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# *Introduction*

“Musical structure is not a set of immutable ‘laws’ to which music must conform; but rather it is a body of guiding principles gleaned from experience and modified according to circumstances. It is the framework over which the composer drapes his tonal fabric according to his fancy, and the result is always unique because it is individual.”

*Howard A. Murphy*

# T

hroughout the history of music, composers have employed certain fundamental and basic principles of organization and structure which serve as a mold or framework for the presentation of the materials of music—rhythm, melody and harmony. Even though every composition has its own unique and individual qualities, and is the result of the natural development of the composers’ ideas, each is based upon the underlying principle of unity and variety, which is achieved by the repetition of musical elements either exact or modified and the presentation of new material. From this need of some kind of plan and order in music, certain basic forms and structures have developed through the years. The focus and emphasis in this book is on these forms themselves illustrated through representative literature with a brief description and analysis for reference and study. Tracing the development of these forms both historically and stylistically is extremely important in the study of music but it is not the purpose or premise of this short collection.

## Introduction

Listening is the basis of all musical experience and should be stressed in the study and analysis of these musical forms. It is important that the plan, design, and sequence of the music be considered and presented through an aural awareness and response to the music.

Each chapter of the book presents representative forms within a certain general category of a musical structure and design. Except for the small primary units of form, the musical score of a complete composition is given to illustrate each basic form. These scores offer the opportunity to follow the form in detail as it is heard, and it also offers a variety of selected music literature for further study and the consideration of other elements of music as well—melody, rhythm, harmony, style, texture, etc. In the early stages of the book, the form is quite specific as to phrases, periods, etc. Later on more attention is given to parts and sections and a more detailed analysis is sometimes left to the reader, based upon the earlier experience.

The complete musical score is then followed by a short discussion and analysis of other compositions to illustrate and reinforce the particular form in various contexts, and with various composers and periods. Occasionally, important themes and analytical guides are given for these compositions to aid and guide the listening. Whenever possible, it is, of course, most valuable to listen and analyze with complete scores. Measure numbers are, therefore, frequently provided in the analysis and discussion to facilitate this kind of study. At the end of each presentation of a form, additional suggestions of compositions for extra study and listening are presented with brief “highlights” of the music and an occasional detailed analysis.

## CHAPTER 1

# *Primary*

## *Units*

### *of*

## *Form*

A

### *The Motive*

Almost all music is based on the extension and expansion of a brief group of notes called a *motive*. A motive is a short harmonic, melodic, or rhythmic fragment or figure from which a theme, melody, or entire composition is developed. The following musical examples illustrate some uses of the motive.

1. A four-note pattern serves as the principal motive for the first movement of the Beethoven *Symphony No. 5*. A characteristic feature of the movement, it appears on various scale tones, in contrary motion and in imitation. It also reappears as a prominent rhythmic pattern in the third and fourth movements of the symphony.

Beethoven: *Symphony No. 5*,  
*First Movement*

*Allegro con brio*



## Basic Forms in Music

2. A motive may be extended by its repetition on the same scale degrees.

(a) Two groups of sixteenth notes are followed by an exact repetition.

(b) Respighi repeats a one-measure motive three times in this excerpt.

Allegretto vivace      Respighi: *Pines of Rome, Pines of Villa Borghese*

(c) A one-measure motive is repeated, followed by new material to complete the theme.

3. A motive is often extended by a repetition on different scale degrees. This kind of repetition is called *sequence* and may be an exact or modified duplication involving melody, rhythm, or harmony, separately or together.

(a) Measure 2 is a melodic and rhythmic sequence of the motive in measure 1. A new motive appears in measure 3, followed by a