

Research on Subject Groups in pre-Classical and Classical Period Keyboard Sonata

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ABSTRACT

The two themes, or the two subjects in the sonata form, usually are the objects, which be researched by Musicologists. They usually discuss them in terms of mode or tonality, characteristics, comparison and preparation of before and after materials and so on. This article will not only discuss these aspects, but also focus on the subjects' length. Different musicologists hold different views on the length of the subject groups in sonata form. Therefore, this article will conduct some case studies which from pre-Classical to Classical period keyboard sonata, from Domenico Scarlatti to Johann Nepomuk Hummel, and obtains statistical data. Based on the obtained data, confirm or falsify the existing theories and viewpoints on the length of subject groups in sonata form, and leads to a more reasonable conclusion.

KEYWORDS

Sonata form; Subject groups; pre-Classical era; Classical era

Many sonata theories have provided conclusions regarding the length of subject groups. However, these conclusions are not the same. The first point of view is that the second subject group should be longer than the first one. In fact, the most of theories support this view. According to Charles Rosen, he believes 'As eighteenth-century theorists remarked, the section in the dominant is longer than that in the tonic'¹. Although his words did not separate the second subject group and the closing zone, which may cause some ambiguity, but it can also be seen that he believes that the second subject group should be longer than the first one. Igor Sposobin, a former Soviet Union's musicologist, believes that the second subject group on music material will unfold and develop much more than the first one, so the length should be longer too². William E. Caplin also believes that the second subject group should longer than the 'eight-measure main theme'³.

Of course, there are also completely different viewpoints, a well-known example of this is Percy Goetschius. He believed that for the sonata-allegro form, '(the subordinate theme) is usually shorter than that of Prin. Theme'⁴.

Therefore, which of these arguments are more reasonable, or, are these arguments reasonable? These questions also prompted the birth of this article. The author will analyze the keyboard sonatas from the pre-classical to classical periods and discuss the above viewpoints about length of each

1 Charles Rosen, *Sonata Forms* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1988), 242.

2 Igor Sposobin, *Musical Form* (Shanghai: Shanghai Literature & Art Publishing House, 1986), 215.

3 William E. Caplin, *Classical Form* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 20.

4 Percy Goetschius, *The Larger Forms of Musical Composition* (New York: G.Schirmer, 1915), 166.

subject groups.

1 Case study in pre-Classical period

The sonatas of the pre-Classical period, especially the sonatas of the late Baroque, are slightly different in form from the 'mature' sonata form we are familiar with, or the type 3 sonata form in Hepokoski and Darcy's classification⁵. Therefore, in Chinese and Russian music theories, it will be called the 'ancient sonata form', which is used to specifically refer to the instrumental sonata form of the late Baroque. The difference between the ancient sonata form and the type 3 sonata form (18th-century mature sonata form) mainly lies in the comparison of structural scale and theme. As for structural scale, type 3 sonata form is a hybrid of binary and ternary form⁶, while ancient sonata form does not have the characteristics of ternary form, and its second part (development and recapitulation) is roughly equivalent in length to the first part (exposition). This heterogeneity is mainly due to the fact that the exposition, development and recapitulation of the 18th-century mature sonata form have approximately the same scale and length. The development and recapitulation of ancient sonata form are much shorter in length, and their development is not as extensive as Beethoven and later composers composed. Their length and scale are more similar to the micro development of some sonatas by Haydn and Mozart. The recapitulation of the ancient sonata form will not restate almost every material like the type 3 sonata form. Its usual practice is to omit the first subject group, which is similar to the type 2 sonata form⁷ named by Hepokoski and Darcy. Sometimes even the transition is omitted to form a recapitulation that only restates the second subject group⁸. However, the feature of theme comparison required in the type 3 sonata form 'is not a necessary condition for the ancient sonata form'⁹. The most important tonal contrast in the sonata form, the ancient sonata form is consistent with the type 3 sonata form. Therefore, it is not difficult to see that the ancient sonata form is consistent with the overall sonata principle of the type 3 sonata form. The exposition has two subject groups, the first being presented on the home key and the second on the subordinate key. They may have comparisons, but a single theme material can also be used. The second subject group will return to the home key within the recapitulation.

