

# Classical Piano Music

A common characteristic of **Classical** music is "graceful" melodies, in clear-cut and balanced phrases.

The **piano** was a relatively new keyboard instrument in the **Classical** period.

A popular musical feature used by **Classical** composers is the **alberti bass**. This is a type of broken chord accompaniment repeated in the left hand.



Extract 6 Listen to an excerpt from the second movement of *Sonata in C* (K.545) by Mozart played on the **piano**. Listen for:

**Alberti bass**   **Simple harmonies**   **Clear-cut phrases**   **Major**

**Andante** ( $\text{♩} = 63$ )

*p cantabile*

*cresc.*

*dim.*

*p*

*f*

*dim.*

# Sonata Form

Sonata Form is one of the most important forms used by composers. It is the form used in the **first movements** of Sonatas, Symphonies, Concertos, String Quartets etc.

The basic plan of Sonata Form is:

Exposition	Development	Recapitulation	Coda
1 <sup>st</sup> subject (tonic)	Developing ideas from the Exposition.	1 <sup>st</sup> subject (tonic)	To round off
Bridge (changing key)	Adding new ideas.	Bridge (altered)	
2 <sup>nd</sup> subject (new key)	Exploring new keys.	2 <sup>nd</sup> subject (tonic)	



Listen to the first movement of *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* by Mozart played by a group of **strings**. Try to follow the **sonata form** structure.

**EXPOSITION**  
First subject: Part A

(G major - the tonic key)

First subject: Part B (1st violins above repeated-chord accompaniment)

First subject: Part C

Bridge - busily working its way towards D major

crescendo

Second subject: Part A (in the dominant key)

Second subject: Part B

(Part B repeated)

(2nd violins)

Second subject: Part C - codetta (a miniature coda, ending the Exposition)

DEVELOPMENT

(D major)

(expecting E minor . . . . . but C major instead)

(A minor) (expecting G minor . . but 'surprise' chord of Eb major instead)

Linking passage - working back to the tonic key of G major

RECAPITULATION

First subject: Part A (tonic key: G major)

First subject: Part B (2nd violins)

First subject: Part C

Bridge (now altered)

crescendo

Second subject: Part A (now also in the tonic key)

Second subject: Part B

(Part B repeated)

Second subject: Part C - the original codetta, now lengthened to form a coda

Having listened to this movement, complete the following statements:

1. This **exposition** section starts is in the key of \_\_\_\_\_.
2. At the **bride** passage the music modulates to the \_\_\_\_\_ key.
3. The 2<sup>nd</sup> subject in the **exposition** is in the key of \_\_\_\_\_.
4. The 2<sup>nd</sup> subject in the **recapitulation** is in the key of \_\_\_\_\_.
5. What ornaments are prominent in this piece? (Refer to specific bar numbers).



These last bars at the end of the first section are called the

(175) 3

This middle section in Sonata Form is called the

What is the TONALITY?

Give three concepts (melodic/harmonic/rhythmic /texture) of what happens in this section

1

2

3

This final section, with the return of the first subject is called the

This is usually in the

key but here it is in major which is the

The musical score is written for piano and consists of three main sections. The first section ends with a blue arrow pointing to the middle section. The middle section is marked with a red arrow pointing to the final section. The final section begins with a blue vertical line and includes a 'decresc.' marking and a 'p' dynamic. The score is in 3/4 time and features a piano (p) dynamic.

The sheet music consists of six systems of piano accompaniment. The first system shows a steady eighth-note bass line with chords in the treble. The second system includes a 'cresc.' marking. The third system features a 'p' (piano) dynamic and a 'legato' marking. The fourth system contains trills. The fifth system has a 'cresc.' marking and a red circle around a specific chord. The sixth system concludes the piece with a final cadence, highlighted by a green arrow.

Here is the 2<sup>nd</sup> subject

It is in the            key

which is major

Listen carefully and name the chord

☐

major chord

☐

minor chord

☐

diminished 7<sup>th</sup>

☐

dominant 7<sup>th</sup>

These last bars are called the

\_\_\_\_\_

Listen to the first movement of the piano piece Sonata no 1 by Clementi. This follows a simple Sonata Form structure. While you listen, try to identify the main sections: Exposition, Development and Recapitulation, 1<sup>st</sup> subject and 2<sup>nd</sup> subject, bridge passage. Write the concepts in the spaces provided.

**Allegro** M. CLEMENTI, Op.36, No.1

1

The musical score is written for piano and bass. It begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo is marked 'Allegro'. The score is divided into six systems, each containing a piano (right hand) and bass (left hand) staff. The first system starts with a forte (f) dynamic. The second system includes a mezzo-piano (mp) dynamic. The third system features a piano (p) dynamic. The fourth system has a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic. The fifth system includes a crescendo (cresc.) marking. The sixth system ends with a forte (f) dynamic. The score is filled with various musical notations, including notes, rests, and fingerings (1-5).