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The Development of the Modern Guitar Sonata

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Abstract

This article explores the directions of development of the guitar sonata after the year 1950. The development of any given form is a highly dynamic process with each period bringing a wide variety of, frequently contradictory, points of view. In this context, the author performed a formal analysis of four guitar sonatas representative of the period in question: *Sonata in A major* Op. 17 by F. Werthmüller, *Sonata* Op. 47 by A. Ginastera, *The Blue Guitar* by M. Tippett and *Royal Winter Music* by H.W. Henze. The criterion for selecting the works was to allow a thorough overview of the main trends and views on the sonata cycle form present in guitar music of the second half of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century. During the research, an image of the sonata as a cycle emerged which presents the contemporary composers with tools that allow them to pursue their artistic vision while maintaining certain immutable features of the form in question. This article attempts to define this immutable identity of the sonata.

Keywords: Guitar sonata, form evolution, guitar music after 1950, Franz Werthmüller, Alberto Ginastera, Michael Tippett, Hans Werner Henze.

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The purpose of this article is to provide an overview of the development of the guitar sonata after the year 1950. It is a very dynamic period in guitar music, rich in works that refer to the past in a mature and innovative way. A formal analysis of the selected sonatas representative of the period in question allows to make observations and formulate conclusions concerning the significance of the sonata cycle in contemporary guitar music.

1. Sonata – A Notion That Eludes Definition

The origins of the word *sonata* go back as far as the 16th century. It comes from the Italian *sonare* (to sound) and initially referred to all instrumental music¹. Since then, the history of formation of the sonata's characteristics has been filled with diverse ideas, structures, consensuses and distinct deviations from standards. One of the most important moments in this process took place in the 17th century and divided the sonata into two types, *da chiesa* and *da camera*, with different movement orders. They were then combined by Arcangelo Corelli through a more and more frequent use of the slow-fast-slow-fast movement order². Corelli himself, however, continued to search for innovative formal solutions related to the number of parts as well as their character. At a similar time, Johann Kuhnau published his *Biblical Sonatas* – a set of six programmatic works where the individual movements are arranged primarily based on literary narrative³. The three-movement arrangement brought from the Italian *sinfonia* into organ sonatas by J.S. Bach led the evolution of the genre to another notable point – the works of the composers of the First Viennese School. Their achievements came during a period which was very broad both temporally and stylistically. It is, however, possible to identify features which connect those three great composers: thematic contrast, motivic development, and the progression of music towards extreme expressiveness⁴.

According to Jerzy Habela, during the Romantic period, and especially in its later composers, the classical form of the sonata underwent an evolutionary process of decay⁵. However, it is not easy to agree with such a definitive statement. The Romantic sonata is a continuation of Beethoven's ideas and is consistent with the aesthetics of Romanticism. As each of the periods preceding it, the 19th century was filled with diverse approaches towards the sonata cycle.

¹ A. Daszkiewicz, *Idea barokowej sonaty na skrzypce solo w I połowie XX wieku*, (doctoral thesis under the direction of W. Kwaśnego), Akademia Muzyczna w Krakowie, Kraków 2022, p. 10.

² Ibidem, pp. 14-15.

³ J. Kitchen, *Baroque solo keyboard music*, "Early Music" 1995, vol. 24, no. 4, p. 715.

⁴ B. Schaeffer, *Dzieje muzyki*, Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne, Warszawa 1983, pp. 400–401.

⁵ J. Habela, *Sonata*, [in:] *Słowniczek muzyczny*, PWM, Kraków 1998, p. 180.

The 20th century, rich in sonic and formal experimentation, also brought new ideas. In the presence of diverse approaches and trends, Hali Fieldman, following Charles Rosen⁶, proposes a separate term, *sonata style* “as a shorthand for the dynamic interrelationship between a piece's inner and outer necessities that so nicely summarizes what we mean when we say sonata form”⁷.

