

Analysis of Beethoven Sonata No. 20 in G Major, Op. 49 No. 2, Movement 1

By Sam Moffett

In this paper, I will be guiding the reader through the harmonic and formal structure of the first movement of Ludwig van Beethoven's Sonata No. 20, Op. 49 No. 2, in G Major. For the purposes of better understanding this paper, I have included a harmonic analysis and a formal map at the end. I have included measure numbers above the first measure of each system in the music. It is important to note that I will be speaking of the music as if it is in common time as opposed to cut time, so each measure consists of four quarter note beats as opposed to two half note beats

Exposition: mm. 1 – 52

The prime theme begins at measure 1. Since each harmony in measures 2-4 consist of only two notes, it is difficult to truly determine exactly what it is, (for instance, I've analyzed the third beat of measure 2 as being a V_4^6 chord, even without the presence of D). However, since he repeats the first phrase (mm. 1-4) of the theme in measures 5-8 with a more-active left hand and clearer harmony, it is enough evidence to determine what the harmony exactly was in measures 2-4. The last perfect authentic cadence in the prime theme occurs in measure 12, and from there, the transition begins.

The transition starts with the same material Beethoven uses in measure 9, but an octave down. Rather than having a cadence on the tonic like he does in measure 10, He moves to a V^6/V to transition to the dominant pedal in measure 15. Measure 15 begins a standing on the dominant, that moves the music through the medial caesura in measure 20. It is significant to point out the way Beethoven chooses to modulate to the dominant key here. Since, up until the medial caesura, the tonic is still heard as G, the cadence of the medial caesura is treated as the pivot

chord, acting as the V chord of the tonic key, and the I chord of the dominant key. The lone three eighth-note A5s that occur in the right hand in the second half of measure 20 then imply a V chord leading to the first occurrence of I in the new key. Since the V harmony of the three A5s is not fully harmonically spelled out, but rather implied, I put the V in parenthesis.

The three A5s also being the secondary theme. The thematic material is significantly similar to what occurs in measures 6-9, with the left hand having eighth-note activity and the right hand having quarter-note activity. The first authentic cadence of the secondary theme occurs in measure 24, being an imperfect authentic cadence. It is significant to note at this point that, as in the primary theme, Beethoven uses $ii^6 \rightarrow I^6$ harmony in the second statement of melodic material (this occurs in measures 9-10 in the prime theme, and 25-26 in the secondary theme). Beethoven repeats the secondary theme material to take us into what is first heard as a perfect authentic cadence in measure 36. However, as opposed to ending the secondary thematic material and going into the closing, Beethoven continues to develop the exposition with an evaded cadence, establishing additional melodic material. Since this additional material is quite extended, I neither analyzed this as being part of the secondary theme, or the closing material.

During this additional material, Beethoven uses another significant evaded cadence, in measures 45-46. Whereas it is expected that the V chord on beat four of measure 45 is expected to go to a I chord, Beethoven extends the V harmony, and ultimately deceptively moves it to a IV chord in measure 47.

It is important to explain my harmonic analysis choice for measures 44 and 47. In both instances, Beethoven uses a lydian scale over a IV chord in the left hand. However, the last three notes in the measure leading to a one chord in the next are the first three notes of the related

mixolydian scale. This could be interpreted as V chord harmony, or as passing tones to the I chord. For these reasons, I chose to put the V chord symbol in parenthesis.

In measures 48-49, the music satisfies the previous evaded cadence from measures 45-46 when the material is repeated again. This time, Beethoven lands on the I chord in measure 46. This begins the closing material. Beethoven uses similar material to what is used in the transition, only this time it is over a tonic pedal. This closing leads to a perfect authentic cadence in measure 52, ending the exposition.

