

On performance, analysis, and Schubert

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Abstract: An introductory critique of my own 1985 essay about the performance-analysis relationship sets the stage for a portrayal of the Performer as the individual most especially in charge of shaping our perceptions of form within the first movement of Schubert's *Piano Sonata in A Minor*, Op. 42 (D845). Ideas about form as process in Beethoven's music, about Schubert's personal and professional status in 1825, and about the interplay between formal and motivic conventions and transformations will be brought to bear upon the question of how performers and analysts alike might approach an understanding of Schubert's formidable work.

Keywords: musical form as process, formal functions, philosophical and musical notions of *becoming*, *omnibus* progression, "false" recapitulation, symmetrical division of the octave.

Sobre performance, análise, e Schubert

Resumo: Uma crítica introdutória ao meu próprio artigo de 1985 sobre a relação performance-análise serve como pano de fundo para retratar o Intérprete como o maior responsável pelo delineamento de nossas percepções de forma do primeiro movimento da *Sonata para Piano em Lá Menor*, Op. 42 (D845) de Schubert. Idéias sobre forma como processo na música de Beethoven, sobre a situação pessoal e profissional de Schubert em 1825, e sobre a atuação recíproca entre as convenções e transformações formais e motivicas são focalizadas tendo em vista a questão de como intérpretes e analistas podem chegar à compreensão desta obra formidável de Schubert.

Palavras-chave: forma musical como processo, funções formais, noções filosóficas e musicais de *devenir*, progressão *omnibus*, "falsa" recapitulação, divisão simétrica da oitava.

I made my début as a scholar with a book about Alban Berg's opera *Wozzeck*; but it happens that my very first article, published in 1985, was an attempt to address the performance-analysis relationship. The original version of that essay was a paper that I presented in the United States at the *Annual Meeting of the Society for Music Theory* in 1983. Like my article, that earlier paper addressed two of Beethoven's *Bagatelles*, Op. 126, and it featured a dialogue between an allegorical Music-Analyst and a Pianist-Performer.¹ These two characters were supposed to be understood as dual dimensions of *the real me*, their author—me as a full-time theory teacher, and me as a dedicated performer when spare time permits. Given that I myself played the role of both the Performer and the Analyst in my presentation, it is hard to believe that anyone who heard me deliver that paper misunderstood my allegorical conceit.

In 1983 only a few American Schenkerian and atonal theorists had begun to write about the ramifications of their work for performance; perhaps this is why my two characters seem in

¹ Janet Schmalfeldt, "On the Relation of Analysis to Performance: Beethoven's Bagatelles Op. 126, Nos. 2 and 5," *Journal of Music Theory* 29/1 (1985): 1-31.

general to have been warmly welcomed into the academic community at that time.² It has been a pleasure to note since then that my article has often been cited affirmatively; and I have even heard that it still shows up on reading lists for performance/analysis courses. But not all of my readers have been happy with the apparent relationship between my fictive Performer and her friend the Analyst. To get right to the point, I seem to have given the Analyst the upper hand.

Consider, for example, Joel Lester's reaction to my work, in 1995. He describes me as "more evenhanded" than at least one other writer (Tim Howell), but he proposes that I offer an "imbalanced dialogue": "her *pianist*-persona is learning to play the pieces, but it is obvious from her prose that her *analyst*-persona has studied them long and hard."³ On a much sharper note—it felt scathing at the time—we have Lawrence Rosenwald's critique in 1993. From the passage in which my Performer describes having been enlightened by the Analyst about an aspect of motivic design, Rosenwald detects "a Puritan conversion narrative: 'I once was lost, but now am found, / was blind, but now I see.' Says Rosenwald, "I cannot believe that this is the relation of actual analysts and performers; when David Lewin gets to heaven, will he have conversations of this sort with Glenn Gould?"⁴ (As if this weren't enough, Nicholas Cook has since cited parts of these same quotations from Lester and Rosenwald.)⁵

Surely Rosenwald never once thought that my Performer and my Analyst characters presumed to represent the likes of Lewin and Gould. I had assumed that both of my characters would be easily recognizable as aspects of myself—for example, me struggling to prepare my first complete performance of the *Bagatelles* (broadcast in 1984 by the Canadian Broadcasting Company in Montréal), and me grappling with how my analytic training could be brought into the service of my performance aspirations. In the broadest sense, I was of course also trying to come to grips with how—and whether—the kinds of analysis I teach as a music theorist might be useful to the many young performers who have been required to take my courses. But, more than anything else, my article was an extremely personal effort to bring two essential aspects of my being into dialogue with one another.

As I saw it then and I see it now, in no way did I mean to portray the Performer of my 1985 article as intellectually, cognitively, or imaginatively inferior to, thus dependent upon, my Music-Analyst. Lester, outraged by Wallace Berry's insistence on the superiority of cognition in performance, rhetorically asks: "Is it right to assume that all those tens of thousands of hours that performers

² Among studies of influence on my own that were published in English before the 1980s, there are the following: Jeanne Thieffry, *Alfred Cortot's Studies of Musical Interpretation*, trans. Robert Jacques (London: George G. Harrap, 1937); Ralph Kirkpatrick, Preface to *Johann Sebastian Bach: The Goldberg Variations*, ed. Ralph Kirkpatrick (New York: G. Schirmer, 1938); Roger Sessions, *The Musical Experience of Composer, Performer, Listener* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950); Erwin Stein, *Form and Performance* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962); Edward T. Cone, *Musical Form and Musical Performance* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1968); Cone, *The Composer's Voice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974); Alfred Brendel, *Thoughts and Afterthoughts* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976); David Blum, *Casals and the Art of Interpretation* (London: Heinemann, 1977); Geoffrey Payzant, *Glenn Gould: Music and Mind* (Toronto: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1978); Konrad Wolff, *Schnabel's Interpretation of Piano Music*, 2d ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1979).

