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# Development of the Sonata

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*The J. William Fulbright College of Arts & Sciences Department of Music  
Presents:*

## Christine Hsu

Piano Recital- Stella Boyle Smith Concert Hall, Fine Arts Center,  
Wednesday: April 15, 2015, 8:00 PM

Christine Hsu was born in Tucson, Arizona and started playing the piano at the age of five. She has won competitions including first place in the MTAC-Irvine Contemporary Festival, second place in the MTAC-Irvine Classical Festival, and fourth Place in the CAPMT District 8 Sonata Festival. Currently, she is a senior at the University of Arkansas and is in the process of completing her Bachelor's Degree in Music under the guidance of her instructor: Jura Margulis. Christine has attended master classes in the United States and other countries such as Austria.

### ***Program:***

Sonata in d minor K. 9  
Sonata in E Major K. 20  
Sonata in A minor K. 54  
Sonata in A Major K. 24

Domenico Scarlatti (1685-1757)

Sonata in C Major  
I. Allegro  
II. Andante  
III. Scherzo: Allegro molto e con fuoco  
IV. Finale: Allegro con fuoco

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

-----Intermission-----

Sonata in D Major Op. 28  
I. Allegro  
II. Andante  
III. Scherzo-Trio: Allegro vivace  
IV. Rondo: Allegro ma non Troppo

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Sonata in f minor Op. 1

Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953)

# **Development of the Sonata**

An Honors Thesis submitted in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for Honors  
Studies in Music: Piano Performance

By: Christine Hsu

2015  
Music

J. William Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences  
**University of Arkansas**

## Introduction to the Sonata: Program Notes

Music history is grouped into four periods: the Baroque era (1600-1760), Classical era (1730-1820), Romantic era (1780-1910) and the Modern era (1900-Present). The sonata first appeared in the 16<sup>th</sup> century as an instrumental piece. Sonatas came from instrumental transcriptions of canzonas (songs) in Italy. The word “sonata” originates from the Italian word “suonare”, which means, “to sound”. Many similarities are noted when comparing sonatas to canzonas such as sectional structures that contrast in meter and tempo (rhythmic), and reliance on contrapuntal (melodic) texture (Mangsen). There were two notable types of sonata termed *sonata de camera* (chamber sonata) and *sonata de chiesa* (church sonata: more serious) (Kennedy). The sonata de cameras were composed as suites (dance music: allemande, courante, sarabande, gigue) that were in the same key (Mangsen). Although the sonata form originated in the early Classical period and has three basic parts: the exposition, development, and recapitulation, it is not to be confused with the sonata genre. A music form is the overall structure of each movement. There can be many movements in one piece. Usually a sonata includes a sonata form in the first movement. Overall, the sonata is a part of the classical repertoire that pertains not just to piano, but also to other instruments as well.

During the early Baroque period, changes were made to the sonata genre by cutting the number of sections and making each section longer. Eventually these sections became movements. After 1700, the sonata became more popular and gained the attention of many piano composers. An example includes Domenico Scarlatti, who composed numerous sonatas based on one-movement binary forms

that are taken from the dance suite style. His sonatas often include the gallant style: a continuous melody that spins out with a constant rhythmical harmony. After Scarlatti, many composers moved toward composing sonatas in many movements. Later on, the sonata movements will decrease again and evolve into one long movement.

In consideration of the stylistic approach in the Baroque era, the use of ornamentation (improvisational decorations) was prominent in sonatas. During that time, the sonata became popular in other countries other than Italy. As a result, many other countries imported manuscripts of copied sonatas from Italy (Mangsen). Due to performance practice, sonatas were performed at first domestically. Later on, keyboard practice evolved from domestic performances to public performances for mass audiences on the concert stage. Eventually, the sonata transformed to suit these types of public performances.

By the classical era, much of the piano repertoire included sonatas. Composers such as Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven were well known for their sonatas. The sonata structure in this era usually contained three to four movements that consisted of contrasting character (Mangsen). The first movement of the sonata normally includes the sonata form, which was developed during the classical period. The second movement is usually slow and in a related key to the first movement. The third movement is often a minuet-trio. Finally, the last movement is often a rondo (another form: ABACA...). Composers such as Beethoven often use this type of sonata form. Beethoven made enormous contributions to the sonata repertoire by composing 35 piano sonatas during his life. He is often regarded as the one who

pioneered the sonata to be performed on concert stage rather than in a salon (smaller room: domestic). In addition, the development of the keyboard's action and range during Beethoven's time also had a great impact on his compositions of sonatas.

