

## Web Feature 22.2

### When two episodes are not enough—Mozart’s Rondo in F major, K.494

In Web Feature 22.1 we saw that the French Baroque *rondeau* tended to have a flexible number of episodes alternating with the refrain. Although most Classic-era rondos are of the five-part or seven-part variety, occasionally nine-part rondos—ones with an additional episode—are found. This extra episode is added before the return of the B section in the tonic, so that the resulting form is ABACADAB'A.

Mozart’s Rondo in F major K.494, composed in 1786, is rather unusual in its output in that it was added on to two movements of an evidently unfinished piano sonata, K.533, composed in 1788. The result is Mozart’s only piano sonata with a double Köchel catalog number (K.533/494). The rondo is unusual in its form, too, as we will see. Rather than subjecting you to a “play by play” here, only the most important details are illustrated with musical examples; you are encouraged to find a score and locate the sections on your own. You can download a score from the International Music Score Library Project at the following link:

[http://imslp.org/wiki/Piano\\_Sonata\\_No.15\\_in\\_F\\_major\\_K.533/494\\_\(Mozart,\\_Wolfgang\\_Amadeus\)](http://imslp.org/wiki/Piano_Sonata_No.15_in_F_major_K.533/494_(Mozart,_Wolfgang_Amadeus))

The refrain (Web Example 22.2) has an interesting phrase structure—two six-bar (rather than four-bar or eight-bar) phrases. This refrain is also melodically varied with each reappearance—Web Example 22.3 shows the opening (right hand only) of the next three refrains.

**Allegretto**

**Web Example 22.2.** Mozart, Rondo in F major K.494, mm. 1–12.

mm. 39-50:

mm. 83-94:

mm. 120-131:

3

**Web Example 22.3.** Mozart, Rondo in F major K.494, refrain variations (mm. 39–50, 83–94, 120–131, right hand only).

The B episode begins in measure 19 after a short transition (measures 13–18) that allows us to hear C major as a new key and not merely the V of F. This section (significantly, as we will see) consists of two ideas: the theme found in measures 19–30, and the cadential extension in measures 30–34. A brief retransition (measures 34–38) leads us back to the refrain; the addition of a B $\flat$  in measure 36 allowing us to hear the C major harmony “morph” from a tonic chord in C major to a V of F major.

In contrast to the B episode, the C and D episodes do not require transitions: they begin in keys sufficiently distinct from F major. The C episode begins in measure 51 with a dramatic D minor chord; it contains several references to the refrain, developing the material. At measure 67 a lengthy retransition begins, initially visiting the key of B $\flat$

major before passing by sequence through F minor on its way to the V of the tonic (measure 79). Measures 79–82 consist of a lengthy lead-in back to the refrain.

With the D episode (measures 95–117), Mozart seems to change style altogether (Web Example 22.4 shows the first four measures of this section). The imitative counterpoint in the upper two voices and the circle-of-fifths harmonic sequence suggest the Baroque style, an unexpected departure from what we have heard up to this point. This section also has its own form—continuous simple binary form. The lead-in coming out of the D episode (measures 116, second ending, to 119) is reminiscent of the earlier lead-in to the retransition coming out of the C section (see measures 66–67).

The image shows a musical score for measures 95-98 of Mozart's Rondo in F major, K.494. The score is in 3/4 time and features a 'Minore' section starting at measure 95. The music is marked 'mf' and shows imitative counterpoint between the upper two voices (treble and alto clefs) and a circle-of-fifths harmonic sequence in the bass line.

**Web Example 22.4.** Mozart, Rondo in F major K.494, mm. 95–98.

The B thematic material comes back in the tonic key (the B' section) at measure 132 and proceeds without incident until measure 143. At this point, however, there is a dramatic rupture in the form. We saw that in the K.333 sonata-rondo Mozart inserted a cadenza just before the final refrain. He does something similar here, between the first and second thematic idea within the B' section. Instead of the somewhat metrically free and exploratory feel of the K.333 cadenza, however, this passage (see Web Example 22.5) pushes forward in strict meter while persistently avoiding resolving to the tonic by using a number of deceptive cadences and phrase elisions. (Notice particularly the junctures at measures 146–147 and 148–149, and the very long dominant prolongation at 158–168.) There is also a passage of imitative counterpoint at measures 152–158, although the successive entries at perfect fourth intervals (C, F, B $\flat$ , E $\flat$ ) in measures 154–156 would hardly have been found in Bach's day.

(phrase elision)

142 *f* *p* *f*

(deceptive cadence)

(phrase elision)

145 *p* *f*

(deceptive cadence)

(phrase elision)

148 *f* *f*

(deceptive cadence)

(phrase elision)

151 *p*

(deceptive cadence)

155

*f*

This system contains measures 155 through 158. The music is in a minor key, indicated by a single flat in the key signature. The right hand features a complex melodic line with many sixteenth notes, often beamed together. The left hand provides a steady accompaniment with chords and eighth notes. A dynamic marking of *f* (forte) is placed in the right hand at the beginning of measure 158.

159

*decresc.* *p*

This system contains measures 159 through 162. The right hand continues with a melodic line, showing a gradual decrease in volume. The left hand has a more rhythmic accompaniment with some rests. Dynamic markings include *decresc.* (decrescendo) in the right hand and *p* (piano) in the left hand.

163

*f*

This system contains measures 163 through 165. The right hand has a very active melodic line with many sixteenth notes. The left hand has a simple accompaniment with chords and rests. A dynamic marking of *f* (forte) is placed in the right hand.

166

This system contains measures 166 through 168. The right hand continues with a melodic line, and the left hand has a simple accompaniment with chords and rests.

168

*sf* *f* *p* *f*

*tr*

PAC, at last!

**Web Example 22.5.** Mozart, Rondo in F major K.494, mm. 142–171.

The second half of the B' section at last returns at measure 170 (seen at the very end of Web Example 22.5), and the final refrain appears, with “regularized” four-bar phrase lengths and in a much lower register, as a coda beginning in measure 176.

One of the most famous lines in the play and film *Amadeus* is when Mozart is told that his music has “too many notes.” Certainly Mozart’s melodies were more elaborate than those of some of his contemporaries, and—as we have seen with his treatment of the refrains in his Rondo K.494—he rarely repeated a melodic idea exactly the same way (this kind of perpetual variation of an idea, in fact, endeared his music to the American experimental composer John Cage). It is tempting to attribute such restless variation to Mozart’s mercurial, restless personality and sense of humor, much in evidence in *Amadeus*. Similarly, we see evidence of this kind of personality—this resistance to “cookie-cutter” order—in his treatment of rondo form. It would be easy to compose a rondo using a “fill-in-the-boxes” approach; in fact, Mozart’s treatment of rondo—as we have seen from both K.333 and K.494—shows not only his gift for continual melodic variation but also his willingness to experiment with the form.