Development: mm. 53 – 66

The development section begins with a D minor chord that causes the listener to believe that Beethoven has used modal interchange to transition to the previous key's parallel minor. However, the cadence to A minor in the next measure (54) gives that initial D minor chord dual function as the iv chord of the new key of A minor. In measure 54, Beethoven is using similar melodic material to what he used in the primary and secondary themes, with eighth-note activity in the left and, and quarter-note activity in the right hand. In measure 56, beat 3, Beethoven starts a sequence of measures 53 and 54, sequencing up a perfect fourth. Similarly, the A minor cadence in measure 56 has the same dual functionality as the D minor chord in measure 53, function as the i in the current key, and the iv of the new key, E minor. In measure 58, Beethoven breaks the sequence, keeping i chord on beat one, but moving to a German augmented sixth chord on beat 3. The augmented sixth chord moves to a dominant pedal beginning in measure 59, which ensues until an Imperfect Authentic Cadence in measure 64. The melody in measure 63 is sequenced in the i chord in measure 64, then also sequenced in the iv chord in measure 65. The iv chord in measure 65 acts as the pivot back to the tonic key, functioning also as it's ii chord. Beethoven then uses a familiar melody over the dominant chord

in measure 66 (this melody is heard leading into the first perfect authentic cadence in the piece, measures 11-12) to move into the recapitulation.

Recapitulation: mm. 67 – 122

The recapitulation begins as the exposition did for the first seven measures, (through measure 73) apart from an extra embellishing note in the left hand in measure 72. In measure 74 Beethoven modulates to C major instead repeating all of the prime theme fully. The same material that is used in the exposition as the “evaded cadence” is used here, this time before the second theme begins. Beethoven uses this material to move to the original transition material used in the exposition, beginning in measure 82. The transition ends as it did in the exposition in measure 87, with a medial caesura. However, as opposed to starting the next phrase on A to move into the dominant key, Beethoven starts on D to stay in the tonic key.

The secondary theme (this time in the tonic key) begins in measure 87, and is identical in form to the secondary theme from the exposition. Beethoven uses subtle, but significant changes, such as a change in the melody during the half cadence, from a descending to ascending line in the exposition, to a purely ascending line in the recapitulation. Another change occurs in measure 100, where, instead of only moving from ii^6 to I^6 , he moves from ii to V , then to I . Form-wise, however, Beethoven is identical as to the secondary theme in the exposition, including his use of the evaded cadence material, all the way through measure 115. In measure 116, the closing begins.

The closing is similarly identical in terms of melodic and harmonic material as it is in the exposition, this time in the tonic key. However, Beethoven adds a small coda in the form of an extension of the material. Instead of the closing being four measures as it was in the exposition, it is extended to seven measures, ending in a perfect authentic cadence.

Beethoven Sonata No. 2 in G Major, Op. 49 No 2, Movement 1

Formal Map

Exposition

MT

mm. 1 – 12 – G: PAC

TR

mm. 12 – 20 – G: HC, M.C

ST

mm. 20 – 28 – D: HC

mm. 29 – 36 – D: Evaded PAC

mm. 37 – 48 – Extended material from evaded cadence.

C

mm. 49 – 52 – D: PAC

Development

mm. 53 – 55 – a: Thematic material from MT and ST

mm. 56 – 57 – e: Sequence of 53 – 54 in e minor

mm. 59 – 63 – e: Dominant pedal

mm. 64 – 66 – Modulate back to G major.

Recapitulation

MT

mm. 67 – 74 – Repeated from MT in Exposition, but with a move to a PAC in C

mm. 75 – 81 – Thematic material from evaded cadence in ST of Exposition.

TR

mm. 82 – 87 – G: HC, M.C.

ST

mm. 87 – 95 – G: HC

mm. 96 – 103 – G: Evaded PAC

mm. 104 – 115 – Extended material from evaded cadence.

C

mm. 116 – 122 – Closing, with extended coda.

ZWEI LEICHTE SONATEN

für das Pianoforte
von

Beethovens Werke.

Serie 16. N^o 143.

L. VAN BEETHOVEN.

Op. 49. N^o 2.

