
The Power of the Moment

*Essays on the
Western
Musical Canon*

Martin Boykan

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For Eric Chafe with gratitude for a long friendship

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MB

Martin Boykan Biography

Martin Boykan studied composition with Walter Piston, Aaron Copland and Paul Hindemith, and piano with Eduard Steuermann. He received a BA from Harvard University, 1951, and an MM from Yale University, 1953. In 1953-55 he was in Vienna on a Fulbright Fellowship, and upon his return founded the Brandeis Chamber Ensemble whose other members included Robert Koff (Juilliard Quartet), Nancy Cirillo (Wellesley), Eugene Lehner (Kolisch Quartet) and Madeline Foley (Marlborough Festival). This ensemble performed widely with a repertory divided equally between contemporary music and the tradition. At the same time Boykan appeared regularly as a pianist with soloists such as Joseph Silverstein and Jan de Gaetani. In 1964-65, he was the pianist with the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

Boykan has written for a wide variety of instrumental combinations including 4 string quartets, a concerto for large ensemble, many trios, duos and solo works, song cycles for voice and piano as well as instrumental ensembles and choral music. His symphony for orchestra and baritone solo was premiered by the Utah Symphony in 1993. His work is widely performed and has been presented by almost all of the current new music ensembles including the Boston Symphony Chamber Players, The New York New Music Ensemble, Speculum Musicae, the League-ISCM, Earplay, Musica Viva and Collage New Music.

He received the Jeunesse Musicales award for his String Quartet No.1 in 1967 and the League-ISCM award for *Elegy* in 1982. Other awards include a Rockefeller grant, NEA award, Guggenheim Fellowship, a Fulbright, as well as a recording award and the Walter Hinrichsen Publication Award from the American Academy and National Institute of Arts and Letters. In 1994 he was awarded a Senior Fulbright to Israel. He has received numerous commissions from chamber ensembles as well as commissions from the Koussevitzky Foundation in the Library of Congress, and the Fromm Foundation.

Boykan was an Emeritus Professor of Music, Brandeis University. He has been Composer-in-Residence at the Composer's Conference in Wellesley and the University of Utah, Visiting Professor at Columbia University, New York University and Bar-Ilan University (Israel) and has lectured widely in institutions such as Harvard, Yale, Princeton, The American Academy in Berlin, etc. He has served on many panels, including the Rome Prize, the Fromm Commission, the New York Council for the Arts (CAPS) and the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts. Over the years he has taught many hundreds of students including such well known composers as Steve Mackey, Peter Lieberman, Marjorie Merryman and Ross Bauer.

Quartets no. 1 and 2 were both recorded on CRI. A disk of vocal music (*Elegy* and *Epithalamion*) was released as a CD by CRI in 1998, along with the Quartet no. 4; a second CD including the Piano Trio no.2, *Echoes of Petrarch* (trio for fl., cl., and piano), *City of Gold* (fl.) and the Second Quartet was released in Jan. 2000. Another CD of chamber music includes a song cycle (“A Packet for Susan”), a sonata for violin and piano and *Flume* for clarinet and piano, and a recording of the Sonata for Solo Violin is included in a CD by the eminent violinist, Curt Macomber. In 2010 Albany Records released a CD that includes the Third String Quartet, along with an extended song cycle on poetry by Mary Oliver (*Second Chances*), a setting of the Song of Songs (*Motet*), and a piece for four instruments entitled *Songlines*. Scores are published by Mobart Music Press, and C.F. Peters, NYC. In 2004 a volume of essays entitled *Silence and Slow Time: Studies in Musical Narrative* was published by Scarecrow Press (Rowman and Littlefield). The Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, premiered in 2008, has been recorded by the Boston Music Orchestra Project (BMOP) and has been paired with the Symphony for a CD.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Some Words About Theory

I

It is said that when Schoenberg first laid eyes on Schenker's graph of the *Eroica* he exclaimed, "But where are my favorite parts?" True or not, this story has been endlessly repeated, usually with an indulgent chuckle about the naïveté of composers. Schoenberg, of course, began his career at a time when classical music was revered as supreme among the arts. Kandinsky summed up the general feeling when he wrote that "Musical sound acts directly on the soul and finds an echo there because, though to varying extents, music is innate in man."¹ For decades the symbolist movement in literature had been trying to connect with that inner world of the spirit by reshaping language. Abstraction was in the air for visual artists, and as Walter Pater famously said, "all art aspires to the condition of music." I am sure that if people of that time could have seen a graph of the *Eroica*, they would have reacted just like Schoenberg. Their response to music was so immediate and unquestioning that a reductive graph—not to mention one with a resemblance to graphs of other pieces—would have seemed like an act of vandalism.

Fast forward now to the year 1956 when Leonard Meyer published his influential book entitled *Emotion and Meaning in Music*, and you will see how the entire framework for discourse about music has changed. It can no longer be assumed that music "acts directly on the soul" (aside from the embarrassment of that last word). Only a careful investigation into the structure of the human mind seems capable of explaining how acoustic stimuli without specific outside references could be of interest. To ascribe meaning to an art form so remote from our existential concerns has become a challenge, and if "meaning," as Meyer wrote, "is to have any signification at all as applied to music, then it must have the same signification as when applied to other kinds of experience."²

With confidence in the innate source of music seriously eroded in the course of the twentieth century, Meyer was concerned to safeguard the musical tradition

¹Wassily Kandinsky, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, tr. M.T.H. Sandler (New York: Dover Publications, 1977), 27.

²Leonard B. Meyer, *Emotion and Meaning in Music* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956), 33.

through analogies with other modes of thought. From Gestalt psychology, essentially a visual theory, he borrowed the idea that the human mind is only able to understand and interpret simple, symmetrical shapes, so that ambiguity or complexity causes discomfort and stimulates a mental rearrangement. Translated into musical terms, this means that musical ideas call for continuations that form intelligible patterns (for the most part based on cultural or stylistic norms), and if there is a deviation that inhibits the expected response, the listener experiences anxiety until the expectation is ultimately fulfilled.

Meyer's theory was a brave attempt to provide meaning for music in a dark time. There is no question that we do have expectations on occasion, and that the violation of an expectation or the delay in its fulfillment is a familiar experience in music. Such expectations are inevitable when the composer has set up a repetitive pattern or when he is making use of a generic formula such as the resolution of a dissonance, or a cadence. And as we shall see in later chapters, a composer may awaken an expectation as part of a particular narrative, or he may arrange the musical surface to suggest the approach of an ending. But aside from occasions like those, it is not so easy to identify the expectation generated by a musical event. What sort of continuation, for example, would one expect for the opening unison passage of Mozart's String Quartet, K.428 (Ex.1-1)? I doubt that Kandinsky's generation would have thought to ask the question. But half a century later it is no longer obvious how collections of "acoustic stimuli" could be said to respond to one another. And so expectation becomes more than a device that is useful on occasion; it is now the source of musical continuity itself. In considering this hypothesis, however, it is important to remember that music moves relentlessly forward, and we are constantly experiencing a flow of new information: any speculation about the future, unless it is an intrinsic part of the music we are currently hearing, would leave us hopelessly distracted. For this reason, expectation, as a *general* explanation of musical continuity, must be understood as an automatic, quasi-instinctive reflex, a manifestation of cultural norms or mental processes lodged in the unconscious mind.

Example 1-1.

The musical score for Example 1-1 is presented in a grand staff format, consisting of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The key signature is one flat (F major), and the time signature is 4/4. The piece begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic marking. The melody in the right hand starts with a half note G4, followed by a half note A4, a quarter note B4, a quarter note C5, a quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, and a half note G4. The bass line starts with a half note G3, followed by a half note F3, a quarter note E3, a quarter note D3, a quarter note C3, a quarter note B2, and a half note G2. The score is divided into four measures, with the first measure containing the initial notes and the subsequent measures continuing the melodic and harmonic development.

Example 1-2.



In a short analysis of a melody from Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice* (Ex.1-2), Meyer writes that

the repetition of the C after the triadic motive creates a break in both melodic and rhythmic processes. That is, we expect the triadic motion of the opening motive to continue. The powerful effect of the high E is partly a result of the fact that it was unconsciously expected at the beginning of the first complete measure. The eighth-note motive is also expected to continue.³

Now the kind of expectation attributed here to an ascending arpeggio or a brief succession of eighth-notes certainly suggests something instinctive or automatic, but it is very different from the expectation generated by repetitions of a particular motive or by a cadential formula. It is much less specific and for that reason can easily become slippery. It is not immediately evident why the E of m.3 should be the pitch we are waiting for rather than the octave C of m.1, arguably a satisfying completion for the opening arpeggio. What would prevent us from taking the repetition of the C on the downbeat to be the confirmation of a fulfilled expectation rather than a “break in ... melodic and rhythmic processes”? And if we still want to grant the E expressive weight, we can ascribe it to the fact that it opens a new register. As for the expectation generated by the succession of eighth-notes, it is hard to see why we unconsciously desire it to continue, unless we assume that every change is, by definition, unexpected. But in that case we would find ourselves simultaneously assaulted by all sorts of conflicting expectations arising from rhythm, instrumentation, register, motive, harmonic movement, etc. And we would have to wonder how long something could continue unchanged before the expectation became annoying, before it reached the level of “saturation,” a state of mind that Meyer is also obliged to consider.

Since the belief that music acts “directly on the soul” has faded, the source of emotion in music also becomes a problem, and as a matter of course, Meyer connects it closely with “meaning” and also locates it in a delayed or inhibited fulfillment of an expectation. Freudian concepts were so widespread during the 1950s that one is not surprised to learn that a repressed instinct is the source of emotion in music. On several occasions, Meyer uses the analogy of a person

³Meyer, 133.

who craves tobacco, but discovers that his pockets are empty of cigarettes at a time when all the stores are closed. As a former chain-smoker, I can testify that the only affect associated with that inhibited fulfillment is the most extreme irritation, and I cannot remember any time when music evoked an analogous feeling (unless it was a miserable performance of a piece of mine by arrogant and incompetent players). But the real problem is that Meyer's basic assumption is too simple to account for the emotional range of music. Anxiety is only one affect, and in a musical context all the usual words, such as "love," "grief," "anger" etc. are no more than imprecise analogies. Every piece we care about seems to create its own emotional world, and there is no limit to the changes that can occur within it.

In spite of these reservations, Meyer has the merit of being one of the few theorists of the twentieth century to respect the temporal character of music. Again and again he argues against the tendency to replace the actual experience of playing or hearing with a synchronic view of total structure. But the theory does not always allow him to be consistent. He is aware of the difficulty of assigning a single expectation to many musical events, and in those circumstances he feels obliged to postulate a set of "probabilities" (his word) based on a current style. If we assume that probabilities are an unconscious collection of stylistic formulas or clichés that we have internalised at an early age, it is hard to see how the same audiences could enjoy both *Tristan* and *Die Meistersinger*. But if probabilities emerge from the particular course of a piece, they cannot be instinctive, and Meyer is assuming that a listener would be able to keep in mind a variety of options for the future while still paying attention to the stimuli racing by in the present. And on one occasion, Meyer even proposes the reinterpretation of an impression from the past while a piece is in progress. In a comment on the slow movement of Schubert's *Great C-major Symphony*, he remarks that "the entrance of what is obviously the real theme enables the listener to understand, in retrospect, the significance of the opening measures."⁴ "In retrospect" was to become one of the diseases of the twentieth century. The unconscious mind will provide no cover for intellectual reinterpretations of the past, and I cannot imagine a listener who would take the trouble to rethink a previous impression at the same time that he finds himself singing along with one of Schubert's great melodies.

⁴Meyer, 184.

II

As the century wore on, musicology increasingly lost interest in the individual work and shifted its focus to social and political issues. The Marxist “superstructure” enjoyed a surprising afterlife as music began to be treated as a symptom of the class (or gender) struggle. It became fashionable to study the public response to musical events, and the fascination with the riot at the first performance of the *Sacre du printemps* threatened to turn the most famous piece of the century into a perpetual news item in a tabloid.

Theorists did not travel that road, of course, but they too had their problems. Not only did they have to contend with the spiritual devastations of two world wars; there was also the trauma of the dissolution of functional tonality. And even in the exciting innovative years before 1914 the fear of anarchy began to be felt. Kandinsky praises Schoenberg for “severing himself from conventional beauty,” and then goes on to quote from the *Harmonielehre*, “Every combination of notes, every advance is possible but I am beginning to feel that there are definite rules and conditions which incline me to the use of this or that dissonance.”⁵ This, of course, is the germ of what was to become the twelve-tone method. For Schoenberg it was just that—a *method*, a way of reconnecting with the large-scale forms of the tonal masters. But for many of the composers of Meyer’s generation, serial composition was another attempt to address the anxieties that loom behind his theorizing. If it cannot be taken for granted that music “speaks directly” to our minds and our feelings, the very possibility of musical continuity becomes a matter of concern. In the absence of verbal narrative what is it that impels a piece of music forward? We are taught that a work of art must be “organic,” that all of its complexities ultimately coexist within a unified statement, but what sort of “statement” can be made by a non-verbal art-form? How sharp can a contrast become before the “unity” of a piece is destroyed? At what point does similarity turn into redundancy?

Worries of this kind engendered countless attempts to define the unity of a work as a complex set of variations on a single motive, a *Grundgestalt* (to use Schoenberg’s term) that informs every musical event. At the same time, composers were attracted to procedures that offered to solve the problem of continuity by determining the course of a piece in advance. So obsessive did the idea of a pre-compositional system become that there were times when the resultant music seemed only intended as a validation. But on the other hand, the intense involvement with pre-composition could also engender charts so complex that the musical surface seemed independent of its origin. I do not intend this as

⁵Kandinsky, 16-17.

a criticism; it is the surface that counts, after all. But it was sometimes hard to avoid the impression that magical properties were ascribed to the chart. I remember an evening with Boulez in the sixties after he had lectured about his method of composing, and I asked him if he thought it possible, in view of the variety and complexity of his precompositional designs, to hear or at least to deduce them from the musical surface. His answer was a firm “No.” I then asked whether these designs were still able to insure the organic unity of his music. His reply: “Yes, if they’re logical.”

The obsession with pre-compositional construction was not only a response to a deep anxiety about musical continuity. It was also a deliberate attempt, particularly in Europe, to start over from scratch after the horrors of the Second World War had seemed to close the door to any possibility of artistic expression. I think that both impulses lie at the root of the need to view music synchronically. In either case the future is no longer to be trusted. A piece of music is no longer conceived as something that lives in time; it has become a pre-existing structure that can be grasped as a whole like a visual image, even if it is only gradually revealed in the course of a performance. Pre-compositional construction is an obvious example, but many other procedures common in the twentieth century suggest a similar synchronic outlook; random successions of events, “moment forms” are also expressions of discomfort with the ordinary experience of music that moves in one direction only.

Perhaps the most unapologetically synchronic view of music can be found in the work of Heinrich Schenker, without question the greatest theorist of the twentieth century. In a revealing bit of polemic he writes that

Everything organic, every coherence belongs to God and remains His gift—the sum total of all foreground, called chaos by humans, is derived by God from His cosmos as background . . . Those who in creation or performance attribute significance solely to the foreground of a work and lose themselves in details are heathens. But on the other hand, the confessors of a genuine Divinity are those who revere the background⁶.

Even though Schenker theorists have generally been unwilling to subscribe to this theology, they still regard the background as the ultimate source of coherence and unity. The details of the foreground—those favorite moments of the *Eroica* that Schoenberg was so unhappy to miss—are by no means ignored in the theory, but their primary significance lies in their relation to the background, and it is the structural graph—the short overview of the terrain—that guarantees the life of the work.

⁶Heinrich Schenker, *Der Freie Satz*, tr. Theodore Howard Krueger (unpublished diss. University of Iowa, 1960), 21-22.

III

It is not my intention to survey musical theory of the previous century. I have only wanted to suggest why thinkers were impelled to search for a general body of laws that would define musical continuity, why individual works were so frequently analyzed only to illustrate those laws, and why those who had lost faith in them, at least for their own music, were still eager to construct a methodology that would be generally applicable. No one has ever worried about the possibility of coherence in language, but musical coherence became so problematical that the last resort was inevitably the synchronic view that simply abolished the uncertainties inherent in the passage of time.

In this way theory became very remote from the actual experience of composers, performers and listeners. It is a simple fact that music cannot be experienced like a jigsaw puzzle in which a picture is gradually revealed as the various pieces are fitted together. In the visual world it is possible to add to an image without destroying what we have already seen. But in the world of sound, the past no longer exists in our hearing. Every event *replaces* what preceded it, and music, therefore, can only be understood as a succession of events.

On the other hand, it should be equally obvious that every musical event also leaves a trace in the memory. But since music is always moving forward, we have no time to dwell on an auditory image from the past (any more than we have time to imagine a future unless the expectation is automatic and unconscious). The memory trace is felt only in the way it colors the music we are *presently* hearing. Earlier I asked what sort of continuation one would expect after the first four measures of Mozart's Quartet in E \flat . At this point let me quote the actual continuation that Mozart wrote to illustrate how profoundly memory traces can affect our current perceptions (Ex.1-3).

Example 1-3.

The musical score for Example 1-3 is presented in two systems. The first system contains four measures of music in E-flat major (two flats) and 4/4 time. The right hand begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The melody consists of quarter notes: E \flat 4, G \flat 4, A \flat 4, B \flat 4, followed by a half note G \flat 4 and a quarter rest. The bass line consists of quarter notes: E \flat 3, G \flat 3, A \flat 3, B \flat 3, followed by a half note G \flat 3 and a quarter rest. The second system begins at measure 5. The right hand has a more active melody with eighth and sixteenth notes, while the left hand continues with a steady bass line of quarter notes: E \flat 3, G \flat 3, A \flat 3, B \flat 3, followed by a half note G \flat 3 and a quarter rest.

As we pass from the first four measures to the response beginning in m.5, we can only be struck by an extraordinarily vivid contrast in texture and pacing. In place of unisons we now have full harmony. More important, there is a sudden surge of energy on the surface as the moderate, smooth procession of unisons is replaced by highly accented, varying rhythms. We have a surprising impression of speed, but at the same time something else seems to be happening, since the linear movement has actually become much slower. The sudden abundance of notes serves only to decorate two pitches remembered from the unison passage, F and A \flat , so that a duration of three quarter notes is now stretched to three measures. There would appear to be a cadence on the tonic in m.8, but immediately afterwards, the figure in the second violin surprises us with a curious double reference. On the one hand it remembers its own repeated-note figure from m.5, but on the other, it unexpectedly returns to the upper register, thereby accessing a memory of the E \flat and B \flat from the opening measures, but this time the reference to the unisons is *shortened* from six quarters to three. And this diminution along with the surprising allusion to the opening so destabilize the cadence that the whole passage is repeated a second time.

Such an extraordinarily complicated weave of contrast and memory is particularly characteristic of Mozart. But in any music the second phrase is bound to be heard in relation to the first. If there are no obvious memory traces, there is still the particular quality of the contrast, and if the second phrase seems identical to the first, it is not really identical since our impression will be colored by the fact that it is a repetition. This sort of relationship will of course continue as our experience of the third phrase is in turn colored by our memory of the first two, and gradually, in the course of a piece, meanings accumulate and grow more complex until we arrive at what we may metaphorically call the “statement” of the piece. If this is an accurate description of the way we experience music, it should be obvious that general rules for continuity, abstract principles of coherence or organic unity cannot be viable. As the Mozart example shows, the first eight measures of a piece may begin a discourse so complex that the unity of the whole work, which after all depends on a continuation of that discourse, can only be addressed in specific terms. Unity only emerges gradually in the course of listening and it is different for every piece, just as every piece that we care about is in its own way unique. Derivations from a single motive may create a restricted discourse, but they are no more likely to insure unity than they are to bore us with redundancy. And there are no structural templates that will make a composer’s life easier. To understand a piece, you need to start from the beginning, and if it fails to convince, it is because the relationship between present experience and the accumulated network of memories grows cloudy, and the music sinks into irrelevance.

We have been considering music as an art that exists in time, but the fact is that other arts also have a temporal dimension. It takes time to read a novel or watch a play. But we read at our own pace, and in the theater there are always occasions when we have time to reflect on what we have seen. Language needs those occasions because it cannot help but evoke wide-ranging references beyond the immediate context, but musical sounds refer to nothing outside themselves. They exist only in the present, and like the tick-tock of the clock, but with incomparably more variety, the continuous succession of pitch-attacks focuses our attention on the passing of time. Even dance—the art form closest to music—does not measure time so closely since its movements can often be continuous and flowing enough to mute the ticking of the clock.

Music not only takes place in time; it is also *about* time. Time passes slowly when you watch the clock. And time in music is also markedly slower than the time in which we live our daily lives. Every musician knows what an extraordinary wealth of information can be packed into a few seconds of music. Ten minutes is a considerable length for a piece and twenty minutes is usually thought to be sufficient for a major work. It takes about a half hour to read the libretto of an opera of Wagnerian length, and to perform it on the stage, without music, but with all the necessary dramatic pauses, an hour would certainly be enough. But even if time is sufficiently slow to accommodate an intricate network of musical relationships, it does not *feel* slow (as it does when you watch the clock.) It simply feels different, and a musical passage in which little seems to be happening can be as deeply meaningful as one that is crowded with information. With music that has captured our attention, silence too is riveting.

Normally, we tend to associate the passing of time with the darker occasions of life: aging, loss, mortality. But in spite of its fundamental concern with time, music is not burdened by those associations. We are totally focused on the present while playing or listening, although paradoxically it is the experience of change that rivets us. With time passing so slowly, we seem to be in some other kind of world. To be sure, life experiences do reappear as musical metaphors, and we encounter everything from dramatic confrontation to quiet agreement. We experience a wide range of feelings, but though they have their analogies in the verbal world, they are not quite the same. And there are striking differences as well; music cannot frighten us or cause anxiety. Think of the passage in which a desperate Don José pleads with Carmen for the last time; if it were a play we would most likely be in a state of high tension, but as he sings the words *il est temps encore, O ma Carmen* (“there is still time, my Carmen”) in a tempo that would be ridiculously slow if he were speaking it, it is pity that we experience, not fear. And when he stabs her shortly afterwards, we do not recoil in horror; there is only a deep sense of sadness. It is true that music can manufacture all

kinds of frightening feelings when it is used as a background for a movie, and time passes at its usual rate. But when it is music that controls the pacing, as in opera, the catharsis that tragedy provides is one of pity but not terror.

