The Liability of Labels

Mary H. Wennerstrom

It is a great honor for me to have been awarded the 2006 Gail Boyd de Stwolinski Prize for Lifetime Achievement in Music Theory Teaching and Scholarship, and I am deeply appreciative of all those people who participated in the nomination and selection process. I am especially grateful to Mary Arlin, Chair of the Editorial Review Board of the *Journal of Music Theory Pedagogy*, for her work, including her presentation to me of an elaborate framed certificate at the 2006 meeting of the Society for Music Theory, and for her efforts to include the announcement in the general business meeting of the Society. As described in Volume 21 of this journal, the prize was established by Gail and her husband Louis de Stwolinski to recognize the role of the classroom music theory teacher. I was very pleased to be recognized as the fourth recipient of the award, and hope that my prize money will continue to be used to recognize outstanding teaching.

As part of the de Stwolinski Prize, I was asked to participate in a residency at the University of Oklahoma in September 2007. During that time the music theory faculty were exceptionally hospitable to me, and I visited classes and was part of a teaching master class session. James Faulconer and Alice Lanning from the Gail Boyd de Stwolinski Center for Music Theory Pedagogy were also very gracious in showing me the newly renovated offices of the Center (including the *JMTP* archives) and in arranging an enjoyable dinner with Mr. de Stwolinski. I had met Gail in the 1970's, when I was a visiting faculty member at the University of Oklahoma, and we had many conversations about the role of the music theorist in the academic community. Professor de Stwolinski's efforts to recognize outstanding teaching in the university (instead of an exclusive emphasis on faculty research) have been validated at many schools around the country, where tenure and promotion can be achieved through strong teaching, and pedagogical publications and curriculum designs are recognized as important scholarly contributions. This residency as part of the de Stwolinski award was indeed an honor and a pleasure.

Another part of the residency was a public presentation. As I thought about a topic for this presentation, I decided to focus on

an issue of importance to both Gail and me: formal design in music and the parameters which contribute to musical structure. De Stwolinski's book, *Form and Content in Instrumental Music*,[1] emphasizes beginning a study of form by listening, and she incorporates in the book not only a wide variety of musical repertoire (including much twentieth-century music) but also good strategies for aural analysis. I also considered the pedagogical work of the previous winners of the de Stwolinski Prize: John Buccheri, who is well known for his workshops on teaching rhythmic concepts, Robert Gauldin, who among his many publications has written a comprehensive textbook[2] which includes formal designs in tonal music, and Dorothy Payne, whose widely-used book *Tonal Harmony with an Introduction to Twentieth-Century Music*[3] written with Stefan Kostka appeared in a sixth edition in the spring of 2008. I decided to choose a short composition analyzed in the de Stwolinski book, Beethoven's Bagatelle op. 119 no. 5 (see Example 1), and to focus on two aspects: the metric/rhythmic structure and the overall formal design. My goals were to do an informal survey of how groups of listeners respond to these two aspects, to highlight the labels given by different authors in each of these two parameters, and to suggest ways of using this information in the classroom.

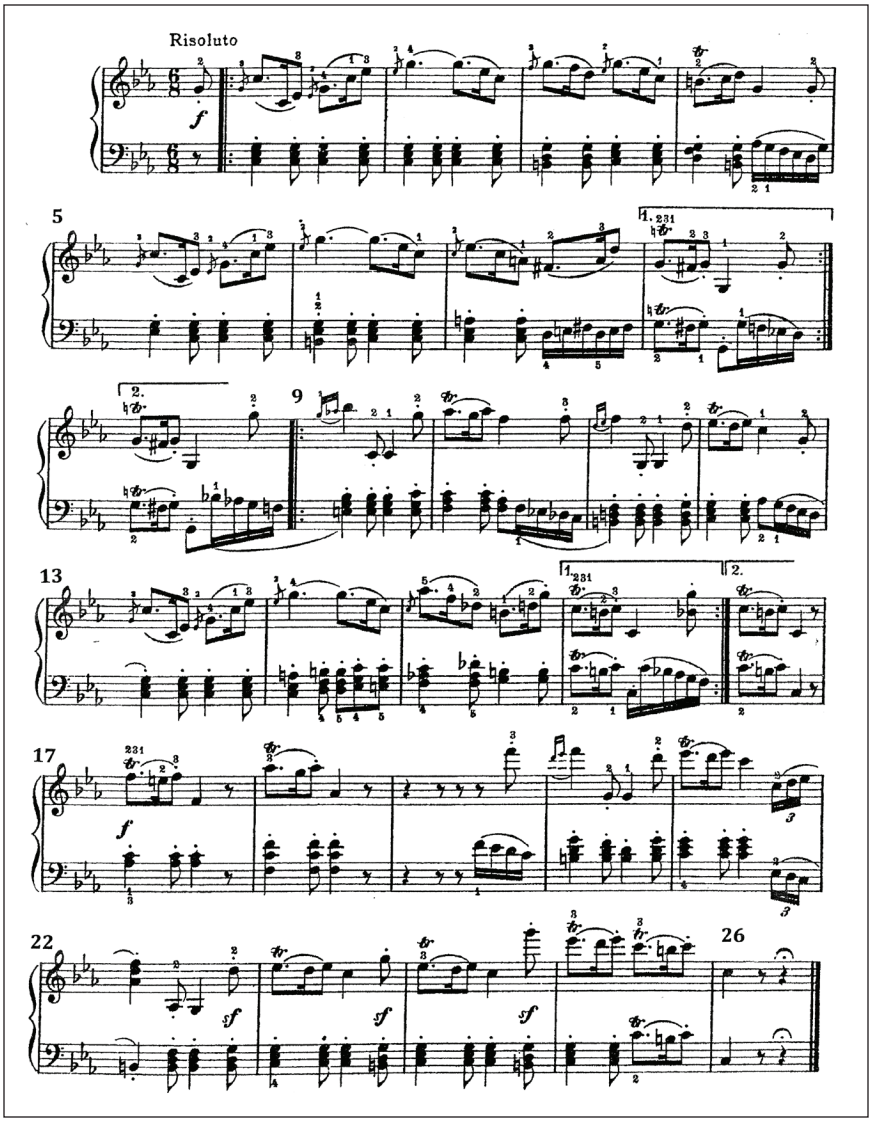
Beethoven Bagatelle Op. 119 No. 5 (Risoluto): Listening results

