PROLONGATIONAL AND TRANSFORMATIONAL VIEWS OF SONATA FORM IN THE FIRST MOVEMENT OF SCHUBERT’S PIANO SONATA IN B♭, D.960

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1.1: Introduction

The conventional wisdom about Schubert’s sonata forms includes two erroneous assumptions. The first is that his “lyric impulse”—presumably derived from fascination with the Lied—is necessarily at odds with the architectural savvy required for successful sonata-form composition. The second is that the value of Schubert’s sonata forms therefore must lie instead in his beautiful tonal excursions, adventures to keys so exotic that they cannot be sufficiently probed with hierarchical Schenkerian methods. Rather, they are best viewed in light of critical theories that focus on their expressive qualities, or transformational theories that map modulations within a network outside the constraints of functional hierarchy.

I will argue instead that in the first movement of his Piano Sonata in B♭, D.960—his final work in the medium and a choice example of his mature style—Schubert displays a mastery of sonata-form composition based on the Classical principle of motion from tonic to dominant. The traits that are typically identified as “Schubertian”—a tendency towards expansive opening tonic areas, “three-key expositions,” and distant harmonic journeys—are entirely compatible with the classic tonic-dominant motion of a sonata exposition; in fact, Schubert’s stylistic individualities are unique inflections and intensifications of conventional harmonic design at deeper
levels of structure. A Schenkerian analysis will prove to be an incisive and revealing approach for studying those deeper levels in relation to the music itself, and also for understanding Schubert’s roots in the Viennese Classical tradition.

Neo-Riemannian analysis—rather than Schenkerian—has of late been the most popular approach to Schubert’s more striking harmonic plans. What is called neo-Riemannian theory is not strictly the issue of the nineteenth-century German harmonic theorist Hugo Riemann. Rather, Riemann’s work is taken to represent an entire generation of German harmonic theorists (which also included Moritz Hauptmann and Arthur von Oettingen) who explored methods of measuring triadic proximity beyond strictly functional—i.e., fifth-related—definitions.\(^1\) There has been a renewed interest in those conceptions of proximity in recent years; when they are wedded to modern set theory techniques under equal temperament, they can produce algebraically closed systems. Within these systems, consonant triads or tonalities are imagined as Klängen defined by their pitch-class content and manipulated by a series of transformational operations.\(^2\)

Since triadic proximity and functional relationships in these systems are measured by number of shared pitch-classes, music with prominent third relations is often addressed with neo-Riemannian methods. It is perhaps due to its preponderance of third relations that the tonal structure of the first movement of Schubert’s B\(\natural\) Sonata has invited much speculation from neo-Riemannian (and related) perspectives in recent years. Third

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relations are accorded a prominent role in that movement, and are juxtaposed both directly and across longer spans of time.

These neo-Riemannian analyses can be refreshing in some respects due to the elegance of their underlying mathematics and their new and challenging ideas about what is structural in chromatic tonality. Nonetheless, I feel that they cannot be as responsive as is necessary to the conventions of sonata-form composition that Schubert drew upon when writing works such as the B♭ Sonata. The neo-Riemannian methods, while attending carefully to shared pitch classes and transformational relationships at middleground levels, are ill equipped to address issues of contrapuntal function at the same levels. In the analysis of longer passages and entire movements, the particular algebra in which neo-Riemannian theory is embedded tends to seep through at the expense of a more contextual description, and the harmonic plan of a sonata form is often reduced to a series of consonant, root-position, third-related triads. The picture of Schubert that emerges from such an analysis is necessarily of a radical, striving towards the vastly expanded chromaticism of the late nineteenth century.

A Schenkerian analysis of harmony and voice leading, on the other hand, situates Schubert in a tradition of sonata form composition based on the juxtaposition of tonic and dominant key areas. This fact is profitably addressed by Schenker’s monotonal theory, in which tonic-dominant relationships are usually the most important generators of form. Moreover, Schenker’s theory of structural levels is well suited to address relationships between the general and the particular in an early nineteenth-century sonata such as D.960; the most conventional aspects of the harmonic structure appear at deeper
Schichten, while Schubert’s highly individualized play with those tonal conventions unfolds at each subsequently more detailed level.

A Schenkerian analysis is also sensitive to the context of harmony and voice leading, rather than equating all triads and considering them only abstracted to root position. For example, a triad in six-three position is not presumed to be fully equivalent to its root-position counterpart. Although it might be interpreted as a prolongation of the root-position form (as is the B♭ six-three in Figure 1.1, m. 1, b. 4), it might also be a passing (Figure 1.1, m. 2, b. 2) or neighboring harmony prolonging a different chord (as does the F six-three in Figure 1.1, m. 1, b. 2). Schenkerian analysis—like neo-Riemannian analysis—thus takes pitch structures and their significance as its general interest, but it retains an important context that the neo-Riemannian approach discards: it addresses the specific contrapuntal relationships between voices rather than simply reducing those independent voices to an array of triadic roots and qualities.

This is not to suggest that neo-Riemannian analytical techniques are entirely without value for the analysis of tonal music. The closer a succession of chords or a series of modulations approaches radical symmetry—both in its partitioning of a tonal space and its vertical deployment of pitches—the more accurately the abstract mathematical reasoning behind neo-Riemannian theory can address the music. Put another way, and perhaps glibly: the more strongly all aspects of harmony and melody literally resemble a series of algebraic functions, the more likely that algebra will be to describe the significance of the (necessarily sequential) passage. Also, because algebraic approaches deal largely in the objective pitch-class relationships between consonant, root-position triads, I believe that there may be interesting neo-Riemannian
studies—probably psychoacoustic in nature—to be done on the affective relationship between triads in the abstract, for example, or between the keys of two movements of a work. Nevertheless, the neo-Riemannian approach seems to me to fall short compared to Schenkerian techniques when it comes to placing the pitches, harmonies, and lines of a piece into context.

Despite what I believe to be the contextual strengths of a Schenkerian approach, plenty of contexts will go un- or under-addressed in these pages. For example, I will not devote any lengthy passages to a consideration of Schubert’s personal circumstances at the time he composed his final Piano Sonata, despite the fact that such an investigation could easily shed light on the piece in a more hermeneutic approach. That attention would not be entirely divorced from my concerns, either: it is not a terribly difficult leap to make between affect or topic and formal conventions of the thematic or textural type. Likewise, I will not spend a good deal of time exploring rhythm and meter, nor make an exhaustive research into Schubert’s other piano sonatas, nor will I (for better or for worse) delve deeply into the other movements of this undoubtedly cyclic piece.\(^3\) Striving

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to address all possible contexts in an attempt to realize what Edward T. Cone has
memorably called the “total possible content” of Schubert’s work would be a bloated
project doomed to failure, and far beyond the scope of this thesis.\footnote{Edward T. Cone, \textit{The Composer’s Voice}, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 171.} All of these questions
are worth investigating, but they would nevertheless dilute the focus of my argument,
which is that Schenkerian approach is more effective than a neo-Riemannian approach to
middleground tonal strategy in an early nineteenth-century sonata form by Schubert.

Indeed, the architecture of the first movement of Schubert’s B♭ Piano Sonata
makes a particularly strong case for the ability of Schenkerian analysis to address issues
of sonata form. As we shall see, the musical drama that Schubert enacts in this movement
is notably centered around the changing role of the dominant; throughout the
composition, a Schenkerian analysis is able to recognize and comment upon the dominant
in its different guises as well as to describe the coherent linear progressions with which
Schubert elaborates V. In the remainder of this chapter, I will prepare my analytical
discussion by first summarizing a number of diverse and important theories of sonata
form and then addressing the authoritative statements on Schubert’s treatment of sonata
form. Chapter 2 presents my Schenkerian analysis in detail, with commentary linking it
to the information presented in Chapter 1 as well as foreshadowing my critique of neo-
Riemannian analysis in Chapter 3.
1.2: Theories of sonata form

In order to construct an interpretive context for Schubert’s sonata rhetoric⁵, it will be informative to examine the thoughts of some diverse and prominent commentators on sonata form, both historical and contemporary. Heinrich Schenker, Donald Francis Tovey, Leonard Ratner, A.B. Marx, Charles Rosen, and James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy have all approached sonata forms from different perspectives and with different goals. For example, Schenker, Tovey, and Ratner aim to prove the specifically harmonic—or, in the case of Schenker, harmonic-contrapuntal—nature of sonata form, while Marx sees its genesis in the organic growth of phrase-level motives. Rosen’s approach is part of a larger aesthetic argument about what he calls “the Classical Style,” while Hepokoski and Darcy are essentially attempting to construct a grammar of late eighteenth-century sonata-form composition.

Despite their considerable disagreements, there are a number of sonata-form characteristics upon which all these authors agree. It is not controversial among them that a major-mode sonata exposition typically moves from an initial tonic area to a second area of relative repose in the dominant. In larger forms, this tonic-dominant motion is most often marked by a definitive harmonic and expressive gesture that indicates the imminent arrival of V. Frequently, this gesture appears in the form of a marked emphasis

⁵ Although it most accurately refers to the classical art of oration, the term rhetoric is often adapted to indicate more generally the intersection of a set of conventions and a composer’s treatment of them. In an even broader sense, it can simply mean the dramatic arc of a piece as it relates to stylistic or formal norms. For example, this is the sense in which it is used by James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy when they speak of the different “rhetorical shapes” or “rhetorical patterns” possible within the confines of sonata form. James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy, “The Medial Caesura and Its Role in the Eighteenth-Century Sonata Exposition,” *Music Theory Spectrum* 19/2 (1997), 117. Likewise, Patrick McCreless refers to the “rhetorical emphasis” that can be accorded chromatic tonal areas. Patrick McCreless, “Schenker and Chromatic Tonicization,” in *Schenker Studies*, ed. Hedi Siegel, 125-145, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 145.
on V/V, or II♯ (the roman numeral of the same chord when viewed from the perspective of the overall tonic).⁶

The II♯ itself is sometimes highlighted with its own applied dominant. If imagined as motion clockwise on the circle of fifths, the arrival on V/II♯ (or VI♯) is two steps beyond the eventual goal of V. This continuation past the larger objective can be understood as a kind of “overshooting” the mark, accenting the large-scale applied dominant (II♯) with its own dominant (VI♯). In the process, the deep-level tonic pitch is weakened: in order to act as the leading tone to 2, 1 must be chromatically altered, becoming #1.

Once the music has reached the dominant area, there follows a development section that, by its end, usually returns to the dominant in order to prepare the recapitulation. The tonic and the dominant—whether conceived as keys, poles, or Stufen—are thus brought into some kind of fundamental dialogue. While the significance of the tonic is sufficiently felt by its placement at the beginning and end of a piece, the dominant’s relationship to the tonic must be highlighted by deeply etched preparatory gestures such as a marked arrival on II♯. Those gestures are therefore among the most definitive rhetorical moments of a sonata exposition. When the dominant arrives, the tonic is permanently displaced as an architectural harmony until the music first returns to the dominant at the end of the development, in preparation for the recapitulation. In the following pages, I will demonstrate how an understanding of these general principles cuts

⁶ A brief note is required on the use of roman numerals. The numerals V/V and II♯ will be used interchangeably, depending on which aspect of the harmony presently requires emphasis. II♯ reflects the role of that Stufe as an intermediate harmony in the deep-level I–II♯–V motion, while V/V indicates more specifically that the chord is functioning as a local dominant to V. In more abstract discussions of deep-level harmony, the numeral II♯ carries the sharp accidental because that is the figure required in C major; II♯ has therefore taken on a more generic meaning for all major triads built on 2. In the specific discussion of D.960, the overarching tonal center of B, major dictates that the chord be called II♯ in order to indicate the triad C–E♯–G.
across chronological and ideological boundaries to appear in the works of a diverse set of commentators.

1.3 Schenker’s Conception of Sonata Form

Schenker saw the origin of sonata form in an interruption that divides the *Ursatz* into two branches (Figure 1.2). He puts it bluntly: “Only the prolongation of a division (interruption) gives rise to sonata form.” The top voice \(3 \rightarrow 2\) that spans the first branch of the interruption (in a major-mode piece with head-note \(\hat{3}\)) thus corresponds to the initial primary key area (\(\hat{3} \text{ over } I\)) followed by the move to the dominant (\(\hat{2} \text{ over } V\)).

The move to \(\hat{2} \text{ over } V\) is crucial to the generation of sonata form, since it introduces the top-voice note whose downward tendency will not be realized until its cause is taken up again by the complete third-progression of the recapitulation. The bass arpeggiation of the exposition is likewise incomplete, moving only from I to V, but not back to I. So, although the form is commonly described as possessing three parts of distinct thematic and textural content—exposition, development, and recapitulation—Schenker’s *linear* derivation falls into only two. The incompletion of the first half—and the inherent implication of the recapitulation to come—thus hinges on a clearly articulated and strongly prolonged \(\hat{2} \text{ over } V\).

Felix Salzer calls this conception “three-part prolongation form (originating in interruption)” in order to accommodate Schenker’s theories as well as the ready perception that sonata form possesses three characteristic parts. He uses the phrase

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2. Schenker, 134.
“prolongation form” to indicate that the \( \hat{2} \) which arrives with the exposition’s secondary key area is further prolonged by the movement’s second section, the development.

Schenker, too, discusses sonata form as having three rhetorical parts despite its bipartite genesis.\(^{10}\) All the same, he claims that the development’s “only obligation, according to the structural division, is to complete the motion to \( \hat{2} \) [over] \( V \) < or in some way to expand that point>.”\(^{11}\)

As a measure of its importance, Schenker notes that the advent of the structural \( \hat{2} \) during the exposition is frequently announced with an applied dominant: “Most often...the \( \hat{2} \) over \( V \) is preceded by a tonicizing \( \text{II} \) which has the effect of \( V \)–I in the key of the dominant.”\(^{12}\) In practice, the arrival on this \( \text{II} \) is quite often itself highlighted by a more activated texture, treatment as a pedal point, or even prepared by a focused dissonance. Each of these techniques can help to underscore \( \text{II} \)’s role as a structural pillar of the interruption’s first division.

\(^{10}\) Despite the bipartite division of the *Ursatz*, Schenker divides his discussion of sonata form into three parts: § 313: “First part: the main section (exposition),” § 314: “Second part: the middle section (development),” and § 315: “Third part: the repetition (recapitulation).” Schenker, 134-137.

\(^{11}\) Schenker, 136.

\(^{12}\) Schenker, 134.
The rhetorical significance of a conspicuous II in sonata forms persisted well beyond Schubert’s days and into the later Nineteenth Century. Such an observation has been made by Carl Schachter, who uses Schenkerian analysis to describe a particularly marked instance of arrival on II in the exposition of the first movement of Brahms’s Second Symphony. Schachter’s attention to this aspect of the Brahms Symphony is quite relevant to our discussion of the B♭ Sonata: in the symphonic movement Brahms adopts a classically Schubertian “three-key exposition” with the three themes occurring in D major, F♭ minor, and A major. As we shall see in Chapter 2, the linear connections Schachter highlights in the Brahms Symphony also have predecessors in Schubert’s treatment of sonata form.

Schachter argues that the second, F♭-minor, theme of the Brahms Symphony does not participate as directly in the large-scale harmonic framework of the exposition as do the two harmonies that eventually tonicize the dominant: II, and the German augmented sixth that prepares the II itself. Schachter also demonstrates how the augmented-sixth chord can be said to arise from a chromatic voice-exchange of the root and third of the tonic triad (Figure 1.3). It is Schachter’s conviction that although “such chromatic voice exchanges can occur in small-scale progressions...they also serve to unify large musical spans.” Thus, the augmented-sixth chord might be thought of as the last gasp of the tonic area as it gives way to the dominant Stufe.

In Schachter’s view, the temporary motion to F♭ minor—with its memorable theme—is motivated in part by the movement’s fundamental motive, C♭ as lower

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14 Schachter, 64.

15 In that movement, in the key of D major, F♭ over D becomes D♭ over F♭. Schachter, 64.

16 Schachter, 63.
neighbor to D. The C♯ that is the main top-voice pitch of the F♯-minor section is in a deeper sense neighboring to an inner-voice D. This iteration of the motive is particularly forward-looking because it is incomplete. The C♯, despite persistent local motions to D, never resolves back up to that pitch. Rather, the heightened upward momentum causes that voice to overshoot its mark, moving instead to the D♯ of the augmented sixth (as seen in Figure 1.3).

Schenker’s conception of sonata form as formulated in *Free Composition* is independent from thematic or motivic concerns. However, we should not let Schenker’s emphasis belie the attention to theme and motive in his analyses and those of others working in the Schenkerian tradition. Carl Schachter’s analysis discussed above is a good demonstration not just that Schenkerian techniques are compatible with attention to motive, but that they are remarkably well suited to describe the interaction of theme and tonal structure. Any competent Schenkerian analysis will take into account the themes of a sonata form both from a rhetorical perspective and from a motivic one, even if it does not take such characteristics to be the primary source of tonal coherence.

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17 Schenker, 138.
Despite Schenker’s rigid and conservative principles for what constitutes true musical art, his *Formenlehre* is artistically liberating in some ways as well. In contrast to the professors of Schenker’s day—who taught “that a masterwork which is in contradiction to the [strict thematic “rules” of the] textbook represents an exception, a liberty not to be allowed to young music students.”—there are no supposedly binding rules of theme type or character.\(^{18}\) The character of the themes (a foreground trait) is chosen by the composer rather than dictated by convention; the theme in the dominant, for example, need not be “lyrical” or “contrasting.”\(^{19}\) Instead, the unifying principle of sonata form is only that of interruption, and interruption must be articulated by eventual motion to the V-*Stufe*. The opposition of I and V in the exposition, however, is not dialectic or evenly weighted, but rather represents the unfolding in time of a natural movement that is abruptly and prematurely cut off. It is an incomplete attempt to prolong a triad through a third progression, an attempt that must begin again to meet with success.

Although not all current thought on sonata form is Schenkerian in orientation, Schenker nonetheless anticipates more modern thinkers who posit harmony as the foundation of the form.\(^{20}\) Even so, the understanding of sonata form as largely harmonic in conception has its roots earlier than Schenker, and even among theorists whose foundational assumptions seem incompatible with his.

\(^{18}\) Schenker, 138.
\(^{19}\) Schenker points specifically to Haydn’s monothematic expositions. Schenker, 135.
1.4 Other Theories of Sonata Form

A.B. Marx, in his *A Practical and Theoretical Method of Musical Composition* (1868), is more strongly concerned with the functions of a sonata form’s three discernible parts and their themes than he is with identifying those parts as surface-level traits in a delicate rapport an underlying harmonic-contrapuntal motion. In fact, he views the origin of sonata form in the themes themselves. At the earliest stages motive (the *Urgestalt*) leads to *Gänge* (open-ended, forward-moving formulations of a repetitive or sequential nature) and *Sätze* (complete thoughts). These components first give rise to the periodic rondo forms and then, through the deletion of parts, to the sonata form (which is thus a derivative of the rondo).²¹

Of Marx’s *Kunstforme*, the one that most closely approximates Schenker’s conception of sonata form is not the sonata but the three-part song form. This is essentially a rounded binary form in which “the second part [i.e., the development] has established itself and spread out to such an extent that there is no space before its close to come back to the first part, then it will build a cadence for itself of such a nature that the repetition of the entire first part can then follow [i.e., the recapitulation].” Just like Schenker’s sonata form, Marx sees in this expanded *Liedsatz* a binary formal kernel that is elaborated to comprise three *rhetorical* sections.²² In 1928, Felix Salzer made the *Liedform*-sonata connection explicit when he asked: “What is the sonata form other than an enlargement of the vision of the three-part song form?”²³

²² Marx, 76.
Despite proposing a sonata cosmology so completely at odds with Schenker’s—recall that Marx derives the sonata form from the rondo—Marx does not ignore the directed harmonic motion of the sonata form’s exposition. Rather he sees it as arising organically from the form’s desire for rhetorical unity, to bridge the gap between the main Satz and the secondary Satz. The exposition is “thoroughly permeated and conditioned by the urge for a unified, powerful sense of forward and progressive motion,” that is, towards the secondary Satz.\(^{24}\) Thus the forward momentum of the generative Gänge is felt even at deeper levels.