Science has shown that music inhabits the opposite side of the brain from language. It is well known that stutterers lose their stutter when they sing; names and words tend to be forgotten in old age, but musical memory seems to remain relatively unimpaired. Music, as Kandinsky noted, is innate, and just as there has never been a human community without language, so there has never been one without music. But they are very different. From the beginning music was associated with ritual, and over the centuries philosophers connected it with the harmony of the spheres. And for the serious listener in our own time, it remains totally distinct from a language expressly intended for verbal communication. Music erects its own intellectual and emotional world; it has its own temporal flow, and it endows each moment with an incomparably rich aura, an aura saturated with very recent memories. To be sure, the various parts of the brain are intricately connected, and music and words have been associated from the beginning, but as the endless controversies over text-setting attest, their life together is rarely in perfect accord.

IV

I have written this book to study a few pieces in a way that might resonate with the experience of composers, performers, or listeners. After the cultural and political studies, after the abstract formulations of the theorists, we very much need the kind of criticism that literature is fortunate to possess: the close reading of a score with the intent to deepen our understanding. Since I have been insisting that the musical experience takes place in the present, and only in the present, I have paid close attention to the moment, questioning why a composer in a particular situation selected one version rather than another. But as we have seen, details have far-reaching consequences, and so I have also tried to show how the memory traces of a myriad of moments add up in the end to a general structure. Finally, I have restricted myself to a few of the most admired works from the repertory so that the quality of the music would not become part of the discussion.

Since functional tonality is common to almost all of the music I have chosen, I cannot conclude this introduction without a few additional words about Schenker. I do not think any consideration of tonal music is possible without an awareness of his extraordinary contribution to tonal theory. So far as I know, he was the first thinker to shift attention from the chord progression and the

phrase to the voice-leading that extends across large areas of a composition. Unfortunately, his central concept, “prolongation,” has sometimes been misunderstood; it does not imply a stasis, but is rather a corollary of the distinction between consonance and dissonance. It means that a dissonance, by definition unstable, exists on a different plane from a consonance, so that the latter, because it is relatively stable, continues to resonate whether it is literally repeated or simply implied by a melodic pitch that is an inner part of its harmony. Even reinterpreted by a new harmonization, it remains stable, but if it too becomes a dissonance requiring resolution, the memory of what it was will make its motion all the more emphatic.

By calling attention to these crucial effects, Schenker has given us a profound insight into the long-range linear movements that help to shape the narrative of a piece. The problems begin with the assumption that the linear trajectory of every piece ultimately reduces to a single structural background, the stepwise linear descent from the third or fifth degree of the scale to the tonic. Schenker wished to restrict this formula to the great masterpieces, and though his disciples extended it to all of tonal music, they still regard it as the source of organic unity, or at the very least, a guarantee of coherence. If it is not quite the mark of greatness Schenker believed, it remains the essential formula for “directed motion,” as Felix Salzer put it in *Structural Hearing*⁷. Once again we encounter the notion of expectation, now as an axiom of an essentially synchronic theory rather than as an example of an intuitive mental process. But this abstract formulation only magnifies the difficulties inherent in any general reliance on expectation. In music (as in the novel) our feelings can be deeply aroused by an incident with an uncertain outcome and such an experience will remain fresh even after the piece has become familiar. But the game is up if the music itself insistently proclaims the inevitability of a happy ending.

Now it is true that the vast majority of tonal pieces do exhibit a linear descent from $\hat{5}$ or $\hat{3}$ to $\hat{1}$, with each step replacing its predecessor with a clear change of harmony. Since the tonic triad, with its root doubled in outer voices, is completely stable, a step-by-step descent into that place of perfect calm has a metaphoric resonance that is hard to ignore. It is also true that this descent is very often stretched across an entire piece. But in many cases it does not appear until close to the end where it obviously cannot be understood as a structural plan, and is really functioning only as a device for closure. And it can often be found in the middle of a piece, a very strong punctuation that also interferes with a deep structural role as Schenker defines it. Although I have been insisting

⁷Felix Salzer, *Structural Hearing: Tonal Coherence in Music* (New York: Boni, 1952, reprinted New York: Dover, 1962 and 1982)

that real musical unity depends on relationships specific to each individual work, and although I find it hard to believe that every musical narrative has the same basic thrust, the presence of Schenker's formula in so many pieces does require an explanation.

This is not the place for a detailed discussion of functional tonality; I have already devoted several pages in *Silence and Slow Time* to a hypothetical account of its evolution, particularly with reference to Monteverdi.⁸ For our purposes here, I would say only that it grows out of one basic distinction: there is the tonic (supported by subdominant and dominant) and there is everything else, and this distinction mirrors the one between subject and object, the individual and the world outside. Functional tonality was not invented to insure aesthetic unity; it was born out of a world-view that has its counterpart in the Cartesian *cogito*, and in the painting of the early Baroque in which everything is seen from the point of view of the beholder. No matter where tonal music moves, no matter how wild the modulations, we hear it all from the vantage point of the tonic; indeed, the impression of wildness depends on that. The rules familiar from the harmony textbooks—rules for voice doublings, appropriate chord progressions, chromatic alterations—can all be traced to this principle. But they are very local, of course, and for the piece as a whole, it becomes the task of long-range voice-leading and deep structure to insure that the tonic triad remains a constant point of reference.

If the linear descent is so common, it is because no other pattern offers such an effective tonic background. But it is not the only option. As we shall see, a Schubert song can change the head-tone from $\hat{3}$ to $\hat{5}$ in the course of things. And in the first movement of the *Hammerklavier* Sonata, Beethoven finds an entirely different *Ursatz* to keep the tonic dangling before us in the face of harmonic progressions that are among the most surprising in tonal music. If we think of deep structure as a way of maintaining the presence of the tonic in our memory rather than as a magic formula for artistic unity, we will find Schenker an invaluable tool for the understanding of the classical tradition.

⁸Martin Boykan, *Silence and Slow Time*, (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2004), 79-89.

CHAPTER II

THE POWER OF THE MOMENT

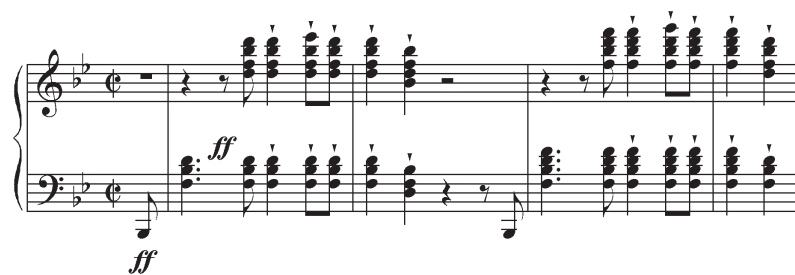
The Hammerklavier and the Archduke

I

Towards the beginning of the first movement of Beethoven's *Hammerklavier* Sonata there is a powerful and disturbing event that continues to haunt the rest of the piece. It occurs at the beginning of the bridge passage. We have just experienced music of extraordinary energy, an array of arpeggios and scales that affirm the B \flat tonic. Now the sonata appears to begin again; the first two measures are quoted verbatim, but in the next two measures the harmony takes an unexpected turn as a D-major triad astonishingly substitutes for the tonic (compare Ex. 2-1 with Ex. 2-2).

Commenting on this passage, Edward Aldwell and Carl Schachter describe the effect as “drastic” and “uncompromising.” The D triad will ultimately prove to be the dominant of G, the key of the second theme-group of the exposition, and as Aldwell and Schachter point out, “a composition cannot move from

Example 2-1.



Example 2-1 is a musical score for a piano passage. It consists of two staves, treble and bass clef, in a 2/4 time signature. The key signature has two flats (B-flat major). The first two measures are identical to the previous passage. The third measure features a fortissimo (ff) dynamic marking and a D-major triad (D, F#, A) in the bass clef, which is the dominant of G. The fourth measure continues with the D-major triad in the bass clef and a B-flat major triad (B-flat, D, F) in the treble clef. The fifth and sixth measures continue with the B-flat major triad in the treble clef and a B-flat major triad (B-flat, D, F) in the bass clef. The seventh and eighth measures continue with the B-flat major triad in the treble clef and a B-flat major triad (B-flat, D, F) in the bass clef. The ninth and tenth measures continue with the B-flat major triad in the treble clef and a B-flat major triad (B-flat, D, F) in the bass clef. The eleventh and twelfth measures continue with the B-flat major triad in the treble clef and a B-flat major triad (B-flat, D, F) in the bass clef. The thirteenth and fourteenth measures continue with the B-flat major triad in the treble clef and a B-flat major triad (B-flat, D, F) in the bass clef. The fifteenth and sixteenth measures continue with the B-flat major triad in the treble clef and a B-flat major triad (B-flat, D, F) in the bass clef. The seventeenth and eighteenth measures continue with the B-flat major triad in the treble clef and a B-flat major triad (B-flat, D, F) in the bass clef. The nineteenth and twentieth measures continue with the B-flat major triad in the treble clef and a B-flat major triad (B-flat, D, F) in the bass clef. The twenty-first and twenty-second measures continue with the B-flat major triad in the treble clef and a B-flat major triad (B-flat, D, F) in the bass clef. The twenty-third and twenty-fourth measures continue with the B-flat major triad in the treble clef and a B-flat major triad (B-flat, D, F) in the bass clef. The twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth measures continue with the B-flat major triad in the treble clef and a B-flat major triad (B-flat, D, F) in the bass clef. The twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth measures continue with the B-flat major triad in the treble clef and a B-flat major triad (B-flat, D, F) in the bass clef. The twenty-ninth and thirtieth measures continue with the B-flat major triad in the treble clef and a B-flat major triad (B-flat, D, F) in the bass clef. The thirty-first and thirty-second measures continue with the B-flat major triad in the treble clef and a B-flat major triad (B-flat, D, F) in the bass clef. The thirty-third and thirty-fourth measures continue with the B-flat major triad in the treble clef and a B-flat major triad (B-flat, D, F) in the bass clef. The thirty-fifth and thirty-sixth measures continue with the B-flat major triad in the treble clef and a B-flat major triad (B-flat, D, F) in the bass clef. The thirty-seventh and thirty-eighth measures continue with the B-flat major triad in the treble clef and a B-flat major triad (B-flat, D, F) in the bass clef. The thirty-ninth and fortieth measures continue with the B-flat major triad in the treble clef and a B-flat major triad (B-flat, D, F) in the bass clef. The forty-first and forty-second measures continue with the B-flat major triad in the treble clef and a B-flat major triad (B-flat, D, F) in the bass clef. The forty-third and forty-fourth measures continue with the B-flat major triad in the treble clef and a B-flat major triad (B-flat, D, F) in the bass clef. The forty-fifth and forty-sixth measures continue with the B-flat major triad in the treble clef and a B-flat major triad (B-flat, D, F) in the bass clef. The forty-seventh and forty-eighth measures continue with the B-flat major triad in the treble clef and a B-flat major triad (B-flat, D, F) in the bass clef. The forty-ninth and fiftieth measures continue with the B-flat major triad in the treble clef and a B-flat major triad (B-flat, D, F) in the bass clef.

Example 2-2.



Example 2-2 is a musical score for a piano passage, identical to Example 2-1. It consists of two staves, treble and bass clef, in a 2/4 time signature. The key signature has two flats (B-flat major). The first two measures are identical to the previous passage. The third measure features a fortissimo (f) dynamic marking and a D-major triad (D, F#, A) in the bass clef, which is the dominant of G. The fourth measure continues with the D-major triad in the bass clef and a B-flat major triad (B-flat, D, F) in the treble clef. The fifth and sixth measures continue with the B-flat major triad in the treble clef and a B-flat major triad (B-flat, D, F) in the bass clef. The seventh and eighth measures continue with the B-flat major triad in the treble clef and a B-flat major triad (B-flat, D, F) in the bass clef. The ninth and tenth measures continue with the B-flat major triad in the treble clef and a B-flat major triad (B-flat, D, F) in the bass clef. The eleventh and twelfth measures continue with the B-flat major triad in the treble clef and a B-flat major triad (B-flat, D, F) in the bass clef. The thirteenth and fourteenth measures continue with the B-flat major triad in the treble clef and a B-flat major triad (B-flat, D, F) in the bass clef. The fifteenth and sixteenth measures continue with the B-flat major triad in the treble clef and a B-flat major triad (B-flat, D, F) in the bass clef. The seventeenth and eighteenth measures continue with the B-flat major triad in the treble clef and a B-flat major triad (B-flat, D, F) in the bass clef. The nineteenth and twentieth measures continue with the B-flat major triad in the treble clef and a B-flat major triad (B-flat, D, F) in the bass clef. The twenty-first and twenty-second measures continue with the B-flat major triad in the treble clef and a B-flat major triad (B-flat, D, F) in the bass clef. The twenty-third and twenty-fourth measures continue with the B-flat major triad in the treble clef and a B-flat major triad (B-flat, D, F) in the bass clef. The twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth measures continue with the B-flat major triad in the treble clef and a B-flat major triad (B-flat, D, F) in the bass clef. The twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth measures continue with the B-flat major triad in the treble clef and a B-flat major triad (B-flat, D, F) in the bass clef. The twenty-ninth and thirtieth measures continue with the B-flat major triad in the treble clef and a B-flat major triad (B-flat, D, F) in the bass clef. The thirty-first and thirty-second measures continue with the B-flat major triad in the treble clef and a B-flat major triad (B-flat, D, F) in the bass clef. The thirty-third and thirty-fourth measures continue with the B-flat major triad in the treble clef and a B-flat major triad (B-flat, D, F) in the bass clef. The thirty-fifth and thirty-sixth measures continue with the B-flat major triad in the treble clef and a B-flat major triad (B-flat, D, F) in the bass clef. The thirty-seventh and thirty-eighth measures continue with the B-flat major triad in the treble clef and a B-flat major triad (B-flat, D, F) in the bass clef. The thirty-ninth and fortieth measures continue with the B-flat major triad in the treble clef and a B-flat major triad (B-flat, D, F) in the bass clef. The forty-first and forty-second measures continue with the B-flat major triad in the treble clef and a B-flat major triad (B-flat, D, F) in the bass clef. The forty-third and forty-fourth measures continue with the B-flat major triad in the treble clef and a B-flat major triad (B-flat, D, F) in the bass clef. The forty-fifth and forty-sixth measures continue with the B-flat major triad in the treble clef and a B-flat major triad (B-flat, D, F) in the bass clef. The forty-seventh and forty-eighth measures continue with the B-flat major triad in the treble clef and a B-flat major triad (B-flat, D, F) in the bass clef. The forty-ninth and fiftieth measures continue with the B-flat major triad in the treble clef and a B-flat major triad (B-flat, D, F) in the bass clef.

B \flat major to G major through a diatonic pivot chord, for the two keys have no chords in common.” Nevertheless, they continue, “it would be easy to effect a smoother chromatic modulation than Beethoven’s by avoiding the direct chromatic progression F \flat –F \sharp ” and they offer an alternative suggestion (Ex. 2-3). Why then did Beethoven avoid a solution of this kind? The answer they propose lies in “the motivic design of the piece. The contrast between F \flat and F \sharp (together with a related one between B \flat and B \natural) is a most important feature of the movement and, indeed, of the entire sonata. To have softened this first confrontation would have weakened the compositional fabric.”¹

There can be no doubt of the importance of F–F \sharp and B \flat –B in the *Hammerklavier* Sonata; as a matter of fact, the keys of B \flat major and B minor will eventually come to seem like primary antagonists. But we have not yet encountered this drama, and one has to ask what there is *at this point* to distinguish an intentionally abrupt harmonic progression from a compositional defect. Actually, it is not even true that the half-step F–F \sharp is necessarily abrupt; Beethoven could quite easily have juxtaposed those pitches without creating any disturbance at all. I have provided another version of the passage in Ex. 2-4; notice that F \flat –F \sharp have become even more conspicuous here because they have been moved from an inner voice to the bass. But now the shock is gone.

What then is responsible for an effect that is indeed “drastic” and “uncompromising”? To understand the situation we need to turn back to the opening where we will find a whole section devoted exclusively to the melodic ascent from B \flat to F. In the first four measures (Ex. 2.1) it takes the form of an arpeggio; subsequently (Ex. 2-5), it is repeatedly spelled-out in stepwise motion, and finally (Ex. 2-6), we have a B \flat that is prolonged by scales through several octaves, culminating in an F-major arpeggio. This ascent from the tonic pitch to the fifth degree is of course very familiar as an opening formula; it can be found in any number of Schenker graphs. What is peculiar to the *Hammerklavier* is the amount of repetition, the pointed insistence on the formula (varied though it is).

At the beginning of the bridge, one more repetition seems to be in the offing. But this time we will not make it to the F as the unexpected D-major chord interrupts the formula. It is not the F \sharp by itself that creates a disturbance. Note in my smoothed-over version (Ex. 2-4) how an easy stepwise move from Beethoven’s own F to F \sharp allows us to construe the D-major chord as V $_5^6$ of VI in B \flat , and in this situation the F \sharp is simply a leading-tone requiring resolution. We are not likely to be bothered by a note that initiates an ordinary harmonic progression. What makes Beethoven’s passage so startling is the fact that har-

¹Edward Aldwell, Carl Schachter, *Harmony and Voice Leading*, (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Group/Thomson Learning, 2003), 596

Example 2-3.

Musical score for Example 2-3, showing a short piano piece in G minor, 2/4 time, with a simple harmonic structure.

Example 2-4.

Musical score for Example 2-4, showing a piano piece in G minor, 2/4 time, featuring complex chordal textures and melodic lines.

Example 2-5.

Musical score for Example 2-5, showing a piano piece in G minor, 2/4 time, with a melodic line marked *p* and a fermata over the fifth measure.

Example 2-6.

Musical score for Example 2-6, showing a piano piece in G minor, 2/4 time, with dynamic markings (*f*, *sf*, *rit.*, *dim.*, *p*, *pp*) and a fermata over measures 27-30.

monic motion is stifled; his D-major triad is in root position with the root doubled in the soprano so that it is completely stable. Without an obvious dominant function, it can find no way to fit comfortably into the B \flat tonality. As a result the F \sharp , for the moment deprived of the possibility of functioning as a leading tone, is also felt to be stable, and so the expected goal of the formula (F \sharp) now seems unattainable and there is no longer any path to follow. After the exuberance and the energy of the opening, Beethoven has staged a train-wreck.

I do not know how he could have been more explicit. The energy of the first section, flowing from the rhythmic surface, generates an abundance of ornamental pitches (neighbors, passing notes, etc.). In the opening arpeggio, for example, the D and the F are both decorated by neighbors, and the E \flat in particular receives additional emphasis when the formula becomes linear (Ex. 2.5). In writing my version it seemed obvious that the E \flat would continue to decorate the D when it was reharmonized by a D-major triad in first inversion. But in root position with the D doubled in outer voices, that triad signals a crisis, and as soon as it appears, Beethoven puts a stop to all decoration. We hear the pianist crudely pounding on the same chord, and after the highly sophisticated textures we have been experiencing, the effect is shattering. The general silence which follows speaks volumes, and the impression of a derailment is further sharpened by the fact that the music on the other side of the silence is still the same D-major triad—a quiet memory of the shock. In the end, the surface recovers its rhythmic flow, and a C \sharp is added to the triad to turn it into a dominant-seventh chord, but until the second theme, 24 measures later, there will be no essential change of harmony.

In short, it is the sudden stoppage that defines the meaning of this moment, and that is what lends the F \sharp the power to generate a whole passage in the recapitulation. Since the original tonic in a tonal piece is always present at the back of our minds, withholding the expected fifth degree of the scale along with its appropriate harmony becomes a compelling issue. But we must not assume that the future course of the movement is now determined. Beethoven could have treated the interruption as a purely local shock; there is nothing that would have prevented him from resuming his harmonic itinerary once the dominant-seventh on D was resolved. G-major, if that were the resolution, could easily have been transformed back into G-minor (VI) and reinterpreted as II in F, thereby providing us with a somewhat delayed structural $\hat{5}$. That would have been a very different piece of course. Beethoven chose instead to let the interruption continue to vibrate through the exposition and the development and into the recapitulation. Clearly he wants us to feel that the trauma of the D-major triad is too powerful to be quickly repaired, but from the technical point of view, that

is no easy task; it takes a master to keep this incident in the forefront of our consciousness over such a long stretch of time.

II

The first casualty of the interruption is the second theme. For we do not have a normal modulation to G major; there is no voice-leading, no series of chords that seems to open a path to a new tonic. For this reason the theme, at least for Beethoven, is quite unusual. Unlike Haydn, he has little interest in monothematic sonata-forms, and his themes are almost always contrasting. But in the absence of a real transition to a new key, the second theme in this instance markedly resembles the response to the opening arpeggio in mm. 5-8 (Ex. 2-7). The notes and intervals are different, but the phraseology is identical. Both are composed in 4-measure units with the first two measures in sequence, and both sequences have identical rhythmic patterns. The parallelism between the opening tonic arpeggio and the aborted arpeggio of the bridge is so obvious that it is easy to hear the second theme as a direct parallel to measure 5-8, delayed only by the protracted length of the dominant-seventh. By linking the two

Example 2-7.

The image displays a musical score for Example 2-7, consisting of three systems of music. The first system shows measures 5 and 6 in a piano part, with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. Measure 5 is marked with a '5' above the staff. The second system shows measures 63 and 64, with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. Measure 63 is marked with a '63' above the staff. The third system shows measure 64 in a harpsichord part, with a bass clef and a key signature of one sharp. The notation includes various rhythmic values, accidentals, and phrasing slurs.

Example 2-8.

Musical score for Example 2-8, measures 75-78. The score is in G major, 2/4 time. Measure 75 begins with a treble clef and a common time signature. The melody starts on G4 and moves through a series of notes: A4, B4, C#5, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4. The bass line consists of a sustained D4 chord. A slur covers measures 75 and 76. Measure 77 continues the melody: C#5, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4. Measure 78 concludes with a final G4 note. A second slur covers measures 77 and 78.

Example 2-9.

Musical score for Example 2-9, measures 112-116. The score is in G major, 2/4 time. Measure 112 starts with a treble clef and a common time signature. The melody is a series of chords: G4-B4-D5, A4-C#5-E5, B4-D5-G5, A4-C#5-E5, B4-D5-G5, A4-C#5-E5, B4-D5-G5, A4-C#5-E5. The bass line is a steady eighth-note pattern: G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3. Dynamics include *sf* and *p*. A dashed line labeled (8^{th}) spans measures 112-113. Measure 114 continues the chordal melody: G4-B4-D5, A4-C#5-E5, B4-D5-G5, A4-C#5-E5, B4-D5-G5, A4-C#5-E5, B4-D5-G5, A4-C#5-E5. The bass line continues the eighth-note pattern. Dynamics include *f*, *sf*, *sf*, *sf*, and *ff*. A dashed line labeled (8^{th}) spans measures 114-115. Measure 116 concludes with a final chord: G4-B4-D5. The bass line ends with a final G2 note. A first ending bracket covers measures 114-115, with a first ending arrow pointing to measure 116.

responses, even as notes and intervals are changed, Beethoven raises the ghost of the interruption: in place of the linearized ascent from $\hat{1}$ to $\hat{5}$, the second theme essentially prolongs the $\hat{3}$ (D).