This bagatelle is one of a group of eleven that Beethoven sketched at various times during his life and published between 1821 and 1823. I first played the composition (measures 1-16 only, with repeats) at around ♩. = 50, and second played a performance by Rudolf Serkin (♩. = c. 92). My questions to the listeners in Oklahoma (before they received a copy of the score) were (1) Is the piece in major or minor mode? (2) Is it in duple or triple meter? and (3) Is it in binary or ternary form? This listening exercise was repeated in October 2007 with a group of music theory faculty and graduate students at Indiana University.

[1] Gail de Stwolinski, *Form and Content in Instrumental Music* (Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown, 1977).

[2] Robert Gauldin, *Harmonic Practice in Tonal Music*, 2nd edition (New York: W.W. Norton, 2004).

[3] Stefan Kostka and Dorothy Payne, *Tonal Harmony with an Introduction to Twentieth-Century Music*, 6th edition (Boston, MA: McGraw Hill, 2009).



Example 1. Beethoven Bagatelle op. 119 no. 5

Not surprisingly, both groups unanimously identified the mode as minor. In this composition the answer is unambiguous aurally and visually because of the C minor triad presented both harmonically and melodically at the outset and confirmed in a strong cadence in measures 15-16 (and later in a C minor emphasis from measures 21-26). The results about meter and form however were considerably more mixed. At Oklahoma a majority of listeners identified the

meter as triple at the slower speed; at the faster speed about half thought it was triple. At Indiana the vote at the slower speed was almost 70% for triple meter as contrasted to almost 75% for duple meter at the faster speed. The Oklahoma listeners were split almost equally between binary and ternary form on both hearings. Almost 90% of the Indiana listeners identified the form as binary at both speeds.

Duple versus triple: metric aspects

Even a quick review of the literature on rhythm and meter reveals evidence to support a metric classification of the Beethoven excerpt as both duple and triple. The points below are summarized from correspondence and discussions with John Buccheri:[4]

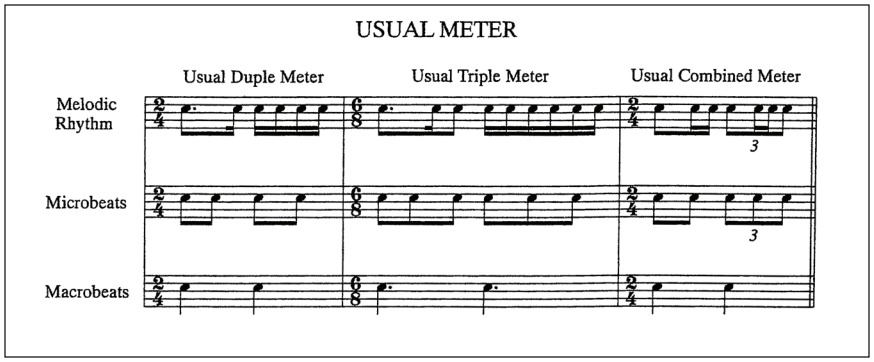
1. Compound and simple are not useful terms and should be eliminated from the basic vocabulary of rhythmic terms.
2. "Tempo is the chief determinant of the pulse that will be chosen as the beat, not the time signature notation appearing in the score." Tempo does not determine the type of meter, but does determine the rhythmic/metric character of the music.
3. Duple and triple are the two basic (most common) types of meter. "A metric structure with any grouping of three's in it is triple."
4. Meter signatures cannot be determined by listening.

By these guidelines the Beethoven example is in triple meter, regardless of its tempo, because of the groupings in three at the eighth-note level. Buccheri does not use the terms "compound" and "simple" in his discussion of meter and rhythm because he thinks they are confusing terms.

