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THE SONATA FORM AND ITS USE IN BEETHOVEN'S
FIRST SEVENTEEN PIANO SONATAS

by

Kathryn Hammond

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF ARTS

in

Applied Music

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY
Logan, Utah

1965

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express thanks to my committee members, Mr. Irving Wassermann, Dr. A. L. Dittmer, and Mr. Merle E. Puffer. Mr. Wassermann, especially, has spent many hours helping me in this study, and also with my recital.



Kathryn Hammond

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INTRODUCTION

Beethoven's piano sonatas are possibly the greatest achievement in piano literature, perhaps in all musical literature. It has been said that if the forty-eight preludes and fugues of Bach's "Well-tempered Clavier" were to be considered the "Old Testament" of music, then Beethoven's thirty-two sonatas would have to be the "New Testament."

Together, the sonatas encompass a complete range of feeling, from the gayest to the saddest, from the most humorous to the most sublime. Each sonata is a work of art in itself and is different from every other one. Each presents its own array of thoughts and emotions. Although he generally follows the set pattern of the sonata form, Beethoven continually presents something new, so that the listener never tires or becomes disinterested.

It is my purpose here to present an analysis of the form and structure of the sonatas of Beethoven's early period, up to and including the sonata, Opus 31, number 2. To begin, it is appropriate to present a short biography of Beethoven, inasmuch as one's works are influenced by his personality, his family, and the conditions in which he lives. Following this, I shall give an outline of the sonata form as it was used by Beethoven, and a short history of the sonata form up to the time of Beethoven.

BEETHOVEN'S LIFE

The family of Ludwig van Beethoven can be traced back to a small village in Belgium, and from there to Antwerp. Here, Beethoven's grandfather was born. Before reaching the age of twenty, the elder Beethoven moved to Bonn, Germany, where he became an excellent musician. He married a woman, Maria Poll, who drank excessively, a problem which recurred in her son Johann. Johann became a musician also, though he was not as talented as was his father.

Johann and his wife Maria-Magdalena had six children, three of whom reached maturity. Ludwig van Beethoven was born in Bonn, most probably on December 16, 1770. It is interesting to note that many records of Beethoven carry a mistake of two years, probably because his father falsified his age in order to make him appear more of a prodigy. Beethoven's two brothers, Karl and Johann, were born in 1774 and 1776, respectively.

Beethoven's childhood was a rather unhappy one. His family was poor and his education was quite limited in fields other than music. His father was his first music teacher, and Johann soon recognized the genius in his son, so he hired more qualified teachers, Van den Eeden, followed by Pfeiffer.

At the age of eleven, Beethoven began studying piano, organ, and

composing with C. G. Neefe, an organist.¹ At this time, Beethoven could play most of Bach's Well-tempered Clavier.² Shortly after this, he was appointed assistant organist of the court band. The elector at this time was Max Friedrich, and Beethoven dedicated three early sonatas to him. In 1784, Max Friedrich was succeeded by Max Franz, who was greatly interested in music and increased the musical activities of Bonn.

About 1787, Beethoven made the acquaintance of some rich and cultivated people who were to remain friends to him until death. These were the Breuning family and Count Ferdinand von Waldstein. Waldstein's name is now familiar mainly because of the great sonata, Opus 53, which was dedicated to him by Beethoven. Frau Breuning was almost like a second mother to Beethoven, and her children, Stephan and Eleanore, almost like a brother and sister to him. Eleanore later married one of Beethoven's biographers, Dr. Wegeler.

Also during the year of 1787, Beethoven made a trip to Vienna, where he met and played for Mozart, whom he quite impressed, but whose own protegee, Hummel, was more of a prodigy than was Beethoven. After a few months, Beethoven returned home to see his mother who was gravely ill and who died within a few weeks. Following this, his father began drinking more and more; consequently, Beethoven had to assume more responsibility with the family.

¹Robert Haven Schauffler, Beethoven: The Man Who Freed Music (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc., 1937), p. 16.

²H. A. Rudall, Beethoven (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, and Rivington, Ltd., 1890), p. 10.

In 1789, Beethoven went with the Electoral orchestra to accompany the Elector to Mergentheim. This was a very pleasant trip down the Rhine River. On the way Beethoven met a famous pianist, the Abbe Sterkel, and improvised for him. At Mergentheim he also improvised for Vogler.

Josef Haydn came through Bonn in 1792, and saw a composition of Beethoven's, and encouraged him to continue writing. Late in that year Beethoven left Bonn permanently to go to Vienna. He received a pension from the Elector to help him financially. Count Waldstein wrote to him as he departed, "Receive, through unbroken industry, from the hands of Haydn, the spirit of Mozart."³

In Vienna, due to his great gifts, Beethoven became acquainted with many of the influential people, and with royalty, the principle among which were the houses of Princes Lobkowitz, Lichnowsky, Lichtenstein, Esterhazy, and Kinsky. Another lifelong friend whom Beethoven met at this time was the Baron von Zmeskall. Within a month after his arrival in Vienna, Beethoven received news of his father's death. This made him now the guardian of his two younger brothers.

Beethoven began lessons with Haydn, but these proved to be not as successful as both might have wished. Haydn let many mistakes in Beethoven's exercises go uncorrected, and when Beethoven discovered this, he was very displeased and arranged to study secretly with Schenck at the same time. Following this period, he studied counterpoint with Albrechtsberger, and also

³Rudall, p. 33.

with Salieri. After 1795, he studied only by himself.⁴

Beethoven was on his own financially by this time. The pension from the Elector had ceased when the French entered Bonn. He published his Opus 1, three trios, and gave lessons to support himself. His Opus 2 was the three sonatas which he dedicated to Haydn. By 1796, he had enough money to send for his brothers. Eventually, Karl became a musician and Johann an apothecary.

