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## **Sonata form Experimentation in Joseph Haydn's String Quartets, Opus 17**

by James MacKay

### *Abstract*

In 1963, Jens Peter Larsen published an article entitled "Sonata Form Problems," in which he outlines some of Haydn's unique solutions to sonata-exposition structures. Using Larsen's hypotheses, coupled with William Caplin's insights in *Classical Form*, and James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy's ground-breaking *Elements of Sonata Theory*, I will examine the diversity of Haydn's formal procedures in certain movements of his oft-neglected Opus 17 string quartets of 1771. These works provide a staggering array of sonata-form possibilities, many of which deviate provocatively from the High Classical sonata form model.

In a brief overview of the Opus 17 quartets' 17 sonata-form movements (presented in tabular form), we will explore the diversity of Haydn's formal procedures. Four of James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy's five sonata-form "types" (from their *Elements of Sonata Theory*) are employed in Opus 17: Type 1 sonatas (which lack a development section), Type 2 sonatas (which omit the main theme from the recapitulation), Type 3 sonatas (the "textbook" form), and Type 4 sonatas (a sonata-rondo blend). Following this overview, we will turn in depth to three specific movements from this opus: the slow movements of Opus 17, nos. 1 and 3, and the sonata-rondo finale of Opus 17, no. 1. In these works, Haydn's fondness for anomalous thematic structures will be explored and examined as viable alternatives to normative sonata-form design. Haydn's formal inventiveness in his Opus 17 quartets strongly suggests that he was not seeking to problematize sonata form, but rather, positing a wide range of solutions for the balance of thematic and developmental activity in these works.

## *I. Introduction*

Joseph Haydn had a long and successful history with the string quartet, from the ten early quartets of the 1750s to his final (and fragmentary) Op. 103 of ca. 1803. Following a decade-long absence from the genre, he returned to the string quartet with a vengeance in the late 1760s and early 1770s, producing, in close succession, three sets of six quartets, Opp. 9, 17 and 20. The final of these sets, the ‘Sun’ Quartets of 1772, were almost instantly acclaimed. The problem with this acclaim is that these works’ immediate predecessors, the six quartets Op. 17 (1771), have been comparatively neglected, despite their considerable success in Haydn’s lifetime. However, many of the technical and formal innovations that have been noted in the ‘Sun’ Quartets were also present in the Op. 17 set, in particular, Haydn’s innovative treatment of sonata form.

This essay will focus on Haydn’s varied (and sometimes idiosyncratic) use of sonata form in the Op. 17 string quartets, building on the hypotheses of Jens Peter Larsen (outlined in his 1963 article, “Sonata Form Problems”), coupled with William Caplin’s insights in *Classical Form* and James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy’s remarks in their groundbreaking *Elements of Sonata Theory*.<sup>1</sup> The diversity of Haydn’s formal procedures in certain movements of his oft-neglected Op. 17 provide the listener, performer and analyst with a staggering array of sonata form possibilities, many of which offer innovative approaches to the balance between thematic/expository and developmental content.

After a brief overview of the quartets’ seventeen sonata form movements, I will turn to an in depth discussion of three specific movements from this opus: the slow movements of Op. 17 nos. 1 and 3, and the sonata-rondo finale of Op. 17 no. 1. In these works, Haydn’s fondness for anomalous thematic structures will be explored and examined. Contrary to the more rigid, formulaic sonata form as described in the early Romantic era, Haydn’s

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<sup>1</sup> See Jens Peter Larsen, “Sonata Form Problems,” in *Haydn, Handel and the Viennese Classical Style*, trans. Ulrich Krämer, (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1988), 269-91; William Caplin, *Classical Form: A Theory of Formal Functions for the Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, Norms, Types, and Deformations in the Late-Eighteenth-Century Sonata* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); and James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory: Norms, Types, and Deformations in the Late-Eighteenth-Century Sonata* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

formal inventiveness in his Op. 17 quartets displays the malleability of the sonata principle as practiced in the middle third of the eighteenth century.

## *II. Brief Overview of Opus 17*

The Op. 17 quartets both consolidated the musical gains of the Op. 9 quartets of ca. 1769 (which they greatly resemble in many aspects), and pointed toward the achievements of Op. 20 (1772). These works were highly regarded in their own right in Haydn's day. They were published almost immediately by Hummel in Amsterdam and Berlin, by Gardom in London, by Sieber in Paris and three years later by Welcker in London; in addition, they were circulated widely in manuscript.<sup>2</sup> It seems that these works were gaining critical acclaim as well: in 1772, Charles Burney remarked on hearing "some excellent quartets by Haydn executed in the utmost perfection: the first violin, by M. Startzler [*recte* Starzer], who played the *Adagios* with uncommon feeling and expression."<sup>3</sup> These works could well have come from Op. 17, or indeed Op. 9. Both of these quartet sets are characterized by their violin dominant textures, a feature that is often singled out by early and more recent commentators. This texture gives rise to a singing quality, especially in the slow movements, which draw on the rhetoric of opera, invoking aria and (in Opus 17 no. 5, specifically) recitative.<sup>4</sup> The invocation of vocal conventions, noted as a major influence on early sonata form by Charles Rosen, elicits from Haydn a malleable range of thematic and formal processes in sonata (and other) forms in the Op. 17 quartets.

Before turning to a detailed consideration of form in Op. 17, it would be useful to summarize the different formal strategies that Haydn employed in the seventeen sonata

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<sup>2</sup> H. C. Robbins Landon, *Haydn: Chronicle and Works*, vol. 2 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978), 320.