2. Analysis of the Selected Sonatas

2.1. Preliminary Considerations

The period in guitar sonata music discussed herein is rich in valuable works which explore the definition of what is considered the sonata form. In this context, one must mention the minimalist and sonoristic *Sonata no. 1* by Leo Brouwer, the folkloric and expressionistic *Elogio de la guitarra* by Joaquin Rodrigo, the vitalistic *Sonata no. 1 by Dušan Bogdanović or the sonoristic Sonata of Loneliness* by Pēteris Vasks. In this article, it would be impossible to perform a complete quantitative analysis of specific formal solutions, especially in the most recent music. Instead, this article will focus on four sonatas, representative of guitar music after 1950, in terms of their complexity and distinctive approach towards form. The selected works provide a panoramic view of the main trends in contemporary music and the music of the second half of the 20th century: neoclassicism, expressionism, neo-impressionism, eclecticism, postmodernism, sonorism, intertextuality or programmatic music. This will demonstrate the contrasting approaches of contemporary composers towards the structure of a sonata cycle. *The works selected for the purpose of this article clearly demonstrate the main trends of the period.*

2.2. Franz Werthmüller – *Sonata in A major Op. 17*

2.2.1.A NEOCLASSICAL MYSTIFICATION

The first of the analysed works is the *Sonata* by Franz Werthmüller. It is in fact a pen name, or even an artistic mystification. Tilman Hoppstock, the real author of the piece, published the *Sonata* in 1997 as a newly found arrangement of a 19th century piece originally intended for piano⁸. However, there are no mentions of Franz Werthmüller (1769–1841), the alleged composer, in any

⁶ Ch. Rosen, *Sonata forms*, W.W. Norton & Company, New York – London 1988, p. 353.

⁷ H. Fieldman, *Schubert's Quartettsatz and Sonata Form's New Way*, “Journal of Musicological Research” 2002 no. 21, p. 103.

⁸ T. Hoppstock, *Preface* [in:] F. Werthmüller, *Sonata in La maggiore Op. 17 per chitarra*, Bèrben, Ancona 1997, p. 2.

available sources. Today, it can be said with a high degree of certainty that all this was supposed to allow the work to be placed by the audience's imagination in a specific time period, making the stylistic references to Joseph Haydn and Fernando Sor even more evocative and genuine.

The above example, however extreme, constitutes an important point in guitar music. At the same time, it significantly expands the range of styles of contemporary sonata music. Neoclassicism, as an artistic approach, is a common phenomenon in postmodern music. Therefore, in this article the *Sonata in A major*, Op. 17 shall constitute a point of reference for interpreting the form and style of works in which the references to previous periods are more subtle (e.g., Joaquín Rodrigo's famous *Sonata giocosa*).

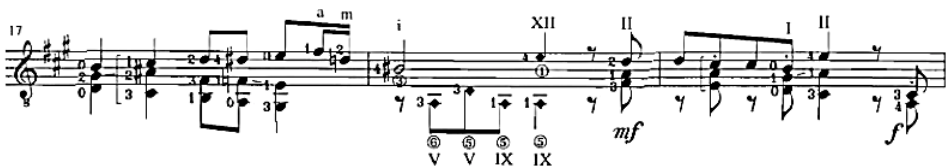
2.2.2.FORMAL OVERVIEW

The cycle has a three-movement form (*Allegro – Adagio – Rondo Vivace*) and clearly draws from Haydn as well as the other composers of the First Viennese School⁹. And similarly to Haydn, there is a lack of a distinctive contrast between the first (cf. example 1) and second theme (cf. example 2) of the sonata. The arrangement of the *Allegro* movement itself is a typical representation of the classical structure of the sonata allegro:

- Exposition: Theme I [tonic] – Transition – Theme II [dominant] – Coda;
- Development: Elements of Themes I and II; dramatic development;
- Recapitulation: Theme I [T] (variation) – coda.



Example 1. *Allegro*, bars 1–2: part of theme I. Source: F. Werthmüller, *Sonata in La maggiore* Op. 17 per chitarra, Bèrben, Ancona 1997.



Example 2. *Allegro*, bars 17–19: part of theme II. Source: F. Werthmüller, *Sonata in La maggiore* Op. 17 per chitarra, Bèrben, Ancona 1997.