To highlight this secondary Satz, Marx notes the important function of the traditional (but by no means obligatory) emphasis on the II\(^{\#}\): “To this end, and in accordance with long recognized precepts, there is a modulation in the First Part from the main theme and its key to the dominant of the dominant [that is, II\(^{\#}\)], and from there back to the dominant [emphasis Marx’s].”\(^{25}\) The difference of opinion between Schenker and Marx on the genesis of sonata form is irrelevant here: both writers comment on the frequent rhetorical emphasis granted to preparation of the large-scale dominant in a sonata form. So crucial is the rhetorical marking of V that Marx even disallows a non-modulatory transition in a full-scale sonata form (though there are, of course, many sonata forms of that sort!), relegating the practice only to the less unified realm of the sonatina.\(^{26}\)

Although he chooses to focus his discussion on its phrase-level rhetorical traits—he calls it “the locus of variety and motion”—Marx felt that the development also

\(^{24}\) Marx, 96.
\(^{25}\) Clearly, “modulation” had a somewhat different definition in Marx’s time than it does today. Marx, 96.
\(^{26}\) Marx, 96.
possesses a harmonic function that is more consonant with Schenker’s ideas.\textsuperscript{27} The reason, he says, for the “greater variety in the ordering and disposition of the material” in the development stems from its natural task: “to lead, with material selected from the First Part [the exposition], from the conclusion of the First Part to the pedal point on the dominant of the main key, and then to the entrance of the Third Part.”\textsuperscript{28} One is led to surmise that—in Marx’s view—the typical development section exhibits Gang-like characteristics because it is obligated to move forward toward the concluding dominant pedal. Thus the harmonic purpose of the development is to connect the end of the exposition (in the key of the dominant) to the retransition (on V, now as local dominant to I). This function dramatizes the liminal area of transition and recapitulation, since it brings at once the expected return of the dominant, but only with the further stipulation that it will itself soon usher in the return of the tonic.

Marx’s idea that sonata form is generated by phrase-level rhetoric is somewhat consonant with Leonard Ratner’s view presented in his article “Harmonic Aspects of Classic Form.” The difference between the two is that the rhetoric to which Ratner refers is explicitly harmonic; he asserts that the generally simple and goal-oriented harmony of the Classical phrase gradually becomes used to articulate keys over longer stretches of time, either by expansion of the period form, by addition of other periods, or both.\textsuperscript{29} The result is that the conventional wisdom about sonata forms—i.e., that the exposition presents two themes and the development subjects them to fragmentary variation—is out

\textsuperscript{27} Marx, 97.  
\textsuperscript{28} Marx, 97.  
\textsuperscript{29} Ratner, 166.
of touch with a plurality of Classical masterworks. Instead, “expositional” and “developmental” procedures can and do occur at any point in a sonata form.

Whereas Schenker viewed sonata form as an organic elaboration of a divided Ursatz, and Marx and Ratner—though differently!—as the apotheosis of phrase-level rhetoric, Charles Rosen has asserted that sonata form (and the “Classical style” itself) grows naturally out of an aesthetic principle: “the symmetrical resolution of opposing forces.” Sonata form is thus necessarily dialectic in nature: in a major-mode sonata form, the tonic and dominant keys are opposed in the exposition and synthesized in the recapitulation. Unfolding this opposition through time is the most strongly form-defining gesture found in the first part of a sonata form: “An articulate movement to the dominant (or its substitute) is all that is required harmonically of a sonata exposition; how it is done is completely free, or, rather, bound only by the nature and material of each individual work.”

Like Schenker and Ratner, Rosen conceives of sonata form as a flexible harmonic archetype that hinges on motion to the dominant; the realization of that motion is up to the composer and is not bound by constraints of thematic topic or character.

While Schenker would describe the deep-level dominant Stufe as an organic outgrowth—a linearly derived prolongation—of the tonic, Rosen views it as an antagonistic force, the thorny presence of which plays out in a necessarily dramatic

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30 Ratner, 160. This sentiment is anticipated by Tovey: “But as for what and where the different themes are, Haydn may run a whole exposition on one theme, Mozart may reserve one of his best themes for the development, and Beethoven may have one-and-a-half themes in his first subject, a very definite new theme for his transition, five-and-a-half themes in his second subject, and still a new one in the course of his development. And in all three composers you will have no reason to expect any two works to be alike; and all three composers may adopt each other’s procedures.” Donald Francis Tovey, “Franz Schubert.” in The Main Stream of Music, ed Hubert Foss, 103-133 (New York: American Musicological Society Press, 1979), 120.

31 Ratner, 160.


One of the ways in which this drama is heightened is by the presence of what Rosen calls the “moment of dramatization,” that is, “a moment...of awareness of the new tonality.” The character of this moment is not strictly circumscribed: “it may be a pause, a strong cadence, an explosion, a new theme, or anything else that the composer wishes.” He notes that one of the most common strategies is to move to a half cadence in the secondary key, i.e., to an arrival on II. By highlighting the traditional emphasis on II, Rosen falls into step with the other authors discussed previously. Yet another writer with his own personal conception of the generative force behind sonata forms nonetheless agrees upon the rhetorical force implicit in the articulation of the dominant by its own dominant.

Despite Rosen’s dialectic terminology—and he cautions: “I do not want to turn Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven into Hegelians”—Rosen notes that the tonic and dominant key areas are not hierarchically equal in a sonata form. Rather, the dominant (or other secondary key) is a “weaker pole of force acting against the tonic.” Yet he maintains that the dominant itself remains stronger than the myriad other keys through which the music sometimes passes in the development section. Although Rosen does not invoke the concept of harmonic prolongation, the fact that he conceives of the dominant as hierarchically superior to all other keys besides the tonic—it alone opposes the tonic in the Ur-struggle, even though it eventually loses—resonates with Schenker’s similar view of tonic and dominant Stufen as the generative harmonies of the form.

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34 Rosen, The Classical Style, 70.  
Rosen’s “moment of dramatization” finds a ready analogue in the “medial caesura” of James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy. Hepokoski and Darcy (hereafter HD) base their “Sonata Theory”—essentially a taxonomy of compositional choice in sonata composition—inductively, on examples drawn from the works of many composers. The medial caesura is defined as some break in the texture, most often a cadence, which “marks the end of the first part of the exposition” and “is simultaneously the decisive gesture that makes available the second part.” The authors put it even more succinctly: “If there is no medial caesura, there is no S [i.e., secondary key area; italics are HD’s].” This is necessary because, in the view of HD, the goal of nearly all sonata expositions is eventually to achieve a perfect authentic cadence in the secondary (dominant) key.

The medial caesura requires rhetorical energy in order to open the secondary key area successfully. That energy is derived primarily from the characteristic material leading up to the caesura. Typically this music exhibits a combination of features such as accelerating figuration, swelling dynamic indications, sequences, or a quickened harmonic rhythm. Capping off this passage are often further “contrapuntal, harmonic, and rhetorical gestures that call attention to the event and identify it generically as a medial caesura.” Primary among these is for the music to sit on the dominant of the dominant, II$: “the medial caesura is usually produced as the final moment of articulation following several measures of preparation on a prolonged structural dominant (V or

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39 Hepokoski and Darcy, 115.
40 HD, 121.
41 HD, 122.
43 HD, 122.
44 HD, 124.
Just as Schenker, Marx, and Rosen did in their own ways, HD also highlight emphasis on $II^\#$ as the archetypal harmonic turning-point of a sonata-form exposition.

1.5 Some Traits of Schubert’s Sonata Forms

Writers such as Donald Francis Tovey and James Webster have commented on the particulars of Schubert’s sonata forms, which, it is agreed upon, sound quite different than those of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. Some, like Tovey, have attributed this uniqueness to an excusable lack of mastery by a genius cut down prematurely, while others such as Webster have tried to catalog more objectively the methods with which Schubert manipulates formal conventions.\(^{46}\)

In Tovey’s mind Schubert’s greatest weakness as a sculptor of sonata form in his approach to expositions. These, he insists, are prone to vast expanses of music in the tonic key area and then to further rhapsodizing in a distantly related key.\(^{47}\) But it is not the usual breadth of Schubert’s first subjects and the frequent presence of a lengthy harmonic diversion that are problematic to Tovey. Rather, it is Schubert’s tendency to continue the exposition beyond his distant keys—to a final section in the conventional dominant—that falls to banality, while “up to that point all is well with Schubert.”\(^{48}\)

The result is, in Tovey’s opinion, sonata forms that are “diffuse and inconsistent,” as if Schubert feels he must fill up the dominant key area with thematic material despite the wealth he has already presented in earlier stages of the exposition.\(^{49}\) Thus derives

\(^{45}\) HD, 124.

\(^{46}\) See James Webster, “Schubert’s Sonata Forms and Brahms’s First Maturity (I),” *Nineteenth-Century Music* 2/1 (1978): 18-35. See also Tovey, “Schubert.”

\(^{47}\) Tovey, “Schubert,” 120.

\(^{48}\) Tovey, “Schubert,” 120.

\(^{49}\) Tovey, “Schubert,” 120.
what Tovey perceives as Schubert’s propensity for “garrulous” dominant-area themes that are not worthy of reappearance later in the work’s recapitulation. Despite Tovey’s skepticism of Schubert’s ability to craft a viable exposition, he finds that “Schubert’s ways of bringing the unexpected key round to the orthodox one are thoroughly masterly.”

James Webster’s main hypothesis likewise concerns the V of the central tonic-dominant relationship: “for Schubert, the dominant no longer commanded the power it had for Classical composers.” This results in the fact that he “places the second theme outside the dominant much more frequently than any earlier composer.” In this context, it is clear that when Webster refers to a “second theme,” he means just that: the second highly etched theme that appears in the exposition, regardless of its key. However, it seems to me that Webster’s differentiation of “first” and “second” groups lacks a similarly consistent logic.

Perhaps because Schubert’s second themes—the ones usually outside the dominant—are often so arresting, Webster calls these expositions “three-key expositions,” suggesting that equal rhetorical weight is universally imparted to each constituent tonality. Webster then argues further that Schubert’s “three-key expositions” possess bipartite second groups: that is, the second theme (usually in a remote key), and the third theme (in the more conventional dominant) are bound together (presumably by virtue of their not-tonicness), usually with a longer transition connecting them.

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50 Tovey, “Schubert,” 122.
51 Webster, 24.
52 Webster, 24.
53 Webster, 26.
54 Webster, 19.
Although Webster joins the second and third themes together into a larger “second group,” he nevertheless recognizes that Schubert invariably turns to the dominant by the end of a sonata exposition, and also that the middle section (that is, the “second theme”) of a three-key exposition “always [leads] from the tonic to the dominant, and thus always constitutes a transition.” Harmonically, then, the “second theme” takes the place of more traditional transition sections and sometimes—as we shall see in the B♭ Sonata—is as harmonically unstable as any bridge passage, despite the fact that it begins with a memorable theme.

But this is not the rule, either. Other of Schubert’s sonata forms, such as the Quartettsatz in C minor, D.703, do feature a middle theme that is harmonically more stable. In the case of the Quartettsatz, the second theme is a relatively stable expansion of A♭ major, ♭VI. So, while D.703 might more accurately embody Webster’s term “three-key exposition,” it simultaneously raises other questions of form: e.g., if the second theme comprises a stable key area, should it be grouped with the first theme, or the third?

Since this study will be limited to the B♭ Piano Sonata, I will be concerned with the harmonically volatile type of second theme, such as the one found in that piece. Given that scenario, some distinctions must be drawn between the first and second parts of Webster’s “second groups”: the first part—beginning in a remote key—has the potential to be harmonically unstable despite the presence of a remarkable theme, while the second—in the dominant—is the region most authors have traditionally recognized as the goal of a sonata-form exposition, even though in Schubert it might sing less freely than we expect. By allowing that the harmonic function of Schubert’s “purple patches” is

55 Webster, 30.
often transitional, Webster tacitly acknowledges the usefulness of the tonic-dominant conception of sonata form for analysis of Schubert’s works.

In this light, Webster’s most powerful observation is that Schubert’s strange second themes are frequently strategic devices used to delay motion to the dominant. Further, as part of Schubert’s reluctance to move to the dominant, he often cryptically prolongs the tonic key area with his second themes: “the first section of the second group sounds like a sharp break, and it presents a new idea in a new key; but the underlying reality—in Schubert’s unconscious, one is tempted to add—is that the tonic still holds sway.” It is curious that Webster first chooses to connect Schubert’s second themes to his third as part of a larger, double “second group,” but later asserts that the second themes simultaneously share a harmonic orientation with the first group.

Despite lacking a consistent and flexible description of Schubert’s three-key expositions, Webster correctly points out that they often possess an expansive initial area of tonic orientation that is steadfastly reluctant to give way to the dominant Stufe. The result is that Schubert’s sonata forms are far more responsive to Schenker’s generative conception than to Marx’s, since the latter writer’s formulation of the fragmented, oft-sequential, and dominant-directed Gang is an idea clearly derived from the style of Beethoven. In Webster’s mind, Schubert’s sonata forms are characterized by “a contemplative rather than an active, a self-contained rather than a dynamic rhythm.”

I agree with Webster that the characteristic sound of Schubert’s sonata forms derives in part from his purposeful delay of definitive motion to the dominant, and from

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56 Webster, 24.
57 Webster, 30.
58 Hence the fact that in Marx’s scheme it is the Gang—which, “taking up a motive to inclination, then with its repetition...in varying circumstances”—that is “the first fundamental form in music.” Marx, 67.
59 Webster, 24.
his generally deliberate harmonic rhythm on both the small and large scales. I am skeptical, though, of Webster’s implication that Schubert’s “purple patches” open the second main part of the exposition simply because they sound “like a sharp break” and often bring an arresting melody. Certainly, this expressive weight is not without significance, and I do not begrudge Webster his observation that Schubert sings more freely in these tonally distant loci than he does in the dominant. But I question just how much Schubert’s purple patches truly constitute the opening of the second part of a sonata form. Rather, they seem more like a Schubertian appropriation and expansion of Beethoven’s use of transitional themes (such as in the D-major Piano Sonata, Op. 10, No.3, I).

1.6: Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been to review historical perceptions of sonata form in general and of sonata forms by Schubert in particular. Specifically, I have focused on the surprising unanimity found among diverse commentators concerning the harmonic momentum of sonata-form expositions. Authors writing from differing and even potentially antagonistic points of view nonetheless agree that the hallmark of a major-mode exposition is its directed motion towards V, and that the motion is frequently articulated by strong emphasis on the dominant of the dominant, II♭.

Writers from different perspectives likewise arrive at a similar and related observation concerning Schubert’s sonata forms: Schubert often delays the characteristic motion to the dominant for long periods of time, effecting that deferral with intervening thematic material in a distant key. The harmonic function of the second theme differs in
each composition, and is thus best treated on a case-by-case basis. However, it is frequently an area of harmonic instability that links the opening tonic area with the eventual arrival of the main dominant Stufe.

A Schenkerian analysis is capable of paying careful attention to the stylistic contexts outlined above. Of particular use is the concept of structural levels, which allow a Schenkerian analysis to sort out the main dominant of the exposition from other dominants as well as to be precise about when it arrives. A Schenkerian perspective is also equipped to interpret extended passages in which the sense of key is in flux. This can be achieved through attention to middleground contrapuntal fluencies that often provide coherence when a passage rapidly implies one key after another. As we shall see in Chapter 2, both of these analytical strengths are of particular importance when considering the B♭ Sonata in light of the conceptions of sonata form discussed earlier.

Those conceptions are not relevant only to my Schenkerian analysis. They concern precisely the features of Schubert’s sonata forms that I believe are ignored by a neo-Riemannian approach: a strongly articulated motion toward the dominant harmony in the exposition, and a displacement of the tonic as main harmony until the music first returns to the dominant in the retransition. As we shall see in Chapter 3, the neo-Riemannian approach tends to overemphasize the significance of large-scale third relations simply because third-related triads—or, more precisely, the (037) trichord—are consonant with the algebra of the theory. Unfortunately, an interpretation of the B♭ Sonata informed by the misplaced emphases of the neo-Riemannian approach would be rhetorically imbalanced and unfaithful to the style in which Schubert wrote, for the theory
lacks the ability to mediate between basic sonata-form principles and the ways in which Schubert worked with them.
CHAPTER II

THE B♭ SONATA IN LIGHT OF VOICE LEADING 
AND SONATA RHETORIC

2.1: Introduction

Just as the preceding survey moved from more general attributes of sonata form to a discussion of Schubert’s individual play with those conventions, so will my Schenkerian analysis of the B♭ sonata isolate what is fundamental sonata rhetoric, what is Schubertian trope, and where and how the two interact. Far from denigrating the characteristic, I hope to demonstrate that Schubert composed a sonata form that is taut below the lyric surface and whose drama unfolds somewhat differently than in the compositions of his predecessors. Schubert’s beautiful themes and modulations are indeed attractive in their own right. To limit discussion to that observation, however, or to reduce his harmonies to a rhetorically flat series of transformations, is to sell Schubert short. The supposed stasis, languor, and aimlessness of his sonata forms belie coherent middleground structures that are in truth a sophisticated, dramatic, and fresh articulation of sonata form.

Perhaps the most characteristic harmonic trait of Schubert’s sonata expositions is that he bases them on the traditional motion from the tonic to the dominant, but delays that motion for a significant amount of time. In the B♭ Sonata’s exposition, one of the
sources of long-range coherence framing the delay of the dominant Stufe is a chromaticized voice-exchange between the head-note, 3 (D), and the B♭ root of the tonic triad. In my analysis—which is similar to Carl Schachter’s view of Brahms’s Second Symphony seen in Chapter 1—the deep-level B♭-major triad of the initial tonic expansion is eventually transformed into a leading-tone diminished seventh chord to II♭.

Paradoxically, this dissonant sonority prolongs the initial tonic and is also an intense expression of momentum directed away from the tonic, toward the crucial II♭ that signals the imminence of the dominant key area.

Though this deep-level voice exchange is a large pattern that can be said to frame or unify the exposition through measure 73, the music in between possesses its own, mostly independent, drama. From a Schenkerian point of view, much of the exposition before measure 73 reflects a composing out of the movement’s striking motivic trill on G♮ (mm. 8-9). This distant and ominous rumbling imported from the parallel minor later underpins a passage in G♭ major (mm. 20-35) and the “purple patch” that begins in F♯ minor (mm. 48-69).¹ These middleground chromatic neighbors elaborate a persistent bass emphasis on F that profoundly affects formal subdivisions and middleground harmony.