³ Joel Lester, "Performance and Analysis: Interaction and Interpretation," in *The Practice of Performance: Studies in Musical Interpretation*, ed. John Rink (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 198; Tim Howell, "Analysis and Performance: The Search for a Middleground," in *Companion to Contemporary Musical Thought*, 2 vols., ed. J. Paynter et al. (London: Routledge, 1992), 692-714.

⁴ Lawrence Rosenwald, "Theory, Text-Setting, Performance," *Journal of Musicology* 11 (1993): 61.

⁵ Nicholas Cook, "Analysing Performance and Performing Analysis," in *Rethinking Music*, ed. Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 246.

spend honing their skills are entirely mindless, and that it is only when cognitively derived information is explained in words that performers' skills are able to create valid performances?⁶ The answer here is obviously a resounding "No, this is not right!"; and, as one who has spent quite a few of those thousands of hours at a keyboard, I will say this very emphatically. But I have recognized for some time now both *how* and *why* I opened my work to the kind of criticism Rosenwald, Lester, and Cook have raised about it. In my effort to characterize what is unique about performance, and thus to create two distinct personae, with their separate tasks and goals, I exaggerated, maybe even caricatured, their differences. My Performer does indeed get the credit for the Analyst's effort to interpret structural details in *dramatic* terms; but the Analyst clearly takes charge of the analysis, leaving the Performer mainly to perform the bagatelles. Since not all music analysts perform, and since performers tend not to regard themselves as analysts, the kind of dialogue I created might be said to have some basis in reality. But, truth be told, that reality happens not to be my own.

At some point after I began to study music theory and analysis as an undergraduate, I began to think about my entire pianistic repertoire in analytic terms, loosely speaking. For example, though this might sound bizarre to first-year theory students, I can no longer remember what it must have been like to play a piece without being consciously aware of melodic scale degrees, harmonic and tonal progressions, cadences, and voice leading on a fairly detailed local level. I have always been intrigued by the question of *form* in music. And when I began to study Schenkerian theory, the very tangible ideas of, say, middleground neighbor motions, registral connections, voice exchanges, and unfoldings made sense to me because they were in some completely uncomplicated way already part of my experience in performing and listening to tonal music. Thus, in all honesty, but with a bit of embarrassment, I will admit that, for many years now, I have rarely chosen a fingering, made a decision about pedaling or articulation, or even considered how I will enter and exit the keys without having already arrived at some kind of analytically-based sound image—if only a vague one. Conversely, I would not be a music theorist today had I not gained a profound love of music through performance. I see the discipline of preparing for performances, not to mention the energy, imagination, courage, and focus that performing requires, as the best possible preparation for teaching music in classrooms and presenting papers about music at conferences. In short, the Performer and the Analyst *in me* have never been as distinct one from another as I seem to have portrayed them to be in my article.

And yet, in deferring to the Analyst, my 1985 Performer may well have been revealing herself as the less confident of the two. After all, like certain other writers about performance and analysis, I had long ago chosen to make my living as a teacher and scholar, rather than as a professional pianist. Did this not mean that I should be better at verbal interpretations of music than at interpretations presented physically through sound? As readers must surely have noticed, the Performer in my article is just as "verbal"—maybe even as "analytical"—as her friend the Analyst. The two of them together can certainly not be construed as representing, or endorsing, that outmoded Cartesian mind-body antithesis—Analyst as mind, Performer as body—which still seems to be hovering around, if not actually thriving in, recent discussions of analysis versus performance.⁷ Quite to the contrary, the processes of thinking, feeling, and using the body to

⁶ Lester, "Performance and Analysis," 198.

⁷ See, for example, Suzanne Cusick, "Feminist Theory, Music Theory, and the Mind/Body Problem," *Perspectives of New Music* 32/1 (1994): 8-27. Cusick discusses Fanny Hensel's Piano Trio in D Minor.

perform all interact inseparably for my two characters. And, most important, I had intended to give them equal authority within their exchange. But not once does the Analyst in my article clarify that many of her analytic views had in fact been inspired by the Performer. Not once does the Performer have the chance to demonstrate that, for better or worse, and certainly for richer rather than poorer, performances can (and usually do) influence and even determine analytic interpretations, just as much as analyses can (and usually do) inform performances. In what follows below, I shall do my best to let the *Performer* make that case with reference to Schubert. I am currently working on a series of essays about early-to-mid nineteenth-century European music—a project in which I explore the notion of *musical form as process*, while proposing precedents for that idea in early nineteenth-century philosophical writings. Let me acknowledge here that I have undoubtedly been led into this undertaking as much by the performer in me as by my analytic and theoretic concerns. The distinguishing feature of my present work is its effort to recapture something of the *processual nature* of the musical experience. As a temporal art, music demands that we hear it diachronically; thus we perceive all performances—of *any* kind of music—as processual, if only in the ordinary sense that they must proceed to begin at some point in time and to end sometime later. Less ordinary, I claim, is that, towards the end of the eighteenth century and into the next, new compositional approaches to certain by-then well-established conventions of musical form seemed intent upon shifting our focus away from the perception of forms as the product of successive, functionally discrete sections within a whole. Instead, these new approaches seemed to be treating the formal process itself as “the form.” Listeners of this kind of music are being asked to *participate* within that process, by reinterpreting *formal functions* in the light of their awareness of an interplay between conventions and transformations. And, as the most active of all listeners, performers themselves are being urged to play a far more authoritative role than usual in articulating such form-defining moments as beginnings and endings, and then projecting the overall shapes that these might define.