Domenico Scarlatti, as a late Baroque keyboard composer born in the same year as J. S. Bach and Handel, has very obvious characteristics of ancient sonata form in his keyboard sonatas. The following table presents my analysis of 20 of his sonatas, showing the relative lengths of the first and the second subject groups, where 'First' and 'Second' represent the first subject group and the second respectively; 'B' means the beginning bar, 'E' means the ending bar, and 'T' means the total number of bars of the subject group. These terms also apply to my subsequent analysis tables. From the diagram, we can clearly see the characteristics of the ancient sonata form, that is, the first subject group is not stated in the recapitulation.

Scarlatti is also very creative in his sonatas, often integrating various compositional techniques. The analyzed charts give us a special piece, K.33. By looking at the analysis chart, we can find that almost all of Scarlatti's sonatas are the second subject group longer than the first one, or about the same length. This is also in line with the views of Rosen, Caplin, and Sposobin. However, K.33 seems

5 James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 344.

6 Yoel Greenberg, *How Sonata Forms* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022), 44.

7 Hepokoski and Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory*, 344.

8 Sposobin, *Musical Form*, 254.

9 Sposobin, *Musical Form*, 251.

Domenico Scarlatti	Exposition						Recapitulation					
	First			Second			First			Second		
	B	E	T	B	E	T	B	E	T	B	E	T
K.2	1	12	12	21	35	15	/	/	/	62	76	15
K.4	1	5	5	14	19	6	/	/	/	31	37	7
K.5	1	4	4	31	39	9	/	/	/	78	86	9
K.6	1	8	8	18	33	16	/	/	/	61	72	12
K.7	1	8	8	39	55	17	/	/	/	129	137	9
K.9	1	4	4	12	16	5	/	/	/	46	50	5
K.11	1	4	4	10	13	4	/	/	/	24	27	4
K.14	1	4	4	12	19	8	/	/	/	36	43	8
K.16	1	13	13	22	55	34	/	/	/	75	108	34
K.19	1	8	8	18	25	8	/	/	/	81	87	8
K.22	1	8	8	12	22	11	/	/	/	63	70	8
K.25	1	12	12	30	45	16	/	/	/	75	87	13
K.26	1	14	14	48	68	21	/	/	/	121	144	24
K.27	1	4	4	17	29	13	/	/	/	53	65	13
K.31	1	8	8	43	50	8	/	/	/	95	110	16
K.33	1	10	10	51	58	8	/	/	/	107	114	8
K.36	1	16	16	17	39	23	/	/	/	68	92	25
K.37	1	3	3	22	26	5	/	/	/	47	52	6
K.44	1	16	16	51	66	16	/	/	/	121	136	16
K.49	1	6	6	17	29	13	/	/	/	88	100	13

to be an exception. This piece is the only example of the 20 musical pieces analyzed where the first subject group is longer than the second one. So what circumstances lead to this exception?

Perhaps we can find the answer from the cadential material from the first subject group. In bars 7-8, K.33 already has a cadence, but it is an imperfect authentic cadence. If we follow the conventional division of musical form, it seems that bar 8 is already considered the ending of the first subject group, but Scarlatti did not stop here. Instead, he added the melodic voice, or the highest voice, in the next bars 9-10. This voice, resolved from the dominant to the tonic. This also extends the first part by two bars. These two bars that cause a strange phenomenon in this sonata, that is, the second subject group is shorter than the first one.

As a composer who lived in the Galant period, a period bordering the Baroque and Classical, Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach's keyboard sonatas have sonata form characteristics from these three periods. His keyboard sonatas include Baroque style ancient sonata form music works, and classical period type 3 sonata form music works, but the most important and most common one is the intermediate sonata of these two sonata forms. The chart below is still my analysis of 20 movements of C. P. E. Bach. It differs from the Scarlatti chart in that in Recapitulation I added a question mark symbol at the ending of the first subject group and a bracketed number at the total section of the first subject group. The question mark symbol at Ending means that the recapitulation of this musical work includes the first subject group, and the starting measure of this group is very clear, but I cannot determine its ending measure, which means that in the recapitulation, the first subject group will be merged with the transition, which is what Caplin calls 'Fusion of main theme and transition'. The number in brackets below the total bars indicates how many bars of musical material from the first subject group were retained in the recapitulation. I call this 'Fusion of main theme and transition' sonata the intermediate sonata because it does not completely omit the first subject group like the ancient sonata form, nor does it completely restate it like the type 3 sonata form, it is a moderate approach to two different sonata forms. From the analysis chart, it can be seen that this intermediate sonata accounts for nearly half of C. P. E. Bach's keyboard sonatas, with 8 out of 20 works exhibiting this characteristic, while the ancient sonata form and type 3 sonata form each

account for 6 pieces.