The deep-level F bass reflects a tenacious lower-level dominant that controls much of the exposition, postponing the arrival of the more structural V.

While the exposition derives its drama from an extended suppression of the inevitable deep-level dominant, the movement’s development begins by sublimating that F dominant once again with a sudden modulation to the distant key of C♯ minor (enharmonically, Ⅲ♭, in m. 117). As the development spins out, a series of prominent

¹The use of the phrase “purple patch” to describe this passage comes from Tovey, by way of Webster. Webster, 22.
arrivals gradually change the mediant Stufe from unearthly \( \text{iii}^\flat \) to august \( \text{III} \) (D, major, m. 149) to the poignant diatonic iii (D minor), incrementally preparing the foreground reactivation of the main F-major dominant in measure 203.

The unifying thread between the exposition and the development—and the clearest point of contact with eighteenth-century sonata forms—is the central role of the dominant. In the former, it is the long-withheld goal, while in the latter, V remains active but is embroidered with various forms of the mediant before it resurfaces as the main harmony of the retransition. My Schenkerian analysis will trace the pivotal harmonic-rhetorical role of the dominant in this sonata form as it is inflected though various adumbrations, delays, and voice-leading transformations.

2.2: Middleground Chromatic Voice Exchange as Framer of Dominant Delay in the Exposition

In the Schenkerian reading proposed here, the marked arrival on II\(^\flat\) in measure 74 is prepared by a dissonant diminished-seventh harmony imaginable as a transformed version of the tonic triad itself. That is, the head note D (\( \tilde{3} \)) over the bass B eventually becomes B\(^\natural\) over D in measure 73, as part of a diminished six-five chord. Figures 2.1 and 2.2 illustrate the voice exchange and the way it is realized at the deep middleground of the B\(^\natural\) Sonata. Although an augmented-sixth sonority is perhaps the most type of common chord to arise out of deep-level chromatic voice exchange, the diminished six-five also includes the crucial raised tonic pitch—\( \tilde{\text{I}} \)—in the top voice. The \( \tilde{3} \) in the bass, however, is diatonic, instead of \( \tilde{\tilde{3}} \) as in an augmented-sixth chord.
Figure 2.1: Chromatic voice exchange of tonic triad creates diminished-seventh chord

Figure 2.2: Middleground of mm.1-80 highlighting chromatic voice exchange
Unlike the augmented-sixth chord that Carl Schachter identifies in the Brahms symphony, the chromatic turning point in measure 73 of the Schubert is exquisitely understated. It occurs only momentarily, on the weak fourth beat of the bar, and marked a delicate *pianissimo*. It is mysterious, delicate, ephemeral. Why, then, in the absence of the rhythmic and textural criteria Schachter identifies in his study, should we consider this hesitant diminished-seventh chord of such great structural importance? If voice leading is our only guide, is this not potentially gnostic Schenkerism at its worst? A brief digression concerning the diminished-seventh chord will respond to those questions.

The diminished-seventh chord containing the pitches B♭-D-F-A⁷ is first heard earlier than measure 73, as an ominous replacement for the tonic triad in the failed perfect authentic cadence of measure 45. Even the dominant seventh of measure 44 is inauspicious. When that harmony extends beyond the first two beats, the parallelism with the cadence of measure 18 is destroyed and the mood of the phrase is transformed from conventional closure into guarded uncertainty. Also portentous is the fact that the motoric inner-voice triplet figuration does not cease, but continues to push forward, hardly behavior appropriate for settling into a cadence. Instead of the expected full melodic close on ¹ in measure 45, the top voice descends to the chromatically transformed pitch B♭, ½. The upward tendency of the inner-voice leading tone A is likewise diverted down to A♭ while the bass F and restless triplet figures continue.

The result is not the anticipated harmonic and rhythmic repose, but rather the unstable fully diminished four-three over F of measure 45. Perhaps the most powerful reversal of expectations is the failed replication of the *Urlinie* in the top voice: D-C-B♭: it mocks the expected diatonic closure and even negates the tonic pitch itself. Instead of a
full close on the tonic triad, the prolongation of the dominant six-four continues (as illustrated in Figure 2.3), but with a displacement of B♭ to B♮ that will prove to be motivic and central to consideration of the deep-level voice exchange.

This moment—and more precisely this B♮—might productively be considered as what Edward Cone calls a “promissory note.” Of course, not just any note or chord that fails to resolve as we expect can be considered promissory! Nevertheless, the fact that this B♮ enters when we so strongly expect a B♭ makes this particular chromatic pitch more significant than most. Schubert chooses to notate it as a B♮ instead of a C♮, and thus suggests that its intended resolution will be upward. Cone provides further guidelines for his concept of promissory status that resonate with Schubert’s treatment of the B♮:

Normally, in music of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, promissory status is demanded, or at least requested, by a note—or more accurately, though less paranomastically, an entire chord—that has been blocked from proceeding to an indicated resolution, and whose thwarted condition is underlined both by rhythmic emphasis and by relative isolation...The promissory chord is promoted, so to speak, by an insurrection that tries, but fails, to turn the course of the harmony in its new direction.3

Our surprising B♮ and its diminished-seventh chord certainly meet these criteria. It is rhythmically accented by its replacement of the closing tonic of an otherwise complete tonic expansion of over forty measures; it is isolated by the fact that the harmonic rhythm comes to a halt on the diminished seventh, leaving it hang in the air of measure 45. The appearance of B♮ is laden with meaning from sonata convention as well: this is the pitch that will often indicate the end of tonic influence and the advent of the large-scale

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3 Cone, “Promissory Note,” 236.
Figure 2.3: Diminished four-three of m. 45 viewed as prolongation of dominant harmony
dominant by serving as leading tone to the pivotal V/V, or II♯. That is, the diminished-
seventh chord B♯-D-F-A, might reasonably be imagined as vii°7 of a middleground II♯,
trying to steer the harmony towards the dominant key area that eventually arrives in all of
Schubert’s major-mode sonata forms.

But that is not the case here. Rather, the diminished seventh is enharmonically
reinterpreted as vii°7 in F♯ minor, launching what is the most discussed and tonally
itinerant section of the exposition. When this motion to F♯ minor occurs, the salient B♯
notably moves downward to A. The fact that the B♯ is not allowed to resolve upward at
this point suggests, to borrow Cone’s words, “an obligation that it has failed to
discharge.” Its desire to do so—a desire bound up in its raised accidental and the

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4 See Ch.1.
5 Cone, “Promissory Note,” 235.
potentiality of II$$^3$$—will have great implications for Schubert’s later articulation of that structural pillar via the middleground voice exchange.

The tonal wandering of the following measures (48-72) proves to be circular. Harmonically speaking, the music ends up exactly where it began: in measure 72 it is back on the same fully diminished four-three over F that provoked the journey. As it was earlier, the return to the acute instability and multivalence of the diminished seventh is marked by melodic stasis and restless figuration. At the two moments at which the diminished seventh chord arrives, it is if all directed motion comes temporarily to a halt, lost in the symmetrical indecision of the sonority.

Just as it did previously, the specific way in which Schubert arrives at this second diminished seventh emphasizes an annulled melodic third progression. The music shifts triumphally back into the key of B$$^\flat$$ major in measure 70, pushing upward to B$$^\flat$$6, the highest note in the piece so far. The structural top voice also regains D$$^\flat$$ from C$$^\flat$$ (the enharmonically respelled mixed third, D$$^\flat$$) at this moment, implying that now it will complete the descent to 1 that was frustrated earlier, in measure 45. Once again the top voice approaches the mysterious B$$^\flat$$ from above, mimicking the standard completion of the linear progression 3-2-1 in B$$^\flat$$ major.  

This time, however, Schubert gives a hint of the unexpected resolution a half a beat earlier, on the last eighth-note of measure 71. Where we have come to expect the V or V$$^7$$ elaborating a cadential six-four, Schubert inserts instead a passing minor v with an inner-voice A$$^\flat$$, anticipating the A$$^\flat$$ in the following fully diminished seventh chord. The As its appearances in this movement alone were not enough to seal the passage’s significance, there is a conspicuous repetition of nearly this exact gesture in the the sonata’s slow movement (II, Andante sostenuto, C$$^\flat$$ minor). The movement’s middle section—in A major—has modulated to its subdominant, D. From there there is a common-tone modulation to B$$^\flat$$ major. In that key, a cadence is approached and thwarted by melodic motion 3-2-1, closing instead on the familiar diminished-seventh chord B$$^\flat$$-D-F-A$$^\flat$$, a chord that in this case is used as a leading-tone seventh (on G$$^\flat$$) to return to A major.
collapse back into instability that the A♭ prefigures is further suggested by the
decrescendo that accompanies the minor v, a directive reserved for the fully diminished
seventh chord itself in the previous version of this passage (compare mm. 71-2 to mm.
44-5).

The anticipation of A♭—and the startling, if understated presence of the minor v
on the last eighth-note of measure 71—is a small gesture, and has little or no
consequences for a middleground view of harmony. Nevertheless, the subtle chromatic
inflection transforms the arrival of the second diminished seventh chord. The harmonic
ambiguity of the diminished seventh creeps backward across the barline, just barely. It is
a canny calculation on Schubert’s part to vary the approach to the diminished seventh the
second time it appears. We have arrived again at the very sonority that began our
odyssey, a chord which we also know has the potential to define the crucial II♭ of the
exposition, opening motion to the dominant. Saving the “surprise” of the diminished
seventh for the downbeat of measure 72, however, might sound like a facile repetition of
the earlier harmonic trick. Instead, Schubert simultaneously underlines the importance of
the moment and saves it from banality.

After the diminished four-three returns, Schubert begins to break the harmonic
stasis through insistent eighth-note repetitions of the top-voice B♭ (m. 73). This is
followed by motion down from four-three to six-five position through a passing root-
position E-major triad (m. 73, b. 3) to a fully diminished six-five on D (b. 4). With this
sonority, the long-range chromatic voice-exchange of the tonic triad is finally achieved:
the original B♭ bass of the opening tonic expansion is transformed into the unstable top-
voice B♭ while the initial head-note D♭ now enters as the bass (see Figure 2.2).
At this turning-point, the uneasy, limp, and static four-three version of the B♭ diminished seventh that has characterized the exposition until this point (m. 73, b. 1) gives way to a distinctly goal-directed viiº⁵/II (b. 4). Even though both can be considered inversions of the same diminished seventh chord—sharing the same four pitches, the one elides smoothly into the other with little fanfare—their functional roles are diverse. In my reading, the chord in four-three position is understood as a strange, symmetrical projection of the dominant Stufe left unresolved by the failed cadence of measure 45 (as illustrated in Figure 2.3). In contrast, the six-five form on the fourth beat of measure 73 is a contrapuntally activated representation of the deep-level tonic Stufe, primed to push forward into the structural II♭. The B♭ promissory note, which I suggested above had failed in its upward quest for C and II♭, is now released to complete that journey, opening the harmonic and tonal space of the dominant key area. This affecting and liminal moment typifies the punctuated equilibrium of Schubert’s middleground harmonies, as foggy indeterminacy is rapidly transformed into forward momentum before we are truly aware of what has happened.

That forward momentum is manifest in the rhetorical energy Schubert grants II♭. Measures 74-79 sit on V of F (mostly the dominant eight-six and six-four) while constantly building in intensity. The triumphal melody of measures 74-5 is repeated, much of it an octave higher the second time. A crescendo begins near the end of measure 75 and builds into the climactic arrival on the C dominant seventh on the downbeat of measure 79. The entire passage achieves a dynamic expansion from pp to f. In short, despite the preceding material, measures 74-79 display all the signs of the approach to a medial caesura as described by Hepokoski and Darcy. Those suspicions are confirmed.
with the arrival of the dominant seventh on the downbeat of measure 79, part of the authentic cadence that functions as (or, in this case, bridges) the medial caesura.\footnote{The fact that there is a PAC here instead of a HC of F is moderately unusual for a sonata form. This species of medial caesura (V:PAC) is considered a “third-level default” by HD because it raises questions about placement of expositional closure and the function of the music that follows. I believe that those questions are quite relevant to another, broader study of Schubert’s sonata forms, namely an examination of the effect of middleground counterpoint and “three-key” expositions on perceptions of thematic character.}

There are therefore at least two reasons that it is sensible to show the diminished six-five chord in measure 73 as originating at the deepest middleground level. First, doing so responds directly to the triumphal standing on II\textsuperscript{5} in measures 74-79. As we have seen in Chapter 1, rhetorical emphasis on II\textsuperscript{5} is recognized by numerous theorists past and present as the most conventional means by which composers prepare the dominant key area of a sonata exposition. To elevate the structural status of the diminished six-five that prepares it is to underline the clearly audible importance of II\textsuperscript{5} to the coming dominant area.

Second, the paradoxical nature of the diminished-seventh chord arrived at via the voice-exchange resonates with the drama of expositional motion to the dominant. If, as so many authors have asserted, a marked II\textsuperscript{5} allows the music to proceed to V, then the diminished six-five is the true turning point. Showing its participation at a deep structural level (as I do in Figure 2.2) reflects a dynamic—rather than static—kind of tonic control in measures 1-73. From one point of view, the chord in measure 73 represents the tonic triad, the ultimate gauge of consonance, yet it is simultaneously a dissonant and forward-looking other. To some extent it exists in two worlds, the last gasp of tonic prolongation and the most potent expression of motion to the dominant; Janus-faced, its gaze is directed both backward and forward. This dynamism challenges Schubert’s critics, who often bemoan his supposed lack of goal-orientedness in the genre of sonata form. Such
goal-direction is indeed present, but it unfolds with a typically Schubertian subtlety and delicacy.

2.3: Composing Out Dominant Delay—Middleground Motive, Parenthetical Insertion, Harmonic Ambiguity, and Contrapuntal Unity in the Exposition

While Schubert organizes the delay of the anticipated dominant \textit{Stufe} with a chromaticized voice exchange at the deep middleground, he uses more foreground techniques to animate that span, filling it with music that heightens anticipation for the deep-level V. Middleground repetition of the \( G_v-F \) motive—introduced by the portentous trill of measures 8-9—stresses in particular the F bass that underpins much of the exposition. One of these middleground neighbors to F is drawn out with a long, harmonically circuitous passage—the “purple patch”—that is a compelling example of musical parenthesis and most suggestively considered in light of middleground voice leading.

Schubert uses this deep and persistent emphasis on the bass pitch F—decorated by its motivic upper neighbor, \( G_v/F \)—both to foreshadow the eventual arrival of the structural dominant \textit{Stufe}, but also to make large swaths of the exposition prolong a six-four chord representing a lower-level dominant \textit{Stufe}. Ironically enough for being built on F, that harmony actually holds off motion to the main dominant of measure 80. In Schenkerian terms this more elaboratory dominant results from composing-out of the upper fifth of the opening tonic triad. Thus, any connection between this dominant and the deep-level dominant yet to arrive is considered associative rather than structural; the two dominant \textit{Stufen} exist on different structural levels.
The Schenkerian ability to distinguish between the dominants of measure 35 or measure 70 and the dominant of measure 80 is particularly attractive in light of the theories of sonata form examined in Chapter I. That is, the interpretation I propose withholds the essential I–V motion of the exposition until the moment at which it is definitively articulated via emphasis on IIⅤ. Schubert’s choice to delay the deep-level dominant through motivic emphasis on a lower-level dominant constitutes a second narrative of harmony and voice leading in the exposition, one that overlaps and interacts with the tale of the chromaticized voice exchange.

The bass’ insistent pull towards F first becomes apparent with the famous trill itself in measures 8-9. One reason that the profound motivic impact of the G♭–F neighbor immediately becomes clear is because it breaks down local metric stability. The half cadence is extended by a full bar—through the ninth instead of the more conventional eighth measure of the phrase—and is followed by two and a half beats of rest lengthened further with a fermata. Charles Fisk has noted that the felt meter preceding the trill stretches from ¼ to ⅓, beginning around the downbeat of measure 6 (Figure 2.4). Even meter is thus malleable in the pull of the low bass F; it seems that the dominant degree can bend time as well as contrapuntal structure.

A middleground repetition of the same motivic G♭–F neighbor figure provides the harmonic genesis for the B-section in the movement’s unique opening tonic expansion. The music that unfolds makes a clear reference to a traditional rounded binary form, but

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9 It is worthwhile to note that the above-mentioned temporal plasticity found at the first (mm. 8-9) appearance of the G♭/F motive occurs here as well: measures 17-18 lengthen to a felt ⅓ just as the analogous bars before the half cadence did. The “extra” quarter note that puts the music back on track occurs on the last notated beat of measure 19; it becomes a pickup to the stable ¼ of the next section. The ominous low register and the inherently downward-inflected Ⅵ thus consistently disrupt regular rhythmic structures in this exposition.
with the traditional placement of the harmonic and thematic dimensions out of phase. Normally a rounded binary form in the major mode modulates to V by the end of its A section, or at least provides a half cadence that elides into the B section that begins on V. The B section then makes its way back to the tonic by one harmonic device or another, often sequential, providing a double return of thematic material and tonic harmony simultaneously. Instead of writing a modulatory A section, Schubert uses a tonally closed one, somewhat less common.

The B section is even more unorthodox. Instead of dominant harmony, it brings VI: a rich and colorful area, but in a Schenkerian sense still an intermediate harmony between the opening I and the later cadential arrival on V. In this contrasting section, the main theme is transformed first into lyrical monody and then into figural variation before the key of G is wrenched back to B through the addition of an augmented sixth. That is, a G tonic triad turned German-sixth resolves in a perfectly normal fashion, to F, the dominant chord of B, with six-four figures (m. 35, b. 4).

The result at measure 35 is the return of tonic key that is conventional with the reprise of A-section material—and even of the pitches of the tonic triad—but not of tonic harmony. Although tonic key and tonic harmony often coincide, they are not the same, a distinction that a Schenkerian graph is able to draw quite well. In this case the sonority that arises from the harmonization of the main theme at its original pitch level over the bass pitch F represents a dominant (but not yet the main dominant) Stufe with six-four elaboration. The dominant that might more traditionally come at the beginning of the B

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11 This might productively described as what Robert Hatten terms an “arrival six-four.” He notes: “the cueing of closural stability by the cadential six-four is such that one may exploit it without ever completing the cadence.” Robert S. Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven: Markedness, Correlation, and Interpretation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 15.
section is in fact simultaneous with the double return of tonic key and main theme!

Schubert thus plays with the conventions of rounded binary form by realigning the traditional harmonic and thematic functions of its parts, a play highlighted by the voice-leading sketch in Figure 2.5.

This blurring of harmonic and thematic function arises from the high degree of emphasis accorded the \( \flat VI \) scale degree. Paradigmatically, it might serve as a brief chromatic upper neighbor to a more conventionally placed V. Here, however, \( \flat VI \)'s larger role as an expansion of the important \( \flat 7-\flat 6-\flat 5 \) motive allows it to inflect the relationship between the more structural tonic-dominant framework of the rounded binary form, delaying the arrival of the dominant until the last possible moment. This dominant delay
sets an important precedent for the later deferral of the main dominant $Stufe$ of the exposition.

The blurring of formal boundaries also permeates rhythmic aspects of the passage. The emphatic triplets that push forward through the retransitional German augmented-sixth sonority in measures 34-35 spill through and transform the inner-voice texture of the A’ section. Further, the contrapuntal resolution of the augmented sixth comes on the fourth beat of measure 35—as an anticipation—while the metric accent does not arrive until the downbeat of measure 36.\textsuperscript{12} Certainly this occurs in part to accommodate the quarter-note anacrucis to the main theme, but the forceful nature of the syncopation also underlines the conflicting characters of measure 36: it brings thematic resolution, but has a marked lack of tonal resolution owing to the bass’s uneasy presence on F.