In an article published by the journal *Beethoven Forum* in 1995, I introduce some of these premises, as exemplified in particular by the first movement of Beethoven’s “Tempest” Sonata, Op. 31, No. 2.⁸ In that essay I take certain of Theodor Adorno’s and Carl Dahlhaus’s ideas about the music of Beethoven as my point of departure. With his oft-recurring argument that form is a dialectical process in Beethoven’s music after 1802, Dahlhaus emerges as the guardian of a tradition in which Hegelian concepts have been brought to bear on the question of musical form. Precedents for Dahlhaus’s idea of form as process arise in the early writings of Friedrich Schlegel and in the *Encyclopaedia Logic* of Hegel. The metaphor common to all three sources—Schlegel, Hegel, and Dahlhaus—is the notion of *becoming*; and it is the idea of *form coming into being* that I shall address here, as I explore some of the challenges of performing the first movement of Schubert’s Piano Sonata in A Minor, Op. 42 (D845).

Let me begin by offering some historical background about this piece of the kind that I think both performers and music analysts would want to consider. Of Franz Schubert’s three piano sonatas in A minor, the one shown at **Ex.1** was the last to be written—before the end of May in 1825—and the first of *any* of Schubert’s piano sonatas to be published. When the firm of Pennauer put forth this work as Schubert’s Op. 42 in 1826, favorable reviews in Leipzig and Frankfurt helped

⁸ Janet Schmalfeldt, “Form as the Process of Becoming: The Beethoven-Hegelian Tradition and the ‘Tempest’ Sonata,” *Beethoven Forum* 4 (1995): 37-71.

to establish his status as a composer for the piano.⁹ But Schubert was hardly a newcomer to solo piano music at that time. Already by the end of his teenage years, during 1815-1818, he had experimented with as many as eleven piano sonatas—leaving some movements incomplete or some sonatas without finales, creating sonata fragments, as it were; and many of these pieces are wonderful. Yet, by 1823 Schubert's only published work for the piano was his highly innovative "Wanderer" Fantasy, Op. 15; and it really does seem probable that his Op. 42 was the first of his piano sonatas that Schubert deemed *worthy* of publication.

Needless to say, Schubert's artistic standards were of the very highest order. Probably as late as 1823, and thus *after* his composition of the "Unfinished" Symphony, Schubert was invited to choose and present one of his orchestral works for a performance. He declined the offer, because he claimed to have nothing that he could "send out into the world with a clear conscience," when "there are so many pieces by great masters, as for instance, Beethoven's Overture to *Prometheus*, *Egmont*, *Coriolanus*, etc., etc., etc."¹⁰ That the name of *just one* composer—Beethoven, the overpowering musical figure in Vienna throughout Schubert's lifetime—should flow automatically here from Schubert's pen comes as no surprise: Schubert could not help but be continually inspired and challenged by Beethoven. As recently put by the American Schubert scholar John Gingerich: "it is difficult to think of another composer on the absolutely highest level in the Western tradition who had more powerful, more immediate, more intimidating models of achievement before him than Schubert had with Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven."¹¹ The very idea, then, that Schubert was willing to send his Op. 42 sonata out into the world may well have some relevance in efforts to interpret its character and its design.

Like others, I would like to believe that Schubert never genuinely doubted his capacity in the end to attain *on his own terms* a level of achievement entirely worthy of comparison with Beethoven's. But possibly by the end of 1822, when he may already have been diagnosed with syphilis, Schubert might also have realized that his time was running out. Whether or not he knew that he had acquired that illness through sexual activities, he may well have assigned to himself a good deal of the responsibility for actions that would inevitably shorten his life. According to two of his friends, in 1823 Schubert produced some of the songs for his great cycle *Die schöne Müllerin* while hospitalized and dangerously ill. By March 31st in 1824, Schubert's mood, as suggested in his now famous letter to Leopold Kupelwieser, embraced an astounding admixture of hopelessness and professional resolve. Quoting Gretchen's (Goethe's) "Meine Ruh' ist hin," from one of his earliest, most famous songs, Schubert says: "I feel myself to be the most unhappy and wretched creature in the world. Imagine a man whose health will never be right again, and who, in sheer despair over this, ever makes things worse and worse, instead of better ... I seem once again to have composed two operas for nothing." But then Schubert announces that he has just completed two string quartets and an octet, and that he has plans for a third quartet, as the next step towards the genre of the "great symphony." Finally, he tells

⁹ Maurice J. E. Brown, with Eric Sams (Work-List), *The New Grove Schubert* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1982), 49-50 (1st published in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie, 1980). See also William Kinderman, "Schubert's Piano Music," in *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert*, ed. Christopher H. Gibbs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 157-59.