An even more potent allusion to the interruption is obvious in the next phrase (Ex. 2-8), as the D-major triad is repeatedly arpeggiated. But something has changed here. The original momentum has been restored as the exposition begins to point towards its closing material, and so the chord (with a $C\sharp$ added) is no longer in root position. The D now recovers its $E\flat$ neighbor which had been abruptly cancelled in the bridge, and its reappearance is pointedly underlined by its shifting rhythmic placement along with its somewhat jolting confrontation with an $E\sharp$. From here until the end of the exposition, the neighbor (usually $E\sharp$ but occasionally also $E\flat$) will remain on center stage along with the privileged D until the emphatic linear descent in the last phrase which serves to connect the exposition, via the first ending, with its repeat (Ex. 2-9).

And so the pitch $E\flat$ acquires an essential role in the interruption narrative, becoming even more prominent in the development, where it will finally be tonicized. But the particular relationship between D and $E\flat$ remains unaltered. The fact is that the first ending of the exposition could also have served as its second ending, connecting directly with the introduction to the $E\flat$ fugato. Ex. 2-10 shows how the omission of ten measures (mm. 122-131) would still leave a very smooth connection. Play the sonata from the beginning, however, and my compressed version will seem to have muddled the focus. With the pitch D so crucial to the narrative, it is not appropriate for the supportive $E\flat$ to become the

Example 2-10.

118. 8^{va} -----
 (132.)
f sf sf sf ff p ff

fp f fp p

Example 2-11.

118. 8^{va} -----
 2-----
 (124.)
f sf sf sf ff sf sf f

pp

Example 2-12.

The musical score for Example 2-12 consists of three systems of piano and bass staves. The first system (measures 189-192) shows a piano part with dynamic markings *ff*, *sf*, *ff*, and *fz*, and a bass part with chords. The second system (measures 193-195) features a piano part with dynamic markings *ff*, *sf*, and *sf*, and a bass part with chords. The third system (measures 196-199) features a piano part with dynamic markings *sf*, *ff*, and *dim.*, and a bass part with chords. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and accidentals.

initiator of the new section. That is why Beethoven unexpectedly reverses the linear descent at the end of the exposition to retrieve the D for the beginning of the development (Ex. 2-11), and why he emphatically underlines it by restating a motive from the closing material. In this way $E\flat$, prolonged though it is by the fugato, can in the end continue to function as a neighbor.

Because of the accelerated pacing that results from contrapuntal entrances, a fugato is common in development sections for its contribution to a general upbeat sense. In this case the $E\flat$ which begins the fugato moves first to C minor (m.167) and then to a G-major chord, understood as dominant (m.176). What follows is a powerful scalar ascent to a D (Ex. 2-12), supported in the bass by the half-step from $E\flat$ to D that is very familiar from the exposition (mm. 189-191), and in this context the arrival at a climactic tonicized D-major chord (m.197) can only be heard as a reincarnation of the interruption. And now we are ready for the critical melodic ascent from D to F that will resolve the issue that has preoccupied us since the bridge.

Example 2-13.

Musical score for Example 2-13, measures 200-203. The score is in treble and bass clefs. Measure 200 starts with a treble clef and a bass clef. The treble staff has a melodic line starting on G4, moving to A4, B4, and C5. The bass staff has a bass line starting on G2, moving to F2, E2, and D2. A slur covers measures 201-203. In measure 201, the treble staff has a chord of G4, A4, B4, and C5. In measure 202, the treble staff has a chord of G4, A4, B4, and C5. In measure 203, the treble staff has a chord of G4, A4, B4, and C5. The bass staff has triplets of G2, F2, E2, and D2 in measures 201, 202, and 203.

Example 2-14.

Musical score for Example 2-14, measures 221-225. The score is in treble and bass clefs. Measure 221 starts with a treble clef and a bass clef. The treble staff has a melodic line starting on G4, moving to A4, B4, and C5. The bass staff has a bass line starting on G2, moving to F2, E2, and D2. A slur covers measures 221-225. In measure 221, the treble staff has a chord of G4, A4, B4, and C5. In measure 222, the treble staff has a chord of G4, A4, B4, and C5. In measure 223, the treble staff has a chord of G4, A4, B4, and C5. In measure 224, the treble staff has a chord of G4, A4, B4, and C5. In measure 225, the treble staff has a chord of G4, A4, B4, and C5. The bass staff has a bass line starting on G2, moving to F2, E2, and D2. A *cresc.* marking is present in measure 221. A *ff* marking is present in measure 225. A *f* marking is present in measure 225.

III

The first step in this ascent is the enharmonic respelling of $E\flat$ as $D\sharp$ to allow it to resolve *upwards* to $E\sharp$ (Ex. 2-13). All through the development, the narrative has intently focused on the changing meaning of $E\flat$. The story began with its sudden disappearance in the bridge. Gradually, it reappeared in its old role as a neighbor to the structural D, finally attaining a measure of independence in the fugato as a tonic in its own right, only to resume its original role in the end. But now, even though it briefly functions as a leading tone, it soon becomes a stable pitch once more, serving as the third of a B-major chord. Here is our first encounter with the B tonality that is slated to play a major role in the sonata. But I do not think we are meant to grasp this yet; though the harmonic progression is a bit abrupt, there is nothing deeply disturbing about B major at this point since the half-step which introduces it ($D-D\sharp/E\flat$) is by now very familiar. Nevertheless, the tonality is surprising enough to call into question the stability of the $D\sharp/E\flat$, already weakened by its shifting meanings, and we are prepared for the promotion of $E\sharp$ from neighbor to primary pitch. Reharmonized by the

dominant of B, it is this E which will ultimately be driven upwards by a moving bass line to reach the F that signals the recapitulation (Ex. 2-14). Under these dramatic circumstances, the voice-leading—D, D \sharp , E, F—finally resolves the basic narrative issue. It has taken nearly 200 measures to reach this point, and I do not know of a more triumphant recapitulation in music. A tide of rhythmic energy carries the bass across the compositional groups, the harmony is enriched, the texture thickens, and the general effect is one of massive affirmation.

The final two measures of the development have occasioned what is possibly the most extended textual controversy in all of music. Scholars continue to debate whether the A should be natural or sharp. In his edition of the Beethoven Sonatas, Schenker argues that the absence of a natural sign before the A in the original edition can only be a mistake because the chromatic voice-leading in the bass begins a sequence of fifths and sixths with the top voice (G-E, G \sharp -E, A-E, A-F, B \flat -F) that must progress in an orderly fashion.² In view of the fact that it is standard procedure to signal a major event by *breaking* a repetitive pattern, this is a surprisingly weak argument. A recapitulation would hardly seem forceful if it appeared in the course of a predictable sequence. I suspect that it is actually the absence of a dominant that really concerned Schenker. But given the generous dimensions of this movement, the last-minute dominant that his emendation proposes would hardly do much for the recapitulation. Furthermore, as even the most routine analysis would show, this development can in no way be considered an example of a dominant prolongation. Nor is there any hint of voice-leading firmly directed towards a dominant that prepares the recapitulation. In fact, the dominant is notable for its absence; Beethoven does not need it because the issue created by the interruption generates music that is every bit as upbeat. That is why it seems to me that the A \sharp is correct. For one thing, the last appearance of the critical E \natural requires the dissonant A \sharp (rather than the consonant A \natural) to motivate its resolution to F; at the same time, the reinterpretation of the dominant of B as the augmented-sixth of B \flat is necessary to provide the strongest possible harmonic thrust for that event. And finally, if you have followed the narrative from the beginning, you will understand why the F, when we finally reach it, must first be harmonized by a *tonic* fifth before the recapitulation can begin³.

²Ludwig van Beethoven, *Klavier.Sonaten*, ed. Heinrich Schenker, new edition revised by Erwin Katz (Vienna: Universal-Edition, 1945), 518.

³Tovey, in his commentary on the Beethoven Sonatas for Pianoforte (London, Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music, 1931) obviously prefers the A \sharp reading when he jokingly remarks that “Beethoven.... would have been delighted with it if someone had pointed out to him that he had actually written it”, but he rejects it on documentary grounds. Curiously, the major (cont.)

IV

As I remarked in the previous chapter, this movement does not conform to Schenker's familiar voice-leading graph for classical sonata-form. In place of the linear descent from the "head-tone" to a tonicized scale degree, followed by an "interruption" of the descent on dominant harmony at the end of the development and a recapitulation that begins again with the head-tone, we have a single overriding issue, the completion of the tonic arpeggio that arches across everything from the exposition to the recapitulation. The sectional boundaries—second theme-group, development, recapitulation—remain as firm as ever, but the insistent reference to the shocking D-major chord cuts across them, and thereby intensifies the driving energy on the surface. As a complement to the great fugue that concludes the *Hammerklavier*, Beethoven seems to have wanted this first movement to cross-breed sonata form with something like a continuous toccata, and I think it quite possible that he had Bach in his head. In any case, we have here—along with op. 101—one of his late experiments in sonata-form that will become progressively more daring during the last quartets until the first movement of op. 132, where the form, if it exists at all, has completely changed its meaning.

Much of Beethoven does of course conform to Schenker's template, and as I indicated earlier, the fundamental narrative we have been exploring is based on a local formula that is very familiar from Schenker. But it is significant that an expansion of that formula to cover a huge area of the movement is just as consistent with a coherent form as the standard graph. Functional tonality does have its constraints, but there is more than one way of shaping it, even at the level of what theorists call "deep structure."

V

Beethoven's recapitulations, unlike Haydn's, do not generally involve extensive recomposition. Only the bridge passage needs to be changed to allow the second theme-group to remain in the tonic. It is not uncommon, though, for the

piece of evidence that he adduces on behalf of the $A\sharp$ seems rather to indicate the opposite. At one point Beethoven clearly did consider $A\sharp$ in the following sketch of the chord sequence leading to the recapitulation:

#	6	6
	4	5
A	A	A

But he must have realized that the last two chords could not possibly have been communicated to the listener without additional pitches, and had he chosen this version, he would have been obliged to change the texture at the end of the passage.

bridge to maintain the impression of a modulatory passage, perhaps to dramatize the fact that the second theme will now be transposed from its original key. In the *Hammerklavier*, however, Beethoven faced a serious problem because this bridge is about an interruption rather than a modulation. A second interruption quickly leading back to the tonic in time for the second theme would obviously be a disappointment. And yet something is required to keep the second theme fresh, particularly in view of its unmistakable resemblance to a passage from the first theme-group (see Ex. 2-7).

Beethoven's solution on this occasion is to provide a modulation *before* the bridge. The extraordinary energy released at the moment of recapitulation expands the opening section through a string of sequences in the course of which a harmonic movement to $G\flat$ takes place, confirmed at the end of the phrase by a full cadence. $G\flat$ will inevitably evoke a memory of the fateful $F\sharp$ of the exposition, and the consequences will be immediately felt. In the bridge, beginning in m. 267, there will only be one statement of the opening motive, harmonized by a B-minor chord. Once again we experience a shock, but Beethoven finds a way to make it even more unsettling than the D-major interruption in the exposition, and the omission of the expected repetition of the motive contributes to its strangeness.

To grasp how disturbing it is, we need only compare it to the first measure of the exposition or the recapitulation (Ex. 2.15). Rhythm, voicing and register are identical and the common D in the soprano makes the comparison unavoidable. But except for the D there is nothing to relate the B-minor chord to the $B\flat$ major tonality. The B-major at the end of the development, a closer relative to $B\flat$, was domesticated by familiar voice-leading, and the B-minor triads earlier in the recapitulation, even the accented one in m. 255, were only passing $\frac{6}{4}$ chords. This B-minor triad, on the other hand, is in root position. Furthermore, it is obviously more likely to recall the interruptive D than the opening $B\flat$ chords and now that it is placed at the *beginning* of the phrase, the shock is intensified. And to make matters worse, it is approached by a passage that contains what is arguably Beethoven's most bizarre measure.

Example 2-15.

The image displays two musical excerpts from Beethoven's Hammerklavier. The left excerpt, labeled 'm. 267', is in D major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. It features a piano (*ff*) dynamic. The right hand plays a B-minor triad (B3, D4, F#4) in root position, while the left hand plays a single D4 note in the soprano register. The right excerpt, labeled 'm. 227', is in B-flat major (two flats) and 2/4 time. It also features a piano (*ff*) dynamic. The right hand plays a B-minor triad (B3, D4, F#4) in root position, while the left hand plays a single D4 note in the soprano register. The notation is in grand staff with treble and bass clefs.

Example 2-16.

m. 260

The musical score for Example 2-16 consists of two systems of piano music. The first system covers measures 260 to 263. The key signature has two flats (B-flat major), and the time signature is 2/4. The music features a sequence of chords in the right hand, with dynamics marked *fz* (forzando) and *dim.* (diminuendo). The bass line provides a rhythmic accompaniment. The second system covers measures 264 to 267. It begins with a *rit.* (ritardando) marking. The dynamics shift to *pp* (pianissimo) and *ff* (fortissimo). The final measure of the system shows a chord with a sharp sign, indicating a change in the harmonic structure.

After the recapitulation cadences on $G\flat$, a literal transposition of the exposition leads to the sectional close with four measures of $G\flat$ harmony followed by a four-measure arpeggio of its dominant. If the B-minor chord were to begin the bridge in this situation, it would have the familiar sound of a deceptive cadence. But defined as a subdominant rather than a tonic (no matter how brief), it would no longer seem like much of a threat. And so, at the very last moment, with no precedent in the exposition, and without any change in figuration to mark the event, the dominant unexpectedly resolves to a tonic fifth on $G\flat/F\sharp$ (Ex. 2-16). It might seem that all will be well now that this fifth can in turn be reinterpreted as V of a tonicized B-minor, but actually it is quite unsatisfactory because the leading tone is unaccountably omitted. On the other hand, if you try playing the passage with an $A\sharp$ added to the $F\sharp$ fifth, you will find that nothing is clarified and the effect is even worse. The sudden resolution of a dominant at this point in the phrase is rhythmically unacceptable, and in this situation the B-minor chord, now supported by a real dominant with a leading tone, sounds too much at home to be believable. I have to admit that this passage has sometimes seemed to me so peculiar that it could only be explained as a compositional lapse. But at other times the extended four-measure *diminuendo* into weirdness has seemed to me a perfect introduction to a chord that will, for a moment, shake the foundations of the recapitulation.

If Beethoven has gone to such lengths to arrange for this shock, it is not simply to match the exposition. There is no question of architectural symmetry here; the energy generated by the resolution of the prolonged narrative issue is enough to fuel a considerable expansion of the first section of the recapitu-

was tonicized in the previous section. Modulation assures the freshness of the theme, but it is equally important to note that in a fundamental sense this music is totally transformed by its context. Back in the exposition the second theme had continued the prolongation of the interruption; now it is approached by a restatement of the linear ascent that resolved that issue, and the memory of a triumphal moment bathes it in an entirely new light.

At this point the recapitulation reverts to a literal transposition of the exposition, and it might seem as if the narrative is essentially over. There is no further threat to the B \flat tonality, as the melodic line happily prolongs a privileged F. But a disturbance still lingers in the air from the two bridge passages, and so Beethoven extends the closing material to arrange for an emphatic linear descent from F to D—that same D that was once harmonized with D-major and B-minor chords. Here it is harmonized by the tonic, and the music lingers for a while with a lyrical quotation from the closing material before continuing the descent from D to B \flat . And so, at the conclusion of the movement, we encounter the quintessential Schenkerian formula. But since it comes so late in the piece it can hardly qualify as “deep structure,” and even as it pauses to remember a couple of dramatic events, its primary function here is obviously to signify closure.

VII

The *Archduke* Trio, Lewis Lockwood has noted, “in the same key of B \flat and dedicated to the same patron, comes [close] to being a model for the *Hammerklavier* ... [and] in their first movements, the two works share important features of their harmonic plans.”⁴ The correspondence is in fact remarkable. Both works place a tonic B \flat chord back-to-back with a D-major chord to lead into a second theme-group located in the key of G. Both feature the key of E \flat in the development, and both revert to D-major harmony before the transition to the recapitulation.⁵ Nevertheless, as Lockwood observes, the two works “differ sharply.” In fact, I cannot imagine a more extreme musical contrast than the volcanic energy of the *Hammerklavier* on the one hand, and the *Archduke*’s deeply introspective lyricism on the other. And herein lies an obvious question: music theory has long been concerned with large-scale pre-compositional planning, but if two very different works can use identical harmonic plans we have to consider what it is that those plans actually contribute.

⁴Lewis Lockwood, *Beethoven: The Music and the Life* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2003), 379-80.

⁵Prof. Lockwood has called my attention to D. B. Greene’s *Temporal Processes in Beethoven’s Music* (New York, 1982), to his knowledge, the first extended comparison of the *Hammerklavier* and the *Archduke*.

Example 2-19.

At the very beginning of the trio and the sonata there is already enough to suggest their highly ambiguous relationship. Where the *Hammerklavier* quickly and repeatedly ascends from B \flat to F, the *Archduke* performs what is essentially the same task, but at a much more reflective pace (Ex. 2-19); the melody first dips down to an inner voice for a low F before it makes its ascent, and the process requires 8 measures rather than 2. It would be hard to imagine a startling event like an interruption in this pastoral environment, and in fact the *Archduke* traces a clear and uncontested path into the key of the second theme-group. Unlike the *Hammerklavier*, it follows the familiar Schenkerian template with a heavily marked linear descent from F through E \flat to D (Ex. 2-20). And when the half-step, F-F \sharp , occurs shortly afterwards, the F \sharp is not in the least disturbing; harmonized now by a $\frac{6}{4}$ chord, it is anything but a dead end.

In both the trio and the sonata the second theme is preceded by a fairly extensive dominant upbeat, but it is striking how different the two passages feel. In the *Hammerklavier* we take it to be a continuation of the stoppage occasioned by the D-major interruption, an interval of time necessary to regain the momentum of the earlier music. In the *Archduke*, on the other hand, it occurs *after* the journey to the new key, and even if we still lack a full cadence in G, we feel that the music is directed towards the future. And so it is appropriate for this second theme, unlike the *Hammerklavier*, to offer a contrast to earlier material, and in place of the relaxed, lyrical first theme, we encounter short motivic groups with repeated notes (Ex. 2.21). It may at first be surprising that the response to this theme (Ex. 2-22) also seems similar to the corresponding passage in the *Hammerklavier* (Ex. 2-8). Both help to direct the exposition towards the closing material, and both evoke a memory of earlier music with a heavy emphasis on the pitch D. But here the similarity ends. Where the *Hammerklavier* remembers the bridge, the *Archduke* transposes a variant of the first theme (mm. 3-4 of Ex. 2-19) but assimilates the characteristic metrical gesture of the second theme by concluding its groups on the second beat, and this fundamental change in the phraseology of the reference heightens our awareness of the passing of time. The situation in the *Hammerklavier* is different because the trauma of the interruption proves to be obsessive, and if the presence of an E \flat evokes the passing of time, it has to compete with the resurrection of a long-dead E \flat .

Example 2-20.

Example 2-20 is a piano score in B-flat major, 3/4 time. It consists of four systems of music. The first system (measures 7-21) features a treble clef staff with trills and a bass clef staff with chords. Dynamics include *cresc.* and *f*. The second system (measures 22-23) has a treble clef staff with trills and a bass clef staff with chords, marked *pp*. The third system (measures 24-28) has a treble clef staff with trills and a bass clef staff with chords, marked *cresc.*. The fourth system (measures 29-33) has a treble clef staff with chords and a bass clef staff with chords, marked *p*, *cresc.*, and *f*. The fifth system (measures 34-37) has a treble clef staff with chords and a bass clef staff with chords, marked *p* and *f*.

Example 2-21.

Example 2-21 is a single treble clef staff in C major, 2/4 time. It starts at measure 52 with a dynamic marking of *sfp*. The music consists of a series of eighth notes and quarter notes.

Example 2-22.

Example 2-22 is a piano score in C major, 2/4 time. It starts at measure 60 with a dynamic marking of *p*. The treble clef staff has a melody of quarter notes, and the bass clef staff has a bass line of chords.

It would seem from this comparison that the sequence of tonalities is less significant than the route traversed. I do not mean to say that key relations are unimportant. Since the tonic $B\flat$ remains in the back of our minds through both works, the particular relationship between $B\flat$ and G colors them both. But that relationship is very much affected by events encountered along the way. Differences between the long-range structures of the two works, between the arpeggiation of the tonic triad and the linear descent, engender differences in everything from the details of voice-leading to the general character of the themes. G-major in the *Hammerklavier* is not quite the same as G-major in the *Archduke*.

This difference is perhaps most evident in the development. Unlike the *Hammerklavier*, the *Archduke* does not reestablish D as a pitch of priority after the linear descent from D closes the exposition. Instead, it moves directly into the $E\flat$ subdominant, somewhat along the lines of the version I proposed in Ex. 2-10. Here we can clearly see the effect of long-range structure. Since the *Hammerklavier* is based on an ascending tonic triad, and the concluding segment of the voice-leading rests on D, that is the pitch that flanks the main body of the development on both sides. The *Archduke*, on the other hand, follows the more common path of a linear descent from the F ($\hat{5}$), so that the goal of the development is the second degree of the scale (C), harmonized by the dominant. For this reason a reprise of the linear $\hat{3}$ (D) is not needed until the time has come to prepare for the dominant ($\hat{2}$). On the page both developments may seem to traverse the same territory, but tonal plans can be transformed by the context generated by deep structure.

Deep structure cannot do this alone, however. If we trace the history of the critical pitch D across both developments, it will become obvious to what extent local detail makes it possible for structure to be vividly experienced. In the *Archduke*, as we have seen, the D arrives late in the game. Only after varied statements of the main theme in $E\flat$ do we hear a sequence that terminates with a D-major chord, understood as the dominant of G-minor (Ex. 2.23). But D begins to seem more like a tonic than a dominant when we next hear a bit of the main theme in that key (Ex. 2-24). And whatever doubts we still might have are resolved with the appearance of the $\frac{6}{4}$ chord in m. 135. In this truly magical measure (marked *sempre pp*), D is clearly reinterpreted as a tonic, since the G-major triad, no longer the presumed resolution of a dominant, has instead become a dissonant neighbor. But when this $\frac{6}{4}$ chord subsequently turns into a chord in root position, we are once again plunged into uncertainty, and the next transposition of the theme (mm.139ff.) will in fact redefine G as a tonic. This is how the phrase ends, but almost immediately the tonicized G is itself turned into a dominant. Throughout this passage the instability characteristic of a

Example 2-23.

