

Clementi's "Progressive Sonatinas," Op. 36: *Sonata semplice* or Mediating Genre between Minuet and Sonata Design?

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Article abstract

In this article, I apply William E. Caplin's theoretical model of formal functions as the *modus operandi* to study variations to the sonatina genre. In particular, I use Clementi's op. 36 cycle of six "Progressive" sonatinas to illustrate some of the compositional options available along the evolutionary pathway between a single-themed minuet exposition and that of a mature sonata exposition. Despite the sonatina's relatively smaller dimension, the variety of loosening features and use of interthematic fusion reveal that the genre is a more captivating topic of study than may have been generally appreciated.

CLEMENTI'S "PROGRESSIVE SONATINAS," OP. 36: SONATA SEMPLICE OR MEDIATING GENRE BETWEEN MINUET AND SONATA DESIGN?

Edward Jurkowski

Sonatinas are often viewed as short, undemanding, or immature essays in sonata form. Although generally associated with such high classical composers as Beethoven, Clementi, Diabelli, Dussek, Heller, and Kuhlau, the genre endured well into the twentieth century, with important contributors including Bartók, Busoni, Kabalevsky, and Sibelius. The sonatina's original *raison d'être* was didactic and the continued presence of these works in Royal Conservatory piano volumes and beginner and intermediate piano competition classes demonstrates that the sonatina remains pertinent for today's student pianist. Given the prevalence and longevity of the genre, it is surprising that little scholarly attention has been directed toward the sonatina. For instance, Hepokoski and Darcy (2006) and Rosen (1988) have little to say about the genre, and Caplin (1998) is conspicuously silent on the topic.¹ This paucity of research is unfortunate, as the sonatina is more intricate than is generally recognized. For instance, its reduced dimension *de facto* requires that the sonata's various design components—its formal functions, to adopt Caplin's terminology—be compressed or modified in interesting ways. As I argue below, some of these alterations are generated by fusing together constituent formal functions of larger-scale sonata design.²

As an illustration of Caplin's conception of formal fusion, consider example 1, the opening theme of the minuet movement of Mozart's piano sonata K. 282. Initially, one may perceive mm. 1–12 as a slightly enlarged sentence. A conventional four-measure presentation phrase is generated by a two-measure basic idea (bi), which is repeated as a statement/response. An enlarged continuation phrase then leads to the cadential progression and a perfect authentic cadence (PAC) in m. 10, and a two-measure codetta rounds off the theme.³ Yet this PAC identifies something different about the theme—that since it concludes in m. 10 on the subordinate key of the dominant, and not the tonic, the expression of main theme function is notably weakened. We recognize in retrospect that an

¹ Although these pieces are not necessarily devoid of technical challenges, they tend to be viewed somewhat pejoratively as pieces to which the young pianist is exposed on the way to studying more "substantial" piano sonatas. This perception may have contributed to the general lack of interest scholars have shown in the genre.

² A summary discussion of Caplin's conception of formal function is found in Caplin, Hepokoski, and Webster (2009, 21–40).

³ The various intrathematic elements of the sentence are discussed in chapter 3 of Caplin (1998).

interesting phenomenon has occurred: the continuation phrase and the modulating transition are one. Using Caplin's terminology to describe this passage, we would say that the main theme has become loosened, not only by its cadentially confirmed modulation to the dominant in m. 10, but more crucially by the fact that transition and subordinate theme functions are fused together within the context of the opening theme. Throughout this study I employ Caplin's notion for such a synthesis, utilizing the term *interthematic formal fusion* (ITFF).⁴ In the Mozart example, for instance, the passage in mm. 5–10 is labelled a "transition/subordinate theme ITFF."

Example 1. Mozart, K. 282. mov. 2, mm. 1–12

It has long been recognized that sonata form design articulates the same formal functions as that of small ternary form (or, depending upon one's theoretical perspective, rounded binary)—an exposition, contrasting middle, and recapitulation.⁵ Given this relationship, it would be valuable to examine other tripartite-designed works whose dimensions intercede between the minuet and sonata, thus providing insight into some of the compositional strategies composers may have employed when transitioning between these two schemata.⁶ For instance, since they are often viewed as immature sonatas, it would be pertinent to study the sonatina and determine what mediating role variants to the genre may have played. Using this idea as a *modus operandi*, I will provide a descriptive study of the six sonatinas from Clementi's venerable op. 36

⁴ Discussion of interthematic formal fusion is found in chapters 11, 14, and 15 of Caplin (1998).

