**Carl Schachter's Critique of the Rising Urlinie;
and the Androgynous ^5-^6**

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Introduction

On 7 October 2009, I wrote the first entry for a blog named "Hearing Schubert D779n13." The goal was to "post and discuss a variety of readings of D779n13, not only the 32 from the Notre Dame conference ["Critical Perspectives on Schenker: Toward a New Research Paradigm," March 1994] but many others that I have generated since, a few of which were published in Neumeyer 2006" (Introduction). Ultimately, the total of readings reached ninety: see the tally [here](#). *[Please note that this PDF document does contain some live links, which will take you out to a browser, and possibly some broken links, as well, due to connections lost when servers were decommissioned.]*

The idea of a menu of readings fit the broad goals of post-World War II academic criticism and analysis as they have been realized in both scholarly and pedagogical literatures. The point of the Notre Dame paper was to make more vivid through examples a critical position that had come to the fore in music theory during the course of the 1980s: a contrast between this widely accepted "diversity" standard and the closed, ideologically bound habits of descriptive and interpretative practice associated with classical pc-set analysis and Schenkerian analysis.

As David Bordwell puts it, "sometimes our routines seem transparent, and we forget that they have a history" (2008, 11). He notes that what I have termed the "diversity" standard"—he calls it "critical Methodism"—"emerged only 60 years ago, out of the boom in college literary criticism that followed World War II. . . . Book-length studies explored one method or another, applied to this or that author, and editors compiled anthologies pitting one method against another for the sake of classroom instruction. . . . The anthology-of-approaches genre became a going concern in the 1950s and 1960s, and it continues to flourish."

Appealing as the idea is in the abstract (a diversity of methods not only builds and hones students' skills but also encourages a broadly based attitude of liberal criticism) and practical as it is in teaching (one simply organizes a course or coordinated series of courses as a survey of available methods), it has three serious weaknesses: (1) it tends to mask or to leave unexamined the implications of fundamental incompatibilities; (2) it has promoted a single routine of critical practice (in part, perhaps, to compensate for its breadth of method); and (3) its historical course has not resulted in an effective balance between

methodological tolerance and advocacy. One need only think back to the "culture wars" of the 1990s to recognize the failed outcome of this last point.

Blogs are inherently dynamic, and it is hardly surprising, I suppose, that the topics discussed on "Hearing Schubert" wandered off from the initial goal of a radical demonstration of music-theoretical Methodism. The principal topics of those "redirects" were two: (1) Schubert and the social environment of dancing in the early to mid-19th century; (2) form functions in music for social dancing and related listening in the same time period. I have gathered material relating to each of these in two PDF-based online publications parallel to this one; both may be downloaded from my personal website. The first of these documents is "Schubert, Dance, and Dancing in Vienna, 1815-1840" (this one is work in progress as of 8 August 2012). The second is "THEORY AND HISTORY OF TRADITIONAL EUROPEAN TONAL MUSIC: Formal functions for phrase, theme, and small forms, following William E. Caplin, *Classical Form: A Theory of Formal Functions for the Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven* (Oxford University Press, 1998), summary and examples with related information and data on dance musics and their performance in the same period."

The "Hearing Schubert" [link] blog remained active from October 2009 throughout 2010, went dormant after an entry on 13 January 2011, but has been revived occasionally since. I have left the blog up for the sake of internet searches and assume it will remain available so long as Google supports blogspot.

The material gathered here represents a third path branching off from the original topic of the blog. Readers will recall that the Schubert waltz of the title, D779n13, is the anomalous A-major piece that is discussed in Schachter 1980; Lerdahl & Jackendoff 1983; and Neumeyer 2006. Essentially a detailed critique of two articles by Carl Schachter (1994; 1996), this collection of blog entries therefore is concerned with some specific issues in traditional Schenkerian theory, those connected with the rising Urlinie—these can be roughly summarized as the status of ^6 and the status of ^7. Sixteen of the twenty three chapters below discuss Schachter's two articles directly, and the other seven chapters (2, 4, 5, 17-20) speak to underlying theoretical problems.

The chapters are the individual blog entries, lightly edited to remove redundancies and to improve clarity of expression. Works cited in individual posts have been gathered into a single Reference section at the end of the document. I have left page citations as they were in the blog entries. If any confusion arises about the document being referenced, you can go back to the blog itself: the chapter titles are all live links.

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Monday, January 11, 2010

Schachter and the rising Urlinie, Part 1

Carl Schachter was invited to give a public lecture for the School of Music, Indiana University, in April 1988. Unfortunately, I missed it as I was in Helsinki, Finland, giving a week-long series of lectures on music analysis. On returning, I was surprised to hear that he had devoted the talk to a critique of the ascending Urlinie (my *JMT* article had appeared not long before). Schachter had previously written on theoretical questions in Schenkerian analysis, including a now classic review-article (1981), and perhaps he was interested for that reason—or he might simply have been piqued to respond by my criticism of his analysis of Beethoven Op. 14n1, I (Schachter 1982).

Whether it was a case of missed opportunity or simply ships passing in the night, bound for wholly different ports, I don't know, but at the time I was on my way to film and film music studies, and, when Schachter did publish an article on the rising line problem in 1996, I didn't see it. I wasn't paying close attention to the music theory literature, and he chose to put the piece in an obscure place. In the meantime, William Rothstein had articulated the main objection from a traditionalist point of view:

> What Neumeyer demonstrates convincingly is that a fourth-progression from ^5 to ^8 may span an entire composition; for this reason alone, the ascending progression must at least be assigned to a deep level of the middleground. Virtually always, however, the ascending fourth-progression is counterpointed by a descending linear progression from ^5 or ^3. . . . It is probably best to assign such a three-part counterpoint to a deep layer of the middleground rather than to the background. (306)

Although Rothstein is generous in making it clear that either the rising or falling line could potentially be "superior in status to the other," in practice the traditionalist view has been (and this is the nub of Schachter's position) that the descending line has priority and the rising one must ultimately be assigned to boundary play (coherent voice-leading figures above the principal line). The very rare example that is "convincing" is merely one of those exceptions that proves the rule.

Thus was set up an opposition in which the three descending Urlinien constitute the marked term and the rising line the unmarked term. ("Thus" is a bit misleading, since the question of the rising line—and so the binary pair—predated my *JMT* article by a good long while.) Schachter defended the marked term; I focused attention on the unmarked term ("flipped" the binary, that is, in a manner familiar to literary criticism since at least the 1950s). In such cases, critique cannot proceed logically, but only ideologically, a step that Schachter has steadfastly avoided (even celebrating that avoidance (2001)). He has, instead, preferred to retreat to an argument carried out as hermeneutics (in its old sense linked to Biblical exegesis).

In a series of posts over the next week, I will examine the arguments and analyses in Schachter's 1996 article and in an earlier article on Bach (1994).

Tuesday, January 12, 2010

The conflict of voice leading and line

In an early article, Kofi Agawu lists three guidelines for the analysis of closure in music:

> 1. Closure is a function of formal principles and/or generic signs.
>
> 2. Closure is not the same thing as an ending. . . . An ending refers to local elements in the musical structure, whereas closure denotes a global mechanism.
>
> 3. Closure is a function of both syntactic and semantic principles. (1987, 4)

In his explanation of the last of these, Agawu says that "The musical equivalent of poetic syntax is the set of rules that govern the succession of notes. For example, a ^2-^1 over V-I cadence offers the correct syntax for effecting a cadence." Or as below, from his most recent book, where Agawu says much the same: "a closed harmonic progression [that] constitutes the norm of coherent and meaningful tonal order" (109).