Musically Beethoven's success was due mainly to his great talent for improvisation. Yet he often refused to play when he was asked. He lived for a time in the home of Prince Lichnowsky, and enjoyed the company of nobility here. Prince Lichnowsky was a good pianist and enjoyed playing Beethoven's compositions. Yet, though great favor was shown to him, Beethoven liked to do things in his own way, in his own time. Often he left just as dinner was being served, to eat elsewhere. In spite of these displays of bad manners, Prince Lichnowsky became a great friend to Beethoven.

Beethoven was in love several times in his life, but never married. One of his earlier affections was given to Marie-Therese von Brunswick. Another of his interests was Giulietta Guicciardi, young girl to whom Beethoven dedicated the "Moonlight" sonata, Opus 14, number 2. Many biographers believe that it was to her that Beethoven wrote his famous letter to the "Immortal Beloved."

⁴Alan Pryce-Jones, Beethoven (rev. ed.; New York: A. A. Wyn, Inc., 1948), p. 30.

In 1798, Beethoven first noticed his approaching deafness.⁵ He mentioned it two years later in a letter to a friend. From this time on, he tried many cures and visited many doctors, but to no avail. His hearing would grow better, then worse again. He was afraid to mention this hearing defect to his friends because he felt that he, more than anyone else, should have excellent hearing. So he often pretended to be absent-minded when in truth he did not hear. The cause of this loss is unknown, but is thought by many biographers to have resulted from a venereal disease.

Beethoven sometimes engaged in piano competition with other pianists. One of these contests was with Steibelt in 1800. At this time Steibelt had prepared an impromptu on a theme of Beethoven's. This displeased the master, so he took up a 'cello part from a quartet of Steibelt's, turned it upside down, and improvised so well that Steibelt left the room. Steibelt never again played in Beethoven's presence.

In 1800, Beethoven began spending his summers in the country near Vienna. The summer of 1802 was spent in Heiligenstadt. It was here that the famed "Heiligenstadt Testament" was written. In this letter to his brothers, which was found after his death, Beethoven poured out his heart and gave words to the feeling that his deafness was cutting him off from society. He left his effects to his brothers and gave them advice on how to live better lives. This was probably the low point of Beethoven's life, a time of illness and gloom.

⁵Schauffler, p. 50.

But soon after this document was written, Beethoven was again in Vienna, in better spirits. He spent his time composing, dealing with publishers, and in many social engagements. His only two professional students at this time were Ferdinand Ries and Karl Czerny.⁶ Throughout all his life, Beethoven had an aversion to teaching. And now, because of his deafness, he performed less and less frequently.

Beethoven was now living with his old friend Stephan Breuning, but they had an argument and parted for a time. Before long, however, they made a reconciliation. Beethoven was often involved in quarrels with his friends. But afterwards, Beethoven was always very sorry, and apologized profusely, taking more than his share of the blame.

Beethoven's only opera, "Fidelio," was first performed in 1805, and was not a success. After being reduced from three acts to two, it was performed again in 1806, and was not seen again in Vienna until 1814. At this time it was completely revised by Beethoven. In all, he wrote four different overtures to the opera.

Also in 1806, Beethoven dedicated three great string quartets to the Russian ambassador to Austria, Count Rasoumovsky. The following year he wrote the sonata, Opus 57, the "Appassionata." In September of that year the C major Mass was first produced.

Beethoven was offered the post of Kapellmeister at Cassell in 1808, and since he was thus threatening to leave Vienna and take this post, three

⁶Pryce-Jones, p. 49.

friends, the Archduke Rudolf, Prince Lobkowitz, and Prince Kinsky, jointly undertook to give Beethoven an allowance to keep him in Vienna. Beethoven decided then to remain. Eventually, however, owing to various troubles, this arrangement proved not so successful as Beethoven had hoped.⁷

By 1810, his career as a virtuoso was over, due greatly to his hearing difficulty. From this time on, Beethoven seems to have been increasingly unhappy. He had been refused in marriage by Therese Malfatti, the daughter of his physician. However, this same year, he met Bettina Brentano, a girl of twenty-two. She was a strange sort of girl, yet Beethoven was attracted to her. It was through her that Beethoven met Goethe. She later published three letters to herself from the master which most authorities believe to have been altered. In one of these is the story or legend about Beethoven's refusing to bow to the Imperial family, while Goethe did bow. Two other of Beethoven's lady friends were Amelie Sebalde and the Countess Erdödy, the former being another thought by some to be the "Immortal Beloved."

In 1814, Beethoven became friends with Anton Schindler. Five years later they shared living quarters, with Schindler acting as a kind of secretary and general assistant.⁸ And in this year, Beethoven's old friend, Prince Lichnowsky, died. An exciting event for Beethoven shortly after this was when Vienna paid him a special honor with a concert and freedom of the city. He was presented to the Empress Elizabeth of Russia.

⁷Rudall, p. 100.

⁸Ibid., p. 116.

Karl van Beethoven died late in 1815, leaving Beethoven as a joint guardian of Karl's nine-year-old son, Karl, along with the boy's mother. In a way this proved to be a misfortune to Beethoven. He had never liked his brother's wife, and now he began a four-year lawsuit to gain sole custody of the child. He finally won the case on grounds of Frau van Beethoven's unfaithfulness. Beethoven was truly not fit emotionally or physically to care for a child, but he did love the boy and in his awkward way tried to do his best. However, he expected too much of the boy, and Karl became very unhappy, not having the talent or the ambition to follow in his uncle's footsteps. Shortly before Beethoven's death Karl even tried to commit suicide. Beethoven spent his own badly-needed money on Karl, yet he was not able to teach him or to raise him in the way that he would have wished. All of this made Beethoven's last years very unhappy.

