

Form and Structure:

This is a **Rondeau**: in Purcell's time, this structure had a recurring main section (or theme) which alternated with subsidiary sections (or themes).

The overall plan of the movement is **A B A C A**.

Each section is 8 bars long.

(Any repeat of the sections is usually left to the discretion of the conductor.)

Section A	Section B	Section A	Section C	Section A
Bars:				
1 - 8	9 - 16	17 - 24	25 - 32	33 - 40
Main theme	Episode 1	Main theme	Episode 2	Main theme

Instrumentation:



String Chamber Ensemble.

The score has 4 parts, like a string quartet (violin 1, violin 2, viola, cello).

It is often performed by a string orchestra.

Background details:

Composed by **Henry Purcell** (1659 – 1695), a composer of the **Baroque** era in music, who is generally considered to be one of the first great English composers.

He wrote incidental music for a play called '*Abdelazer*' in 1695. The music was in 9 movements. This Rondeau was the **second movement** and is the only movement that has become popular.

Has the feeling of a 'spirited hornpipe dance'.

Harmony:

Diatonic. Mainly root position and chords in 1st inversion (including secondary 7th chords and V7 chords). Section A includes a cycle of 5ths (bar 2⁵-6⁵); section B includes some 2nd inversion chords; section C also uses a chord in 2nd inversion (bar 28¹), a chord in 3rd inversion (bar 32²), and a **diminished** chord at the start of bar 31.

Cadences:

Section A – Imperfect Cadence (end of bar 2). Perfect cadence in D minor to end the section.

Section B – Imperfect cadence (end of bar 10). Perfect cadence in F major to end the section.

Section C – Perfect cadence in A major (end of bar 28); imperfect cadence in D minor to end the section (this is known as a **PHRYGIAN** cadence i.e. IV⁶₃-V).

Rhythm:

Triple time

3/2

3 minim beats in every bar i.e. Simple rhythms used throughout, some dotted rhythms in Section C



Tonality:

Section A - D MINOR every time (the tonic / home key)

Section B - F MAJOR (this is the key of the mediant major)

Section C - Starts in A MINOR (the dominant minor)

Ends in D MINOR (the tonic / home key)

Texture:

Homophonic: melody and accompaniment.

The melody throughout is played by Violin 1.

Melody:

Section A introduces 3 motifs:



Section B – based on 'x' and 'y'; 'z' developed from bar 11; also note use of perfect 4ths, octaves and a perfect 5th.

Section C introduces new idea, with dotted rhythm (derived from 'y'):



Mostly conjunct (stepwise), with just one interval of a perfect 5th; 'z' incorporates the dotted rhythm in bar 28; melodic sequence noted in bar 29; new cadential idea in bar 32.

Dynamics:

Not indicated on scores of the time.

There is a very narrow range – often the same dynamic throughout.

Tempo:

Not indicated on all scores – generally, is **allegro moderato**.