

Form, ornaments & terms in context

Binary and ternary were one idea returning once. These two forms build whole movements out of return — and the ornaments and modifier words here are what you meet in the same repertoire.

RONDO — THE MAIN IDEA KEEPS COMING BACK



The refrain returns between contrasting episodes, usually in the home key while the episodes visit others. It may be as short as ABACA — what makes it a rondo is that A always comes back.

THEME AND VARIATIONS — ONE IDEA, CHANGED AGAIN AND AGAIN



The theme is stated simply, then heard again with something altered each time — rhythm, key, accompaniment, decoration. The shape and phrase lengths stay recognisable, which is what lets a listener follow.

TWO MORE ORNAMENTS



TURN

A quick four-note figure curling around the written note: above, the note, below, back. Written as a sideways S.



APPOGGIATURA

A leaning note: it lands *on* the beat a step away, takes some of the main note's time, then resolves into it. Unlike a grace note, it is meant to be felt.

FORM IS MEMORY

Every form here works by giving the listener something to recognise. Ask of any piece: what came back, and what had changed when it did?

MODIFIER WORDS — TERMS THAT ATTACH TO OTHER TERMS

TERM	MEANS	IN COMBINATION
<i>sempre</i>	Always	<i>sempre legato</i> — smoothly throughout, not just in this bar.
<i>poco</i>	A little	<i>poco rallentando</i> — slow down, but only slightly.
<i>molto</i>	Much, very	<i>molto espressivo</i> — very expressively; commit to it.
<i>poco a poco</i>	Little by little	<i>poco a poco cresc.</i> — grow across many bars, not one.

READING A TERM IN CONTEXT

A modifier alone means nothing — look at the word beside it and how many bars it spans. *Poco* over one bar and *poco a poco* over sixteen ask for different things.