C. P. E. Bach	Exposition						Recapitulation					
	First			Second			First			Second		
	B	E	T	B	E	T	B	E	T	B	E	T
H.23, I	1	8	8	19	26	8	57	64	8	69	76	8
H.32.5, I	1	8	8	21	56	36	105	?	(3)	112	143	32
H.42, I	1	6	6	18	29	12	55	?	(3)	63	74	12
H.42, III	1	8	8	24	32	9	/	/	/	104	112	9
H.47, III	1	10	10	26	37	12	/	/	/	105	116	12
H.51, III	1	8	8	16	32	17	92	?	(4)	97	111	15
H.58, III	1	8	8	29	37	9	58	?	(4)	79	96	18
H.59, III	1	7	7	27	36	10	57	?	(4)	74	83	10
H.105, I	1	4	4	12	19	8	/	/	/	41	46	6
H.116, I	1	4	4	12	19	8	40	?	(4)	47	54	8
H.117, III	1	8	8	21	36	16	60	?	(4)	76	91	16
H.119, I	1	6	6	14	22	9	47	?	(2)	60	76	17
H.119, III	1	6	6	26	33	8	57	62	6	84	91	8
H.121, I	1	8	8	17	28	12	/	/	/	47	58	12
H.130, III	1	12	12	29	49	21	114	125	12	132	152	21
H.131, III	1	8	8	19	25	7	/	/	/	60	66	7
H.132, I	1	6	6	15	24	10	/	/	/	39	48	10
H.174, I	1	8	8	17	28	12	72	79	8	82	93	12
H.174, III	1	6	6	15	24	10	53	58	6	67	76	10
H.176, III	1	4	4	17	24	8	44	47	4	64	71	8

It can be clearly seen from the above table that C. P. E. Bach makes the first subject group longer than the second one in the exposition only in a piece, the third movement of Keyboard Sonata in A minor, H.131. In the exposition, the first subject group starts from bar 1 and ends with half cadence in bar 8, which lasts for a total of 8 bars, and then bar 9 is the transition's repeating of the first subject group. The second subject group in the exposition begins in bar 19 and features a stepwise variant of Romanesca¹⁰, but it only lasts for 7 bars and ends in bar 25.

According to length, it can indeed be seen that the second subject is shorter than the first one. This situation can be explained in two ways. The first way is that these two subject groups are similar in duration of the music, and a one-bar difference does not make this musical work feel unbalanced; secondly, the first two measures of the first subject group have no actual musical content and are a statement of an introductory function. Then its real musical progression may only be 6 measures. Therefore, in the end, it still reflects that the second subject group is longer than the feeling of first one. Of course, another result also exists, which is that this repertoire is considered the first subject group longer than the second one's keyboard sonata.

2 Case study in Classical period

The sonata form developed vigorously in the classical period. In the hands of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and others, it gradually began to be 'matured', and type 3 sonata gradually became the most common form. Joseph Haydn, as the most famous composer in the early-Classical period, naturally had many unusual aspects in his keyboard sonata, which were reflected in many

¹⁰ Robert o. Gjerdingen, *Music in the Galant Style*, first edition (New York, NY; 198 Madison Avenue; Oxford University Press, 2020), p.33.

musicologists' articles, such as Hepokoski and Darcy's *Elements*, which often used Haydn's repertoires as special examples of sonata forms. So what is the difference between Haydn's keyboard sonata and its predecessors in handling subject groups?