The lack of harmonic resolution cannot completely efface the perception of thematic return, further blurring our understanding of this remarkable passage. There is still a strong sense of double return owing to the presence of tonic key and the main theme. The structural top voice even regains the diatonic head-note $\hat{3}$ from the downward-bent $\text{♭}3$ harmonized by the G$\sharp$-major section (see Figure 2.5). A Schenkerian analysis treats this double inflection as mixture, but the renewed emphasis on the diatonic $\hat{3}$ sounds very like the moment at which $\hat{3}$ is taken up again after the interruption in a conventional rounded binary form, traditionally coincidental with the moment of thematic and harmonic return. Our perception of the six-four chord in measure 36 as a dominant is thus somewhat challenged by conflicting messages: could the pitches B$\flat$-D-F

\textsuperscript{12} Schubert has curiously marked forte twice here, both on the final beat of measure 35 and on the downbeat of measure 36. The crescendo, however, continues definitively until the downbeat of 36. See the critical notes on this passage. Franz Schubert, Sämtliche Klaviersonaten Band 3: D 850, 894, 958, 959, 960, ed Martino Tirimo, (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1999), 221.
somehow be construed as a consonant structural tonic in second inversion? Perhaps, but the six-four is prepared by an augmented sixth, a chord that nearly always cues the dominant. The eventual resolution of the six-four figures as a cadential six-four (m. 43) also argues for this chord’s role as a dominant.

An examination of the bass’s behavior leading up to the failed cadence ten bars later in measure 45 supports our reading of dominant harmony in measure 35. Although the bass does briefly resolve to B♭ in measure 39, it immediately pushes back down to F through a harmonic sequence, arriving there by measure 42, again via G♭. The feeling is that measure 39 flips the bass up into a dissonant inner voice, then fills in that gap with passing motion back down to the more structural bass pitch F. From this point forward, the F remains unequivocally dominant in orientation until the failed cadence of measure 45. Hence the strong linear connection back to measure 35 argues in favor of dominant harmony at the moment the double return (see Figure 2.5).

We return now to the harmonic narrative following the frustrated cadence in measure 45, recalling that, in place of the expected tonic closure, measure 45 brings a diminished four-three chord over an F in the bass. Schubert has a number of tonal avenues available due to the open-ended nature of the fully diminished seventh sonority. He chooses to reinterpret the bass F as the leading tone E♭, making the chord vii°7 of F♭ minor. Schubert then uses the chord to usher in an authentic cadence in that key (mm. 47-48).

This next section contrasts mightily with what has come before, most of which was devoted to the expansive B♭-major main theme. Every characteristic here seems conceived to set this music apart. Where the main theme exists only in the treble register,
this new theme begins solidly in the piano’s left hand; where the first theme initially ascends and then gently descends, this theme descends first, then ascends. The key of F♯ minor—enharmonically vi—is a full five stations removed from B♭ major on the circle of fifths.

While we ought not ignore the radical nature of Schubert’s key choice here—F♯ minor is without a doubt far from the home key of B♭!—attention to the fluency of the structural bass demonstrates that there are sources for larger contrapuntal coherence both within in this section, and linking it to the earlier music as well. The bass pitch at the end of the previous section—the abandoned cadence—rested on F♯; here it begins a semitone higher on F♯. Skimming ahead through measure 70 reveals that the bass repeatedly returns to F♯ (in mm. 54, 61, and 65) before finally sinking to F♯ again (mm. 68 and 70), as illustrated in Figure 2.6. This motion is another repetition of the motivic F-G♯-F (or 5-6-5) neighbor motion first heard in measures 9-10 and later articulated at the middleground of measures 20-35. It represents an F♯-Stufe as middleground neighbor to F.

Schubert’s composing-out of the middleground neighbor constitutes the passage that has been the crux of the analytical discourse on the B♭ Sonata, Tovey’s “purple patch.” Other analysts (such as James Webster, whose concept of the “three-key exposition” was addressed earlier) have chosen to focus on what makes this section harmonically distinct from the rest of the exposition. I will argue that, despite its remarkable affective qualities, the purple patch remains a neighboring diminution of the tonic’s upper fifth. This assertion will be pursued by clarifying the rhetorically parenthetical qualities of the passage, and also with a more detailed account of linear
Figure 2.6: Voice-leading sketch, “Purple Patch,” mm. 48-80
coherence in contrast to harmonic ambiguity. Some might accuse my Schenkerian analysis of “normalizing” Schubert’s music in an insensitive way. I propose instead that the Schenkerian view remains aware of the purple patch’s harmonic remove and poignant lyricism, but contextualizes those traits in a way that is sensitive to the traditional architecture of sonata form; the last has been my overarching goal in this paper.

One more remarkable facet of the purple patch is that it both begins and ends on the curious fully diminished four-three over F. This leaves the impression that in some ways measure 72 simply picks up where measure 45 left off. In this sense, the purple patch as upper neighbor to the dominant can also be thought of as what William Rothstein calls “expansion by parenthetical insertion.”13

In formulating his concept of parenthetical insertion, Rothstein largely adopts Koch’s and Riemann’s definitions of musical parenthesis. From Koch he borrows the idea that parenthetical insertions consist of “inessential melodic material,” and from Riemann that the insertions may occur anywhere in a phrase, even at the very end.14 The single most defining characteristic of musical parenthesis is that a “dramatic contrast of texture and dynamics interrupts the continuity of the musical discourse.”15 In its origin,

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14 Rothstein, 87. A caution is necessary when applying the word “inessential” to Schubert’s expansive and colorful harmonic adventure. “Contrapuntally inessential” in the most literal sense is what Koch and Rothstein intend when they use the word: they simply mean that, in terms of harmony and voice leading, the music could technically leap without disjunct from the beginning of the parenthesis to the end. Thus the significance of the word “inessential” to describe passages such as measures 45-73 of D.960 does not indicate a value judgment of any kind concerning the parenthetical material, nor intimate that it is rhetorically or affectively inessential; rather, such a designation inevitably falls out from the very definition of “parenthesis.” Although the fully diminished seventh chord that eventually marks the arrival on II¥ technically first appears in measure 45, it is by no means ready to fulfill the role at the point. To use the thwarted cadence—the cadence that is prepared to sound like the end of the tonic area!—to effect an immediate modulation to the dominant would have been a hasty and imbalanced choice. Schubert’s solution, with its compelling side streets and back alleys, is far more elegant. Even if in a Schenkerian sense it is viewed as an elaboration of the exposition’s essential I–II¥–V progression, the “purple patch” is equally essential in order to bring proportional balance to those pillars and above all to make the music uniquely and sensuously Schubertian.
15 Rothstein, 88.
then, musical parenthesis is a phrase-level rhetorical device that can intensify the expectation of closure by first denying, and later allowing it. Rothstein specifically discusses how musical parenthesis can affect the rhetoric of longer periodic structures, resulting in so-called “purple patches” (he uses this very term). Purple patches are (as Riemann describes) “parentheses that interrupt a concluding phrase—the final phrase of a longer period.”

The parenthetical insertion in the Schubert sonata is on an even larger scale, but of a slightly different nature. The cadence that is interrupted in measure 45 is not the end of a period but of a longer tonal form, the incomplete rounded binary pattern that unfolds across the entire tonic key area. And whereas in Rothstein’s phrase expansions a cadence is first thwarted and then successfully revisited, in the Schubert sonata it is the cadential frustration that is revisited. That is, a more traditional parenthesis might frustrate the authentic cadence in B♭ in measure 45 by means of a diminished seventh chord, then later return to the cadential dominant in order to complete the resolution. Schubert thwarts the cadence, but it is the multivalent diminished seventh chord—not the cadential dominant—that eventually reappears and determines where the music heads next. In this case, the satisfactory resolution of the parenthesis occurs only because the music moves to the long-awaited dominant key area, not because the abandoned cadence is eventually completed. The situation in the Schubert is aptly illustrated by Charles Rosen’s diagram below (Figure 2.7; Rosen calls the purple patch the “second group”). Although Rosen is not discussing the parenthetical passage from a Schenkerian

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16 Rothstein, 88.
viewpoint, he nonetheless calls it a “magnificent detour” from the more conventional aspects of the sonata narrative and, suggestively, encloses it in brackets.\footnote{Charles Rosen, \textit{Sonata Forms} (New York: Norton, 1988), 261.}

The music Schubert composes in measures 45-73 can therefore be described as an archetypal expansion via parenthetical insertion that is modified to accommodate the essential I–V harmonic motion of the sonata exposition. Measure 73 would be far too late in the exposition for an unproblematic resolution to the tonic by completing the cadence abandoned in measure 45. Schubert therefore uses for the outer bounds of his parenthesis a dynamic harmony that is capable of forward motion to the dominant: the diminished seventh four-three on F.

Having illustrated the diversionary nature of measures 45-73, let us turn now to the music between those boundaries to contrast its linear coherence with its harmonic ambiguity. Many have referred to this as the section “in F\# minor.” But despite the persistent bass presence on the scale-step F\# throughout this passage, the music does not remain in the key of F\#/G\#. To the contrary, the music is characterized by extreme harmonic instability. There is not a single cadence in F\# minor beyond the V–i motion that opens the section. Instead, Schubert’s song-like melody pulls strongly to the local mediant, A major, nearly reaching a cadence in that key in measure 53 and succeeding in

Figure 2.7: Rosen’s Diagram of Essential Harmonies in the Purple Patch
measure 58. During that span, the bass pitch repeatedly rises and falls, first between A and F♯ and then between A♯ and F♯ (see Figure 2.6).

This repetitive motion in the bass might be considered in light of Schenker’s concept of “boundary play”:

No matter whether a diminution ascends or descends, the composer may seek to regain the position occupied earlier or to reach tones lower or higher. The first motion is followed by others; the tone which begins the total motion and the tone which ends it become its boundary tones. The first tone sets out toward the goal, the last one brings us to it.  

Schenker introduces this concept during his discussion of diminution in *Free Composition*, immediately after he describes descending and ascending diminution. Boundary play is proposed as a synthesis of the two, a “balancing of directions.” While Schenker refers to boundary play only as a melodic diminution, it seems that the bass—also a fluid linear entity—should be equally susceptible to such a technique.

Harald Krebs’s “oscillatory progression” is a harmonic concept similar to Schenker’s boundary play, which Krebs proposes to describe certain harmonic third relations that have much in common with the F♯-A motion in the Schubert sonata. Krebs defines an oscillatory progression as a repetitive “use of third progression independently of fifth-progression,” with the result being the prolongation of one of the two framing triads. In this type of progression, the top voice prolongs a single pitch, a member of the triad that is prolonged.

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18 Schenker, 103.  
19 Schenker, 103.  
20 Indeed, Schenker remarks on just the preceding page (in the section headed “Bass diminutions”) that “diminution in the bass employs the entire array of prolongation techniques.” Schenker 102.  
22 Krebs, 84.  
23 Krebs, 85.
In the measures discussed here (mm. 48-73) the bass first hovers within the minor third F♯–A, prolonging the F♯ minor triad by means of its upper third. The A-major triads here are briefly tonicized, but routinely fall back down to F♯ minor. The melody of this section clearly prolongs C♯—an enharmonically respelled version of ♯♯ (D♭)—that connects back to the movement’s ♯♯ Kopfton (see Figure 2.6). The persistence of the top-voice C♯ in the music resonates with the melodic aspect of Krebs’s oscillatory progression. After moving back and forth from F♯ to A, a strong cadence on A major finally occurs in measure 58, but is not the harbinger of a stable section prolonging A. Rather, Schubert immediately expands the upper limit of the boundary play to B♭ (or A♯), as part of the fully diminished seventh chord C♯-E-G-B♭ (m. 59).

The arrival of this diminished seventh sonority is marked as significant in several ways. First, it brings a return to the right-hand melody and left-hand accompaniment that characterize the earlier G♭-major section (mm. 18-35), which as a result is contrasted with this other, and less stable, F♯-Stufe. Second, although its pitch content is different, this sonority recalls the most prominent fully diminished seventh chord from earlier in the piece, i.e., the crucial chord of measure 45. There is even a motivic connection to the earlier diminished seventh chord in the melody. Here, in the key of A, the melodic descent is frustrated at the last minute: ♯♯♯–♯♯–♯–♯; just as in measure 45, the final tonic pitch is replaced by one a semitone higher, triggering a sudden instability for the local diatony. Finally, this chord reintroduces the deep-level tonic pitch (B♭, here as A♯) that was strategically removed at the failed cadence of measure 45. At that point, the B♭ was first bent upward to B♯ and then deflected down to A♯ with the modulation to F♯ minor.

Krebs identifies this passage as an oscillatory progression in his brief analysis of aspects of the B♭ Sonata. Krebs, 103.
Here, the same inner-voice A♮ is raised back to B♭/A♮, hinting at the resurgence of the tonic pitch.

The most remarkable elaborations of the diminished seventh chord are the passing, root-position A-major triads that recur throughout measures 59-69. It is startling to hear a consonant triad in five-three position functioning as a passing chord within a prolongation of a more dissonant harmony; the typical roles of consonance and dissonance are reversed. Further, this passage comes on the heels of a cadence in A major; at least at first, it might seem intuitive to consider the A-major triads as more structural than the diminished seventh. Such a perception only heightens the passage’s ambiguity, blurring what is consonant and what is dissonant. In a sense, the practice here is similar to what occurred earlier in the exposition. In measure 36, Schubert used the weight of the thematic return to make the dissonant dominant six-four harmony briefly seem plausible as a second-inversion tonic triad, even though context later proves that hypothesis to be incorrect.

These root-position A-major triads are specifically used to pass from one inversion (with B♭/A♮ in the bass) of the diminished seventh chord to another (with G in the bass: see, for example, mm. 59-60), all as part of a general move back down to an F♯ dominant seventh in measure 61. Despite the fact that the chord suggests a different tonic pitch (that of B minor), the arrivals on the F♯ dominant seventh are points of contact with the deeper-level F♯ Stufe that is composed out across measures 48-68 (see the lower limits of the boundary play highlighted in Figure 2.6).

The dominant seventh itself is elaborated by passing tonic six-four chords in the key of B minor, briefly bringing the hint of tonal stability to this harmonically complex
passage. The diminished seventh chord A♯-C♯-E♯-G♯ (from measure 59) shares three common tones with the F♯ dominant seventh, requiring only the semitone displacement of the bass, G♯–F♯. It is in this way that the bass repeatedly returns to the structural pitch of the passage, F♯. Beginning in measure 62, that descent back down to F♯ is simply “rolled up” in the bass, passing back upwards to A♯/B♭ through G♯, G♯, and A.

There are other contextual reasons to consider the A-major triads primarily as passing chords between inversions of the diminished seventh A♯-C♯-E-G. In the first presentation (mm. 59-60), the passing status of the triad is emphasized by meter: it is placed on the weak fourth beat of the measure, a metric position that clearly connects the stronger third beat of measure 59 with the downbeat of measure 60. In the second presentation (m. 63), the A major triad that is part of the upward motion in measure 62 is repeated on the downbeat of the next measure. This creates a feeling of syncopation when the fully diminished seventh arrives on beat two. Schubert strengthens that syncopation—and thus the perception that the fully diminished seventh is the structural harmony—with the emphasis he requests for the B♭ on beat two in the left-hand. ²⁵ Schubert’s subtle variations of this music thus further undermine any claims for A major to continue beyond measure 58 as a stable tonal center.

Having previously expanded the upper limit of the boundary play from A♯ to A♯, Schubert finally pushes the lower limit down to F♯, first as part of a brief expansion of iii (D minor) in measure 68, then more permanently in measure 70. This second F functions as the bass of a six-four chord. That harmony represents the return of the long-suspended

²⁵ “This indeterminate articulation resembles something of a cross between a marcato and a crescendo or diminuendo. Some renowned Schubertians have even dubbed it “Schubert’s wedgie.” Regardless of its name, Schubert consistently uses such marks to indicate the importance of a note or chord.
dominant \textit{Stufe} that was left off in measure 45 (refer back to figure 2.5).\textsuperscript{26} As discussed earlier, this six-four in measure 70 also resolves to a diminished four-three chord—establishing the ending boundary of the parenthetical passage—before pushing down further still to activate the framing chromatic voice exchange, initiate the definitive motion to II\textsuperscript{b}, and press on to the main dominant of measure 80. Figure 2.8 presents a middleground view of the exposition up to measure 80, highlighting the various techniques Schubert uses to delay the arrival of this deep-level dominant \textit{Stufe}.

To conclude, we can see that a hierarchical scale-step theory like Schenker’s is especially useful for considering a passage like measures 48-80 because it addresses larger contrapuntal fluencies even as different tonal centers arrive in quick succession. Commentators such as Charles Rosen and James Webster group this movement with Schubert’s other “three-key expositions” (B\textsuperscript{♭}–F\textsuperscript{♯}–F\textsuperscript{♭}), presumably due to the surprising thematic entrance in F\textsuperscript{♯} minor in measure 48. Unlike the opening B\textsuperscript{♭}-major and later F\textsuperscript{♭}-major areas, however, this section “in F\textsuperscript{♯} minor” simply cannot be described in terms of a stable tonal center. It begins in a fragile F\textsuperscript{♯} minor, moves briefly to A major, prolongs a diminished seventh harmony, strongly implies B minor, and tonicizes D minor, all before arriving back in the home key of B\textsuperscript{♭} major. Thus the tidy label “three-key exposition” is more than a little bit misleading, for it both fails to explain why those three keys (B\textsuperscript{♭}–F\textsuperscript{♯}–F\textsuperscript{♭}) are elevated beyond the others, and efficiently glosses over the vast contextual and conventional differences separating those tonalities.

The Schenkerian reading of the exposition proposed here instead emphasizes the ways in which Schubert simultaneously postpones definitive motion to the dominant

\textsuperscript{26} To be entirely accurate, the sonority is an eight-six chord that is immediately clarified as a B\textsuperscript{♭}-D-F chord in second inversion.
Stufe and yet strongly implies its imminence. The deep-level chromatic voice exchange (with its gaze fixed forward and backward) both lengthens and unsettles the control of the opening tonic Stufe. Within that span, middleground repetitions of the $\frac{6}{5}$ motive emphasize the bass pitch F as part of a long-unresolved dominant six-four harmony. Ironically, Schubert uses this lower-level dominant it to intensify the anticipation for the eventual main V, even though it exists closer to the foreground and therefore does not connect forward to that more structural Stufe.

These middleground harmonic traits imbue the music preceding measure 80 with an underlying tension. That tension exists beneath what some less-than-approving critics have described as the Schubertian tendency to rhapsodize beautifully in diverse—but not goal-directed—keys.\footnote{See the criticisms that Tovey voiced, discussed in Chapter I, section 1.5.} My point here is not somehow to demonstrate Schubert’s true worth by virtue of a concealed goal-directed motion that is perceptible only to those with...
the gnostic gift of Schenker’s ideas. Rather, my intent is to argue that Schubert works wonders—in his own unique and subtle ways—within an inherently goal-directed formal process, and that his particular methods are productively viewed in light of middleground harmony and voice leading.

