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Form and Meaning in Wranitzky's and Dussek's Cyclic Finales

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Abstract

Classical sonata cycles often end with effervescent dance-like movements. From the eighteenth century into the nineteenth, composers developed a taste for more substantial finales of serious character and reconceived the arrangement of multi-movement works altogether. This article examines a small collection of finales written at the turn of the century by Paul Wranitzky and Jan Dussek that occupy a unique position in these transformations and integrate slow movement and fast finale into an inseparable unit. The last movements of Wranitzky's *String Quartets Op. 30 Nos. 2* and *5* and Dussek's *Piano Sonata Op. 39 No. 1* constitute an original type of finale defined by the following features. (1) The opening suggests that a slow movement is underway. (2) A shift to a fast tempo signals an *attacca* transition to the finale. (3) The slow section returns. (4) The fast tempo resumes and provides closure.

The formal design of these movements includes elements of rondo and/or sonata and require frequent re-evaluation on the part of the listener. These movements also display resemblances in their expressive content: the slow sections feature a solemn tone provided by the hymn topic. The return of the slow section – the most striking feature of these cyclic finales – will support two interpretations: a memory from the past and a musical analogy of Schiller's cyclical journey of human growth. The comparative study of these works provides a springboard to address the varying aesthetic demands of final movements, examine the evolution of the sonata cycle, and illustrate how form and expression interact in standardized ways.

Keywords

Paul Wranitzky; Jan Dussek; finale; *Formenlehre*; topic theory; cyclic form; sonata; hymn

This project started, as it often happens in research, with a serendipitous coincidence. My in-depth study of the hymn as a musical topic required assembling a substantial collection of hymn-like passages of instrumental music.[1] Having limited my investigation to the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and determined to expand my search beyond the music of canonical composers, I came upon the two themes by Paul Wranitzky and Jan Ladislav Dussek shown in Examples 1 and 2. The Adagio from Wranitzky's *String Quartet Op. 30 No. 2* (1794) and the Andantino of Dussek's *Piano Sonata Op. 39 No. 1* (1799) share multiple features, formal and expressive. Music analysis often treats these two dimensions separately, and I take this approach for practical reasons. Eventually, I will press on the limitations of this framework, in these works and more broadly.

Example 1 P. Wranitzky, *String Quartet Op. 30 No. 2* in C major, Adagio, mm. 1–8.

Example 2 J. Dussek, *Piano Sonata in G major, Op. 39 No. 1*, Andantino ma moderato e con espressione, mm. 1–16.

[1] Olga Sánchez-Kisielewska, "The Hymn as a Musical Topic in the Age of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven" (PhD diss., Northwestern University, 2018).

I consider these two examples as instances of the hymn topic. The string quartet and the piano imitate the textures and ranges of choral music – male choir for Wranitzky's; mixed for Dussek's. Simple melodies move mostly stepwise through chord tones. Major mode, slow tempo, and soft dynamics impart an overall sense of serenity. The steady pace of chord change resembles the style of congregational song. These wordless hymns also present noticeable differences. The sedate dactylic rhythms and clear segmentation in two-bar units of Wranitzky's theme are reminiscent of a pavane.[2] Eighteenth-century composers repurposed this ceremonial dance, using it alongside the hymn topic to accompany processions of priests in opera.[3] This amalgam of topics, a *trope* in Robert Hatten's terms, combines two highly compatible styles.[4] When it appears in instrumental music, this type of processional hymn arguably carries the associations with ritual and transcendence it acquired in the theater.[5] In Example 2, on the other hand, Dussek infuses the hymn style with the determined dotted rhythms of a slow march. Instead of stopping every two measures as Example 1, the music articulates broader motion and proceeds with a stronger sense of direction. The piano sonata features a different trope, one that brings together two styles with apparently disparate associations: the sacred and the military. In fact, hymn and march formed another stable combination in the musical culture of the time. I have dubbed this trope the "spirited hymn," and suggested that it held associations with French revolutionary music.[6] These two graceful themes, with their commonalities and differences, are not particularly remarkable by themselves. By the end of the eighteenth century, the hymn-like theme figured among the expressive palette of character types available to composers and familiar for listeners. What makes these themes truly striking, and what inspired me to study them together, is the role they play in the unusual multi-movement design of their respective works.

In Wranitzky's string quartet, the Adagio follows a first movement in sonata form and a lighter dance movement entitled "Il ballo Turchesco." Dussek's piano

2 For a comparison with the steps and music of a sixteenth-century pavane, see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B10z9b_PRXw&list=RDB10z9b_PRXw&start_radio=1.

