

**WHERE IS THE BEGINNING OF THE SECOND THEME?  
*or: what about the sonata form, really?***

- *this text has been written because of the first tentamen analysis-class (2008, December), mainly because it turned out that the beginning of the second theme was hard to find -*





I will get down to business at once: the second theme (or: second group) in the first movement of Mozart's Quartet in D major, K 499 starts in bar 49 (with upbeat, at the entrance of the first violin). And not in bar 24, or bar 28, 32, 41, 45, 58 or on the second beat of bar 73...

Of course nobody will accept this off-hand, just because I am saying so: some argumentation is needed here. Before mentioning my reasons for calling bar 49 the beginning of the second group I would like to give a short overview of some general characteristics of sonata form. Of course I will have to generalize - lots of exceptions to most of my remarks below can be found in music scores.

1.

The term **sonata form** is used to describe (mainly) **first movements** of (solo) sonatas, symphonies and chamber music pieces (like trios, quartets, quintets etc.) from the Classical era until at least the first part of the twentieth century. Another common (german) term to describe these movements is: **Sonatenhauptsatzform** ('sonata-headmovement-form; 'head' is referring to: at the start). In dutch this german term is abbreviated to: **hoofdvorm**. In most pieces these first movements are (quite) fast, often Allegro. Maybe that is the reason it has been common practice for a long time to speak of 'the Allegro' in a sonata when referring to a fast first movement.

2.

The term sonata form does *not* describe the whole sonata, but the form of just *one movement*. Most sonatas (and symphonies, quartets etc.) consist of, after a first movement in sonata form:

- a **slow second movement** - often, but not always, this movement is a (big) A-B-A-form; in earlier times it has been common practice to call this movement 'the Adagio' of the sonata
- a **Menuet** or, from Beethoven: **Scherzo** as third movement; the basic form of this movement is: Menuet-Trio-Menuet or Scherzo-Trio-Scherzo
- a **fast or very fast final movement** - sometimes bearing the title: Finale; this last movement very often is a **Vienese Rondo** (also called: 'sonata-rondo'); basic form: A-B-A-C-A-B-A-[Coda]

Sometimes the slow movement and the Menuet/Scherzo are exchanged (the slow movement is then becoming the third movement).

Not all sonatas contain a Menuet or Scherzo; especially lots of solo sonatas consist of only three movements. In most symphonies on the contrary a Menuet or Scherzo is included.

3.

On the next page you see an **outline of a sonata form**. In the outline a (fictitious) sonata in C major is assumed, along with a (also fictitious) sonata in c minor. We have to assume that both sonatas were composed between (ca.) 1780 en 1820: in the early Classical era *dividing lines between the sections of the form* often are less clear (especially between first group and transition); from the later pieces of Beethoven, and certainly from the early Romantic period (e.g. Schubert) the *key pattern* often is different..

When looking at the keys it is notable that:

- in *sonatas in a major key* the keys of the two themes are a fifth apart; in Classical sonatas in a major key we find in the exposition both the home key and the *dominant key*.
- in *sonatas in a minor key* the keys of two themes are most often a minor third apart: in Classical sonatas in a minor key we find in the exposition both the home key and the *relative major key*. Use of the dominant key instead of the relative major key in minor is exceptional. When the dominant key is used, it is always the *minor dominant key!*

Such key relations are not only used in sonata forms; the relations home key/dominant key or home key/dominant key are also the most common relations in for example other sonata movements, and for instance in the dances in a Suite.

In the outline below I am using capitals to indicate *major keys*, and normal characters for *minor keys*.