2.4: Motivic Inflections of the Dominant at the close of the Exposition

After the main dominant Stufe of the exposition has definitively arrived in measure 80, Schubert makes strategic references to some of the most important middleground harmonies of the piece: the minor flatted mediant, D♭ minor, and the tonic, B♭ major. Both of these Stufen are notable in particular for their close relationship to the deep-level V that is the goal of the exposition. D♭ minor, i♭III, is the scale-step upon which the development begins, initiating a large-scale prolongation of that dominant by mediant triads. Despite the emphasis on the mediants, at a deeper level the dominant still holds sway in the development until it returns to prepare the recapitulation. B♭ major, of course, is the tonic Stufe whose grip proved so tenacious in the exposition. The ability of the tonic and mediant triads to function contextually as diminutions within a coherent dominant prolongation will prove central to an understanding of tonal relationships in the development and retransition of this piece. This central role necessitates a closer look now at their presence within the dominant key area.

The first motivic motion—down to the dominant of i♭III and back—occurs in measures 92 to 96, in which the bass gradually slides down from C to B♭ to A♭ as part of a halting and fragmentary sequential passage based on the dominant theme’s last two measures. It tonicizes E♭ major, D♭ major, and D♭ minor before retraversing that same
interval in ascending order to return to the dominant of F in measure 98, a motion illustrated in Figure 2.9.

In the next sequential passage, Schubert changes his emphasis to B♭ major: here it is the local subdominant, but it still possesses weight as a reference to the movement’s overall tonic. A series of fragments (taken from measure 99’s new theme) tonicize the ascending triads G minor (locally ii, m. 103), A♭ major (♭III, m. 104), A minor (iii, m 105), and B♭ major (IV, m. 107). The goal of this sequence is clearly the B♭ major subdominant in measure 107 and its elaborated repetition in measure 112. The emphasis on B♭ here strongly recalls the persistence of the deep-level tonic earlier in the exposition. But that recollection is tempered by the fact that B♭ major is clearly functioning in a subdominant capacity; the connection is thus associative rather than structural. Consistent with its subdominant role, the B♭ chord pushes forward into the local dominant, C, with each repetition here (mm. 107 and 112).

A persistent melodic emphasis on the deep-level 2—locally 5 in the dominant key—is brought to the fore by the lack of a middleground linear progression expanding the main top-voice C. The resulting absence of melodic closure in the secondary area is made most obvious through the exposition’s concluding gesture. Instead of an authentic cadence, there is only the tentative motion of measures 115-6. The local 2 (G♯) is first inflected upward via G♯ to A, only to alight delicately on C, 5, to conclude the exposition (m. 116). Although the deep-level 2 would be considered the main top-voice pitch even were it elaborated with the usual fifth progression, Schubert’s concluding melodic gestures emphasize the particularly restive nature of 2 at this point in the work. That is, C (2) remains highly active at the close of this exposition, even at the foreground. That

energy, as well as the \$$\text{\textdagger}$$ \text{-Stufe} to which Schubert alludes in measures 94-96, will both become important at the beginning of the development.

2.5: Oscillatory Mediants, Apparent Tonic, and Retransitional Dominant in the Development of D.960

In the deepest sense, this development section accomplishes exactly what sonata convention expects of it: it prolongs the dominant scale step that is the goal of the exposition, and it elaborates that \textit{Stufe} with a set of circular tonal excursions. In D.960 those excursions take the form of an episodic and thematically rich rhapsody on the mixed forms of the mediant scale step: \$$\text{\textdagger}$$ \text{\textdagger} \text{\textdagger}, \text{\textdagger} \text{\textdagger}, and \text{\textdagger}. Despite the remarkable emphasis on D minor (\text{\textdagger}) in measures 173-202, the eventual return of the structural dominant is made clear by the protracted, if hushed, presence of the F dominant seventh chord in measures 203-215. That presence is further underscored by the return of the motivic F-G\$$\text{\textdagger}$$-F neighbor figure. It is quite clear by the end of the development that F dominant harmony has reemerged and that it cues the return of B\$$\text{\textdagger}$$ major. This observation leads to an important point: even if Schubert’s exposition is characterized by delay of the structural dominant, once that \textit{Stufe} arrives it is robust at a deep level, persisting until the recapitulation as is the case in most eighteenth-century sonata forms.

At a deep level, the development composes out the diatonic progression V-iii-V (Figure 2.10). The appearance of V-iii-V at the middleground of development sections is not an uncommon occurrence even in Classical sonata forms.\textsuperscript{29} As a middleground plan, it is even more frequent in Schubert’s works. Furthermore, the appearance of an oscillatory

\textsuperscript{29} Another piece that exhibits diatomic V–iii–V motion in the development is the first movement of Haydn’s Symphony No. 80. Krebs, p. 40.
harmonic motion at the middleground resonates with Schubert’s earlier use of similar schemes closer to the surface, such as the motion between F♭ minor and A major in measures 48-58, and the filling-in of the major third C-A, in the bass of measures 89-98.

The structural top voice also follows a trajectory that is typical of development sections prolonging the V-Stufe. An inner voice on 5 to reaches over and passes down through 4 to connect to the main top-voice 3 of the recapitulation, thus bridging the two branches of the unfusible interruption structure, as seen in Figure 2.10. This reaching-over is clearly audible with the reemergence of F (5) as foreground top-voice pitch in measure 188. F moves downward to the repeatedly accented E♭ (4) of measures 206 and 208 before resolving to the D head note in the second bar of the recapitulation.

The orientation of the body of the development around the mediant Stufen derives from the startling harmonic event in the section’s first measure, 117, and literally grows out of the deeper dominant from which it departs. Schubert deftly juxtaposes the final F major triad of the exposition—representing the deep-level dominant of the interruption’s first division—with a forbidding C♭ minor triad, opening the development on the enharmonically respelled flat submediant minor (♭iii♭, D♭ minor). This modulation is all the more agile because it echoes the final gesture of the exposition rhythmically and texturally while it slips into a distant, minor key.

The specifics of the voice leading also contribute to the smoothness with which this remarkable modulation is effected. It can be imagined as a chromaticized voice exchange at the foreground (Figure 2.11). The F-major and C♭-minor triads share no pitches, but each member of both triads is related by semitone to a member of the other. The outer voices are thus able to proceed in contrary motion by half-step: the top-voice C
Figure 2.10: Development, deep middleground

Figure 2.11: Foreground chromatic voice exchange, m. 116-117
is raised to C#, and the bass F is lowered to E, moving from a root-position F-major triad to a C#-minor chord in six-three position. The C#-minor triad then shifts to root position, completing the exchange of voices.

A different way of considering this juxtaposition is as an instance of non-diatonic 5–6 motion, shown in Figure 2.12. A more conventional 5–6 elaboration of the F-major triad would move a top-voice C to D over a constant bass F, resulting in a perfect fifth followed by a major sixth. In the Schubert, the intervallic succession remains the same—a perfect fifth still opens to a major sixth—but instead of one voice moving by whole step while the other remains static, both voices move by semitone in contrary motion. In this sense, they each shoulder half the burden of the 5–6 expansion, but the resulting six-three chord is different, exotic; it is a chromatically altered shadow version of the mediant triad, biii instead of iii. The fact that this doubly altered mediant is of the same quality as the diatonic iii triad—both are minor—only heightens the perception that it is both normal and abnormal at once: it is the “wrong” mediant minor triad. The explanation based on 5–6 motion also demonstrates how both the diatonic and altered mediant scale-steps grow naturally out of, and thus prolong, the dominant Stufe in this movement.

Although it becomes more prominent around the retransition, the reaching-over to ⁵ that is so common in Schenkerian accounts of development sections actually occurs in the section’s very first measure, as part of this curious modulation. That is, at a deep level, the pitch that emerges on top in measure 117—E—has its origins in an inner-voice F (see Figure 2.13). The E can be considered F’s dissonant chromatic inflection, an enharmonically respelled F, (⁵) that must be bent back up to its diatonic counterpart F♯
Figure 2.12: Chromaticized 5–6 motion in m. 117

Figure 2.13: Middleground evolution of mediant Stufe in the development
(5) before it can pass down through the retransitional E₅ (4) to the recapitulatory head note D (3). The result is a struggle to regain the diatonic 5, F, that plays out across the development’s top voice, and a similar impetus in the bass to arrive eventually at the diatonic 3, D. These are the two pitches that were subverted as part of the chromatically modified 5–6 motion of measure 117 and hence must eventually be recovered.

A reading of the development that is attentive to these pitch dialectics can explain the significance of the sections two most important points of arrival, measures 149 and 173 (Figure 2.13). Both points are marked by sweeping gestures followed by a dramatic thinning of texture; both moments are also made conspicuous by their articulation of one of the development’s main themes. These are the moments at which the deep-level, diatonic iii-Stufe is gradually reassembled from the altered constituents of its colorful but dissonant counterpart, Ⅲ. At the first point of arrival—the noble song in D₅ major at measure 149—the structural top voice moves up from E₅ (or F₅) to F₅. The second, and larger, goal of the development is the thunderous arrival on D minor that occurs in measure 173. At that point, the main bass pitch pushes upward from C₇/D₅ to D₅.

These two arrivals divide the development into three distinct parts. The first part (beginning in C₇/D₅ minor) is characterized by frequent modulation and the fragmented appearance of thematic material from the exposition. The middle section (which begins in D₅ major, at m. 149) introduces a new, developmental theme (though it is motivically related to previous material). A series of sequences pushes forward into the third section. This final partition is a vast plain of D minor that first dwells on material from the development before foreshadowing the return of the movement’s main theme with the approach of the retransitional dominant.
As described earlier, the development’s first major section begins with the chromatic 5–6 motion (or voice exchange) that introduces C7 minor, enharmonically $\flat$iii. The dialectical relationship between the pitches C7/D♭ and D♯ immediately becomes apparent in this music as a descending circle-of-fifths sequence, outlining parallel tenths in the outer voices, tonicizes first F7 minor, then B minor (mm. 118-123, Ex. 2.14). The melodic peak of this sequence is the octave-doubled D♯ in measure 125; when that pitch arrives, it occurs as a semitonal displacement of C7. This is also the end-point of the sequence, and the D soon falls back down as the music turns toward a cadence in C7 minor—but not before it has emphasized the conflict between C7/D♭ and its diatonic counterpart, D♯.

As we have seen in the exposition, Schubert often thwarts expectations at a cadence in significant ways. In measure 128, Schubert sets up a perfect authentic cadence in C7 minor. However, instead of the expected root-position C7-minor triad on the downbeat of measure 129, there is a return to melodic $\flat$2 and the Neapolitan sixth, which Schubert marks $fp$. The expected melodic closure is on C7/D♭, the mixed $\flat$3 in the deepest-level B♭-major diatony. But the latent diatonic $\flat$3—D♯—is already muscling its way to the fore, ruining one attempted cadence in C7 and forcing a second try.

Although the second attempt brings a melodic C7, it is not harmonically successful, resolving deceptively to A major in measure 131. In the music that follows, Schubert fills in the major third between the current bass A♯ and the C7/D♭ of the development’s beginning (m. 117) with a sequence (mm. 131-140) in ascending seconds. Measures 131-140 begin in A major, then modulate down a half-step to G♯ minor before

30 One might also consider the parallelism with the earlier cadential frustrations: whereas in the exposition the melodic close is supplanted by the raised tonic, here it is usurped by the lowered supertonic. In both scenarios, the anticipated melodic close on 1 is ruined by the pitch a semitone above it.
quickly moving up a minor third to B major. When this module is repeated—beginning with the B-major downbeat of measure 140—it ends on D₃ major, reattaining the deeper-level bass D₃ (C⁷) that began the development (see Figure 2.14).

While the development so far has therefore prolonged D₃ in the bass, it has also nudged the structural top voice up from E⁷/F₃ to F⁷, expanding the tenth in the outer voices from minor to major. Part of the development’s work is already completed, since the chromatic pitch E⁷ (or F₃) has been righted to its diatonic counterpart F⁷. In addition to these structural qualifications, the importance of measure 149 as a point of arrival is driven home by its status as goal of the sequential passage, its ff dynamic, and by the fact that the texture immediately collapses to a single, pulsating, pp D₃ in the bass.

The fact that the structural top voice has arrived on F here is reinforced by the new theme beginning in measure 151: the downbeats of the right-hand melody outline a third-progression from D₃ through E₃ up to F, as seen in Example 2.15. But—like some earlier linear progressions—Schubert immediately frustrates this one with chromaticism. The melody begins again in measure 155. But instead of completing the ascent to F, the E₃ of measure 156 passes into an inner voice—as D⁷—and instead resolves upward only a half step to E⁷ when Schubert suddenly lurches to an authentic cadence in E major in measure 158 (see Figure 2.15). The resulting middleground linear progression, D₃-E₃-E⁷, recalls the moment in the exposition at which the expected third-progression D-C-B₃ is chromatically deflected to D-C-B⁷. Although at a deeper middleground, the top voice has already definitively reattained F⁷ (at m. 149), this frustrated linear progression causes a temporary, more surface-level retreat and brings the E⁷-F dialectic to the fore. The evolution of the mediantscale-step from dissonant, chromaticized forms to the
consonant, diatonic one is thus dealt a setback here by the top voice’s temporary fall back down to E♭.

In measures 159-173, Schubert once again uses sequence to effect the motion from one inflection of the mediant Stufe to the next, arpeggiating an augmented triad and a diminished triad in the bass. First the music moves from the cadence in E major (m. 158) to one in C major (m. 163) to one in A♭ minor (m. 166), the bass thus outlining the augmented triad E-C-A♭, as illustrated in Figure 2.15. Then the modulatory pace picks up, ascending a minor third to B♭, and again to the goal Stufe, D♭ minor, arpeggiating the diminished triad A♭-B♭-D♭. The bass arpeggiation that ushers in the diatonic iii-Stufe is in fact part of the same motivic diminished seventh chord that is so critical to the harmonic structure of the exposition.

The struggle between the chromatic and diatonic forms of the mediant triad set up at the beginning of the development is made especially salient during this transition. In measures 159-160, the accompanimental figures of the right hand begin with an insistent, eighth-note E♭, only to challenge that note by adding the F♭ a half step away. The textural isolation of this minor second in the right hand and the fact that it is repeated eight times make it a highly salient dissonance. When the same accompaniment is transposed up a sixth five bars later, the pitches that clash are C and D♭. These two pairs of pitches—E-F♭ and C-D♭—are the very same oppositions that launched the development: recall how a root-position F-major triad pushed outward to a C♭-minor six-three in chromaticized 5–6 elaboration of the main V-Stufe (Figures 2.12 and 2.13). The struggle to move to the diatonic mediant (iii) in the intervening music is also actualized at the middleground by those outer-voice pitches.
Figure 2.15: Voice-leading sketch, development, mm 149-173
With the dramatic arrival of D minor in measures 171-173, the evolution of the altered mediant Stufe that begins the development—iii♭—is completed, now coming into sharper focus as its diatonic source, iii. The pitch-dialectic of C♯/D♭ and D♭ is made explicitly functional in this new diatonic context, emerging in the form of pounding octaves alternating tonic and leading tone in measure 172, marked first ff and then with a crescendo; there is no doubt that C♯ functions as the leading tone here. Schubert’s expressive indications and the fact that—just as in measures 149-150—the texture immediately thins out for the presentation of a new theme leaves no doubt that this is an important point of arrival. Aligning the three rhetorically marked moments reveals a large scale metamorphosis from double mixture to single mixture to diatony: iii♭→♭III–iii (refer to Figure 2.13).

Despite the fact that a full 31 measures of the development are in D minor, this tonal area is anything but monolithic. The voice-leading sketch in Figure 2.16 shows how the music in this section lacks cadential articulation of D. Instead, the passage constantly strains toward its relative major, F—the deep-level V-Stufe that is prolonged by the development’s mediant odyssey and which sonata practice suggests will resurface soon—with dominant sevenths of that key in measures 178 and 184. In both cases, those C-major dominants resolve deceptively back to D minor, hardly the strongest means of defining the key of D. D minor’s claim to tonal centricity here is derived instead from the forceful arrival in measure 173, and from the quiet repetition of the accompanimental D-minor triads, a sort of tonic-by-insistence that ripples outwards like diminished shockwaves from the earlier concussion. But the audible pull toward F suggests that the deep-level dominant is beginning to assert itself once more.
This suspicion is borne out quite audibly when the deep-level top voice of the development, F#5, emerges in measure 188 from where it has been concealed in an inner voice. This reaching-over is immediately preceded by a return of the motivic low trill from the exposition, now elaborating the bass D in measure 186. The trill’s reappearance is perhaps the clearest motivic harbinger of the approaching retransition. The melodic response to the trill is the return of the movement’s main theme, now in D minor and centered around the deep-level top voice F#5. The contrapuntal gravity of the coming head-note D (3) is sensed in the renewed emphasis on the melodic 5 that will, by convention, pass down (through 4, E♭) to the Kopfton at the recapitulation. The fact that all of this happens at once—and is triggered by the return of the motivic trill—contributes strongly to the feeling that retransition is near.

One of the most curious and beautiful moments of this development section grows organically out of this adumbration of V, and yet again delays the arrival of a structural dominant. In measures 192-193 a second trill on the low D does not remain there but instead slides down a major third to B♭, ushering in a one-phrase statement of the main theme in its original key. The use of the trill to fall a major third mirrors the exposition’s similar modulation down from B♭ major to G♭ major (mm. 19-20). This passage indeed sounds reminiscent of that earlier gesture, and it brings about an unexpected warmth.

Schubert’s choice of register and his expressive directions do much to set this passage apart. With the trill that ushers it in, Schubert calls for a decrescendo to ppp at the end of measure 193, the only instance so far of this extreme dynamic. The hush lasts only as long as B♭ major does; a crescendo in measure 198 brings the dynamic back up to p with the return of D minor. The B♭-major melody appears a fourth higher than the
surrounding statements in D minor, ascending into a particularly delicate and porcelain register of the instrument that makes measure 194’s accompaniment in parallel sixths sound as if on a glass harp. Despite this perception of time stood still, Schubert uses the half-diminished six-five chords in measure 196 to harmonize an inner-voice repetition of the motivic G♭-F motion from the exposition, subtly heightening anticipation for the recapitulation.

The B♭ passage evaporates as quickly as it fell, rolling back up the third from B♭ to D in the bass for one more statement of the main theme in D minor. Thus this episode represents an oscillatory progression in the local key of D minor: i-VI-i. This localized third motion is nestled within the larger middleground oscillation, V-iii-V, that spans the entire development section (refer to Figure 2.10). Schubert’s frequent use of such elaborating third-oscillations at different structural levels earlier in the movement provides a strong reason to interpret this luminous crystal of B♭ major as a diminution of the surrounding D minor.

This decision might seem counterintuitive, owing to the tonic harmony of this passage. Although the B♭-major phrase is strongly reminiscent—and prescient—of the deeper-level tonic Stufen, it is nevertheless a diminution of a diminution of the main dominant Stufe; it resides on a more elaborative structural level despite the fact that its diatonic orientation is unequivocally tonic. It is an apparent tonic rather than a structural tonic. Its presence closer to the foreground, however, does not preclude it from making strong associative connections to both the tonic key area and the main theme. In fact, this perception is strengthened by this passage’s location near what other rhetorical cues
suggest is the end of the development. We know that B♭ is to return soon and therefore we are attuned to its quasi-presence here.