3 Typical examples include the processions of priests from Gluck's *Alceste* and Mozart's *Idomeneo*. See Eric McKee, "The Topic of the Sacred Hymn in Beethoven's Instrumental Music," *College Music Symposium* 47 (2007): 23–52.

4 On tropes, see Robert S. Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven: Markedness, Correlation, and Interpretation* (Indiana University Press, 1994), 168–74 and passim. On the compatibility of topics, see Robert S. Hatten, "The Troping of Topics in Mozart's Instrumental Works," in *The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory*, ed. Danuta Mirka (Oxford University Press, 2014).

5 See, for example, the slow movements of Dussek's *Piano Sonata in D major Op. 31 No. 2* or his *Duet for Harp and Piano Op. 38*, both entitled *Adagio con espressione*.

6 Dussek employed this style in two pieces with the title *Invocation*, once in *The Sufferings of the Queen of France* and again in his last *Piano Sonata in F minor Op. 77*, see Sánchez-Kisielewska, "Hymn Topic," 116–17 and passim.

sonata opens with an Allegro in triple meter and then proceeds to the Andantino at hand. In both examples, tempo suggests the onset of a customary, slow movement – that is, except for being composed in the main key of each work.[7] Rather than a typical slow movement, these tranquil themes launch an unorthodox cyclical structure that blends the Adagio and Andantino with a fast finale, creating a single hybrid movement (slow-fast-slow-fast). At the seeming end of the presumed slow movements, a shift to a fast tempo suggests an *attacca* transition to the finale proper. These fast sections begin to unfold as a rondo and a sonata rondo respectively. With an unexpected turn of events, the slow movements return in lieu of a second couplet. After these dramatic interruptions, the finales resume and bring their respective works to a close.

The cyclical aspect and multi-tempo design of these movements deviates from typical practice but is not without precedent. Boccherini famously introduced cyclic principles in his chamber works. Haydn inserted a Presto in the Adagio finale of the *String Quartet Op. 54 No. 2* (1788) and a lengthy *Adagio e cantabile* in the finale of his *Symphony No. 67* (ca. 1778).[8] Robbins Landon considers this symphony a model for the finales of Mozart's *Piano Concertos K. 415* (1783) and *K. 482* (1785).[9] Mozart's rondo finales frequently introduce changes of meter and tempo, which M. S Cole classified into six categories.[10] The two types more relevant to the examples discussed here are the rondos with slow introduction, and a heterogeneous group dubbed "formal experiments." These works provide an important frame of reference, showing that a change of tempo and meter was an available option for the second couplet in a rondo. Yet none of them shares the specific structure of Wranitzky's and Dussek's cyclic finales.[11]

Both composers experimented with original configurations in their instrumental music. Dussek frequently omitted internal slow movements and favored piano sonatas with only two.[12] His last movements sometimes fuse characteristics of finale with those of a lyrical slow movement, creating a kind of hybrid (but non-cyclical) movement. One of his favorite alternatives consisted of ending a sonata with a pastoral Andantino in rondo form. Wranitzky wrote several slow

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[7] Wranitzky's Adagio bears the indication *Finale*. The title of the movement, while accessible for performers, would have been irrelevant for other listeners.

[8] Unlike the works discussed here, the Adagio cannot be mistaken for an internal slow movement.

[9] H. C. Robbins Landon, "The Concertos: Their Musical Origin and Development," in *The Mozart Companion* (Norton, 1969), 271.

[10] These works have been examined in M. S. Cole, "Mozart's Rondo Finales with Changes of Meter and Tempo," *Studia Musicologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 16 (1764): 22–53.

[11] It is also worth noting that the slow sections of the multi-tempo finales by Haydn and Mozart cannot be confused with a slow movement, because these works include independent slow movements.

[12] Only 12 of the 32 sonatas have an internal slow movement, and 18 have only two movements.

introductions for the finales of his symphonies. His *String Quartet Op. 23 No. 4* (1793) includes cyclical design with an Adagio-Menuetto-Adagio as a central movement. In the finales of the *String Quartets Op. 30 No. 5* and *Op. 15 No. 3*, he deployed the same slow-fast-slow-fast structure I describe above (and I will incorporate them into my discussion).[13] Wranitzky's and Dussek's unusual yet similar compositional choices demand ad hoc formal interpretations and invite speculation about intent and meaning.