<sup>3</sup> Cited in James Webster, "Haydn's Opus 9: A Critique of the Ideology of the 'Classical' String Quartet," in *Essays in Honor of László Somfai on His 70th Birthday: Studies in the Sources and the Interpretation of Music*, ed. László Vikárius and Vera Lampert (Lanham: The Scarecrow Press, 2005), 139-42.

<sup>4</sup> Mentioned, among other places in Landon, *Haydn: Chronicle and Works*, vol. 2, 319. For an in-depth consideration of these works' use of vocal *topoi*, see Nancy November, "Instrumental Arias or Sonic Tableaux: 'Voice' in Haydn's String Quartets Opp. 9 and 17," *Music & Letters* 89 (2008): 346-72. See also the chapter on aria in Charles Rosen, *Sonata Forms*, revised edition (New York: Norton, 1988), 28-70.

movements contained within this set of works (see Table 1). Many of the formal strategies that Haydn employs in the Op. 17 quartets have been codified by Hepokoski and Darcy in terms of five sonata form “types,” which are discussed in their *Elements of Sonata Theory*. Type 1 sonatas omit the development section, as is common in mid-century practice; Type 2 sonatas omit the main theme from the recapitulation; Type 3 is the so-called “textbook” form (an exposition consisting of a first theme, transition, second theme and codetta, followed by a development and complete recapitulation); Type 4 is a sonata-rondo blend; and Type 5 is a concerto form.<sup>5</sup> Since the “standard” model is relegated to Type 3 by Hepokoski and Darcy, they implicitly make the point that this formal design is but one sonata model among many, and is therefore not privileged over the four other formal designs in any way.<sup>6</sup>

One of the primary alternatives to Hepokoski and Darcy’s Type 3 sonata, first noted by Larsen in 1963, is the sonata exposition that lacks a clear subordinate theme, which he termed a “three-part exposition,” in which the main theme and closing material are mediated by an expansion section.<sup>7</sup> Hepokoski and Darcy include this prototype as one of a number of “continuous exposition” models, in which, as per Caplin, the boundary between transition and subordinate theme becomes blurred.<sup>8</sup> Haydn’s Op. 17 quartets contain a single example of this formal choice, in the opening movement of Op. 17 no. 2. Following an 11-bar main theme (four bars of presentation, stated twice, followed by a three-bar continuation), bars 12-36 fuse transition and subordinate theme function. There is no half cadence demarcating the boundary between transition and subordinate theme; rather, one is aware as a listener of a gradual drift toward the dominant, which is only confirmed with the perfect authentic cadence of bar 36, and by the ensuing codetta (bars 36-38) that concludes the exposition.

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<sup>5</sup> Described in Hepokoski and Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory*, 343-45.

<sup>6</sup> For an overview of sonata form as a whole, with historical context and a discussion of how each of five sonata types fulfils a common trajectory of musical action within the form, see Hepokoski and Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory*, 14-22.

<sup>7</sup> See Larsen, “Sonata Form Problems,” 274-75.

<sup>8</sup> Hepokoski and Darcy consider this formal issue in *Elements of Sonata Theory*, 51-64. Caplin deals with this issue in a single paragraph in *A Theory of Formal Functions*, 201.

Table 1: The seventeen sonata form movements from Opus 17<sup>9</sup>

| Movement | Type | Key    | Meter | Tempo            | Comments                                       |
|----------|------|--------|-------|------------------|--|
| 17/1/i   | 3    | E      | 4/4   | Moderato         | R=1/2 N, both halves repeated                  |
| 17/1/iii | 3    | e      | 6/8   | Adagio           | Both halves repeated                           |
| 17/1/iv  | 4    | E      | 2/4   | Presto           | R=2 N, both halves repeated                    |
| 17/2/i   | 3    | F      | 4/4   | Moderato         | Both halves repeated;<br>continuous exposition |
| 17/2/iii | 3    | B-flat | 4/4   | Adagio           | Neither half repeated                          |
| 17/2/iv  | 3    | F      | 2/4   | Allegro di molto | Both halves repeated                           |
| 17/3/iii | 3    | A-flat | 3/4   | Adagio           | Both halves repeated                           |
| 17/3/iv  | 3    | E-flat | 4/4   | Allegro molto    | R=1/2 N, both halves repeated                  |
| 17/4/i   | 3    | c      | 4/4   | Moderato         | Both halves repeated                           |
| 17/4/iii | 3    | E-flat | 3/4   | Adagio cantabile | First half repeated (written out)              |
| 17/4/iv  | 3    | c      | 4/4   | Allegro          | Both halves repeated                           |
| 17/5/i   | 3    | G      | 4/4   | Moderato         | R=1/2 N, both halves repeated                  |
| 17/5/iii | 1    | g      | 3/4   | Adagio           | Neither half repeated                          |
| 17/5/iv  | 3    | G      | 2/4   | Presto           | R=2 N, both halves repeated                    |
| 17/6/i   | 3    | D      | 6/8   | Presto           | R=2 N, both halves repeated                    |
| 17/6/iii | 2    | G      | 4/4   | Largo            | R=1/2 N, neither half repeated                 |
| 17/6/iv  | 3    | D      | 2/4   | Presto           | Both halves repeated                           |

Perhaps the most intriguing examples of Haydn's use of sonata form in the Op. 17 set are found in its six slow movements. Long admired for their singing quality and richly ornamented violin parts (very likely a tribute to Eszterházy court violinist Luigi Tomasini's virtuosity and musical taste), these movements display Haydn's versatility in approaching sonata form.<sup>10</sup> Reginald Barrett-Ayres provides useful formal diagrams for Op. 17's opening movements (remarking in detail on their unique features, such as the false recapitulations of the first and fourth works of the set), but largely sidesteps the problematic slow movements. He accepts the slow movements of nos. 1 and 2 as conforming to the sonata form model, but describes the slow movements of Op. 17, nos. 3 and 6 as works "in binary form with leanings toward the sonata principle" and those of

<sup>9</sup> For R=2N and R=1/2N, see Caplin, *A Theory of Formal Functions*, 35, and Footnote 1.