<i>section</i>	<i>keys in a sonata in C major</i>	<i>keys in a sonata in c minor (most common)</i>	<i>keys in a sonata in c minor (some-times)</i>
<p><b>(SLOW INTRODUCTION)</b></p> <p>Most sonatas do without a slow introduction, but adding a slow introduction before the exposition is not uncommon. In a slow introduction the tempo is for example: largo, adagio or something similar. At the beginning of the exposition there is a tempo change (the tempo is changing to Allegro, for instance).</p> <p>Often a slow introduction is aiming at the dominant of the home key, usually V or V7 (so in this example we will reach a G- or G7-chord at the end of the introduction); the resolution of this dominant is at the start of the exposition: the exposition is starting on the triad of I .</p>	C	c	c
<p><b>EXPOSITION</b></p> <p><b>first theme (or: first group)</b></p> <p>This section sometimes consists of more than just one musical phrase. In such cases it might be a better idea to speak of a first <i>group</i>. Apart from that: I believe the term 'group' for a thematic section in a sonata form is nowadays more common in English than 'theme'.</p> <p>A first group may end with an authentic cadence in the home key (and will form thus a 'closed entity'). It may also end with a semicadence in the main key (thus forming a 'open entity'; sometimes the beginning of the transition is then sounding more or less as consequent.</p> <p><b>transition (or: transition section)</b></p> <p>This section normally is modulating to the key of the second group. A transition often (but not always) uses musical material of the first group. Often the transition is aiming at V of the key of the second group; at the end V is 'encircled' in the harmony more or less extensively, or we find a pedal point on V.</p> <p>In early Classical sonatas <i>in major</i> transition sections often do <i>not</i> contain a modulation: at the end of the transition we find a <i>semicadence</i> in the home key (so: a G-chord, still sounding as V in C major; the change of key is at the entrance of the second group in G major).</p>	C	c	c
	<i>modulating (from ca. 1780)</i>	<i>modulating</i>	<i>modulating</i>

<p><b>second theme (or: second group)</b></p> <p>This section often consists of more than just one musical phrase (more often than the first group!). In such cases it might be a better idea to speak of a second <i>group</i> (and the term 'group' might in English be a better idea anyhow - see first theme). It is then often possible to subdivide a second group in for instance 'theme 2a' and 'theme 2b' (or: first and second section on the second group).</p> <p>A second group is virtually always closing with an authentic cadence in the dominant key (in major), or in the relative major key (in minor). Very often this is the first authentic cadence since the end of the first group (or even: since the beginning of the piece, when the first theme is ending with a semicadence).</p> <p><b>closing section (or: codetta)</b></p> <p>A (mostly) short conclusion of the whole exposition, often using some small sentences, mainly to support cadences in the key of the second group.</p>	G	Es	g
<p><b>DEVELOPMENT (OR: DEVELOPMENT SECTION)</b></p> <p>The development is the section hardest to describe in general terms. We can assume though that we will see these occurrences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- processing material of the exposition; often parts of the themes are re-used (but not always: in some pieces the composer chooses to re-use musical material of the closing section or transition)</li> <li>- modulations, sequences</li> <li>- contraction, shortening or recombination of motifs or themes</li> </ul> <p>Sometimes the beginning of the development is not yet modulating. We could then speak of an '<b>introduction</b>'.</p> <p>We could call the modulating part of a development the '<b>central section</b>'. In this part we will find mainly the processing of musical material of the exposition.</p> <p>The development section normally ends on a <b>dominant pedal point</b>: V of the home key is in the bass constantly, and at the same time on top of that bass other harmonies might occur. Sometimes a pedal point is less literal, when V is <i>encircled</i> more than kept in the bass all the time. And in some pieces the pedal point is on a 'wrong dominant', so the development is ending in the 'wrong key'. The 'mistake' then has to be 'repaired' in the last moment, just before the start of the recapitulation.<sup>1</sup></p>	<p><i>modulating</i></p> <p>C: V</p>	<p><i>modulating</i></p> <p>c: V</p>	<p><i>modulating</i></p> <p>c: V</p>

1 Well-liked by composers is above all the dominant of the relative minor key, when the piece is in a major key. See for example: Beethoven: First Symphony, first movement; the piece is in C major, the pedal point at the end of the development is on E, V of a minor, the relative minor key. In Beethoven's sonata in F major Op. 10,2 things are