In 1819, Beethoven began using the Conversation Books, due to his deafness. These books include parts of many conversations of interest with Beethoven's friends and acquaintances. The books were inherited by Schindler who destroyed some of them and sold the others, 137 of them, to the Berlin Library.

The Hammerklavier Sonata, Opus 106, was completed in March of 1819, and Beethoven said of it, "Just now I am writing a sonata which shall be my greatest."⁹ Two more sonatas were written after this one. The great Missa Solemnis, written to be performed at the Archduke Rudolf's

⁹Schauffler, p. 360.

enthronement as Archbishop of Ohmütz, was not completed until two years later, in 1823.

At a concert in March of 1824, the *Missa Solemnis* and the Ninth Symphony were first performed. Beethoven had long intended to set Schiller's "Ode to Joy" to music, and after much time, had finally incorporated it into the final movement of his last symphony. It was at this hugely successful concert that Beethoven was turned around by one of the soloists to see the audience's great response. A second performance was arranged, but the hall was not full, and a financial loss was suffered. Beethoven had been very anxious to get some money for Karl and he was greatly disappointed. He again quarreled with friends, this time Schindler and others, accusing them of cheating him.

By now Beethoven was so eager for money that he was playing off one publisher against another and writing substandard music in order to make more money. He published collections of old works. He almost went to London, for which he was to be paid 800 pounds, but this project was finally given up.

Beethoven was also writing excellent music at this time, however. He wrote the three last quartets at the instigation of a Russian nobleman, Prince Galitzin.¹⁰ These are thought by many to be his greatest works.

In 1826, Beethoven and Karl went to Johann Beethoven's home in Gneixendorf for the summer. Beethoven was already ill, and after a return

¹⁰Rudall, p. 140.

trip to Vienna in the fall, fell ill with pneumonia. When he was just recovering from this, dropsy and jaundice afflicted him. He had only inadequate doctors, but finally Dr. Malfatti, with whom he had previously quarreled, was persuaded to come. Schindler also returned, but it was too late. On March 26, during a thunderstorm, Beethoven died with his hand raised and fist clenched as if in defiance.

Thousands of people lined the streets for the funeral procession three days later. Beethoven was recognized already in his own day as one of the greatest, if not the greatest of all composers.

OUTLINE AND EXPLANATION OF SONATA FORM

A sonata is a composition in several movements, at least one of which is written in the characteristic sonata-allegro form. The usual order of the movements is as follows:

- I. Allegro
- II. Andante or Adagio
- III. Minuet or Scherzo
- IV. Allegro.

Sonata-Allegro Form

The sonata-allegro or first movement form, as used by Beethoven, is constructed on the following plan:

- A. Exposition of the themes
- B. Development
- C. Recapitulation
- D. A coda, which may correspond to a second development.

In the exposition, usually two and sometimes three contrasting theme groups are presented. The first or principle theme often has sharp contours and lends itself well to thematic development. This theme is followed by a transition episode, which, as used by Beethoven, is often built on motifs from the first theme. The second theme group, introduced by a full cadence, is

generally written in the dominant key, or, if the piece is in a minor key, in the relative major. It is usually a more lyric melody and has softer, more flexible lines. The first theme often has great leaps in the melodic line, while the second usually has smaller intervals. The closing group also is introduced by a full cadence, and is usually brief and concise, and often rhythmically pointed. The end tends to be strongly marked dynamically, and the whole exposition is repeated, which often necessitates a brief transition for joining the end to the beginning.¹¹

The development section deals with a thematic elaboration and the working out of the themes as presented in the exposition. Since the aim of this section is to return to the main theme in the original key for the recapitulation, this key is not strongly marked. Instead, free modulation is the rule. Any theme or part of a theme may be used in any order in this section. Seldom is a new theme introduced here. This section is approximately equal to the first section in length.

The third part is in the main a repetition of the exposition, with the exception that all the themes are now presented in the tonic key. Because the second theme group is now in a different key from that of its first appearance, the transition between the first and second groups must be changed to accommodate this. In addition, there are almost always minor changes made in this repetition to avoid monotony.

The coda is an appendage at the end of the movement, which may or

¹¹Hugo Leichtentritt, Musical Form (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1951), p. 132.

may not appear. A coda may either elaborate upon the principle theme once more, or it may merely add a few measures to intensify the cadence. In some cases it may be so enlarged as to become a new development section and a fourth part.

Other Sonata Movements

If a sonata has only three movements, the middle one will usually be a slow piece, an andante, adagio, larghetto, or a largo. Among the forms it may use are a song-like form, sometimes called da capo or A B A form, a rondo, a sonata-allegro form or abbreviated sonata-allegro form, or a theme and variations.

If there are four movements, the third is generally a scherzo in Beethoven's sonatas; previously, it was usually a minuet.

The finale may be any of a number of types of compositions. Most frequently used are the rondo, theme and variations, sonata-allegro form, and the fugue. Usually this movement is straight-forward and less interrupted by digressions than the other movements.¹² Following are descriptions of the commonly used forms in sonata movements.

Theme and variations

A theme, when it is to be varied, is most often clear, concise, and is able to make a quick impression so as to be easily recognized. The theme is usually a smaller song-form.