Example 2-23 shows two systems of piano music. The first system begins at measure 121 and the second at measure 124. Both systems are in a key signature of two flats and common time. The music features a treble and bass clef. The first system includes dynamic markings *sf* and *sfz*, and articulation like trills. The second system includes a trill marking *tr*.

Example 2-24.

Example 2-24 shows two systems of piano music. The first system begins at measure 134 and the second at measure 138. Both systems are in a key signature of two flats and common time. The music features a bass clef. The first system includes dynamic markings *pp* and *sempre pp*, and articulation like slurs. The second system includes a slur marking.

development is experienced not only through the usual technique of modulation but also through quiet shifts in meaning. And so the structural D gradually loses its stability as it prepares for the descent to C. Compare this with the straight path I described earlier for the D in the *Hammerklavier*. Harmonized at first by a tonic G-major carried over from the exposition, it returns at the climax of the development to become the tonicized D-major of the interruption. Two moments encapsulate the structural difference between the two works. Where a stable D, supported by a tonic D-major chord, is only heard in the *Archduke*

during a dreamlike passage when meanings are in flux (Ex. 2-24), the same chord is the goal of the development in the *Hammerklavier*, the launching-pad for the transition to the recapitulation.

I cannot conclude this comparison without calling attention to an unusual procedure shared by the trio and the sonata. Both anticipate the recapitulation with a premature tonic (assuming my reading of the controversial $A\flat/\sharp$ in the *Hammerklavier* is correct). Since it is more or less standard practice to coordinate the recapitulation with the arrival of the tonic, one might expect that stretching the rule would have similar consequences. But where the premature tonic serves to shield the quiet theme of the *Archduke* from the usual accent at the beginning of a recapitulation, the same tactic in the *Hammerklavier* leads to an explosive downbeat. Once again, opposite effects are generated by differences in deep structure cooperating with local detail. We have seen how the arrival at the fifth, $B\flat$ - F , in the *Hammerklavier* concludes a long and tense narrative; intensified by the chromatic voice-leading and the augmented-sixth chord that precedes it, it represents the climax of the whole movement, and Beethoven sets it apart by refusing to elide it with the recapitulation. The approach to the recapitulation in the *Archduke* is an entirely different matter. Here the point is to deepen the introspective quality of the main theme. And so Beethoven focuses on the fact that the arrival at the dominant concludes a segment of the deep structure, and although there is often an intense expectation of the main theme at this point, he takes care on this occasion to present the dominant as the *resolution* of a highly accented $\frac{6}{4}$ chord (Ex. 2-25). The result is a brief moment of relaxation

Example 2-25.

The image shows a musical score for Example 2-25, consisting of two systems of piano music. The first system begins at measure 176 and ends at measure 179. The second system begins at measure 180 and ends at measure 183. The score is written for piano and includes various dynamic and articulation markings. In the first system, measure 176 has a *cresc.* marking. Measure 177 features a *ff* dynamic. Measure 178 has a *sf* dynamic. Measure 179 has a *sf* dynamic. The second system starts at measure 180 with a *sf* dynamic. Measure 181 has a *fp* dynamic. Measure 182 has a *fp* dynamic. Measure 183 has a *fp* dynamic. There are also articulation markings: a *tr* (trill) in measure 178 and a *v* (accusatory) marking in measure 183. The score includes a $\frac{6}{4}$ time signature in measure 178 and a $\frac{6}{4}$ time signature in measure 183. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major/C minor).

and that is what makes it possible for the recapitulation to emerge unaccented out of a winding melodic thread that effectively masks the root movement of the harmony.

Both passages are graphic examples of the imprint of deep structure on the musical surface. I would certainly agree with Lockwood that the *Archduke* was probably a “model” for the general harmonic plan of the *Hammerklavier*, but it has nothing to compare with the immediate shock of the D-major interruption and its long string of narrative consequences. It is tempting to speculate that the unusual structure of the *Hammerklavier* began as an intentional response to the *Archduke*. I like to imagine Beethoven thinking back over the trio during one of his long walks, remembering that B \flat -major–D-major chord progression, and intuitively understanding—without putting anything into words—how it could be redesigned into a dramatic event that would resonate through the toccata-like music he had in mind. In a sense, the *Archduke* may have been less a model than a counter-example. A comparison of the two works finally leaves one stupefied by the extraordinary freedom of Beethoven’s mind. He is absolutely without preconceptions; it never occurs to him to trust a compositional approach that worked elsewhere. And even if he happens on one occasion to reuse a tonal plan from an earlier masterpiece, everything is transformed, miraculously reinvented so that it can assume its proper role in music that could not be more different.

Example 3-1.

Fremd bin ich ein-ge - zo - gen,

Example 3-2.

Fremd bin ich ein-ge - zo - gen, fremd zieh' ich wie - der - aus

Example 3-3

Das Mäd - chen sprach von Lie - be

CHAPTER III

VOICE AND PIANO IN DIALOGUE

Seven Songs from the *Winterreise*

I

A very considerable literature has grown up around the German *Lied*. But it is curious that one indispensable feature, the piano introduction, does not often attract much attention. Perhaps it seems too trivial. It was invented, after all, to supply the singer with the correct pitch, and it often looks as though anybody could write one; you need only strum a few chords or quote a snatch of the vocal melody.

Nevertheless, the relationship between successive phrases is at the heart of our experience of music, and when a composer begins a song, he does have to choose from a multitude of options: the piano can lead directly into the vocal entrance or it can cadence before it; it can quote a vocal phrase verbatim, vary it, or ignore it altogether. And this is a choice that obviously matters since the introduction is the first music we hear. In spite of the fact that the entrance of the singer is the event we are waiting for, the character of the vocal line is decisively shaped by the piano introduction, and the consequences for everything that follows can be far-reaching.

Even a casual glance at Schubert's *Winterreise* reveals the care involved in the choice of each introduction along with their extraordinary variety. And the opening song, *Gute Nacht*, offers a telling example of a vocal melody that needs the piano introduction to realize its full tragic power. With its slow, steady repetition of a D-minor chord that creates a dirge-like atmosphere, the piano sets the emotional tone of the whole cycle. Against this background the vocal line twice descends into its lowest register, and there is nothing that would have prevented a composer from quoting it unchanged as the introduction to the song (Ex. 3-1). This is a familiar practice, and if we did not know the *Winterreise*, I doubt that we would have found anything to criticize; the song would still have been a moving experience. But now look at what Schubert actually wrote (Ex. 3-2). Piano and voice are remarkably similar; the piano also arpeggiates down to cadence in the lower register. But there is an essential difference. The piano accelerates as it plunges; the focal point of the descent, the final F-E-D, is shortened from

its first appearance in the upper register, and its urgency is intensified by the reinterpretation of the F as an appoggiatura to a very brief E that itself dissonates against the bass. The voice, on the other hand, only descends as far as a dissonant E where it lingers; it is not until the end of the phrase that it finally descends to a D. That E sounds like a painful refusal, a moment of longing, perhaps, that struggles against the implacable descent of the piano. The reference to the poem is unmistakable—*Fremd bin ich eingezogen/fremd zieh' ich wieder aus,* (“I came as a stranger and left as a stranger”)—and without the introduction as it stands, the vocal melody would have lost much of its expressive power.

By itself, the contrast between the two descents is not quite enough to make the point; it also takes a careful arrangement of the metric grouping on the surface. Notice that the piano melody begins on the upbeat to the second bar, but it would have been a mistake if the song had actually begun there; since a registral descent lies at the heart of this music, it is important, at least at the opening, that the lowest register receive the metric accent. That is why the song begins with a “vamp” in the first measure; with m.2 defined as weak, the stress falls naturally on the arrival at the low D in m.3. And to insure that the second low D will also fall on a strong measure, Schubert devises a further variant of the vocal line. By repeating m.3 he renders m.4 weak, and then uses a tonic $\frac{6}{4}$ chord to furnish m.5 with a heavy accent. As a result the cadential D of m.7 is also strong, setting up a vivid parallel with the vocal E on the next strong downbeat (m.9), and that is how the dotted motive which prolongs that E while denying a further descent becomes the emotional focal point of the phrase.

Once the motive is defined in this way, it can play its part in the changing moods of the rest of the stanza. When the poem lightens and the speaker remembers how love once seemed possible, a move to the relative major seems to occasion a reversal in the alternation of strong and weak measures so that it becomes possible to feel that the dotted motive, now transposed, is no longer stressed (Ex. 3-3). We do remember the original pattern, of course, since the rhythmic surface remains unaltered, and to some extent the music appears to hover between the two alternatives. But once the dark mood returns (Ex. 3-4), there is no longer any room for doubt as the dotted motive, again located on E, occupies an unequivocally strong measure, its pathos deepened by the fact that it now *begins* the phrase. It is true that this close correlation of text and music is hard to maintain through all the subsequent repetitions of a strophic song, and for some reason Schubert rearranged lines in the last two stanzas of this one. But as far as the musical material is concerned, it would seem that the first stanza is decisive.

In any case, it is the dialogue between the melodic descents of piano and voice that defines the meaning of the song, and to maintain it, the piano introduction is repeated between all the stanzas. As an image of something im-

Example 3-4.

Example 3-4 shows a musical score in 2/4 time with a key signature of one flat. The vocal line (treble clef) begins with a whole rest, followed by a dotted quarter note G4, an eighth note A4, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note A4. The lyrics "nun ist die Welt so trü - be" are aligned with these notes. The piano accompaniment (grand staff) features a bass line of chords and a treble line with eighth-note patterns. Dynamics include *fp* (fortissimo piano) markings.

Example 3-5.

Example 3-5 shows a musical score in 2/4 time with a key signature of two sharps. The vocal line (treble clef) starts with a dotted quarter note D5, an eighth note E5, a quarter note F5, and a quarter note E5. The lyrics "will dich im Traum nicht stö - ren, wär Schad' um dei - ne — Ruh'" are aligned with these notes. The piano accompaniment (grand staff) features a bass line of chords and a treble line with eighth-note patterns. Two asterisks (*) are placed above the first two notes of the vocal line.

placable, it is left unchanged; the response to the shifting emotional climate belongs entirely to the vocal descent. To represent the anger that erupts in the penultimate stanza—*Was soll ich länger weilen, / dass man mich trieb' hinaus* (“Why should I wait until they throw me out?”)—the singer cuts short the E, refusing any cadence in the lower register. On the other hand, the ironic farewell of the final stanza, set in the major mode, restores the original descent, but two notes are changed, and that turns out to be anything but trivial. Ex. 3-5 compares the original melody, translated into the major, with Schubert’s revision. The upper D is now placed on a downbeat, reducing the descent that follows to an embellishment that prolongs that D by a move into an inner part. The result is a stress on the upper register that again reverses the alternation of strong and weak measures, robbing the dotted motive of its accent earlier than in previous stanzas. As the turn to major is pointedly affirmed by this apparently insignificant variant, the general atmosphere of the song is totally transformed.

It is striking how meaningful a formulaic move from minor to major can become when a detail like this vocal phrase is appropriately reshaped. But on this occasion the modal change also raises a serious issue. For the text of this stanza is bitterly ironic, and one has to ask whether it is possible to understand so emphatic a turn to major as pure façade. Here we have a telling example of the difficulties that beset the marriage of words and music. We are accustomed to saying one thing and meaning another, but the musical experience is too focused on the present, too compelled by the sounds that surround us to allow for a contradictory subtext. The presence of a text does make a difference, of course, and as I pointed out earlier, motion picture sound-tracks manufacture the most unlikely sensations. But they can do this only because the audience pays no attention to them; when music remains in the forefront of our consciousness, as in a Schubert song, it is hard to imagine how anyone would consider an entire stanza in the major suitable for an angry, hostile frame of mind.

I am certain that Schubert understood the irony of his poem. But had he wanted to suggest something like an ironic tone of voice in his singer's use of the major, he would hardly have repeated the strophic melody so exactly. He would surely have allowed a trace of bitterness to affect the declamation, and he might have quickened the pacing at some points, since the relative slowness of musical time is not very conducive to irony. Instead, nothing is changed but those two notes. It would seem that Schubert had something else in mind. Since music shuts down the impulse to process complicated semantic nuances there are times when a composer has to claim the poem as his own. The words still remain important, only it is the literal meaning that we hear, not some ironic subtext. I would suggest that Schubert sets the last stanza of *Gute Nacht* not as Wilhelm Müller intended, but rather as a temporary relief from the pervasive gloom, so that when we hear the words, *Will dich im Traum nicht stören, / wär' Schad' um deine Ruh* ("I don't want to disturb your dream; / It would be a pity to ruin your sleep"), we take it simply as a mark of courtesy.

And as it turns out, the change to major with its shift in emphasis to the upper register is exactly what is needed at this moment in the song, for it will offer a shattering contrast to the plunge into darkness that follows in the postlude (Ex. 3-6). As at the end of every stanza, that plunge is entrusted to the piano. But even though the piano solo begins in its usual way by overlapping with the vocal cadence, the familiar music of the introduction has disappeared. There is no longer a melody; instead of passing tones and appoggiaturas, a bare series of chords directs the cadential figure down to the lowest register in a gesture that is tragic in its finality.

Example 3-6.

II

Das Wirtshaus (no. 21 of the cycle) is another song that exploits the contrast between a piano introduction and a closely related vocal line. In this case the piano does not close with a tonic cadence. With its dominant articulations it functions, rather, as the kind of introduction that directly connects with the vocal entrance (Ex. 3-7). We will meet the singer *on the way*, and his account of the graveyard he happens to stumble upon is prefigured in the easy rhythm of the piano that in the end morphs into the heavy tread of quarter notes when the melodic line descends below the tonic pitch into an inner part. Now compare the introduction with the vocal line. The rhythmic patterning is almost identical and there is also a clear pitch connection. The basic motive of the piano solo is the descending third A-G-F, and it is played four times. The same motive governs the vocal line, but now you must listen beneath the surface rhythm, for it unfolds at a much slower tempo and is played only once; you can hear it on the downbeat of every measure. It is this contrast with the piano introduction that subtly transforms the singer's rhythm and gives it something of the aura of a funeral march. As in most of his songs, Schubert could easily have used the opening motive of the vocal line for his introduction, but you need only compare Ex. 3-8 with the real version in Ex. 3-7 to grasp the expressive power of this augmentation intoned beneath a surface that otherwise remains unchanged.

The underlying slow tempo becomes very palpable with the heavy G-minor cadence in the middle of the phrase, the first full cadence in the song (mm.6-7). There is nothing more final than the progression $IV-I_4^6 - V^7 - I$, concluding with a tonicized triad with its root doubled in outer voices. Such a cadence at this point in the song would only be possible with functional tonality where a sense of the true tonic is maintained by the deep structure. We have already heard the 3-2-1 descent in F played as a surface motive in the introduction, and now that it is spread out as structural voice-leading, the G cadence does not threaten the tonality. Rather, it supports the descent that will lead to an F, but at the same

Example 3-7.

The musical score consists of three systems. The first system shows the piano introduction in G minor, 3/4 time, with dynamics *pp* and *cresc.* and accents (>) over the first and third measures. The second system begins at measure 5, with the vocal line starting on the word "Auf". The piano accompaniment continues with *pp* dynamics. The third system begins at measure 8, with the vocal line continuing the previous phrase. The piano accompaniment features a half-cadence on the dominant (D) at the end of the system.

5
Auf ein - en To-dten - a - cker hat mich mein Weg ge-bracht; all -

5
pp

8
hier will ich ein - keh - ren; hab' ich bei mir ge-dacht

8

time its finality suggests a stoppage in the middle of the descent that makes us acutely aware of the augmentation even as it contributes to the oppressive weight of the atmosphere.

And then in the third stanza everything seems to change (Ex. 3-9). It must be said that the text here is not one of the summits of German lyric poetry. The image that occurs to the speaker as he looks at the headstones in the cemetery is the nineteenth-century equivalent of a motel with a NO VACANCY sign. But Schubert elevates this text with some of the most poignant music ever written, and once again we are not likely to process anything but the literal sense of the words, the imagined transformation of the cemetery into an inviting place of rest. The rhythmic patterning of the melody here is no different from previous stanzas or the introduction. But for the moment the weight has lifted, and in place of full cadences on G and F we now have half-cadences on the dominant.

Example 3-8.

Auf ein-en To-ten-a - cker hat

mich mein Weg ge-bracht;

Example 3-9.

Sind denn in die-sem Hau - se die

Kam - mern all' be - setzt?

Example 3-10.

Nur wei - ter denn nur — wei - ter mein treu - er Wan - der-stab nun

cresc. *p*

3 wei - ter denn, nur — wei - ter, mein treu - er Wan - der-stab!

cresc.

6

Most important, however, is the glimpse of another world in the melodic line. Until this point the structural head-tone has been A, supported by its neighbor Bb. There are no higher pitches except for passing decorations like the C in the tonic cadences, in technical terms, octave displacements of inner parts. But now a new register opens up as C becomes the structural head-tone. Prepared by the registral change of the piano interlude that precedes it, the effect is breathtaking; the mood audibly lightens and the singer, for the first time, is able to imagine a conversation with the invisible innkeeper.

That structural C will remain until the last bar of the vocal line. But it will suffer a tragic transformation as the hope for relief fades. In place of half cadences open to the possibility of movement, the C is reharmonized in the minor mode and tonicized, and with its root doubled in outer voices it has become agonizingly stable (Ex. 3-10)—agonizing, because stability, in this case, refers to

the unalterable burden of homelessness, but also, in musical terms, because this is a chord that does pose a serious threat to the tonality, as the F-major tonic is deprived of its dominant. Schubert provides no modulation to transform C minor back into V of F. Instead, minor and major alternate indecisively, and it is left to the piano to give a new meaning to its introductory solo as the same music now closes the song with a linear descent to the tonic note.

III

Die Kräbe (no. 15) is another poem that invents a symbol for death, and a comparison with *Das Wirtshaus* offers a good example of Schubert's unflinching awareness of the implications of his texts. Here, the image is a crow that follows the speaker everywhere, "faithful unto the grave." Since nothing will change, we will not find an introduction similar to *Das Wirtshaus* with its dominant articulations that prepare for an encounter about to happen. Instead we have a downward descent that concludes before the entrance of the singer with the finality of a Neapolitan cadence on the tonic (Ex. 3-11).

And what can the singer do but submit? Note-for-note he reproduces the piano introduction. But it is remarkable that even in this situation the vocal phrase sounds different from the piano. To some extent this can be explained by the scoring, as the melody switches from the soprano in the introduction to the bass in the body of the song, where the piano doubles the voice. But more important is the counterpoint that accompanies the melody. As Ex. 3-12 shows,

Example 3-11.

The image displays a musical score for Example 3-11, consisting of two systems of piano accompaniment and a vocal line. The first system shows the piano introduction in 2/4 time, featuring a treble clef with a melodic line and a bass clef with a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes, some marked with a '3' for triplets. The second system shows the vocal line, also in 2/4 time, with a treble clef and a melodic line that begins with a four-measure rest, followed by a vocal phrase. The piano accompaniment continues in the bass clef, mirroring the vocal line's rhythm.

Example 3-12a.

Example 3-12b.

Ei - ne Krä - he war mit mir aus der Stadt ge - zo - gen.

Example 3-13.

Ei - ne Krä - he war mit mir aus der Stadt ge - zo - gen.

the introduction boasts a finely shaped line that, with a few adjustments in the fourth measure, could serve as a good example of invertible counterpoint. But Schubert chooses not to use it. Instead, he writes a simple chordal accompaniment, with each of the parts restricted to a very few notes (Ex. 3-13). Once the singer enters, nothing is allowed to distract from the path that is shared by the inseparable pair. The focus narrows dramatically as the world contracts to a melodic descent.

Twice in the course of this song, the ambience changes as the singer addresses the crow. Something of the bitterness of the last stanza of *Gute Nacht*

emerges in the text, but now it is explicit, and so Schubert on this occasion inflects the declamation to register the change in the emotional climate. The crow is inexorable, however, and unlike *Das Wirtshaus*, there are no new harmonic or registral regions to be uncovered. The vocal line for the most part sticks around the tonic pitch, and the effect is simply to delay the repetitions of the original melody, the first with the singer doubling the bass, and then without the human presence, as the piano postlude responds to an emotional outburst of the singer by insisting on the finality of the Neapolitan cadence.

IV

There are very few cheerful passages in the *Winterreise* and the earliest, and certainly the most famous, is *Der Lindenbaum* (no. 5). This nostalgic evocation of earlier memories comes upon us like an oasis in the desert, or more properly, a mirage, and it begins with a piano solo unlike any we have examined so far: an extended phrase that apparently has nothing to do with the vocal melody (Ex. 3-14). Many people have understood it to represent a journey (or later in the song, the memory of a journey) with the movement of wheels (or is it, perhaps, the rustling of branches?) represented by the figuration in the right hand, and the sound of the *Posthorn* by the characteristic horn call in the last two measures.

What follows is a melody that has become so familiar that it is hard to realize how much it owes to this introduction. Ex.3.15 presents a general outline of the piano solo. The structural $\hat{5}$ (B) in m. 2, picked up in register in m. 4, follows a clearly directed linear route to an A in m. 6, where it is harmonized by II in root position. When this A is then reharmonized as the seventh of a dominant-seventh chord, we are ready for the entrance of the singer. The harmonic sequence (I-V-VI—II-V⁷) as well as the structural voice-leading are so clearly pointed towards this dominant that it is not surprising that the image of a traveling carriage readily comes to mind.

Everything points to the tree at the gate of the city, but the singer who will describe it enters on an unexpected note. His B has a quality of strangeness because the A from the preceding dominant is a seventh and should descend stepwise when the dominant resolves to a tonic. Schubert is not really violating a rule here. You can claim that the A does resolve in an inner part, while the singer's B picks up the B-octave of m.2 to double a new upper voice. But that is only another way of saying that there is an issue between the piano introduction and the vocal line since the singer, by reaching back to an earlier pitch, plainly

Example 3-14.

Example 3-14 is a musical score in 3/4 time, key of D major. It consists of three systems of music.

The first system shows the piano accompaniment. The right hand features a triplet of eighth notes in the first measure, followed by a half note. The left hand plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment. Dynamics include *pp* and *cresc.*

The second system continues the piano accompaniment. The right hand has a triplet of eighth notes in the first measure, followed by a half note. The left hand continues the eighth-note accompaniment. Dynamics include *cresc.*

The third system shows the vocal entry. The vocal line begins with the lyrics: "Am Brunnen vor dem Tho-re da steht ein Lin-den-baum;". The piano accompaniment features a triplet of eighth notes in the first measure, followed by a half note. Dynamics include *fp*, *ppp*, and *p*.