<sup>10</sup> See Landon's discussion in *Haydn, Chronicle and Works*, vol. 2, 319.

nos. 4 and 5 categorically as “*not* written in sonata form.”<sup>11</sup> However, it is difficult to discern how any of these slow movements could be categorized as anything *other* than sonata form, at least according to Hepokoski and Darcy’s sonata types. The Adagio of no. 3 substitutes a retransition for the development, but otherwise follows their Type 1 model. No. 4’s slow movement has a written-out repeat of the exposition (C. P. E. Bach’s *veränderte Reprise*), followed by a full development and partial recapitulation (Hepokoski and Darcy’s Type 2 Sonata). The slow movement of no. 5 is a sonata form without development (Hepokoski and Darcy’s Type 1 Sonata), with a recitative in place of the expected transition. Finally, the slow movement of no. 6, like that of no. 4, omits the main theme in the recapitulation (Hepokoski and Darcy’s Type 2 Sonata). These slow movements, along with the Type 2 sonata-adagios of Op. 17 nos. 1 and 2, aptly demonstrate the wide variety of musical solutions that Haydn brought to bear, especially in the slow movements that are most indebted to operatic influence (the arioso nos. 3, 4 and 6; and the recitative-incorporating no. 5).

### *III. Op. 17 no.1, movement 3*

As a means of exploring Haydn’s ingenious solutions to the challenge of achieving of formal balance in the Op. 17 quartets, we will now take a closer look at three specific movements from the set: the slow movements of Op. 17 nos. 1 and 3 and the finale of Op. 17 no. 1. The two slow movements to be examined are among the lengthiest movements of the entire opus: both of them are vast, ruminative sonata form movements, with both the exposition and the development-recapitulation modules repeated. Though these movements both begin with a two-part sonata exposition, Haydn’s unique thematic design in each movement allows the standard two-part expositional design to play out in a novel fashion.

Haydn’s String Quartet in E major, Op. 17 no. 1, begins with a lengthy sonata form movement in moderate tempo, lasting over 12 minutes in performance when both halves (exposition and development-recapitulation) are repeated.<sup>12</sup> Following a minuet of

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<sup>11</sup> Reginald Barrett-Ayres, *Joseph Haydn and the String Quartet* (New York: Schirmer, 1974), 98-104 and 117.

<sup>12</sup> I strongly agree with Hans Keller’s view regarding the necessity of observing repeats: “So far as the great composers’ mature works are concerned, every second repeat that they have notated in a sonata movement

relatively modest proportions, he presents a slow movement in the parallel minor, whose length, breadth and thematic complexity makes it a more than adequate match for the opening movement. As with the opening movement, the composer requests a repeat of both halves.<sup>13</sup> The reader will find it useful to have scores in hand for the following analyses. (See Appendix, Example 1 for a piano reduction and analysis.)

The fresh, surprising and intricate way in which he introduces and develops his thematic material in this movement is noteworthy. Though the exposition conforms to the two-part design, the thematic material within each section is often anomalous in some way, either irregular in phrase length, or ambiguous in function, or both. The main theme, in gently rocking *Siciliano* rhythm, begins with a double statement of opening material whose operative melody spans an unusually wide range (the leap of a compound fifth in bar 3 is particularly striking).<sup>14</sup> This opening phrase is followed by a continuation phrase that leads tentatively to a half cadence in bar 6, then, after probing the upper register in bar 7, leads forcefully downward to a perfect authentic cadence in bar 10 (the Neapolitan sixth chord of bar 9 imparts a sense of poignancy to this cadential arrival). Perhaps contrary to expectations, this theme slightly deviates from the eight-bar norm, with its two-phrase, 6+4 bar design.

Haydn then immediately muddies the waters. Bars 11-16 reintroduce the higher tessitura first broached in bar 7. The lower three instruments, in close position, retain the rocking rhythm of the opening bars, while the first violin superimposes a sixteenth-note countermelody from the phrase's beginning until the approach to the perfect authentic cadence: bar 16 repeats bar 10 note-for-note. Is this phrase a varied repeat of the main theme's continuation phrase, i.e. Janet Schmalfeldt's "one more time" technique, or is the

must be played, because it involves, indeed contains, what are among the most essential inventions of the movement in question, so that its omission is equivalent to [...] a straightforward cut in a masterpiece." Hans Keller, *The Great Haydn Quartets* (New York: George Braziller, 1986), 76.

<sup>13</sup>The Welcker edition (1774) has the second repeat: the Eulenberg (n.d.) and Henle (2005) editions do not.

<sup>14</sup>For a detailed consideration of the *Siciliano's* rhythmic and tempo characteristics and its use in Haydn's instrumental music, see Eva Badura-Skoda, "Siciliana-Tempi and Haydn's Sicilianos," in *Essays in Honor of László Somfai on His 70th Birthday*, ed. László Vikárius and Vera Lampert, 127-38 (Lanham: The Scarecrow Press, 2005), 127-38.



phrase different enough from the preceding material to be categorized as another main theme?<sup>15</sup> One could argue for either reading, since Haydn deliberately gives the listener mixed formal signals.