<p><b>RECAPITULATION</b></p> <p><b>first theme (or: first group)</b></p> <p>Repeat of the first group of the exposition. Sometimes some changes are made (like: extension, use of a different key, change of the motivic content etc.). The first group will always stay recognizable though.</p> <p>Sometimes the recapitulation is starting in <i>a different key</i>,<sup>2</sup> to a certain extent we could think this different key as a 'wrong key'; often a modulation to the 'right key' is taking place further on in the first group.</p> <p><b>transition (or: transition section)</b></p> <p>In principle it is not necessary to write a modulation in this section, as the first and second theme are in the same key now. Very often there <i>is</i> a modulation though (or: a modulation is <i>suggested</i>). The difference with the exposition: this time the modulation is starting and ending in the same key.</p> <p>See also the remarks about the transition in the exposition..</p> <p>In early Classical sonatas, when there is no modulation in the transition in the exposition, this turns out to be quite 'handy' in the recapitulation: when there is <i>a semicadence</i> at the end of the transition in the exposition (so: on a G-chord, sounding as V in C), then the second theme can follow either in G major (in the exposition) or in C major (in the recapitulation); in principle the transition sections of exposition and recapitulation can be identical!<sup>3</sup></p> <p><b>second theme (or: second group)</b></p> <p>Repeat of the second group of the exposition.(transposed, and in sonatas in a minor key: change to the <i>minor</i> home key). Virtually always closing with an authentic cadence in the home key. See also the remarks about the second group in the exposition.</p> <p>Sometimes in the recapitulation, in a sonata in a <i>minor</i> key, a composer decides to use the <i>parallel</i> major key (maybe because the second theme is sounding well in major, in the exposition, but would sound less good in minor, in the recapitulation?) In this</p>	<p>C</p> <p><i>mostly modulating section (from ca. 1780) - though the keys in the beginning and at the end now are identical</i></p> <p>C</p>	<p>c</p> <p><i>mostly modulating section (from ca. 1780) - though the keys in the beginning and at the end now are identical</i></p> <p>c / C</p>	<p>c</p> <p><i>mostly modulating section (from ca. 1780) - though the keys in the beginning and at the end now are identical</i></p> <p>c</p>
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even more confusing: the development section is ending on V of d minor (relative minor key); then the recapitulation is beginning in the 'wrong key' D major! (only later in the recapitulation of the first theme the key is changing to F major).

2 See footnote 1 (Beethoven's sonata in F major)

3 See for example: Mozart: piano sonata in G major, first movement. The transition sections of exposition and recapitulation are identical; the first theme in the recapitulation is changed though.

<p>case it is <i>possible</i> to return to the minor home key (at a later moment in the second group, for instance in 'theme 2b', in the closing section, or even not earlier then in the coda). It is not necessary to return to minor though: sometimes the parallel major key will stay until the end of the movement.</p> <p>Changing a second theme in the recapitulation (more then: transposing it, and - when the piece is in minor - changing the key to minor) is far less common then changes in the first group.</p> <p><b>closing section (or: codetta)</b></p> <p>See exposition. Sometimes the closing section in the recapitulation is extended (compared with the exposition). Sometimes the closing section leads to the coda in a hardly perceptible way..</p>	C	c / C	c
<p><b>(CODA)</b></p> <p>Lots of sonata forms do not have a coda: especially in the Classical period the movement often ends with the, maybe extended, closing section.</p> <p>Sometimes a coda springs hardly audible from the closing section; sometimes a coda is a really independent section, often reverting to the first theme, or - less often - to the second theme, or to both themes.</p> <p>Sometimes the beginning of a coda is suggesting a modulation (like the beginning of the development); in this way the listener is deceived, and might start to believe he is listening to a 'second development section'.</p>	C	c / C	c / C

Normally

- the exposition is **repeated**; we find a repetition sign at the end of the exposition (and also, when the sonata contains a slow introduction at the beginning of the exposition)

- development section and recapitulation are **repeated together**; we find a repetition sign at the beginning of the development and at the end of the recapitulation.

From Beethoven the second repeat (development+recapitulation) often is omitted; sometimes even the exposition is not repeated (from Beethoven's late work).

In a Classical sonata the **themes** are more or less like *characters* in a play: the thematical sections are best recognizable, are the easiest to remember, and often differ from the other sections by having a clearer, more 'fixed' structure - for instance a clear bar grouping like 4 + 4. The non-thematical sections (transition, closing section) on the contrary often have a more 'loose' structure.<sup>4</sup> When a second group is consisting of more then one section very often the first section is the most 'characteristic', and sounding more 'important' then the second or (eventual) third section. The first section therefore often is perceived as the 'real second theme'.