⁹ W.S. Newman, *The sonata in the classic era*, 3rd ed., University of North Carolina Press, Asheville 1983, p. 135.

The only deviation from the *standard* comes in the recapitulation. The composer chooses not to repeat the second theme in favour of a more extensive development of the first theme and a large coda.

The second movement, *Lento*, is a classic ABA¹ form with an extended ending. The composer is rigorous in his application of homophonic texture. The most important element to the piece's form is the juxtaposition of chordal motifs and lyrical melodic runs. From a stylistic standpoint, section B is reminiscent of Schubert's compositional language, with a noticeable ostinato accompaniment and a melodious narrative in the upper voice (example 3).



Example 3. *Lento*, bars 28–30. Source: F. Werthmüller, *Sonata in La maggiore* Op. 17 per chitarra, Bèrben, Ancona 1997.

A high degree of tonal mobility is also a reference to the Austrian Romantic composer. Section B begins with a modulation from B-flat major to D-flat major, then suddenly moves to a dark B-flat minor. It goes back to D-flat major again only to introduce the final A¹ section in B-flat minor. Frequent modulation remains the forming element of the *Lento* up to the final distant E major chord which is a dominant in the tonality of the subsequent part beginning with an beginning *attacca*.

From a formal standpoint, the *Rondo Vivace* has a A-B-A-C-A-D-A + coda structure. It contains references to the sonata form: section C which functions as a development, internal transitions, and two distinctive juxtaposed musical ideas.

2.2.3. APPROACH TO TRADITION

The above general formal analysis presents Franz Werthmüller's *Sonata in A major* as a piece which is strongly rooted in the Classical period and only slightly stepping out of its framework in the *Lento* movement. It is an example of a neoclassical piece with very direct references to an earlier period. The composer's objective was not to present the Classical musical language or form filtered through contemporary sensibility, but to immerse himself in it and create its most accurate representation possible. Such an approach, along with the mystification that surrounds the piece, makes it a very unusual example of a post-1950 guitar sonata. However, here it will serve as a radically neoclassical point of reference for the other trends and directions in the evolution of the sonata cycle.

2.3. Alberto Ginastera – *Sonata Op. 47*

2.3.1. FORMAL OVERVIEW

Composed in 1976 by the Argentinian composer, this sonata is an example of expressionistic and dodecaphonic music which displays an entire palette of original colours and articulation types. Its form seems to serve a highly contrasting narrative or tonal experimentation. A closer analysis, however, reveals references to the sonata cycle.

The work is composed of 4 movements: *Esordio*, *Scherzo*, *Canto*, *Finale*. Already at this level, the form has noticeable references to the heritage of Beethoven (number of movements¹⁰, presence of a *Scherzo*¹¹) or maybe even of Corelli (order of the tempo categories: slow – fast – slow – fast)¹².

The first part, *Esordio* (Italian: “beginning”, “opening”), is based on two contrasting thematic ideas. The composer refers to it as a “prelude and song”¹³, which can be linked to the loosely approached contrasting themes I and II, in line with the idea of the classical sonata allegro. The first idea is based on a chord composed of six open guitar strings. It is without metre, improvisational, and characterised by highly intense expressiveness (*fff* dynamics). It takes advantage of almost the full range of the guitar (example 4).

Theme II is inspired by the music of the Quechua tribes and is based on the whole-tone scale. The melody is dominated by whole tone steps and strongly contrasts with the first theme. The occurrence of a triple metre, *piano* dynamics, and *dolce* expression (example 5) also make it distinctively different.

The presented themes are then developed. The transformations involve articulation (use of different percussive effects), colour, register, and rhythm (example 6). Using an original and modern musical language, the composer creatively explores the classical structure of the first section of the sonata cycle.

The second movement of the cycle is a dynamic *Scherzo* in the character of a toccata. In search of evocative contrasts, the composer uses controlled aleatoricism, various percussive articulations, delicate harmonics, and intense *rasgueado*. Moments before the brilliant finale, the narrative abruptly comes to a halt and introduces a quote from Richard Wagner’s *Die Meistersinger von Nurnberg*.