In bar 17, a dependent transition ensues (i.e. a transition that begins with a main theme incipit), which arrives almost immediately on an inverted dominant seventh chord in the relative major.<sup>16</sup> A new idea, loosely derived from the main theme melodically, but supported by a new, intricate triplet figuration, ensues in bars 19-28, ending with a half cadence in G major. The effect of this section, based on the contrasting accompaniment texture in bars 19-28, is that of a two-bar anacrusis followed by a ten-bar pseudo-theme. The formal role of these bars is ambiguous: is the passage beginning in bar 19 already the subordinate theme, or does the insufficient harmonic preparation (lack of a clear medial caesura) mark this section as still being transitional in character? Certainly, the emphatic arrival of V in bar 28 makes bars 29ff. a more convincing location for the subordinate theme's onset, but from a thematic standpoint, either bar 19 or 29 seems analytically tenable for this formal juncture (see Table 2 for two possible analytical readings of this movement).

Whether bars 29-38 are read as the entire subordinate theme, or only its second half, the phrase structure of this section is highly original and anomalous by any formal standard. Bars 29-32 begin with a main theme incipit and end with a perfect authentic cadence. Is this already the codetta, perhaps? But then Haydn restates the material of bar 29 to begin a *second* consequent phrase in bar 33. This unusual periodic structure is not discussed in Caplin's *A Theory of Formal Functions*, nor can it be found in Hepokoski and Darcy's *Elements of Sonata Theory*. Furthermore, the rhythm and texture of bars 19-28 (our putative transition) returns in bar 35, persisting beyond the perfect authentic cadence of bar 38 that concludes the theme, and continuing through the two and a half bars of codetta

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<sup>15</sup> Janet Schmalfeldt, "Cadential Processes: The Evaded Cadence and the 'One More Time' Technique," *Journal of Musicological Research* 12 (1992): 1-51.

<sup>16</sup> Following Hepokoski and Darcy's terminology, this passage comprises a transition that serves as a "grand dissolving consequent," which follows a main theme that had served as a "grand antecedent." See *Elements of Sonata Theory*, 101-02.

that conclude the exposition. Thus there are two main musical features in this exposition, cadential-thematic and textural-rhythmic, which, despite being potentially in conflict with each other, assist the analyst in formulating one of many possible convincing readings of the opening forty bars.

Table 2: Two formal readings of Opus 17 no. 1, movement 3

| I   | II  |
|---|---|
| bars 1-16: Main Theme                                   | ( <i>ibid.</i> )                            |
| bars 17-28: Transition                                  | bars 17-18: Transition                      |
| (Transition continues)                                  | bars 19-28: Subordinate Theme (first half)  |
| bars 29-38: Subordinate Theme                           | bars 29-38: Subordinate Theme (second half) |
| bars 38-40: Codetta                                     | ( <i>ibid.</i> )                            |
| bars 41-52: Development                                 | ( <i>ibid.</i> )                            |
| bars 53-61: (Recapitulation)<br>Main Theme → Transition | ( <i>ibid.</i> )                            |
| bars 62-73: Subordinate Theme                           | ( <i>ibid.</i> )                            |
| bars 73-75: Codetta                                     | ( <i>ibid.</i> )                            |

Despite a relatively lengthy development section (revisiting main theme and transitional material in a variety of tonalities), and a more or less complete reprise of the exposition's most salient material in the work's second half, the development-recapitulation module is *shorter* than the exposition by five bars. How does Haydn manage this? To begin, the main theme as re-stated in the recapitulation (bars 53ff.) is represented solely by its first four-bar phrase, which then dissolves into transitional material. This passage, reminiscent of bars 11-16, ensues in bars 57-61, serving as a stand-in for the transition. The transitional passage presented in bars 19-28 disappears altogether in the recapitulation: the subordinate theme, transposed to the tonic, follows this newly-composed material in bars 62-73, once again comprising two phrases in consequent-consequent design, followed by two and a half bars of codetta. In sum, the composer presents thematic material in this movement's exposition that permits multiple formal readings. He sheds new light on this material with a brief development; then, rather than simply recapitulating it with minimal alteration as the movement concludes, he significantly re-shapes it, pruning away in the movement's closing bars anything inessential to his musical argument. It is as if the musical content, including such oft-neglected features as register, rhythm and

accompaniment texture, generates the work's form, rather than vice versa. This is a tribute to Haydn's creativity and variety in terms of introducing and developing his thematic material.

#### *IV. Op. 17 no. 3, movement 3*

The third movement of Op. 17 no. 3 shares many features of Op. 17 no. 1's slow movement. Like that movement, it is an Adagio in sonata form, in which both halves are repeated. It is the longest of the slow movements from this six-quartet set, running well over ten minutes in performance, and is by far the most wide-ranging and complex from a tonal perspective. As with the slow movement of Op. 17 no. 1, the exposition is five bars longer than the development-recapitulation module, due to Haydn's compression or omission of thematic material in the recapitulation. However, whereas the slow movement of Op. 17 no. 1 provides a unique working-out of the two-part exposition through thematic material of irregular length and unusual cadential content, the slow movement of Op. 17 no. 3 begins fairly regularly from a thematic perspective (as well as a tonal one), but then become expansive and harmonically adventurous (almost unusually so, for Haydn ca. 1770) as the subordinate theme unfolds. As such, this movement presents both formal and tonal challenges for performer, listener and analyst alike, which I will summarize below. (See Appendix, Example 2 for a piano reduction and analysis.)