¹²Leichtentritt, p. 160.

In general, there are two types of variations. One is the ornamental variation, which aims at brilliance and virtuosity, but retains the harmonic basis of the theme, dissolving the melodic line into figurations, passage work, and weaves itself around the theme in fanciful ornamentation. The other type is the characteristic variation, which is based on the art of thematic transformation. This type of variation transforms the theme into something entirely new, gives it a totally different character. It strays away from the theme without, however, losing complete contact with it.¹³

If one may call the ornamental variation concentric, then the characteristic variation may be termed eccentric. Many works in variation form mingle the two styles. The older type of variation is almost always ornamental in character and lasts well into the nineteenth century. Contrapuntal variations had been practiced in organ music of the seventeenth century. The forms of basso ostinato, chaconne, and passacaglia are of this type. The characteristic variation becomes more predominant in the nineteenth century after Beethoven had shown its possibilities.¹⁴

Some more specific ways of varying a theme are as follows:

1. Retain the melody, but alter it in tempo or note value.
2. Use new accompanying harmonies, new rhythms for the accompanying voices, or new countermelodies.
3. Preserve the harmony but use a new melody.
4. Use much ornamentation—runs, passage work, trills, and others.
5. Construct it freely, so that there is hardly any relation to the theme, either by melodic resemblance or by similarity of harmony.

¹³Leichtentritt, p. 95.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 97.

6. Shape new structures from little fragments of the theme.¹⁵

All these variations may be combined in various ways—a slow one followed by a fast one, or in groups that have some similarity contrasted with another different group that stresses another quality. The final variation often returns to the theme and has a coda. Often a fugue is used in the coda.

Rondo

The characteristic feature of the rondo is the frequent return of the theme. It is heard at least three times. A rondo theme is neither too weighty nor too light. It is usually flowing and elastic and is often in a three-part song-form,¹⁶ as is the variation theme. When it is repeated, the theme is often slightly changed or ornamented, though not so much as to make it a variation.

The episodes between are not so weighty or as opposed to the theme as are the contrasting themes in the sonata-allegro form. These episodes are often merely passage work of a transitional character. Sometimes, however, the episodes contain entirely new material, and are thematically more or less independent.

In earlier rondos, the main theme is concluded by a clearly marked cadence. But in later compositions the theme enters gradually into the episode. An essential characteristic of the rondo is the transition back to the main theme from the episode, and to the original key.

¹⁵Leichtentritt, p. 103.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 118.

A rondo in an allegro tempo is most often cheerful, smoothly flowing, graceful, delicate in expression, and playful.

Minuet-scherzo

The minuet is a French dance which became an art form in the seventeenth century. The time is always 3/4 and the tempo is rather slow. The minuet is usually in a three-part form with the first part as the minuet proper, the second part the trio, and the last part a literal repetition of the minuet. Often there is an added coda. Each part is subdivided in the style of a three part song-form.¹⁷

The scherzo differs from the minuet mainly in character, not in form. Jest and humor are its chief attributes. Where the minuet is measured in a deliberate pace, the scherzo passes beyond the dance into rapid running, into a breathless rush. Beethoven uses hurried, sprightly rhythms, sudden sharp accents, shifting of accents by syncopation, clever use of staccato, great leaps in the melodic line, and violent dynamic contrasts.¹⁸

Fugue

A fugue is sometimes used in a sonata, usually as the last movement. Beethoven does not use the fugue in his early sonatas. The fugue is an older polyphonic form, and is built on one main theme which is transferred to different voices. There are usually three to five voices. A fugue theme is

¹⁷Leichtentritt, p. 58.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 63.

generally very short and easily recognizable.

A fugue begins with the theme in one voice alone in the tonic key. After this initial presentation, another voice enters with the theme in the dominant while the first voice continues with a counterpoint. The voices continue to enter in the same manner with the others continuing the counterpoint. When all have entered with the theme, the first part, the exposition, closes. There are usually two other sets of entries during the piece. The last time there is often a stretta, which is a canonic imitation of the theme in which succeeding voices enter before the previous ones have completed the theme.

Between the three main sections are found episodes in which the theme itself is not heard, but motifs of the theme are developed or worked out thematically.

A fugue theme may be varied in several ways. Some of these are:

1. Inversion. The theme is inverted so that the intervals remain the same, but the direction of the intervals is opposite.
2. Augmentation. The time values of the notes are lengthened so that the rhythm remains the same, but the theme appears slower.
3. Diminution. The time values are shortened, so that the theme is heard faster.
4. Cancrizan. The theme is played backwards, note for note. This device is also called retrograde.¹⁹

Combinations of these fugal devices are often used, and two of these often appear simultaneously in different voices.

¹⁹W. S. Rockstro, "Fugue," Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians (3rd ed.; New York: The Macmillan Company, 1947), II, p. 546.