Example 3-15.

Example 3-15 is a musical score in 3/4 time, key of D major. It shows the piano accompaniment for a vocal line.

The piano accompaniment consists of a single line of music. The right hand features a triplet of eighth notes in the first measure, followed by a half note. The left hand plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment. Dynamics include *fp*, *ppp*, and *p*.

The score is divided into six measures, numbered 1 through 6. The first measure is marked with a *V* (V). The second measure is marked with a *I* (I). The third measure is marked with a *V* (V). The fourth measure is marked with a *VI* (VI). The fifth measure is marked with a *II* (II). The sixth measure is marked with a *V7* (V7).

Example 3-16a.

Musical score for Example 3-16a. The vocal line (treble clef) shows the melody for the first two measures: a quarter rest, a quarter rest, a quarter note G, and a quarter note A. The piano accompaniment (treble and bass clefs) features a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The lyrics "Am Brunnen" are written below the vocal line.

Example 3-16b.

Musical score for Example 3-16b. This version shows an alternative piano accompaniment for the same vocal line as in Example 3-16a. The piano accompaniment is more complex, with a more active right hand and a different bass line. The lyrics "Am Brunnen" are written below the vocal line.

Example 3-17.

Musical score for Example 3-17. The vocal line (treble clef) shows the melody for the first two measures: a quarter rest, a quarter rest, a quarter note G, and a quarter note A. The piano accompaniment (treble and bass clefs) features a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The lyrics "Ich musst' auch heute" are written below the vocal line.

ignores the expectations aroused by the journey to the dominant-seventh. Even if we restrict ourselves to a purely local context, the same disconnect will turn up. Ex.3.16 shows two ways of hearing m.8; if the first involves the upward resolution of the seventh, the second is equally untenable because of the exposed parallel fifths in outer voices. To be sure, the singer very quickly provides the proper resolution of the seventh, but precisely because the horn call so clearly represents the goal of the introduction, the brief moment of disconnect gives the famous melody its air of unreality, and makes it a perfect setting for memory and dream.

When the harsh realities of the present intrude upon the fantasies of the young man, and the major mode turns to minor in the second stanza, the disconnect will obviously disappear (Ex. 3-17). There is no longer a mirage as the

same dominant chord briefly connects the interlude with the entrance of the singer, so that the darker mood evoked by the piano flows directly into the vocal melody. The third stanza goes even further and removes the melody altogether, leaving a motive from the introduction as the sole survivor. We have to wait for the final stanza to retrieve something of the original nostalgia as the singer remembers the tree after a cold and windy night, but even though this is the appropriate moment for a recapitulation of the first stanza, the quotation is by no means exact. The context has been affected by the disturbance we have just encountered, and it is worth noting that the interlude again connects with the vocal entrance. Traces of the darker mood also persist in the piano figuration that began with the turn to the minor mode although it is now in the major. By weaving these memories of earlier music into the final stanza, Schubert has complicated and enriched the pastoral surface of the ending.

V

Although most of the songs in the *Winterreise* have an introduction that dialogues with the singer, *Auf dem Flusse* (no. 7) is an exception. Its text begins *in medias res* with the singer already addressing a once-flowing river now coated with ice, and so the introduction, for dramatic reasons, is kept to the minimum: a simple E-minor cadence to give the singer his pitch and a top voice consisting of only two notes (Ex. 3-18). But as we shall see, those two notes have consequences.

It is important to notice that the vocal line, when it enters, simply doubles the bass (Ex. 3-19). It certainly sounds like the main melody, and it absorbs our attention, but the distinction between melody and bass is a *sine qua non* of all functional tonal music, and in a technical sense, the real melody here is in the right hand of the piano as it continues its alternation of G and F# from the introduction. Schubert is clearly responding to the central image of the poem; like the frozen river, the right hand is locked into its two notes, and the only event,

Example 3-18.

The musical score for Example 3-18 is written for piano in 2/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The score consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff contains a series of chords, starting with a G major triad (G, B, D) and moving to an F# major triad (F#, A, C). The bass staff contains a simple melodic line of eighth notes: G, F#, G, F#, G, F#, G, F#. The dynamic marking is *pp staccato*.

Example 3-19.

5 *sehr leise*

Der du so lu - stig rausch-test, du hel - ler, wil - der Fluss, wie still bist du ge -

10

wor - den, giebst kei - nen Schei - de - gruss!

ppp

Example 3-20.

(~)

In dei-ne De - cke grab' ich mit ei-nem spi - tzen Stein den

pp

27

Na-men mei - ner Lieb - sten und Stund' und Tag hin - ein:

provoked by the word *still* (“silent”), is the cessation of all motion altogether as the alternation freezes on the F \sharp , ultimately prolonging it by a 3-2-1 descent for the cadence. The result is an arresting modulation, but the point here is not the distance from the tonic but rather the poetic image; along with the F \sharp , the D \sharp , a leading tone with a strong tendency to resolve to E, also turns to ice when it mutates into the temporary tonic of the cadence.

The absence of any E-minor conclusion sets the tone for the first two stanzas. And then in the third stanza, as the singer calls to mind his first encounter with his beloved, the minor mode changes to major (Ex. 3-20). Modal changes have long been recognized as a regular feature of Schubert’s style. This is a generic device, however, and is very easy to handle. If Schubert’s examples are so memorable, it is because they are carefully tailored for specific situations. We have seen how the shift to the major mode in the first song is supported by a small but significant alteration in the vocal line. Similarly, the turn to minor in *Der Lindenbaum* occasions a change in the relationship between introduction and vocal entrance. Here in *Auf dem Flusse*, the modal change brings with it a transformation of the texture, and the singer, after two stanzas in the bass, now doubles the right hand of the piano to become the melodic voice. The obsessive two-note alternation, changed by the major mode from G-F \sharp to G \sharp -F \sharp , engenders a new melody, and the effect is electrifying. It is as though the singer has finally begun to sing.

And as he memorializes the past by inscribing it on the ice, the vocal line ascends step-by-step to a B (with a C \sharp neighbor). It would appear that we have a situation similar to *Das Wirtshaus* where the structural $\hat{5}$ is reached late in the song to signify a positive change in mood. But here the $\hat{5}$ is not tonicized, and in fact it turns out to be very temporary. The music goes back to the minor mode, and the piano resumes the alternation of G and F \sharp . At this point it is critical to pay close attention to the text. As the turmoil beneath the icy crust of the river is compared to the turmoil in the singer’s heart, we have the extraordinary incident of the D \sharp (Ex. 3-21), frozen as it was at the beginning of the song, even generating a temporary modulation to G \sharp (m.48), but now suddenly and dramatically thawed, capable of resolving as a leading-tone to E minor (m.52-53). The G and the F \sharp finally descend and *for the first time* we have a full tonic cadence in the vocal part.

These events should not be understood as anything but tragic. They represent the violent emotion concealed beneath a frozen exterior, and they come as the climax of a notably agitated section with irregular seven-bar phrases, during which the singer climbs past the structural $\hat{5}$ that had seemed to promise relief, only to find himself back in the first stanza with its obsessive 3-2. This is one occasion when a tonic cadence is not a happy ending. It will be repeated in the final section, preceded by an explicit step-by-step ascent to the high G, and though the eight-bar phraseology resumes, the rhetoric is, if anything, more intense, as the cadential phrase holds us in suspense for four agitated bars before the final resolution.

Example 3-21.

Mein Herz, in die - sem Ba - che er -

46
kennst du — nun dein Bild? Ob's un - ter sei - ner

49
Rin - de wohl auch so rei - ssend schwilt,

52
ob's wohl auch — so — rei - ssend schwilt.

p *ppp* *cresc.* *f* *tr*

Detailed description: The image shows a musical score for a vocal piece. It consists of four systems of music. Each system has a vocal line on a single staff and a piano accompaniment on two staves (treble and bass clef). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 2/4. The first system (measures 1-4) features a vocal line with lyrics 'Mein Herz, in die - sem Ba - che er -' and piano accompaniment with dynamics *p* and *ppp*. The second system (measures 46-49) has lyrics 'kennst du — nun dein Bild? Ob's un - ter sei - ner' and includes dynamics *cresc.* and *f*. The third system (measures 49-52) has lyrics 'Rin - de wohl auch so rei - ssend schwilt,'. The fourth system (measures 52-55) has lyrics 'ob's wohl auch — so — rei - ssend schwilt.' and includes a trill (*tr*) in the piano accompaniment.

In the postlude which follows we can glimpse the depth of Schubert's absorption in his text. He has understood that the point of the poem is the contrast between the icy silence of deprivation and the turmoil that seethes beneath, and he knows too that nothing can follow the singer's rage, that an outcry so despairing leads only to exhaustion. And so the song ends with a single tonic chord, prolonged for five bars.

VI

The introduction to *Im Dorfe* (no. 17) is unusual for its mechanical regularity, and it is tempting to assume that Schubert means to evoke the sounds mentioned in the first two lines of the poem: the barking of dogs and the rattling of chains (Ex. 3-22). It is notoriously difficult for music to successfully imitate noise, and we are usually willing to accept whatever label a text offers, but in this instance I think Schubert was interested in evoking something beyond those incidental disturbances. The scene is laid at night, people are sleeping, there is only the passage of time, and it seems to me that if this introduction refers to anything,

Example 3-22.

The musical score for Example 3-22 consists of three systems of piano accompaniment in G major, 12/8 time. The first system (measures 1-2) features a piano (*pp*) dynamic. The second system (measures 3-4) features a crescendo (*cresc.*) leading to a piano (*p*) dynamic. The third system (measures 5-6) returns to a piano (*pp*) dynamic. The right hand plays chords and the left hand plays a rhythmic pattern.

it refers to the clock. But even that is probably too literal. For as soon as the singer enters, the absolute regularity of the piano will become involved in one of the most extraordinary examples of ambiguity in all of classical music; if people are sleeping, they are also dreaming, and dreaming is at the heart of the poem.

Perhaps the first thing we notice when the singer enters is the absence of a real melody; he has thoroughly assumed the mechanical regularity of the piano and, devoid of melodic embellishments, his pitches conform exactly to the repeat of the introduction which begins one measure after his entrance (Ex. 3-23). We have the impression of a simple homophonic texture. But at some point a hint

Example 3-23.

m. 6

Es bel - len die Hun - de, es ras - seln die

Ket - ten; es schla - fen die Men - schen in ih - ren

cresc.

10

Bet - ten, träu - men sich

p

Example 3-23 cont.

2

12

Man - ches, was sie nicht ha - ben, thun sich im

pp

14

Gu - ten und Ar - gen er - la - ben;

cresc.

16

ritard. *a tempo*

und morgen früh ist al - les zer - flos - sen.

pp *ritard.* *a tempo*

Example 3-24.

12. 13. 14. 15.,

Example 3-25.



of uncertainty is likely to insinuate itself as we begin to wonder exactly where the bar line is.

In principle, this should be no problem. The piano introduction could not be clearer, and since the pattern continues past the singer's entrance, there should be no need to change the count. But the vocal part does start on the half-measure, and its descending third (A-F#) inverts the motive from the opening bars of the piano solo, but with a metrical shift. The fact that mm.1-4 of the introduction all have middle accents might seem to support this shift. Still, it would be premature to claim that the meter is in jeopardy because the initial A of the voice occurs over the resolution of a 4-3 suspension, and since that is always understood as strong-weak, it is not easy to hear the vocal entrance on a downbeat.

Nevertheless, at some point—and I am not sure exactly when—the bar line does seem to shift. If we focus on the singer—always a temptation—the high D which begins the second half of the phrase in the middle of m. 8 seems a plausible downbeat. This impression of a metric shift is strengthened on the downbeat of m.10 when the E that follows the restatement of the D occasions no change of harmony; unlike the E in m.9, it is hard to hear this downbeat as anything but weak. But it is obvious that the middle of m.10, followed by an unsettling silence, must also be weak; and it is no accident that the next word we hear is *träumen* (“dream”).

The piano also adds its bit to the confusion. The first change in the repetition of the introduction is the extension of the harmony of m. 9 through m. 10. If we hear the two-bar grouping as unshakeable, the chords after m. 10 will not be able to retain their original metrical positions. The V_5^6 of V, previously placed in a weak bar (m.4), now becomes the downbeat incipit for a new group in m.11, while the strong, dissonant I_4^6 that began the third group in m.5 now falls on the weak m.12. Assuming no change in grouping, it is likely to be heard in its new situation as an accented syncopation, but that, of course, is an uncharacteristic beginning for a dominant pedal and could actually call into question the regular alternation of strong and weak bars.

At the same time, a second metrical shift in the vocal line seems to be encouraged by the uncertainty created by the silence in m. 10, as the beginning of its second phrase uncharacteristically repeats the pitch at the end of its first: if the word *Betten* (“beds”) occurs on a weak beat, then its echo, *träumen* (“dream”), might

also be weak, especially since it does nothing but prolong the harmony of the piano. Without decisive harmonic movement in m. 11, we may feel that the regular succession of two-measure groups is undergoing a change, and that m. 11 is in fact a third measure added on to mm. 9 and 10, so that the dominant pedal (m. 12) arrives on a strong measure after all. But now the bar line begins to drift again. The chordal sequence in Ex. 3-24 shows how accented dissonances on third beats resolve on the following downbeats, tempting us once more to move the bar line to the middle of the measure, until the second silence in m. 15 finally restores the original bar line beyond any doubt, and the section comes to an end.

The verbal description of this remarkable passage makes it seem more complicated than it really is. I doubt that we actively consider every ambiguity in the meter as it occurs. Rather, we sense a general air of uncertainty hovering over a music that was notable for its uncompromising regularity at the beginning of the song. I suspect that we only become aware of something uncanny during the two pauses in m. 10 and m. 15, and it is certainly no accident that the first one is placed just before the dreams begin, and the second just before they end.

The middle section which comments on these dreams forms a complete contrast. The tonality changes and the meter becomes perfectly straightforward. The singer begins a melody that promises to flower into a lovely bit of Schubertian lyricism. But the text turns contemptuous—*und hoffen was sie noch übrig liessen/ doch wieder zu finden auf ihren Kissen* (“What people lack in life, they hope to find on their pillows”)—and Schubert is not afraid to disappoint our expectations by answering a four-bar antecedent with an abbreviated three-bar consequent that gets nowhere. And finally there is the transition back to the opening material (Ex. 3-25), and anyone who doubts that Schubert really intended the metric complexity I have described should look at this apparently simple arpeggio that unmistakably alludes to a shifting bar line.

VII

The six songs we have examined offer a glimpse of the enormous range of possibilities for the dialogue between the piano introduction and the vocal melody. In Schubert's hands every song is different. We have seen tragic meanings unlocked by varied vocal restatements of the introduction in *Gute Nacht* and *Das Wirtshaus*. We have seen how continuations of the introduction after the entrance of the singer can lead, in the case of *Auf dem Flusse*, to an intensification of the affect, or in the case of *Im Dorfe*, to its exact opposite, the transformation of regularity into uncertainty. And we have seen in *Der Lindenbaum* an example of a vocal melody which has nothing to do with the introduction, a disconnect

which then becomes a point of the song.

Schubert has attained mythical status in the popular mind as the composer of beautiful melodies. I see him rather as the composer of sonatas, quartets, and symphonies, acutely aware of the interaction of adjacent phrases. There are times, as with *Im Dorfe*, when he is uninterested in “singable” tunes, when he is even quite willing to squelch a promising lyrical beginning. As the inventor of the *Lied*, after all, he was not taught the “rules” of the genre, and in his handling of texts he is equally free. We have seen him alter meanings in *Gute Nacht* for the sake of the tragic postlude. And though a poem may communicate to the reader through a speaker who happens to use the first person

Example 3-26.

Drei

5
Son-nen sah ich am Him-mel steh'n, hab' lang und fest — sie an-ge-sehn.

9
Und sie auch stan - den da so stier, als woll - ten sie — nicht

Example 3-26 cont.

2
13

weg von mir. Ach, mei-ne Son-nen seid_ ihr

f *p* *p*

17

nicht, schaut an - dern doch in's An - ge - sicht! Ja,

20

neu - lich hatt' ich auch wohl drei; nun sind hin - ab die be - sten zwei.

p *pp* *decresc.*

Example 3-26 cont.

24

Ging' nur die dritt' erst hin - ter-drein! im

dimin. *p*

28

3

Dunk - eln wird ____ mir woh-ler sein.

pp *f* *p* *pp*

singular, Schubert can be moved to imagine him as something more than a literary trope, so that the music becomes a way of inhabiting his mind, of actually experiencing a disconnect from reality in *Der Lindenbaum* along with the memories described in the poem, of succumbing after a moment of rage at the end of *Auf dem Flusse* to an exhaustion that is not mentioned in the text.

Even the presence of a dialogue between the piano introduction and the vocal line is by no means a hard-and-fast rule. *Irrlicht* (no.9) offers the example of a vocal line that quotes the introduction exactly, but it does so in order to conjure up the image of the singer helplessly following a will-o'-the-wisp. In this regard, it is not unlike *Die Krübe* which also duplicates the introduction, though with a significant transformation of the musical setting. The only other example of a duplicated introduction in the *Winterreise* is *Die Nebensonnen* (no.23), the penultimate song of the cycle, and it is with this song (Ex. 3-26) that I should like to conclude.

The text for *Die Nebensonnen* is so unlike the other poetry in the cycle that I quote it here in a rough translation:

I saw three suns up in the sky;
 Long and hard, I stared at them.
 So stiffly were they standing there,
 You'd think they would never abandon me.

O, but you are not my suns;
 Other faces attract you now;
 Awhile ago, I did have three,
 But now the better two are gone.

If only the third would also set,
 I'd feel more peaceful in the dark.

I imagine that everyone has his private solution of this riddle, and I have no intention of arguing for my own. The point is that it *is* a riddle, a bit of symbolism, and it seems so abstract that it is hard to imagine what insight a piano introduction at odds with a vocal line could contribute. The real contrast is between the first stanza, with the singer and his symbolic suns locked together in a mutual gaze, and the second stanza with its experience of loss.

This contrast is extraordinarily vivid in Schubert's setting. The first stanza is unusually impassive; its cadences are restricted to the tonic and its repetitive melody consists of only four pitches, connected only by step. Even the reharmonization in the relative minor offers very little variety. By contrast, the second stanza has a vocal line that rises to a climax; repetitions disappear and the cadences are all on the dominant. For one more time we experience the suffering that is the subject of the cycle before the opening material returns, its single-minded simplicity a perfect fit for the death that liberates.

Even though *Die Nebensonnen* is a relatively modest song, it provides something of a conclusion for the *Winterreise*. What follows, *Der Leiermann*, is essentially an epilogue: for the poet a backward look over the cycle, and for Schubert a bleak summation. I do not sense a large architectural design in the cycle, but it is perhaps not without significance that the song that in effect brings the work to an end is itself a musical image of the ultimate closure, and the complex give-and-take of voice and piano is no longer needed.

CHAPTER IV

A RECURRENT TONALITY

The Meaning of the Kiss in Verdi's *Otello*

I

As we have seen with the *Hammerklavier* Sonata and the *Archduke* Trio, a tonal plan is only a thread in a very complicated weave of surface events, narrative issues and long-range voice-leading. Widely different effects can be obtained from an identical series of tonalities. But even if we grant that the meaning of a tonal relationship depends heavily on its surroundings, it still seems inconceivable that we could be oblivious to the recurrence of a tonality within the *same* piece. We take it for granted that we would always remember its previous incarnation, and that we can rely on that memory to shape our understanding of its recurrence.

No matter how axiomatic this statement may seem, we have to confront the fact that no less a work than the first act of Verdi's *Otello* appears to disregard it. It will be remembered that this act divides into two very distinct parts. In the first part we encounter the public world, with two great choruses celebrating the military victory of the Venetians. The second part, a total contrast, takes us into the private realm for the extended love duet of Otello and Desdemona. Tonalities are specifically chosen to dramatize this contrast. The choruses of celebration are both set in E, with related keys for the other set pieces that involve the crowd. As soon as night falls and the stage begins to empty, the flat keys are introduced, and only those keys will be heard for the remainder of the act, with the exception of the passage that leads to the lovers' kiss and the kiss itself which is set, of all things, in E-major! If we happen to have followed the tonalities in the course of a performance, we might wonder what that moment of profound peace had to do with the storm that destroyed the Turkish fleet.

At this point, I can imagine a strong objection. It is unacceptable, we will be told, to compare a work for the theater with a work for the concert hall. Once the visual element (as well as language) is added to music, the experience becomes so dense that long-range tonal relationships may no longer be pertinent; after an extended stretch of music running alongside a succession of complicated stage actions, we are unlikely to call to mind what E major might have meant when it was being sung by other singers in another situation. In

an exceptional case like *Don Giovanni*, we do pick up repeated references to the tragic key of D minor, but only because a single thread runs through the plot, and each reference is underlined by something in the text.

I think there is a good deal to be said for this argument. As far as Verdi's practice is concerned, I would be hard-put to find a long-range tonal plan in the third act of *Aida*, even though this is another example of the composer at the height of his powers. So much happens in the course of this act, there are so many characters on and off the stage and such a range of emotion that any whiff of a systematic plan would only interfere. The choice of tonality in this case depends on its relationship with the preceding key; inevitably there will be duplications, but we barely notice them, for the dramatic pacing is too quick to allow us to absorb anything beyond local harmonic connections. But Verdi's mastery of the theater is such that he does not feel bound by any procedure, and in the fourth act of *Aida* the situation is entirely different. Here we have three scenes, each with a very precise dramatic focus. Since there are no plot complications and everything follows in a logical order, Verdi provides each of the scenes with a consistent tonal plan. So there are times in which he does find it meaningful to organize tonalities over a long span and I think it may be useful to consider those scenes before we attempt to deal with the conundrum of *Otello*.

II

The first scene focuses on the duet between Radames, awaiting trial for treason, and Amneris, pleading with him to save himself. Once the duet begins, the tonalities are almost entirely arranged according to the pitches of a single diminished-seventh chord. We may think of it as a circle of minor thirds that transposes and inverts into itself, and in the course of the scene it creates a sense of confinement from which there is no possibility of escape. Only twice is the circle broken, and on both occasions there is a delusional dream of a happier future which will never take place.

Ex. 4-1 shows Amneris' plea at the beginning of the duet, a melody that starts in E \flat and ends in F \sharp . Radames' response transposes this melody (m.17), beginning in F \sharp and ending in A. For a brief moment the A returns to F \sharp and then we have the first attempt at an escape from the circle, as F \sharp becomes the subdominant of C \sharp (D \flat) and Amneris allows herself to imagine a happy life with a man who has no interest in her. After the circle returns with brief quotations of the opening melody in E \flat and F \sharp , it begins a highly agitated passage in which Radames learns that Aida is still alive (Ex. 4-2). Notice how E \flat passes quickly through F \sharp (G \flat) to hover suspensefully on the dominant of A (mm.7-9),

Example 4-1.