¹⁰ Otto Erich Deutsch, *Schubert: A Documentary Biography*, trans. Eric Blom (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1946; reprint, New York: Da Capo Press, 1977), 264-65.

¹¹ John M. Gingerich, "Schubert's Beethoven Project: The Chamber Music, 1824-1828" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1996 [Ann Arbor: UMI, 1996], 124.

his friend the news in Vienna that there will soon be a concert of Beethoven's latest works, and he concludes with: "God willing, I too am thinking of giving a similar concert next year."¹²

Unfortunately, the "concert next year" did not occur until four years later, in March of 1828—on the anniversary of Beethoven's death; eight months after that, Schubert was dead, at the age of 31. But apparently by 1825 he had indeed worked out most of his "Great" Symphony in C Major, while also producing the Op. 42 sonata and then the Piano Sonata in D Major. These works, along with the chamber pieces from 1824 and the instrumental works that followed in such an astonishing spate of creativity until his death, constitute what Gingerich has called Schubert's "Beethoven Project"—that is, Schubert's forthright commitment to meeting Beethoven on his own turf, by not only composing but also now publicly presenting works in Beethoven's own instrumental genres. Following Charles Fisk, whose recent book on Schubert's late piano music has been ground-breaking, I see Schubert's "Beethoven project" as his preeminently self-affirming "Schubert project," and as an act of the greatest courage.¹³ Moreover, I am particularly attracted to the A-minor Sonata Op. 42 because of its place within the initial stages of that project, shortly after the beginning of the end of Schubert's life. But Gingerich's idea of a "Beethoven project" could not be more appropriate as a basis for what I am about to discuss. There is only one composer to whom one might turn in search of precedents for Schubert's remarkable formal and motivic strategies in his Op. 42 first movement, and that composer is of course Beethoven.

About the first movement of Beethoven's "Tempest" Sonata, Carl Dahlhaus has said: "The beginning of the movement is *not yet* a subject, the evolutionary episode is one *no longer*."¹⁴ Allow me to attempt a translation of this distinctly Hegelian thought into present-day technical terms. Let me also demonstrate Dahlhaus's observation by applying it to Schubert's sonata rather than to Beethoven's. The annotated score at **Ex.1** shows a broad, brooding beginning whose obsessive orientation on dominant, rather than tonic, harmony suggests that an Introduction to the sonata-form proper is gradually building to a climax. Not a single tonic harmony will fall on a downbeat until the cataclysmic *fortissimo* at m. 26—a "structural downbeat" if there ever was one. At that moment, the much-awaited resolution of the pent-up dominant is provided by a bold new idea that sounds for all the world like the beginning of the sonata's Main Theme (**MT**). But a *sequential* repetition of the new idea initiates a modulation into the secondary key of this sonata exposition—C major. And then a prolongation of the dominant of that new key prepares the beginning, at m. 40, of what must ultimately be regarded as the Secondary Theme (**ST**). Thus the apparent **MT** begun at m. 26 has unquestionably *become* (\Rightarrow) the Transition. And from this it follows that what seemed like an Introduction in the beginning must have been the **MT** after all. Or, better put, this is what it has become.

Dahlhaus's statement about Beethoven's "Tempest" Sonata suggests that it is useless to try to settle once and for all the question of whether Beethoven's beginning is an Introduction or a **MT**. I am proposing precisely the same about Schubert's opening. The beginning of this movement is *not yet* the **MT** when we hear it *in time*, for the *first time*. It becomes the **MT** only in retrospect, that is, only after we realize that the subsequent modulatory passage can *no longer* be regarded

¹² Deutsch, *Schubert: A Documentary Biography*, 338-40.

¹³ See Charles Fisk, *Returning Cycles: Contexts for the Interpretation of Schubert's Impromptus and Last Sonatas* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

¹⁴ Dahlhaus, *Ludwig van Beethoven: Approaches to His Music*, trans. Mary Whittall (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), 170.

as the **MT**. It is the very process of "Introduction *becoming* **MT**" that Schubert seems to be highlighting. And, to invoke Schubert's contemporary, Hegel, we might say that the *becoming* itself is what dialectically unites our opposing perceptions—**Introduction** versus **MT**.

Now, just what does this processual interpretation of Schubert's opening mean to me as a performer of the movement, and to what extent has it been influenced by the performer in me? This latter question is particularly hard to answer, because I began to conceive analytically of the idea of *dual, progressively changing formal functions* around the same time that I began preparing for my first performance of this piece. I can, however, certainly stress the following: the formal ambiguity that I have always sensed about Schubert's opening convinces me that performers of this movement are very much in charge of how listeners will perceive the unfolding design. To explain what I mean, I invite my readers to think about multiple ways in which the performer might be free to project the materials of mm. 1-26.