This progression, however, is hardly "syntactically correct"—it shows the compromises necessary when melodic parsimony (move by step whenever you can, or not at all) conflicts with a strictly maintained four-voice texture (apparently derived from continuo practice). The problem becomes obvious to the eye and ear if we put the alto or tenor at the top and move the soprano into the inner voices:
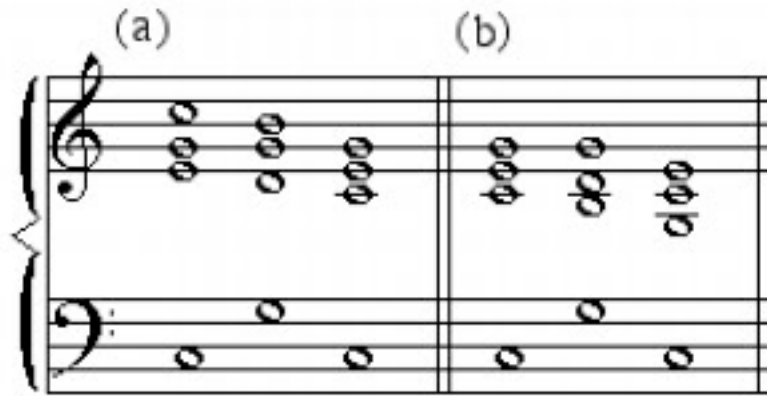
How to solve this without changing the number of parts? You can't. In the four solutions below, melodic parsimony is maintained but the final chord is incomplete (contrary to figured bass), as at (a) and (c). Or, Agawu's "syntax" is violated because ^2 retreats to ^3, as at (b) and (d).
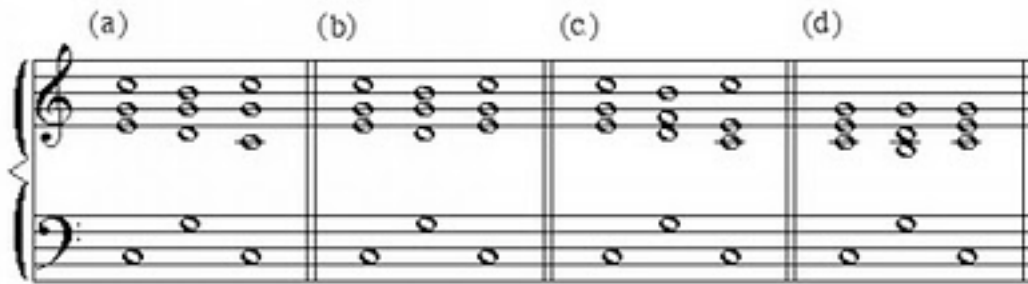
What this suggests is that there will always be a conflict between the two-voice structure assumed by "^2-^1 over V-I" and the archetypal four-voice texture of figured bass. There is no reason to choose Agawu's "norm" with its damaged inner voices over (a) or (c) above with their incomplete final tonics. In fact, (b) and (d) would seem to be the best solutions, as they meet the requirements of both melodic parsimony and figured bass rules—*only* the assertion of a very particular melodic requirement that arbitrarily applies parsimony *and* unidirectionality to just one voice can unseat them.

In the *Attwood Studies*, Mozart voices cadence chords differently than Agawu. Mozart calls the cadential six-four "accordo di quarta consonante" and the older-style dissonant vertical that would occupy the same accented position in a cadence the "accordo di quarta dissonante" (Heartz et al 1965, 21). See his voicings of the specific verticals involved in (a) and (b) below, respectively.
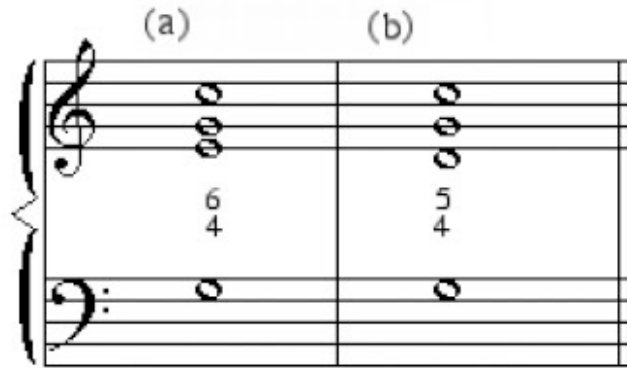
In a related document ascribed to him (authenticity uncertain), Mozart also contrasts the older cadence with a 4-3 suspension over the dominant to the cadential six-four: the former is "contrapunctisch," the latter "modern (gallant [sic])," the obvious implication being that the latter replaced the former in practice (Heartz and Mann 1969, 16-17). In those examples, too, the voicing differs from Agawu's "correct syntax."

Modern use of the term "cadence galant" comes from Charles Cudworth (1949), who ascribed its invention to the early 18th century Neapolitan opera composers, in particular Leonardo Vinci. It seems likely, however, that the change was generational, as Daniel Heartz and Bruce Alan Brown point out (2009)—and, according to Lucinde Braun (2007), it can in fact be found in French claveçin composers, among others, around the same time. It was this clichéd formula that Schenker eventually took for granted as a possible component of Urlinien: the cadential dominant figure appears without comment in *Free Composition,* Fig. 16 (the table of bass motions under the Urlinie from ^5).

Agawu asserts that his "closed harmonic progression" "is characterized by a sense of departure . . . and return, [or] motion from one (relatively) stable point to another (more stable point)" (2009, 109). Echoing Lerdahl and Jackendoff, Meyer, and others, he explains that "departure generates tension and arouses expectations, while return provides resolution and fulfillment of expectations." A century earlier, August Halm had said much the same, although, following the Ramellian tradition, he tends to attribute the essential qualities of tension/relaxation to the dominant chord itself ("Urkeim [der Kadenz] ist die Dominante mit ihrer inneren Bewegung zur Tonika" (5) [rough translation: "the core of the cadence is the dominant with its inner motion toward the tonic"]). His example (below) is described as "die primitivste Musik" but "zweifellos Musik! Es ist das erste Geschehnis, Leben der Töne, Bewegungsanstoß and -Abschluß! . . . . Die Kadenz ist, richtig verstanden, Grundlage und Urbild des Musizierens überhaupt!" (14-15) [rough translation: "the most primitive music, but unquestionably music! It is the first event, the life of tones, the incitement to movement and the end of movement. The cadence, understood correctly, is the foundation and the basic construct of music making itself!"]
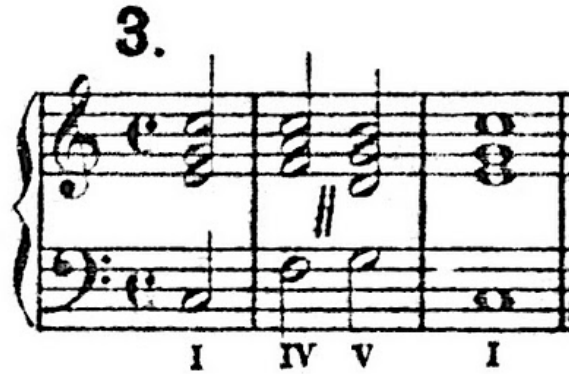
Note, however, that Halm did not require a soprano note above or away from ^1 for his first chord. And we cannot appeal to "pure melodic principles," either—every one of the *cantus firmi* that Fux uses for his species counterpoint exercises in *Gradus ad Parnassum* begins and ends on the *finalis* (modal tonic).

Clearly, Agawu's archetype is not archetypical—it is a progression strongly interpreted according to a specific bias, which, whether accidentally or deliberately, erases the significance of the leading tone (^7). In an upcoming post, I will discuss the problem of the "two leading tones" and how that impinges on the question of the rising Urlinie.

Wednesday, January 13, 2010

Schachter and the rising Urlinie, Part 2

Before I go on to discuss details of Carl Schachter's essay on a Bach prelude, I should note that Schachter did in fact write about D779n13; see comments in early posts (1); (2) *[live links]*. This is one example in a classic essay that, with its companions, was a foundational influence on metric-rhythmic studies in the Schenkerian tradition. I commented at some length on the tonal and contrapuntal aspects of the analysis in my *Music Analysis* review-article, 22-24. The following is an edited excerpt:

> Schachter notes that 'the right hand plays two melodic lines written in free imitation. The lower of these lines carries the main melodic motion and is, in general, more active than the upper one. The upper line, therefore, functions as a secondary part' (Schachter 1999, 70). The logic is uncertain: the strong linear drive created by the string of suspensions succeeds in focusing attention on the lower voice but does not *therefore* relegate the upper voice to secondary status: the unargued assertion that the lower voice 'carries the main melodic motion' in itself accomplishes that task. (2006, 22)

The claim that the alto voice, with its suspensions, is somehow "more active" than the upper voice, with its constant play of ^5 and ^6, is simply not defensible. The characterization rests on an opposition line/boundary-play (Urlinie/Ränderspiel) that assigns structural

priority (and I mean that literally as "arising in an earlier level") to a line that is internal to the texture rather than the line at the top.