The *Canto* movement is a calm, impressionist rhapsody, which connects *attacca* to the *Finale*, a vitalistic toccata evoking the style of Bartók or Stravinsky.

¹⁰ W.S. Newman, op. cit., p. 133.

¹¹ M. Kowalska, *ABC historii muzyki*, Musica Iagiellonica, Kraków 2001, p. 334.

¹² Ibidem, p. 234.

¹³ Ch. King, *Alberto Ginastera’s Sonata for Guitar Op. 47: an analysis*, The University of Arizona, USA 1992, p. 23.

Tutti *molto*
Solenne $\text{♩} = 46$
arpeggiato lento

pp *sim.* *sempre tutta forza!* *vibr.*

The score for Example 4 shows a piano introduction. It begins with a series of arpeggiated chords in the left hand, marked *pp* and *sim.* The right hand has a melodic line with fingerings (1, 0, 1, 1, 2, 1, 2, 2, 3, 1, 2, 3) and dynamics. The tempo is *arpeggiato lento* with a quarter note equal to 46. The piece is marked *Tutti molto* and *Solenne*. The dynamic *sempre tutta forza!* is indicated for the melodic line, which ends with a vibrato.

Example 4. *Esordio*: part of the first theme. Source: A. Ginastera, *Sonata* Op. 47, Boosey & Hawkes Inc., USA 1984.

Poco più mosso $\text{♩} = 76$
tastiera

p dolce

The score for Example 5 shows a piano introduction. It features a series of chords in the left hand and a melodic line in the right hand. The tempo is *Poco più mosso* with a quarter note equal to 76. The piece is marked *tastiera* and *p dolce*. Fingerings are indicated above the notes.

Example 5. *Esordio*: part of the second theme. Source: A. Ginastera, *Sonata* Op. 47, Boosey & Hawkes Inc., USA 1984.

mf *f* *mf dim.* *p*

The score for Example 6 shows a piano introduction. It features a series of chords in the left hand and a melodic line in the right hand. The dynamics are marked *mf*, *f*, *mf dim.*, and *p*. There are also markings for *T* (tutti) and *f* (forte).

Example 6. *Esordio*: part of the development of the second theme. Source: A. Ginastera, *Sonata* Op. 47, Boosey & Hawkes Inc., USA 1984.

2.3.2. APPROACH TO TRADITION

The *Sonata* Op. 47 borrows extensively from the achievements of modernism. Dodecaphonic compositional language, intertwining styles (impressionism, expressionism, vitalism, folklorism) and techniques (aleatoricism, percussive effects, metricity and ametricity) produce a comprehensive picture of post-modern music. Alongside a seemingly complete departure from tradition, one can notice references to the traditional sonata form: four-movement arrangement (*sonata da chiesa*, Corelli, Beethoven), the presence of a *Scherzo* (Beethoven), thematic dualism as well as exposition and development in the first movement (a “classic” model of the *sonata allegro*), and the use of the full range and dynamic capabilities of the instrument (Beethoven)¹⁴.

¹⁴ M. Kowalska, op. cit, p. 354.

2.4. Michael Tippett – *The Blue Guitar*

2.4.1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The three-movement sonata by the British composer is a result of inspirations extending far beyond the musical arts. The work which began the sequence of artistic references was Pablo Picasso's painting from 1904 – *The Old Guitarist*¹⁵. The impression that this painting made on the American poet Wallace Stevens was so vast that in 1937 he published a long poem entitled *The Man with the Blue Guitar*¹⁶ which deals, as the author himself states, with the relationship between “the imagined and the real”¹⁷. The poem's form is built around a dialogue between the old man from Picasso's painting and the audience gathered around him.

The Man with the Blue Guitar became to Michael Tippett, what *The Old Guitarist* was to Stevens. In 1983, he published a piece composed of three movements, the titles of which come from the main moods of the three sections of the poem: *Transforming, Juggling, Dreaming*. Each one of them is accompanied by a quote from the poem¹⁸. Tippett, however, was against making overly literal comparisons between literature and his art. He argued that his sonata should be perceived first and foremost as an independent musical work¹⁹.

