



Chopin's:

**Prelude in D flat major, Op. 28 ("The Raindrop")**

The Piece is in a clear 4/4 time and has three sections as follows:

Section A	Bars 1 – 27	D flat Major
Section B	Bars 28 – 75	C sharp minor
Section A <sub>2</sub>	Bars 76 – End (89)	D flat Major

**Main Themes**

- *The first theme:*



Found in the right hand part at bars:

Section A → 1–4, 5–8, 20–23, 24–27,

Section A<sub>2</sub> → 76–79, Bar 80 and the first beat of 81 contain the theme up to note 'C'

- *The second theme:*



Found in the left hand part at bars:

Section B → 28–31, 36–39, 44–47, 52–55

**A closer look at section A**

*Figures:*

As well as the melody in the right hand of section A, the left hand plays a melodic figure and a repeated note, usually an A flat, which acts as an accompaniment.

*Keys:*

Section A starts in D flat major and modulates to the dominant (A flat minor) by bar 12.

A small circle of fifths brings the piece briefly into B flat minor (the relative minor of the tonic key, D flat major) at bar 16:

The image shows a musical score for piano, spanning from bar 13 to bar 16. The key signature is three flats (B-flat major / D-flat minor). The score is written for both hands. Bar 13 is labeled 'A flat minor'. Bar 14 is labeled 'E flat minor'. Bar 15 is labeled 'B flat minor'. Bar 16 is labeled 'F (V7 of B flat)'. The score shows a circle of fifths progression: A flat minor (bar 13) -> E flat minor (bar 14) -> B flat minor (bar 15) -> F (V7 of B flat) (bar 16). The right hand plays a melodic line, and the left hand plays a bass line with chords. The piece returns to D flat major at bar 20.

The piece arrives back in D flat major at bar 20 with the return of the opening theme.

*Phrasing:*

A consists of even phrases that are mainly four bars long.

*Interesting features:*

- Ornamentation in this section consists of crushed notes (e.g. the D,C,B before the last beat of bar 15 in the right hand), septuplet figures (e.g. last beat of bar 4 in the right hand). The player may also add things like broken chords.
- Circle of fifths – A flat → E flat → B flat → F starting at bar 13
- Dominant note used as an accompaniment throughout most of the A section.
- A syncopated feel – The second and fourths beats are often stressed (e.g. bar 1)
- In the last bar we are left hanging, as the anticipated D flat is not played. This note / tonic chord is delayed until the start of the following bar (the B section), thus bringing our attention straight away to the left hand that plays it. This allows us to hear the new left hand melody clearly and completely.

*Dynamics:*

There is no dynamic contrast in this section. It remains piano throughout.

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**A closer look at section B**

*Figures:*

The left hand now plays the melodic figure while the repeated dominant notes are played with the right hand. Later there is also a complimentary melodic figure in the right hand part. (starting at bar 36.) At bar 60 the right hand plays the main melodic figure.

*Keys:*

The starting key is C sharp minor, which is the enharmonic equivalent of the ‘minored’ tonic (D flat).

At bar 40 the key seems to shift to E major (the relative major changing the mood from gloomy to majestic and proud. This phrase uses G sharp minor (dominant key) to return to C sharp minor at bar 44, where the opening section B theme returns.

The same thing happens at bar 56 but the theme doesn’t return. Instead, a new melodic section begins at bar 60. The key is C sharp minor and moves to G sharp major by bar 72:

The image shows a musical score snippet with two staves. The top staff contains a melodic line with various notes and rests, and the bottom staff contains a bass line with chords. Above the first staff, the number '70' is written above the first measure, and '72' is written above the third measure. Below the staves, the following text is written: 'C sharp minor' under the first measure, 'E sharp minor (V7 of G sharp)' under the second measure, and 'D sharp' and 'G sharp major' under the third measure.

The section ends in G sharp major followed by a bridge of four quavers to return to D flat major in section A 2

*Phrasing:*

The phrasing is very regular and is in four or eight bar phrases.

*Interesting features:*

- The ornamentation in this section consists of an appoggiatura at bars 49 and 55
- At bar 61 there features a 4 – 3 suspension over a G sharp major (dominant) chord. In bar 62 there is a 9-8 suspension over a C sharp minor (tonic) chord followed by a 4-3 suspension over a dominant chord. These emotive two bars are repeated at bars 69 and 70 with slight alterations in the bass line.

*Dynamics:*

This section makes highly effective use of dynamics. They range from pianissimo to fortissimo. There is also use of crescendos, diminuendos and accents. All of these features are used to help contrasting moods within the section come alive. For example, the majestic mood at bar 40 is fortissimo and is immediately followed by the return of the gloomy opening B section theme, which is contrastingly pianissimo.

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## A closer look at section A2

### *Figures:*

Section A2 contains the same melodic figures as before, in section A. In bar 84, the main melodic line moves to the inner part of the right hand, with the upper part playing a complimentary melodic figure with the lower left hand. The upper left hand continues to play the repeated dominant notes ( A flat) right until the last semibreve in bar 89

### *Keys:*

The key is a consistent D flat major to round the piece of.

### *Phrasing:*

The phrase structure is a symmetrical six bar, two bar, six bar structure.

### *Interesting features:*

The septuplet figure in the previous A section has been extended to a ten-note figure. (bar 79 beat 4 in the right hand)

### *Dynamics:*

The dynamics start at piano as in section A. In the two bar phrase the dynamic is forte. It seems to bring to the listener's attention the closure of the prelude. The final phrase is piano and dies away to pianissimo.

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## Overall form of the piece.

The piece seems to be in ternary form because:

- It has harmonically closed sections ( A and A2 are closed:- tonic - tonic)
- The B section is thematically contrasting.

It is not typical of ternary form because:

- The B section is not harmonically closed. It is tonic – dominant.
- We would usually expect the B section to be in the dominant key ( A flat ) but it is in the enharmonic equivalent of the 'minored' tonic key.

The piece could also be rounded binary form because:

- The B section is the longest.
- The return of A is shorter than the original.
- A returns with exactly the same material as the start.

Because the prelude's sections are mainly harmonically closed with a contrasting B section, it is most likely ternary form.