Schachter's insistence on a feature that runs counter to the evident musical qualities of D779n13 is only the most obvious marker of his basic strategy, that of the symptomatic reading. As David Bordwell describes the process, the critic must first have

> master[ed] a semantic field informed by particular theoretical concepts. [Then, in the work of interpretation,] certain semantic features enjoy a particular saliency. . . . The critic will pick out textual cues that can bear the weight of those semantic features [and] mount an argument, perhaps using the rhetoric of demystification, to show the significance of the semantic projections, from field to text, that the critic generated. Every recognized method . . . follows something like this routine. (12)

If large-scale descending lines have priority (that is, "enjoy a particular saliency"), then the appropriate "textual cues" are more likely to be in the alto than the soprano (which cannot "bear the weight"). The "rhetoric of demystification," then, would separate soprano/alto from main-voice/subordinate-voice by indicating how and why the alto is the carrier of the primary melodic voice. (Actually, I think Bordwell is referring to something a bit different, but in our limited context the dismantling of a cluster of binaries makes sense.)

Within the theory itself, the effacing of ^7 by ^2 is behind this particular result. More to that tomorrow.

Thursday, January 14, 2010

## **The two leading tones in Schenkerian analysis**

This is a continuation of the topic from the last two posts, where (two days ago) a conflict between melodic parsimony and a melodic descent from ^3 to ^1 was observed to be unresolvable in four-part writing; and (yesterday) basic sets of oppositions with unequal (marked and unmarked) terms were seen operating in Schachter's reading of D779n13.

One can preserve Agawu's syntactically necessary "^2-^1 over V-I" only in three-voice counterpoint and then only by accepting incomplete tonic chords—see below. In other words, three-part writing is no better than four-part writing at solving the conflict, but it is certainly better at revealing the basic elements of the archetypal progression that Agawu invokes: I-V-I in the bass with a progression including the descending line from ^3 and both leading tones resolving correctly.
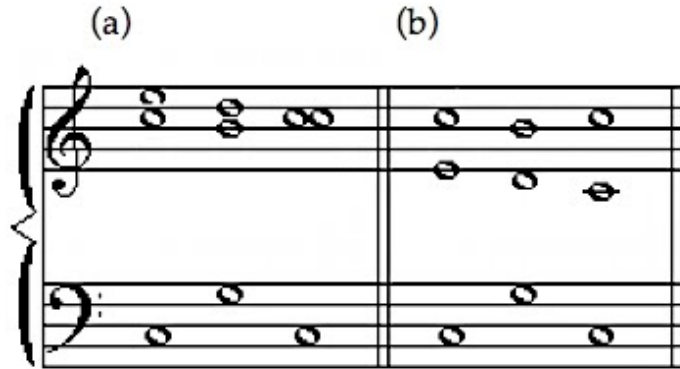
In two-voice counterpoint, of course, the ^2-^1 is possible but not the V-I (at least, not in the Fuxian species), which is why the structural levels of a Schenkerian graph can be understand as replicating the order of the Fuxian species only conceptually, not literally (we just saw something nearer the literal in the examples above). Schenker was interested in marrying the melodic principle in the old cadence, with its 6-8 or 3-1 interval sequences, to a nineteenth-century, abstract conception of harmony, and so he resorted to a Hegelian dialectic of basic musical forces: melody vs. harmony in synthesis become the counterpoint of the Ursatz—the rational perfection of first species, not its duplicate or imitation.

In the old *clausula vera* or *Tenor-Klausel*, there are two equal "leading tones," the equivalents of ^2 and ^7 in the major-minor scale system. Here is an example of the latter as it is expressed in the final two bars of J. S. Bach, Eb-major Cello Suite, Prelude.
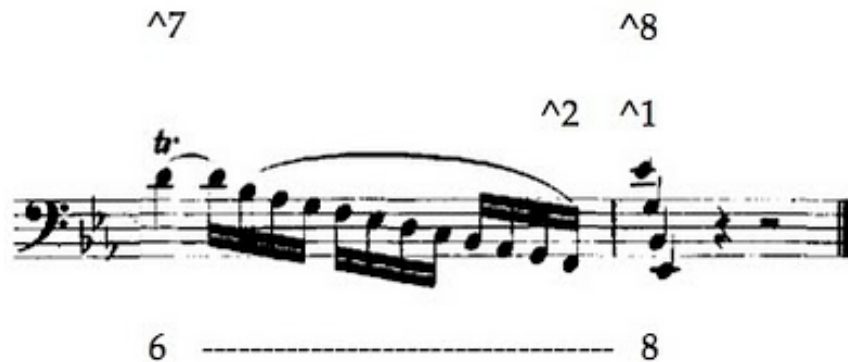
As I suggested in yesterday's post, however, Schenkerian analysis has devices that remove the ^7 to later levels than the ^2. Two of these we have already seen:(1) the bias toward descending lines from ^3, and (2) the attendant willingness to give priority to inner voices if they carry such lines. The other two are, in a way, more pernicious: (3) the leading-tone third line, which provides "automatic" explanations for ^7 as subordinate to ^2; and (4) the implied ^2, which supplies ^2s even if not present in the score.

This erasure of the ^7 has some far-reaching consequences for interpretation.

Saturday, January 16, 2010

On Departure and the Tonal Archetype

I am returning one last time to the progression that Kofi Agawu describes as "a closed harmonic progression [that] constitutes the norm of coherent and meaningful tonal order" (109).

In a previous post I observed that this progression is not in fact "syntactically correct" because it shows the compromises necessary when melodic parsimony conflicts with a strictly maintained four-voice texture.

There is another problem with the progression, specifically with its status as a departure-return model. The first chord conflates a stable harmonic beginning point (I) with an already-departed melody (^3, not ^1). Now, this is presumably out of deference to Schenker, but that deference also means too much is taken for granted here. As Westergaard puts it near the beginning of *Introduction to Tonal Theory,* "pitch and time relationships are the primary stuff of the structure of any piece of tonal music" (11). If stable beginning is also to be point of departure, then only ^1 over I can be adequate to the task.

The properties are separable: in the examples below, all constitute points of departure (bar 1 of a waltz in D365) but only one of them constitutes a stable beginning (and even there, the tonally stable beginning is pre-empted metrically by the pickup note E5, which gains in salience from its mordent).

Although Westergaard, too, sets his rules out of deference to Schenker ("The first note of the basic step motion must be a tonic-triad member a third, fifth, or octave above the final note" (as cited in Peles 78)), he seems to recognize the problem at some level. Looking back at *Introduction to Tonal Theory* more than thirty years later, he says (59) that he would replace *arpeggiation* with *borrowing* as a basic operation (*arpeggiation* is melodic movement between triad members; *borrowing* accounts for these movements as drawing notes from other voices in the voice-leading web—the same as William Rothstein's "imaginary continuo"). Westergaard's example (60) *begins* (this is the crucial bit) with a closed position tonic triad, whose label reads "Four voices define a span by stating a C-major triad in closed position with the C doubled in the outer voices." Only after this, rearticulation confirms duration and borrowing lets the soprano claim ^3 from the tenor. Thus, the closed position triad, with ^1 at the top, is conceptually prior to the first chord of Agawu's "norm."

Sunday, January 17, 2010

Schachter and the rising Urlinie, Part 3

Today's post is a summary of Carl Schachter's article on the Prelude to J. S. Bach's Eb-major Cello Suite. I will provide critical commentary in tomorrow's post.

Here is a link to a copy of the score (from the old Bach complete works edition): page [(1)](); page [(2)](). And here is a much condensed and (necessarily) heavily edited version of Schachter's 250-word abstract (71):

> The Prelude has a quick-moving and active bass line above which ^3, ^5, and ^8 initiate linear strands: ^8 is a cover tone that begins and ends the Prelude; ^5 begins a fourth-progression ending in the final ^8; ^3 descends to ^1 at the structural cadence. Among the complex interactions is a contradiction between Db and D-natural whose resolution helps to direct the large-scale harmonic structure.
>
> In the opening, ^3 lies below ^8 and ^5: this disposition characterizes the Prelude as a whole. The descent from ^3 to ^1 occurs in the middle of the texture: the uniformity of this texture suggests that the Urlinie is first among equals rather than the governing upper voice (that is, a two-part outer~voice counterpoint has less explanatory power here).