A HISTORY OF SONATA FORM

Early Sources

The sonata form had its probable beginnings in the early sixteenth century musical forms. At this time, most of the music was vocal and predominantly church music. Madrigals were the main vocal form, and the music was polyphonic. When the madrigals became too complicated for voice, some of the parts were played by viols. Composers then probably decided to have the viols play by themselves. This purely instrumental music became the canzona, which was a form used on into the eighteenth century. The canzona, like its parent, the madrigal, was mainly a fugal form.²⁰

Another early form was a source of the sonata. This form was used in dances and songs such as the branle. It had two parts, each of which is divided into two sections. The first section is divided almost equally between that which tends toward the tonic, and that which tends toward the dominant. The second section begins with a part which is much freer harmonically, and concludes with a restatement of the conclusion of the first half, bringing about a unity to the whole piece. Many examples of such forms are found in the old dance tunes of the sixteenth century, and also other melodies such as the

²⁰Sir C. Hubert H. Parry, "Sonata," Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians (3rd ed.; New York: The Macmillan Company, 1947), IV, p. 809.

famous German chorale, "Ein Feste Burg."²¹

The name sonata was probably adopted as the antithesis of the cantata, which had become a popular vocal form of the time. The word is first noted about the end of the sixteenth century. Charles Burney says that the earliest pieces called sonatas that he had discovered, were those of Turini, published in 1624. These, however, merely followed the pattern of the canzona one movement fugal form.²²

The influence of dance music was very important upon the early sonata or canzona. The various dance rhythms, as they were used in the early sonata, were compounded rather than kept distinct as in the different dance forms.²³ Occasionally, the developing sonata was confused with a collection of dance tunes, the latter being called a sonata, but there seems to have been a presentiment that their paths would differ.

Another great influence that was felt by the sonata was that of the opera and the drama. Two ideas were contributed by them. One was the short passage of instrumental prelude or interlude, and the other was obtained from the vocal portions of the drama. The latter produced a vague and rhapsodical form like that of the recitative of the early opera.²⁴

Many composers began soon to write sonatas of several movements.

²¹Sir C. Hubert H. Parry, "Form," Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians (3rd ed.; New York: The Macmillan Company, 1947), II, p. 271.

²²Parry, "Sonata," p. 809.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid.

These different movements were influenced by the dance, by the contrapuntalism of the church and by operatic declamation, as well as by the influence of the madrigal or canzona.

Johann Kuhnau (1660-1722) was one of the earliest composers of sonatas. His sonatas seem to lie half way between the fugue and the sonata form. He attempts to balance the subjects and to distribute the key and subject. In most of his sonata movements he alternates two characteristic groups of subjects throughout, at different positions of the scale and at irregular intervals of time. The sonatas were of either four or five movements.²⁵

Corelli and The Violin School

The influence of Arcangelo Corelli (1653-1713) is even greater than that of his contemporary, Kuhnau. At least sixty of Corelli's sonatas have been published, including both the *Sonate da chiesa*, or church sonata, and the *Sonate da camera*, or chamber sonata. Both of these sonata types have usually four movements, beginning with a slow movement and alternating slow movements with fast ones.

The first movement of a Corelli sonata is commonly in 4/4 time and is rather slow and dignified. In the church sonata the second movement is fugal, somewhat similar to the canzona. However, in the chamber sonata, it is often a dance, such as the *allemande* or the *courante*. The third movement is the only one in a different key and is often in 3/2 time. It is generally

²⁵Parry, "Sonata," p. 810.

contrapuntal, and in the chamber sonata it is frequently a sarabande. The last movement of both types is almost always lively—either a dance tune or something very similar.²⁶

The church sonata seems more strictly abstract, then, than the chamber sonata, which is often indistinguishable from the suite. Corelli's sonata movements often repeat, at the conclusion, the theme from the end of the first part, a practice similar to that used in the old dance tunes or branles. Composers seemed to feel at that time that what one hears last is remembered longer and brings about more continuity than what one hears first.

During the time from about 1600 to 1725, instrumental music was thus evolving from a style similar to the vocal music of the time to a more abstract instrumental style, and closer to the ideal type of sonata.

Many of the violin sonatas of this period follow the example of Corelli. Violinists such as Geminiani (1674-1762), Locatelli (1695-1764), and Tartini (1692-1770) monopolized the sonata form for a long while. They began to build upon the structural outlines, except for the second movement which remained fairly stationary as a slow song form. Many of the examples of the early violin sonatas which began to resemble the later-called first movement or sonata-allegro form were last movements. These movements have a theme which modulates to a relative key and a conclusion of the first half in that key. The second half begins with a section corresponding to a development section, and concludes with a repetition of the first theme and features

²⁶Parry, "Sonata," pp. 811-812.

of the second.²⁷

Two types of form appeared, one in which the first subject appears in a complementary key at the beginning of the first half, and one in which the first subject does not appear until after the working-out section.

Bach and Handel

The violin sonatas of Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) follow this general pattern of having four movements. But Bach still uses contrapuntal writing and a primary form which has a long principle section in the main key, followed by modulations and development, and a recapitulation in the main key. Both Bach and Handel (1685-1759) use a great variety of other forms as well. Some are like the branle, others like a sort of rondo.

Scarlatti

In the development of the clavier sonata, Domenico Scarlatti (1659-1725) is a very important name. Scarlatti's sonatas are characterized by frequent and identical repetitions. He attaches more importance to the last part of the first half of his sonatas than to the first, as did Corelli, and it is usually that part that is repeated at the end of the movement. The start of the second section often modulates freely, in some instances stating a fraction of the first theme of the movement. Scarlatti's music principles are more modern than those of his contemporaries. He seldom employs fugal devices or

²⁷ Parry, "Sonata," p. 814.

writes fugues. Most of Scarlatti's sonatas are complete in one short movement.²⁸ Though he uses dance forms, he abandons their names.²⁹

Other contemporary writers also offer a high musical interest and many of them show a tendency to drop the introductory slow movement.