What are the possible motivations for composing this idiosyncratic type of finale? How do these movements fit in their historical context? What are we, listeners, to make of this music as it unfolds? This article will provide a close reading of these movements addressing issues of form, perception, aesthetics, and hermeneutics. I begin presenting their formal layouts and discussing how listeners may make understand tempo changes that do not fit into any conventional type. The formal analysis will demand the kind of dynamic, processual approach proposed by Janet Schmalfeldt, where "*the formal function initially suggested by a musical idea, phrase or section invites retrospective reinterpretation within the larger formal context*."[14] After analyzing each of these works, I offer some reflections about the "mini" corpus as a whole. I will situate the works in their aesthetic context, considering the evolving, rhetorical roles of the finale. To conclude, I take an interpretive leap and provide two metaphorical reading of these movements: one as remembrance and another as a musical analogy of Friedrich Schiller's journey of human growth. My main goals are to shine a light on these intriguing pieces, and to use them as a case study to probe assumptions about the relationship between musical structure and expression.

Form in the Finales of Wranitzky's String Quartets Op. 30 Nos. 2 and 5

The Largo of Wranitzky's *String Quartet Op. 30 No. 5* shares the lyric quality and relaxed character of my previous examples. Accents on second beats of triple meter provide hints of a sarabande topic. Although the melody lacks hymnic associations, the lower parts tend to move together in quasi-chorale textures. Crucially, *Op. 30 No. 5* presents another instance of the two-tempo finale described above, tying the three works together. Wranitzky's deployment of such an unusual form twice in the same set seems hardly a coincidence. Rather, it suggests what Elaine Sisman calls "tertiary rhetoric," a compositional strategy in which works that are grouped together spark intertextual connections for performers and

[13] I thank Daniel Bernhardsson for bringing *Op. 15 No. 3* to my attention.

[14] Janet Schmalfeldt, *In the Process of Becoming: Analytical And Philosophical Perspectives on Form in Early Nineteenth-Century Music* (Oxford University Press, 2011), 9, italics in original.

listeners alike.[15] Let us know examine in tandem how the composer integrates the slow movements into the finales and presents their cyclical returns. For my analysis, I adapt the perspective of a hypothetical listener familiar with the style of late-eighteenth-century music, as they hear the music in the moment. Tables 1 and 2 presents a synoptic view of the entire finales of *Op. 30 Nos. 2* and *5*.

Table 1 P. Wranitzky, *Op. 30, No. 2*, overview of formal structure.

	TEMPO	METER	KEY	FORM	FORMAL EXPECTATION/AMBIGUITY
First movement	Moderato	2/2	C		
Second movement	Il ballo Turchesco	2/4	G		
Finale	Adagio (32. mm)	2/4	C major	AABA	Slow movement
	Allegro non troppo (128 mm.)	6/8	C major	Rondo A B1B2 A ...	
	Adagio (40 mm.)		C major	ABA RT (in lieu of episode)	Episode ?!
	Allegro (40 mm.)	6/8	C major	A	

Table 2 P. Wranitzky, *Op. 30 No. 5*, overview of formal structure.

	TEMPO	METER	KEY	FORM	FORMAL EXPECTATION/AMBIGUITY
First movement	Allegro brillante	4/4	A		
Second movement	Allegretto	2/4	D		
Finale	Largo (32 mm.)	3/4	A major	AABA	Slow movement
	Allegro (75 mm.)	3/4	A major	Exposition	
	Largo (24 mm.)	3/4	A major	ABA (in lieu of development)	?!
	Allegro (75 mm.)	6/8	A major	Recapitulation	

[15] Elaine Sisman, "Rhetorical Truth in Haydn's Chamber Music: Genre, Tertiary Rhetoric, and the Opus 76 Quartets," in *Haydn and the Performance of Rhetoric*, ed. Tom Beghin and Sander M. Goldberg (University of Chicago Press, 2007).

Both the Adagio of *Op. 30 No. 2* and the Largo of *Op. 30 No. 5* proceed in prototypical rounded binary form. Tonally and formally self-contained, these simple themes are too short for a "proper" slow movement and might prompt a listener to expect that a set of variations will follow.[16] Instead, sudden shifts to a fast tempo force one to quickly discard such expectations. At the onset of the ensuing Allegros, listeners might find themselves accepting that what they just heard was a complete internal slow movement after all, albeit an aphoristic one. One could also understand these passages as slow introductions, which would explain why the Adagio and the Largo are in the main key of each quartet. However, a strong expectation for a slow movement would override key choices, which bear limited significance for listeners without perfect pitch. For performers, the title of the movement – preceding Adagio and Largo with the indication Finale – makes the notion of a slow introduction more plausible. Before 1800, slow introductions occurred in symphonies rather than chamber music and (according to Hepokoski and Darcy) they "almost never" preceded finales.[17] This categorical statement does not apply to Wranitzky's output: his *String Quartets Op. 9 Nos. 1* and *4* (1791) end with slow-fast finales. As in *Op. 50 Nos. 2* and *5*, the slow sections are tonally stable and formally "tight-knit," without the sense of anticipation and hesitancy commonly associated with slow introductions.[18] Performers who encounter these works for the first time might face a cognitive dissonance: the music sounds like the standard slow movement that one might expect at this point of the quartets, but the titles say otherwise.