<sup>4</sup> Erwin Ratz speaks in his Formenlehre-book of "fest gefügte" ('strong jointed') and "locker gefügte" ('loosely jointed') passages.

Let us return to the original subject: why is the starting point of the **second group** in **Mozart's Quartet in D major** in bar 49, and not at any earlier or later point? We can think of several reasons.<sup>5</sup>

1.

Looking at the section from bar 41 (with upbeat) to bar 48 it is quite striking that the *melodic content* is based on the first theme. This does not immediately exclude an interpretation as second theme<sup>6</sup>, but it makes such interpretation at least less probable.

2.

In the *harmony* of bars 41-48 almost nothing is happening: everything is based on an E major chord (first as major *triad*, and from the fourth beat of bar 44 as dominant seventh chord (see the tone d in the first violin). It is therefore probably we are facing here a 'musical colon' at the end of the transition, on V in A major, the key of the second group.

3.

The first violin is introducing a *new melody* from bar 49 (by the way: the same melody appears a little later in the cello part, thus forming a little canon with the first violin..) So: in this moment a 'new character is entering', which makes it probable this bar is the start of the second group.

4.

Sometimes a glance at the recapitulation leads to clarification: it is logical to assume that there will be *differences* between the transitions in exposition and recapitulation - because of the different keys in exposition and recapitulation.<sup>7</sup> In this Mozart Quartet however the comparison is leading us nowhere: the transition in the recapitulation (bars 167-191) is an almost literal transposition of the transition in the exposition (bars 24-48).

To be able to exclude bars 24, 28 and 32 as possible starting points of the second group we should have a look at the harmonic and melodic 'events' from bar 23:

- bar 23 (first beat) should be interpreted as the *final bar of the first group*; we are still in D major
- from bar 24 we find a *modulation*; this is characteristic for a transition, and not very characteristic for a (classical) second group. Modulation means: tonal instability, often going along with a more 'loose' structure than what we expect to be the structure of a theme. And: in a sonata form it is hardly possible to put the two themes immediately after each other, without a transition as connection.

The modulation seems at first to aim at the key of b minor (bars 24-27), but then it turns out we are heading towards A major (bars 28-31). As we know of course that A major will become the more important key (as it is the key of the second group), it is logical to describe the whole modulation in the home key D major, and in A major:

bars:	22/23	24 - 27	28 - 31
	in D major	V - I6	'encircling' VI
	in A major	'encircling' II	V7 - I

The b minor chord in bars 24-27 can be explained in two ways: as VI (in D major), and as II (in A major) thus forming the harmonic connection between those keys. Such a connection in a modulatory section is called a **pivot chord** (or: **pivot**).

- When we assume bars 24-31 to stand in A major, these bars form long **complete authentic cadence**<sup>8</sup>. A 'perfect ending' is avoided though: the authentic cadence in bar 31 is **imperfect**.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>5</sup> The score of the Quartet is at the end of this text. It is a pity the bar numbers are missing in this - downloaded - score. Please add the bar numbers yourself (to be able to read the rest of this text..)

<sup>6</sup> It would -theoretically be possible the piece would be a *monothematic sonata* form: then the themes are identical, or almost identical. The first and second group just are in different keys..

<sup>7</sup> See the outline on page 4-7.

<sup>8</sup> Complete cadence: harmonic closing with subdominant, dominant and tonic (in this order). N.B.: II is a subdominant!

<sup>9</sup> Imperfect authentic cadence: harmonic ending on I, with the third or the fifth of the tonic triad on top (here: the c# in



This is an important point: since we are still in the middle of a harmonic progression, it is not possible to see bar 28 as the beginning of the second group. Apart from that: bars 28-31 are formulating an *answer* to bars 24-27 (almost like a consequence).