Rather than demanding that these prolongational and associative aspects are irreconcilable, I prefer to think that they can be mutually informative. That is, a Schenkerian analysis gives a rigorous account of why this occurrence of B♭ major is not simply an unproblematic anticipation of the recapitulation, but rather a weightless, crystalline, and poignant reference to the more architectural tonic areas of the exposition and recapitulation, why it feels like it ought to feel like a tonal and thematic homecoming, but is instead uneasy and devastatingly lyric. Carl Schachter has described how an apparent tonic such as this B♭ “does not function as a tonic, but, almost like some negative formulations in language, it asserts the existence of that which it is not.”31 It seems to me that this property of “not-being” plays a large part in the remarkable pathos of measures 194-198. It also seems typically Schubertian that this, one of the most affecting moments in the movement, is also among the most harmonically oblique.

The journey towards the structural dominant nearly complete, we emerge from Schubert’s B♭ reverie with the motion back up to D minor in measure 199; indications of the retransition begin to pile up in a kind of dimensional stretto that emphasizes the resurfacing of F as structural harmony and dominant of B♭. The final statement of the theme in D minor pushes forward to the F dominant seventh of measure 203. The dominant sevenths of F frustrated earlier (mm. 178 and 184) are thus vindicated on their third attempt with the appearance of the retransitional dominant seventh in six-five position (m. 203).

Schubert also underlines the presence of the main dominant by placing particular emphasis on the top-voice $\tilde{5}$ — i.e., the voice that reached over at the beginning of the development as E, but still needed to be bent upward to its diatonic form, F—here with an indication of fp (m. 203). That F moves down to E (m. 206) as a passing seventh within the dominant harmony, a salient melodic indicator that F is now firmly situated within a B, diatony (refer to Figure 2.16). Schubert likewise marks the E, fp. Finally, a valedictory cascade across the keyboard brings a return of the motivic trill on G, repeated first in a higher register and then again in its original, lower octave and followed by a rest marked with a fermata. The breakdown of regular metric definition, the return of the motive most strongly associated with the dominant, and the punctuating silences are all further indicators that this development section comes definitively to a close on F as dominant of B,.

2.6: Conclusion

As we have seen earlier, the relationship between the tonic and dominant is the archetypal foundation of a major-mode sonata form in the age of Schubert. My analysis of the exposition and development of Schubert’s last piano sonata has demonstrated that, despite the composer’s harmonic innovations, the piece is tonally coherent in ways that are consistent with traditional sonata forms. My use of Schenkerian techniques should not be mistaken for a desire to “strip away” the characteristic aspects of Schubert’s composition; rather, I find that those techniques provide a sensitive means by which to examine the relationship between sonata convention and compositional logic, between
shared stylistic traits of a repertoire and the particular affective resonances of this piece.\footnote{One ought to remember, that Schenker’s mature theory is unequivocally generative in conception. That is, despite the fact that an analysis must depart to some extent from “the piece itself,” he or she should also keep in mind that the background is a generic abstraction that can be said to unify a certain repertoire and not a reductive goal that need be wrenched out of it.}

Traditional tonal coherence at a deep level can be realized in myriad individual ways.

Schubert imbues this sonata form with a unique sense of drama by withholding the definitive motion to the dominant—the very motion that is necessary to articulate sonata form—well into the exposition. Ironically, he achieves this delay by dwelling on a lower-level dominant whose connection back to the opening tonic expansion creates a appreciable drag on the exposition’s tonal momentum. Once the main V is gained, however, Schubert prolongs it through the development, setting in motion a chromatic-to-diatonic odyssey that eventually points back to the retransitional dominant on the surface. In both the exposition and the development, Schubert’s play about the dominant \textit{Stufe} is most suggestively understood in light of the hallmarks of Viennese sonata tradition: goal-directed motion to the dominant in the exposition, and the reactivation of the dominant in the retransition. Throughout, a Schenkerian analysis is able to comment on the specific voice-leading techniques with which Schubert frames and controls these large-scale harmonic motions.

Neo-Riemannian analyses of D.960 have tended to arrive at vastly different conclusions than my Schenkerian analysis. In particular, Richard Cohn’s article-length study uses transformational networks to construct a tonal narrative almost completely at odds with my own.\footnote{Richard L. Cohn, “‘As Wonderful as Star Clusters: Instruments for Gazing at Tonality in Schubert.” \textit{19th-Century Music} 22/3 (1999): 213-232.} Our differences of opinion, though many, center on the relationship between dominant and tonic that is central to any account of sonata form. As we shall see in Chapter 3, I feel that Schenkerian methods, and my analysis, are significantly more
responsive to the literal surface of the composition and to the tradition in which Schubert composed.
3.1: Introduction

I hope to have demonstrated that the first movement of Schubert’s B♭ Piano Sonata, despite its colorful harmonic excursions, is still based upon the traditional tonic-dominant relationship of eighteenth-century sonata forms. This is should not be taken to imply that Schubert’s kaleidoscopic harmonies are facile or easily explained. Rather, I hope to have shown that it is suggestive to consider his adventures in this particular piece in light of the style in which he composed, a tradition in which arrival on the dominant scale-step of a sonata form is still conferred great structural and dramatic value. Further, by attending to middleground voice leading we can most clearly see how Schubert delays the dominant Stufe, heightening the anticipation for its eventual arrival. Schenkerian analysis is therefore an appropriate and insightful method with which to approach the intricacies of the sonata form Schubert spins out this singular and compelling work. My Schenkerian analysis suggests that Schubert composed in the traditional forms he inherited from Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, but sought subtle—and potentially subversive—ways in which to inflect those paradigms.

It seems to me that historical premises of a quite different kind underpin neo-Riemannian analyses of Schubert. These approaches tend to emphasize Schubert either as
a revolutionary whose assault on the tonal system frequently renders useless traditional modes of analysis, or as a master of harmonic sensuality the delicacy of whose music is largely ignored by the imposition of a Schenkerian middleground. It is my opinion that such portrayals include more than a little of the anachronistic, attributing to Schubert a vision of tonal disunity that distorts the forward-thinking but conventionally grounded nature of his compositions. Such a view demands two drastic stylistic or historic preconceptions: first, that Schubert’s music will appear tonally disunified to Schenkerian analysis, and that middleground contrapuntal relationships will be in disarray; second, that Schubert’s music is in fact subject to a different tonal unity, one that is best exposed with methods whose origin lies in post-tonal set theory.¹

I will begin by giving a short introduction to neo-Riemannian analysis itself, and then briefly address the approach to D.960 taken by David Kopp in his book Chromatic Transformations in Nineteenth-Century Music. Though Kopp’s view is not explicitly neo-Riemannian, it shares a number of assumptions with neo-Riemannian analysis: namely, it questions traditional tonal hierarchy and instead places strong emphasis on the functionality of common-tone derived third relationships. Discussing Kopp’s brief analysis will thus aid in teasing out some typically neo-Riemannian observations concerning Schubert’s Sonata.

The bulk of my critique, however, will be focused on the work of Richard Cohn, specifically his detailed 1999 study of the B♭ Sonata’s first movement.² This analysis, based on Cohn’s neo-Riemannian concept of hexatonic systems, argues that Schubert’s treatment of sonata form is drastically different than suggested in Chapters 1 and 2 of this

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¹ These claims are made explicit in certain neo-Riemannian writings, and I will address them in greater depth later.
² Cohn, “Star Clusters.”
thesis. Instead of discussing it as an essentially traditional form whose unique drama is based on the postponement of conventional harmonic motion, Cohn believes that Schubert’s sonata form is to a large extent tonally disunified when viewed functionally. Instead, he asserts that its middleground harmonies are best described based on the efficiency of their semitonal voice leading. This view demands that the rhetorical sections of sonata form outlined earlier melt into each other in the absence of the traditional tonal articulations. I believe that this approach would inform a bizarre and imbalanced interpretation of this sublime composition.

This chapter is not intended as a generalized attack on neo-Riemannian theory, nor as an *ad hominem* fusillade directed at Richard Cohn. It is motivated by a strong conviction that modern analytical models based on the primacy of the common tone are being forced ever further backward onto historical repertoires—such as Schubert’s—that are better considered using a basically diatonic model such as Schenker’s. The historically and contrapuntally contextual approach to harmony and voice leading afforded by Schenker’s graphic analytical technique seems to me to be particularly well suited to Schubert’s middleground linear connections. For these reasons, I hope that the analysis presented in Chapter 2 will prove to be more musically convincing than those concerned more primarily with finding third relationships.

3.2. Neo-Riemannian Analysis and the Nature of Functional Third Relationships

Neo-Riemannian theory was recently formulated to try to address harmonic relations that were not easily explained in the language of functional tonality. Richard Cohn writes:
Neo-Riemannian theory arose in response to analytical problems posed by chromatic music that is triadic but not altogether tonally unified. Such characteristics are primarily identified with the music of Wagner, Liszt, and subsequent generations, but are also represented by some passages from Mozart, Schubert, and other pre-1850 composers. Because music of this type uses the harmonic structures and, often, the conventional cadences of diatonic tonality, it lures the attentions of analytical models designed for diatonic music. Yet it is also notoriously unresponsive to such attentions.[1]

Thus one of the central assumptions of neo-Riemannian theory in this (inherently historical) formulation is that the approach can be useful and illuminating for examining much of Romantic tonality while more traditional methods cannot. A related—and also historical—conclusion is that Schubert was a harmonic revolutionary not because of his vivid extensions of functional idioms, but because he anticipated a newer, afunctional brand of tonality whose practice came to maturity in the works of Wagner and the secrets of which are best accessed through neo-Riemannian methods.

The name “neo-Riemannian” derives from the theory’s roots in the functional labels—only later reformulated as transformations—of Hugo Riemann’s mature harmonic theories (found in 1893’s Vereinfachte Harmonielehre and the Handbuch der Harmonielehre of 1898).[2] In those publications, Riemann laid out a syntax of tonal harmony in which any chord could be described as a modification of either the tonic (T), subdominant (S), or dominant (D) triads in a given key.[3] Riemann’s volumes promoted a system in which all of chromatic harmony could be heard as overlapping functions generated by different tonics and their associated subdominants and dominants.

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3 Bernstein, 797.
Riemann’s functional labels remain a far cry from modern neo-Riemannian theory, which has its origins more recently in David Lewin’s work from the 1980’s. In his book *Generalized Musical Intervals and Transformations*, Lewin made an important observation about Riemann’s functional labels: they can also be imagined as transformations, “as something one does to a Klang, to obtain another Klang.” For example, in the key of C major Riemann’s theory would label a G-major triad “D,” for its dominant function. Lewin suggests that the label itself, “D,” could just as well be an operation performed on the C-major triad, hence: D(C,+) → (G,+). Lewin postulated a number of transformations inspired by Riemann’s functional labels, such as DOM, SUB, PAR, and MED. More recent works (e.g., Brian Hyer’s 1989 dissertation) brought Lewin’s ideas into closer contact with nineteenth-century German harmonic theories by mapping the transformations onto the Tonnetz, a graphic representation of harmonic relations favored by writers such as Weber and Oettingen.

Although it appears in slightly differently in different sources, the Tonnetz traditionally represents pitches as points on a plane. If the three pitches of a major or

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6 Lewin, *GMIT*, 177.

7 In this discussion, I will follow Lewin in using + and - to denote major and minor, respectively.

8 Though it is not essential to the thrust of this paper, an important distinction should be made concerning the polarity of Lewin’s transformations. They are formulated so as to produce musically intuitive networks. If we were to draw a diagram of a perfect authentic cadence based literally on Riemann’s functional nomenclature, the arrows indicating the function would appear to run opposite to the music’s momentum. That is, if we stipulate that time moves from left to right, and D is the operation we perform on (C+) in order to produce its dominant (G+), then our networked representation of the perfect authentic cadence would appear: (G+) ← D(C+), or “G major is what we get if we ask for the dominant of C major.” Since dominant function is derived from the tonic triad, the direction of our function flows against the temporal flow of the cadence. For this reason, Lewin formulates his similar transformation DOM as “transposition by the inverse of the dominant interval.” Therefore, “we can read this equation as telling us that (p, sign) [i.e., a root and quality] becomes the dominant of (q, sign).” Lewin’s definition of DOM would diagram a perfect authentic cadence with a more understandably oriented arrow: DOM(G,+) → (C, +), or “G major becomes the dominant of C major.” In Lewin’s mind, he resolves a significant weakness in Riemann’s theory, for “his [Riemann’s] dominants...do not point to their tonics via implicit DOM arrows. Rather the tonics point to their dominants, generating them by implicit DOM arrows. Then the dominants just sit around, not going anywhere.” Lewin, 176-177.

9 Cohn, “Introduction,” 172-173.
minor triad are imagined as vertices of an equilateral triangle, each side of the polygon will represent one of the three interval classes (ICs 3, 4, and 5) within the consonant triad (prime form 037). Since each consonant triad shares two pitch classes with exactly three other consonant triads, each side—i.e., interval—of each triangle is also part of another triangle representing a different triad. If this pattern is continued in all directions, three axes will emerge at 60° angles to each other, each one generated one of the three constituent interval classes of the triad.

In addition to reviving the Tonnetz, Hyer’s dissertation also eliminates some of the Lewinian transformations, leaving only the “contextual inversions” PAR, REL, and LT (each of which will map a major triad onto a minor, and vice-versa, hence “inversions”), and the one transposition DOM (which transposes a triad up a perfect fourth). 10 Figure 3.1 shows Hyer’s form of the Tonnetz with arrows depicting how the transformations PAR, REL, DOM, and LT act on a C-minor triad.

One key trait of Hyer’s Tonnetz is that it is conceived under equal temperament, while Oettingen’s and Riemann’s were not. Equal temperament bends the geometry of the Tonnetz back upon itself so that it becomes a hypertorus. 11 Each axis, previously extending into the outermost reaches of just intonation, becomes a closed system of either

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10 PAR maps a triad onto its parallel major/minor, REL onto its relative major/minor, and LT to the major or minor triad from which the original triad is only one semitone removed. For example, LT maps C major onto E minor (the pitch class C moves to B). By removing other transpositions such as SUB and MED, Hyer also brings Lewin’s neo-Riemannian transformations closer to the Schritte-Wechsel system propounded by Oettingen (1866), and in earlier work of Riemann. Cohn, “Introduction,” 172-173.

11 A hypertorus—or sometimes simply a torus—is essentially the geometric ideal of a doughnut. It is what results from “the revolution of a conic, especially a circle, about an exterior line lying in its plane.” Random House Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary (New York: Random House, 1997), 1358. Upon brief reflection, this makes sense. First, imagine the Tonnetz in its usual form, a rectangular field on the page. Now mentally bend the bottom and top edges together so that they connect, closing the cycles of major and minor thirds in that dimension. A cylinder results. Now bend the ends of the cylinder around, closing the cycles of perfect fifths in that dimension: a (hyper)torus results.
perfect fifths, major thirds, or minor thirds.\textsuperscript{12} In Cohn’s words, “such a conception greatly enriches the group structure of the transformations.”\textsuperscript{13}

It is this group structure that becomes the defining feature of Hyer’s analysis of \textit{Tristan und Isolde}, and from it grows the most influential idea of his dissertation: a tonic need not exist for music to be tonally coherent. It is “not just that the tonic is in abeyance, suspended, but that there really is no tonic...We can use the dominant, Leittonswechsel, relative, and the parallel to structure—assign coherence—to the tonal process in the absence of a single ultimate tonic.”\textsuperscript{14} In other words, algebraic group structure can substitute for the presence of a hierarchically elevated tonic.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{Tonnetz_diagram.png}
\caption{Tonnetz with Transformations (Hyer 1989)}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{12} Cohn, “Introduction,” 172.
\textsuperscript{13} Cohn, “Introduction,” 172.
\textsuperscript{14} Hyer, 271.
Hyer’s assertion has inspired much of modern neo-Riemannian theory, and particularly Richard Cohn’s article-length study of D.960 which I will critique later. I am not judging here the appropriateness of Hyer’s claim concerning Act III of Tristan, which after all is an opera, not a sonata, and was written some 28 years later than D.960. The simple fact that it has never been obligatory that an opera begin and end in the same key, for example, should suggest that there are considerable differences in the relationship of harmony and form between the early nineteenth-century Viennese piano sonata and the mid-nineteenth-century Wagnerian music-drama.

The idea that a diffuse and mysterious group structure can substitute for functional tonality highlights certain characteristics of neo-Riemannian theory. First, neo-Riemannian theory—like Schenkerian theory—claims to illuminate the harmonic coherence of a work, even if that coherence is hidden. Second, it is inherently critical of tonal hierarchies and its analyses will thus always differ significantly from a Schenkerian analysis. Finally, neo-Riemannian transformations rely heavily on common tones to produce their underlying group structure (refer to the graphic representation of the transformations on the Tonnetz in Figure 3.1 and note that the triangles related by the transformations often share a side); therefore, neo-Riemannian analysis tends to accord high structural weight to third-related triads.

Although he is not an expressly neo-Riemannian analyst, David Kopp shares many of the methodological concerns of neo-Riemannian analysis. By examining Kopp’s analysis of a passage from the B♭ Sonata, we can begin to see what problems neo-Riemannian methods pose for the understanding of Schubertian sonata rhetoric developed in Chapter 1, and also how those problems are directly related to neo-Riemannian
theory’s implicit critique of Schenker. Kopp addresses the B♭ Sonata in the context of his case for “functional third relations.”\textsuperscript{15} By “functional,” he means that their role is not limited to elaborations of more conventional—that is, fifth-related—harmonies. He also asserts that, in the music of Schubert, those functional third relations are within “the sphere of normative harmonic practice.”\textsuperscript{16}

Since Kopp’s method emphasizes the structural aspect of third relations, it shares certain conceptions with neo-Riemannian analysis, namely a rejection of functional hierarchy and an emphasis on common-tone relations in place of structural counterpoint. The passage Kopp discusses is the B section (mm. 19-35) of the tripartite tonic key area. Recall that this passage begins with a common-tone modulation from B♭ major to G♭ major (m. 19), and ends when the latter triad is transformed into an augmented-sixth chord, ushering in a return of the home key, B♭.(m. 35).

