Inside Mozart's *Sonata in C, K. 545*

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Piano Sonata in C major, K. 545, first movement (Allegro) — a full sonata form, with a surprise
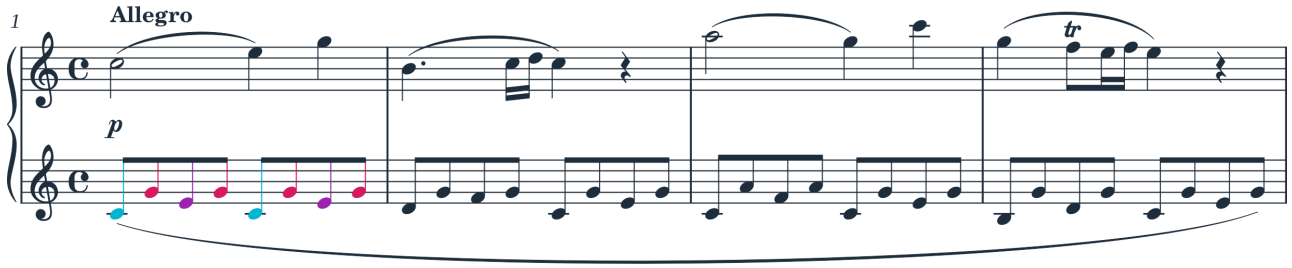
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791) wrote this sonata in Vienna in **June 1788** and entered it in his own list of works as "a little keyboard sonata for **beginners**." It was printed only after his death, in **1805**, as a *Sonate facile*, "easy sonata." Its notes are easy to find; making them sound clear and graceful is the real work. Handout 239 showed sonata form in a small sonatina. This is the full-size plan.

THE MAP · SONATA FORM IN 73 BARS



Colors show the key: **cyan** = C, the home key; **magenta** = G, its dominant; **indigo** = F. The **exposition** presents two themes, the first in C and the second in G. The **development** takes the exposition's last idea through minor keys. The **recapitulation** brings both themes back and ends at home in C (Handout 395 shows the plan in general).
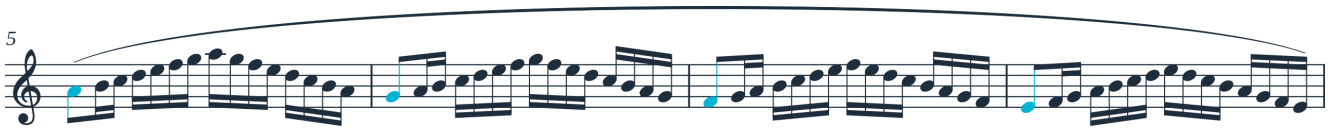
THEME 1 · A TUNE OVER AN ALBERTI BASS



Bars 1–4. Bar 1's left hand: **C root**, **E 3rd**, **G 5th**.

The right hand sings a simple tune: up the C chord (C–E–G), a curl around C in bar 2, a reach up to A and high C in bar 3, then down to E with a quick trill in bar 4 (Handout 389). The left hand breaks each chord low–top–middle–top: C–G–E–G. That is an **Alberti bass**, and this opening is the most famous one there is (Handout 41). Notice the treble clef in the left hand: it plays around middle C.
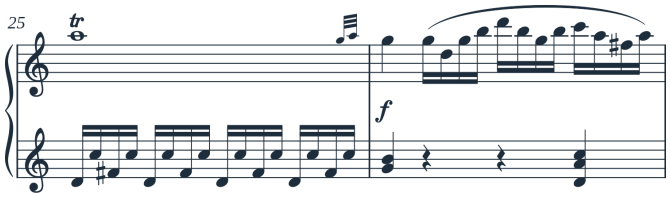
THE BRIDGE · SCALES THAT STEP DOWN



Bars 5–8, right hand. Each bar starts one step lower: **A, G, F, E**.

Four runs up an octave and back down, each starting a step lower than the last: the same pattern moved step by step is a **sequence** (Handout 355). Two more scale bars lead to a stop on a **G chord** (bar 12). Then the left hand starts a quiet, rocking pattern on its own (bar 13), and theme 2 enters in G major.