Edwin Gordon would agree. His example of "usual triple meter" (see Example 2[5]) includes the rhythmic patterns of the melodic lines in the Beethoven Bagatelle. Gordon indicates microbeats (the

[4] John Buccheri, Notes from the author for a Workshop in Teaching Rhythmic Concepts in Undergraduate Music Theory and for presentations to music theory societies and the College Music Society.

[5] Edwin E. Gordon, *Learning Sequences in Music: Skill, Content, and Patterns* (Chicago: GIA Publications, Inc, 1993), 145.



Example 2. Edwin Gordon, Usual Meter

eighth note) and macrobeats (the dotted quarter) as part of a triple meter configuration. "The type of usual meter of a piece of music is not determined by how 'notes' are grouped in a measure, but rather, how macrobeats are divided into microbeats regardless of the measure signature."[6]

Justin London's book *Hearing in Time: Psychological Aspects of Musical Meter*[7] documents some reasons why listeners changed their opinion from triple to duple meter as the tempo increased. The two speeds at which I played the Beethoven example correspond to the metric trees at various tempos given by London in Figure 2.6 on page 44. His first (a) tree shows a tactus of 50 beats per minute, and his second (b) tree shows a tactus of 92 beats per minute, the two speeds of my demonstration. London comments that the trees demonstrate that at the slower speed there are more possibilities for subdivision and at the faster speed more possibilities for higher levels of meter. Listeners have demonstrated a preferred level of periodicity at speeds which include ♩. = 92 as the tactus; if the dotted quarter is the unit of measurement, its recurrent groupings in twos (within the measure and by two and four measures) create a duple meter, with one level of triplet subdivision. At the slower tempo the eighth note becomes a possible tactus, and its triple grouping thus suggests triple meter.[8]

[6] Gordon, 143 (presented in bold type).

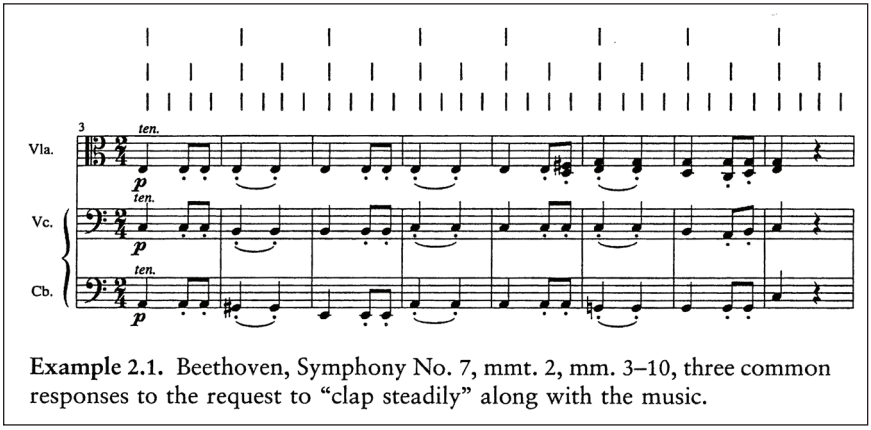
[7] Justin London, *Hearing in Time: Psychological Aspects of Musical Meter* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[8] At this slower tempo both the speed of the eighth note (150 per minute) and the speed of the dotted quarter (50 per minute) are not in what London identifies as "the range of maximal pulse salience." "We are biased against triple meters (and to a lesser extent, triplet

Thus the question "Is this example in duple or triple meter?" depends on many factors, including the tempo, the definition of meter, and more importantly, the level of pulse (or beat) to which the listener is responding. In a classroom setting, a teacher might perhaps more profitably explore the following questions:

1. Tap what you hear as a regular recurring pulse.
2. How many pulses group together into bigger units?
3. Is the pulse you are tapping able to be subdivided? If so, into how many units?
4. Make (at least) a three-level diagram of pulse relationships (groupings). Indicate whether each level is duple (grouped in two) or triple (grouped in three) as related to the next slower level.

This process is described by Gary Karpinski in his book *Aural Skills Acquisition: The Development of Listening, Reading, and Performing Skills in College-Level Musicians*[9]. On page 21 he demonstrates three common responses to the request to "clap steadily" along with the music. (See Example 3). Karpinski suggests a protonotation system of vertical lines to represent pulses.



Example 2.1. Beethoven, Symphony No. 7, mmt. 2, mm. 3–10, three common responses to the request to "clap steadily" along with the music.

Example 3. Karpinski's Example 2.1 from *Aural Skills Acquisition: The Development of Listening, Reading, and Performing Skills in College-Level Musicians*, page 21

subdivision) simply because there are fewer ternary options that lie comfortably within the range of maximal pulse salience." London, 46.