Kopp makes several claims about what he believes traditional analysis—including Schenkerian analysis—fails to grasp in this passage compared with his approach based on functional third relations. First, Kopp argues that traditional analytical methods do not do justice to the individuality of the G♭-major section. Instead, since a Schenkerian approach views this particular ♭VI as an upper neighbor to V, it “obviat[es] any need to explain it as a triad in its own right.”\textsuperscript{17} The object of his critique, then, is the hierarchy of scale-steps in Schenker’s theory that is ultimately derived from “the chord of nature.”\textsuperscript{18} Based on this passage from the Schubert Piano Sonata, Kopp suggests that a line- or Stufe-derived theory automatically denies the “sensuous” aspect of the move to G♭ because it considers

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\textsuperscript{16} Kopp, 18.
\textsuperscript{17} Kopp, 29.
\textsuperscript{18} Schenker, 10.
\( \upsilon \text{VI} \) to be dissonant with the fundamental structure, and hierarchically dependent on the dominant.¹⁹

This assertion parallels the neo-Riemannian claim that Schubert’s music resists Schenkerian readings because it frequently strays beyond the realm of functional harmony. Kopp invokes two earlier examples—the songs *Der Musensohn* and *Die Sterne*—as evidence that in Schubert’s music, \( \upsilon \text{VI} \) can resolve to I as readily as it does to V.²⁰ Correspondingly, he argues that it is most faithful to the music to describe the Sonata’s G₆-major section as a functional lower flat mediant (“LFM”) to the tonic.²¹ As such, it has no particular harmonic implications one way or the other. It is simply valid for its “calm sweetness” rather than because of any imagined relationship with the dominant.²²

Kopp’s insistence upon appreciating G₆ for nothing other than its unique sonority calls to mind avant-garde philosophies of music from the 1960’s: “Ideally, it is possible to elude the interpreters in another way, by making works of art whose surface is so unified and clean... whose address is so direct that the work can be... just what it is.”²³ The vocabulary of the functional third relation is thus held up as not just analytically preferable, but somehow liberating as well, confounding those who would dogmatically over-interpret with tonal hierarchies and linear connections. His argument also shares in the neo-Riemannian tendency to dwell upon the supposedly revolutionary aspects of a

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¹⁹ Kopp, 29-30.
²⁰ In both of these songs, major triads related by major third are juxtaposed with no intervening material. Although there is not the time nor the space to do so here, my suspicion is that a survey of Schubert’s music would still find that 80%-90% of middleground \( \upsilon \text{VI} \) Stufen resolve to the more standard dominant instead of the tonic.
²¹ Kopp, 30.
²² Kopp, 30.
composer’s style. Regarding the “logic” of a Schenkerian interpretation, Kopp writes, “it was just such a logic that Schubert was, I believe, aiming to transcend.”

But the validity of G♭’s warmth in this situation is simply not an issue; affective worth need not depend on a relationship to the dominant, nor a lack thereof. Other critics might choose a different turn of phrase than Kopp’s “calm sweetness,” but that has little to do with G♭’s contextual function. Although labeling G♭ major as the LFM might imagine that triad as existing independently of the dominant, the label seems listless and indeterminate; it describes the content of the tonal region but little else. Further, a Schenkerian reading does not strive to invalidate Kopp’s terminology. All it says is that here, in this piece, ♭VI happens to be acting as an upper neighbor to V. Most importantly, in D.960, Schubert is working in an entirely different idiom from the songs Kopp cites: sonata form. As I have shown in Chapter 2, this particular sonata form exhibits strong emphasis on the tonic-dominant relationship, a trait which is highlighted by an analysis that attends closely to voice leading.

Kopp avoids discussing the strong relationship of G♭ to the dominant F in part by limiting his analysis to measures 1-39. Measure 39 is the moment at which the bass F briefly resolves up to B♭ before it immediately pushes back down again to F. By cutting the analysis off with the resolution to B♭, Kopp implies that even though the ♭VI eventually resolves in the conventional fashion (i.e., down to V), it is still part of a larger I–♭VI–I key progression controlled by the fully functional status of G♭ major. In contrast, I hope to have emphasized with my Schenkerian analysis that, despite the clear presence of B♭ as key in measure 35, the scale-step present is in fact V, represented by a the

24 Kopp, 30.
25 It might be argued that using the label “lower flat mediant” makes ♭VI unnecessarily dependent on the tonic.
pitches of the B₃ triad in six-four position (see Figure 2.5). Kopp’s choice to limit his
discussion to measures 1-39 is also typical of neo-Riemannian analyses, which have
traditionally relied on short excerpts to justify their claims. This tendency contrasts with
that of Schenkerian analysis, which by its nature strives to embrace the whole of a
composition.

It seems to me that another of the primary problems with Kopp’s analysis is
shared with neo-Riemannian analyses: it suggests a sweeping rejection of hierarchy. The
labels Kopp proposes for his functional third relations remove qualifications of
consonance and dissonance from third-related *Stufen* , but fail to propose some kind of
animating function in their place. They seem static, merely descriptive, and most of all
unnecessary to their stated goal. We can full well appreciate the sensuousness of G₃
major without eliminating the structural primacy of the tonic and dominant from our
understanding of a sonata form written in 1828. To assert otherwise, as Kopp does, is also
to argue that Schenker’s theory must hold that all non-harmonic tones—all
appoggiaturas, suspensions—are without expressive significance because they are
considered to be structurally auxiliary. Of course that would be absurd, and clearly
contrary both to Schenker’s writings and those who have been influenced by his ideas. To
me, the tension in this passage lies between the sonorous and affective languor of the G₃-
major section and its conventional role as upper neighbor to the dominant six-four of
measure 36. That perception is heightened by the expectations created by experiencing
dozens of Schubertian and pre-Schubertian sonata forms.

A second claim of Kopp’s analysis is that appreciation of the melodic common
tone B₃ between B₃ major and G₃ major is “lost in the conventional approach.” Kopp, 31.

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parallels the neo-Riemannian principle that functional relations are a product of efficient voice leading; i.e., the greater the number of common tones between triads, the closer their harmonic relationship. Kopp reminds us that the changing role of the B♭ is an important part of our perception of these first 39 measures, demonstrating that it begins “as root of tonic B♭ major, it changes to consonant third of G♭ major, then to member of a dissonant tritone in a German-sixth chord, next to dissonant fourth in a cadential [six-four], momentarily resolving to A, ultimately reemerging as the tonic pitch at m. 39” (Figure 3.2). I agree completely with that assertion, but maintain that a Schenkerian approach attends to that as well, and with more rigor.

Take, for example, the fact that the melody in the G♭-major section begins in a very similar tessitura to the movement’s opening phrase. Both phrases begin on B♭, fall a step to some kind of A, return to the original pitch, then pass upwards through a type of C to some inflection of D. More gracefully put, the opening melody is transformed tonally to conform to the G♭-major scale. Simply pointing out the B♭ common tone, however, is to privilege that aspect of the voice leading over others that exist in relation to the common tone. For example, it ignores the chromatic transformation of D♭ (♭3) from the opening period to D♭ (♯3) in measures 18-35 and then back to D♭ again, as well as the fact that this motion occurs above the B♭ common tone. Thus, although Kopp is correct to point out the unifying thread of B♭A and its changing role, there are other dramatic

27 Kopp, 31.

28 Schubert’s earliest sketches for the B♭ Sonata show an even closer relationship between the melodies of measure 1 and measure 20. In measure 20, he originally wrote: B♭-B♭-A♭-B♭-C♭-D♭, thus preserving the B♭-A♭-B♭ neighbor motion of measure 1 as well as foreshadowing the minor form of the submediant that becomes so important to the purple patch (imagine A♭ as B♭). Franz Schubert, Drei große Sonaten für das Pianoforte, D. 958, D. 959, und D. (early versions), facs. from the autographs in the Wiener Stadt- und Landesbibliothek (Tutzing, 1987), III, 1.

29 A Schenkerian graph can also track the artful scale-degree inversion that Schubert achieves between the opening and the passage in measure 20. At the outset of the movement, the melody 1-♭7-1-♭2-♭3 is paralleled a sixth below by ♮3-♭2-♭3-♭4-♭5. The situation is quite audibly reversed at measure 20 (thanks to Prof. Roman Ivanovitch for pointing this out to me).
aspects of voice leading that go ignored when the literal relationships between voices are not engaged analytically, as they are with a Schenkerian analysis.

This tendency towards radical abstraction as the basis for analysis is exhibited much more dramatically in Richard Cohn’s neo-Riemannian account of this piece. Analytic approaches whose mechanisms are animated solely by pitch content have little reason to identify any aspects of the music beyond that very pitch content. But as we have seen in Chapter 2, the voice leading context of a middleground harmony can lead to different interpretations of its function, despite its pitch-class content.\(^\text{30}\) This possibility for multiple meanings is one of the most powerful flexibilities of the tonal system and can be of great importance to an understanding of a sonata form.

\(^{30}\)This best example of this from Chapter 2 is the fully-diminished seventh chord containing B\(_5\), D, F, and A\(_5\). First it appears as a prolongation of the unstable dominant six-four, later as a contrapuntally activated and chromaticized prolongation of the tonic triad itself.
3.3. A Brief Introduction to Hexatonic Systems

One major event in recent neo-Riemannian analysis has been the formulation of “maximally smooth” hexatonic cycles by Richard Cohn. The hexatonic cycles are closed systems of six triads which can circulate indefinitely merely by changing one pitch class by semitone. The algebra behind such a group is very straightforward, and its application to triadic progressions is easily grasped simply by examining the following example of a complete hexatonic cycle (Figure 3.3). Each hexatonic system thus uses exactly six pitch classes and includes three major and three minor triads. Because there are twenty-four major and minor triads under equal temperament, there are four hexatonic cycles which together are termed the hyper-hexatonic system (Figure 3.4).

Although neo-Riemannian analysis is typically anti-hierarchical, the fourfold partitioning of the twenty-four major and minor triads reveals closer relationships between some cycles than others. The cycles which are shown to be adjacent in Figure 3.4 each share three pitch classes, while those that are opposite share none. Further, since each cycle of six triads uses exactly six pitch-classes, the opposite systems combine to make an aggregate.

Figure 3.3: Circulation of hexatonic system in Brahms, *Double Concerto*, (Cohn 1996)

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Figure 3.4: The Hyper-Hexatonic System (Cohn 1996)
There is no doubt that the concept of the hexatonic system formalizes in algebraic
terms some of the most powerful cyclic possibilities of the consonant triad in Romantic
harmony. Cohn provides a number of short passages from the works of Wagner, Liszt,
and Franck in which the properties he describes are clearly exploited by the composer.
Taken on their own, however, many of these short examples seem atomistic or isolated.
The question remains whether or not these maximally smooth cycles will prove to be
equally suggestive when read into an entire sonata-form movement from earlier in the
Nineteenth century, the first movement of Schubert’s D.960.

3.4. Cohn’s Telescope Considered

In his 1999 article “As Wonderful as Star Clusters: Instruments for Gazing at
Tonality in Schubert,” Richard Cohn presents a harmonic narrative for the B, Sonata far
removed from the reading given in Chapter 2 of this paper. Basing his analysis on his
neo-Riemannian concept of hexatonic systems, Cohn diverges most significantly from
my view concerning precisely the points at which sonata form is most decisively
articulated: namely, the exposition’s motion from tonic to dominant, and the
development’s return to a clear retransitional dominant before the recapitulation. In both
situations, Cohn sees the middleground harmonies as controlled by hexatonic cycles. It
seems to me, however, that this view has profound implications not just for the
functionality of the harmony (which Cohn addresses) but for also the movement’s status
as an example of sonata form (which he does not).

At the beginning of the article, Cohn makes clear the radical historical project of
his neo-Riemannian analysis, suggesting that “the standard approach to Schubertian
harmony emphasizes, perhaps by default, those features that it holds in common with its eighteenth-century precedents,” while neo-Riemannian analysis does not.33 Nevertheless, Cohn is forced to acknowledge the undeniable residual power of the tonic-dominant relationship, and accounts for this by “superimposing them [the cycles] so that modally matched fifth-related harmonies are aligned.”34 In other words, the entire cycle which includes the B♭-major triad (the Southern) and the entire cycle which includes the F-major triad (the Eastern) are posited to exhibit some vestiges of the tonic-dominant relationship. Thus the hexatonic analysis of the exposition—like the Schenkerian—looks to locate areas of tonic and dominant prolongation and understand the nature of the transitional material between.

The most central difference between Cohn’s hexatonic reading and my Schenkerian one is that he places definitive motion to the dominant much earlier, in measure 58 rather than measure 80. His decision hinges on the fact that A major—the tonicized triad in the cadence of measure 58—falls within the Eastern hexatonic system of the dominant F, rather than the Southern of the tonic B♭ (the cycles are seen earlier, in Figure 3.4). However, it seems to me that this decision owes more to privileging what is consonant with the mathematics of the hyper-hexatonic system rather than paying attention to Schubert’s articulation of sonata conventions; the latter makes central the withholding of the dominant until the last minute.

Perhaps this difference between Cohn’s and my approaches to the exposition is best illustrated by his appraisal of the opening 48 bars: “The music that precedes the arrival of F♯ minor at m. 48 is prolongationally stable, adhering to the A B A model

33 Cohn, “Star Clusters,” 213. This is not untrue. In this paper I have certainly dwelled upon points of contact between D.960 and eighteenth-century music.
34 Cohn, “Star Clusters,” 217.
identified by Salzer as characteristic of Schubertian first themes." Cohn’s assertion of an unproblematic tonal unity until measure 48 must derive from his theory of hexatonic systems itself rather than from Schubert’s treatment of sonata form. In other words, according to Cohn’s theory, there exists “functional equivalence between harmonies whose roots are related by a major third.” The articulation of B♭-major, G♭-major, and F♯-minor tonal centers, then, constitutes only a straightforward circulation of the Southern hexatonic system and does not impede our perception of tonic control.

However, as I have asserted in the previous chapters, the opening 47 measures are anything but prolongationally stable, and neither is their tripartite, ABA construction straightforward. I agree that the first 44 measures—up until the thwarted full close on B♭—are a convincing expression of B♭ major as a key, and that they thus fulfill the role of an opening tonic expansion in the sonata form. But in prolongational terms, the opening 47 measures are deeply unstable. Recall that the ABA form is harmonically skewed so that the dominant—which might more typically underpin the B section—strangely arrives with the return of the A section. The reprise thus composes out a contrapuntally unsteady dominant six-four sonority (see Figure 2.5). Furthermore, that dominant is left unresolved by the collapse into the diminished-seventh chord at measure 45. The first 45 measures of the movement, then, constitute a harmonically incomplete play at a ternary (or even rounded binary!) form in which the main dominant is left—literally—suspended in midair before pushing onwards to a neighboring Stufe on F♯/G♭ (mm. 48-70).

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35 Cohn “Star Clusters,” 221.
36 Cohn “Star Clusters,” 219n.
37 Strictly speaking, that tonic control is the control of the Southern hexatonic system, but practically Cohn takes that system to represent the tonic because it includes the major and minor triads built on B♭.
The differences between Cohn’s point of view and mine clearly have profound implications for understanding the first half of the exposition. Both views hold that, at least as far as measure 48, there is some kind of connection to the movement’s governing B⁷ harmony. In Cohn’s neo-Riemannian analysis, all harmonic motion before measure 48 remains within the Southern hexatonic system; in my Schenkerian analysis, the F♯ minor of measure 48 is an upper neighbor to a middleground dominant Stufe that is itself an unresolved upper fifth of the overriding tonic.

The backward connection in the Schenkerian analysis seems to me to be more dynamic and explicitly contextual than the purely associational connection in Cohn’s hexatonic analysis. In the latter, the exposition is still clearly in the tonic region—essentially where it began—at measure 48. In the former, although F♯ minor is still conceived in relation to the opening tonic, it is dissonant, unsettled; it wants to move back down to revisit the unfinished business of the binary form’s unresolved dominant Stufe. In this sense, a Schenkerian understanding of the cadence in F♯ minor (m. 48) possesses great potential energy and a restlessness characteristic of the transitional music between the tonic and dominant pillars of sonata forms.

Having used the opening 48 measures to establish some fundamental differences between the neo-Riemannian approach and my own, let us continue by comparing more closely the hexatonic analysis of the famous “purple patch” with my Schenkerian analysis. Both analyses agree that somewhere a large-scale motion from tonic to dominant occurs, but they disagree significantly on where, a consideration that greatly influences interpretation of the sonata form. In comparing the two, it will be useful to refer to Figure 3.5, Cohn’s précis of “the most significant harmonic events that connect
To Cohn’s credit, his neo-Riemannian analysis does not jump to its conclusions. Rather, he carefully considers the location of the motion to the dominant, proposing several hypotheses before deciding on measure 58. The difficult question from the neo-Riemannian perspective is whether the cadence on A major at measure 58 indicates the permanent ascendancy of the Eastern (or dominant) hexatonic cycle, or if the feint towards D minor in measure 68 and brief nod to B♭ major in measures 70-71 prove that the Southern (or tonic) cycle is still prolonged at that later point. Cohn eventually decides that there is a “single continuous gesture” from A major (m. 58) to F major (m. 80) within which the D-minor and B♭-major triads (of mm. 68 and 70 respectively) are not “targeted for a strong cadential gesture or accented by any rhetorical or agogic means.”

To counter Cohn, one could point out the crescendo in measure 70, or the marked attainment of the highest pitch of the movement so far (B♭6, in m. 70). Further, attention to outer-voice counterpoint shows the long-awaited bass motion back down to F♮, also in measure 70.

In addition to underplaying the quiet but long-awaited bass resolution of measure 70, it seems to me that Cohn’s ascription of dominant-cycle status to measures 58–74

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38 Cohn, “Star Clusters,” 220.
relies on a problematic reading of an A-major/minor prolongation in those bars. But as I have shown in Chapter 2, this is music of great harmonic multivalence. I presume that Cohn bases his assertion of an A-major prolongation throughout this passage on measures such as 59, 63, and 67, all of which contain at least one beat of a root-position A-major triad. To be fair, I must note that Cohn’s view is not controversial; rather, it is the conventional wisdom about this passage that it begins in F minor, moves to A major, and finally to the large-scale dominant, F. Even from a Schenkerian perspective, Harald Krebs sees the same motion: “the basic progression here is, then, \( \text{vi}^\flat - \text{VII}^\natural - \text{V} \).”\(^40\) And this is indeed the case if one takes the contrapuntal structure to be dictated only by which root-position triads are tonicized in most recent memory.

However, as described earlier, I believe that the consonant, root-position A-major triads between measures 59 and 67 are more accurately described as passing in function, i.e., as byproducts of voice-leading that prolongs an overriding fully diminished seventh-chord. In the parlance of traditional Schenkerian analysis, the A-major triads of this passage might even be termed “apparent” or “illusory.” Though I am not opposed to such terms, I hesitate to downplay the acoustic strength of these five-three chords here; their surprising consonance leaps out of the arpeggiated texture and seizes the ear. Nevertheless, it is paramount to view them in terms of their voice-leading context rather than to rush to ascribe to them structural status owing simply to their momentary consonance and the relatively recent cadence on A (m. 58). The strong and clear implication of the key B minor through its dominant seventh in measures 61-62 and 65-66 also undermines any claim to an unproblematic prolongation of A in this passage.

\(^40\) Krebs, 103. Krebs, of course, still draws a larger connection between \( \text{vi}^\flat \) and V, but does not trace the constant bass presence on F\#/G\# in this passage.
Attention to voice leading demonstrates that the center of gravity in the bass remains F— the same F which was previously emphasized by the appearance of F minor in m. 48 (this analysis is summarized in Figure 2.6).

One common criticism of Schenkerian theory is that it supposedly forces abstract ideals of consonance and dissonance onto complex compositions. But it seems to me that in a passage such as this one, it is the neo-Riemannian perspective that hastens to privilege root-position, consonant triads. Here, the Schenkerian perspective is best able to highlight the tonal ambiguity in this music, and instead proposes that it is voice leading which renders the passage coherent.

One more key disagreement between Cohn’s analysis and mine leads him to show the continued presence of A major/minor until measure 74. As seen in Example 3.5, Cohn shows a motion from a root-position E-major triad to an A-minor six-three chord between measures 73 and 74; such a root motion would presumably be a convincing indicator of a local A tonic. At first glance, the notes bear his argument out: the pitches on beat three of measure 73 are E, G, and B, and those on the downbeat of measure 74 are A and C, all of which could be conceived as motion from V to I in A minor.