Whether or not the performer thinks of the opening four bars as an **antecedent phrase**, the convention of a **basic idea** followed by a **contrasting idea** that leads to a **half cadence (HC)** would undoubtedly suggest an antecedent to listeners familiar with late-classical Viennese styles. The idea of an antecedent as an opener is further confirmed when what promises to be a **consequent phrase** unequivocally begins at m. 5. But consequents most often end with a perfect authentic cadence (**PAC**); here no such cadence is achieved. Instead, let's say that the potential consequent *becomes* an expanded **2nd antecedent**, in that, like the first, it ends with a half cadence (at m. 10). Now we might be prepared to reinterpret those two antecedent phrases as the expansive *presentation* of a large idea (mm. 1-4) and its expanded repetition (mm. 5-10). If this is what we perceive, then we will now be expecting a *continuation* of comparable length, such that just one expansive theme—of the type that Arnold Schoenberg and others have called the **sentence**—may well be completed. Here the performer might either confirm or negate such expectations; and, since ambiguity, rather than clarification, is already at the basis of the compositional plan, I suggest that the performer is free to choose.

I'll admit that, on every recording of this movement I've studied, the pianist responds to the new texture and rhythm at **m. 10** by directly initiating a somewhat faster tempo, or by gradually achieving this over the next two-to-four bars. That said, I shall propose that when pianists make an effort to camouflage their acceleration, or to treat Schubert's *a tempo* marking at m. 10 literally—as a request to resume the initial moderato tempo, then the perception that a single thematic process is continuing onward will most likely be reinforced. I roughly describe Andreas Staier's strategy here, on a richly resonant fortepiano. Maurizio Pollini's approach is similar, but his moderato tempo itself seems a bit plodding; the opening tempo he pretends to resume is already on the slow side, and he gives the impression of maintaining that tempo throughout the exposition.¹⁵ If, on the other hand, pianists indeed observe both of Schubert's *poco ritardandos*, including the one at m. 3, and even if they have lingered for only a split second on either the accented E-natural in m. 1 or its neighbor-tone, the F-natural in m. 5, then at what moment has there been the establishment of a stable tempo to resume? Here's a problem! Schubert's markings encourage a wonderfully reflective, perhaps even hesitant, certainly introductory-like performance of mm. 1-10; but then what? Perhaps because they sense that the forthcoming new idea at m. 26 calls for a faster tempo than the basic idea of mm. 1-2, various performers respond to the *a tempo* at m.

¹⁵ Andreas Staier, fortepiano (Teldec 0630-11084-2, 1996); Maurizio Pollini (Deutsche Grammophon LP 2530 473).

SCHUBERT

SONATE OP. 42, D 845

EXPOSITION

Intro. \Rightarrow Main Theme (MT)

antecedent

basic idea (BL) *pp*

contrasting idea (CL) *a tempo*

consequent \Rightarrow 2d antecedent?

mf *in poco ritard.*

HC

continuation?

mf *a tempo* *eresc.*

HC

eresc.

MT \Rightarrow TRANSITION

new idea \Rightarrow model

PAC?

sequence

into III (= C)

standing on the new dominant

(omnibus)

eresc.

SECONDARY THEME (ST)

BL as model

fp

sequence

compressed continuation

cre *scen* *do*

fp

var. rep. of ST

EC?

p

eresc.

ff

CLOSING THEME

1 antecedent *pp*

EC?

consequent

molto espressivo

mf 2d consequent?

eresc.

CODETTAS

pp

p

Ex. 1 - F. Schubert: *Piano Sonata in A minor*, Op. 42 (D845), first movement.

The image displays a musical score for F. Schubert's Piano Sonata in A minor, Op. 42 (D845), first movement, continued. The score is divided into two systems. The left system contains measures 81-95, with a section labeled 'DEVELOPMENT: PRE-CORE' between measures 85 and 90. The right system contains measures 120-138, with a section labeled 'CORE II' between measures 120 and 125. The score includes various musical notations such as treble and bass staves, notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *ppp*, *mf*, and *f*. There are also performance instructions like *cresc.* and *dim.*.

Ex. 1 - F. Schubert: *Piano Sonata in A minor*, Op. 42 (D845), first movement, continued.

Ex. 1 - F. Schubert: *Piano Sonata in A minor*, Op. 42 (D845), first movement, continued.

The musical score is presented in a single system with multiple staves. It includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *pp*, *cresc.*, *f*, *p*, and *fz*. The score is divided into several sections: *consequent* (measures 238-243), *2d consequent?* (measures 244-249), *CODETTA* (measures 250-255), *CODA* (measures 256-261), *Stage 1* (measures 262-267), *Stage 2* (measures 268-273), and *Stage 3* (measures 274-279). The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *pp*, *cresc.*, *f*, *p*, and *fz*.

Ex. 1 - F. Schubert: *Piano Sonata in A minor*, Op. 42 (D845), first movement, continued.

10 with a faster tempo that at any earlier moment so far. The faster the tempo chosen, and the more immediately it is established, the more likely it is that we will hear the downbeat of m. 10 as the beginning of a distinctly *new* thematic process, or as the discrete second part of a small-binary theme. This is what the recordings of pianists Richard Goode and András Schiff suggest, at least to me. In fact, their almost *subito* faster tempos at m. 10 (Goode) or m. 11 (Schiff) already establish the pace that they will generally hold all the way to the end of the **ST**.¹⁶

Finally, the manner in which the pianist approaches the tonic downbeat at m. 26 will have everything to do with how listeners retrospectively interpret Schubert's formidable opening. Even the slightest pause on, or *ritardando* into, the dominant of m. 25 can suggest, I think, that this harmony is the goal harmony, already achieved back at m. 10 and simply prolonged ever since. By contrast, a strong sense of direction onto the tonic at m. 26, even if with a broadening over the bar line, will emphatically convey the effect of a perfect authentic cadence here. And this in turn could help to suggest that an apparent *dominant*-prolonging Introduction has, at the very last minute, closed in the characteristic manner of a **MT**. Granted, I know of no recorded performance in which the dominant of m. 25 seems to be the pianist's goal. Despite the vast registral and textural discontinuities created at m. 26, and perhaps because of the nearly unbearable suspense that the "standing-on-the-dominant" creates, performers seem consistently to project the idea of an authentic cadence at m. 26. The split second that Andreas Staier steals before the downbeat of m. 26 is perhaps just great enough to raise a question; but even here I sense that the tonic is Staier's goal.