2.4.2. FORMAL OVERVIEW

The first part, *Transforming*, takes the form of a fantasy with distinctively contrasting themes. The piece starts with an introduction in triple metre but maintains a rather free and improvisational character. Bar 23 brings the beginning of theme I. It has a strict rhythmic structure. The theme is based on poly-rhythms and is characterised by a persistent juxtaposition of bars $\frac{2}{4}$ and $\frac{9}{16}$, and further $\frac{5}{8}$ and $\frac{6}{8}$. This seamlessly introduces theme II which brings another sharp contrast, but this time in terms of texture. This polyphonic, two-voiced section, in which one voice is conducted in a cantilena fashion while the other is characterised by a high degree of liveliness, gradually leads to an intense climax.

Theme III brings a calming of expression and a return to a more improvisational mood. It is based on dense and resonant chords. Over the course of very short sections, the range of dynamics includes both *forte*, and *piano*.

The composer then introduces distinctive brief thematic ideas which each time stop unexpectedly, allowing for another original phrase to take their place.

¹⁵ A.H. Barr, *Picasso: Fifty Years of His Art*, Simon & Schuster, New York 1946, p. 29.

¹⁶ W. Burney, *Wallace Stevens*, Twayne Publishers Inc., New York 1968, p. 62.

¹⁷ R. Rehder, *The Poetry of Wallace Stevens*, Macmillan Press, London 1988, p. 150.

¹⁸ M. Tippett, *The Blue Guitar*, preface, Schott and Co. Ltd, London 1984.

¹⁹ O. Roman, *Performer's Guide to Michael Tippett's The Blue Guitar*, (doctoral thesis under the direction of Ch. Brewer), Florida State University, USA 2003, p. 34.

Those “unfinished” ideas can be divided into two opposing groups: 1) static themes which stop the narrative (markings from the composer: *radiant, with stillness, dark*) (example 7); 2) lively and energetic themes (*faster, free flowing, with movement, brilliant*) (example 8).

Example 7. *Transforming*: part of the thematic idea from group 1. Source: M. Tippett, *The Blue Guitar*, Schott and Co. Ltd, London 1984.

Example 8. *Transforming*: part of the thematic idea from group 2. Source: M. Tippett, *The Blue Guitar*, Schott and Co. Ltd, London 1984.

One of the short thematic ideas is based on the opening motif from Debussy's prelude *La fille aux cheveux de lin* (example 9). It appears twice towards the end of the sonata's first movement and in both cases is followed by a distinctive transformation (perhaps the word “distortion” would be a better choice in this context) (example 10).

Example 9. *Transforming*: Debussy theme. Source: M. Tippett, *The Blue Guitar*, Schott and Co. Ltd, London 1984.

Example 101. *Transforming*: “distortion” of the Debussy theme. Source: M. Tippett, *The Blue Guitar*, Schott and Co. Ltd, London 1984.

The second polyphonic theme is also substantially developed. The two voices, which are shown as contrasting in the exposition, adopt a common cantilena-like character. They also become closer in character through the use of imitation.

Transforming ends with a short coda which, through gradual modulations, reaches a surprising, within the context of the here prevalent dodecaphony, key of F minor.

The second movement, *Juggling*, is a toccata with a scherzo character. It can be divided into two sections, both of which are characterised by lively fast runs, dodecaphony, and a wide melodic and dynamic range.

The triptych ends with an unconventional slow movement entitled *Dreaming*. The dualism of musical ideas is also present in this part. The impressionistic narrative is contrasted with dramatic recitatives.

An eclectic combination of impressionistic, sonoristic, expressionistic, and dodecaphonic features and elements of tonality, the use of distorted musical quotes and vaguely defined programmatic elements all place *The Blue Guitar* among the postmodern works with a noticeable presence in contemporary music.

2.4.3. APPROACH TO TRADITION

The Blue Guitar by Michael Tippett is another example of an innovative and creative approach towards the sonata cycle, maintaining its relationship with the historical heritage of the form itself. In this context, it seems worthwhile to try to identify certain constant elements by means of which the contemporary composer, in his use of the sonata form, corresponds with Schubert, Beethoven, Haydn or even Scarlatti and Corelli.