The opening bars of the movement comprise a pair of six-bar phrases with parallel beginnings. The first phrase ends with a perfect authentic cadence, whereas the second one ends with a half cadence. The slow movement of Op. 17 no. 4 begins similarly: a single four-bar phrase leads to a perfect authentic cadence, followed by a parallel six-bar phrase leading to the dominant. Webster would have called this structure an "anti-period," since these phrases are periodic from a motivic standpoint, but their cadential goals are reversed.<sup>17</sup> I read the opening phrase as a six-bar main theme (comprising a two-bar

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<sup>17</sup> See James Webster, *The "Farewell" Symphony and the Idea of Classical Style: Through-Composition and Cyclic Unity in his Instrumental Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 44. Compare Caplin, *Classical Form*, 129, where he describes exactly this musical situation as "giv[ing] the impression of being a kind of reversed period."

presentation stated once, followed by a two-bar continuation stated twice), after which a six-bar dependent transition ensues, beginning with a main theme incipit, followed by a four-bar continuation. This non-modulating transition subtly turns away from the home key by introducing the movement's first two structurally important chromatic tones (scale degree  $b7$  as part of a  $V^7$  of IV, and scale degree sharp-4 as part of a half-diminished  $vii^7$  of V).

Although the movement's first twelve bars are tonally straightforward and harmonically staid, the theme that ensues in bars 13-41 could hardly be more different from this opening section. This theme, while beginning normatively in the dominant, gradually becomes audacious in its harmonic shape and breathless in its musical effect. Following its opening four bars, based on a fourfold repetition of the main theme incipit from bar 1, the theme continues to regenerate itself, one idea flowing seamlessly into the next, with hardly a moment to pause. Cadences of any type are conspicuous by their absence until the theme's concluding perfect authentic cadence in bar 41. This section spans nearly two minutes in performance, and is suggestive of Baroque *Fortspinnung* technique. Haydn's use of this phrase-structural design reminds us that through his Viennese training in the 1740s (a decade in which both J. S. Bach and Georg Frideric Handel were still alive and writing music) he was steeped in older traditions, which he never entirely excluded from his musical language.<sup>18</sup>

Although the theme begins unambiguously (without a hint of chromaticism) it quickly moves tonally astray in the continuation phrase. E-flat minor arrives suddenly in bar 19 through modal mixture; subsequently, a 5-6 melodic motion introduces G-flat major in bar 22. The tonality shifts again, through modal mixture, to a surprisingly remote G-flat minor in bar 25 (which Haydn declines to spell in its more readable enharmonic equivalent, F-sharp minor); and finally, another 5-6 shift introduces E-double flat major,  $bV$  (or enharmonic  $\sharp IV$ ) of the home key in bar 27. Proceeding logically and systematically from a

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<sup>18</sup> Haydn's Baroque heritage acquired in his formative years as a musician in 1740s Vienna, has in my opinion been insufficiently explored, although Robbins Landon hints at this, in *Haydn: Chronicle and Works*, vol. 1 (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1978), 56-60.

conventional diatonic beginning, Haydn has effected an unprecedented destabilization of the exposition's formal and tonal direction through a series of surprising harmonic maneuvers as the subordinate theme unfolds.

The harmonic return from this remarkable key, the most remote key available to Haydn within the tonal system, is no less surprising: E-double flat major is reinterpreted as the Neapolitan of D-flat major in bar 29, a tonal region upon which Haydn pauses (as V of the previously-stated G-flat major), extending the moment with a brief cadenza. A sequential repetition of this phrase in bars 30-32 leads briefly to C minor, and from there to an inverted dominant seventh of E-flat, after which nine bars of cadential material, elided with five bars of codetta, ensues in bars 33-45. This closing section, comprising 13 bars that consist almost entirely of primary triads in the dominant key, confirms and stabilizes E-flat major to conclude this remarkable span of music, an astonishing passage to have been written in the year 1771. In these bars, Haydn's mixture of Baroque *Fortspinnung*, Classical homophonic textures and bold harmonic progressions that look ahead to the early Romantic era, creates a kaleidoscopic mixture of musical aesthetics that results in a richly diverse and complex compositional result. Despite the requisite (and unusually expansive) cadential confirmation of the subordinate key at the exposition's conclusion, some of the strangeness of the preceding harmonic progressions remains in the listener's ear as a bold excursion, one that is, at best, barely resolved by the return to Classical decorum in bars 33-45.

As in the slow movement of Op. 17 no. 1, the development-recapitulation module of this movement is greatly compressed: since the exposition contained so much developmental technique and harmonic adventure, the development itself could be greatly shortened. A single six-bar phrase (bars 46-51) re-introduces the main theme incipit in the subordinate key, eventually leading to a half cadence in F minor. A three-bar phrase then serves as retransition to the home key in bars 52-54, followed (as in the slow movement of Op. 17 no. 1, discussed above) by a truncated recapitulation. Haydn's compression of his thematic material begins immediately: in bars 54-59, he fuses main theme and transition function in a single phrase that ends on the dominant. A passage reminiscent of the subordinate

theme's continuation phrase ensues in bar 60, though replete with chromaticism and a nervous energy that strongly suggests a transition (compare bars 60 ff. to bars 20ff.). Haydn then transports us to the parallel key, A-flat minor, via modal mixture in bars 64ff. As in the exposition, a 5-6 motion brings us to the tonally most remote point of the recapitulation, F-flat major in bar 68 (locally interpreted as the Neapolitan of the dominant, E-flat major, or, more globally, as flat-VI of the home key, A-flat major). As in the exposition, a brief modulation leads to an arrival on an inverted dominant seventh chord. Following this pause, Haydn undermines the musical tension of the preceding section with nine bars of cadential material elided with five bars of codetta (bars 73-85). As in the exposition's parallel passage, he uses primary triads almost exclusively to restore tonal balance and stability. Thus he concludes this fascinating movement, which is probably among the boldest of his musical creations dating from the early 1770s.