Joseph Haydn	Exposition						Recapitulation					
	First			Second			First			Second		
	B	E	T	B	E	T	B	E	T	B	E	T
HOB XVI:1, I	1	7	7	8	15	8	30	38	9	39	46	8
HOB XVI:1, II	1	2	2	5	8	4	/	/	/	14	17	4
HOB XVI:2, I	1	10	10	31	43	13	101	109	9	118	130	13
HOB XVI:3, I	1	12	12	26	34	9	/	/	/	66	82	17
HOB XVI:3, II	1	8	8	12	19	8	53	60	8	64	71	8
HOB XVI:4, I	1	7	7	11	19	9	36	42	7	49	57	9
HOB XVI:5, I	1	6	6	30	60	31	/	/	/	109	139	31
HOB XVI:5, III	1	7	7	23	44	22	86	92	7	108	129	22
HOB XVI:6, I	1	4	4	12	18	7	/	/	/	41	47	7
HOB XVI:6, IV	1	10	10	11	22	12	61	66	6	67	78	12
HOB XVI:7, III	1	13	13	16	25	10	38	43	6	46	55	10
HOB XVI:8, I	1	8	8	8	14	7	27	34	8	34	40	7
HOB XVI:9, I	1	4	4	11	15	5	29	32	4	38	42	5
HOB XVI:10, I	1	8	8	9	16	8	39	46	8	47	54	8
HOB XVI:10, III	1	10	10	11	30	20	59	68	10	69	88	20
HOB XVI:12, I	1	4	4	11	18	8	38	41	4	46	53	8
HOB XVI:12, III	1	7	7	15	26	12	36	44	9	56	67	12
HOB XVI:13, I	1	4	4	23	30	8	54	57	4	76	84	9
HOB XVI:13, III	1	8	8	19	42	24	59	67	9	80	103	24
HOB XVI:14, I	1	8	8	17	28	12	75	82	8	87	98	12

We can clearly see from the above table that Haydn's keyboard sonata is mainly based on complete recapitulation, with only a small number of music works omitting the first subject group in the recapitulation. This complete recapitulation is more in line with the well-known sonata form, so it is not difficult to understand that Webster defined him as the composer who started the sonata form¹¹. Moreover, Haydn's creation of the first subject group in the recapitulation is also different from the composers mentioned earlier—although Haydn often expands or prunes it in length, the changes are not significant compared to the exposition, and both can clearly identify specific ending bars, rather than extensively pruning and integrating it with transitions like C. P. E. Bach. However, one thing we can see is the addition of examples of the first subject group longer than the second one in the sonata. In the examples of Scarlatti and C. P. E. Bach, only 1 out of 20 cases had this situation, while Haydn's 20 cases had 3 cases, which were the first movement of Sonata in C major, Hob XVI: 3, the third movement of Sonata in C major, Hob XVI: 7, the first movement of Sonata in G major, Hob XVI: 8.

So, let's take a look at his first example, which is a very tiny sonata, the first movement of Sonata in G major, Hob XVI: 8. The first subject group in the exposition is obviously composed of two phrases of different materials. They form a contrasting sentence and end on the dominant chord of the home key halfway through the bar 8, showing the characteristics of a half cadence. Then Haydn did not write a transition, but directly followed the first one with the second subject group, which continued until the first note of bar 14 and ended with the perfect authentic cadence of D major. Then there is the codetta that lasts for 3 bars, and finally marks the end of the exposition in bar 16.

11 Webster, James. 'Sonata form.' *Grove Music Online*. 2001; Accessed 19 Aug. 2023. <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000026197>.

After the end of the exposition, there is a development for 10 bars. After unfolding the materials at the beginning of the first subject group and the materials at the cadence of the second subject group, Haydn decided to bring back the complete first subject group in bar 27, and thus the recapitulation began. And for this recapitulation, Haydn adopted the simplest approach proposed by Sposobin, Hepokoski and Darcy - to present the entire subordinate key's music material, namely the second subject group and codetta, directly on the home key.

