

Sonata-Rondo Form



SONATA-RONDO FORM / RONDO-SONATA FORM: A B A C A B + CODA

Sonata-Rondo (or Rondo-Sonata) form is the result of two different forms or structures combining, i.e. Rondo form and Sonata form.

Sonata-Rondo form is often used by composers for the last movement of a Sonata, symphony or concerto.

In Sonata-Rondo form, the main Theme appears at the start of the Exposition, then again at the start of what might loosely be called the Development and once more at the start of the Recapitulation. This means that the main Theme returns at least three times which is a fundamental requirement of Rondo form.

In Sonata-Rondo form, the crucial difference is that the 2nd Subject group (indicated by B in the symbol summary below) appears in the dominant key first, and then finally re-appears at the end, in the tonic key, just as the 2nd subject would do in Sonata form. So both Rondo form and Sonata form each have a basic requirement that is satisfied in the new combination, Sonata-Rondo form.

SONATA-RONDO FORM AT A GLANCE

A B	A C	A B + Coda (Coda generally quotes main theme again)
Exposition	Development	Recapitulation

A = Theme;

B = 2nd Subject (first in the dominant key and later returning in the tonic key);

C = 'Episode', a contrasting section to 1st & 2nd subjects.

And in a little more detail over the page:

EXPOSITION

Theme, or 1st Subject group in tonic key (like the 1st Subject of Sonata form)

Transition

2nd Subject Group in dominant key (like the 2nd Subject of Sonata form)

'DEVELOPMENT' (not strictly speaking the Development section anymore)

Theme, or 1st Subject group in the tonic key

Episodic material

RECAPITULATION

Theme, or 1st Subject group in tonic key

Transition

2nd Subject Group now in the tonic key

Coda, which almost always quotes the Theme again

Composers have certainly modified Sonata-Rondo form in subtle ways, but the crucial thing to remember is that the main Theme is woven into the Sonata form structure so that it appears at least **three** times.