[9] Gary Karpinski, *Aural Skills Acquisition: The Development of Listening, Reading, and Performing Skills in College-Level Musicians* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

Karpinski rightly reminds the teacher that each of the three levels of response from students is correct, and that unfortunately aural skills textbooks most often do not "isolate meter perception as a separate fundamental skill."[10] Metric structure is usually defined as dependent on regular groupings by greater or lesser stress in at least two adjacent levels of pulse, but the aural results of these groupings are often not discussed in musical contexts. Karpinski summarizes:

> "[M]usic that exhibits . . . regular differentiation into primary and secondary pulses has *meter*." "Any relationship between two adjacent levels of pulse is either duple or triple at its simplest; otherwise, there is an intervening level that divides that larger number into some combination of twos and/or threes."[11]

As Karpinski indicates in a footnote on page 21, his pedagogical approach to meter is based on theoretical notions by several different authors. The system of dots presented by Lerdahl and Jackendoff shown in Example 4 relates exactly to the listeners' perception of the two different metric organizations of the Beethoven Bagatelle. At the slower speed, the metric organization is 2/3/2 (version a in Example 4, although the example uses the notation of eighth/quarter/dotted half instead of the bagatelle's notation of sixteenth/eighth/dotted quarter); at the faster speed the metric organization is 3/2/2 (version b in Example 4 on the following page).[12]

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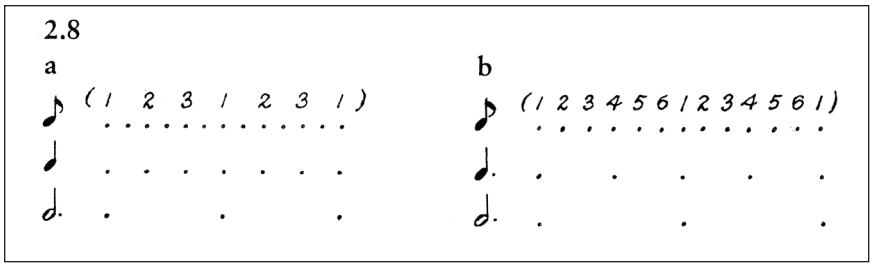
[10] Karpinski, 23.

[11] Karpinski, 22, 24.

[12] Fred Lerdahl and Ray Jackendoff, *A Generative Theory of Tonal Music* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1983), 20. Note that Lerdahl and Jackendoff use "beat" to mean what Karpinski refers to as "pulse": "For beats to be strong or weak there must exist a *metrical hierarchy*—two or more levels of beats." (Lerdahl and Jackendoff, page 19). The duration between beats is a "time-span": what Karpinski calls "beats " (Karpinski page 23).



Example 4. Lerdahl and Jackendoff, *A Generative Theory of Tonal Music* Example 2.8 page 20

This discussion has avoided the widely-used terms simple and compound, to which Buccheri objects. These labels of course can be useful in describing the relationship between two adjacent levels of a metric hierarchy, but not in describing all the levels. As related to metric perception in the Beethoven Bagatelle, the meter is simple triple if the pulse is considered as the eighth note: divided in two and grouped in three. The meter is compound duple if the pulse is considered as the dotted quarter note: divided into three and grouped in two.[13] Miscommunication can occur if a label indicating a metric type is based on consideration of different pairs of adjacent levels.

A more complete metric description of the Beethoven Bagatelle would include several levels. 2/3/2/2/2 indicates the groupings of sixteenths, eighths, dotted quarters, measures, and subphrases. In contrast the Beethoven Symphony no. 7 excerpt (Example 3; Karpinski's Example 2.1) could be labeled as 2/2/2/2/2, indicating groupings of eighths, quarters, half notes, subphrases, and phrases. Although "duple meter" is an accurate description of the symphony excerpt, no matter which adjacent levels are chosen, the label "triple meter" for the bagatelle (unless used to indicate a three-grouping at any hierarchical level) can be potentially confusing.

[13] My colleague Frank Samarotto reminded me of the 18th-century definition of "compound meter" (for instance in writings by Kirnberger and Marpurg), which could mean combining two measures of simple ("einfache") meter together ("zusammengesetzte") . In this definition both 4/4 (two measures of 2/4 combined) and 6/8 (two measures of 3/8 combined) could be regarded as "compound," a use of the term different from its meaning of a triple subdivision of the pulse or beat.