THE CLOSE · A LONG TRILL, THEN V–I IN G
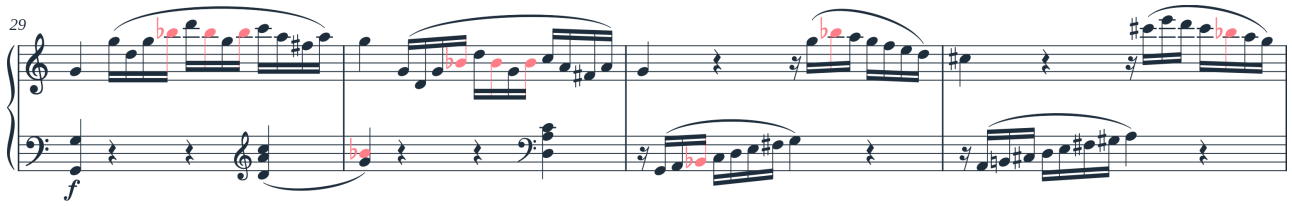


Bars 22–28 close the exposition in G. Bar 25 is one long **trill** on A over a D7 chord broken in the left hand, the dominant seventh of G. Mozart's trill starts on the note above, B–A–B–A… (Handout 389); its two small notes, G–A, end it and lead into **G** in bar 26: an authentic cadence, V–I (Handout 72). Bar 70 does the same in C.

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AFTER THE DOUBLE BAR

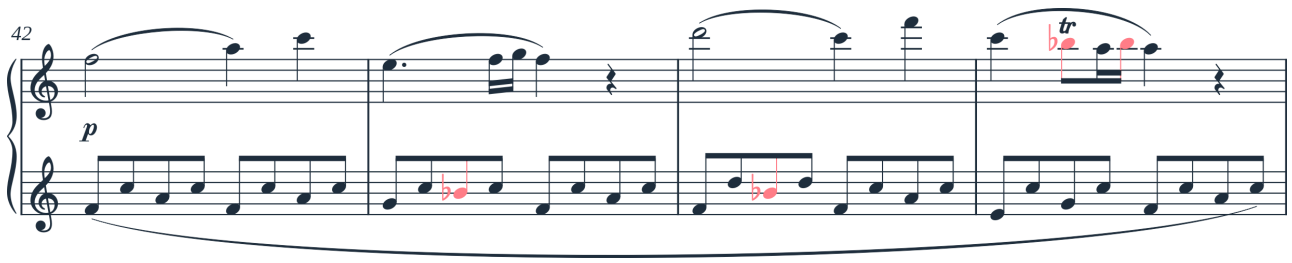
Minor keys, then a surprise



Bars 29–32, the start of the development. B♭ = the note that changed.

The exposition's last idea (bars 26–27) returns in **G minor**: B has become B♭. In bar 33 it moves to D minor; then short scales fall a step at a time (bars 37–40), and a C7 chord in bar 41 leads into F.

THE SURPRISE AT BAR 42 · THE RECAPITULATION STARTS IN F



Bars 42–45: theme 1 again, a fourth higher. The B♭s tell you it is F major.

A recapitulation normally starts in the home key, as Clementi's does in bar 24. Mozart starts his in **F major** (IV): the same tune, a fourth higher. Then watch how he gets home. The bridge scales step down again, four bars longer than before (bars 50–53 give them to the left hand), until bars 54–57 bring back bars 9–12 almost note for note, stopping on the same G chord. In the exposition that chord led to theme 2 in G; this time **theme 2 comes back in C** (bar 58), and the movement ends at home.

	CLEMENTI, OP. 36 NO. 1 (239)	MOZART, K. 545
Length	38 bars	73 bars
Theme 2	G major, bar 8	G major, bar 13 (the tune from bar 14)
Development	bars 16–23: stays near G, E♭ for color	bars 29–41: G minor, D minor, falling scales
Recapitulation starts	in C, bar 24	**in F**, bar 42
Theme 2 comes back	in C, bar 31	in C, bar 58

PRACTICE RECIPE

1. **Map it first.** Mark exposition 1–28, development 29–41 and recapitulation 42–73 in your score. Both halves are repeated.
2. **Left hand alone.** Play bars 1–4 as blocked chords, then broken (Handout 41): very quiet and even, so the tune floats on top.
3. **The scales,** hands separately and slowly, in groups of four sixteenths, every note even.
4. **The trills** (bars 4, 15, 17, 25 and in the recapitulation): even before fast. Start each on the note above, unless that note was just played (Handout 389). Then hands together.

TRY IT Play bars 1–4, then bars 42–45: the same tune, but the second time in F. Then play bars 13–17 and bars 58–62: theme 2, first in G, then at home in C.

LISTEN
Scan to hear these bars and the whole movement
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