The essay has the following sections (headings taken from the text):

The Musical Idea. Responding to a criticism that technical analysis (the analytic graphics) may not provide real insight into a work's musical idea (here, not only a motivic germ but also a sense of movement and balance), Schachter summarizes his argument by noting the striking Db in m. 3 and its resolution through D-natural several bars later, but in the "wrong octave" and middle of the texture. This is corrected at the end of piece but is worked through dramatically in conjunction with changes in figuration after the low C# (enharmonically Db) in m. 49.

The Opening Tonic Pedal and Underlying Shape: mm. 1-10. Three upper-voice motions are possible: the one described in the previous section, an ascent from an inner voice ^5 up to ^8, or a descent from ^8 down to ^5. The first of these, which is considered boundary play by Schenker, is preferable, and because its registral shift "exposes an inner strand of the texture--Ab-G--and transforms it into the upper voice," that G3 is ^3 of an Urlinie that remains essentially "submerged" throughout the Prelude as an array of events moves above it.

The Large Structure: An Overview. Details of the preceding (multiple strands with the Urlinie in one of the middle ones) are shown.

The C-Minor Prolongation and Parallelisms: mm. 11-28. Highlights motivic parallelisms between the topmost voice at the beginning and the bass in the following section.

The Chromatic Move C-C#-D: mm. 27-52. The more important and dramatic music follows after the C-minor cadence (in the preceding) through this section that leads to a cadence in G minor. Disturbances in the figuration gradually increase, up to the point of the full stop on C#2 in m. 49.

The G-minor Cadence: mm. 49-62. Connections are made between voice leading movements here and those of the three strands and their registral positions.

From G Minor to the End: mm. 62-91. The G-minor cadence is framed by a pattern of gradually introduced sharped notes before (shaped by the circle of fifths) and a corresponding series of flatted notes after (likewise following the circle of fifths). The several strands remain; the large-scale fourth in the upper strands resolves itself in the final two measures.

The Submerged Urlinie. The lower strand, with ^3-^2-^1, rather than the large-scale fourth, is the fundamental line because (1) it "is the primary melodic constituent of the big harmonic cadences, and these cadences clearly shape the tonal movement of the piece . . .; (2) G is a far more prominent constituent of the opening tonic prolongation than the Bb; (3) in this piece, the 3-2-1 line is representative of the melodic structure that characterizes the tonal repertory at large" (68-69). Here, at least, "the contrapuntal interplay between several upper voices is important enough to reduce the explanatory power of inferring a two-voice framework."

Oppositions. "The opposition of ascending and descending motion [,] an inescapable constituent of any music with organized pitches [,] plays an inordinately great role in the design and structure of the Prelude. Indeed if the musical idea of the Prelude involves the restoration of equilibrium after an initial disturbance, it is largely in terms of the opposition of descending and ascending that the idea seems to be conceived" (69)

Symbolism? Tentatively suggests Christian symbolism: "the change of Db into C# may symbolize the redemption of fallen humanity through the crucifixion" (70). Although the focus on flatted notes in the second half "might suggest mortality and physical death, they are mitigated by the final rise to the high Eb, the saved soul's ascent to heaven" (71)

Monday, January 18, 2010

Schachter and the rising Urlinie, Part 4

In his article on the Prelude from J. S. Bach's Eb-Major Cello Suite, Carl Schachter makes a serious attempt to weigh the merits of a rising Urlinie, but the direction of his argument is nevertheless obvious from the outset, as he weighs the three possibilities for a reading of the upper voices in the first section (mm. 1-10). He addresses the question of the rising Urlinie head on only in the closing pages, and then only briefly. Still, the answer he comes to—the Urlinie as one among equals rather than an obvious and controlling line—responds in a sensitive way to the circumstances of the Prelude even as it preserves the theoretical priorities dictated by Schenkerian theory. His "first among equals" construct here is in fact almost indistinguishable from Channan Willner's four-part Ursatz model: see the item "Polyphonic Ursatz" under the year 2007 on his [publications page](#).

I don't hear the Prelude quite the same way, but mainly with respect to the middle strand on ^5 (Schachter labels this "y"—"x" is the upper Eb, and "z" the Urlinie G3). The idea of continuing voice leading strands certainly makes sense, given the static quality of the registers (so static they have to be broken up radically by the cadenza-figures), though I might want to experiment with the five or even six voices implied by the arpeggio figures, rather than the four Schachter follows (bass plus x, y, and z).

In the graphic below, at (a) I have pulled out early-middleground/background features for Schachter's reading in terms of score fragments and at (b) have produced an analogous graphic for my own view of it. Remember that the graphic is a thumbnail—click on it to see the original size.

(a) Schachter

(b) DN

I would essentially flip the priorities of Schachter's textural model, with an ^8-^7-^8 figure as the background and Schachter's "y" and "z" as the other "equals." Probably because of

the lack of typical emphasis on V, a relatively common figure that combines descent and ascent (from ^8 down to ^5, then back up) really doesn't work at all here. And in any case, I can't hear the ascent in Schachter's strand "y", especially in phrases 3 and 4 (mm. 27-62), where a rise from C4 through C#4 to D seems forced, too much at cross purposes with the underlying harmonic progression.

Posts in a series starting next week will look in detail at the article in which Schachter addresses the theoretical questions of the rising Urlinie directly: "Schoenberg's Hat and Lewis Carroll's Trousers: Upward and Downward Motion in Musical Space."

Tuesday, January 19, 2010

Schachter and the rising Urlinie, Part 5

If the rising line is not a good candidate in the Eb Major Prelude (see previous posts), it is inescapable in the G Major Prelude. The same kind of dramatic emphasis that Carl Schachter notes and uses in part to situate his reading of the several voice leading strands in the Eb Major Prelude occurs also in the G Major Prelude, and specifically in connection with a cadence that rises to and through the leading tone: here are the final bars.

The opening bars (shown below) establish a three-part texture with great clarity; the topmost voice charts a neighbor-note figure across mm. 1-4 and even embellishes itself with little neighbor note figures along the way. The bass is a pedal point G2, and the middle voice walks sturdily on a path from ^5 to ^1 (^8): D3-E3-F#3-G3. As we shall see, the relationship of the upper two voices is simply reversed in the final cadence, the pedal point bass there being V or D3. That the topmost voice is the principal one is confirmed a few measures later, when a stereotypical (^2)-^2 brings ^3 over I down to ^2 over V (see the rectangle frame in the example). Along with this, the role of D4 is plainly identified as a cover tone, or focus of an auxiliary (secondary) voice above the principal voice.

Disruptive cadenzas like those in the Eb Major Prelude are lacking in the G Major Prelude, but there some dramatic moments before the final flourish. In the first system below, a registrally expansive gesture runs quickly across the strings from the open C2 to our cover tone D4. The latter is pushed one half tone higher to Eb4 two measures later—that's the highest note before the run up to G4 at the end. The effect is immediately vitiated, however, by a move downward and resolution to B3 as ^3 (end of the rectangular frame), and D4 is heard again it's obviously a cover tone once more (circled in the last system).


At the end, the formation of A3 (^2) above V could hardly be clearer, and the sudden chromatic rush up to G4 is a surprise—although the chromaticism itself is a marker of the cadenza, and that is apparently how the figure is meant to function here. The diagonal line marked in the score suggests that the figure outlines (unfolds) a sixth from A3 to F#4.