⁵ The literature on sonata form is too vast to cite here. Five representative studies include Caplin (1998), Hepokoski and Darcy (2006), Ratner (1980) and Rosen (1972, 1988). For a concise summary of the theoretical perspectives underlining small ternary and rounded binary designs, see Caplin (1998, 71–72).

⁶ Rosen (1988, 114) notes that a crucial difference between the minuet and sonata exposition is that, unlike the sonata exposition, there is no requirement that the minuet exposition modulate to a subordinate key (although many frequently do so), whereas it is fundamental to the design of the sonata exposition that such a modulation take place.

collection from 1797, subtitled “Progressive Sonatinas.” The subtitle refers to both the increasing breadth of the works within the series, and to the escalating keyboard technique required to effectively render a sequential performance of these pieces.⁷ Yet the value of these six pieces extends beyond the realm of pedagogical benefit for the performer, and the increasing formal complexity that corresponds with their chronological ordering makes them fascinating compositional studies in their own right. As we shall see, such a sequential ordering vividly illustrates positions along an evolutionary path from minuet exposition to a fully formed sonata design. The analyses that describe the stops along this route are predicated on Caplin’s (1998) theoretical model of formal functions. In order to restrict the scope of my study, I will examine only the first-movement expositions of the six sonatinas in Clementi’s op. 36.

Op. 36, No. 1

As a point of departure, let us examine the main theme from the exposition of op. 36, no. 1 (example 2). On first impression, it consists of a rather conventional eight-measure period: a four-measure antecedent phrase ending with a half cadence (HC) in m. 4, followed by a four-measure consequent phrase leading to a PAC in m. 8. Nevertheless, three features of the sonatina’s main theme make it quite unusual relative to that of the conventional sonata. First, although the opening portion unequivocally prolongs the home tonic, the latter segment modulates to the subordinate key of the dominant, an unusual feature for a sonata main theme. Said differently, the lack of a HC or PAC in m. 8 to tonally confirm the opening tonic prolongation significantly weakens main theme function. As the result of the modulation to the dominant, we recognize a second remarkable attribute: the consequent phrase of the main theme in mm. 5–8 also represents a fusion of transition and subordinate theme functions. In other words, the passage represents a transition/subordinate theme ITFF. Third, there is an elision in m. 8, where the final measure of the main theme (and, as we have just established, the transition) also represents the first measure of the subordinate theme. Put another way, the cadential goal of the main theme and transition fuses with the initiating function of the subordinate theme.

Caplin has commented upon the fusion of interthematic functions within the context of the opening A section of a minuet form (often a single tight-knit theme). He writes that “a main-theme function in a modulating A section always arises by virtue of initial tonic-stabilizing progressions of the home key ... Frequently, the modulation and the cadential confirmation occur in the same phrase, thus creating transition/subordinate-theme fusion” (Caplin 1998, 221). Nevertheless, there is an important distinction between a modulating A section of a minuet and the main theme of Clementi’s opening sonatina. Specifically, Caplin notes that interthematic fusion tends to be correlated with an expansion of theme length. That is, short and compact themes have a tendency

⁷ For a performance-oriented study of the sonatina, including aspects of Clementi’s op. 36, see Rhoden (1998).

Main Theme (Period)
(Antecedent Phrase)

Allegro

(Transition/Subordinate Theme ITFF)
(Consequent Phrase)

Subordinate Theme (Sentence)

(cont.)

(V:) I II⁶ C⁶ I V⁶ I V³ I⁶

II³ C⁸ I

Example 2. Clementi, Op. 36, no. 1, mm. 1–15

to be associated with the A section of a minuet that rests entirely in the home key. In Clementi's theme, however, a modulation takes place within the realm of a predictable eight-measure theme.