Allegro ma non troppo.

Sonate N^o 20.

1

Prime theme begins

IAC

5

G: I I^b V^b I V⁵ I V⁵ I V⁵ I V⁵ I

IAC

10

PAC Transition begins

I^b V^b I V^b V I V⁷ IV V⁷ V⁵ I

ii^b

15

Standing on dominant

I^b IV V I

ii^b V⁶ V⁶

19

Secondary theme begins

Passing 4

G: V I^b V I V⁴ (V) I^b V² I^b V^b I V^b V V⁴ I^b V⁴ I

24

IAC HC

D: V⁵ I ii^b I^b ii^b I^b ii^b V¹⁰ V

29

Passing

IAC

D: I⁶ V⁴₂ I⁶ V⁶ I V V⁴₂ I⁶ V⁴₂ I V⁵₁ I ii⁶ I⁶

34

Evaded PAC

D: ii⁶ I ii⁶ V I V⁴₃

38

D: I V⁴₃ I V⁷_{IV}

42

D: ii⁶ I⁶₄ V⁷ I IV₃ (V⁷) I ii⁶ I⁴₄ V

46

closing

D: IV (V⁷) I ii⁶ I⁴₄ V I V⁴₂

50

Development

D: I V⁴₂ I V⁴₂ I V⁴₂ I (iv) d: i | a: iv

54

Material from Prime and Secondary Themes Sequence

IAC

D: i V⁴₂ i⁶ V⁶ i V⁴₃ i⁶ V⁴₃ i V⁴₂ i⁶ V⁶

B.143.

a: i V⁴₂ i⁶ V⁶ i V⁴₃ i⁶ V⁴₃ i V⁴₂ i⁶ V⁶

e: i | iv

58

HC

e: 63

i Ger+6 D.P.V. I V V i V

IAC

Recapitulation begins

e: 68

V Passing i G: VII V V⁷ I

IAC

Passing

G: 73

I V⁶ I V⁶₃ I V²_{IV} vi⁷ V² I I' V⁶ I

Material from exposition

G: 77

V⁶ V I V²_{IV} C: I' IV V V⁷ I V⁴₃

C: 80

I V⁶₅ I

Transition (standing on the dominant)

C: 84

V⁴₃/vi G: VII V⁶_V D.P.V. V⁷ I

M.C. Secondary theme (Tonic)

G: B.143.

V I V I V

4 (120)

88

Passing \flat_4

G: $I^{\flat} V^{\flat}_2 I V^{\flat} I V^{\flat} V V^{\flat}_2 I^{\flat} V^{\flat}_4 I V^{\flat} I ii^{\flat} V^{\flat}$

G: $ii^{\flat} I^{\flat} ii^{\flat} vii^{\circ} V V I^{\flat} V^{\flat}_2 I^{\flat} V^{\flat} I V^{\flat} V$

G: $V^{\flat}_2 I^{\flat}_3 V^{\flat}_4 I V^{\flat} I ii^{\flat} V^{\flat}_2 I^{\flat} ii^{\flat} V^{\flat}_2 I ii^{\flat} V$

G: $I V^{\flat}_3 I$

G: $V^{\flat}_5 I V^{\flat}_5/IV CT^{\circ 7}$

G: $ii^{\flat} I^{\flat}_4 V^{\flat}_7 I IV^{\flat}_3 (V^{\flat})$

G: $I^{\flat} ii^{\flat} I^{\flat}_4 V IV^{\flat} (V^{\flat}) I ii^{\flat} I^{\flat}_4 V$

B.143.

116

closing *extended closing*

G: T.P. I $V^{\frac{4}{2}}$ I $V^{\frac{4}{2}}$ I $V^{\frac{4}{2}}$

119

G: I $V^{\frac{4}{2}}$ I $V^{\frac{4}{2}}$ I $V^{\frac{4}{2}}$ I V^7 I

PAC

Tempo di Menuetto.