In the final bars, the circled note pairs mark the parallels to the beginning of the Prelude, but now with the voices inverted: what was the uppermost voice is in the middle, and the middle voice, having attained its tonic goal-tone, is shifted an octave higher, above the

original "soprano." Thus, the opening gesture at the left of the example below turns into the closing gesture at the right.
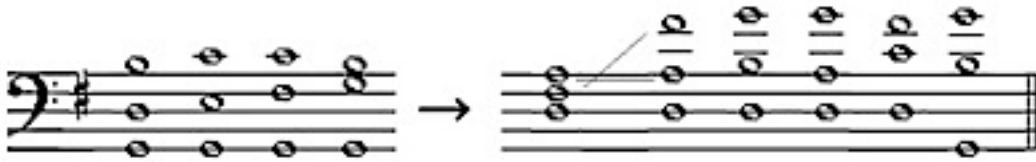
I suppose one could argue that the stretched-out chromatic scale changes the relations of the voice leading strands to the point that the middle voice replaces the upper voice as primary, and therefore one gets a rising Urlinie from the cover tone D—picked up in the middle of the chromatic scale—up to G4. I am wary of these sudden reversals, however, just as I am of Urlinie ^3s that show up just a few bars away from the end of a piece. The cover tone D4 never has the kind of significance earlier that would predict such a change of role—the rising line, then, seems an arbitrary choice. Thus, I would go with Schachter's "equals" here, the inner voice being "first among" them, and would probably notate using Channan Willner's "polyphonic Ursatz" (see yesterday's post). But there is a caveat: a descent to ^1 is plainly as forced and arbitrary as a rising Urlinie would have been. The Prelude, then, ends as it began: with ^3 in the principal voice (and probably then a background shape involving neighbor notes—see my comment on Arthur Komar's reading of the *WTC*, C Major Prelude in the *MTS* article, 291).

Postscript: Should D779n13 not be read in a similar way? Have I not said that the rising cadence gesture is a surprise? And does not the set of parallel sixths force B4 (^2) back up to C#5 (^3) rather than down to A4 (^1)? I could settle for the latter reading, but as to the rising gesture, it is only a surprise in terms of the clichéd formulas of the cadence (and, in the waltz repertoire, therefore, rather less of a surprise than it would be in most other genres). Unlike the cover tone D4 in the G Major Prelude, in D779n13 the F#5 (^6) that appears almost immediately and is touched on repeatedly thereafter forces constant attention to the "space above ^5" and sets all the conditions needed for a move further up the scalar ladder at the end.

Sunday, January 24, 2010

Schachter and the rising Urlinie, Part 6

Carl Schachter's article "Schoenberg's Hat" has the following sections:

> *Introduction: Schoenberg's Hat (327)*
> *Ascending and Descending Motion Contrasted (328)*
> *Structure and Contour (331)*
> *The Rising Fourth (333)*
> *Conclusion: Lewis Carroll's Trousers (337)*
> *Appendix: The Rising Urlinie (338)*

Schachter begins by criticizing Schoenberg's extension of his idea of a unitary musical space (essential to derive and justify the several forms of a 12-tone row, including inversions) to tonal music, where Schachter points to "a functional context in which the tonal motive assumes. . . Meaning . . . characterised by fixed points of orientation (the tonic note, triadic roots), [and] by important functional differences between rising and falling movement (for instance in the resolution of dissonances)" (328). Schachter is careful to say that notions of high, low, and others relating to space and motion are metaphorical or analogical, but then he goes on to claim that "I do not regard the analogies between musical space and motion on the one hand and physical space and motion on the other as unimportant, inexact though they may be. A significant part of music's ability to reflect our physical and emotional lives comes from just these analogies."

He then spends considerable time exploring text painting in relation to prolongational figures in songs by Schumann ("Die Lotosblume") and Brahms ("Der Tod, das ist die kühle Nacht"). Under *Structure and Contour*, the examples are Verdi, from "0 Terra, Addio" from the final duet of *Aida*; Schubert's "Die junge Nonne"; under the *Rising Fourth*, Bizet, Carmen's soliloquy in the "Card Trio" of the opera's third act. In the latter section, he also looks at two instrumental compositions: Bach's C-minor Fugue from *WTC* 1; Chopin's Prelude in E-major. The appendix comments on what Schachter regards as problems in my rising line article and renders his own judgments about analyses that are convincing with rising line Urlinien.

I will make some comments on the analyses and offer responses to the arguments in posts over the next several days.

Monday, January 25, 2010

Schachter and the rising Urlinie, Part 7

I summarized Carl Schachter's article "Schoenberg's Hat . . ." yesterday. A number of issues will be considered here, from how good is his defense of some traditional notions, to how convincing are his examples, to how effective is his criticism of my "Ascending Urlinie" article. I will take these more or less in order—insofar as they can be separated from one another—following the article section by section.

As I wrote yesterday, in the introduction Schachter takes Schoenberg to task for his assertions about a unitary musical space, but Schoenberg was not referring to rising or falling lines—he was talking about musical "objects" (motives) that maintain their identity despite "viewer position" (P, I, R, or RI). Schachter cites Milton Babbitt's comment on Schoenberg's application of the idea to Beethoven as well as to 12-tone music—"The tonal motive assumes functional meaning in a context, and becomes, in turn, a vehicle of movement within this context; the twelve-tone set, however, is the instigator of movement and defines the functional context" (cited on 329). Schachter apparently wants his positioning of Babbitt's comment as "long ago" to mean that Schoenberg's error should have been obvious to everyone, but in fact the "long ago" inadvertently highlights an anachronism: Babbitt's firmly placed wall between tonality and atonality (understood in Schenkerian and 12-tone terms, respectively) is an attitude that belongs to a generation of the twentieth century's third quarter. That wall started showing cracks as early as the mid-1970s, when Allen Forte, James Baker, and others began to explore transition repertoires (Scriabin, early Schoenberg and Webern, etc., eventually going back to the late music of Liszt); it was crumbling noticeably after David Lewin published *GMIT* in 1987 and collapsed quickly once neo-Riemannian theory and its attendant historical narrative began its rise in the 1990s.

Furthermore, work on schemata, metaphor, and related ideas points to the complexity of musical cognition. Janna Saslaw, drawing on Lakoff and Johnson, lists the following image schemes: container [which suits motives and hats very well], up-down, center-periphery, link, part-whole, force, front-back, path, and source-path-goal (219, Figure 1). All of these, as Saslaw points out, can be understood as relevant to expressive and interpretative models of music making. There is no more reason to privilege the up-down schema than there is to perpetuate Babbitt's wall.

Schachter finishes the introduction by listing three assumptions: he understands "motion", "space", "high", and "low" in purely musical terms; these have only a "a loose metaphorical relation to our non-musical experiences of space and movement"; but these metaphors are nevertheless fundamental to music's expressive and affective potential.

To the first of these: Schachter immediately constrains the potential outcomes by his definitions. Motion, for example, "refers to the kinetic impressions we derive from tonal and rhythmic patterns," a description that pushes us more than halfway down the road to Schenker. "Motion," however, involves schemata whenever it is *anything* more organized than events passing randomly by in linear time—schemata like path, force, and source-path-goal. "'High' or 'low' [refers] to sounds produced by vibrations of greater or lesser frequency"—but here again the variety of ways in which frequency differences are understood or experienced is ignored in favor of a particular one. Indeed, high and low frequency differences may be primarily based on gender differences familiar from everyday speech but

particularly exposed during singing (children, in this crude account, being lumped in with women). The music of the celestial spheres had all manner of interval sizes, not just ones that produced "high" notes—and the symbolism of intervals and numbers meant far more to composers before the 19th century than did the superficial text painting to which Schachter alludes. Pianists experience music as much left to right as lower to higher; violinists, too, with an added angle of distortion; organists left to right and large to small; trombonists far to near; guitarists top to bottom; horn players—well, round and round, I suppose. Only a handful of instruments fit the low/high model: cello, bass, oboe, clarinet. Finally, of course, the proper way to conceive frequency differences would be slower and faster.

To the second and third assumptions: Schachter tries to have it both ways, acknowledging the weakness of the metaphorical ties but then wanting those metaphors to have deep cultural significance nevertheless (and, because of their historical depth, permanence). Although I suspect that in music gender differences are at the root of it, the up/down schema itself is certainly ancient and is obviously a mental model related to everyday experience. It has generated a powerful collection of related metaphors, including earth/sky, climbing/descending, standing/sitting (or lying), waking/sleeping, even living/dead (as an extension of waking-standing/lying-sleeping). In the arts, it has often been mapped onto the pair tension/relaxation.

The schema and its metaphors are easily tied to gravity, as Steve Larson does in his three voice leading "forces": gravity, magnetism (or attraction), and inertia (cited in Lerdahl, 191). Lerdahl criticizes the first of these, however, saying that "gravity appears to be dispensable: in the major scale, except for the leading tone, the strongest virtual attractions of nonchordal diatonic pitches are by stepwise descent anyway." Lerdahl finds the source of Larson's promotion of gravity as a force not in cognition but in an ideological committment: "By gravity he means the tendency for melodic lines to descend by step (as a Schenkerian, Larson is especially committed to this notion)."