Binary versus ternary: formal aspects

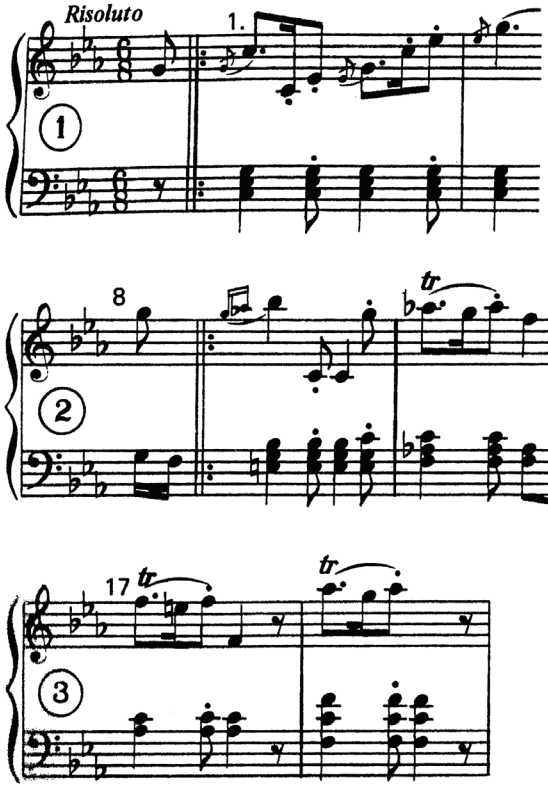
The confusion of two and three is also evident in the formal design of the Beethoven Bagatelle. I concentrated on measures 1-16 because this section illustrates a pattern common in tonal music: two sections, each repeated, with a return of some aspects of the first section in the second section. De Stwolinski includes the bagatelle in her chapter on Part Forms (Ternary). To her this example is ternary because it has an A B A′ design.[14] She suggests listening to the piece by following the musical segments she gives on pages 226-227 (see Example 5 on the following page) and by plotting out a form diagram, considering the "arrangement, content, and apparent purpose of a musical idea. . . . After three to five listenings to a work, the analysis should reveal the following structural information: (1) the number and arrangements of parts; (2) the number of phrases within each part; (3) any use of auxiliary members [such as introduction, retransition, transition, and codetta]."[15] Students are then referred to the Appendix to check their work against the diagrams she provides; see Example 6 on the following page.[16]

[14] See de Stwolinski, *Form and Content in Instrumental Music*, Chapter 4, Part Forms. On page 193, footnote 2, she indicates that the terms "rounded binary" and "incipient three-part form" are not used in her discussion. Binary form is discussed after ternary, as an AB pattern (two-part) with no return of material.

[15] de Stwolinski, 225.

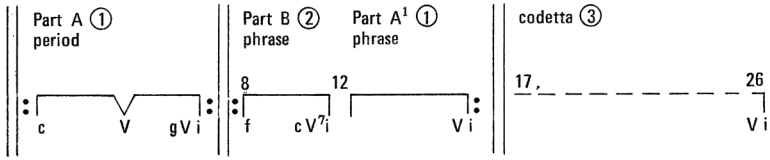
[16] On pages 226-227 de Stwolinski provides for the listener musical cues from the Beethoven Bagatelle; she includes detailed diagrams for all the listening examples in an appendix. The Beethoven diagram on page 560 indicates an A B A′ form and shows that Part A is a period (divided by a half-cadence and ending with an authentic cadence in G minor) while Parts B and A′ are each phrases, ending with authentic cadences in C minor. Musical cue no. 3 functions as a codetta.

Ex. 4-29. Beethoven: Eleven Bagatelles, Op. 119, No. 5.
Appendix page—560



Example 5. de Stwolinski, Beethoven op. 119 no. 5 Musical segments, pages 226-227

Ex. 4-29. Beethoven: Eleven Bagatelles, Op. 119, No. 5 (ABA¹)



Example 6. de Stwolinski, Beethoven op. 119 no. 5 Form diagram from Appendix, page 560

In giving this work a ternary label, de Stwolinski is following the exact model described by Arnold Schoenberg in *Fundamentals of Musical Composition*. In Part II, on Small Forms, Schoenberg describes the Small Ternary Form (A-B-A'):

THE SMALL TERNARY FORM

> "The A-section of the A-B-A' form may be a sentence or a period, ending on I, V, or ~~III~~ (iii) in major; on i, III, V, or v in minor. The beginning, at least, should clearly express the tonality, because of the contrast to follow.
>
> The A'-section, the recapitulation, ends on the tonic if it completes an independent piece. It is seldom an unchanged repetition. The final cadence generally differs from that of the first section, even if both lead to the same degree.

THE CONTRASTING MIDDLE SECTION

> The most effective factor in a contrasting section is the harmony. The A-section establishes a tonic; the B-section contraposes another region (one of the more closely related). This provides both contrast and coherence.
>
> Further coherence is furnished by the metre, and by using forms of the basic motive which are not too remote from those of the A-section.
>
> Further contrast can be achieved through the use of new variations of the basic motive, or change in the order of previous motive-forms."[17]

This description matches perfectly the musical processes of the Beethoven Bagatelle in measures 1-16. William Caplin, in *Classical Form: A Theory of Formal Functions for the Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven*[18] adopts Schoenberg's terminology for pieces such as the bagatelle; he also emphasizes three main formal sections,

[17] Arnold Schoenberg, *Fundamentals of Musical Composition* ed. Gerald Strang and Leonard Stein (London: Faber and Faber, 1967), 119-120.

[18] William E. Caplin, *Classical Form: A Theory of Formal Functions for the Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998). See Chapter 6, Small Ternary (71-86) and his summary of three-part versus two-part labels in various writings in Note 1 to Chapter 6 (267-268).

expressing the functions of exposition (A), contrasting middle (B), and recapitulation (A'). Listeners in Oklahoma who identified the form as ternary pointed out the strong sense of return (in measure 13) which created a third part—a restatement of the opening material after a departure in measures 9-12 (although many elements of these measures are similar to those in measures 1-8).