The onset of the following fast themes shakes off any previous inconsistencies between musical content and formal location. In both works, Wranitzky chooses styles typical of the classical fast finale and follows conventional formal scripts. In the *Allegro non troppo* from *Op. 30 No. 2*, a *chasse* in rounded binary form functions as the refrain of a five-part rondo. The Allegro from *Op. 30 No. 5* is composed in sonata form and begins with a *Deutscher* as main theme. For the first three sections of the rondo and the exposition of the sonata, the two pieces behave normatively. By the time one expects a second episode or a sonata development

16 For comparison, the Adagio Lento of *Op. 30 No. 1* lasts 130 measures. Simple styles, such as the hymn topic, provide a fitting point of departure for subsequent ornamentation and change. In Wranitzky's *Op. 30*, the slow movement of quartet *No. 4* is a theme with four variations. Joseph Haydn famously used the *Kaiserhymne* as a theme and variations in the quartet *Op. 76 No. 3*.

17 See James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory* (Oxford University Press, 2006), 296, which mentions Dittersdorf's and Boccherini's slow introductions for symphonic finales. Wranitzky wrote slow introductions to the *Symphonies Op. 31* and *Op. 33 No. 2*. Another relevant counterexample occurs the music of Anton Wranitzky. In his *String Quintet Op. 8 No. 3 in E-flat major*, the labelled *Finale* begins with an Adagio that introduces an Allegretto. The music of the Adagio is similar in style to the slow movements discussed here, tonally stable and hymnic.

18 Unlike the works discussed here, the slow sections of the *Op. 9* finales do not return.

respectively, memories of the slow section have faded into the background. It is at this time when the composer surprises listeners with a dramatic twist, bringing back the slow themes. The Adagio of *No. 2* returns with modifications: Wranitzky expands the phrase introducing 18 measures of new material before the cadence. This music includes chromaticism and increases rhythmic activity, and I will comment on its possible effect and meaning below. The Largo of *No. 5*, on the other hand, remains unaltered. When listening to each of these works, the returns of the slow themes prompt us to reinterpret the form of the movements. Listeners now recognize that slow movement and finale have been integrated into an inseparable unit. Only at this point can performers reconcile the apparent contradiction inherent in the title.

After the second iteration of the slow themes, both Allegros resume to wrap things up in a completely conventional manner. The rondo of *Op. 30 No. 2* concludes with the expected repetition of the first refrain followed by a brief codetta. The sonata recapitulation of *Op. 30 No. 5* contains minimal modifications besides the required tonal adjustment. Yet these normative ends leave behind all-but predictable structures. Cyclic form would become common currency for a younger generation of composers. Benedict Taylor finds that "the idea of cyclic form is […] essentially a Romantic one."[19] Hugh Macdonald credits Beethoven, Schubert, and Berlioz for laying "the foundations on which Mendelssohn, Schumann, Liszt, and Franck elevated cyclic principles to great importance."[20] James Webster sought to reframe this common view and credited Haydn for incorporating "cyclic integration" in his music.[21] The early examples from Wranitzky denote an original approach to the sonata cycle and provide a missing link in the evolution of cyclic form.

Dussek, Piano Sonata Op. 39 No. 1

While the two quartets discussed in the previous section are explicitly linked together in the output of a single composer, their connection with Dussek's *Piano Sonata Op. 39 No.1* is less obvious. To my knowledge, there is no conclusive evidence of Dussek's familiarity with Wranitzky's *String Quartets Op. 30*. Yet the

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19 Benedict Taylor, *Mendelssohn, Time, and Memory: The Romantic Conception of Cyclic Form* (Cambridge University Press, 2011), 17.

20 Hugh Macdonald, "Cyclic Form," *Grove Music Online*, 2001, accessed September 9, 2025, https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.proxy.uchicago.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000007001.