Gravity (as priority to downward motion) is an "earth-bound" metaphor, but it is as primitive as it is ancient: the scientific definition (since Newton) *is* attraction, and thus the appropriate way to think of gravity is in terms of tension and opposition but not a specific and fixed direction. In the neo-Riemannian historical narrative, the emergence of musical thinking expressing this change happens clearly in the first quarter of the 19th century—see Cohn 1999, where Schubert's use of symmetrical harmonic and tonal patterings undermines the "down-to-tonic" model and prefigures more systematic understandings of symmetries later in the century.

It is certainly also worth noting that Alexandra Pierce, who of all persons should have the most authoritative notion of the embodiment of Schenkerian hearing, does not tie "ending" to "sitting" or even to "relaxing"—instead, resting balance and centered core match harmonic completion and a closing tonic (in ch. 2 of her book).

Tuesday, January 26, 2010

Schachter and the rising Urlinie, Part 8

In the second section, "Ascending and Descending Motion Contrasted" (328-31), Carl Schachter offers two readings of ascent and descent in connection with text painting in 19th century songs. In the first case (Schumann), the inversion of a motive and a sequence made up of this rising form expresses "erotic excitement" (329). In the second case (Brahms), the motivic directions are reversed (death/night/rise; life/day/fall) but at the climax the expectations are righted by a change of shape in the motive (330).

From the first, because Schumann denies the erotic with a falling cadence at the end, comes the general statement that "the descending melodic impulse at a cadence is typical and is a central component of the tonal system" (329). "Typical" not "universal"—Schachter never goes so far as explicitly to claim the latter for descending lines in cadences—but nevertheless essential to "the tonal system," the latter, as we find out during the discussion of Brahms, being defined as Schenker construed it. Thus,

> That descending melodic movement tends to create repose might be understood as reflecting our physical lives as creatures subject to the force of gravity. It takes effort to throw a ball into the air; it falls back to the ground by itself. Accordingly we might well imagine that musical descent suggests repose by analogy with physical motion.... (330)

> . . . the ensemble of pitches conforms in part to the inner structure of a normal musical tone. . . . Musical motion toward the first partial—" descending" motion—leads to a fixed point of reference and thus tends to evoke a feeling of repose comparable to a move down through space. In the music of triadic tonality, this general attribute of downward motion is intensified by the fact that the triad is built from the bottom up. . . . In tonal music, the most stable positions of the triad are of course those where the root is grounded in the" earth" of the bass part. And in the melodic lines of tonal music, a descent from ^3, ^5, or ^8 to ^1 replicates in the horizontalized triad of the upper voice a move from an overtone . . . to the fundamental sound. (331)

Out of this recital of familiar notions comes the foregone conclusion that "for tonal music, the distinction between up and down is far from superficial, since moving down provides a more definitive closure."

David Lewin argues differently. Reacting to Susan McClary's charges about patriarchal containment of women's voices, he rejects an analogy between the spoken sentence and the sung phrase (and therefore a naturalized linkage between "coming to rest" and descending melodic movement): "Our musics are not 'natural phenomena,' like everyday speaking. All singing styles, in particular, are highly stylized in comparison to everyday speech" (275).

I would add that the notion of cadence-as-repose within a tension-relaxation model has no place in the singer's physical experience of performance—tension in the body (diaphragm,

lungs) rises to its top point *before* a phrase starts and is maintained till *after* the phrase is finished. One doesn't need to be a professional singer to experience that, either—or a singer at all, since playing a wind instrument works essentially the same way.

Instead, Lewin associates patriarchy with priority to the bass (or fundamental), and from this it follows that "the transcendent musical voice must be a woman's voice" (271): "The female voice is typically acoustically free of what we conceive as a functional bass line—whether continuo or fundamental bass—and that is less typically true of the male voice" (274).

For Schachter, a certain set of historical practices in European tonal music may as well be universals ("fixed points of orientation [the tonic note, triadic roots]. . . important functional differences. . .the system itself"), but for Lewin they still have strong traces of cultural practices that can be interrogated. For Schachter, the difference between rising and falling melodic gestures offers wonderful expressive tensions in a balanced system; for Lewin, that balanced system may also be understood as a constraining cultural construct that can be "escaped" not just by the mad women of nineteenth-century opera but also by the transcendent female voice (*pace* McClary, Lewin counts Isolde and the soloist in Schoenberg's second string quartet and *Erwartung* among these).

However one reacts to Lewin's specific argument here, it is certainly well-established through historical narratives connected to neo-Riemannian theory that in the nineteenth century a harmonic model emerged that opposed symmetrical models to traditional "Earthbound" metaphors. I also claim that whether through a Newtonian concept of gravity, the Romantic's exploitation of oppositions, or simply through a desire to escape from century-old, clichéd cadence figures, the opposition of rising and falling gestures was altered to contest (or to vitiate) the structural priority of descending cadence gestures.

Wednesday, January 27, 2010

Schachter and the rising Urlinie, Part 9

The third section, "Structure and Contour" (331-33), provides two readings that illustrate an assertion from the end of the second section:

> Downward motion will characterise structural endings, and, as a corollary, upward motion will occur before the descents-~either at the beginning or in the middle of melodic lines. The tonal system, however, through the phenomenon of octave equivalency, provides an escape clause from these constraints of the structural background. Prolongations, in widening the field for tonal activity, will also free the upper voice from the need for uniformly descending resolutions of linear tension. (331)

The examples from Verdi and Schubert show registral repositioning upward of individual tones in a descending urlinie: the ^3 in the middle of a five-line, and the final ^1, respectively. In both cases, the repositioning is associated with figures in the text.

With respect to the structural cadence of Schubert's "Die junge Nonne"—and therefore the Urlinie shape—Schachter has simply gotten it wrong. His graph shows bars 52-61; these include a "cadence [that] achieves its rise to the tonic through a brief stepwise line that culminates in the notes C-D-E-F; F of course is the tonic note and E, the leading tone, can be understood as an inner-voice note of V that substitutes for ^2" (333). This is not the structural cadence—"a variant of this same cadence" has that role: mm. 74-83. These latter measures are shown in the graphic below, with Schachter's reading mapped onto them: ^5 with inner voices ^3 and ^1 below, the structural bass elements IV-V-I and ^4-^3 (moving from voice to piano)-^2-^1 with accompanying sixths below, two lines moving up in the voice: ^3-^5, then ^5-^8.

Against that I offer my reading below. The ^5 over ^1 is clear at the outset. Note the string of unstable harmonies with parallel octaves between voice and bass at the same time the voice repeatedly outlines the octave register (C4-C5, D4-D5, F4-F5). The octave, and the space of the octave, are obviously crucial here. The clue, I think, is in the "bell sounds"—the piano left hand crossover pitches, F5 in m. 74, C5 in m. 75, etc., The voice duplicates the piano's notes each time she reaches the word "Getön" (meaning the bell sound): the link between "Getön" on F5 and "Höh[e]n" on F5 is obvious. The piano may have to work the mundane task of the cliché cadence, but the voice has been transported—and that, I would assert, is what this song is all about.

In the *MTS* article, I wrote about the Pietist concept of *Jesussehnsucht* (longing for Jesus) in connection with the funerary chorale "Christus, der ist mein Leben." Here it is not an expression derived from the Protestant notion of personal salvation, but from the Catholic tradition of specifically female figures (usually nuns) yearning for the "heavenly marriage" with Christ. That idea has been merged with simple Romantic nature imagery—in the first verse, she speaks of her fear at a stormy night; in the second verse, the emotion is the turbulence of her yearning for Christ (at the end of this, she calls out for the *himmlischer Bräutigam*); in the final verse, the bell sound seems to clear and calm the air, and she can speak of peace, desire, and heaven.

Schubert obliges with a ballad style and textures and affects that remind one of *Erlkönig*. The first two verses are in F minor, with obsessive emphasis on C5 and Db5 in the voice (see below); the final verse is in F major.