The first obvious reference to the wider tradition is the three-movement structure. The fast-fast-slow order of the movements is rare in the history of the development of the sonata form (it seems like a mirror image of the slow-fast-fast order occurring in late Baroque)²⁰, but the presence of a scherzo in the middle section of the cycle is reminiscent of 18th- and 19th-century works.

²⁰ W.S. Newman, op. cit., p. 135.

Although Tippett's use of the sonata form in the first movement of *The Blue Guitar* cycle is hardly obvious (the order of the individual sections is closer to a free-form fantasy) certain ideas that refer to the classical pattern of the first movement of the sonata cycle are evident. Thematic dualism, motivic development, sections which one might call exposition and development – timeless tools used by Tippett to produce a perfect representation of music matter.

2.5. Hans Werner Henze – Royal Winter Music No. 1

2.5.1. ORIGINS

Composed in 1975, the work is subtitled *First Sonata on Shakespearean Characters*²¹. It was commissioned by Julian Bream, one of the most acclaimed guitarists of the second half of the 20th century and a relentless explorer always in search of new and valuable music for his instrument. Henze was requested to compose a music piece bearing such importance as the *Hammerklavier* sonata did among piano works²². As a result, guitar music has been expanded to include two postmodern cyclical masterpieces that refer to plays by William Shakespeare. This article shall analyse the first of those two works.

2.5.2. FORMAL OVERVIEW

The work in question is composed of six parts, each entitled after a literary character. The first movement, *Gloucester*, has the form of a sonata allegro. Theme I is filled with dissonant harmonies and contrasting colours (timbres change from *sul tasto* to *sul ponticello*). In terms of dynamics, *fff* is predominant while the rhythmic layer contains frequent syncopations, thirty-second grace notes, and sharp, punctuated rhythm (example 11).



Example 11. *Gloucester*: part of theme I. Source: H.W. Henze, *Royal Winter Music*, B. Schott's Söhne, Berlin 1976.

Theme II maintains *ppp* – *p* dynamics. Chordal texture is prevalent while the harmonic layer often presents intervals of thirds and fourths giving the music

²¹ H.W. Henze, *Royal Winter Music*, B. Schott's Söhne, Berlin 1976, p. 5.

²² M. Orszulik, *Aspects of the Historical Development of Repertoire for the Guitar: A Case Study of Hans Werner Henze's Royal Winter Music, Sonatas on Shakespearean Characters*, (doctoral thesis under the direction of D. Gramit), University of Alberta, Canada 2016, p. 13.

a euphonic character which contrasts with theme I. The rhythm becomes more mellow as well (example 12).

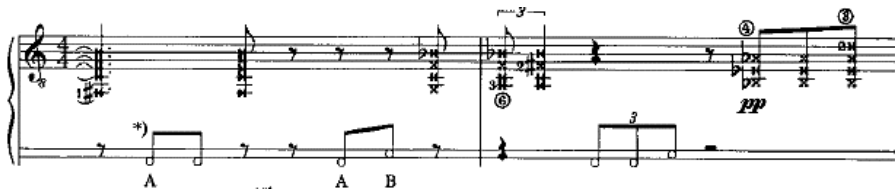


Example 12. *Gloucester*: part of theme II. Source: H. W. Henze, Royal Winter Music, B. Schott's Söhne, Berlin 1976.

In the development, the composer transforms distinctive motifs by presenting them using a different timbre or articulation. The same technique is also noticeable in Albert Ginastera's piece described above. Not only are there percussive techniques (*tambour*, *golpe*), pronounced changes in articulation (*sul tasto* and *sul ponticello*), but also subtle motivic development (examples 13 and 14).



Example 13. *Gloucester*: part of the development of theme I. Source: H.W. Henze, *Royal Winter Music*, B. Schott's Söhne, Berlin 1976.



Example 14. *Gloucester*: part of the development of theme II. Source: H.W. Henze, *Royal Winter Music*, B. Schott's Söhne, Berlin 1976.

