

Sonata Form

- Baroque composers tended to write long-flowing melodies, spun out using the same repeated rhythms, ideas, instrumental colour (timbre) and tempi, thereby creating the same affection (or mood).
- Classical composers tended to write shorter, memorable melodies, with clear-cut contrasting rhythms, instrumental timbre and tunes that closely followed one another and constantly changed the mood.



- Sonata Form** became a means of building up these varying elements into a balanced, coherent musical design. It was used so often in the first movements of nearly every type of instrumental music (sonatas, symphonies, concertos, overtures, trios, quartets etc.) that it's also called **first-movement form**.

Sonata Form

- It has **two main themes** (subjects), were are presented and developed over **three sections**. Therefore, sonata form grew out of binary (two-part) form and ternary (three-part) form:

Exposition: composer 'exposes' states his musical material in two subjects (meaning subject for later discussion), both made up of several smaller musical ideas:

- The **1st Subject** (group of ideas): is in the tonic 'home key' and is often vigorous, rhythmic, triadic and bold. It is followed by a *bridge passage* which modulates (changes key), leading us to:
- The **2nd Subject** (group of ideas): in a new, but related key - often the dominant or relative major if the tonic is minor - and is often more melodic, scalar, and lyrical. It is followed by a repetition of the exposition so the listener can fully absorb both subjects.

Sonata Form

Development: composer 'develops' or explores the musical possibilities of any aspect of the ideas presented in the exposition.

- Rhythmical and tuneful **fragments** will be repeated, but brought through a variety of **different keys** (avoiding the home key),
- Fragments can be **combined or set in opposition** creating strong feelings of climax, tension and dramatic conflict before the:

Recapitulation: composer now 'recapitulates', or repeated in a slightly different form, the music of the exposition,

- The **1st Subject** (group of ideas): is in the tonic 'home key' again. It is followed by an *altered bridge* without any modulation
- The **2nd Subject** (group of ideas): now also in the tonic before the composer round off the movement with a *coda section*.

Sonata Form Summary

Exposition (usually repeated)			Development	Recapitulation			Coda
1st Subject (tonic)	Bridge (Changing Key)	2nd Subject (new key)	Many new keys, discussing, developing combining, and opposing ideas from the exposition	1st Subject (tonic)	Bridge (now altered)	2nd Subject (tonic)	To round off!

Ex.1 Serenade No.13 for Strings in G major (1787)



Mozart 1756-1791

A **serenade** or evening music (just like the divertimento - music to divert or entertain) was of a lighter character than a symphony and often intended for performance in the open air

Abridged Sonata Form

Exposition (usually repeated)		Link	Recapitulation			Coda	
Ist Subject (tonic)	Bridge (Changing Key)	2nd Subject (new key)	Joining the exposition to the recapitulation	Ist Subject (tonic)	Bridge (now altered)	2nd Subject (tonic)	To round off!

- As the name implies, this is a shortened version of sonata form, with the development section removed. Instead a small link section is provided to lead back to the tonic key and the recapitulation.
- The link may be only a few bars or just a single chord (V⁷) leading straight into the recapitulation.
- Because of its compactness, abridged sonata form is often used for operatic overtures and for slow movements of compositions like sonatas, symphonies and chamber works, where full sonata form would be too long due to the leisurely speed of the music.

Combination of Sonata and Ritornello Form

- Exposition** (Orchestra)
 - Ist Subject strings then winds (I)
 - Bridge (**1st Ritornello**)
 - 2nd Subject strings then winds (I)
 - Codetta (orchestra)
 - Exposition** (soloist)
 - Ist Subject piano only (I)
 - Bridge (**2nd Ritornello**)
 - 2nd Subject piano then winds & strings (V)
 - Codetta** (piano)
 - Bridge (**3rd Ritornello**)
- Development** (soloist & orchestra)
 - New Material** (in sonata form you expect 1st & 2nd subjects to be developed!)
 - Modulation** to keys
- Recapitulation** (soloist & orchestra)
 - Ist Subject winds & strings then piano (I)
 - Bridge (**4th Ritornello**)
 - 2nd Subject piano then winds & strings (I)
 - Codetta** (piano)
 - New Material** again (piano)



Ex.2 Piano Concerto No.23 in A Major (1st mvt) by Mozart

- Bridge (**5th Ritornello**)
- New Material** again (orchestra)
- Cadanza (soloist)
- Coda** (orchestra)

Sonata-Rondo Form (A-B-A-C-A-B-A)

- As the name suggests, it's a combination of ingredients of sonata form and rondo form.
- Like rondo form, it depends upon a recurring main theme (A) which appears at least three times but both this theme and the second theme (B), which occurs twice, are called subjects, since they may be used for development during the central section (C).

Exposition			Central Section	Recapitulation			Coda
A ¹ Principal Subject (tonic) Rondo Theme	B Second Subject (Dominant or relative major)	A ² Principal Subject (tonic) Rondo Theme	C Very often an episode (new material) in another key; or development of any previous material or a combination of both	A ³ Principal Subject (tonic) Rondo Theme	B Second Subject (tonic)	A ⁴ Principal Subject (tonic) Rondo Theme	To round off!
Bridge (Changing Key)				Bridge (now altered)			

- Like sonata form, it has two subjects (second subject returning during the recapitulation section in the tonic key), and the total structures divides into three main sections.
- However the main differences are
 - the exposition and recapitulation both end with a return of the principal subject (rondo theme) or at least some reference to it.
 - the central section may consist of development of previous material or an episode introducing new material, or both!
- Used almost exclusively for final movements of instrumental compositions such as sonatas, symphonies, quartets.

Ex.3 Horn Concerto No.4 in Eb Major (3rd mvt)



Mozart 1756-1791