21 James Webster, *Haydn's 'Farewell' Symphony and the Idea of Classical Style: Through Composition and Cyclic Integration in his Instrumental Music* (Cambridge University Press, 2004). See also Bryan Jeffrey Proksch, "Cyclic Integration in the Instrumental Music of Haydn and Mozart" (PhD diss. University of North Carolina at Chappel Hill, 2006).

close parallelism between such exceptional works seems hardly a coincidence. In any case, Dussek's hybrid finale raises similar issues regarding the perception of musical form and, as I will address in due course, expression. A bird's eye view of the large-scale construction – another hybrid two-tempo movement – reveals the striking resemblances with the previously analyzed works. Here, the fast finale takes the form of a sonata rondo. In lieu of a development or a new theme functioning as second refrain, what first appeared to be an independent slow movement returns wholesale. The location of the insertion mirrors Wranitzky's strategies: the slow movement returns to function as an interior theme in a larger formal structure. Dussek's design suggests that he might have composed the *Piano Sonata Op. 39 No. 1* in dialogue with the *String Quartets Op. 30 Nos. 2* and *5*. Wranitzky had already explored the possibilities of rondo and sonata form to accommodate the return of a slow movement; Dussek accomplishes the same task but takes it a step further with a sonata rondo. Table 3 provides an overview of the work.

Table 3 J. Dussek, *Piano Sonata in G major Op. 39 No. 1*, formal overview.

	TEMPO	METER	KEY	FORM
1st mov.	Allegro	3/4	G major	Sonata
Finale	Andantino (39mm.)	2/4	G major	ABA
	Allegro (73 mm.)	6/8	G minorr	**Sonata-rondo exposition**
	Andantino (41mm.)	2/4	G major	ABA **(in lieu of development)**
	Allegro (74 mm.)	6/8	G minor–major	**Sonata recapitulation**

In the sonata *Op. 39 No. 1*, it is even easier to understand the slow section as an independent movement (that is, before its eventual return) than in the cyclic finales from *Op. 30*. The *Andantino ma moderato e con espressione* is, at 39 measures, slightly longer than Wranitzky's slow themes.[22] Its internal structure, a small ternary form, resembles the slow themes discussed above, although without the repeat signs. A significant difference is that, instead of a repeated 8-bar phrase, the A section of the Andantino is a compound, 16-bar period, which gives the theme a significantly more expansive quality. Whereas Wranitzky's slow themes cadence in only one secondary key, Dussek's tonal trajectory covers more ground

[22] The Andantino is also comparable in length with the independent slow movement of Dussek's *Op. 39 No. 1*, a 46-bar *Andantino quasi Larghetto*.

with cadences in the dominant and the submediant. Finally, and importantly for performers, Dussek did not mark the slow theme with the title *Finale*.

The final cadence of the Andantino elides with the beginning of an *Allegro non troppo* in 6/8 (Example 3). In the quartets *Op. 30*, the shift to a fast tempo brought about some temporary formal clarity (the "real" finale now begins). In Wranitzky's cyclic finales, the onset of the fast sections sounds like a true beginning – thus deceivingly implying that the slow section has ended. In Dussek's sonata, this moment creates a new puzzle. Here, the opening measures in 6/8 sound rather *in medias res*, almost as a continuation of the preceding Andantino than a proper beginning. The melodic material of the new fast theme in G minor, with insisting repeated motion from leading tone to tonic, suggests premature closing function. The clear-cut structure and rustic character of a typical rondo theme are missing. More importantly, the sonata is in G major, but the Allegro is in the parallel minor instead. (The restless rhythmic activity stops only at a pastoral, secondary theme in B-flat major.) While minor mode sonatas in the eighteenth century sometimes end in the major mode, a modal shift in the opposite direction – a G minor finale for a G major work – is less common. Another string quartet by Wranitzky, one that I cannot discuss in detail here, offered a kind of model for Dussek's formal and tonal design. Wranitzky's *Op. 15 No. 3* in B-flat major also ends with a slow-fast-slow-fast hybrid. The slow section is the longest of all the examples discussed, making it potentially sound as an independent slow movement in the "wrong," main key. The fast section begins with a contredanse melody in G minor that sounds like a typical rondo refrain. This Allegretto provides the form and character expected of a finale, but the tonal choice is again "wrong" because the fast finale should be in B-flat major instead.[23]

Example 3 J. Dussek, *Piano Sonata Op. 39 No. 1*, Allegro ma non troppo, mm. 1–6.

[23] The form can be described as ABCAC, with A being the "fake" slow movement in B-flat, B a "fake" rondo refrain in G minor.