Instead of eventually returning to themes I and II in the recapitulation closing the movement, the music gradually moves away from the original material presented in the exposition. The narrative progresses towards the finale with a more and more extensive use of percussive effects.

The second movement is entitled *Romeo and Juliet*. It is a two-voiced *arioso* which is uniform in nature. The composer's use of the imitative technique brings to mind the programmatic representation of the title characters. This movement is much shorter than its adjacent sections.

The subsequent movement, *Ariel*, can be seen as a fantasia with two leading thematic ideas. This movement also contains programmatic references. The

ethereal character of the fairy from the play *The Tempest* is shown, in this interpretation, through light, brilliant runs of thirty-second and sixty-fourth notes. To emphasise her sadness, however, the composer makes a unique, in terms of the entire work, turn towards the tonal system, the minor scale²³.

The fourth movement, *Ophelia*, is the second, alongside *Romeo and Juliet*, short interlude connecting the main parts of the sonata cycle. It has a clear and uniform texture with a calm melodic line running against an impressionistic *arpeggio*.

The title of the subsequent section is *Touchstone, Audrey and William*. Both the metre ($\frac{3}{4}$) and the expression marking provided by the composer (*with humour*) are obvious references to the scherzo, frequently used in one of the middle movements of the traditional sonata cycle. This choice seems to have been dictated mainly by programmatic considerations: *Touchstone* is a clown in the comedy *As You Like It*. The form can be considered a variation but at the same time a scherzo and a trio, where the scherzo functions as an exposition for the three musical ideas and their variations (each one related to a separate comedy character), while in the trio individual themes are developed and intertwined²⁴. The final section mainly uses *Touchstone's* phrases and ends with a short and very intense coda.

The final movement, *Oberon*, is free-form. However, a recurring theme transformed several times brings to mind the rondo. Another interpretation is to view *Oberon* as an improvisational fantasia²⁵.

2.5.3. APPROACH TO TRADITION

The movements and their titles bring to mind a programmatic suite rather than a sonata cycle. Those two forms, however, have first become intertwined since the days of the *sonata da camera* and Arcangelo Corelli²⁶. References to the heritage of the sonata are made even clearer if we present the individual links and their functions in the cycle as a whole: 1) *Gloucester* – sonata form, 2) *Romeo and Juliet* – interlude, 3) *Ariel* – slow part, 4) *Ophelia* – interlude, 5) *Touchstone, Audrey and William* – scherzo, 6) *Oberon* – fantasia/rondo. What emerges is a very classical cycle arrangement where the fundamental parts of the form are a sonata allegro at the beginning, a slow movement and scherzo in the middle, and a rondo/fantasia as the finale.

The composer uses the subdivision into exposition and recapitulation, and transforms thematic thoughts by use of colour, texture, articulation or tempo, while approaching the formal framework in an original and exploratory manner. The main

²³ Ibidem, p. 61.

²⁴ Ibidem, pp. 63-66.

²⁵ Ibidem, p. 67.

²⁶ M. Kowalska, op. cit., p. 234.

purpose of the form of each movement is to convey the personality of the characters presented in the music in as much detail as possible. The presented themes, along with their transformations, are primarily a result of the needs of the narrative.

3. Contemporary Sonata Form: Closing Thoughts

Reflecting on the condition of the post-1950 guitar sonata cycle is directly linked to answering a number of important questions: what is tradition in relation to a highly diverse form developed over 500 years? Is there a set of properties that could support the notion of a general identity of a sonata? Is it a form that is necessary for the contemporary composer, one that would constitute the best possible tool to produce specific artistic content? Is it possible to indicate a specific direction of evolution of the sonata cycle? In my opinion, the analysis of guitar works representative of the period in question offers valuable tools for providing answers to the above questions.

3.1. The Tradition of the Sonata Form

The 18th century sonata cycle is often considered as a model when it comes to structure.²⁷ However, at each stage of evolution composers have explored possible variations to the form. From today's perspective, classicism can certainly be seen as a very important point of reference in the study of the modern sonata, but an encyclopaedic definition fails to convey the dynamic processes that accompanied, and still accompany, the development of the form in question. Given this perspective, it is proposed here to view the tradition of the sonata as a history of formation of what might be called the *identity* of the sonata.