Apart from the PAC, the eight-measure subordinate theme (mm. 8–15) is a conventional sentence.⁸ The subordinate theme's other unconventional feature is that, as just noted, the initial measure of the presentation phrase elides with the final measure of the main theme. In fact, one could argue that the subordinate theme conforms more closely to a standard thematic model than the main theme does—a feature that Caplin (1998), Ratz (1973), and Schoenberg (1967) have argued is inconsistent with conventional sonata form design.

Op. 36, No. 2

The exposition of op. 36, no. 2 is shown in example 3. Here, the main theme is an eight-measure hybrid-4 design leading to the PAC in the subordinate key of the dominant in m. 8.⁹ As in the first sonatina, transition to the subordinate theme appears during the main theme's consequent phrase in mm. 5–8; the lack of an articulated home key HC or PAC in m. 8 further weakens main theme function. However, unlike the first sonatina, the initiating function of the subordinate theme is independent from the main theme, beginning in m. 9. Yet even with comparably weakened main themes, one can assert that main theme function is more unstable in the present sonatina, as a result of the cbi's lack of a typical internal weak cadence at m. 4.

⁸ Although the PAC is required to end a subordinate theme, it is far more conventional to end a sentence with a HC.

⁹ A hybrid-4 theme type is defined as an eight-measure theme that begins with a compound basic idea (cbi), defined as a four-measure phrase that conventionally contains a two-measure bi, followed by a two-measure ci, but lacking a cadence in m. 4, which is followed by a four-measure consequent phrase. Various categories of hybrid designs are discussed by Caplin (1998, chap. 5).

Main Theme (Hybrid 4) (Transition/Subordinate Theme ITFF)
(Consequent Phrase)

(cbi) ci

Allegretto bi

p

I V⁶ I (V:) II⁶

7 PAC f C⁴ 3

(Subordinate Theme repeated)

13 IIAC II⁶ V I II V

20 PAC I

Example 3. Clementi, Op. 36, no. 2, mm. 1–25

Relative to its counterpart in op. 36, no. 1, the subordinate theme in this sonatina, mm. 9–20, is looser in design, and this partially accounts for the greater length of its exposition. Specifically, the sentence-designed theme is only six measures in length: it begins conservatively enough with a pair of two-measure bi's, but the continuation phrase is shortened by two measures. Despite this slight abridgement, the overall theme extends to thirteen measures through the imperfect authentic cadence (IAC) in m. 14, engendering the repetition of the truncated continuation phrase and ultimately leading to the PAC in m. 20.

As implied above, sonatinas are often viewed as undeveloped versions of sonata form. Yet given the first two sonatinas' highly compressed dimensions (their expositions are a mere fifteen and twenty-two measures in length) as well as the interthematic fusion between the transition and subordinate theme functions, on a continuum of tripartite design, where the single-themed minuet stands at one end and the fully formed sonata at the other, examples 2 and 3 appear relatively close to the minuet side of the gamut. Put another way, instead of miniature sonatas, it might be more useful to conceptualize these two examples as sophisticated expositions from dual-themed minuets.

Op. 36, No. 3

Unlike the first two sonatinas, the twenty-six measure exposition of op. 36, no. 3 (example 4) contains no interthematic fusion. Interesting here is the absence of a transition, a point to which I will return below. In essence, the exposition

Main Theme (Hybrid 3)
(c**bi**)

Spiritoso

(cont.) — (repetition of cont. phrase)

Subordinate Theme (Hybrid 3)

“one more time”

(Coda)

Example 4. Clementi, Op. 36, no. 3, mm. 1–26

consists of two loosened themes. The hybrid-3 designed subordinate theme beginning in m. 13 is loosened in intriguing ways.¹⁰ Consider, for instance, the elision between the last measure of the contrasting idea (ci) and the first measure of the continuation function at measure 16. The continuation opens with a relatively straightforward prolongation of G major, leading to the cadential progression in mm. 18–20. However, the evaded cadence in mm. 20–21 forges a decorated repetition of the cadential function, this time leading to the PAC in m. 24.

Turning to the main theme, it too is enlarged. In fact, it is one of the two main themes from these six expositions to extend beyond the predictable eight measures. Although slightly loosened, the main theme function is more strongly expressed than the main themes of op. 36, no. 1 and 36, no. 2.