I am hardly finished with the striking features of this song. Contrary to the suggestion in the lines that Schachter quotes, with their "sweet sound" and "eternal heights," the harmonic progressions of the F major verse remain surprisingly tense (at least, unstable) right up to the structural cadence—it is the release in that final rising gesture, going one last time to F5, that enables the harmony to come to peace itself. Some sections of the song look very amenable to transformational readings, and the incessant right hand tremolos reveal a different version of the Riemannian hand [ed: a construct discussed elsewhere in the D779n13 blog]. Perhaps I'll follow up those leads some other day.

Friday, January 29, 2010

Schachter and the rising Urlinie, Part 10

This post continues the discussion of Schubert's ballad "Die junge Nonne" from Part 9. First, a simple, nicely done description of the song through the poem's narrative may be found here, along with a link to a performance: Die junge Nonne.

From the standpoint of thematic reading, an Urlinie running down from ^5 misses too much of what is essential about the dramatic progress of the song in terms of motive and the play of register. "Misses" is not quite right—what I mean is that an analysis grounded on such an Urlinie necessarily misconstrues the song and its elements.

The introduction announces three registers with distinct materials: I've labeled them Bass, Tremolos, and Bell. The voice (system 3) occupies the space between Tremolos and Bell (assuming the singer is meant to be female, a reasonable assumption given the identity of the poem's narrator). The Surprise moment comes in the second system, when to Bell is suddenly appended a motive that is a loose inversion of Bass, drawing attention to the relation of Db and C, which I regard as the crucial design element in the upper most voice, whether that line is in the keyboard or the singer's part. (L in the third system is a Leitton-wechsel transformation, made directly as it could be in Tremolos.)

The static register of the voice—as I wrote in the earlier post, if I were reading this with proto-backgrounds, ^1-^5 would be the overwhelming choice—is pushed against by the same C-Db pair (above), and even more when Db = C# moves again, to D-natural (below). The harmony "breaks," however against "finster," where an R transformation in Tremolos is subverted by the G# in the bass. From that point the harmony moves toward a cadence; D-natural moves down again, finally reaching C; and the pinkie finger in Tremolos retraces its movements down from F# to F-natural.

When all this done, Surprise reappears, now in the voice, immediately after the keyboard's P-transformation (third system below). "Immerhin" here means "always" (or perhaps "constantly"), as the young nun introduces the comparison between the turbulence of the storm and her equally unsettled emotions. This moment of Surprise is remarkable, stands out as an island of calm, and promptly disappears as verse 2 gets underway in earnest.

A motivic detail of interest is Bell, which sounds as D5 but then is gone for several bars until it reappears at the moment of Surprise (below).

The second verse ends like the first, and the third verse, then, expands greatly on the P-transformation and the Surprise moment—see below. The voice keeps pushing upward: C5-then D5-then E5-and-finally-F5 (circled notes), but as it turns out only the initial C5 is stable. E5 is reached at "Friede" but the harmony is C: I 6/4 that remains unresolved—instead, an RP transformation takes it directly to A major (as V of D minor), then to Bb: V7 with the F5. This latter move is a PR transformation *if* you read only the underlying triads.

In all this, there is no suggestion of C5 (or any ^5) taking a significant role, though C4 in the middle of Tremolos does move to C# (enharmonically the Db of the beginning), which in turns drops back to C—a nicely managed motivic statement.

The latter half of verse 3 was discussed in some detail in the previous post. Here I will note that Bell gives us a gesture C5-D5-F5 (connected boxes below), as pinkie Tremolos run from A4 up to D5 (connected circled notes). In Bell, E5 is skipped, not reached; and in Tremolos a reach toward E5 in the voice after the D5 is roundly subverted by Bass, which (finally) drops to Bb to define a functional triad plainly and then fosters the predictable patterns of voice leading to which Schachter draws attention.

Both Bell and Tremolos mark F5 as a goal, as, of course, did Surprise from the outset: C5-Db5 as Sturm, F5 as escaping, surmounting Sturm. In the partial score below, I have marked out the twin unfoldings in the voice part that bring ^6 back to ^5 before the final ascent. Note that *only* here are E5 and F5 stable tones. (Earlier in the song, F5 is in Bell at the Surprise moment, and of course the parallel cadence in 52-61 is set up the same way.)

Saturday, January 30, 2010

Schachter and the rising Urlinie, Part 11

Carl Schachter devotes the fourth section of his article "Schoenberg's Hat" to an assessment of one rising fourth line, ^5-^8 (333-37).

Allowing that "the fourth from ^5 to ^8 is among the most important structures that produce rising contours, sometimes spanning whole formal sections and, especially in short pieces, often forming the high point of an entire melodic line," Schachter says that its close on the tonic note accounts for its status, in part at least. Equally important, however, is the play of registers within the Urlinie and the balance of registers that complements upper with lower. It is these – and not Schoenberg's notion of unitary space—that bring formal and expressive treatment of "inversion" into tonal music. Thus, for Schachter, "the interest and beauty [of such treatments] result as much from the structural and expressive differences between rising and falling lines as from the similarities of shape."

His examples are Bizet, *Carmen*, Act III, "Card Trio"; Bach, WTC 1, Fugue in C-minor; and Chopin, Prelude in E-major. In the first, contrast of direction is linked to an expressive life/death reversal. In the second, the gap opened in the subject is filled by the rising fourth line that leads to the fugue's highest pitch in the third episode; the line reappears in the structural cadence. The "^5-^8 fourth . . . serves as a foil both to the essentially descending subject and to the structural descent of the upper voice as a whole" (335). Finally, the E-major Prelude's obvious closing cadence figure is set into context as follows:

> Although each phrase contains a primarily rising melodic line, the Prelude as a whole maintains a remarkable balance between upward and downward motion. This effect results from the second phrase's powerful climax on Ab (G#), which provides a focal point for the right-hand part. Thus the first phrase and most of the second seem to rise up to this tone, which then falls to the E at the end of the Prelude. The large-scale motion from climax to final note, then, is a descent, even though the immediate path to the final note is an ascent. (337)

I read the last of these the same way in my "Three-Part Ursatz" article (27-28), which Schachter does not cite.

Schachter, it seems to me, mixes together the notion of up/down with registral contrast, which can often be linked with timbral differences and functions of textural layers. In other words, rather as I have argued earlier, Schachter wants to maintain a simple opposition up/down so that he can the more easily choose the marked term and set it against an expressive unmarked term. As a device for interpretation, that tends to oversimplify (constrain) the treatment of register. In the *MTS* article, I discuss how the emphasis on balance of tension (along with a tendency to "naturalize" interpretive goals) links Schachter's practice to that of the literary New Critics of the mid-20th century.

Wednesday, February 3, 2010

Schachter and the rising Urlinie, Part 12

The Conclusion—"Lewis Carroll's Trousers" (337-38)—is decidedly disappointing, despite its apparent promise to drive the sartorial point home, from hats to trousers. Schachter does nothing more than repeat his point with a couple new images—an art historian writing in 1969 saying much what Schachter already did but in reference to shapes in a visual field (how exactly does the visual analogy prove the validity of the visual prop for a musical analogy?). Since asymmetrical figures look different upside down, therefore it is clear that, "in tonal music, with its gravitationally charged pitch space, linear shapes are also 'non-commutative.' In principle, ascent tends to mean beginnings and intensifications, whereas descent means endings and resolutions" (337). Let the marked term stand for all.

I take the charitable way out: Schachter tries an argument by accumulation: repeat your point often enough and it will seem to be proven. Since he had only an opposition to work with, the pendulum could have swung at any time to the unmarked term (the joyful playground of the post-structuralists but also the routine of the hermeneutic critic). Since he was wholly committed to one term, there was no real way to address the issue directly. Just as I assume he refrained from making any jokes about "upside down" to his Australian audience—it was, after all, the experience of sailing around the world that drove home the point for once and all that gravity-as-down was a schema that cultures needed to grow out of (in favor perhaps of center-periphery, one of the schemata in Saslaw's list), or else needed to make far more complex than a simple opposition.

Friday, February 5, 2010

Schachter and the rising Urlinie, Part 13a

Part 13 is the last in this series of posts on Carl Schachter's article "Schoenberg's Hat." In case you've lost track of them all by now, the first post was on 11 January.