3.2. The Identity of the Sonata

The identity of the sonata is determined by several factors. Undoubtedly, one of those factors is the presence of a form which would allow for a coherent presentation of certain opposing thematic ideas. Clashing and contrasting themes combine into a structure of diverse musical contexts. The narrative is usually based on a logical sequence of parts, fusing larger pieces together into an internally coherent artistic work. The proper understanding of the individual parts can be achieved only by interacting with the entire piece. Despite frequent references to extramusical content in contemporary sonatas (cf. *The Blue Guitar*, *Royal Winter Music*), the feature which defines the described identity is, therefore, also the abstract quality of music.

²⁷ J. Opyd, *O sonacie słów kilka*, "Internetowa Gazeta Kulturalna Salonu Literackiego" 2018, no. 5 (37), Stowarzyszenie Salon Literacki.

3.3. Is the Sonata Form Necessary for the Contemporary Composer

In light of the above findings, it is possible to notice certain distinctive qualities specific to the sonata. It is a form that favours multi-threaded narratives and allows to present nuanced musical arguments. Thus, it provides the artist with original tools which allow to express thoughts and emotions through the language of notes. Another considerable feature is the possibility to leverage an incredibly extensive tradition. Therefore, the ability to connect with the entire history of development of the sonata form becomes part of the work's meaning.

3.4. Further Evolution

To paraphrase Boguslaw Schaeffer, one might say that the future of the sonata, as well as the future in general, appears very hazy²⁸. It seems reasonable, however, to trace the evolution of the concept of the sonata which emerges from the guitar works analysed above.

It can certainly be stated that the form in question is invariably based on thematic development. Thematic transformation, however, takes place on new and original levels. Apart from the harmonic layer, used predominantly in the 18th and 19th centuries, articulation and the tone colour of the instrument play an increasingly important role. The themes are viewed as acoustic effects rather than melodic and rhythmic structures which allows for extensive thematic development and distortion in terms of timbre. Tonality, on the other hand, becomes a tool used sporadically to emphasise a specific expression.

As throughout the entire history of its development, the sonata continues to evolve in terms of the order of movements. It is interesting to note that, usually, new formal solutions somehow relate to tradition. However, what remains unchanged is the desire to combine musical ideas in a single cyclic work.

It is impossible to predict how the guitar sonata will evolve within the next few decades, but surely parts of today's music also belong to the music of the future, which we know nothing of but await with curiosity²⁹.

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Kształtowanie się formy współczesnej sonaty gitarowej

Streszczenie

Niniejszy artykuł podejmuje temat kierunków rozwoju sonaty gitarowej po 1950 roku. Historia kształtowania się formy to proces niezwykle dynamiczny, a każda epoka przynosi wiele różnorodnych, często wzajemnie sprzecznych, punktów widzenia. W tym kontekście przeanalizowane zostały pod względem formalnym cztery sonaty gitarowe, reprezentatywne dla omawianego okresu: F. Werthmüller – *Sonata A-dur* op. 17, A. Ginastera – *Sonata* op. 47, M. Tippett – *The Blue Guitar*, H.W. Henze – *Royal Winter Music*. Jako kryterium doboru dzieł przyjęto możliwość przekrojowego omówienia głównych nurtów i spojrzeń na formę cyklu sonatowego, obecnych w literaturze gitarowej drugiej połowy XX i XXI w. W toku badań wykrystalizował się obraz sonaty jako cyklu, który daje współczesnemu kompozytorowi narzędzia do realizowania indywidualnych poszukiwań artystycznych, przy jednoczesnym zachowaniu pewnych niezmiennych cech charakterystycznych formy. W niniejszej pracy podjęto próbę zdefiniowania, czym jest owa niezachwiana tożsamość sonaty.

Słowa kluczowe: sonata gitarowa, ewolucja formy, muzyka gitarowa po 1950 roku, Franz Werthmüller, Alberto Ginastera, Michael Tippett, Hans Werner Henze.