- In bar 31 the key of A major is still lacking in stability (because of the preceding imperfect ending). In the next section (bars 32-40) A major as a key is strengthening: in bars 32/33 a motif of two bars is introduced on an A-pedal point; this motif is repeated. From bar 36 (with upbeat) a motif of one bar is introduced (and repeated; harmony: I -> V<sup>2</sup>), and is extended the last time (bars 38-40). Through a chromatic passage (see the cello part) the dominant of A major is reached in bar 40.

Interesting is the sudden occurrence, at the end of bar 37, of the tone c (instead of c#). This is causing a key change to *a minor* (or maybe it only *seems* a key change?). This procedure is quite common at the end of a transition section: the key of the second group appears at first, at the end of the transition, as (parallel) *minor key*. Sometimes the transition returns to major (in this piece in bar 48, see the c# in the first violin). Sometimes the major key is reached not earlier than at the beginning of the second group.<sup>10</sup> Such phenomenon (leading to a 'more brilliant' appearance of the second theme) can be called a **'minor-major-effect'**.<sup>11</sup>

Bar 32 can not be called the beginning of the second group: the key of A major still needs clearer confirmation, and bars 32-40 have a more 'loose' structure than what can be expected of a theme, because of the ending on V, and because of the key change from A major to a minor.

And they are in fact a *continuation* of bars 23-31 - above all because of the imperfect cadence in bar 31.

It is indeed difficult to hear the actual entrance of the second theme in bar 49, because the end of the transition and the beginning of the second group are **through-composed** (german:

**durchkomponiert**); no cesura is marking the spot, both sections are thoroughly connected. In most early Classical sonatas there *is* a clear cesura before the second theme (sometimes: a rest; sometimes: a rest in all voices but the top voice).

Compare the sonata-exposition of Haydn on the next pages with Mozart's Quartet: in Haydn's piece bar 16 is the last bar of the transition, with a rest (cesura) underlining the formal division.

The other sections of the form are clearly delimited as well. The first group (**periode**) is in bars 1-8. The structure of the transition (bars 9-16) is a bit less obvious. The second group is ending on the first beat of bar 35. At the end of this second group we find a *trill on the second tone* of the key (A major); this trill leads to a perfect cadence in bar 35. This is a very common 'formula' at the end of a second theme: the trill, the melodic motion 2 --> 1 in the top voice, and V --> I as harmonic progression together mark a distinct and definite ending.<sup>12</sup> The last bars of this exposition (from bar 36) form the closing section:

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the first violin). of the triad nvolkomen heel slot: afsluiting op de Ie trap waarbij niet de grondtoon, maar de tert of de kwint in de bovenstem ligt (hier dus: de cis in de eerste viool). after the A major chord (V in the home key D major, so: semicadence; the transition in this piece is *not* modulating - the key change to A major is at the start of the second group). In a **perfect authentic cadence** the root of the tonic triad is in the bass *and* in the top voice.

10 Compare for instance with: Mozart, piano sonata in A minor, first movement. The transition ends in c minor; the entrance of the second group brings the key C major.

11 A similar phenomenon often can be found at the *beginning of a development section*: suddenly the key (the key of the second group) is changed to the parallel minor key. See the beginning of the development of this Quartet! Another possibility: the beginning of the first group is repeated, suddenly in the home key - but: in major instead of minor, or the other way around (see for the latter possibility: Mozart: piano sonata in C minor, first movement).

12 A similar use of a trill is often at the end of the solo-cadence in a solo concerto: the soloist is playing the whole 'formula', whereas the orchestra is re-entering on I at the end.

SONATE in D

Allegro con brio

Hoboken XVI:37

Measures 1-4 of the sonata. The music is in D major and common time. The right hand features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with accents, while the left hand provides a steady accompaniment of eighth notes.

Measures 5-8. The right hand continues with the eighth-note pattern, and the left hand maintains its accompaniment. A fermata is placed over the final note of measure 6 in the right hand.

Measures 9-11. The right hand begins a more complex rhythmic pattern with sixteenth notes, while the left hand continues with eighth notes.

Measures 12-14. The right hand continues with the sixteenth-note pattern, and the left hand provides a consistent eighth-note accompaniment.