¹⁰ A conventional hybrid-3 theme contains a four-measure cbi followed by a four-measure continuation phrase.

Specifically, the hybrid-3 theme energetically projects a tonic prolongation in mm. 1–4; the conventional four-measure continuation phrase, however, ends with an IAC, prompting the additional four measures (by repeating the continuation phrase) and culminating with the PAC on the tonic in m. 12.

Measure 12 includes three quarter-note statements of the final harmony followed by a quarter-note rest. This conventional gesture is particularly interesting in this context: although there is no transition proper or transition/subordinate theme interthematic fusion (as found in the first two sonatinas), according to Heposki and Darcy, this rhetorical feature is one that often appears at the end of a transition.¹¹ Further, given the compressed dimensions of these sonatinas, it is tempting to speculate that the increased chromaticism appearing in m. 10—during the continuation phrase’s repetition—might signal a further loosening device commonly found in transitions.¹²

This exposition’s greater breadth (when compared with the first two expositions) allows Clementi the opportunity to employ different types of loose-knit main and subordinate theme functions. Nonetheless, the absence of any true transition function identifies an exposition that would be more appropriately positioned, like the first two sonatinas, toward the minuet side of the continuum of tripartite design. At the same time, the loosening feature toward the end of the main theme identified above, as well as the rhetorical indicator of the medial caesura in m. 12, place this exposition somewhat closer to sonata form on this continuum, compared with the first two sonatinas.

Op. 36, No. 4

Op. 36, no. 4 continues the trend we have witnessed toward increasingly larger expositions; its exposition, shown in example 5, is thirty measures in length. The main theme is a conventional hybrid-3 design, leading to the HC in m. 8—in fact, this is the first main theme we have seen thus far that is reasonably tight-knit. The transition begins with a repetition of the opening *cbi*. As Caplin notes, this is a common means to initiate a transition, suggesting a large-scale period design; i.e., mm. 1–8 might represent the antecedent phrase, and mm. 9–18 could account for a consequent phrase.¹³ However, the B-natural in m. 13 veers away from the tonic, generating a type of modulating transition that Hepokoski and Darcy, following Adolph Marx, have labelled a “dissolving consequent,” one that leads to the PAC on the dominant in m. 18.¹⁴ The intriguing feature of the transition, though, is its interthematic fusion with the subordinate theme. Specifically, the final measure of the PAC elides with the first measure of the presentation function of the subordinate theme, a nine-measure sentence that

¹¹ Discussion of transition endings, and the notion of “medial caesura” in particular, is found in Hepokoski and Darcy (2006, 23–50).

¹² I am indebted to William Caplin for suggesting this idea during the “Contemplating Caplin” session at the 2010 annual meeting of the Canadian University Music Society, University of Regina, 3–6 June 2010.

¹³ This type of transitional strategy is discussed in Caplin (1998, 127–29).

¹⁴ Dissolving consequent transitions are discussed in Hepokoski and Darcy (2006, 101–11). One of the earliest references to this term is found in Marx (1879, 259).

Main Theme (Hybrid 3)
(cbi) bi
Con spirito ci (cont.) →

6 Transition (Dissolving Consequent)
(Trans./Subordinate Theme ITFF)

12 Subordinate Theme (sentence; no medial function)
(V:) V⁷

17 Subordinate Theme (sentence; no medial function)
bi biz

22 Subordinate Theme (sentence; no medial function)
bi biz

28 (Codetta)

Example 5. Clementi, Op. 36, no. 4, mm. 1–30

is slightly loosened with the two-measure cadential six-four harmony in mm. 22–23.¹⁵ The elision is generated by the lack of a HC in m. 17, the result of the destabilizing dominant seventh harmony, instead of the required root position harmony, therefore delaying the ultimate cadential goal until m. 18, the first measure of the subordinate theme. As Caplin notes, “Many cases of transition/subordinate-theme fusion, though by no means all, seem on the surface to be transitions that close with a perfect authentic cadence in the subordinate key, instead of the more normal half cadence ... the authentic cadential confirmation of a subordinate key is an essential criterion of the subordinate theme’s function. It is thus theoretically more consistent to interpret such passages as cases of fusion than to risk confusing the fundamental characteristics of the interthematic formal functions” (Caplin 1998, 203).