C. P. E. Bach

The next important composer in the development of sonata form is C. P. E. Bach (1710-1784), the son of J. S. Bach. C. P. E. Bach's sonatas reach a high pitch of development. They often incorporate both the old form of recapitulating the first theme to begin the second half of the movement, and a newer idea of presenting it again near the close, after the development. Bach's form is clear and distinct and melodic. His style is increasingly harmonic and less fugal. In his sonatas are a number of figures and subjects characteristic of each primary section, as in Beethoven's sonatas. His works exerted a great influence on Joseph Haydn (1732-1791).³⁰

Haydn and Mozart

With Haydn, the sonata form became all-important. His use of decisively outlined subjects is one of the most important points in relation to structure at this period. An important item in Haydn's development of form

²⁸ Parry, "Sonata," p. 817.

²⁹ Parry, "Form," p. 273.

³⁰ Parry, "Sonata," p. 820.

is his use of the coda, which became very frequent later on. This use seems to have begun in the varying of cadences, either by alluding to the earlier subjects adapted to the cadences, or by using a new figure standing on the same basis. It usually consisted, however, of material taken from the movement, presented in a new way. Modulation is rare, since the intent is to strengthen the feeling of the principle key. The short coda-like figure is placed at the end of the first half of the movement. The coda at the end of the movement was begun as a more decisive ending after the last half of the movement was repeated.³¹

Before Haydn, the use of tunes in serious music was quite rare, but in Haydn's music this becomes a common practice.³² Haydn is also the first noted composer to use the rondo form with frequency. His subjects are often simple, but his development is always ingenious. Some of his repeats of the theme are variations.

Haydn's distribution of keys is simple. In some sonatas, all the movements are in the same key. In later ones he uses the subdominant key.

Abstract form appears in its most technical perfection in the sonatas of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791). Mozart's great advantage over Haydn was in time, the time in which Haydn had settled the form on a definite basis.³³ Mozart was not an innovator and did not elaborate his forms. He

³¹ Parry, "Form," p. 277.

³² Parry, "Sonata," p. 822.

³³ Ibid., p. 825.

considered obviousness of outline to be a virtue. His highest achievements lie in the perfect symmetry of his best works. Both Haydn and Mozart place brilliant passages between the themes to mark the cadences, and thus better outline the form.

Mozart, in his development sections, avoids cadences and complete statements of ideas. Modulations are constant, and he sometimes even introduces a new subject in this section.³⁴

In his rondos, Mozart's treatment is quite different from Haydn's. Whereas Haydn's system is decisively sectional, with every portion distinctly marked, Mozart uses a more integrated method of achieving a balance. His slow movements are characteristic of the time, full of ornamentation, and with grace, elegance, and refinement.

Muzio Clementi (1752-1832) also exerted a strong influence upon the sonata. His piano technique brought new resources to be used—octaves, and fuller combinations of sounds, and occasional passages which bring into play stronger muscles than just the fingers. Clementi adhered to the accepted three-movement type of sonata.³⁵

Beethoven

By the time Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) appears, the sonata form was complete and accepted, so it only remained for him to use it as he

³⁴Parry, "Sonata," p. 825.

³⁵Ibid., p. 826.

would. So, rather than using it as an outline to be filled with appropriate themes and subjects at the appropriate time, he used it as a hidden mode in which to place his most impressive thoughts. His ideas became just as important as the form, if not more so; thus, Beethoven's works are not so controlled or dominated by form.

His "idea" becomes more all-inclusive; not just to have contrasting themes which are compatible, but rather a whole movement or even a whole sonata itself becomes the idea with all of its parts in close affinity.³⁶

In general, some of the other innovations Beethoven brought to the form are: (1) He connected his themes instead of by passages of a different character, by the use of phrases which are either parts of the main theme, or related to it. Consequently, the sections within the movements are not so well-marked. (2) He used new themes both in addition to the two main subjects, and in the development section. (3) In the case of a slow introduction, Beethoven lengthened it to broader proportions. (4) The scherzo, as used by Beethoven, is almost a new creation. (5) Beethoven used many more dynamic and expression marks than did his predecessors. (6) He used variations to a great extent, and (7) he broke down the key system somewhat.³⁷

In the words of Sir Hubert Parry on Beethoven and the sonata form, "With him the long process of development appears to find its utmost and

³⁶ Parry, "Sonata," p. 827.

³⁷ Sir George Grove, "Beethoven," Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians (3rd ed.; New York: The Macmillan Company, 1947), I, pp. 305-309.

complete culmination; and what comes after, and in sight of his work, can be little more than commentary."³⁸

³⁸Parry, "Sonata," p. 830.

ANALYSIS OF FORM AND STRUCTURE IN BEETHOVEN'S
FIRST SEVENTEEN SONATAS

The overall form of Beethoven's early sonatas is fairly conventional, similar to the pattern used by Haydn and Mozart. Nine of the first seventeen sonatas have four movements; the other eight have three movements

The key relationship between the movements of the sonatas to some extent follows the form of sonatas by earlier composers. The sonatas in major keys vary more in their key relationships than do those in minor keys. Before Beethoven, it was usual to write the second movement of a major key sonata in the subdominant key. However, only four of the first twelve sonatas in major keys use the subdominant key (IV) in the second movement. Beginning with the third sonata, Opus 2, number 3, Beethoven often uses other keys. Here he uses the mediant major (III). In other instances, he uses the submediant major (VI) once, the submediant minor (vi) once and the parallel minor (i) five times. In all these sonatas but one, the remaining movements are in the original key. This exception is Opus 27, number 1, which has the second movement in the submediant and the third in the subdominant key.

The sonatas in minor keys are more uniform with regard to key relationships. Of the first five sonatas in minor keys, three have the second movement in the relative major (VI). The other two use the parallel major (I)

for the second movement. Again the remaining movements retain the original key.