Staier especially lingers on the chord that serves as the upbeat to the dominant at m. 4. Whether he had a conscious reason for doing so is not our business; we can thank him in any case for inviting us to hear the subtle first appearance of a motive whose insidious, powerful presence can be sensed throughout this movement and into those that follow. I refer to the bass motion F-to-E, from scale-degree 6 to scale-degree 5—a melodic gesture with antecedents as old as plainchant, and, from one century to the next, often associated with lament. By the turn into the nineteenth century, this neighbor motion, whether in the major or the minor mode, had become a pervasive resource for local and long-range motivic continuity, operative on multiple levels of the foreground and middleground. For example, consider the turn figure that emphasizes the neighbor scale-degree 6 in relation to 5 at mm. 21-24 and mm. 55-59 in the first movement of Beethoven's "Tempest" Sonata. Neighbor-tone gestures of this kind function as motives in so many of Schubert's songs that they can be regarded as one of his signature motivic traits; the openings of his "Gretchen am Spinnrade" (1814), "Erlkönig" (1815), and "Du bist die Ruh" (1822) offer cases in point. In his Op. 42 sonata, Schubert's processual, "organicist" treatment of the F-E motive might suggest that he had become well acquainted with Beethoven's last piano sonatas, and especially Op. 111, published in 1823 (see Beethoven's focus upon the neighbor motion A-flat-to-G at the beginning of the Allegro con brio ed appassionato in his first movement). On the other hand, Schubert's interest in complex motivic networks already becomes evident early in his career; and the later his works, the more they seem to be concerned with cyclic connections from one movement and even one opus to the next.

Within this opus, Schubert gives us *five* initial opportunities to sense that the F-E motion is progressively emerging as a chief protagonist within the music drama. First we have the bass motion that Staier

¹⁶ Richard Goode (Elektra Nonesuch 79271-2, 1993); András Schiff (London/Decca 440 305-2, 1993).

highlights. Next comes the high-point F-natural at m. 5: might it even be a 9th over an implied dominant? Whether yes or no, this F-natural clearly behaves as a neighbor to the E-natural back in m. 1, and it returns to the E-natural in m. 6. Then we have the unforgettably striking chromatic bass motion F-sharp-F-natural-E at m. 8-10, arising when the bass line fills in the span from tonic to dominant. Schubert will return with a vengeance to this chromatic bass descent in his Coda. At m. 12, he finds an ingenious means of sounding the F-natural and the E-natural simultaneously! Finally, having introduced the F-natural of m. 9 as the bass tone of an augmented-sixth chord, Schubert reinterprets that harmony in a manner well-explored by 1825, especially by Schubert himself: he returns to his augmented-sixth at m. 20 but now treats it as the dominant-7th of the Neapolitan. At the same time, he brings his syncopated rhythm to its climax and forces the F-natural into the role of pedal point, thus delaying and heightening its return as a neighbor to the E.

William Rothstein has recently written about some of the pitfalls performers can face when told or motivated to “bring out” structural details. As Rothstein says: “Most listeners . . . do not go to concerts or listen to recordings to hear an analytical demonstration.”¹⁷ For performer-analysts like me, these are words to live by: we can heed them as a preventive from needlessly banging out Schubert’s bass line within this extraordinary first climax. On the other hand, our approach to the passage might well be enhanced by a sensitivity to its dramatic implications: with each of its successive appearances, the motivic F-natural seems to be striving all the more ardently for some kind of autonomy, even though we sense that it must always in the end descend to the E. In our quest for a narrative, or for a psychological process that we might be enacting when we perform this music, it might also be worth considering the *extra-musical* topics of two earlier works in which Schubert saliently explored the same harmonic reinterpretation of an augmented-sixth chord—his “Wanderer” Fantasy and his “Death and the Maiden” Quartet.

The insistence with which the new idea at mm. 26-27 enters and proceeds suggests that, like the F-natural relative to the E, the new idea proposes itself as a *rival* to the opening gesture of the movement. Gaining momentum over the course of the Transition, this “hammering” idea overflows into what I call the Secondary Theme at m. 40. Now it becomes gentler, more dance-like and playful in its major-mode environment; but beneath the surface of the theme’s model-sequence-continuation design over the span of mm. 40-48, we might just be able to hear vestiges of Schubert’s *omnibus* progression from mm. 36-37.¹⁸ Performers would be hard put to “bring out” these omnibus underpinnings; and I concur with Rothstein that this is usually the case with such concealed repetitions. But I propose that the performer is fully in charge of how listeners will perceive the cadential progression at m. 50, or its expanded version at mm. 59-61. In both cases these progressions come “too soon”: after the presentation of a 4-bar idea (mm. 40-43) and its sequential repetition, we have good reason, stylistically speaking, to expect at least an 8-bar continuation, but only 3 bars follow. By introducing a pronounced *ritardando* in m. 50, the pianist could easily convince us that a relatively stable half cadence has been achieved here. Conversely, by *avoiding a ritard.*, but instead catching one’s breath, so to speak, just before the beginning of the repetition at m. 51, the pianist could create the effect of an *evaded cadence*.