The subordinate theme in this exposition is easily the loosest of the four we have thus far examined. It begins predictably enough—a pair of identical

¹⁵ In this interpretation, a PAC is implied in m. 18 but is undermined by the rest on beat one.

two-measure bi's identifies the presentation phrase of a sentence. However, the continuation phrase is significantly truncated: the medial continuation function is missing, and instead a conventional cadential progression completes the theme with a PAC. A slightly varied repetition of the theme appears in mm. 23–28; a three-measure codetta rounds off the exposition. The loose-knit quality of the subordinate theme, brought about from the absence of an intrathematic function in this sentence, engenders the character of an extended codetta or that of a second subordinate theme from a subordinate theme complex.¹⁶ The latter interpretation is attractive because of the relationship it creates with the final two sonatinas from this collection. As we shall see, one feature common to both sonatinas is a subordinate theme complex in which the second subordinate theme is missing one of its intrathematic functions.

An intriguing change in design has taken place in this fourth sonatina when compared to the first two sonatinas. Specifically, the highly circumscribed op. 36, no. 1 and 36, no. 2 contained weakened main theme function, resulting from the transition/subordinate theme interthematic formal fusion within the realm of the main theme. However, the more expansive op. 36, no. 4 contains a far stronger expression of main theme function, followed by transition/subordinate theme interthematic formal fusion during the transition portion of the exposition. Further, the presence of distinctive main, transition, and subordinate themes asserts an interpretation that this exposition would be positioned closer towards sonata design on our tripartite design continuum than the other three expositions we have studied thus far.

Op. 36, No. 5

At thirty-four measures, the exposition of op. 36, no. 5 (example 6) is more than twice as large as the first sonatina in the group. The main theme is similar in design to that of the prior sonatina: a somewhat tight-knit eight-measure hybrid-3 theme type that ends with a HC. Further, the transition is also a dissolving consequent type: it is eight measures long and veers away from the tonic area in m. 13 to forge the PAC on the dominant in m. 16. The strategy ending the transition is also similar to the prior sonatina: specifically, what should be a HC in m. 15 (with a stable root-position dominant) is disrupted with a dominant seventh harmony, extending the cadential progression to m. 16—the initial measure of the subordinate theme. Once again, the typical confirmation of the subdominant key with a PAC appearing at the conclusion of the transition function engenders an interthematic fusion between the transition and subordinate theme functions. Apart from its PAC, the subordinate theme itself (mm. 16–24) is a somewhat conventional sentence that is slightly enlarged with the two-measure cadential six-four harmony in mm. 22–23.

The most absorbing feature of this exposition is the passage in mm. 24–32. Specifically, the sequential material in mm. 24–27 strongly indicates continuation function; and cadential function appears in mm. 28–32. Put another way, these measures express a second subordinate theme function at play—in

¹⁶ I am indebted to James Wright for suggesting this notion about the subordinate theme.

Main Theme (Hybrid 3)

(cbi)

Presto

dolce
bi

(cont.) →

HC

Transition (Dissolving consequent)

bi ci

(Trans./Subordinate Theme ITFF)

Subordinate Theme no. 1 (Sentence)

bi

bi
cresc. *f*
(cont.) →

Subordinate Theme no. 2 (no initiating function)

p

(Subordinate Theme no. 2 repeated)

Codetta

cresc. *f*

Example 6. Clementi, Op. 36, no. 5, mm. 1–34.

particular, a loosened sentence, one that is missing its initiating, presentation function.¹⁷ If we extend this line of reasoning further, these two subordinate themes also display a hierarchy of loose-knit structure within the subordinate theme function; specifically, the first subordinate theme is more tight-knit in design than the second. This idea will be explored more fully below.