Amneris

Radamès

but the resolution is unexpectedly denied as Radames imagines a happy future for Aida, and the music turns instead towards the key of B to break the circle for the second time. Once again we experience the futility of hope as the B tonality is squelched, and the duet strikes a path to C, the one note of the diminished seventh we have not yet heard. For the next forty-four measures we will remain in C, as Amneris and Radames both face the impending tragedy. Finally, a postlude in the orchestra (Ex. 4-3) provides a synopsis of the scene by reciting the diminished-seventh one more time, beginning on C and moving through E \flat and G \flat to end on A.

This synopsis has a double function. At the same time that it concludes the first scene, it also serves as an upbeat to the judgment scene which follows, located solidly in A. In dramatic terms, the duet between Amneris and Radames is

Example 4-2.

The musical score for Example 4-2 is presented in four systems. Each system consists of a grand staff with a treble clef on the upper staff and a bass clef on the lower staff. The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The melody in the right hand is characterized by a recurring eighth-note pattern with accents (^) over the notes. The bass line in the left hand provides a steady accompaniment with various chordal textures. The first system shows the initial establishment of the tonality. The second system includes a measure with a fingering of 5. The third system continues the melodic and harmonic development. The fourth system concludes with a final chordal texture in the right hand.

only the prologue to the trial, and Verdi uses his tonal plan to make this explicit in the music. Once A is established there will be no further modulation except for a relatively brief rhetorical heightening as the official summons of the high priest is twice transposed up a half-step. In comparison with the harmonic variety of the duet, the restriction of the judgment scene to a single tonality speaks volumes. This part of the story has reached its conclusion.

And so the final scene in the vault takes us into totally different harmonic territory. Like the first scene, where the diminished-seventh, for dramatic reasons, does not begin until the duet, we find ourselves in something of a no-man's-land

Example 4-3.

The musical score for Example 4-3 consists of five systems of piano accompaniment. The key signature is G minor (two flats) and the time signature is 4/4. The first system begins with a forte (*ff*) dynamic marking. The notation includes numerous accents and slurs, particularly over the appoggiaturas in the right hand. The bass line is characterized by a prolonged D note in the first measure, which is a key element of the harmonic analysis discussed in the text. The score concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

until a new tonal plan is triggered by the unexpected appearance of Aida. As she explains her presence in the vault, the final duet formally begins with an introductory series of expressive appoggiaturas resolving against a prolonged D in the bass (Ex. 4-4). The dissonant $E\flat$ chord of m.7 is the culmination of that series and one measure later, in a profoundly meaningful harmonic change, it is reinterpreted as a consonance that no longer requires resolution, promptly provoking the disappearance of the D. It is as though the weight of the world

Example 4-4.

has shifted, and I cannot imagine a more affecting setting of the words *e qui lontano d'ogni umano sguardo nelle tue braccia desisi morire* (“here, far from human eyes, I wished to die in your arms”). And so, as the transformed Eb generates a cadence, the tonal plan of the scene begins. Step-by-step the music makes its descent down the circle of fifths through Ab and Db to the Gb which ends the opera as the lovers sing their farewells to the world.

III

As we consider Act IV of *Aida*, it seems increasingly questionable to assume that the E major at the beginning of *Otello* would have become irrelevant by the time we reach the end of the love duet. To be sure, a long-range tonal plan is not a law of nature for Verdi; it is a technique useful on certain occasions for its dramatic effect. But if Act I of *Otello* does not require the comprehensive plans of the concluding scenes of *Aida*, it still maintains a very clear harmonic distinction between the public world and an intimate personal relationship. In principle, the exception made for the kiss at the end of the act ought to be a disturbance.

It may be tempting then to probe the argument that it actually *is* a disturbance, that Verdi means to suggest that the marriage of Otello and Desdemona is intrinsically vulnerable to a plot hatched in the public sphere. Literary critics have made similar observations about the play. There are a number of references in the text to the couple's disparity in age and social status. Othello is well on in years, no longer handsome, if he ever was, a military man unused to the con-

ventions of polite society. Desdemona, very young and beautiful, brought up in aristocratic circles, could well have expected a husband at the top of the social order. More troubling is the report of their courtship. According to Othello's own account, Desdemona fell in love with him because she was mesmerized by stories from his career: the dangers, the slavery, the long years of hardship, and as she pitied him for those hardships, he loved her for that pity. Pity, and the need for pity, are hardly signs that bode well for a marriage, and W. H. Auden went so far as to say that if Iago had not been on the scene, he was sure that Desdemona, after a few years, really would have cheated on her husband.¹

All of this may be Shakespeare, but it is not the opera. Boito does quote Othello's account of the courtship, but where the Othello of the play was defending himself before the *signoria* against a charge of witchcraft, Boito transfers the account to the duet where the couple is reminiscing with one another, and that changes everything. In spite of the difference in age and social background, I think that the play does indicate that the couple's love is genuine, and the violence of Othello's jealousy certainly testifies to the intensity of his passion, but it is true that there is no major love scene in Shakespeare, no passionate kiss at the beginning of their marriage, and the circumstances of the play allow the couple little time together. For Boito and Verdi, on the other hand, the love scene is the foundation of the drama, and the extended duet at the end of Act I is in fact the major liberty they took with the original.

I imagine that Verdi must have leapt at the opportunity to paint a musical portrait of an ideal love. Whether it was his conscious intention or not, it strikes me as the great anti-Tristan statement of the 19th century. Where the ecstasy of the Wagnerian lovers flows from an escape from personality that is also a denial of the world and an acceptance of death, the feelings aroused in Verdi's lovers serve to heighten rather than to overwhelm their individuality. Given the history of the love duet in opera, it is striking that, except for the final cadence and two measures in the middle, Otello and Desdemona never sing together, not even at the ecstatic moment of the kiss. And except when they recount what made them fall in love, neither repeats the music the other has sung, not at the beginning of the duet where they trade stories about their courtship, nor at the end where they share joyous hopes for the future, so that the scene as a whole becomes an extraordinary flow of continuous melody without recapitulation. Phraseology also becomes a way of defining character. Verdi was too good a dramatist to assign his lovers to categories, but Otello, as the man of action, tends by and large to sing in irregular rhythmic groups, while the young and untroubled Desdemona prefers the balance of the periodic phrase. Verdi obviously meant to give

¹W.H.Auden, *The Dyer's Hand*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), 269.

the impression that his music was being sung by real people we might recognize. But if his duet is without metaphysical resonance, it is still too intensely lyrical to be anything but a private matter, very much apart from the public world.

IV

And so we remain where we were before, no nearer a solution of the riddle of the E-major kiss. At this point, I should admit that I never met anyone who actually expressed discontent with that E major. As for myself, it never occurred to me either that there was a problem, though I have known the duet by heart, words and music, for many years, and I cannot remember how many performances I have seen. The question I am raising is not something I heard or felt; it emerged while *looking* at the score in the course of a graduate seminar. Nevertheless, it does call attention to a puzzling fact, and if we find no fault with the tonality, we still have to ask why a riveting passage in E fails on this occasion to spark a memory of extensive earlier passages in the same key. One hesitates to ask the question because the implications are so radical. Is it conceivable that a changed context could be so powerful that the E major of the kiss would not be recognized as the E of the victory chorus? Or to put it another way, what would it take to erase the memory of a key that had already played such a major role?

I would begin by observing that the public and the private E do grow in very different landscapes. Ex. 4-5 shows the music that immediately precedes the first E-cadence, celebrating Otello's safe passage through the storm. Note how an ascending series of fourths (F, B \flat , E \flat) concludes with an A \flat , now spelled as G \sharp to accommodate an E-major triad in second inversion. As a glowing harmonic change, this chord effectively breaks the sequence, and the delay occasioned by the interpolation of a diminished-seventh with an E on top (mm. 7ff) creates a moment of suspense that insures that the E triad, announced by an extensive upbeat, will sound like an arrival. Actually, we have already heard a similar sequence of ascending fourths, ending on the pitch E (Ex. 4-6). In that case, the sequence served as an upbeat to an A-minor chorus, with E remaining as the dominating melodic pitch, and after two such sequences, it seems obvious that we are on the way to a major goal.

As it turns out, the E-major cadence in Ex. 4-5 is only a temporary arrival that resolves deceptively. And so Verdi takes us back to the heavily weighted melodic G \sharp that began the cadence, reharmonizes it with a C \sharp -major triad (preceded by its dominant) as a way of dramatizing Otello's first appearance on the stage, and then reinterprets it once again as a dominant of II in E to set in

Example 4-5.

The musical score for Example 4-5 consists of four systems of piano accompaniment. The first system (measures 1-3) begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and features a treble clef with a series of chords and a bass line with a melodic line. The second system (measures 4-6) continues with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic and shows more complex harmonic textures. The third system (measures 7-10) includes a *8va* marking and features a treble clef with a series of chords and a bass line with a melodic line. The fourth system (measures 11) begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic and features a treble clef with a series of chords and a bass line with a melodic line.

motion a second E-major cadence, and at this point the tonality for the victory chorus is firmly established (Ex. 4.7).

I do not mean to include the earlier music of Act I in this account of the ultimate ascendancy of E. The opera famously begins at the frontier between functional tonality and extended tonality in the modern sense. The shocks and uncertainties of a violent storm obviously suggest other kinds of harmonic movement. But beginning with the first sequence of fourths, it becomes increasingly clear that a central tonality is imminent, and it is no accident, incidentally, that the keys of all the set pieces—A minor for the choral prayer, E for the two victory choruses, B minor for the drinking song, and F# minor for the conclusion of the riot—form another sequence of fourths that now functions as a large-scale tonal plan.

Example 4-6.

There is nothing that resembles such a plan at the end of the act. The predominant key of the duet is F, and there are also cadences on G \flat major, G minor, C minor (with a *tierce de Picardie*) and D \flat major. The modulation to E begins, after one of the strongest cadences on F, with a D \flat -major chord that is quickly changed to minor, and the road to E is paved with chromatic voice-leading, notably the motive C \sharp (D \flat)-C \flat -B, repeated twice before it continues downwards into the cadence (Ex. 4-8). Once again, a deceptive cadence postpones the resolution to E, but this time an entire section in C intervenes, and I do not think that we tensely anticipate a return to E partly because the phrasing is quite regular, and partly because there is a strong cadence on C that satisfies us with temporary closure. And here we begin to have a sense of the extraordinary difference between the E of the crowd scene and the E of the lovers. Not only is the modulation different, but the tonality itself has taken on a new meaning. The deceptive cadence in the public scene was immediately followed by an upbeat passage of considerable length that in the end worked its way back to a second cadence, confirming the tonality. There was no question that E was a major goal, fit to serve as the tonic for the next two set pieces. The deceptive cadence in the duet, on the other hand, initiates no such upbeat; the C-major music, with its balanced antecedent and consequent phrases seems more like a

Example 4-7.

E - sul - ta - - - te! L'or - go - gliu mu - sul - ma - no se-pol - to é in

mar, no - stra e del ciel é

glo-ria. Do-po l'ar - mi lo vin - se l'u - ra - ga - no.

self-contained, relaxed episode, and it takes a few measures of upbeat figuration *after* the cadence to prepare for the kiss.

Surprising as it may seem, the E major of the kiss is *not* presented as a climactic harmonic arrival. And this fact is also reflected in the melody itself. In spite of its apparent freshness, it is not quite the new invention we might have expected. Ex. 4-9 shows how the kiss actually treads the same territory as the modulation; once again we begin with a C# (joined here to a B), followed by C#, and an implied B in the cadence. In fact, a memory of this descending motive has subtly been kept alive during the section in C (Ex. 4-10), first at the beginning of the section, then at a half-cadence five measures later, and finally at the end of the figuration that introduces the kiss. These descents, incidentally, begin on a C, so that the C# will have a magical effect when it returns as the opening pitch for the kiss.

Example 4-8.

Example 4-8 is a piano accompaniment score in three systems. The first system features a treble clef with chords and a bass clef with a melodic line. The second system includes dynamic markings 'ppp' and accents. The third system continues the melodic and harmonic development.

Example 4-9.

Example 4-9 is a single melodic line in treble clef, consisting of two systems. The first system has a 'pp' dynamic and the second system has 'p' and 'f' dynamics. Accents are marked with 'X'.

There is no question that the kiss is a sensual highpoint of the duet. And there is no doubt that E is a temporary tonic. But it is not the goal of a series of upbeats, and the melody itself, despite its cadence, will not let us forget that it is essentially *an excursion from a D \flat triad*. Should there be any confusion on this point, the final cadence of the act will summarily clear it up. Ex. 4.11 shows the harmonic outline of the music after the kiss, and it should be obvious that it is nothing more than a replay of the chromatic descent in reverse that ends where the modulation began. And so it is inevitable that it would be this D \flat triad, rather than the E of the kiss, that closes the act. Verdi would never have brought

Example 4-10.

A)

B)

C)

Example 4-11.

down the curtain without a stable final chord, and it is striking that $D\flat$ is such a firm tonic here that it can do without a cadential formula or even a dominant. In a last-minute revision Verdi did hedge his bet a little by adding a short quotation of the beginning of the scene to signal the descent of the curtain, but he superimposed it over a sustained $D\flat$ in the bass, availing himself of the pedal-point that commonly serves to prolong the final tonic.

V

It appears, then, that the E major of the kiss is a subsidiary tonality, and as such is perceived as something very different from the same tonality defined as a harmonic goal. When the harmony settles down in E early in the act, it is the occasion for a wholly new melody. The music for the kiss, on the other hand, essentially replays the voice-leading of the modulation, only to retrace its steps afterwards. *Otello* represents a highly unusual example, of course, and it is certainly possible that the text helps to strengthen the distinction between the two E tonalities. But in any case, I think we have to face the fact that under certain conditions the same musical event may have such fundamentally different meanings that any proposed connection would be irrelevant.

The tonal situation of the kiss also sheds a very revealing light on Verdi's dramatic intention with regard to the couple. If the kiss is set in a subsidiary tonality, then it is not the goal of the duet, no matter how compelling it is. Memories of courtship, faith in an unchangeable love, the beauties of the night—these are equally part of an intensely lived experience. And once again we can see a sharp contrast with *Tristan*, where sexual union is indeed the culmination of the relationship, and the music is directed in an unbroken arc to the climactic B major of the *Liebesnacht*.

It is a curious fact that *Tristan* and *Otello* both end with repetitions from their love duets. Isolde's *Liebestod* is of course an essentially unchanged portion of the *Liebesnacht*, and the repetition dramatizes a metaphysical view of death as the ultimate consummation which the world can no longer interrupt. An ecstatic ending to a life of suffering, it cannot be considered tragic in the classical sense. For *Otello*, on the other hand, the kiss becomes a symbol of guilt and deprivation. Once it was only an episode in the "endless melody" of a passionate and wide-ranging experience; now it is all that is left. References to a more fundamental tonality would hardly have made sense in Act IV. The kiss itself remains unchanged, but this ending is fully tragic, and Verdi was moved to recompose the musical context to communicate the sense of an unredeemable loss.

If we turn to *Otello*'s final monologue (Ex. 4-12), we can see how little this approach to the kiss resembles Act I. The C \sharp that begins the motive is prepared over a long stretch, while the voice-leading slowly but surely closes in on E as a tonic to the exclusion of all other possibilities. Note how the first section of the excerpt (mm.1-31) evokes the dominant of B, the key, incidentally, of Desdemona's murder. The G in m.6 obviously fails to resolve to the expected F \sharp , but after the interruption, in which *Otello* meditates on the end of his career, m.28 will supply the resolution. The long delay weights the dominant of B and at the same time underlines the linear move to the dyad, D-C \sharp , that

Example 4-12.

Example 4-12 is a musical score for a scene from Verdi's *Otello*. It consists of four systems of music, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment.

The first system shows the piano accompaniment with a *ff* dynamic. The vocal line begins with a melodic phrase.

The second system features a *dim.* dynamic in the piano part and a *pp* *morendo* dynamic in the vocal part. The piano part includes a triplet of sixteenth notes marked with a '5' above it.

The third system is marked *Poco meno ma pochissimo*. The vocal line includes the lyrics: "Niun mi te - ma, se an-co ar-ma-to mi ve - de. Ec - co la". The piano accompaniment is marked *pppp* and consists of sustained chords.

The fourth system continues the vocal line with the lyrics: "fi - ne del mio cam - min... Oh! Glo - ria!". The piano accompaniment is marked *ff* and features a triplet of eighth notes.

Example 4-12 cont..

2

25 30

O - tel - lo fu

pp *pp* *p* *ppp*

Adagio. *pp* 35

E tu... co-me sei pal - li-da! e stanca, e muta, e bel - la, pia cre-a-tu-ra

Adagio. *p*

ten. ³ 3 40

na-ta sotto ma-li-gna stel-la. Fred - da co-me la ca - sta tua vi - ta, -

Example 4-12 cont

3

c in cic - lo assor - - - ta. De -
 3
pp *dolciss.* *sempre pp*
 3 3 3 3

sde - mo-na! De-sde - mo-na! Ah!... mor-ta! mor-ta! mor - ta!
 45
 Poco piu mosso.
p

Allegro.
 50
 Ho un'ar - ma an - cor! Ah! fer-ma! Scia - gu - ra - to
string. *ff*

Example 4-12 cont.

4

4

dim.

55 *p* *ppp morendo* *Andante come prima.*

60 *pp*
 Pria du'uc-ci - derti... sposa... ti ba - cia - i. Or mo -

65
 ren - do... nel - l'om - bra in cui mi gia - cio... *con espressione* un ba - cio...

pp

concludes the section. These are crucial pitches, and they begin what appears to be an aria in mm. 32-34. They also provide a cadence in mm. 41-42, but at this point Otello seems emotionally unable to continue (mm.43-45), and the $D\flat$ unexpectedly changes to $D\sharp$. The orchestra, however, immediately restores the D as the bass moves stepwise down from D to B, while the upper voice moves stepwise up to a high D (mm.46-49) from which a chromatic descent comes to rest (m.55) on the same $D\flat$ ($C\sharp$) we heard in the cadences in mm.31 and 41. This dyad has dominated a considerable stretch of music and it now engenders another crucial motive as the pause on $D\flat$ is followed by a similar pause on C before the arrival on B. $D\flat$ -C-B is of course the familiar signal of the kiss motive, and the simultaneous arrival at an E-minor chord after the long upbeat insures a very settled tonic when the kiss begins eight measures later. In comparison with Act I, the harmonic focus has severely narrowed. Even before the cadence, the music makes it clear that this E, unlike the E of the love duet, is final.

The last scene has often elicited disappointment from lovers of the opera. After the splendors of the Willow Song and the Ave Maria, it can seem rather poor in melodic invention and almost perfunctory. There is no question that it is remarkably restrained. The Shakespearian rhetoric has been toned down; there is only a hint of the complex mixture of guilt, sorrow for a ruined career, and concern for posterity that distinguishes the play. We are not accustomed to associating understatement with opera, but I think that on this occasion the spareness of the music is a matter of intention, not fatigue. The stark contrast with the abundant melodic richness of the love duet is very poignant. Otello is quite simply crushed, and as we have seen in Ex. 4-12, he can go only so far in his address to Desdemona before he breaks down. Nothing that he or the rest of the characters could have sung would have been adequate for the situation. It is the musical transformation of the kiss that holds the key to the opera.

I admit that it is a tall order to ask us to remember as far back as Act I although anyone who is conversant with *Otello* knows how enriching that memory can be. But Verdi has also provided us with two occasions in Act IV to experience the transformation. The first is Otello's kiss before he commits the murder (Ex. 4-13). Transposed at the beginning, it soon reverts to the original E, but then becomes so stuck on the $C\sharp$ that it is unable to complete itself. If the kiss in Act I is located in a subsidiary tonality, this one sways in the wind. As a description of Otello's state of mind, it could not be more revealing, and it will be remembered as a sharp contrast to the tonally unshakeable version of the kiss at the end.

The second occasion is the motive that coincides with the arrival of the tonic E-minor in m. 57 of Ex. 4-12. (p.75-78). We first hear this motive in the double

Example 4-13.

The musical score for Example 4-13 is presented in two systems. The first system contains four measures of music. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 8/8. It features a melodic line with a dotted quarter note followed by eighth notes, and a bass line with chords. The dynamics are marked *dolce* for the first two measures and *pp* for the last two. The second system begins at measure 5 and also contains four measures. The top staff continues the melodic line with more complex rhythmic patterns, and the bass line provides harmonic support. The dynamics are marked *pp* throughout this system.

bass when Otello enters Desdemona's bedroom. But the pitches B and C are also intimately connected with the music for the kiss, and after a slow, six-fold repetition, it will seem that a new meaning has been added to that music when we hear it in the final minutes of the opera. For me, there is a tragic resonance in this transformation of an all-embracing exultation into the remnant of a world contracted to the single fact of mortality. Or perhaps, if you prefer, a reminder of the only thing that mattered.

CHAPTER V

RESETTING THE CLOCK

The Scherzo of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony

I

Just as the scherzo of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony begins its repeat, a measure is added that totally changes the way we hear it. Ex. 5-1 shows the theme as it appears at the beginning of the movement. Compare it to the recapitulation (Ex. 5-2), and you will notice that the sustained C in m. 236 is a novelty, but since that is the only difference between the two versions, it is not likely to attract much attention. Unlike the interruption in the *Hammerklavier* Sonata, this event is so ordinary that I doubt that many people notice it in the course of a performance. But the effect is transformative.

There are bound to be consequences when an extra measure is added to a theme, but one must proceed with caution, because at this point in Beethoven's career the quick turnover of bar lines in a scherzo can sometimes make it hard to decide how the measures should be grouped. In later works Beethoven will often provide specific instructions, but different interpretations of the opening of this movement might seem equally plausible. Although the slur that arches across the theme could be consistent with a stress on the downbeat of m.1, or even on the downbeat of m. 3 with the change of harmony, it could also suggest an ambivalent, unaccented performance that would be very suited to this quiet moment. But when the theme is restated in m.9 (Ex. 5-3), the problem disappears. It is tempting to speculate that the *sforzando* D of m.13 was specifically added to clarify the meter; by picking up the D two measures earlier it obviously defines mm. 13-14 as a two-measure group with strong-weak accentuation that is immediately confirmed by the slurring of mm.15-18 (repeated from mm. 5-8). A metrical pattern like this has a very physical presence and it tends to perpetuate itself unless something in the music obliges us to reconsider. Since m.17 is a strong measure, we expect m.19 also to be a strong measure, and the sudden *fortissimo* entrance of the horns on that downbeat is certainly more than enough to satisfy our expectation. I am aware that many people prefer to read the horn entrance as an upbeat, perhaps by analogy with the opening of the symphony, perhaps because of the implied dominant harmony carried over

Example 5-1.