Dussek's commitment to cyclic form in *Op. 39 No. 1* reaches beyond the hybrid finale. Elements from the first movement (an Allegro in 3/4) return in the Andantino and the *Allegro ma non troppo*, with echoes that encompass the musical surface and the deeper tonal structure. The most obvious (and arguably most relevant for listeners) connection between the first and last movements is an arpeggiated D major chord in sixteenth notes (measure 164 of the Allegro; measure 112 of the *Allegro ma non troppo*). In the first movement, the arpeggio introduces an abrupt change of texture that arrests the motion of the frantic transition and prepared the arrival of the secondary theme with a half cadence. The expected secondary theme, however, fails to arrive and the cadence must be understood as what Hepokoski and Darcy call a *medial caesura declined*.[24] Instead, the music gets caught in the pseudo-improvisatory flourishes of fantasia style and diverges into B-flat major before a second transition leads to another half cadence, this time in D major and introducing the true secondary theme. In the finale, the same series of arpeggios (mm. 103–111) interrupts the refrain and prepare the return of a slow theme. An attentive listener would realize that the migrating passage sets the stage for formal and expressive milestones.

Expression and Meaning

The works analyzed above deviate significantly from common practice, yet they are strikingly similar to one another. Besides their characteristic slow-fast-slow-fast tempos, these finales display similarities in topical content. Robert Hatten coined the concept of an *expressive genre* as a "category of musical works based on their implementation of a change-of-state schema […] or their organization of expressive states."[25] The subgenre discussed here constitutes a recognizable type that combines the qualities of expressive genres with the organizing principles of musical form. It is plausible – even likely – that Wranitzki's quartets influenced Dussek's sonata. More importantly, I take the parallels between their creative approaches as indicators of similar preoccupations and motivations. First, these works denote a shared concern with cyclic principles. As I mentioned at the beginning of the essay, the eighteenth-century history of cyclic form remains to be fully understood. Second, Wranitzky's and Dussek's hybrid cyclic movements explore and push the boundaries of the rhetoric roles of the finale. With these formal experiments, composers seem to ask themselves and their audiences what finales *can* and *should* do. The typical classical finale, light in character and formally uncomplicated, functions mainly as "entertainment music."[26] Michael

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[24] Hepokoski and Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory*, 45–47.
[25] Hatten, *Musical Meaning*, 290.
[26] Leonard Ratner, *Classic Music: Expression, Form, and Style* (Schirmer, 1980), 322.

Talbot has named this category the "relaxant finale," a way of concluding a multimovement cycle by releasing (rather than creating) tension and demanding "a lower level of concentration on the listener's part."[27] From the eighteenth century into the nineteenth, composers developed a taste for more substantial finales of serious character and reconceived the arrangement of multi-movement works altogether. The small collection of cyclic finales by Wranitzky and Dussek occupies a unique position in these transformations.

The fast sections of these finales exhibit qualities associated with lightness: short meters, simple textures, quadratic phrase structures, a preference for repetition over thematic development, and "popular-sounding" themes.[28] The returns of the slow themes provide precisely repetition instead of developmental material, thus arguably contributing to the "relaxant" feel. Yet they also push in the opposite direction. The unexpected thematic repetitions demand close attention and active engagement from listeners. The serious character of the slow themes, colored by the gravitas of the hymn topic, contradicts the levity expected of a relaxant finale. At some level, these hybrid finales look forward to the nineteenth-century and anticipate different type of finale that Talbot dubs "valedictory:" slow, soft, introverted, and with varied hermeneutic connotations including "sleep, death, or the unknown."[29] These movements also share features with the remaining type of finale identified by Talbot: the "summative" finale, a "weighty" type with unconventional form that sums up the entire cycle. The hybrid movements by Wranitzky and Dussek, with their fusion of tempos, formal structures, and expressive effects, provide at once multiple ways to experience the sense of an ending.

The defining moment of the cyclic finales, and a key to their potential signification, is the return of the slow themes. Musical repetition, in the words of Elisabeth Margullis, "makes music knowable in the way of something out of time."[30] It changes our perspective and invites a different kind of temporal orientation. This essay concludes with a discussion of the possible meanings that this musical repetition may elicit from listeners. I offer some general reflections and suggest more specific interpretations that resonate with my own hearing of these pieces. It is only fitting to proceed in cyclical fashion. Let us go back to the beginning and revisit the hymnic themes from Examples 1 and 2. Nothing in the music indicates that these slow themes will eventually return. As discussed above,

[27] Michael Talbot, *The Finale in Western Instrumental Music* (Oxford University Press, 2001), 50.