Op. 36, No. 6

The exposition of the final sonatina in this collection is the longest—thirty-eight measures (example 7). Together with the notable absence of interthematic fusion, this exposition exhibits three distinctive features compared with the other sonatinas from this collection. First is the sentence-like transition in mm. 12–22: it is an independent theme that, unlike the strategy we observed with the fourth and fifth sonatinas, is minimally related to the main theme (itself a hybrid-3 theme type, which is enlarged to twelve measures via a decorated repetition of the continuation phrase).¹⁸ Further, the modulating transition ends with a fully articulated medial caesura. A second distinguishing attribute of the exposition is the subordinate theme in mm. 23–30. Although it is of conventional eight-measure length, its relatively loose-knit construction is intriguing. For instance, the basic idea prolongs a first-inversion triad rather than the more conventional root-position triad.¹⁹ Further, the focus on the first-inversion dominant at the midpoint of the theme in m. 26, rather than root position (which would thus forge a HC), engenders a hybrid-4 theme type, rather than what is otherwise a conventional period theme type. A third noteworthy quality of the exposition is the passage from mm. 30–38. Analogous to the situation we observed in the fifth sonatina, the increased rhythmic acceleration and one-measure repetition of material—both characteristics indicative of continuation function—suggest a loosened sentence theme type, one missing presentation function.²⁰

As Caplin has argued, it is preferable to dispense with the label “closing theme” and instead consider any such theme as an additional subordinate theme.²¹ “The use of multiple subordinate themes is one of the principal means for the classical composer to enlarge the formal dimensions of the musical composition, for a greater number of loosening techniques can be employed there than would be possible in the confines of a single theme. Indeed, the way in which such techniques are dispersed among the various themes of the group is usually of significant analytical interest” (Caplin 1998, 121).

¹⁷ Omission of an initiating function as a loosening technique is discussed in Caplin (1998, 111). I thank William Caplin for bringing this idea to my attention.

¹⁸ While the right-hand rhythm in m. 1 is related to mm. 12 and 14, there is minimal melodic association between the main theme and transition.

¹⁹ The use of first inversion harmony as a loosening device within a sentence’s presentation function is discussed in Caplin (1998, 99).

²⁰ Perhaps as a means to compensate for the incomplete cadential progression within the more tightly designed hybrid-4 theme in mm. 23–30, the pre-dominant harmony in the cadential progression of this loosened sentence forges a more complete cadential progression.

²¹ For arguments supporting this theoretical perspective, see Caplin (1998, 122).

Main Theme (Hybrid 3)
(c**bi**)
bi

dolce

I³

(cont.)→

3

6

IAC

("one more time," decorated continuation phrase)

9

V⁶

Transition (Sentence-like)

bi

12

PAC

(cont.)→

16

(V: IV) V⁷→

Example 7. Clementi, Op. 36, no. 6, mm. 1–38 (1 of 2).

One attribute connecting these fifth and sixth expositions is the presence of an embryonic subordinate theme complex. Further, in both instances, there is a stark difference between the two themes in the degree of tight-knit design: specifically, the first subordinate theme is far more tight-knit than the second subordinate theme, a feature not uncommon in sonata designs from this period.²² What is particularly intriguing about these two sonatinas is that even within the confines of these compressed dimensions, Clementi is clearly attempting to expand subordinate theme function beyond that of a single theme, as employed in the first four sonatinas. In short, it is not just their greater

²² The propensity for the first subordinate theme in a subordinate theme group to be more tight-knit than the remaining subordinate themes is discussed in Caplin (1998, 121).

19

Subordinate Theme no. 1 (Hybrid 4)

22

(cbi)

Consequent Phrase

26

HC

Subordinate Theme no. 2 (no initiating function)

30

PAC

(Subordinate Theme no. 2 repeated)

33

36

Example 7. Clementi, Op. 36, no. 6, mm. 1–38 (2 of 2).

breadth and independent main, transition, and subordinate theme functions that position these latter two sonatinas closer to the sonata design side of the continuum of tripartite designs. It is also the expansive subordinate theme function that plays a role in our perception that these two expositions are no longer portions of “enlarged minuets” but, rather, “small-scale sonatas.”

In essence, Caplin conceptualizes form as a recursive system of formal functions. One advantage of this perspective is the opportunity for integrating functions to account for the infinite variety of pieces that do not neatly conform to textbook *Formenlehre* designs. For instance, one could combine the antecedent function from a period with the continuation function of a

sentence (Caplin refers to this as a hybrid-1 theme type). However, the mixing of functions can also appear at higher levels of a design. Consider, for instance, an eight-measure sentence-designed theme from the exposition of a minuet form. If the presentation phrase of a sentence strongly articulates the tonic and the theme cadences efficiently in the home key (more often than not, with a HC), its interthematic idiom is that of a main theme. However, if a modulation to the subordinate key takes place by the end of the theme and is confirmed by a PAC (recalling back, this was the design of the exposition in example 1), main theme function is weakened, and the functions of transition and subordinate theme are integrated—or to use Caplin’s terminology, interthematic fusion has occurred.