However, the remainder of measures 74-78 make it clear that this “A minor” is in fact a cadential dominant in the key of F major: the very V/V we have awaited, but not been granted, for so long. Cohn is cognizant of the immediate reversal of his view here; he
describes the chord as a “presumed but overridden A minor.” One wonders why Cohn presumes that the “A minor” hearing to be structural here—if he agrees that merely two beats later the chord turns out not to be A minor—unless it is to demonstrate the firm preexisting grip of the dominant hexatonic cycle.\footnote{Cohn, “Star Clusters,” 222. Nicholas Temperley discusses Schubert’s use of this “eight-six” chord in a number of other works, and argues convincingly that it should not be subsumed under the rubric of the six-four chord and qualified as incomplete. He asserts that its unique intervallic disposition and lack of a tonic pitch lend to it an affective quality which is unique to Romantic music and should not be ignored. By claiming here that it is definitively not A minor, I am not contradicting Temperley’s plea; he is careful to call it an “eight-six chord on the dominant” [italics mine].” Nicholas Temperley, “Schubert and Beethoven’s Eight-Six Chord,” Nineteenth-Century Music 5/2 (1981), 146. My point is not that it is a six-four without the four, but rather that for a variety of reasons it is instantly apprehended as a cadential six-four of F instead of a an incomplete A-minor six-three.}

Given Schubert’s frequent use of passing five-three chords earlier in this section, I think it is reasonable to view the E-major triad on beat three of measure 73 as passing as well. It is analogous to the earlier A-major triads, but transposed down a perfect fourth.\footnote{That is, since Cohn is not formulating a purely phenomenal analysis but rather a traditional “bird’s-eye view,” it seems illogical that here he would indicate as structural a “harmony” which he admits turns out to be fictitious. A similar question might be asked of his interpretation of measure 70 as D minor becoming B major.}

Just as it was in measure 69, a diminished-seventh sonority—now F-A♭-B-D—is being prolonged here.\footnote{Out of fairness to Cohn, I must note that his analysis is consistent. He considers measure 69, beat 3 to be a stable A-major triad just as he considers measure 73, beat 3 to be a stable E-major triad.}

This reading eliminates the emphasis Cohn’s neo-Riemannian analysis places on the E-major triad (m. 73, b. 3; see also Figure 3.5) in favor of closer attention to outer-voice counterpoint. That is, in measure 70 the F♯ bass that is composed out in the purple patch finally moves back down to the F that was left off in measure 45, completing the parenthetical insertion that was discussed in Chapter 2. But then the bass passes down again—by way of the E-major triad—to C in measure 74 (refer to Figure 2.6). This motion attains the long-awaited II♭ harmony that heralds the arrival of a stable...
secondary key area. Further, it is at the last moment of this passing motion—where the
bass moves F-E-D in measure 73—that the surface realization of the deep-level
chromatic voice exchange occurs (see Figure 2.2). It is manifest in the first-inversion
diminished-seventh on D on the last beat of measure 73, a fulcrum-like moment in which
backward-looking tension is transformed into forward momentum towards the rhetorical
\( \text{II}^5 \) harmony that directs the exposition to F major.

The interpretive tension between the hexatonic analysis and mine thus boils down
to one fundamental difference: the neo-Riemannian analysis describes sonata rhetoric
that—revolutionarily on Schubert’s part—is blurred by the premature but concealed
arrival of a structural harmony. According to the hexatonic analysis, the main dominant is
in control by measure 58, though it is not revealed literally until measure 75, a process
which constitutes an assault on the sonata traditions received from the Eighteenth
Century. In contrast, my Schenkerian analysis asserts that Schubert’s trademark inflection
of sonata form is to withhold motion to the dominant, but to mask that delay with
arresting lyricism, harmonic ambiguity, and static passages until structural counterpoint
quietly opens the way forward.

Given this contrast, the other point at which one would expect the hexatonic and
Schenkerian analyses to diverge significantly is the approach to the recapitulation. This is
in fact the case. Once again, Cohn’s neo-Riemannian analysis argues that the key
structural harmony of the recapitulation—the tonic B, major as represented by its
hexatonic cycle—arrives well before the moment most traditional analysis would call the
reprise (i.e., measure 215). My Schenkerian analysis asserts that Schubert specifically
highlights the absence of a structural tonic until measure 215 by means of delicate middleground counterpoint.

The central episode in Cohn’s—and also my own—analysis of the development and retransition is the extended passage in D minor of measures 173-202, music which has frequently been the focus of commentary on D.960. From the hexatonic point of view, the arrival in D minor represents a return to the tonic (or “Southern”) hexatonic cycle and hence stands in for the recapitulatory tonic. The importance of this music is indeed made clear by the force with which it bursts upon the scene. In Cohn’s appraisal, however, this is “so thunderous that it siphons off the rhetorical weight conventionally bestowed on the return of B♭ major at the opening of the recapitulation.”

The vigor accorded the arrival in D minor indeed contrasts with the more restrained treatment of the V in measure 203, which Cohn finds to be “opiated and spineless.” Nevertheless, the V Cohn seeks to downplay is anything but brief: it is drawn out for thirteen measures. Its dominant status is also highlighted by a the prominent melodic role of the chord seventh (E♭, in mm. 206 and 208), a valedictory cascade across the registers of the piano (mm. 210-211), two dramatic occurrences of the motivic trill on G♭ as upper neighbor to F (mm. 212-213 and 214-215), and a grand pause (215).

Cohn’s unwillingness to consider these measures at length suggests that they simply do not fit into the algebra of the hyper-hexatonic hypothesis. In the neo-Riemannian reading, the powerful arrival of D minor in measure 173—and the brief oasis of B♭ major nestled within it—provide satisfactory tonal closure to the development and

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45 Cohn, “Star Clusters,” 226.
46 Cohn, “Star Clusters,” 226.
counter any claims to structural status by the more conventionally retransitional dominant beginning in measure 203. Cohn’s assertion echoes what Charles Rosen has rather more poetically said of measure 203: “it prepares for something which is already there.”

What Cohn proposes—direct recapitulatory motion from a tonic-equivalent iii to I itself without recourse to a structural dominant—bears a striking resemblance to techniques which have been recognized in the music of other composers. In fact, the structural juxtaposition of third-related triads seems to have existed nearly as long as common-practice tonality itself. A brief examination of several other works will help clarify the contexts in which such events arose, as well as to evaluate the B♭ sonata in relationship to earlier and later compositions which exhibit similar characteristics. Are such relations—as Cohn seems to imply—inherently destructive of tonality? Is the recapitulation of D.960 even a convincing example of directly contrasted third-related harmonies?

David Beach has traced Mozart’s use of III♭ as the goal of development sections in a number of works for piano, showing that in many instances the retransitional dominant is either “passing or missing entirely.” In contrast to the neo-Riemannian interpretation, Beach views the mediant triad as dividing the space of a fifth between the dominant that ends the exposition and the tonic that begins the recapitulation: the structural harmonies of the sonata form remain I and V. That being said, the marked interpolation of III♭ between the two will necessarily transform our perception of the moment of recapitulation. The normal rhetorical force of the recapitulation is elided since

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47 Rosen, Sonata Forms, 362.
it contains a smoothing common tone and is not prepared by the archetypal—and tension-building—standing on the dominant.

A good example of how extraordinary a III♯–I recapitulation can sound is found in the first movement of Beethoven’s Violin Sonata in F Major, Op. 24 (“Spring”). The uniquely understated quality of the recapitulation is anticipated by the startling motion to III♯ at the beginning of the development. Here, Beethoven moves from the V7 in the home key of F that prepares the repeat of the exposition directly to III♯ in first inversion (m. 86). The local voice leading mimics a deceptive resolution of the V7 chord: the bass C moves up to C♯ (D♭) while the chord seventh (B♭) resolves down to A. That A-major triad is revisited towards the end of the development as dominant of D minor (m. 116), though it is the A that is the main Stufe (see sketch in Figure 3.6). Beethoven then isolates the pitch A in both instruments in order to make a common-tone modulation back to F major for the recapitulation (m. 124). The harmonic elision is made all the more beautiful here by the prominence of the common tone—A—as the first melodic tone of the recapitulation.

Unlike the Schubert passage in question, in which the emphasis late in the development falls on iii, the Beethoven sonata and others of its kind typically use the chromatically altered III♯ chord as the divider between V and I. One easily recognizable difference between the two types of mediants is that III♯ typically appears as V/vi, since the submediant key is frequently a goal for the development of sonata forms. The

Figure 3.6: middleground sketch of development section. Beethoven, Op. 24, I.
diatonic iii, however, is not directed toward a more conventional key, and would therefore be more difficult to explain.

An example that comes closer to Cohn’s ideal of structural iii–I motion—albeit more at the phrase level—is found in Brahms’s F-major Romanze, Op. 118 No. 5, sketched in Figures 3.7a and 3.7b. This movement’s A section is a set of variations over a tonally open ground bass. The eight-measure harmonic pattern groups into two four-bar phrases, an antecedent and a consequent. The antecedent begins with a sequence in descending thirds, and ends with a half cadence on V in measure 4. Its parallel consequent responds by tonicizing vi (D minor, m.7), and concludes with a half cadence in that key, i.e, on III# (A major, m. 8), before the next (antecedent) phrase begins anew on I (F). While the antecedent phrase can therefore be considered a typical interruption of 3–2 over I–V, the consequent unfolds a much blurrier harmonic motion, 3 over I–III#. Of particular interest is the way in which III# seems to “melt back into” F for the beginning of the next variation.50

In part this is because of the lack of a structural dominant in the consequent. The III# that is the phrase’s goal therefore cannot be part of an arpeggiation down from a deeper-level dominant as we saw in the Beethoven example. But the elision is even further heightened when Brahms briefly changes III# to the diatonic iii chord, lowering C# to C (third half note of m.8). The move takes what is already a fuzzy exploitation of common-tone harmony—the return to F in measure 9 is very different than if it had been prepared by another half cadence on C!—and unfolds the voice leading even more incrementally. In this example, Cohn’s hexatonic rubric could explain very well why

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50 Kevin Korsyn, “Towards a New Poetics of Musical Influence,” *Music Analysis* 10/1-2 (1991), 40. Although my analysis was essentially finished before I consulted Korsyn’s article, my use of upper beams to show the descending thirds sequence is borrowed from his graphs.
Figure 3.7a. Voice-leading sketch, first two phrases of Brahms, Op. 118, No. 5

Figure 3.7b. Same phrases, middleground
Brahms is able to blur the $III^\sharp$–I elision even further: Brahms uses the maximally smooth voice leading available to him through the interpolation of the diatonic iii chord. Nevertheless, I think it would be a mistake not to avail ourselves of the insights which are available by attention to literal voice leading in addition to the more abstract counting of semitonal difference in pitch-class content that the hyper-hexatonic system formalizes. In the case of the Brahms Romanze, Schenkerian analysis helps us see how the harmonic implications of the interrupted antecedent are not realized by the consequent. Although the consequent again takes up the head note A (3) no melodic linear progression is thwarted: the structural top voice remains on A throughout the phrase. Furthermore, the third relationship of $III^\sharp$ with the overall F tonic is less contrapuntally active than the fifth relationship made by the C dominant in at the end of the antecedent.

The half-cadential feel on the downbeat of measure 8 also suggests that, despite the interest in Brahms’s $III^\sharp$–iii motion, the $III^\sharp$ remains the more structural of the two chords. It is the dominant of D minor that is the goal of the phrase, and the C\#$ appears as an anticipation, briefly producing the diatonic iii chord in measure 8. This suggests that the C\#$ enters as a lower-level diminution, and that the iii chord therefore elaborates the more structural $III^\sharp$. So, even though there is an audible iii–I motion between measures 8 and 9 of the Romanze, it is still not analogous to the structural mediant-tonic motion Cohn asserts at the recapitulation of D.960.

The first movement of Jan Dussek’s Sonata in D Major, Op. 9, No.3 is an example of a sonata form which weds the collapse from $III^\sharp$ to iii seen in the Brahms excerpt to the potential for $III^\sharp$–I recapitulation realized in the Beethoven work. Like the
Beethoven, the development section of this composition arpeggiates downward from the dominant (A major) through the mediant (F♯ major as dominant of an elusive B minor) to the tonic at the recapitulation.\(^\text{51}\) Although there is a surface-level cadential formula in D immediately preceding the moment of recapitulation, this is so brief—one offhand measure compared to nine on F♯—that we are justified in saying it elaborates a more fundamental A–F♯–D bass motion spanning the development (Figure 3.8).

After elaborating the III♯ with neighboring six-four motion for six measures (mm. 81-86), the music lands on a fortissimo F♯-major triad (m. 87) and holds it for two measures before mysteriously falling to pianissimo as that F♯ major is transformed to F♯ minor (m. 89), now marked dolce. Although the overarching progression of the development remains V–III♯–I, the somewhat anticlimactic moment of III♯–I elision is further smoothed over by the surprising and expressive collapse to the diatonic iii chord just before the recapitulation. III♯’s implications as V/vi are neutralized with the metamorphosis to iii, leaving us with only the larger contrapuntal function of the chord—as a fifth-divider between V and I—to hang our hats on.

Cohn’s proposition of tonic arrival by proxy in measure 173 of the Schubert Sonata, however, is clearly different than any of the above situations, and at odds with the Schenkerian analysis proposed in Chapter 2. My Schenkerian reading holds that, while the pitch content of the D-minor and B♯-major music is obviously closely related to that of the expected structural tonic of a recapitulation, it is beautiful precisely because it is not a deep-level tonic but rather a multilayered elaboration of the dominant scale-step that last appeared literally at the end of the exposition. The impending return of that same

\(^{51}\) For another example similar to the Dussek, see the first movement of Ignaz Pleyel’s String Quartet in A major, Op. 2 No. 1.
Figure 3.8: Voice-leading sketch, development section of Dussek, Op. 9 No. 3, I
dominant as a surface entity is foreshadowed by aspects of voice leading and motive such as the reemergence of $\tilde{s}$ (F) as the salient top-voice pitch in measure 188 and the reiterations of the dominant-defining G$^\flat$-F neighbor in measures 206-215. There is, simply put, a tangible difference between the tossed-off quality of the one-measure ii-V-I auxiliary cadence found in the Dussek Sonata and the drawn out, thirteen-measure (203-215), motivically emphasized, and rest-punctuated dominant prolongation in the Schubert Sonata. Cohn’s unwillingness to ascribe structural status to that dominant simply because it isn’t as loud as the earlier D-minor music thus misses one of Schubert’s characteristic understatements.

3.5: Conclusion

I have argued that Schubert’s instrumental music is best considered in relation to the eighteenth-century Viennese archetypes he inherited from Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, and that some of the richest appreciation of his individual voice is possible when he is not removed from his historical context. Further, I believe that Schenkerian analysis is a useful method with which to consider Schubert’s inflections of traditional sonata form. This assertion is borne out by the processes I highlighted in my analysis of key passages from the B$^\flat$ Piano Sonata. Along the way, I have been antagonistic towards neo-Riemannian analysis—and one analysis in particular—because I feel that for reasons inherent to its formulation, it is a problematic method with which to consider issues of sonata form in Schubert’s works.

The relationship between prolongational and transformational theories in Schubert analysis need not always be adversarial. First of all, the formalization of Cohn’s
hexatonic systems does a good job of explaining why voice leading between major-third related triads is so smooth. Although Schubert was certainly not thinking in equally mathematical terms, it is clear that he exploited common-tone relationships to a great extent.

Neo-Riemannian theory can also address the inherent affective relationships between triads, even those which have no direct voice-leading connections. Examples of such relationships might be between songs of a song cycle, between movements of a multi-movement work, or even between works. Because they are part of different fundamental structures, Schenkerian analysis—at least conservatively formulated—cannot comment upon the incomparable effect produced by the progression in Winterreise from the desolate C minor of Erstarrung to the warm reminiscence that begins Der Lindenbaum, despite the clear textural and motivic connections between the two songs. Aspects of the hexatonic polar relationship, however, might be found to resonate with that sudden and profound mental journey.  

Other ideas from transformational analysis might serve as glosses on the structural voice-leading highlighted in a Schenkerian analysis, as is the case with D.960. For example, David Lewin’s transformation PAR maps a triad onto its parallel major or minor while SLIDE maps it onto the major or minor triad with which it shares a common third (e.g., SLIDE transforms D major into D♭ minor and vice-versa by virtue of their shared third, F♯). These two transformations can be used to trace the metamorphosis of C♯ minor through D♯ major (enharmonically PAR of C♯ minor) to D minor (SLIDE of D♯).  

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53 Lewin, GMT, 178. In Lewin’s own words: “we can define an operation SLIDE that preserves the third of a triad while changing its mode: (F,+) SLIDE = (F♯,−); (F♯,−) SLIDE = (F,+)...A SLIDE relation between (C,+), and (C♯,−) can be heard over measures 103-110 in the slow movement of Schubert’s posthumous B♭-Major Piano Sonata.”
major) which organizes the development of the $B\flat$ Sonata. In my analysis, I likened this motion to the reassembly of a diatonic ideal. Lewin’s transformations give names to each stage of that evolution and help us evaluate the relationships between them; we can watch as the pitches $F$ and $A$ of the dominant are transformed into to their shadows, $F_\flat$ and $A_\flat$, and then gradually brought back to their diatonic forms. The transformational vocabulary also helps us to understand analogous connections in the exposition, with its early emphasis on the upper neighbors $G_\flat$ major and $F_\sharp$ minor (PAR of $G_\flat$ major) to the goal dominant $F$ major (SLIDE of $F_\sharp$ minor). With the help of PAR and SLIDE, we can apprehend these parallels even though the prolongational structures of the exposition and development are—necessarily—entirely different.

These insights are nevertheless only tangentially related to Schubert’s articulation of sonata form in the $B\flat$ Sonata, as they do not address the prolongational relationship between tonic and dominant that remained the basis for that form well into the Nineteenth Century. It seems to me that an attempt to fuse the symmetrical, anti-tonal group structure of neo-Riemannian theorizing with the inherently asymmetrical and hierarchical precepts of tonality will distort either one or the other. This is the case with Richard Cohn’s analysis of D.960, in which the tonic-dominant relationship—and therefore Schubert’s treatment of sonata form—is warped by the algebra of the hyper-hexatonic system. Such a view misappropriates the structural weight due the dominant and directs analytical attention away from the ways Schubert suppresses, grants, and elaborates the deep-level $V$, all in the name of demonstrating a new and revolutionary tonal unity.

In contrast, I believe that the $B\flat$ Sonata is a remarkable piece even when understood as a specimen of common-practice tonality. In it, Schubert addresses one of
the most fundamental aspects of sonata form: the role of the large-scale dominant. Schubert persistently delays its arrival in the exposition, thus raising the level of harmonic tension despite what his detractors have called a tendency toward beautiful but directionless melody. In so delaying V, Schubert is playing with what many authors—both in the Nineteenth Century and today—have called the most essential dynamism of the form. In my view, the Schubert of D.960 is not a tonal anarchist, chisel in hand, chipping away at tonality in a bold anticipation of the Liszt, Wagner, and the composers of the Twentieth Century; rather, he is a sensitive student of the eighteenth-century masters, commenting upon the sonata principles of his own day with his incomparable lyricism and tonal logic.


Webster, James. “Schubert’s Sonata Forms and Brahms’s First Maturity (I).” *Nineteenth-Century Music* 2/1 (1978): 18-35