All except three of the sonatas begin with a sonata-allegro movement. Altogether in the seventeen sonatas there are twenty-four movements in sonata-allegro form, five of which appear as the second movement and five as the last movement. Two sonatas, Opus 26 and Opus 27, number 1, have no sonata-allegro form.

The key system within these sonata-allegro movements follows almost without exception the key structure used by Haydn and Mozart. When the first theme group is in a minor key, the second theme group is in the relative major or the dominant minor. When the first group is in a major key, the second is most often (12 times) in the dominant major key. In only two movements, the second group is in the dominant minor.

Beethoven's slow movements may take any of several different forms. Only one sonata, Opus 27, number 2, begins with a slow movement. This is a real departure from the usual design of a sonata. In this work the only sonata-allegro form appears in the last movement. Four other sonatas, Opus 10, number 2; Opus 14, number 1; Opus 14, number 2; and Opus 26, have no real slow movement at all.

In the other sonatas, the slow movement most frequently appears second, but in Opus 27, number 1, it is the third movement. Six of the slow movements have a lyric da capo or A B A song form. Five have a sonata-allegro or modified sonata-allegro form. Three others have a rondo form or a modified rondo-sonata form.

For the final movement, Beethoven uses either a sonata-allegro form or a rondo. Some of these sonata-allegro finales are modified in some manner, such as using a long episode in place of the development, as in Opus 10, number 1. At times the development section may be omitted. The rondos also may be modified, and may include elements of both the sonata and the rondo, as in Opus 27, number 1 and Opus 31, number 1. Here a sort of development takes the place of an episode.

Beethoven includes a theme and variations twice in the first seventeen sonatas. The first set is in the second movement of Opus 14, number 2. In this instance, there is a theme with three variations. The later occurrence appears in one of the following sonatas.

The three sonatas which differ most from the others are successive ones, Opus 26; Opus 27, number 1; and Opus 27, number 2.

The A♭ major sonata Opus 26 begins with a set of five variations on a theme. These are very delightful and are followed by a short coda with a new theme. The second movement is a scherzo and trio, also in A♭. The third movement is called Marcia Funebre sulla morte d'un Eroe. It is a slow, solemn march with a trio and a repetition of the march. It is written in the relative minor of C♭, a rather little-used key of seven flats. The last movement is a rondo; thus there is no sonata-allegro movement at all in this sonata.

The following sonata, Opus 27, number 1, is entitled Sonata quasi una Fantasia. This sonata in E♭ is quite differently conceived than the others. It is written as a complete piece, and the movements are to be played without

pause. The first movement is a tune with sectional alternatives. It is similar to a rondo, but it lacks the regular transitional passages. The second movement is a scherzo and trio in C minor (vi). The third movement is a song form and a slow movement in A (IV), leading to the final movement, again in E \flat , which is a rondo-sonata with a development in place of the second episode. The sonata closes with a recapitulation of the slow movement theme now transposed to E \flat , followed by a final short Presto. This sonata, then, also has no sonata-allegro movement.

The C \sharp minor sonata Opus 27, number 2, commonly called the "Moonlight Sonata," begins with the famous slow movement with the beautiful lyric, continuous melody. The movement really does not follow any of the forms previously discussed, although it does have elements of a development and recapitulation. The second movement is actually written in the parallel major, but it is notated enharmonically as D \flat major. This is a lyric da capo movement and has a little faster tempo. The final movement, which is very fast and again in C \sharp minor, is in sonata-allegro form.

In his first sonata, Beethoven already is using an unusual key for his time—F minor, with four flats. In other sonatas, he writes other little-used keys, such as the C \flat minor as already noted. The earlier sonatas are more classical in style, whereas the later ones are beginning to be quite romantic. This fact is quite noticeable in the slow movements. The first of these are beautiful, but more shallow, and have more ornamentation in the Mozartian style. In the second movement of the D major sonata, Opus 10, number 3, Beethoven really begins to express in a slow movement a true depth of feeling.

As has also been noted, Beethoven departs from the basic sonata form more in the later sonatas of the first seventeen than in the early ones. He begins to use longer codas more often in these later ones. But as early as Opus 2, number 3, in the first movement, he has a long coda with a sort of cadenza lasting from measure 218 to measure 257. The final movement of this sonata also has a rather long coda. Especially long codas are found also in Opus 10, number 3; Opus 27, number 2; and in Opus 31, numbers 1 and 2. These codas might be called second developments for the most part, since they elaborate on themes from the main part of the movement.

The C minor sonata, Opus 13, the Pathétique, is a good example of the new importance Beethoven gives to the introduction. He has a full-page introduction here.

The sonata form is most probably the most important of all the musical forms developed up to this time. It gives the composer a basic structure to work with, yet it does not limit his ideas. Since its beginnings, it has shown its flexibility in many types of compositions in addition to the piano sonata, such as the concerto, the symphony, and the various chamber music forms. Although usually in a modified form, it is still being used by twentieth century composers.

Beethoven is perhaps the greatest master of the sonata form. He used it exceptionally well in all of its different applications. Yet the form did not hinder or bend his ideas to conform to the structure. He was able to use it to express his greatest thoughts. He could present more within this framework than probably anyone before him or since. He did not have the gift for melody

that Mozart or Schubert had, but his genius and hard work let him use to the fullest advantage every melody and rhythm he did have.

In studying these sonatas, one can gain much knowledge about the various forms used in a sonata, and how they can best be employed. One learns the great versatility of the sonata form when one sees the various types of feeling and moods that can be incorporated into a sonata. One gains a great admiration for Beethoven's genius and determination evident in these works. Truly, a thorough study of Beethoven's sonatas is a most rewarding experience.