It is undoubtedly innovative in terms of length, whether it is the first subject group longer than the second one or a total length of only 44 bars with full development and full recapitulation. In terms of overall length, as I mentioned earlier, this sonata is undoubtedly a 'micro sonata'. Haydn seems to be particularly fond of creating extremely short sonatas, and there are also works that are shorter in length than the previous example, such as the second movement of Sonata in C major, Hob XVI: 1, with a total length of only 17 bars.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart is the second representative of the First Viennese School. Compared with his predecessors, such as Haydn, his keyboard sonata naturally has some innovations. As can be seen from the table below, Mozart uses more complete recapitulation than Haydn—in Haydn's twenty examples, four still do not restate the first subject group, but Mozart only has one.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mo- zart	Exposition						Recapitulation					
	First			Second			First			Second		
	B	E	T	B	E	T	B	E	T	B	E	T
K.279, I	1	12	12	20	31	12	58	67	10	74	92	19
K.279, II	1	6	6	11	17	7	43	50	8	51	57	7
K.279, III	1	10	10	23	38	16	87	96	10	109	124	16
K.280, I	1	13	13	27	43	17	83	95	13	109	131	23
K.280, II	1	8	8	9	21	13	37	42	6	43	57	15
K.280, III	1	16	16	38	66	29	108	123	16	149	177	29
K.281, I	1	8	8	17	38	22	70	77	8	86	107	22
K.281, II	1	15	15	28	43	16	59	72	14	88	103	16
K.282, I	1	4	4	9	15	7	/	/	/	27	33	7
K.282, Finale	1	8	8	16	35	20	62	69	8	77	96	20
K.283, I	1	16	16	23	43	21	72	83	12	90	110	21
K.283, II	1	4	4	9	14	6	24	27	4	32	37	6
K.283, III	1	24	24	41	73	33	172	195	24	212	244	33
K.284, I	1	9	9	38	50	13	72	80	9	110	126	17
K.309, I	1	21	21	33	54	22	94	116	23	127	148	22
K.310, I	1	8	8	23	35	13	80	87	8	104	116	13
K.310, II	1	8	8	15	22	8	54	61	8	68	77	10
K.311, I	1	7	7	17	24	8	99	109	11	79	86	8
K.311, II	1	12	12	17	38	22	39	50	12	53	74	22
K.332, I	1	22	22	41	86	46	133	154	22	177	222	46

As can be seen from the above table, all the first subject groups in the exposition are shorter than the second one. In addition to using a higher proportion of complete recapitulation than his predecessors, Mozart also made a bold innovation—placing the first subject group in the recapitulation after the second subject group. As can be seen from the above table, the first movement of Piano Sonata No. 9 in D major, K. 311 is an example. This approach has not appeared in the examples I gave before. But beyond the reverse sonata form mentioned by Rosen, it seems that the second movement of this sonata is more worthy of observation and research.

From the data given in the table, there seems to be nothing special about the second movement—it seems to be a normal sonata, the first subject group is shorter than the second one, the

recapitulation is also complete, and so on it seems to be a perfectly normal sonata. But it is indeed a unique piece of music, because it not only adds a Repeat sign to the first subject group in the exposition—this symbol usually exists after the exposition ends, but also seems to be a sonata-rondo form—after the second subject group, the first subject group is restated. However, it does not seem like it is entirely a sonata rondo form—it does not have an episode or development between the exposition and the recapitulation, which means it's recapitulation directly after exposition, therefore, it also has the characteristic of the sonata without development, the type 1 sonata¹² called by Hepokoski and Darcy. After using a brief transition music material, this recapitulation follows the second subject group stated on the home key, which followed by the first subject group again. The text description may be a little confusing, so the following diagram is the structural layout of this movement.



It seems that neither the sonata-rondo form nor the traditional sonata form can explain this repertoire as well, so how should we classify the form of this movement? The hybrid or intermediating form proposed by Li seems to be able to solve this problem—In author's opinion, according to the application of subject groups, this sonata combines three musical forms, or three principles: rondo, sonata and double-ternary, a musical form with ABAB₁A structure, but B and B₁ are written on different keys¹³. It can be seen that Mozart's innovation of sonata is mainly in the internal structural layout, not in the length comparison of subject groups, or more precisely, not in the length comparison of subject groups in the exposition, because these twenty examples are all in line with Rosen and others' view.

Ludwig van Beethoven, as the last representative of the First Viennese School, lived at the junction of the Classical and Romanticism periods, and his keyboard sonata has a very high reputation in the music industry. So, is his arrangement of subject groups in Sonata any different from his predecessors? Let's start with the table. Similarly, the examples in the analysis table come from his 20 keyboard sonata movements.

It can be seen that in these examples, Beethoven's sonata is larger than its predecessors, and movements exceeding 200 bars are the norm. And compared to Mozart, he used more complete recapitulation—each recapitulation contains music materials for the first subject group. And it is also his common practice to write the first subject group shorter in the recapitulation. The only first subject group that does not have a complete theme in the recapitulation comes from his second movement of Piano Sonata No.7, Op. 10 No. 3. In addition, in these examples of Beethoven, without exception, the second subject group in the exposition is written longer than the first one.