[28] Ibid., 8 and 68. The "relaxant" type relates to the happy ending of opera and oratorio.

[29] Ibid. 50 and 106–26. Except for Haydn's *Farewell* Symphony and the *String Quartet Op. 54 No. 2*, Talbot presents the valedictory finale as a phenomenon typical of the late nineteenth century.

[30] Elisabeth Hellmuth Margulis, *On Repeat: How Music Plays the Mind* (Oxford University Press, 2013), 7.

their repetition in the middle of the Allegros requires formal reinterpretation and complicates the perception of otherwise familiar forms. These re-apparitions also affect the expressive potential of the themes. When heard for the first time, they sound gentle, calm, voice-like.[31] As the same music interrupts the fast sections, it takes on new meanings. The themes shed off their unassuming simplicity to reveal themselves as significant turning points, musical epiphanies that suddenly bring new understanding. The musical context activates new expressive attributes: after the agitated allegros, the slow passages acquire expressive depth as moments of regained serenity. The hymns, originally conveying a quiet solemnity, project transcendence and almost spirituality.

In Dussek's sonata in particular, the minor mode and stormy nature of the Allegro followed by the returning Andantino present a conventionalized combination of expressive states. Just as musical topics form an expressive "thesaurus" (in the words of Leonard Ratner) for composers, formulaic constructions such as the topical sequence *tempesta-to-hymn* provide an expressive phrasicon of classical music.[32] Matthew Riley describes the transition from tempesta into hymn as "a poetic representation of the achievement of a state of serenity following a period of hardship."[33] He identifies this process in pastoral symphonies (including several by Paul Wranitzky) and finds it evocative of the "sun coming out after the storm."[34]

The unexpected, somewhat unmotivated returns of the slow themes fracture the musical surface. Adorno theorized musical discontinuities (albeit of a different kind) through the concept of *Durchbruch*, an eruption of subjectivity.[35] James Hepokoski adapted the term to his theory of sonata form, defining "breakthrough" as

> abandoning or profoundly correcting the originally proposed sonata […] through the inbreaking of an emphatic, unforeseen idea at some post-expositional point, usually during the space customarily given over to development.[36]

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[31] Eric McKee refers to these qualities as "level 1" expressive attributes of the hymn topic in "The Sacred Hymn in Beethoven's Instrumental Music," *College Music Symposium* 47 (2007): 23–52, at p. 27.

[32] Ratner, *Classic Music*, 9. On hymn-to-tempesta, see Sánchez-Kisielewska, "The Hymn as a Musical Topic," 213–217.

[33] Matthew Riley, *The Viennese Minor-Key Symphony in the Age of Haydn and Mozart* (Oxford University Press, 2014), 224.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Theodor W. Adorno. *Mahler: Eine musikalische Physiognomik* (Suhrkamp, 1960), 60–66.

[36] James Hepokoski, "Fiery-Pulsed Libertine or Domestic Hero? Strauss's *Don Juan* Reinvestigated," in *Richard Strauss: New Perspectives on the Composer and His Work*, ed. Bryan Gilliam (Duke University Press, 1992), 149.

Adorno coined the concept of *Durchbruch* to analyze the music of Mahler and Michael Spitzer applied it profusely to late Beethoven. Hepokoski presents it as a characteristic *fin-de-siècle* strategy.[37] Yet his description aligns seamlessly with the sonata-form examples analyzed here. The formal disruptions of Wranitzky's *Op. 30 No. 5* and Dussek's *Op. 39 No. 1* create a specific type of breakthrough *avant la lettre*, but the concept does not address the cyclical nature of the interruption.

Cyclic and circular forms bring attention to time and memory – Taylor explored these themes in Mendelssohn's music, with overarching metaphors such as "returning home," "in search of lost time," or "overcoming the past."[38] An analytical category created for a later repertoire but well suited to describe the experience and signification of cyclic finales is Joan Grimalt's concept of the Retrospect. Grimalt considers the Retrospect a narrative archetype or expressive genre central to instrumental music of the nineteenth-century and describes it as a "back-and-forth trip from a dysphoric present to an irretrievable past."[39] In Dussek's *Op. 39 No. 1* and Wranitzky's *Op. 15 No. 3*, the minor mode and wrong key of the fast sections make the "present" (fast section) dysphoric. The memories of the "past" (slow section) may evoke a nostalgic idyll in turn. In Wranitzky's quartets *Op. 30*, on the other hand, the "present" (represented by the fast themes in the major mode) sound rather euphoric. The returns of the slow themes give the impression of a remembrance, but not necessarily an escape from an undesirable state. The potential of music to suggest the act of remembering is most apparent in the modified return of the Adagio of *Op. 30 No. 2*. Instead of a literal repeat, Wranitzky extended the theme to incorporate embellishments and hesitant chromaticism, abandoning chorale textures to highlight the protagonism of the first violin. According to Grimalt, these features contribute to a "spontaneous tone of discourse, suggesting an improvising subject," typical of the retrospect.