#### *V. Op. 17 no. 1, movement 4*

To conclude this thumbnail sketch of Haydn's Op. 17 quartets, and further to explore the variety with which he deployed his thematic material in sonata form, I will discuss the most formally enigmatic of the work's six sonata form finales: the concluding movement of Op. 17 no. 1, in E major. Unlike the other finales of this opus, which tend to be brief, uncomplicated movements in standard Type 3 sonata form, this finale turns out to be a blending of disparate forms. Although on first hearing, this movement seems to be an unproblematic Type 3 sonata with both halves repeated, upon a closer examination, it also incorporates many characteristics of the rondo, another typical form for Haydn's finales. (See Appendix, Example 3 for a piano reduction and analysis.)

As with the slow movement of Op. 17 no. 1, which immediately precedes this finale, Haydn presents us with thematic material that is irregular in phrase length, and, moreover, is often ambiguous in formal design. As in the case of the slow movement of Op. 17 no. 3, thematic and transitional rhetoric (tonally stable versus tonally unstable passages) are intertwined once the subordinate key is reached, making the application of formal labels for each section of the exposition particularly challenging. The overall large-scale trajectory of the movement's tonal and thematic design is relatively straightforward, but at the local

level, the movement's thematic boundaries can be read in multiple ways (see Table 3 for a pair of readings of this movement's form).

Table 3: Two Formal Readings of Opus 17 no. 1, movement 4

| I   | II  |
|---|---|
| bars 1-12: Main Theme                     | bars 1-12: Main Theme, presentation phrase  |
| bars 13-34: Transition                    | bars 13-34: Main Theme, continuation phrase |
| bars 35-73: Subordinate Theme             | bars 35-73: Transition/Expansion Section    |
| bars 74-81: Codetta                       | bars 74-81: Subordinate (Closing) Theme     |
| bars 82-84: Retransition                  | (ibid.)                                     |
| bars 85-155: Development                  | (ibid.)                                     |
| bars 156-167: (Recapitulation) Main Theme | (ibid.)                                     |
| bars 168-206: Subordinate Theme           | bars 168-206: Transition/Expansion Section  |
| bars 207-214: Codetta                     | bars 207-214: Subordinate (Closing) Theme   |
| bars 215a-217a: Retransition              | (ibid.)                                     |
| bars 215b-237: Coda                       | (ibid.)                                     |

Haydn's subversive toying with listeners' expectations in this rollicking romp, set in duple meter and in presto tempo, begins immediately: using a mixture of two-part writing in parallel thirds for the two violins juxtaposed with more dense textures, he presents two five-bar phrases, separated by a full bar of rest, to announce the movement's main thematic material. The first phrase ends with a plagal harmonic gesture (IV-I), coinciding with a *forte* explosion for all four instruments, while the second phrase ends equally loudly and abruptly with a perfect authentic cadence. Although these bars seem perfunctory, spanning barely eight seconds in performance, they could be heard as the entire main theme, or as a slightly elongated basic idea stated twice.<sup>19</sup>

After another full bar of rest, a passage that begins with the same main theme incipit ensues (bars 13ff.), this time stated by viola and cello, to which the two violins add an inverted pedal as counter-melody, ending with a half cadence in the home key in bars 33-

<sup>19</sup> Given the meter and tempo, Caplin would probably consider this movement to be  $R=2N$ , where two notated bars represent one "real" (analytical) bar (cf. *Classical Form*, 35, in which the opposite case,  $R=1/2N$ , is also discussed). If so read, this segment (five and a half "real" bars as per Caplin) would be of insufficient length to be a truly complete theme. This analytical decision is also relevant in deciding upon the thematic role of bars 74ff., discussed below.

34. Here again, multiple formal readings are possible. Since this passage restates and develops the opening bars' incipit, it could be viewed as the main theme's continuation phrase. However, these bars depart from the diatonicism of the opening twelve bars (bars 16-28 tonicize the subdominant, A major, while bars 32-34 tonicize B major).<sup>20</sup> Thus they destabilize the home key, however slightly. This marks them, at least potentially, as a dependent transition (in which the transition begins with a main theme incipit), despite the absence of a modulation to the dominant.<sup>21</sup>

In bar 35, a restatement of main theme material in the dominant begins. Could these bars be read as the subordinate theme version of opening material, thus signaling a monothematic exposition (a typical gambit for Haydn, especially in his later music)? Or is it (finally) the beginning of the transition? Though initially forthright in tonal shape and thematic design, this section quickly introduces modal mixture and secondary diminished seventh chords in bars 43-60—two hallmarks of transition rhetoric—before making two attempts at a cadence in B major in bars 65-68 and 69-73. Also, since bars 13-34 do not modulate, what follows in bars 35ff. could be construed (at least at first) as transitional, potentially leading to a half cadence in the dominant key (B major) to prepare the onset of a subordinate theme.

After the perfect authentic cadence in bar 73 that definitively establishes the dominant, the exposition concludes with a single eight-bar phrase in bars 74-81, once again reminiscent of the main theme, to cement this arrival. Is this passage finally the long-awaited subordinate theme, or are we already in the exposition's closing section (codetta)? Despite the passage's main theme incipit (as noted above, a common strategy for Haydn's subordinate themes), eight bars of duple meter in presto tempo—barely five seconds in clock time—seem woefully inadequate to articulate a viable theme. Moreover, an authentic

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<sup>20</sup> This passage will return at the development's midpoint (bars 125ff.) and in the coda as well (bars 218ff.), each time acting as a mild tonal disruption prior to a major cadential arrival.