Johann Nepomuk Hummel was another great composer who lived at the junction of the classical and romantic periods and was considered a contemporary of Beethoven. His music style is similar to Beethoven, and some of his music works were even classified under Beethoven's label before. Likewise, he also composed many keyboard sonatas. Are there any other breakthroughs in Hummel's writing about the subject groups in these musical repertoires? As with the previous analysis diagrams, the examples analyzed below are derived from published Hummel piano sonatas.

It can be seen that Hummel's keyboard sonata is similar in length to Beethoven—compared to

¹² Hepokoski and Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory*, 344.

¹³ Jiti Li, *Form and Analysis of Music* (Beijing: The Minzu University of China Press, 2003), 137.

Ludwig Beethoven	van	Exposition						Recapitulation					
		First			Second			First			Second		
		B	E	T	B	E	T	B	E	T	B	E	T
Op.2 NO.1, I		1	8	8	21	41	21	101	108	8	120	140	21
Op.2 NO.1, Finale		1	13	13	34	50	17	138	152	15	173	189	17
Op.2 NO.2, I		1	32	32	58	104	47	226	252	27	278	324	47
Op.2 NO.3, I		1	13	13	47	77	31	139	146	8	181	211	31
Op.7, I		1	17	17	41	59	19	189	201	13	221	239	19
Op.10 NO.1, I		1	30	30	56	94	39	168	189	22	215	271	57
Op.10 NO.1, II		1	16	16	24	44	21	46	61	16	71	91	21
Op.10 NO.1, III		1	8	8	17	28	12	58	65	8	74	85	12
Op.10 NO.2, I		1	12	12	19	55	37	137	144	8	145	189	45
Op.10 NO.2, III		1	5	5	23	32	10	87	91	5	125	141	17
Op.10 NO.3, I		1	16	16	67	93	27	184	193	10	248	274	27
Op.10 NO.3, II		1	9	9	17	26	10	44	?	(5)	56	65	10
Op.13, I		11	19	9	51	89	39	195	203	9	221	253	33
Op.13, III		1	17	17	25	43	19	121	128	8	134	153	20
Op.14 NO.1, I		1	11	11	23	46	24	91	101	11	114	137	24
Op.14 NO.2, I		1	8	8	26	47	22	125	132	8	153	174	22
Op.22, I		1	8	8	22	56	35	128	135	8	153	187	35
Op.22, II		1	9	9	18	27	10	47	55	9	65	74	10
Op.27 NO.2, III		1	14	14	21	43	23	102	115	14	116	137	22
Op.28, I		1	39	39	91	135	45	269	311	43	365	411	47

Johann Hummel	Nepomuk	Exposition						Recapitulation					
		First			Second			First			Second		
		B	E	T	B	E	T	B	E	T	B	E	T
Op.13, I		3	14	12	35	62	28	133	146	14	154	181	28
Op.13, III		1	8	8	36	51	16	131	138	8	157	172	16
Op.20, I		1	16	16	28	47	20	105	?	(6)	136	154	19
Op.20, II		1	20	20	36	60	25	/	/	/	97	108	12
Op.38, I		12	18	7	61	81	21	202	?	(5)	234	254	21
Op.38, II		1	14	14	23	46	24	61	74	14	87	108	22
Op.81, III		1	25	25	47	63	17	164	178	15	183	201	19
Op.106, I		1	16	16	39	82	44	162	171	10	180	207	28
Op.106, Finale		1	59	59	94	153	60	265	369	105	229	253	25
Piano Sonata No.7, I		1	16	16	37	51	15	153	168	16	115	129	15
Piano Sonata No.8, I		11	37	27	57	107	51	139	147	9	172	223	52
Piano Sonata No.9, I		1	16	16	43	67	25	/	/	/	121	145	25

previous composers, their keyboard sonata appears quite broad. In addition, Hummel also basically follows the setting of the second subject group longer than the second one in the exposition. The only exception is the third movement of Piano Sonata No.5, Op.81. By observing this movement, we can also find out why this result occurs.