Many currently-used music theory textbooks label this formal design as rounded binary, and emphasize the two-part nature of the form. Robert Gauldin's detailed analysis of the Menuetto and Trio from Beethoven's Piano Sonata op. 2 no. 1, includes diagrams of the two-reprise design of both sections of the movement (see Example 7).[19]

Figure 25.1 **TWO-REPRISE DESIGN IN THE MENUETTO**

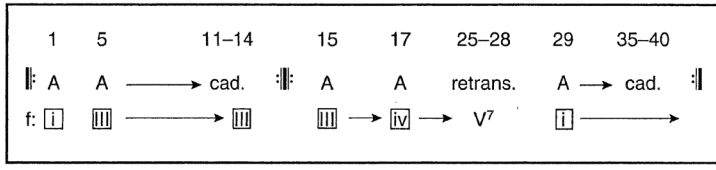
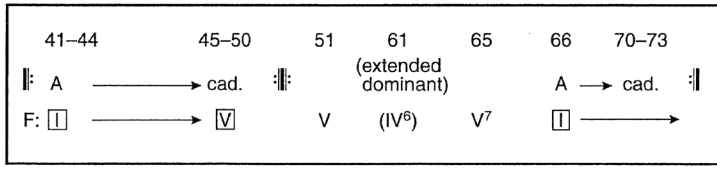


Figure 25.2 **TWO-REPRISE DESIGN IN THE TRIO**



Example 7. Robert Gauldin, *Harmonic Practice in Tonal Music*, 2nd ed. Beethoven Piano Sonata op. 2 no. 1, Movement III. Two-reprise forms (rounded binary) in the Menuetto and Trio. Figures 25.1 and 25.2, page 455

[19] Robert Gauldin, *Harmonic Practice in Tonal Music*, 2nd ed. (New York: W.W. Norton, 2004), 455. See his detailed comments about this movement on pages 453-467, guiding the teacher and student from an overview into a progressively more focused study of tonality and motivic development, and Gauldin's descriptions of various types of "Simple Forms" in the preceding chapter (pages 426-452).

Steven Laitz, among other recent textbook authors, offers a comparison of ternary form and rounded binary form (see Example 8).[20] For these authors, the middle section of the Beethoven Bagatelle is more of a digression than a contrast. The two-part structure indicated by the repeat signs and the shortened return of A point more strongly to a binary design rather than a ternary one. The Indiana listeners, familiar with teaching this pattern as a "rounded binary form," overwhelmingly chose binary over ternary as a label for the form of the Beethoven example.

Kostka/Payne's *Tonal Harmony* is less consistent in its labeling of formal designs. Example 9 on the following page is a compilation of descriptions from the text of three different musical excerpts, all with two repeated sections, as indicated by the label "two-reprise."[21] In each case the first section is shorter and the second section returns some or all of the elements of the first section. The text's terminology includes the common

EXAMPLE 31.1

A. Ternary form

A	B	A or (A')
° original material	° contrasting material	° literal repetition of A (or altered restatement, labeled A')
° original key	° contrasting key: (major mode: IV, vi, iv, ♭VI, i) (minor mode: III, iv, VI, I)	° original key

B. Rounded binary form

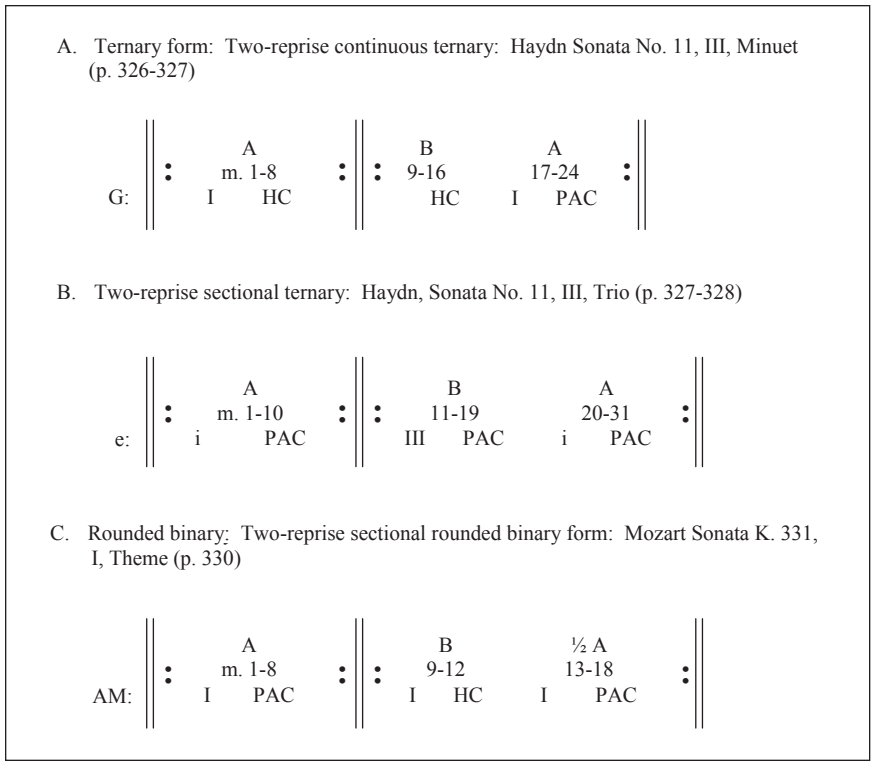
: a :	: digression a' :
° in one key I ---------- V //	I ---------- V I