<sup>21</sup> As various authors have remarked, although modulation is a common feature of the transition, it is not obligatory there (cf. Hepokoski and Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory*, 94-95; and Caplin, *A Theory of Formal Functions*, 127).



cadence as medial caesura (such as Haydn had used in bar 73), though not completely out of the question, was a rare alternative to the half cadence in the musical style of the time.<sup>22</sup>

Three bars of retransition (bars 82-84), which, like the movement's opening bars, is a duo for the violins, in parallel thirds, lead to the exposition's repeat, and to the development's beginning. Here Haydn springs yet another musical surprise: the development's opening phrases (bars 85-96) are a complete, unaltered restatement of the exposition's first 12 bars—in the home key! The movement's overall form is AB/ACAB with repeats (AB comprises the exposition, ACAB comprises the development-recapitulation). This formal plan marks the Op. 17 no. 1 finale as an idiosyncratic, though incontestable, sonata-rondo, i.e., Hepokoski and Darcy's Type 4 sonata.

As the development continues, the exposition's third phrase (mimicking the transition's beginning) also returns in the home key in bars 97ff., albeit slightly reworked. This time, the inner parts restate the main theme gesture in parallel thirds, beneath the first violin's inverted pedal; the cello is silent. Haydn uses this familiar passage as point of departure for the development's core, or central *Sturm und Drang* section. In this stormy passage, the thematic material from bars 97-104 is subjected to sequential repetition by ascending step.<sup>23</sup> Following a perfect authentic cadence in C-sharp minor to conclude bars 138-46, in which the composer re-uses the twofold cadential gesture of bars 65-68 and 69-73, he writes nine tonally nebulous bars of retransition (bars 147-55) in which the violins play in parallel thirds. This passage recalls the thinly-textured opening gesture of the movement, leading seamlessly to the recapitulation. The upbeat to bar 156, where the main theme begins, is not highlighted in any way. The texture and dynamics remain the same, so the recapitulation's onset is barely noticed, and is only made palpable by the first phrase's *forte* conclusion in bar 160, which initiates the third statement of A (the main theme) in

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<sup>22</sup> Hepokoski and Darcy consider this means of ending a transition to be a "third level default," which occurs much less frequently than ending either on V of the dominant, or V of the home key. They then mention a handful of Haydn and Mozart expositions (e.g. Mozart's "Hunt" Quartet and Haydn's Symphony no. 10) that so proceed. See *Elements of Sonata Theory*, 27-29.

<sup>23</sup> For a detailed discussion of core technique in sonata form developments, see Caplin, *Classical Form*, 141-55.

this sonata-rondo movement. The highly integrated development both re-states and sheds new light on Haydn's principal thematic material.

As in the two slow movements discussed above (Op. 17, nos. 1 and 3), the composer is not yet done with rearranging his thematic material simply because the recapitulation has begun. He repeats the exposition's first phrase note-for-note, but largely recomposes the second phrase. If bars 162-67 are compared to the exposition's parallel passage (bars 7-12), it can be seen that, although he retains the same harmonic trajectory in the later passage, he replaces the ascending melodic line of bars 7-12 with a descending one in the recapitulation. He then excises over 30 bars of transition material, beginning the following section (bar 168ff.) with a passage that greatly resembles bar 43ff. This passage, though ostensibly part of the subordinate theme, nonetheless features modal mixture and chromaticism prominently, thus displaying the requisite transition rhetoric for this juncture in the recapitulation. However, as we approach the recapitulation's final cadence in bar 214, the sequence of musical events from the exposition returns. The twofold cadential gesture first stated in bars 65-68 and 69-73 is re-stated, transposed to the home key, in bars 198-201 and 202-206. The eight-bar codetta, and subsequent three bars of linking material with which the exposition had ended, then return as well (bars 207-17), preparing for a return to the development's opening bars. The movement's second half is then repeated; fortunately, since the harmonic and thematic detours and false leads of the development/recapitulation module, and the manner in which Haydn reworks and reorders previously presented material, retains much of its musical effect the second time around.

Finally, Haydn appends a coda, spanning bars 215-37. One of the purposes of such a section can be to tie up thematic loose ends, which he accomplishes here by restoring much of the transitional material that he had cut from the recapitulation.<sup>24</sup> The coda's first fourteen bars (bars 216-229) are an exact repeat of bars 14-27 from the exposition, comprising almost exactly half the segment that he had omitted from the recapitulation, possibly because he had previously featured this passage prominently, at pitch, in the

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<sup>24</sup> See also Rosen's discussion of this passage in *Sonata Forms*, 301-04.

development.<sup>25</sup> This section re-introduces, for the last time, the thinly-textured writing of the movement's opening gesture, before settling into a four-part texture for the final 21 bars. Its disruptive tonicization of A major, first heard in bars 19-27, and revisited briefly during the development's middle section in bars 125-31, returns note-for-note in bars 222-30.

A brief extension and repetition of this material, transposed down a perfect fourth, re-establishes E major, leading to a perfect authentic cadence in bar 232. Six bars of alternating dominant and tonic harmonies then quietly confirm the home key. Stated in the instruments' lowest register and employing a consistent four-part homophonic texture, this cadential confirmation quietly brings the quartet to a satisfying conclusion, which, as Charles Rosen claims, resolves the movement's "unfinished business": i.e., the tonal, thematic and textural ambiguities that had been presented earlier in the finale.<sup>26</sup>

## VI. Conclusion

There are many other musical discoveries to be experienced in Haydn's Op. 17 quartets (and their immediate predecessor, Op. 9). As H. C. Robbins Landon ruefully remarks, this set of quartets "has never recaptured the popularity it once so thoroughly enjoyed [becoming] an object for scholarly study for the connoisseur's admiration [that] is more analyzed and discussed than performed." Nonetheless, this relatively neglected set of quartets is, in Landon's words, "full of rewarding works and delightful individual movements."<sup>27</sup> Overshadowed—however fairly or unfairly—by its better-known successor, the 'Sun' Quartets of 1772, the Op. 17 quartets are a storehouse of fascinating solutions to musical, formal, registral and textural challenges. In particular, the registral and textural variety of the slow movement from Op. 17 no. 1 is unsurpassed in Haydn's output, even by the better-known Op. 20. These works remain a fitting example of the diverse means that Haydn brought to bear when he utilized sonata form.