Musical score for Example 5-1, measures 1-5. The score is in 3/4 time with a key signature of two flats. The bass clef part begins with a half note C4, followed by quarter notes D4, E4, F4, and G4, all under a slur. The treble clef part has whole rests for the first four measures. In measure 5, the treble clef part has a half note chord of F4 and A4, followed by quarter notes G4 and F4, all under a slur. The dynamic marking *pp* is present in the first measure.

Example 5-2.

Musical score for Example 5-2, measures 1-5. The score is in 3/4 time with a key signature of two flats. The bass clef part begins with a half note C4, followed by quarter notes D4, E4, F4, and G4, all under a slur. The treble clef part has whole rests for the first four measures. In measure 5, the treble clef part has a half note chord of F4 and A4, followed by quarter notes G4 and F4, all under a slur. The dynamic marking *pp* is present in the first measure.

Example 5-3.

Musical score for Example 5-3, measures 1-20. The score is in 3/4 time with a key signature of two flats. The bass clef part begins with a half note C4, followed by quarter notes D4, E4, F4, and G4, all under a slur. The treble clef part has whole rests for the first four measures. In measure 10, the bass clef part has a half note chord of F4 and A4, followed by quarter notes G4 and F4, all under a slur. In measure 15, the treble clef part has a half note chord of F4 and A4, followed by quarter notes G4 and F4, all under a slur. The dynamic marking *pp* is present in the first measure, and *ff* is present in measure 20.

from the previous measure. But it is hardly abnormal for a V-I progression to be accented on the first chord, and there are countless examples of a downbeat phrase beginning with the same harmony as the preceding cadence. It seems to me in this case that the immediate metrical context is so unambiguous and the entrance of the horns such a commanding moment that we naturally group the horn motive in 2-measure units with a strong-weak accentuation.

Unlike the opening of the movement, the recapitulation (mm.236 ff.) presents a clear metrical pattern from the beginning. As Ex. 5-2 shows, the low tonic C immediately sets up a two-measure unit by occupying the first two

downbeats. After the upper C marks the third downbeat, we are likely to follow the bass as it presides over a strong harmonic move every two measures (tonic in m.236 and m.238, dominant in m.240, and tonic in m.242), and it is striking that the slurring is adjusted accordingly. This grouping is vivid enough to impress itself on the music which follows (Ex. 5-4) so that m.244 and m.254 are both strong measures. Once again there is no need to shift the meter when we come to the signature motive in m.255, but as it turns out, the original accentuation is reversed; now that the fanfare is reduced to a whisper, it runs weak-strong instead of strong-weak. The purpose of that unassuming, additional m.236 would seem abundantly clear.

I do not know any other example of an extended section with such a radical reinterpretation of music we have already heard. The metrical complications we encountered in Schubert's song *Im Dorfe* are altogether different. There, the point was to create an atmosphere of uncertainty, to suggest that the bar line might be drifting without committing the music to a real change. Here there is no uncertainty; the motive is the same, the bar line does not change, but the clock has been reset. There is a famous passage in the first movement of the Fifth that also plays with meter. It occurs towards the end of the development (Ex. 5-5) in the course of a sequence of two conjunct chords played alternately by winds and strings in separate registers. There is no question that the accent always falls on the first of the chords until m.210 when the motive is split between the strings and winds, and at some point—it is hard to say exactly when—the accentuation appears to be reversed as the strings begin to sound like an echo of the winds in the upper register. But Beethoven has a bit of magic up his sleeve and the metrical accentuation of the motive that begins the passage in m. 195 remains unchanged when it is repeated in mm. 228ff. We seem to experience a dramatic *diminuendo* in which the energy of the accent fades away through uncertainty, only to revive in preparation for the imminent recapitulation. This too is very different from the scherzo. There, the metric shift does not involve a sequential extension of a phrase; it tinkers with a primary theme, and it is unique both because it is unambiguous and because it is final. There is no return to the original pattern of strong and weak measures.

One would think that so drastic a reinterpretation would be shocking. At the very least, we ought to be confused to find a familiar motive distorted by a reversal of accentuation. And yet we take it in stride; I doubt that there are many listeners who are consciously aware of the reversal, although it has its effect, of course. For the fact is that the scherzo and its recapitulation are not really identical. The notes may be the same, but the scoring has changed; *arvo* has become *pizzicato*, the brass is replaced by single winds, and the dynamic level is reduced

Example 5-4.

Musical score for Example 5-4, measures 245-255. The score is in 3/4 time and B-flat major. It features a piano (p) and pizzicato (pizz.) section. The upper staff (treble clef) contains chords and single notes, while the lower staff (bass clef) contains a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. Dynamics include *p* and *pp*. Measure numbers 245, 250, and 255 are indicated.

Example 5-5.

Musical score for Example 5-5, measures 200-230. The score is in 2/4 time and B-flat major. It features a fortissimo (*ff*) section for Winds and a piano (*p*) section for Strings. The upper staff (treble clef) contains chords and single notes, while the lower staff (bass clef) contains a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. Dynamics include *ff*, *p*, *pp*, and *dim.*. Measure numbers 200, 205, 210, 215, 220, 225, and 230 are indicated.

to *pianissimo*. The metric shift is there to dramatize the hush that subdues the orchestra until the end of the movement. By itself, the shift is of no interest; the point is that the two-measure groups are now *end-accented* rather than front-accented. Every group now begins with an upbeat rather than a downbeat so that our attention is directed towards the future, not because we have a particular expectation in this instance, but because we sense that something important is about to happen and we find ourselves mesmerized by the possibility.

II

The entire movement lives in anticipation of the finale, of course, and the atmosphere of the recapitulation is only an intensification of that state of mind. It is striking that there is not a single tonic cadence in the entire course of the scherzo until the end, and even that is significantly underplayed (Ex. 5-6); the final four measures are abruptly subdued, and the tonic chord is placed in a relatively weak measure. After quick cadences on the dominant in mm. 8 and 18, the emphatic cadence, prolonged for eight bars, that concludes the first section is also a dominant (Ex. 5-7). Here it is V of III, but the essential point is that it will not be resolved to the relative major; instead, the scherzo starts over again even though it finds itself in a rather foreign place (subdominant of the subdominant). This is a serious denial of an expectation, and there is no doubt that it awakens a feeling of suspense. The parallel cadence in m. 96 (Ex. 5-8) makes the same point even more insistently because the unresolved dominant, a C-major triad that has mutated into V of F, is followed by a restart of the scherzo that is pointedly in the tonic. Clearly, the scherzo is in search of something, and a memory of dominant endings left hanging in midair will certainly resonate when the dominant pedal that ends the scherzo finally does resolve into the triumphant fanfare of the finale.

In order for this narrative to work it is critical that the repetitions of the opening theme do not suggest a regular harmonic itinerary with a modulation in the middle of the movement and a recapitulation in the tonic. If we are really to have the sense that the scherzo is twice obliged to begin again because of the evaporation of a previous dominant, there must be no hint of continuity. Any implied resolution of the cadential dominant, any sense of real harmonic movement must be avoided. Now these dominants are not passing chords such as one might find in a sequential or modulatory passage. They are cadential punctuations, and though we can accept many different chords as deceptive

Example 5-6.

Musical score for Example 5-6, measures 135r to 140. The score is in 3/4 time and B-flat major. The right hand features chords with accents and dynamic markings *ff* and *pp*. The left hand plays a steady bass line with accents. Measure 140 ends with a fermata.

Example 5-7

Musical score for Example 5-7, measures 35 to 45. The score is in 3/4 time and B-flat major. The right hand features chords with accents and dynamic markings *f*, *sf*, and *pp*. The left hand plays a steady bass line with accents. Measure 45 ends with a fermata.

Example 5-8.

Musical score for Example 5-8, measures 95 to 100. The score is in 3/4 time and B-flat major. The right hand features chords with accents and dynamic markings *sf* and *pp*. The left hand plays a steady bass line with accents. Measure 100 ends with a fermata.

or surprising resolutions, there is one triad that will not permit a connection: a dominant that defines a tonality cannot simultaneously be a tonic, nor can it mutate into one without strategic help from the surrounding harmony. And that is how Beethoven sets up a wall of separation between the cadences and the thematic repeats: a cadential dominant with a $B\flat$ root cannot connect with a tonic in $B\flat$ minor, nor a cadential C-dominant with a tonic in C minor.

One would expect in a work of such physicality as the Fifth Symphony that these harmonic disjunctions would also have a profound rhythmic effect. And indeed, we do experience a moment of metrical disorientation when the scherzo theme begins again. As Ex. 5-8 indicates, the cadential dominant is repeatedly placed on the downbeats of strong measures, although it requires a metrical shift in the middle of the phrase to make this happen. Since m.97 initiates the repeat of the scherzo theme, one would think that it too was strong, so that measures 96 and 97 would feel like back-to-back downbeats. But with no attack on the downbeat of m.97 this interpretation is hard to sustain. On the other hand, it is equally uncomfortable to construe m.97 as the second of a two-measure group, because in this situation, the $E\flat$ sounds like an impossibly wrong note. I suspect that the issue remains unresolved, and that listeners have to suffer a few rocky moments until the original metrical grouping reemerges a few measures later.

It is a curious fact that the bass line for mm. 96-97 is identical with the beginning of the recapitulation in mm. 236-237 (see Ex. 5-2 on p.82). This is not an easy connection to hear, partly because the whole trio separates the two events, but mostly because they are really so different; the C in m. 96 is not a tonic note, and there is a wall dividing it from the following measure. But a listener who does hear the reference will also be aware that the wall no longer exists in m.237, and for him, the moment when the main theme reverses its accentuation may not be as obscure as I have described it.

III

It has often been noted that the scherzo of the Fifth offers the only example in Beethoven's middle period of the old ternary form. In every other piece the trio is played twice, and the scherzo, three times. But from the beginning this scherzo has been so single-mindedly directed towards the finale that it is hard to imagine how suspense could have been maintained through three presentations of the same music.

The trio would also seem to resist a complete repetition. At first it sounds fairly normal; the opening section cadences on the dominant and the second on the

tonic, and each is individually repeated. But as the repeat of the second section begins, Beethoven again performs a bit of metrical magic to change its function, so that instead of closing off the trio, it mutates into a transition to the *pianissimo* version of the scherzo. As Ex. 5-9 shows, there is nothing unusual about the first section: two groups of six measures, followed by two groups of four. After the repeat of the section, however, we receive a jolt from the unexpected repeat of the cadential formula in a different register (mm.160-161). Since we have twice heard the downbeat of m.160 as an ending, we cannot suddenly change our mind, and in the absence of an obvious phrase overlap, we have to take the upbeat to m.161 as the beginning of the new phrase, even though it only repeats the cadence. In this way, at least, the change of register makes sense, and the thematic fragmentation of mm.162ff. also seems appropriate since the fugato subject, no longer the incipit of the section, is now presented in a weak bar as a prolongation of dominant harmony. After the full subject is restored, Beethoven forces us back to the original pattern of strong and weak measures, and the section ends with a tonic cadence (Ex. 5-10) that appears to parallel the previous cadence on the dominant (Ex. 5-9 on p. 89). But this parallelism is only an illusion; as the phrasing of Ex. 5-10 shows, the bars are now grouped in such a way that the final quotation of the cadential formula in the lower register (mm.196-197) has become a *bona fide* member of the cadence. We are spared the jolt of an additional repetition, but by the same token the second section has lost its heavy incipit accent. Instead, the *fragment* has now become the incipit, and even though a strong bar still marks the beginning of the section, the incipit harmony has become somewhat ambiguous: either a II chord, or more probably, the beginning of a dominant-ninth arpeggio awaiting resolution—in any case, harmony with a clear upbeat sense. Without any obvious revision of the thematic material, the mood is now overtly suspenseful, and the stage is set for a gradual diminuendo to the *pianissimo* reprise of the scherzo. From here until the end of the movement there will be no further tampering with the clock; the pattern remains undisturbed, and that is how it is possible for the transformative m.236 to occur as though in the normal course of events.

The finale, with its astonishing concluding fanfare, is of course the culmination of the whole symphony, and as we have seen, it takes Beethoven's masterful control over the clock to create the necessary suspense. Without careful harmonic and metric preparation, a few formal devices, such as an abbreviated repeat of the scherzo or an *attacca* connection to the finale, would not have been sufficient to arouse the intensity of expectation required for the imposing proportions of the ending. Beethoven, in fact, has no hesitation in suppressing the pause between movements on other occasions, and in this regard it is illuminating to compare this scherzo with the scherzo of the *Harp Quartet*, op.74. There

Example 5-9.

The musical score for Example 5-9 is presented in five systems, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 3/4. The score includes the following details:

- System 1:** Measures 145-150. The bass clef part begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic. A bracket above the staff spans from measure 145 to 150.
- System 2:** Measures 150-155. The bass clef part continues with the forte (*f*) dynamic. A bracket above the staff spans from measure 150 to 155.
- System 3:** Measures 155-160. The treble clef part begins with a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic. A bracket above the staff spans from measure 155 to 160. First and second endings are indicated above the treble clef staff.
- System 4:** Measures 160-165. The bass clef part continues with the forte (*f*) dynamic. A bracket above the staff spans from measure 160 to 165.
- System 5:** Measures 165-170. The treble clef part begins with the forte (*f*) dynamic. A bracket above the staff spans from measure 165 to 170.

are many resemblances here; the key is the same, the basic motive is remarkably similar (Ex. 5-11), and the quartet also reduces the repetition of the scherzo to a hush in preparation for the transition to the last movement. But in this case, the last movement is anything but a culmination. A set of variations on a theme of modest proportions, it does not bear the dramatic weight of the whole piece. Therefore the last repetition of this scherzo need not be abbreviated, and there can be three full statements with two of the trio in accordance with Beethoven's

Example 5-10.

Example 5-10 consists of two systems of musical notation. The first system shows a piano accompaniment in 3/4 time with a forte (*sf*) dynamic. The piano part features a steady eighth-note bass line. The violin part has a melodic line with slurs and accents. The second system continues the piano part with dynamics ranging from fortissimo (*ff*) to piano (*p*), including a *dim.* (diminuendo) section. The violin part continues with slurs and rests.

Example 5-11.

Example 5-11 consists of two systems of musical notation. The first system shows a piano accompaniment in 3/4 time with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The piano part features a steady eighth-note bass line. The violin part has a melodic line with slurs and accents. The second system continues the piano part with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The violin part continues with slurs and rests.

usual practice during his middle period. Since this scherzo is not intended to create suspense, it has no need to avoid intermediate cadences on temporary tonics, and in contrast to the Fifth, there is even a full cadence on the real tonic before the transition to the last movement. But the most telling difference lies of course in the thematic material that emerges at the end of the transition. After the intense upbeat quality of the scherzo of the Fifth Symphony, the finale satisfies our expectations by providing an absolutely new theme with a strong downbeat orientation. The variations of the quartet, on the other hand, seem to *grow out* of the transition; its opening notes are foreshadowed, and in contrast

to the heavily accented music that precedes it, downbeats are quietly suppressed (Ex. 5-12).

Once again we seem to see Beethoven remembering an earlier work, but reinventing it so completely that the new piece becomes a wholly different experience. In any case, the entire scherzo of the Fifth was uniquely conceived as a preparation for what is to come. In this regard, it continues a story already begun in the slow movement when sudden C-major appearances of the signature Fifth Symphony motive are left hanging without continuation (mm.32-48, 81-97, 148-166). The metric twists of the scherzo pick up this thread. Exceedingly subtle, they only take a fraction of a second and may barely cross the threshold of consciousness, but they are responsible for the heavy atmosphere of suspense that ultimately bestows upon the finale its aura of festive celebration.

Example 5-12.

The image displays two musical staves for piano. The top staff is in treble clef, and the bottom staff is in bass clef. Both are in B-flat major (two flats) and 3/4 time. The top staff begins with a whole rest, followed by a series of chords and a melodic line. The bottom staff features a steady accompaniment of chords. The first staff is marked *pp* and the second *p*. The word *Variazioni* is written above the second staff.

Example 6-1.

Largo.

Musical score for Example 6-1, marked Largo. The score consists of ten staves of music in a single system, written in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The time signature is common time (C). The music features a complex rhythmic pattern with frequent sixteenth and thirty-second notes, often beamed together. Trills are indicated by 'tr' above notes in measures 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, and 21. The piece concludes with a final chord in measure 21.

CHAPTER VI

THE POWER OF EVERY MOMENT

Musical Continuity in J.S.Bach

I

For generations Bach chorales have been used to teach the principles of functional tonality. They seem ideally suited to the classroom, but I would always advise anyone harmonizing a chorale melody to be prepared to encounter the uncanny.

By and large, a chorale is not a very exciting object. Most of the melodies are not by Bach; like hymn tunes generally, they tend to be unassuming, and some are actually quite dull. It does not take much effort to produce a version that sounds like a true copy of the Bach style—until you look at what Bach actually wrote, and although he is more than likely to confirm your harmonic choices in general, there is almost always a small detail somewhere, a passing tone or a neighbor note in an inner part, that suddenly takes your breath away, and makes you wonder why you didn't think of it, and what makes it so beautiful. It is this unfailing ability to “load every rift with ore” that turns his music into such an overpowering experience.

For this reason I decided not to conclude these essays with a major contrapuntal work, but rather to consider a very simple piece like the slow movement of the unaccompanied violin sonata in C (Ex.6.1). There is counterpoint here too, of course, but since it is composed for a single instrument, conversations between voices are mostly implied. The form is quite simple and actually fairly routine; the first three phrases are punctuated by cadences on the tonic, the dominant and the supertonic, and the final section leads back by way of the dominant to the tonic. The entire piece is only 21 measures long, and is really nothing more than a single extended melody for the violin. But a melody that is almost unbearably rich and expressive!

II

Because this is such a short piece, I think that it might be useful to begin at the beginning rather than with a particularly revealing moment. Freed from the demands of a large structure, we have the opportunity to explore musical continuity on an intimate level, to trace the way meanings unfold from phrase to phrase as we experience them in the course of a performance.

Like most tonal pieces, this one begins with a measure that outlines the tonic chord. The slurring suggests a division into several short motives with an emphasis on the pitch C. There is a rhythmic punctuation on the third beat that presents a varied restatement of the opening pitches, but avoids closure by re-harmonizing them with the dominant.

None of this is very remarkable, and I can easily imagine writing it myself. But the continuation is already something that only Bach could have conceived. Although it roughly balances the opening in length, there is nothing here that we might have expected. Now there are only two contour changes in place of the zigzag of the first measure, and in spite of the fact that the same slurring is maintained, the division into small motives has disappeared. As the melody dips down to double the D in the bass and then ascends an octave to the upper D, we have the impression that things are beginning to flow. A rhythmic punctuation closes the group as in m.1, and the pitches B \flat -A are heard as a local stepwise descent from the earlier C. But we cannot help remembering that the first and second groups also *began* with A and B \flat so that it is not clear that the melody has taken us very far. In fact, it may not have taken us anywhere; the shape it assumes can be understood as an embellishment of three notes held over from the end of the first segment (D, B \flat , A), and we may prefer to group the passage around those notes. One thing is sure; the harmony for the punctuation is a very transitory-sounding III⁶.

There is no question that the pause in measure 2 is a highly expressive moment; a melody that appears on the surface to be relatively flowing and well-directed doubles back to an opening pitch that has lost the security of tonic harmony. But when we speak of a loss of "security," we must keep in mind that no anxiety is implied and in any case, the III⁶ that substitutes for the tonic does not give the impression of a chord deliberately chosen for its insecurity; rather, it seems to occur in the normal course of events, both because of the stepwise motion of the bass, and because it was foreshadowed by the punctuation in m.1 with which it rhythmically and intervallically rhymes.

The climax of the phrase occurs early in the next segment. But it too begins with A and B \flat ; we hear four conjunct pitches that pointedly refer to the beginnings and endings of the previous segments. The sudden leap to the upper

register in m. 3 becomes extraordinarily vivid by contrast, but in spite of the unexpected climax, there will be no immediate consequences as Bach makes us wait for a melodic continuation from the high B \flat while the structural C along with its neighbor D prepare for the tonic cadence in m.4.

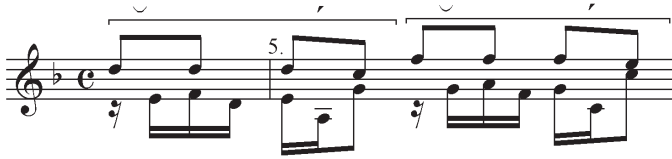
As we consider the three segments together, we can see how events fuse into one single arch. The first measure defines the place from which we start; in the second measure we find ourselves on the way, not quite certain of the direction, while mm.3-4 lead to the first real cadence, but with the unresolved issue of the high B \flat still pending. This of course is the generic narrative of many phrases. But notice how specific it has become in this instance, how intimately the segments are related. If the second bar seems like the middle of the phrase, it is primarily because of the harmonic movement generated by the bass and the surface gesture of the melody, but pitches from the first measure are still very much in our ear. The beginning of the third group quotes them as well, and the tonic cadence which follows makes closure meaningful not only by referring back to the second and third beats of the first bar, but also by taking extra time to spell out the critical pitches (see Ex.6.2).

The responding phrase begins on the fourth beat of m.4, and it is here that the real harmonic movement of the piece begins. Now everything will be different. For the first time the group does not begin with A and B \flat ; the flowing gestures of the melodic line disappear, and instead, we encounter two parallel sequences, each composed of two-beat units. A sequence is a familiar technique for suggesting harmonic movement because it involves transposition, and because quick restatements of a short motive accelerate the pacing, and like the fugato, easily suggest a road to an harmonic goal. But in this piece Bach heightens the forward momentum with a special rhythmic device: the sequences begin with a motive that straddles the bar-line (Ex.6.3). There is no threat to the meter here; suspensions on the first and third beats of m.5 insure that they will continue to be heard as strong beats. As a result, the 4/4 remains unaltered, but the motivic rhythm has changed from trochaic to iambic. The first half of every

Example 6-2.

The image shows two staves of musical notation. The top staff is labeled 'm. 1' and the bottom staff is labeled 'm. 3'. Both staves are in G major (one flat) and common time. The first staff shows a melodic line starting on G4, moving to A4, B \flat 4, and C5. The second staff shows a more active melodic line starting on G4, moving to A4, B \flat 4, and C5, with a final cadence on C5. Vertical dashed lines connect the two staves at the beginning and end of the first measure.

Example 6-3.