Table 1. Key system of Beethoven's sonatas, numbers 1 through 17

Sonata	1st movement	2nd movement	3rd movement	4th movement
<u>Sonatas in minor keys</u>				
1. Opus 2, no. 1	F minor	F major (I)	F minor (i)	F minor (i)
5. Opus 10, no. 1	C minor	A \flat major (VI)		C minor (i)
8. Opus 13	C minor	A \flat major (VI)		C minor (i)
14. Opus 27, no. 2	C \sharp minor	D \flat major (I)		C \sharp minor (i)
17. Opus 31, no. 2	D minor	B \flat major (VI)		D minor (i)
<u>Sonatas in major keys</u>				
2. Opus 2, no. 2	A major	D major (IV)	A major (I)	A major (I)
3. Opus 2, no. 3	C major	E major (III)	C major (I)	C major (I)
4. Opus 7	E \flat major	C major (VI)	E \flat major (I)	E \flat major (I)
6. Opus 10, no. 2	F major	F minor (i)		F major (I)
7. Opus 10, no. 3	D major	D minor (i)	D major (I)	D major (I)
9. Opus 14, no. 1	E major	E minor (i)		E major (I)
10. Opus 14, no. 2	G major	C major (IV)		G major (I)
11. Opus 22	B \flat major	E \flat major (IV)	B \flat major (I)	B \flat major (I)
12. Opus 26	A \flat major	A \flat minor (i)	A \flat major (I)	A \flat major (I)
13. Opus 27, no. 1	E \flat major	C minor (i)	A \flat major (IV)	E \flat major (I)
15. Opus 28	D major	D minor (i)	D major (I)	D major (i)
16. Opus 31, no. 1	G major	C major (IV)		G major (I)

Table 2. Key relationships within sonata-allegro movements

Sonata	Movement	First group	Second group
Opus 2, number 1	1st movement	F minor	A major (III)
	2nd movement	F major	C major (V)
	4th movement	F minor	C minor (v)
Opus 2, number 2	1st movement	A major	E minor (v)
Opus 2, number 3	1st movement	C major	G minor (v)
Opus 7	1st movement	E♭ major	B♭ major (V)
Opus 10, number 1	1st movement	C minor	E♭ major (III)
	2nd movement	A♭ major	E♭ major (V)
	3rd movement	C minor	E♭ major (III)
Opus 10, number 2	1st movement	F major	C major (V)
	3rd movement	F major	C major (V)
Opus 10, number 3	1st movement	D major	A major (V)
	2nd movement	D minor	A minor (v)
Opus 13	1st movement	C minor	E♭ minor (iii)
Opus 14, number 1	1st movement	E major	B major (V)
Opus 14, number 2	1st movement	G major	D major (V)
Opus 22	1st movement	B♭ major	F major (V)
	2nd movement	E♭ major	B♭ major (V)
Opus 27, number 2	3rd movement	C♯ minor	G♯ minor (v)
Opus 28	1st movement	D major	A major (V)
Opus 31, number 1	1st movement	G major	B major (III)
Opus 31, number 2	1st movement	D minor	A minor (v)
	2nd movement	B♭ major	F major (V)
	3rd movement	D minor	A minor (v)

Table 3. First movement forms

Form	Sonata
Sonata-allegro form*	1. Opus 2, number 1 2. Opus 2, number 2 3. Opus 2, number 3 4. Opus 7 5. Opus 10, number 1 6. Opus 10, number 2 7. Opus 10, number 3 8. Opus 13 9. Opus 14, number 1 10. Opus 14, number 2 11. Opus 22 15. Opus 28 16. Opus 31, number 1 17. Opus 31, number 2
Theme and variations	12. Opus 26
Alternating tune (like rondo)	13. Opus 27, number 1
Slow continuous melody	14. Opus 27, number 2

* Sonatas Opus 26 and Opus 27, number 1, have no sonata-allegro form.

Table 4. Second or middle movement forms

Form	Sonata
Sonata-allegro form	1. Opus 2, number 1 5. Opus 10, number 1 7. Opus 10, number 3 11. Opus 22 12. Opus 31, number 2
Minuet or scherzo and trio	6. Opus 10, number 2 9. Opus 14, number 1 12. Opus 26 13. Opus 27, number 1
Lyric da capo or A B A form	4. Opus 7 14. Opus 27, number 2 15. Opus 28 16. Opus 31, number 1
Rondo	2. Opus 2, number 2 3. Opus 2, number 3 8. Opus 13
Theme and variations	10. Opus 14, number 2

Table 5. Third movement forms

Form	Sonata
Minuet or scherzo and trio	1. Opus 2, number 1 2. Opus 2, number 2 3. Opus 2, number 3 4. Opus 7 7. Opus 10, number 3 11. Opus 22 15. Opus 28
Funeral march with trio	12. Opus 26
Lyric melody or A B A	13. Opus 27, number 1

Table 6. Last movement forms

Form	Sonata
Sonata-allegro form	1. Opus 2, number 1
	5. Opus 10, number 1
	6. Opus 10, number 2
	14. Opus 27, number 2
	17. Opus 31, number 2
Rondo	2. Opus 2, number 2
	3. Opus 2, number 3
	4. Opus 7
	7. Opus 10, number 3
	8. Opus 13
	9. Opus 14, number 1
	10. Opus 14, number 2
	11. Opus 22
	12. Opus 26
	13. Opus 27, number 1
	15. Opus 28
	16. Opus 31, number 1

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