¹⁷ William Rothstein, “Analysis and the Act of Performance,” in *The Practice of Performance*, 202.

¹⁸ The name “omnibus” for the type of chromatic progression heard in Schubert’s mm. 36-37 originates in an unpublished paper by Victor Fell Yellin in 1972 (Yellin traces his awareness of the term to Roger Martinez of the University of San Juan); see Yellin, *The Omnibus Idea* (Warren, MI: Harmonie Park Press, 1998). See also Paula J. Telesco, “Enharmonicism and the Omnibus Progression in Classical-Era Music,” *Music Theory Spectrum* 20/2 (1998): 242-79.

Perhaps this is the better choice here, given that the repetition of the **ST** seems to be a “one-more-time” effort, motivated by a failure to close, and again refusing closure at m. 61—this time through absolute silence.¹⁹

Despite the lack of closure here, I regard what follows as a Closing Theme, so to speak, followed by a series of codettas. Now we can begin to understand that the elusive formal and motivic behavior of Schubert’s opening will have enormous repercussions as the movement continues to unfold. It would seem that Schubert very deliberately set forth multiple formal possibilities so that he could explore and exploit each one of them in due time. You will recall the potential antecedent-consequent plan that the very opening of the movement seemed to promise. The first two phrases of the Closing Theme now confirm that original expectation: here variants of the initial basic and contrasting ideas return in the mediant minor, at first pausing as before on the dominant, then closing on the tonic to create the effect of a genuine consequent. As if, however, to suggest that these Main-Theme materials are not willing to be conventionalized, a third phrase—another consequent?—enters to disturb the classical symmetry, and also to gain what now finally seems like a more conclusive cadential closure, at m. 77.

The codettas now seem at first to propose a reconciliation: the Transition idea has become subdued. But then a new version of the MT-idea intrudes, at mm.82-83, to insist on its priority in this piece. Just how are we to understand the harmonic meaning of this purely melodic gesture? Or, for that matter, what are the harmonic implications of the idea to which it alludes—the opening idea of the movement? Peter Smith, in his fine analysis of Schubert’s opening, argues for a dominant underpinning.²⁰ Perhaps especially as a performer, I tend instead to hear *tonic* harmony both at the beginning of the movement and at m. 82. This may be because I am strongly influenced by the one-and-only harmonized appearance of the idea—within the Development section (at m. 106), where the idea is given *tonic* support in D minor. But if, at m. 82, the descent of the idea through the scale-degrees 3-2-1 in A minor suggests an A-minor harmony, then let us note how strongly this idea seems to want to pull the music away from the key of C major and back into the home tonic! In mm. 87-89, a fragment of the Transition idea persists in sustaining the key of C major. But at the very end of the Exposition, we have nothing but a single offbeat chord, and it happens to be the home dominant.

The first stage of Schubert’s Development section—his Pre-Core (to use William E. Caplin’s term²¹)—begins by prolonging that very same *home*-dominant harmony, through yet another variant of the **MT**-idea, now alternating with its codetta version in the higher register. This unharmonized registral dialogue has posed as yet unsolved mysteries at least for me, even after I found fingerings and physical motions to accommodate the registral shifts. Here Schubert’s music establishes, once and for all, the compositional—and perhaps now psychological—priority of his initial basic idea. His Development will be obsessively concerned with variants, expansions, and fragmentations of that idea, to the complete exclusion of Transition or **ST** materials.

¹⁹ On the “one more time” repetition, see Janet Schmalfeldt, “Cadential Processes: The Evaded Cadence and the ‘One More time’ Technique,” *Journal of Musicological Research* 12 (1992): 1-52.

²⁰ Peter H. Smith, “Structural Tonic or Apparent Tonic?: Parametric Conflict, Temporal Perspective, and a Continuum of Articulative Possibilities,” *Journal of Music Theory* 39/2 (1995): 273-74.

²¹ See William E. Caplin, *Classical Form: A Theory of Formal Functions for the Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), chap. 10, “Development.”

