An Overview of
SONATA FORM

Sonata form is a large scale, multi-movement structure used for these common genres:

Sonata – for a solo instrument, or solo instrument with piano accompaniment
Trio – for 3 solo instruments, or 2 solo instruments with piano accompaniment
Quartet – for 4 solo instruments
Quintet – for 5 solo instruments
(etc.)
Concerto – for a solo instrument(s) with orchestral accompaniment
Symphony – for orchestra alone

• Evolved during the Classical era (1750-1820), continued into the Romantic era (1820-1910) and beyond.

• Typical Tempi/Movements of a Classical Sonata structure (there are many variants)
  1. fast – sonata allegro form (see next page…)
  2. slow – ternary or sonata allegro form
  3. minuet and trio (often omitted from Sonatas and Concertos)
  4. fast – sonata allegro form, rondo form (ABACAB’A), or theme & variation*

* We’ll study this in 223