The first subject group of this movement adopts a structure described by Chinese and Russian theories as a 'plural sentence' —a structure whose shape is similar to a period, that is, the first and second phrases use the same beginning, but stop on different cadences¹⁴. But the plural sentence is longer than the period. Therefore, each 'phrase' in a plural sentence can be used as a separate sentence. It can be seen that bars 1-13 are the first sentence of the plural sentence, and it stays on the half cadence. Bars 14-25 are the second sentence, which stays on the perfect authentic cadence

14 Sposobin, *Musical Form*, 76. & Li, *Form and Analysis of Music*, 65.

of f-sharp minor. This kind of plural sentence usually omits one of the sentences in the recapitulation, so Hummel also adopted the same approach in the recapitulation, reducing the length of the first subject group from lasting 25 bars to only lasting 15 bars.

Another noteworthy sonata by Hummel is the Finale of Piano Sonata No.6, Op.106. Rather than saying it is novel, it is the strangest sonata. In the exposition, the first subject group is written in small ternary form and lasts a total of 59 bars. Bars 17 to 36 are contrasting middle, and its key is not home key but dominant major. It can be said that this has met the conditions of complete exposition—two themes with two different keys—the recapitulation of the small ternary form can be regarded as a manifestation of the sonata-rondo form.

However, Hummel did not seem to have any intention of doing so. Instead, he composed a large multi-themes second subject group in bars 94-153, with the most notable being the lyrical theme starting from bar 101 and ending from bar 124.

In the recapitulation, this theme appears earlier than the first subject group, thus making the entire sonata conform to Rosen's view of the reverse sonata form. And this theme was first stated on the wrong key in bar 229, which is B major, and then immediately returned to the home key. However, it did not end on the perfect authentic cadence, but stopped on the half cadence at bar 253. The music that followed was standing on the dominant, emphasizing the dominant chord in order to provide sufficient preparation space for the first subject group's restatement. The first subject group finally started in bar 265, but it seems to have changed again—its high voice adopts the lyrical theme which from the previous second subject group, while the bass voice uses the material of the first subject group, forming a polyphony where two subject groups are stated simultaneously, and the counterpoint performance of these two materials is very perfect. This composition method Hummel lasted quite a long time—the total length is 105 bars. During this period, this kind of material has been fully developed, and finally a perfect authentic cadence was written in the bar 369 to conclude.

This composition technique similar to the second development usually occurs in coda, while Hummel adopts a very alternative approach, allowing it to occur on the last subject group in the reverse sonata form—the first subject group in the recapitulation. That is to say, although Hummel adopted many uncommon practices, such as the second subject group in the recapitulation being first stated on the wrong key without a perfect authentic cadence, the first subject group appearing later than the second one in the recapitulation, and using counterpoint technique to simultaneously state the music materials of two subject groups, however, it cannot be denied that it is still a kind of sonata form. It can be said that Hummel's musical work has taken a significant step forward in modifying subject groups compared to its predecessors, which is a very rare practice.

3 Conclusion

All in all, many famous composers in the pre-Classical period and Classical period have been developing ways to deal with the subject groups of keyboard sonata. These developments not only exist in the choice of mode or tonality, characteristic, length and speed contrast etc., but also exists in many aspects such as the comparison of the order of statements in the exposition and the recapitulation, the selection of musical materials, and so on.

Overall, among the 134 keyboard sonatas that author's analyzed, the second subject group with a longer length than the first one undoubtedly accounts for the highest proportion compared to the length of the subject groups in the exposition. A total of 113 movements adopted this approach, which is consistent with Rosen and other's view that the second subject group has a longer length than the first one.

Secondly, there is the practice of two subject groups of equal length, with a total of 12 movements adopting this approach. The earlier composers prefer to use this approach. However, composers such as Beethoven and Hummel in the later stages of the Classic period hardly used this approach.

The approach of the second subject group shorter than the first one accounts for the least proportion, with a total of 9 movements adopting this approach. Almost every composer has adopted this approach, but the proportion is not significant. Among the composers mentioned above, Haydn has the highest proportion using this method, while Beethoven have the lowest.

Therefore, Rosen and others' points of view are all need further improvement. Although their views apply to most repertoires, but there are indeed examples of the opposite. Their views cannot fully cover all the keyboard sonatas of the both pre-Classical and Classical period. Consequently, the definition of the length of subject groups in sonata form should be: 1) in most cases, the second subject group should be longer than the first one. 2) in the absence of significant comparison in the characteristics of subject groups, can also see some examples where the length is the same. 3) rarely seen some cases that the first subject group is longer than the second one, however, such examples do exist.

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