At the outset, we entertained the idea of using Caplin’s theoretical model of formal functions to identify modifications to the sonatina genre and locate such designs between the minuet and fully formed sonata allegro. As we have seen, the sequential ordering of the six pieces in Clementi’s op. 36 presents an attractive study that identifies some positions of the evolutionary pathway between a single-themed minuet exposition and that of a mature sonata exposition. For instance, the tadpole-like first two sonatinas both contain interthematic fusion between the transition and subordinate theme functions within their respective opening eight-measure main themes (and concomitantly, significantly weakening main theme function in both cases). The next gradual step is the third sonatina: there are two distinct themes, both confirmed by a PAC, and no transition (although the final measures of the main theme contain the rhetorical gesture often found at the end of transitions). Sonatinas four and five move us further along the evolutionary ladder. In both instances, main theme function is strongly asserted and a dissolving consequent transition is the context in which interthematic fusion between the transition and subordinate theme functions takes place. The sixth sonatina gives birth to a “small frog” of sorts; this the largest exposition of the six and all components of the exposition—the main theme, transition, subordinate theme functions—are fully formed. Not only do the fifth and sixth sonatinas flank that of a full sonata, when placed on this formal design continuum, but the two subordinate themes engender a subordinate theme complex, albeit within the compressed dimensions of these two expositions. The upshot is that the first three sonatinas appear at different locations, but are more closely focused towards a single theme minuet on our tripartite continuum. The latter three sonatinas, however, would be placed at different positions towards the sonata end of the spectrum.

Despite the relatively smaller dimensions of the sonatina, the variety of loosening features and use of interthematic fusion discussed in this paper reveal that the analytic study of the genre is a more captivating topic than may have been generally appreciated. My scope has restricted the analysis above to only the expositions of these six pieces. A broader consideration of these sonatinas would need to examine not only the underlying designs of their recapitulations, but also compare the functional relationships between analogous components from their expositions and recapitulations. Further analysis would also need to evaluate the motivic uniformity and functional efficiency

between the expositions and recapitulations overall,²³ and contrasting middle/development function. An obvious further step would be to carry out comparable studies on a broad number of other sonatinas, both by Clementi and other eighteenth-century composers, to identify further variants to the genre beyond the six examined in this study. Such a comprehensive survey of the multifarious designs would, of course, ascertain even further positions along the gradual path between the minuet and sonata. It would also provide a more inclusive understanding of the mediating compositional options available to a composer, thus affording further insights into the development of large-scale instrumental music from this period.

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²³ Caplin (1998, 85) discusses formal efficiency with respect to tight- and loose-knit organizations.

ABSTRACT

In this article, I apply William E. Caplin's theoretical model of formal functions as the *modus operandi* to study variations to the sonatina genre. In particular, I use Clementi's op. 36 cycle of six "Progressive" sonatinas to illustrate some of the compositional options available along the evolutionary pathway between a single-themed minuet exposition and that of a mature sonata exposition. Despite the sonatina's relatively smaller dimension, the variety of loosening features and use of interthematic fusion reveal that the genre is a more captivating topic of study than may have been generally appreciated.

RÉSUMÉ

Dans cet article, j'applique le modèle théorique des fonctions formelles (*formal functions*) de William E. Caplin à l'étude des variations de la sonatine. En particulier, j'utilise le cycle de six sonatines « progressives » de l'opus 36 de Clementi pour illustrer quelques-uns des types de composition possibles dans l'évolution entre l'exposition à thème unique d'un menuet et l'exposition d'une sonate mature. Malgré la dimension relativement restreinte de la sonatine, la diversité des caractéristiques informelles et le recours à la fusion interthématique révèlent un sujet d'étude plus captivant que l'on aurait pu le penser d'une manière générale.