After the classical era, sonatas evolved to fit the romantic styles (i.e. miniature and grandioso forms). The Romantic era sonatas included characteristics such as more fluidity in the melodic line, richer harmonies, and more rapid shifts between harmonies (Mangsen). The first movement, which usually consisted of the sonata form, transformed by expanding the development section.

By the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the sonata became more varied. Due to changes in the number of movements and forms of the sonata in the Romantic era, the Modern era used the term sonata as a more general definition. Any type of sonata was known as a serious piece that could be compared to Beethoven's sonatas (Mangsen). Due to the evolution of the sonata, composers chose to compose sonatas in a variety of forms that mainly included 1-4 movements.

In conclusion, the sonata genre has developed since the 16<sup>th</sup> century in terms of its structure and musical style. It is a genre that can include either one movement or many movements. The first movement of the sonata usually includes a sonata form. Many important composers have contributed to the piano repertoire by composing a variety of sonatas. The sonata genre is also very similar to the symphony. The symphony also consists of several movements with the first movement in sonata form. The only difference is that the orchestra performs a symphony while an instrument performs a sonata.

## **Program Pieces:**

### **Scarlatti Sonatas (1739):**

Scarlatti is a well-known Italian keyboard composer who composed over 550 keyboard sonatas. He uses the binary form for each sonata and repeats each part. At the end of the first part, there is usually a modulation to the dominant. The sonata continues to modulate back to the tonic in the second part. He does not employ much polyphonic texture but uses an important rhythmic role in the left hand. There are rapid scales, division between hands, fast octaves, and hand crossing (Gordon, 76-77). Scarlatti's music is considered virtuosic and achieves contrasting moods.

### **Beethoven Sonata in D Major Op. 28 (1801):**

This sonata adheres to the traditional of the classical era sonata form and includes four movements. It is named "pastoral" due to its bucolic character. Pastoral music often depicts the simple life and the lifestyle of shepherds living in harmony with nature. The first movement includes a pedal point in the key of D that resounds as a continuous base. The second movement contains a staccato bass line with a melancholy right hand melody. The third movement is a Scherzo that contains the structure of a minuet-trio. The minuet begins with broken octaves following each other and the trio contains running octaves in the left hand. The last movement is a rondo with the form of ABACABA (Gordon, 165). It begins with a motif that rocks smoothly similar to a boat on water. The right hand answers with a simple pastoral melody. The ending of the last movement finishes with an upbeat coda.

### **Brahms Sonata in C major Op. 1 (1853-1854):**

Brahms composed this sonata in his early years and used it as an introduction to other important musicians. It is often compared to the Hammerklavier Sonata of Beethoven and also includes strong influences of Beethoven's early sonatas. The first movement is heroic with a lyrical second theme (Gordon, 333). The second movement includes variations on the theme of a German folk-song, a Minnelied with the following lyrics:

<i>Verstohlen geht der Mond auf.</i>	Stealthily rises the moon.
<i>Blau, blau Blümelein!</i>	Blue, blue flower!
<i>Durch Silberwölkchen führt sein Lauf.</i>	Through silver cloudlets makes its way.
<i>Blau, blau Blümelein!</i>	Blue, blue flower!
<i>Rosen im Tal,</i>	Roses in the dale,
<i>Mädel im Saal,</i>	Maiden in the hall,
<i>O schönste Rosa!</i>	O handsomest Rosa!

The third movement is a scherzo with massive double thirds and octaves followed by a peaceful harmonic section that eventually leads back to the fierce beginning. The last movement is a rondo, which includes parallel thirds and octaves as a continuing motif that flows to two different lyrical sections and ends with a coda.

### **Prokofiev Sonata in f Minor Op. 1:**

Prokofiev's No. 1 Sonata is composed in one long movement following the Romantic tradition. Although, the sonata is only one movement, the style includes traditional romantic elements before Prokofiev's discovery and experimentation with modern music (Gordon, 439). The sonata opens with a declamatory statement descending in left hand octaves that leads to the melody in the right hand. The melody has a patriotic, heroic and militaristic character.



## Works Cited

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