Example 6-4.



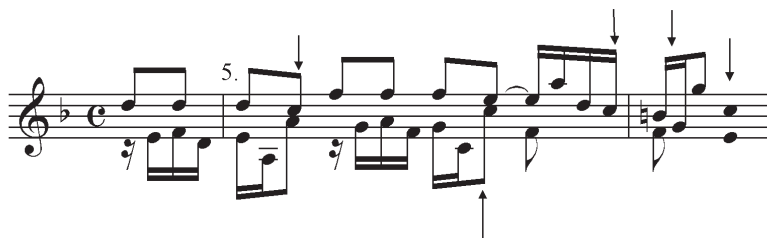
motive has now become an upbeat, and in decided contrast to the previous phrase, we begin to look forward to an important arrival.

The feeling of anticipation will intensify as we come to the parallel sequence in m.6. Each of the sequential motives in mm.4-5 is separated from its successor by the resolution of a dissonant suspension. But this changes with the motive that straddles the bar-line between m.5 and m.6. Though it is basically a variation of the two previous motives, the resolution of the dissonance is now supplied by the motive that follows, and from this point on, the *caesura* between motives disappears. It is striking that the pacing tightens precisely when the first B \natural appears, and a moment later, just as the second sequence begins, we have a glimpse of the harmonic goal. In the end, an extra beat will be added to the last motive (the second beat of m.7) to restore the original trochaic rhythm for the arrival at the tonicized dominant.

The increasingly urgent approach to the cadence is of course intimately connected with the harmonic process. Ex.6.4 shows the basic chord progression of the modulation; it is obvious that the essential event is the reinterpretation of the C. Nothing could be simpler, but nothing is more demanding for a composer in these circumstances. If this chord progression, located in the underlying structure, is to give the impression of a modulation on the surface, it will not be enough to prolong the C by repetition or by linear figures that emanate from it. In the absence of structural linear movement, some way must be found to allow us to *experience* the transformation of the C from the fifth degree of one scale to the tonic of another.

And so the modulation begins with an explicit quotation from the tonic cadence: the dyad D-C (on the first two beats of m.4) that may also remind us of the punctuation in m.1, as well as the descent from the accented D on the downbeat of m.3 to a C towards the end of the measure. By transposing this dyad through F-E to A-G, measures 5-6 create a sense of harmonic movement, but at the same time, the C continues to be heard in register as it shifts from the top voice in the first motive to the lower voice in the second, and back to the

Example 6-5.



top in the third (see Ex.6. 5). I do not mean to suggest that there is any ambiguity in the contrapuntal texture. We hear a clear distinction between upper and lower voices; the point is that the C only maintains its presence by accommodating itself to a changing context. Such shifty behavior is appropriate here, for the C is now in the process of transformation. Once it is recontextualized by a leading tone (B \sharp), it moves closer to the forefront, and if it can still be said to be shifty during the second sequence, it is only because of its metrical placement.

And after all these irregular appearances, the C finally occupies an accented beat in m.7. Since the beginning of the piece, no C had been allowed on a strong beat. This is a powerful moment, and as a celebration of the event, it would be impossible to imagine a more expressive welcome than the four-note figure that precedes it. As we have seen, it breaks the sequential pattern by extending the downbeat harmony of m.7 for an extra quarter. And yet it does not sound like an empty beat whose sole purpose is to restore the trochaic rhythm. Were that the case, the approach to the cadence would lose all of its urgency. To understand what makes this figure so compelling, we need to look at the larger context. As Ex.6.6 shows, there is a somewhat free correspondence between the units of the two sequences, and since the four-note figure substitutes for the third unit of the second sequence, it inevitably calls to mind its partner, the third unit of the first sequence. The resemblance is close enough to give us the sensation that two beats are compressed into one as the high A now descends to G within a *single* quarter. From the point of view of the harmony, the four-note figure represents an extension of the previous unit, but it is melodically riveting because it also conjures up the *next* unit of the sequence, pointedly cut in half.

Example 6-6.



In this way the extra beat required to restore the trochaic meter actually seems to accelerate the pacing as it signals the imminent arrival at the cadence.

At the same time there is another reference, and it is this, I think, that really accounts for the particular aura of the passage; the four-note figure is also a transposition of the second beat of m.1. Now this may seem like an overly subtle connection, but the fact is that this figure has never recurred until now, and there will only be two further repetitions in the course of the piece, both at equally critical moments—on the second beat of m.15, just before the dominant articulation, and on the second beat of m.17, just before the tonic cadence. Here, on the second beat of m.7, the point is to secure the modulation by a backward glance over the terrain we have just crossed. When we first hear the figure in m.1 it leads to an *appoggiatura* resolving to a C accompanied by an E. Now, in spite of the fact that it is transposed, it leads to the same C and the same E, but this time directly on the beat and without any ornamental delay. The transposition pointedly calls to mind the earlier context in order to juxtapose the two interpretations of the C and to confirm its transformation at this juncture from dominant to tonic.

III

If we take a quick overview of the section that follows, we will find that it almost exactly recreates the processes of the first section. After the opening phrase is transposed into C major (mm. 8-9), a two-beat motive straddles the bar-line of m.9 to begin another sequence. Once again trochees turn into iambs to signal harmonic movement, and here too, resolutions of suspensions separate the first two motives, but the *caesurae* disappear afterwards to allow an unbroken connection. And finally, the second beat of m.12 dissolves the sequence by prolonging the harmony of the downbeat so that trochaic rhythm can be restored in time for the cadence on the supertonic (m.13).

But even though the process is the same, the music feels very different. Every motive is familiar from the first section, but they have all been reworked, and the relationships between them take on new meanings. Bach abbreviates the opening phrase and understates the first two sequential motives in order to reserve the emotional climax for the move to the upper register at the end of m.10. It is here that the B \flat of m.3 is picked up, but with an intensity that distinguishes it from its earlier appearance. In m.3 it was an emanation from the structural neighbor D (and the same can be said of the high A in m.5). Now it is heard as an octave transference of the B \flat that followed the structural C in m.10. B \flat has itself become a structural pitch, and for the moment its move bestows upon the

upper register the distinction of the structural voice, entrusted with the linear descent through B \flat and A to the cadential arrival on G.

This is the basic design, but in Bach every technical adjustment, every alteration of a motive or a phrase becomes a vivid experience on the surface of the music. It is not enough to simply abbreviate the opening phrase; the cut must be physically felt, and so a fragment of the tonic cadence, the third beat of m.4, is quoted in m.9 to make it seem as though the new version in C-major runs from start to finish in half the time of the first version. Similarly, the first substantial change in the new version, the F on the third beat of m.8 followed by a D-arpeggio, obviously puns with the first two beats of m.2, but the pun occurs a half-bar *early*. Meanwhile, the suspension on the downbeat of m.9 against the implied C in the bass also contributes to the accelerated pacing by pushing the music forward towards a resolution of the dissonance. But the most noteworthy difference between the two versions lies in the harmony. The second version begins by overlapping with the dominant cadence on the downbeat of m.8, and as Ex.6.7 shows, the opening phrase of the piece has now been transformed into a dominant prolongation, and the bass, restricted to C and its leading-tone, B \flat , no longer has the linear movement of mm.1-2. As a result, the phrase seems too short to be complete. Too little has happened harmonically, and so the motive that signals the tonic cadence in m.4 is unable to duplicate that role when it is quoted in m.9. Under the circumstances it assumes other, more connective qualities, and it is precisely when the allusion to a cadence turns into an upbeat that we become intensely aware that everything from the beginning of the section has been flowing directly into the last beat of m.9. There we find the B \flat seventh that begins the modulation and incidentally uses its privileged position to call attention to another contrast with the first section; now that we are on the road to the climax there will be no change of harmony to separate the flowing line from the sequential passage.

A climax that is more than a rhetorical flourish depends on a pre-history. The puns and references I have been tracing may not be in the forefront of our consciousness, but we are aware of them nonetheless, and they serve to create an atmosphere of growing intensity. The two sections are sufficiently similar so that the omission of a cadence in m.9 inevitably plays against a memory of the moment of relaxation we experienced at the cadence in m.4. The situation has

Example 6-7.



clearly become more urgent. And when we finally arrive at the climactic $B\flat$ in the upper register, our attention will also be drawn to the extraordinary transformation of the sequence that accompanies it.

That sequence seems at first like a fairly close copy of the one that began in m.4: short motives characterized by a threefold repetition of the same note followed by a stepwise descent. Unlike the opening section, the motive in m.10 is initially transposed at the interval of a second rather than a third. But the $E\flat$ on the upbeat to m.11, a highly expressive note we have not heard before, pointedly restores the interval of a third for the next transposition. If the pattern had continued as before, either as in mm.4-6 of the first section, or as in m.10, that $E\flat$ would have been the top voice. That is why the climactic $B\flat$ sounds so intense when it appears *above* the $E\flat$ at the very end of m.10. After its transference up an octave to begin the structural descent, it seems for a moment to be soaring over the whole texture. And yet, despite all this, the sequence does not disappear. Because the threefold repetition of the $E\flat$ that begins in m.10 still suggests the sequential motive, and two similar motives follow in its wake, the texture now seems to split into three separate voices represented by triple stops: the linear descent at the top, the sequence in the middle and the bass. But since this is one of those compound lines that can also function as a single melody, we can connect the upper registers and simply hear a procession of sequential motives, similar to mm.6-7, but changed by the fact that it has now become a vehicle for the structural descent.

With its modulation from C to G the second section might seem to parallel the original modulation from F to C, but there is obviously a critical difference between the reinterpretation of a single pitch for the first modulation and the voice-leading that defines the second. And we should not forget that G-minor is more distant from the tonic than C-major, a fact that has emotional consequences as our memory of the tonic, emphatically jogged at this point by the structural descent, measures the distance we have come. Perhaps the clearest mark of that distance is the pitch $F\sharp$ because it directly contradicts the tonic F. It is certainly no accident that $F\sharp$ is the occasion for the one event in this piece that might give us something of a jolt. Its appearance in the lower register on the downbeat of m.12 violates the contour of the sequential motive. But even aside from that, we would have expected to hear the $F\sharp$ as a stepwise continuation of the chromatic line in the top voice, and its surprising transference to the lower register leaves a gaping hole. The immediate objective is, of course, to save the right register for the cadence at the end of the measure. But it is more important to notice that this event occurs precisely when the iambic meter is being replaced by trochaic. Once again we encounter the problem of the required

extra beat, but in the middle of the climactic phrase the circumstances are no longer the same, and Bach's solution is quite different from his earlier one. Now there is the jolt on the downbeat of m.12, and it is strong enough to interrupt, or at least to redirect, the motive that began on the upbeat to m.12. We have the impression that the trochaic meter forcibly takes over in the middle of a motive; unlike the first section it no longer waits for the motive to end before adding the extra beat. The metric change has turned into a dramatic encounter, and as we approach the cadence at this most distant point of our tonal journey, all of the musical relationships join together to confer an extraordinary expressive weight on the critical F \sharp .

IV

And this F \sharp will have one further consequence. By calling into question the smooth connection between the upper registers, it helps to reinstate a contrapuntal distinction that allows us, after the cadence in G-minor, to embark on the road to the final tonic. A group of thirty-second notes in m.13 accents the structural C in its original register, and a parallel accent on the B \flat in the next bar begins a gradual stepwise descent all the way to the tonic pitch (see Ex.6.8). In counterpoint with this, the top voice replays its descent to G in a tonic context, and once the G is followed in m.14 by an F \natural instead of F \sharp , it seems pretty clear that we are on our way home.

But it is not yet time for a cadence. This is frequently a very charged moment in tonal music; the composer forces us to wait while suspense builds for the ultimate return to the tonic. Suspense is also experienced here, as the melody uncharacteristically stops to repeat the G-E-F motive three times. But against the background of the linear descent that continues uninterrupted in the structural register, this melodic repetition turns out to be more than a generic device. Beginning with m.14, it again becomes possible to connect the notes as a single melody, and if we do, we will find the allusion to the first two beats of the piece inescapable. By dangling a motivic fragment from the opening, Bach whets our appetite for the impending tonic arrival. And on the second beat of m.15 he even offers an exact quotation of the second beat of m.1, the important four-note figure that once

Example 6-8.

Example 6-9.



announced the dominant arrival in m.7 and now in its tonic form provides an unmistakable signal that the end approaches.

And as we wait for the completion of the structural descent, memories of the movement as a whole begin to accumulate. Since the reference to m.1 intensifies the expectation of the tonic cadence, it is easy to remember how sequential passages led to earlier cadences, so that we are now likely to hear the repetitive allusion to the first two beats of the piece as one more instance of a sequence: here too the motives are two beats long, and their general shape is distinctly reminiscent of the previous sequence (see Ex.6.9). But there is one important difference: they do not transpose, and so they lack the sense of a goal-directed upbeat that is essential to a sequence. In this situation it is the metric rhythm of m.1 that prevails, and these sequential (or quasi-sequential) motives are trochaic rather than iambic. They begin with downbeats.

After the dominant articulation finally breaks the spell in m.16, the melodic line regains its motion, and another sequence, back in the appropriate iambic form, provides a smooth approach to the tonic cadence. Exactly transposed from the sequence that preceded the dominant cadence in mm.7-8, it has become very soothing now that the metric accents have been readjusted. The voyage is essentially over. The only issue that remains is the unresolved leading-tone in the upper register (downbeat of m.16), and the coda will take care of it, even as the lower voice replays its linear descent from the fifth degree of the scale.

V

The amount of thinking that went into this little piece is staggering. But one should not be deluded by all the verbiage necessary to describe its multitude of motivic cross-references, its rhythmic subtleties and strategic recompositions. Bach of course was thinking only in notes. Words are a very clumsy tool in these matters; they cannot deal with the powerful and immediate effect of a network of relationships except by tracking them separately, one-by-one. Music abhors the linearity of language, and I have the impression that, as complicated as my words may seem—with music of this elevation, they only touch the tip of the iceberg.

But any attempt to grapple with this music can at least induce us to question our usual generalizations about Bach. We tend to think that dramatic contrast belongs to the Viennese classics, and it is true that the sudden shift in pacing and texture that we found in the first 8 measures of Mozart's Quartet in E \flat is unlikely in Bach. But there is also a good deal of variety in the violin piece, including those different ways of spinning out a melody that are essential to the distinction between modulating passages and passages we might call expository, between insecurity in the middle of a phrase and the satisfaction of closure, between a sequence on the way to the dominant and the same sequence at the climax of the movement. And if this is not quite the same thing as dramatic contrast, Bach is aware of that possibility too; you need only consult the aria from the Matthew Passion, *Ich will bei meinem Jesu wachen*, with its stark opposition between the intense wakefulness of the singer and the lullaby of the chorus that puts sin to sleep. It has sometimes been said that Bach is always punctual while the Viennese masters like to keep us waiting, and while there is some truth to that, it is by no means the whole truth as the solo violin movement will testify in the suspenseful passage between m.14 and the downbeat of m.16. Perhaps the most widespread generalization about Bach is the prevalence of a steady beat; jazz musicians, of course, were especially drawn to him for that reason, and Colette intended a compliment when she described him as a "divine sewing machine." But the subtle metrical flexibility we encountered is by no means a unique occurrence; Bach is endlessly inventive both on the local level of meter and on the larger level of formal rhythm.

I have no intention of denying the enormous change in sensibility initiated first by the Enlightenment and then by the Romantics. The point is simply that we find an extraordinary range of technical procedures in Bach. But it was not the procedure by itself that interested him. He does not stage an impressive event to call attention to the change from trochaic meter to iambic in mm.4-5; we perceive it of course, but what we experience on this occasion is rather the expressive transformation of pitches that have just been otherwise involved. Even the "suspenseful" passage in mm.14-15 is without the dramatic atmosphere such passages would acquire in the classical period. For me at least, the feeling it arouses hovers between suspense and the kind of delay that allows us to savor the return to the tonic. These incidents are extremely moving, but they are not isolated highpoints; if there is anything we experience during the violin piece, it is the feeling that everything that happens is important, that every moment is lived to the fullest. This is true of all great music, of course, but with Bach we cannot help but wonder at the complex associations that can be aroused by a phrase, at the multiplicity of connections that define and enrich

the meaning of every event, as though nothing is a simple matter of cause and effect. Every moment contains within it the memory of all that has happened, and by acknowledging it, justifies it, so that every step of the way is a step undertaken with deepest concentration and with reverence.

We tend to forget that Bach was essentially a church composer. Over the past several decades Eric Chafe has published an important series of studies of the cantatas and the Passions to show how deeply they are shaped by the intricacies of Lutheran theology. You need not be concerned with that theology to appreciate its central importance for Bach, just as Leo Steinberg, in a parallel study, has demonstrated the importance of theology for Leonardo's Last Supper, or as everybody has always known, the Divine Comedy would have been unthinkable without Aquinas. The Sonata for Unaccompanied Violin in C is a secular piece, but if I may appropriate some words of Kafka, I am certain that every time Bach sat down to compose, "writing [was] a form of prayer." Even considered purely as a musical work, those 21 measures for solo violin are no less a statement than the Matthew Passion.

CODA

As we look back over the pieces we have been considering, it is easy to grow nostalgic for a time when music had a restricted harmonic vocabulary, when the unfolding of a melody was guided by clear principles of voice-leading, when a few basic forms, like approved cultural objects, were available for general usage. The history of music in the twentieth century is in fact drenched in this nostalgia. After the enormous excitement of the opening years of the century, the specter of a dying civilization raised by the First World War forced the enthusiasm for innovation and experimentation to come to terms with a *rappel à l'ordre*, a last-ditch effort to save the past. And so we had Hindemith's attempt to reconstitute tonal theory, stylistic paraphrases in Stravinsky and his followers, the 12-tone method, originally conceived by Schoenberg as a way of structuring atonality for the revival of classical forms. And as the century wore on, and ideology followed ideology, the tradition continued to exercise an attraction that was not always easy to resist; along with music that proclaimed its modernity, there was neo-romanticism, music constructed out of quotations, a second attempt to formulate a theory of functional tonality for the modern world—this time based on a linguistic model—and any number of systems designed to hold a piece together by means of pre-compositional constraints, parallel to, even if different from those attributed to tonal music.

Nostalgia, as a state-of-mind, is of course intrinsically unreliable; in casting a sentimental haze over the past, it cannot help distorting it. If you long for tonal forms as they are generally described in textbooks, you might envy the composers of the past for their helpful ready-mades, but the fact is that sonata-form in the hands of Haydn is so variable as to be unpredictable, and I have only found one fugue in the *Well-Tempered Clavichord* that actually observes the rules set forth in the authoritative treatise of Gedalge. And if you imagine that the “grammar” of functional tonality insures a level of coherence, you will be surprised by quite a few pieces from the eighteenth or nineteenth century—some even written by composers of distinction.

Discovering rules for functional tonality was a popular sport in the twentieth century, and a few became so ingrained that they can now be said to be almost proverbial. It is generally assumed, for example, that motivic reference is sufficient to assure coherence, at least as far as tonal music is concerned. Everyone knows that the music of Ockeghem is another kettle of fish, but I can imagine

readers of the previous chapter on Bach who were delighted to observe that the second beat of m.1 is exactly quoted on the second beat of m.15, perhaps all the more delighted that, with so much happening in between, the repetition is not very obvious. If we briefly turn back to the passage, however, we will see that the quotation, by itself, is not the point. What counts is the changed context, the fact that the quotation occurs when the continuous flow of the melodic line is for a moment arrested. While the bass continues its march towards the tonic, the melody pauses as though to imagine from a distance the final cadence, and in those circumstances the actual presence of a tonic figure has a strong emotional charge. But not any tonic figure! Bach is careful to choose the one that had served, in a transposed form, to prepare the arrival at the dominant, and it is precisely the *return* to the original pitch level that resonates with the singular behavior of the melody.

According to another commonly accepted rule, tonal form requires the arousal of expectations that will only be satisfied after a sufficient dose of frustration and delay. The train-wreck at the beginning of the *Hammerklavier* would seem to be a good example of the kind of event that generates an expectation. But if the *Hammerklavier* were a novel instead of a piano sonata, the author could have followed the description of the wreck with a lengthy flashback or a whole new set of characters, and no matter how long we had to wait, we would still be concerned to find out what happened to the passengers on the train. But music is too intently focused on the present to allow us to dwell on past events unless they are directly involved with what we are currently experiencing. To keep the expectation of the *Hammerklavier* alive, Beethoven needed to maintain the train-wreck in the forefront of our consciousness. And so he provides a continual succession of allusions between the exposition and the recapitulation, reminders that the issue of the interruptive D-major chord is still hanging in the balance.

Words like “expectation” or “narrative,” useful though they are, easily shift their meanings when they are applied to music. It may be that a careless analogy with language is responsible for some of the misleading generalizations about tonal music that we frequently encounter. Since we think of a novel as shaped by a plot (at least in many instances), tonal plans are often treated as though they had the same function for music. But it should be obvious from our comparison of the *Hammerklavier* and the *Archduke* that a tonal plan is not necessarily identical with the narrative of a piece; it is only one relationship among many, and it may not be the most important one. And *Otello* provides an example of a tonality so transformed by its context that we no longer identify it with its earlier occurrences. Again and again we have seen how musical effects depend on a

confluence of many streams. What we call a “narrative” may be equally intricate, and you need only turn back to the scherzo of the Fifth Symphony to find a situation—the build-up of suspense for the Finale—that could not have been so convincingly realized without the complex interaction of metric patterning, harmony, phraseology, and orchestration.

It is true that the classical repertory requires an understanding of functional tonality. It defined the musical world for a couple of centuries, and as I suggested earlier, it reflected a particular cultural view. But it is a mistake to think of the constraints of this system as though they were a formula for composition. They set out the available materials, and describe their properties under the conditions of the system, but it is up to the composer to make the piece meaningful. I do not believe that there are systematic technical procedures that can guarantee a coherent result, but I should like to think that our analytical studies have been able to shed some light on meaning in music by showing in specific instances how, in an art-form where the experience of the present is so intense, the precise shape of a moment is critical for the meaning of the work as a whole.

Music has always been central to the human experience. I suspect that this is so because it releases us, however briefly, from our usual anxiety over the passing of time, not by distracting us, but on the contrary, by intensifying our awareness. We find ourselves enveloped in an extraordinary wealth of sensuous stimuli, and with time moving slower than usual, it becomes possible to grasp relationships that are complex and constantly in motion. And this is just as true of recent music as it is of functional tonality. In the course of these essays we have often had occasion to note how a musical passage acknowledges the past even as it demands our attention to the present. It seems to me that this ability to invest a span of time with a sense of gradually accumulated meanings is the definition of real music. And I would go further and claim that it is a definition that applies beyond the repertory discussed in this book.