

## MUS 233 Sonatina Form

A *Sonatina* is a smaller scale version of a sonata (usually of the kind developed in the Classical period). Muzio Clementi (1752-1832) is especially well-known for his *Piano Sonatinas* (Op. 36). Understanding this “simple” version will help us with our subsequent study of the Sonata (and Sonata form).

### First-Movement Form:

Sonatinas (and sonatas) are multi-movement pieces. We will devote our attention (for now) on the first of these movements because of the particular formal characteristics it embodies.

In many ways, the first-movement sonatina form is an elaborate ternary structure. There are three basic sections that allow the music to present itself in the tonic, modulate to other (and sometimes distant) keys, and then return to the tonic key. We can also think of these three phases as:

**somewhat stable → unstable → very stable.**

Each of the three sections (ABA’) has a name (*exposition*, *development* and *recapitulation*, respectively) and within each section there are the same two themes (1st & 2nd) used in slightly different ways. They operate like this:

**Exposition:** Presents First Theme initially in the tonic key, but usually ends in a new key  
Presents Second Theme in the new key and cadences in that new key  
Represents stability leading towards instability  
Usually repeated

**Development:** Uses the same two themes in the new key or in another, more-remote key(s)  
Usually shorter than the other two sections  
This usage is more exploratory and may just use fragments of the theme(s)  
Usually cadences in the V of the original key (or in the I of the new/remote key)  
Represents instability both harmonically (new keys) and thematically (fragments)

**Recapitulation:** Presents First and Second Themes in the **original tonic** (i.e. NO modulation)  
In many ways, mirrors the exposition (without the modulations)  
Represents re-stabilization of the original tonic and a balancing-out of the developed/modulated material

The development and recapitulation sections are usually grouped together as a *single* section in terms of repetition. In this light, we could also understand the larger first-movement form to be binary in structure.

Section:	<i>Exposition</i>	<i>Development</i>	<i>Recapitulation</i>
Themes:	: --1 <sup>st</sup> th.---- -----2 <sup>nd</sup> th.-----:	: --(1 <sup>st</sup> th.)--- ---(2 <sup>nd</sup> th.)---	--1 <sup>st</sup> th. ---- -----2 <sup>nd</sup> th.-----:
Keys:	I/i → N (“new”)	N (or other) → (original V)	I/i            I/i

***N.B. This model represents what usually happens. It is possible that in certain cases, some of these events may be different. These formal models are only approximate and should not be taken overly-literally.***