

Musical analysis, lesson 10: The sonatine first movement

The word Sonatine is the diminutive of Sonata, a sounding piece, as opposed to Cantata, or a singing piece. This form, perfected by the masters of the Classical School, and brought to its highest development by Beethoven. Let's have a look at the first movement in C major of Clementi's Sonatine op. 36 no. 3 (the score is printed at the end of this text).

It will be noted that a double bar is used requiring a repeat of the first portion of the form, Part 1. Following this double bar we find new material, which leads generally to the repeat of Part I, with tonal modifications. We can then roughly subdivide the whole movement into three parts:

- I. Twenty-six measures to the double bar.
- II. Nine measures.
- III. Twenty-nine measures (Part I plus three measures).

So the first fact to be grasped about the Sonatine (and Sonata) first movement, is that its structure is three-part, or Ternary.

It now becomes necessary to indicate the subdivisions of these three parts. As a rule, they follow this order, in the major keys:

Part I: A 1 + A 2

- a. A1, measure 1–12: C major (tonic key).
- b. A2, measure 13–27: G major (dominant key).

So the second fact to be grasped about the Sonatine (and Sonata) first movement, is the structure of the Part I is two-part, or binary.

Part II: B

Here any thematic material from Part I may be used and combined, if desirable, with new material. This part is not regularly subdivided, for which reason it is called the "working-out" part, sometimes the free fantasia part. At its conclusion it merges naturally into the return of Part I: it consists of a G pedal point, which is the dominant in C major and has (if any) some relation with part I.

Part III: A1' + A2'

It is a modified repetition of Part I, hence binary.

- a. A1', measure 36–48 (cf. m. 1–12): C major (tonic key); it ends with a half cadence.
- b. A2', measure 49–64 (cf. m. 13–26): C major (tonic key).

In the analysis of such movements as this, the student should take note not alone of the form, but of the harmonic progressions as well. Hence, in the following questions, the latter requisite is included. Study the first movement Clementi's Sonatine op. 36 no. 4 (the score is printed at the end of this text).

Remark

Normally the first movement of sonata and sonatine is defined in terms of two (or more) themes or subjects. The standard definition focuses on the thematic and harmonic organization of tonal materials that are presented in an exposition (our Part I, elaborated and contrasted in a development (our Part II) and then resolved harmonically and thematically in a recapitulation (our Part III). In addition, the standard definition recognizes that an introduction and a coda may be present. However, in the eighteenth point of view, themes and thematic relationships are completely irrelevant in describing form (in contrast to a 19th century way of analyzing), only tonal relationships! Form is in that view be seen as a sum of phrases or periods, both characterized by more or less concluding cadences. I think this is the best way to understand form: not from presupposed (contrasting) themes, but from building, clearly defined blocks as phrases and periods.

Questions Clementi's Sonatine op. 36 no. 4

1. What is the key of the entire movement?
2. What is the form of Part I?
3. Which cadences can be found?
4. Describe the melodic, rhythmic relations (if any) between the sections of Part I.
5. Determine the harmonic progression of Part II .
6. Describe the melodic, rhythmic relations (if any) between Part II and Part I.
7. Determine the harmonic progression of Part II .
8. Compare Part III with Part I.
9. Determine the harmonic progression of Part II .
10. Define the words Sonata, Sonatine and Cantata.

This lesson is a modification of Tapper's First Year Analysis –Musical Form– and has been typeset with MC Musiceditor 6.0.8 (www.mcmusiceditor.com – www.bestmusicteacher.com)

SONATINE

Nº 4

Op. 36. - Nº 4.

Con spirito

PIANO

The musical score is written for piano in 3/4 time, B-flat major. It consists of seven systems of two staves each. The first system begins with a forte (f) dynamic and a 'Con spirito' instruction. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings like piano (p) and forte (f). Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat signs.