Example 8. Steven C. Laitz, *The Complete Musician, an integrated approach to tonal theory, analysis, and listening*, 2nd ed. Example 31.1, page 702

[20] Steven E. Laitz, *The Complete Musician, an integrated approach to tonal theory, analysis, and listening*, 2nd ed. (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 702.

[21] Stefan Kostka and Dorothy Payne, *Tonal Harmony with an Introduction to Twentieth-Century Music*, 5th ed. (Boston, MA: McGraw Hill, 2004), 326-330.

distinction between continuous and sectional, indicating whether the structural cadence at the end of the first large section is open (not on tonic) or closed (on tonic). However, the binary or ternary labels depend on how much of the first section is returned. In Example 9A and 9B the restatement of the first section (in both cases somewhat varied) is as long as, or longer than, the first A section, leading to a ternary classification: two-reprise continuous ternary and two-reprise sectional ternary, depending on the cadences at the end of the A section. Example 9C on the other hand is a two-reprise sectional rounded binary form, presumably because the A section is not restated completely. Based on these examples, the Beethoven Bagatelle would probably be described by Kostka/Payne as a two-reprise continuous rounded binary form.



Example 9. Stefan Kostka and Dorothy Payne, *Tonal Harmony with an Introduction to Twentieth-Century Music*, 5th ed. Summaries of formal discussions on pages 326-330, Examples 20-3, 20-4, and 20-7.

Clearly this common musical design has aspects of both binary and ternary patterns, depending on which musical elements

are considered most structural. Rather than arguing about the label attached to a particular formal design, teachers could more productively help students to develop a list of questions to consider in a discussion of form of any musical composition. These questions might include: (1) Where are the most important divisions (cadences) of the work? (2) What musical elements characterize these places of division? Consider not only harmony and tonality, but all musical parameters (rhythm, dynamics, register, texture, etc.). (3) What creates musical contrast in the composition? Where does this contrast occur? (4) Is any material restated in the composition? If so, where? Does this restatement occur as a recognizable return of the opening material, or of other parts of the work? (5) Make a diagram of the work, including measure numbers, main divisions (include key areas and types of cadences, if relevant), and letters indicating relationships of sections or phrases (if relevant). (6) Examine the diagram and discuss the design or designs created, including the balance of sections.

For instance in the design of the Beethoven Bagatelle measures 1-16:

> What musical elements create a binary (two-part) design in this composition? Answers to this question could include: (a) the division into two equal parts by repeat signs (b) the lack of a strong rhythmic, textural, or tonal contrast at the beginning of the second large section (c) the strong cadences in measures 7-8 and 15-16 and (d) the identical rhythmic and melodic material of the cadential measure 8 (in the dominant minor) and measure 16 (in the tonic).
>
> What musical elements create a ternary (three-part) design? Answers to this question could include (a) the strong feeling of return in measures 13-14 of measures 1-2 (probably set off in performance by phrase articulations as indicated by Beethoven, separating the tonic chord ending in measure 12 from the tonic chord beginning in measure 13) and (b) the somewhat new material of measures 9-12, presenting a more disjunct melodic line, a wider melodic range, and a two-measure sequential pattern (de Stwolinski indicates that measure 9 begins in a new tonal area of f minor).

How do the lengths of sections relate to each other? The first section includes two four-measure phrases in a parallel modulating period relationship (m. 1-4, 5-8); the second section includes two four-measure phrases in a contrasting relationship. The simple diagram below is similar to the elements highlighted by de Stwolinski:

	a	a′	b	a″
Measures	1 -4	5 - 8	9 - 12	13 - 16
c:	i----V	i -----v	(iv) i	i---------i
		(g: V-i)		(c: V-i)
	4	4	4	4

BEYOND LABELS: THE INDIVIDUAL MUSICAL COMPOSITION

This discussion of meter and form has concentrated on only measures 1-16 because this part of the composition is the one which falls most recognizably into regular phrase groupings and into the formal pattern generally referenced as either "small ternary" or "rounded binary." After I played measures 1-16 at the two different tempos for the Oklahoma and Indiana listeners, we heard the complete composition. Several interesting events occur in measures 17-26 which challenge the predictability of the rest of the short composition. Measures 17-18 recall the F minor emphasis of measures 9-10, while restating the octave-leap cadential pattern of measures 8 and 16. Measures 20-23 restate measures 11-12 up an octave and then in the same register, and add three more measures to confirm the tonic cadence. The regular metric grouping is disturbed by the silence in measure 19, by the seven-measure length of the section from measures 20-26, and by the sforzando markings in measures 22-24. De Stwolinski refers to this section as a "codetta;" one could also see this as an expansion of the "b" phrase of measures 9-12, giving an overall formal pattern of:

a	a′	b	a″	b′
4	4	4	4	10
repeated		repeated		

Additional questions about this complete composition which might stimulate discussion in a class include:[22]

1. Measure 14 is the only measure in the piece which uses a regular pattern of three eighth notes. Why does this measure sound rhythmically less, instead of more, regular than the rest of the composition?