My final, metaphoric interpretation refrains from importing concepts of romantic aesthetics and remains rooted in the intellectual context of the late eighteenth century. The cyclical finales of Wranitzky and Dussek present structural similarities to Friedrich Schiller's ideas on aesthetics and the process of human growth. Moral progression and the understanding human life as an intellectual journey occupied a central role in German Enlightenment and Weimar

37 Michael Spitzer, *Music as Philosophy: Adorno and Beethoven's Late Style* (Indiana University Press, 2006).

38 Taylor, *Mendelssohn*. The phrases give title to the central chapters of the book.

39 Joan Grimalt, "Brahms Intermezzi as (Hidden) Narrative Cycles," in *Nineteenth-Century Program Music: Creation, Negotiations, Reception*, ed. Jonathan Kregor (*Speculum Musicae*, 2018), 77–92, 86.

Classicism.[40] In the *Letters on the Aesthetical Education of Man* (1795) Schiller describes this process as starting in an initial state of development dominated by "sensuous instincts." This impulse "arouses and develops the potentialities of mankind," but it also "fetters the upward driving spirit with indestructible bonds to the world of sense."[41] As rational faculties grow, an opposing "formal" impulse develops. Re-establishing "the unity of human nature" requires tempering and reconciling the two drives. The interaction of two opposing impulses gives rise to the Beautiful, a state of equilibrium "which can never be wholly attained." The experience of Beauty, Schiller writes, "will always be twofold."[42]

The hybrid finales present listeners with an opposition between two contrasting states, made overly explicit through different tempo and meter. The slow sections suit well the tranquility and unadventurous nature of the original state. The fast sections take over and seem determined to move on. We can hear them as a musical analogy of the formal impulse, which brings the "highest expansion of being" – expansion of register, dynamics, magnitude, and activity. The return of the slow themes, a compositional choice that conspicuously departs from stylistic conventions, reveals that the previous state never disappears and cannot be abandoned. The formal impulse "makes all barriers disappear" but only the combination of both drives leads to the "greatness fullness of existence."[43] Under this metaphor, the simple slow movements stand as an original state of innocence or Arcadia. Through aesthetic and moral education, innocence is lost. The process unfolds as an upwardly spiraling cycle, where the individual comes full circle to achieve a higher state of freedom or Elysium. This liberal analogy between music and philosophy requires quite an interpretive leap. I find such a leap compelling, and especially rewarding to understand Dussek's *Op. 39 No. 1* and Wranitzky *Op. 15 No. 3*. In these works, the Allegros started in the wrong key – the parallel minor and the submediant respectively. After the return of the slow themes, the music gets back into its proper tonal track. While the Retrospect emphasizes the sense of loss, Schiller's moral and aesthetic growth provides a better suited umbrella for the positive turns to the major mode.

At the turn of the century, the classical *lieto fine*, with its origins in opera buffa, no longer provided a satisfying conclusion for the sonata cycle. Composers explored a variety of alternatives to endow finales with more gravity and to shift

[40] For an application to these ideas to music, see John B. Fowles, "From Arcadia to Elysium in the *Magic Flute* and Weimar Classicism: The Plan of Salvation and Eighteenth-Century Views of Moral Progression," *BYU Studies Quarterly* 43, no. 3 (2004): 1–20.

[41] Friedrich Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, trans. Reginald Snell (Yale University Press, 1954), especially Letters XII.

[42] Ibid., Letter XVI.

[43] Ibid., Letter XIII.

the expressive weight of multi-movement works towards the end. The hybrid, cyclic finales by Wranitzky and Dussek participate in these stylistic and aesthetic developments but have not received much analytical attention. Although they main remain somewhat isolated experiments, these innovative works anticipate certain nineteenth-century trends – such as Talbot's "valedictory" and "summative" finales, or more specifically chorale finales. Attending to the connections between these pieces illuminates dark corners on the evolution of musical style and highlights the inseparability of musical form and expression.

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