**Sonata Form(s)**

**Definition.**

- Usually described as falling into four sections: Exposition, Development, Recapitulation, Coda.

- Sonata form is best viewed not as a rigid, prescriptive mould, but rather as a flexible and imaginative intersection of modulation, the thematic process and numerous other elements. The basis of Sonata form is the open modulatory plan of rounded binary form, in which the initial modulation from the tonic to a new key (normally the dominant in a movement in major or relative major in a movement in minor) is answered by a complementary modulation from the new key back to the tonic.¹

- Binary or Ternary? Restatement of opening material would seem to indicate ternary structure but the form developed from rounded binary patterns.

- Sonata form is a synthesis of binary and ternary principles: it integrates three sections into a two-part structure. Sonata form is bi-partite in that the exposition has the same tonal structure as a half cadence or the first half of binary form: it is open, poised on the dominant (relative major), tonally incomplete. Hence it requires resolution by a balancing second part which closes in the tonic. The power of Sonata form is due principally to this bi-partite structure governed by the tonal polarity of the exposition.²

- Interaction between surface pattern and underlying process.

- **Structural Dissonance**

  Throughout the eighteenth century almost all music contains an initial movement from tonic to dominant (relative major), but sonata style by the 1750’s turns this modulation into an overt confrontation of tonalities: that is, the area in the exposition governed by the dominant (even when, as often in Haydn, the transition from one to the other may be very extensive), and all the material played in the dominant [contrasting key] is consequently conceived as dissonant, i.e., requiring resolution by a later transposition to the tonic.³

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¹ NHDM, 764
² Grove 1980, 17, p497
³ Charles Rosen, *Sonata Forms*, 25
Two Case Studies:

**Domenico Scarlatti (1685-1757)**

Sonata in C major (Kp.159) c.1733

- Illustrates the emergence full blown Sonata Form from the binary forms of the Baroque. Open (rounded) binary tonal plan demonstrating restatement of material previously in V (bar 14) in I (53). ‘Resolution of structural dissonance’ (Rosen).

**Franz Josef Haydn (1732-1809)**

String Quartet in D minor (Op 42) Movt 1. (1785)

**Exposition**

- Bars 1-8: First Subject (or Primary Group). A musical ‘sentence’ comprising of four motivic cells.
- Bars 9-12: Transition based on primary motiv. I – III
- Bars 13-33: Second Subject (or Subordinate Group). A development (or spinning out) of primary group material.

**Development**

- Development (or ‘spinning out’) of motivic cells from opening sentence through III and V. Note pivotal use of German 6th chord at Bar 51. Varying dialogue between individual voices. Thinning out of texture towards Recap.

**Recapitulation**

- Bars 66-69: Recap of 1st Subject compressed into two bars. Transition omitted
- Bars 70-96: Recap of 2nd Subject includes further ‘spinning out’ of primary motivic material. Pedal on V leads to further pivotal use of German 6th in Bar 94 resolving to I 6/4 V 1 cadence into

**Coda**

- Bars 96-105. Restatement of cadential ‘tag’ in I.