(The surface eighth-note pattern is not synchronized with the harmonic rhythm of this measure, which creates a hemiola pattern of three quarter notes.)

2. Measures 17-26 don't follow the four-measure groupings of measures 1-16. How are they grouped? How does this grouping contribute to suspense and closure?

(There are various possibilities for grouping within these ten measures, such as

[3-2-2-1-2], [2-1-2-2-3], or [5-5, based on an expansion of the four-measure phrase in measures 9-12]. Suspense is created by the silence in measure 19 and the unpredictability of the cadential extension in measures 24-26. Closure is created not only by the repeated V-i harmonic pattern but also by the metric placement of the final octave C: the first time in the composition that this octave leap has ended on the first beat of a measure.)

3. How do you think the composition is designed in terms of tension and relaxation? Where is the climax (point of greatest tension)? What musical elements contribute to these patterns?

[22] Questions such as these are similar to those in the stimulating and thought-provoking section on Musical Analysis in Michael Rogers's book *Teaching Approaches in Music Theory: An Overview of Pedagogical Philosophies*, 2nd ed. (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2004), particularly Stage 6 at the end of Chapter 4, pages 93-99. The questions and discussions of the purpose of the questions that he presents are very useful guides both for teachers in the classroom and for students in music theory pedagogy classes, as they work to structure a meaningful discussion about a musical composition. I often ask pedagogy students to write their own questions based on a musical excerpt, to give possible answers to the question, and to discuss the purpose of the questions. De Stwolinski also suggests similar questions in her assignments at the end of the chapter on part forms (pages 235-236).

(One possible design is: presentation (m. 1-8), some tension (m. 9-12), return/relaxation (m. 13-16), climax/most tension/ conclusion (m. 17-26)[point of greatest tension in m. 19-20], based on the musical elements already discussed.)

This article has focused on one short piece to try to raise several issues which might be helpful to teachers of music theory. First, it is important to ask relevant questions about a specific musical composition. In the case of the Beethoven Bagatelle, my two-choice question about mode was relevant (although basic) and produced an unambiguous answer (which might not have been the case with another composition by Beethoven or a composition by Schubert written at the same time). However, my two-choice questions about meter and form were not unambiguous and should probably not come at the beginning of a discussion, or should not be asked at all. Too many students are anxious to immediately conclude "The form of this piece is A B A" without considering all musical elements.

Second, although some labels can be helpful in summarizing various structural aspects, students and teachers should be aware of the factors that underlie the labels and of the different labels that have been applied to the same structure. In some cases different labels are in fact trying to describe the same musical phenomenon. In the case of the Beethoven example, labels of type of meter (duple and triple) are both appropriate to the work (at least in some theorists' views), depending on tempo, perception of basic pulse, pulse groupings, and larger metric structure at the phrase level (hypermeter). Ternary and binary are also both appropriate in different ways as formal descriptions. To describe formal designs which combine two- and three-part patterns, authors of current texts employ terms such as rounded binary, balanced binary, ternary, small ternary, incipient ternary, and binary-ternary, combined with the modifiers two-reprise and sectional/continuous, in an often confusing attempt to create a relevant formal label for every type of piece.[23] These labels privilege different musical elements, which should be clearly identified by the teacher and student: two-

[23] William Caplin remarks that "One of the most vigorous debates in the history of theory concerns whether the simple form under consideration here [the small ternary form] (as well as its more expanded manifestation, the sonata) consists essentially of two or three parts." Caplin, *Classical Form*, 71.

reprise depends on a repeat pattern of the sections (does the formal design thus change if the sections aren't repeated in performance?); sectional/continuous depend on tonal goals at an important interior cadence; and the various binary and ternary labels depend on whether there is a return of opening material or of cadential material and, to some authors, on the length of the return.

Third, although more time-consuming in class and more ambiguous in an assignment and exam situation, analytical discussions which help students to think about important aspects of musical materials and structure and to justify their opinions are much more useful than simply applying terms. This understanding is the essence of informed performance, and students might perceive something very different from what the teacher has in mind.

The best teaching corrects wrong and unsubstantiated comments but challenges the student to think of different interpretations, to find what structural elements are common to other pieces of a particular genre or to other pieces written by the composer, and to uncover what aspects are unique to a particular composition. Labels can be liabilities if they are considered a final answer; they can also be the starting point of stimulating discussions in which the teacher and students are both learners.