal center that was established in the first theme of the exposition.</p>	<p>Unity: One Key</p> <p>Themes stated in the exposition return, providing a sense of resolution after the instability of the development.</p> <p>Theme 1 (Key #1) ↓ Bridge ↓ Theme 2 (Key #1) ↓ Closing Material</p>	Optional. A section added at the end to let listeners know the piece is finished. (The word "coda" is Italian for "tail.")

Historical Eras

Classical Era (1730 – 1820)

Significant Composers of Symphonies: Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven

Characteristics of Classical Era Symphonies

- Balanced, restrained, and “rational”
- Strict adherence to musical forms
- Clear melodic lines and thematic development
- Clear separation between sections

Romantic Era (1815–1910)

Significant Composers of Symphonies: Beethoven, Franz Schubert, Hector Berlioz, Felix Mendelssohn, Robert Schumann, Johannes Brahms, César Franck, Anton Bruckner, Camille Saint-Saens, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, Antonín Dvořák, Gustav Mahler

Characteristics of Romantic Era Symphonies

- Emotional excess
- Willingness to break the rules

Modern Era (1900–1945)

Significant Composers of Symphonies: Carl Nielsen, Jean Sibelius, Ralph Vaughn Williams, Serge Rachmaninoff, Charles Ives, Igor Stravinski, Serge Prokofiev, Roy Harris, Aaron Copland, Dmitri Shostakovich, Samuel Barber, William Schumann

Characteristics of Modern Era Symphonies

- Desire to break all barriers and reject the artistic traditions that had been developed over several hundred years
- Neo-romanticism

Postmodern Era (1945 to the Present)

Significant Composers of Symphonies: Olivier Messiaen, Henryk Górecki, Peter Maxwell Davies, Phillip Glass, Lief Segerstam

Characteristics of Postmodern Symphonies

- No single unifying theme
- Anything goes