

Binary Form



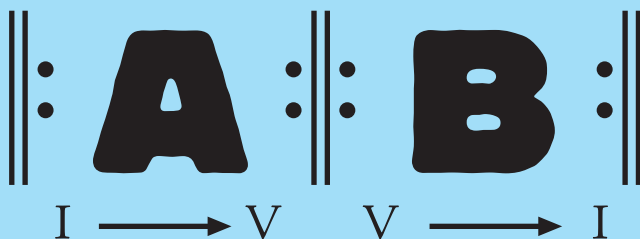
WHEN WE TALK ABOUT THE **FORM** OF A PIECE, WE ARE REFERRING TO THE LARGE-SCALE LAYOUT OF THE PIECE... SPECIFICALLY, THE ARRANGEMENT OF SECTIONS OF MUSIC, HOW AND WHEN THEY ARE REPEATED, AND WHAT KEYS ARE BEING USED.

ONE OF THE SIMPLEST FORMS IS **BINARY FORM**, WHICH CONSISTS OF **TWO CONTRASTING SECTIONS**. WE REFER TO THESE TWO SECTIONS AS **A AND B**.

THE SECTIONS MIGHT BE CONTRASTING IN **MOOD, TEMPO, KEY**, OR EVEN IN A COMBINATION OF THESE CHARACTERISTICS.

A B

BINARY FORM



BAROQUE DANCE FORM

BINARY FORM IS USED IN **BAROQUE DANCE SUITES** IN A VERY SPECIFIC WAY. IN THESE PIECES, BOTH SECTIONS ARE REPEATED. THE **A** SECTION BEGINS IN THE PRIMARY KEY AND MODULATES TO THE **KEY OF THE DOMINANT**, AND THE **B** SECTION BEGINS IN THAT KEY AND MODULATES BACK TO THE **ORIGINAL KEY**. PERFORMERS OF THE TIME WOULD TYPICALLY IMPROVISE ORNAMENTATION WHEN REPEATING EACH SECTION.

BAROQUE DANCE SUITES WERE WRITTEN FOR VARYING INSTRUMENTATION; MANY WERE WRITTEN FOR **KEYBOARD** (USUALLY **HARPSICHORD** OR **CLAVICHORD**), OTHERS WERE WRITTEN FOR CHAMBER GROUPS, AND SOME WERE EVEN WRITTEN FOR **FULL ORCHESTRA**.

EACH MOVEMENT OF THESE SUITES WOULD BE WRITTEN IN THE STYLE OF A PARTICULAR BAROQUE DANCE: **ALLEMANDE, GAVOTTE, BOURREE, COURANTE, SARABANDE, LOUREE, GIGUE**, AND OTHERS, EACH OF WHICH HAD A SPECIFIC CHARACTER.

BECAUSE BAROQUE DANCE FORM IS SO COMMON IN BAROQUE INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC, WHEN THEORISTS AND MUSICOLOGISTS ARE TALKING ABOUT BAROQUE MUSIC AND SAY "**BINARY FORM**," THEY ARE ACTUALLY REFERRING TO **BAROQUE DANCE FORM**.

ANOTHER SOMEWHAT RARE VARIATION OF BINARY FORM IS **ROUNDED BINARY FORM**, WHERE THE **A** SECTION RETURNS AFTER THE END OF THE **B** SECTION. THIS REPRISE OF THE **A** SECTION, HOWEVER, IS **SHORTENED**, SO WE REFER TO IT AS "**A PRIME**."

A B A'

ROUNDED BINARY FORM