Measures 15-17. The right hand features a series of sixteenth-note runs, and the left hand continues with eighth notes. A fermata is placed over the final note of measure 16 in the right hand.

Measures 18-21. The right hand continues with sixteenth-note runs, and the left hand provides a steady eighth-note accompaniment. A fermata is placed over the final note of measure 20 in the right hand.

21

24

27

29

31

34

38

Finally I would like to make a few remarks about the second group of the Mozart Quartet. I hope to clarify along the line why the second group does not start in bar 58, or on the second beat of bar 73.

My subdivision of the second group:

<i>bars</i>	<i>section</i>		<i>key</i>
49 - 57	<u>first section</u> : an antecedent (bars 49-52), ending with a <b>deceptive cadence</b> (on VI in A major: the f# minor triad on the second beat of bar 52), and then a consequent, also with a deceptive ending. In fact the consequent is a 'failure'. <sup>13</sup>	] together these sections form the first part of the second group. We could call this: <b>theme 2a</b>	A major
58 - 65	<u>second section</u> : the f# minor triad is becoming more independent, and seems to become the tonic of the f# <i>minor key</i> . At the end of the second four-bar group (62-65) it is clear that we are not leaving A major. This section is again ending with (a different) deceptive cadence: in bar 65 we end on an F major chord, <i>lowered VI</i> in A major!		<i>seems to become f# minor</i> (actually we are staying in A major)
66 - 73	<u>third section</u> : the F major triad is becoming more independent, and seems to become the tonic of the F major <i>key</i> . At the end of the second four-bar group (70-73) it is clear that we are not leaving A major. This section is ending with a perfect authentic cadence in A major.		<i>seems to become F major</i> (actually we are staying in A major)
74 - 83	<u>fourth section</u> : consists of two smaller phrases (starting on the second beat of bar 73) of four bars each; the second phrase (from the second beat of bar 78) is a varied repeat of the first one. As the phrases are short, and as they are both ending with a perfect authentic cadence <sup>14</sup> , it is possible to interpret bar 74 as the starting point of the <i>closing section</i> . In that case the second group would end in bar 73 (and we would not need the description 'theme 2a anymore').	] we could call this: <b>theme 2b</b>	A major

It is notable that the second and third section of the second group use the main motif of the *first group*. The first violin starts in bar 58 with an **augmentation**<sup>15</sup> of the first bars of the first group; the second part of the melody, from bar 62, quotes the beginning of the first group. The third section - varied repeat of the second section - does not contain the augmentation; but it does, from bar 70, quote again the beginning of the first group.

13 Deceptive cadence (or: **Trugschluß**): an harmonic closure where the dominant (mostly: V7) is followed by another degree than I, often VI. A deceptive cadence is in fact no ending at all: the actual ending is 'failing', so the cadence must be repeated.

14 See also footnote 9.

15 Augmentation (**Latin: augmentatio**): all note values are lengthened, compared to the original; often all notes get twice their original length. The augmentation in this Mozart piece is much more liberal. Shortening of note values is described with the term **diminution (diminutio)**.

Such interrelationships between various sections of a form are quite common; they lead to more cohesion throughout a piece. It is therefore not that strange that an aspect of the first group is returning in the second group. A good example for this procedure is the exposition of the piano sonata in f minor Op. 2,1 of Beethoven. In the beginning of the first group we encounter mainly rising broken triads, whereas the second theme starts with falling broken chords:

begin van het eerste thema:



begin van het tweede thema:



Maybe it is clear now why the beginning of the second group in Mozart's Quartet is not in bar 58:

- we reach the key of A major already much earlier
- bar 58 is a strange starting point because of the deceptive cadence just before (in bar 57)
- bars 58 - 65 are harmonically less stable than the bars before
- no new material is presented (other than in bar 49)

About bar 73 as starting point: this spot is rather sounding as a 'final stage', a 'consequent', 'final cadences' - more than as a beginning (and for that reason it is possible to see bar 73 as the first bar of the closing section). Apart from that: we are in the key of A major quite some time now..

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More could be said about this movement (I did not speak about the first group, and left out the development and the coda..) For the time being I think I have said enough though -after all, the only question was: where is the starting point of the second group?