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<sup>25</sup> See n. 19, above.

<sup>26</sup> Rosen, *Sonata Forms*, 304.

<sup>27</sup> Landon, *Haydn: Chronicle and Works*, vol. 2, 320-21 and 324.

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### VIII. Appendix: Musical Examples 1-3.

#### Example 1: Haydn, String Quartet Op. 17 no. 1, mvt. 3 (reduction, annotated).

##### EXPOSITION

##### Main Theme (Presentation)

##### Continuation

Piano

HC "One more time"

Transition

G major...

MacKay, James. "Sonata Form Experimentation in Joseph Haydn's String Quartets, Op. 17."

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Measures 22-24. Treble clef: 22, 23, 24. Bass clef: 22, 23, 24. Triplet markings are present above and below the notes.

Measures 25-27. Treble clef: 25, 26, 27. Bass clef: 25, 26, 27. Triplet markings are present.

Subordinate Theme (Consequent-Consequent)

Measures 28-31. Treble clef: 28, 29, 30, 31. Bass clef: 28, 29, 30, 31. Triplet markings are present.

HC

Measures 32-35. Treble clef: 32, 33, 34, 35. Bass clef: 32, 33, 34, 35. Triplet markings are present.

PAC

Measures 36-37. Treble clef: 36, 37. Bass clef: 36, 37. Triplet markings are present.

Codetta

Measures 38-41. Treble clef: 38, 39, 40, 41. Bass clef: 38, 39, 40, 41. Triplet markings are present.

DEVELOPMENT

41

46

48

50

PAC

RECAPITULATION

Retransition Main Theme...

52

becomes... Transition

56

MacKay, James. "Sonata Form Experimentation in Joseph Haydn's String Quartets, Op. 17."

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Subordinate Theme (Consequent-Consequent)

60 HC

65 PAC

70

72 Codetta PAC

74 6



Example 2: Haydn, String Quartet Op. 17 no. 3, mvt. 3 (reduction, annotated).

EXPOSITION

Main Theme (Presentation) *tr* (Continuation)

Piano

7 Transition *tr*

13 Subordinate Theme (MT incipit as presentation) (Continuation)

E-flat major

19 e-flat minor (mixture) G-flat major

25 G-flat minor (mixture) E double-flat major (Neapolitan of D-flat) V arrival in G-flat major

MacKay, James. "Sonata Form Experimentation in Joseph Haydn's String Quartets, Op. 17."

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(C minor) V arrival in E-flat

Codetta  
PAC

DEVELOPMENT  
HC, f minor

Retransition  
RECAPITULATION  
(Main Theme)

Subordinate Theme (with transition rhetoric)

58

tr

HC

64

A-flat minor (mixture)

F-flat major  
(flat VI of A-flat)

Cadential

69

V arrival

74

tr

Codetta

80

tr

PAC

## Example 3: Haydn, String Quartet Op. 17 no. 1, mvt. 4 (reduction, annotated).

## EXPOSITION

Piano

Main Theme

Transition

PAC

Subordinate Theme

HC

The image displays a piano reduction of the first movement of Haydn's String Quartet Op. 17 no. 1, specifically the exposition section. The score is written in G major and 2/4 time. It is divided into five systems, each with a treble and bass clef staff. The first system is labeled 'Main Theme' and includes a trill annotation. The second system is labeled 'Transition' and includes another trill annotation. The third system is labeled 'PAC' (Piano Accompaniment). The fourth system is labeled 'Subordinate Theme' and includes a 'HC' (Harmonic Change) annotation. The fifth system continues the subordinate theme. The score includes various musical notations such as chords, melodic lines, and rests.

45

54

63 (Cadential) *tr*

71 Closing Section (Codetta) *tr*

PAC

79 Retransition DEVELOPMENT (MT/I!) *tr*

PAC

87 *tr*

PAC

MacKay, James. "Sonata Form Experimentation in Joseph Haydn's String Quartets, Op. 17."

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96 (=Transition, varied)

105

114

123

132

141 Retransition

PAC, c-sharp minor

## RECAPITULATION (Main Theme)

Musical score for measures 150-158. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The music is in treble clef. Measure 150 starts with a treble clef and a key signature of three sharps. The music consists of a series of chords and eighth notes in the right hand, while the left hand is mostly silent.

Musical score for measures 159-167. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The music is in treble clef. Measure 159 starts with a treble clef and a key signature of three sharps. The music features a trill in measure 159. The right hand has eighth notes and chords, while the left hand has a simple bass line. The piece ends with a double bar line and the word "PAC" below it.

## Subordinate Theme (cf. measure 43 ff.)

Musical score for measures 168-176. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The music is in treble clef. Measure 168 starts with a treble clef and a key signature of three sharps. The music features a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The right hand has eighth notes and chords, while the left hand has a simple bass line.

Musical score for measures 177-185. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The music is in treble clef. Measure 177 starts with a treble clef and a key signature of three sharps. The music features a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The right hand has eighth notes and chords, while the left hand has a simple bass line.

Musical score for measures 186-194. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The music is in treble clef. Measure 186 starts with a treble clef and a key signature of three sharps. The music features a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The right hand has eighth notes and chords, while the left hand has a simple bass line.

MacKay, James. "Sonata Form Experimentation in Joseph Haydn's String Quartets, Op. 17."

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194 (Cadential) *tr*

202 3 3 3 *tr* Closing Section (Codetta) PAC

210 PAC

214b 2 CODA

222

230 PAC