The Pre-Core effects a modulation into the key of the subdominant, D minor, and sets the stage for the song-like first Core (mm. 105-120), which proceeds, via a chromatic ascending-step sequence (5-6 series), to none other than the key of F minor (vi)—a now tonicized reference to the motivic F-natural. Core II (mm. 121-46), with its 16th-note tremolo figure, continues the ascending-step sequence (5/3-6/4) but then breaks from this (at m. 134), settling on the dominant of the subdominant (D minor). Now the V-of-iv is reinterpreted as the beginning of yet another omnibus-related progression (mm. 137-42) that leads to the dominant-7th of F-sharp minor, the point of departure for Core III. This third Core serves as a “false recapitulation.” It begins at m. 146 with a direct reference to the **MT**’s antecedent phrase, but it uses this as a model for a sequential series that proceeds via ascending minor thirds, to create a *symmetric division of the octave* (see the circled bass dominants in Ex. 1 at mm. 147-78: c#-e-g-b^b-c#-e, in m. 178). Incorporated within this process is a return, at m. 166, of the idea from the formally ambiguous m. 10. This idea proposes to initiate a final Core (IV), but that Core retrospectively seems to *become* the true retransition (mm. 168-185). Starting at m. 178, the materials from m. 18 now return to recreate a “standing-on-the-home-dominant.” Thus what was once the problematic, ambiguous part of Schubert’s opening has now been placed in the service of a retransition. From the viewpoint of a *structural-tonic* return (rather than a thematic return), the Recapitulation then begins precisely where a **MT** had seemed to begin in the first place—with the Transition materials, at m. 186! In short, it seems possible that Schubert created the ambiguous, multivalent, dominant-prolonging passage within his opening measures for the express, long-range purpose of reinterpreting this as the climactic means of approaching his entirely unorthodox Recapitulation.

When the Closing Theme returns at m. 224, the pianist in particular will have no difficulty discovering the processual, long-range motivic rationale for that *extra* third phrase, here beginning at m. 232: the fifth finger of the pianist’s left hand will find itself once again wanting to linger on the very same F-natural that Andreas Staier highlighted in m. 3. And now we can understand just why Schubert could not possibly have begun his Recapitulation with his opening materials. His exclusive focus upon his **MT**’s basic idea within the Development section may well have been a crucial reason for omitting a conventional **MT** recapitulation; but now, as well, the Closing Theme in the Recapitulation comes into such a close rapport with the **MT**-materials that it is tempting to think of this theme as the stable, definitive **MT**-form towards which that theme had been reluctantly striving over the course of the complete movement. Then, however, the F-natural initiates the first of an astounding series of attempts to break free from the E. The first of these arises with the *deceptive progression* into m. 237, complete with parallel 5ths and 8ves, and repeated at m. 242. Then comes Schubert’s three-stage Coda, within which the rival ideas—the hovering **MT**-variant and the hammering Transition gesture—are finally combined in a manner that somehow suggests both futility and defiance.

I shall not be so reckless here as to conclude by insisting on some one overriding narrative that performers must convey in this movement. Whatever the story might be, my **Ex.2** suggests that it has not been completed at the end of Schubert’s violent Coda. The incipits at **Ex.2**—(a) from the opening of Schubert’s second movement, (b) from his third-movement Scherzo, where the Trio resides in the motivically significant key of F major, and (c) from the beginning of his Finale—all propose that the F-E relationship remains to be explored throughout the complete work. I shall boldly suggest, however, that I hear within Schubert’s first movement a haunting obsessiveness—of the kind, for example, that thoughts of death might bring; I also hear a fierce determination not to give in to the obsession. Here is a case where, as both performer and

(a) *Andante, poco mosso*

(b) *Trio*
Un poco più lento
pp mit Verschiebung

(c) *Rondo*
Allegro vivace
pp legato

Ex. 2 - F. Schubert: *Piano Sonata in A minor*, Op. 42 (D845), first movement, continued.

analyst, I have gained inspiration and, I hope, insight from the recent work of a third and a fourth type of scholar—the biographer and the music historian. Knowing what I've learned from these about Schubert's illness and about his "Beethoven project," I shall simply never again be able to approach an analysis or a performance of any work as if the composing of music could somehow be an autonomous activity, entirely separate from one's cultural, sociological, psychological, and deeply personal concerns. John Gingerich has said: "If anyone could be assumed eligible to suffer a crippling case of 'anxiety of influence' it was Schubert. But Schubert neither ignored Beethoven, nor fought him, nor was he silenced by Beethoven's imposing precedent."²² Three portentous silences occur in Schubert's Coda, and each one of these will be overcome more powerfully. Here, then, Schubert's instrumental persona urges us performers to reach with him for the greatest heights, against all odds.

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In the role of pianist, Prof. Schmalfeldt's appearances in Montréal included a performance of Beethoven's Fourth Concerto with the McGill Symphony as well as regular chamber and solo recitals, one of which was broadcast by the CBC. While teaching at Yale, she presented a solo recital and performed Mozart's Piano Concerto, K. 271. With the Tufts Symphony in the spring of 1997, she and Lois Shapiro performed Mozart's Concerto in E-flat for Two Pianos, K. 365. For the 1999 annual meeting of the New England Conference of Music Theorists, held at Harvard University, she presented Schubert's *Sechs Momente musicaux* and accompanied baritone Richard Lalli in a performance of Schubert songs and Robert Schumann's *Dichterliebe*. In the fall of 2002, she performed Schubert's *Winterreise*, with Mr. Lalli at the Goethe-Institute in Boston, and Beethoven's Fourth Concerto with the Tufts Symphony.

It was with her greatest pleasure that Prof. Schmalfeldt served in the spring of 2002 as a visiting teacher in Brazil within two seminars on Analysis for Performers—at the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul in Porto Alegre, under the kind supervision of Prof. Cristina Capparelli Gerling, and at the Universidade do Rio de Janeiro-UNIRIO, as especially organized by Ingrid Barancoski. The article published here is a somewhat more formal version of the paper Prof. Schmalfeldt presented in Porto Alegre, in Rio, and in Salvador.

²² Gingerich, "Schubert's Beethoven Project," 231-32.