The appendix is a set of comments on my *JMT* article "The Ascending Urlinie" (338-39). Schachter spends most of the roughly 1000 words disagreeing with my interpretation of a graphic from Victor Zuckerkandl's *Sound and Symbol,* even suggesting that Zuckerkandl himself didn't take quite the right view of his own graphic. The last two paragraphs acknowledge that two of my readings are convincing, but only in the context of repeating his point about the exception proving the rule. In a lengthy footnote, it is understood that I mis-

read Schenker's statements about the *Bassbrechung* (background I-V-I) in relation to the harmonic series.

I'll discuss the first of these three points here, the others in Parts 13b & c.

Here is Zuckerkandl's graphic, which Schachter reproduces:
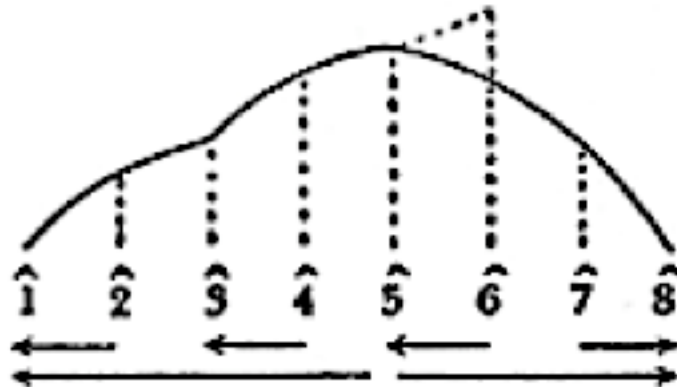
I use Zuckerkandl's distinction between "acoustical space" [movement in pitch space] and "dynamic space" [rise or fall on a tension-relaxation scale] as a way of breaking through the conceptual fourth-species logjam, the style-statistics-driven assertion that descending melodic motions have priority because suspensions resolve downward. Why lines have to obey the same rules as suspensions is never explained, nor why the musics of the 19th century have to obey the rules of the 16th (we can't say it's to preserve a continuity narrative: harmonic practices and ideas about rhetoric and expression, after all, changed radically during the same time period).

Zuckerkandl points to the ^5-^8 "upper half" as potentially rising in acoustical space but falling in dynamic space, and of course I use that in the *JMT* article as one of the justifications for rising lines in a generative mode of linear analysis. Here is Zuckerkandl, cited by Schachter: "the tone ^6 still plays a double role, since it can be heard both as a state in the succession ^5-^6-^7-^8 and as bound to a pointing toward its comparatively stable adjacent tone ^5; the particular circumstances determine whether the meaning 'away from ^5' or the meaning 'toward ^8' preponderates in the step ^5-^6."

Schachter says that the graphic shows "implicitly a far greater bias toward downward resolution in the dynamics of scalar structure than his explicit formulation acknowledges" and "the pull of ^1 is much greater than that of ^8" (339). But Zuckerkandl doesn't imply what Schachter claims: instead, Zuckerkandl says quite directly that "particular circumstances determine whether the meaning 'away from ^5' or the meaning 'toward ^8' preponderates." Schachter misreads Zuckerkandl in order to push a couple "greaters": "a far greater bias" and a "much greater" pull.

In any case, Zuckerkandl's model has firm style-statistical support in 19th century music, especially in the popular genres of dance music, where the play of ^6 and ^5 creates a kind

of tonal androgyny that makes the identity of ^5 and ^6 interchangeable, in "particular cir-
cumstances," exactly as Zuckerkandl says. Eventually (that is, by around 1860 or so, but
firmly and unmistakably by 1910), the two even fuse in the triad with an added sixth.

And it all starts early, in places like D779n13: see the graphic below, where I have written a
narrative of the interplay of ^6 and ^5 in the first strain. The two identities of the scale de-
grees are plainly evident.

Saturday, February 6, 2010

The androgynous ^5 and ^6

This follows from the Schachter series, part 13a, in which I wrote the following:

> [Victor] Zuckerkandl's model [of acoustical and dynamic space in the scalar octave]
> has firm style-statistical support in 19th century music, especially in the popular
> genres of dance music, where the play of ^6 and ^5 creates a kind of tonal androg-
> yny that makes the identity of ^5 and ^6 interchangeable.

In the post, I analyzed D779n13 on those terms. Here are simply a few more score examples
of the play of ^5 and ^6, with the telling moments boxed.

Schubert, D783n2: 1. a simple V9 chord; 2. a delightful (and historically prescient) muddling of scale degrees ^4, ^5, and ^6; 3.& 4. clear division of functions and registers.

Schubert, D779n17: the V9 again in the configuration that becomes a stylistic hallmark of the Viennese waltz through (and beyond) the Strausses: the 9 is sustained (repeated) over the resolution and eventually ^6 drops to ^5, leaving the status of ^6 in both sonorities less than crystal clear.

Schubert, D779n8: 1. ^6 as the upper third to the seventh of V7 (sounds like a variation of the V9 in D783n2 above); but 2. ^6 turns down to ^5 before the resolution (but note the ascending figure in the bass); 3. ^6 as an inner voice moves up to ^8 (^1) in the cadence.

Offenbach, *La belle Hélène*, n18b "Melodrame." This follows and repeats the ending from the rondo "Vénus fond du notre l'àme." We've heard the incessant play of ^5 and ^6 throughout the rondo; there and here, the game is resolved in favor of ^6 and the dynamic space of ^5 rising to ^8.

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Nº 18 bis

MÉLODRAME.

Clar:
Cors.
Piston.

RÉP: le roi Ménélas! A Leucade le gêneur!

PIANO.

P Quatuor.

The Strausses and the androgynous ^5 and ^6

Here are examples from the Strauss clan, not the Johanns, but Eduard and Josef.

The first is a version of Eduard's galop "Über Feld und Wiese" (Over Field and Meadow) published as a polka (schnell) by Herzberg & Greenburgh (New York, 1876). Link to this entry on the LOC site. The tempo of a polka schnell was probably not much less than that of a galop, and therefore one could dance a polka to it, but the musical figures are not at all like those of a polka. (A "slow polka," btw, was called *polka française*.) Link to this piece published as a galop.

In general, Eduard's music tends to be more conservative in its treatment of musical materials than the contemporaneous waltzes of the other Strausses. The first strain here uses quite conventional harmonic progressions, except to end the first phrase (boxed), where a characteristic figure draws ^7 over V down to ^6, and the resulting V9 resolves directly to ^5 over I.

The trio is similar. Here, a "throwaway" ^6 over I (first circle) becomes the ninth in a V9 that again resolves directly (second circle).

The second strain of the Trio is more adventurous in its cadence, finally taking up the implication of the stolid initial motive (first box) and sending the line up to ^8 in a PAC that is far more emphatic than the quick V-I that follows it.

The second example is "Mein Lebenslauf ist Lieb und Lust," a set of waltzes by Josef Strauss, as published in Philadelphia by Louis Meyer (1870). Link to this entry on the LOC site.

In the second strain of the first waltz touches on both ^5 and ^6 over I and over V7.

The second waltz makes the play of ^5 and ^6 its main motif.

The third waltz, however, goes all out as ^5 and ^6 permeate the melody, disappearing only with approach of the final cadence (but note the reference to ^5 and ^6 over V7/V—not marked in the score).

The second strain of waltz 3 uses ^6 and ^5 over I as the melodic answer to ^5 and ^4 over V7, quite common in legato strains. (More common though is ^5 and ^6 over I answering ^7 and ^6 over V7, a favorite gambit of Johann Strauss, jr.)

Monday, February 8, 2010

A proliferation of suspensions

The Strausses destroy the exclusivity of the old suspensions (an idea that lies behind both Zuckerkandl's scale scheme and Schachter's objections to it) by filling their dances with a profusion of accented incomplete neighbors (suspensions, appoggiaturas).

Perhaps one of the most famous examples is the first waltz in *Tales of the Vienna Woods* (Johann Strauss, jr., op. 325). Note that the direction of diatonic suspensions/appoggiaturas isn't changed (as here, they almost always go down) but they are answered by chromatic neighbor notes, which, as here, almost always rise. Thus, not only are all diatonic degree-pairs engaged at some point or another in Strauss waltzes, but the half-step "power" of the

leading tone is represented in the chromatic figures, and this complex balances the diatonic figures.

Note the unusual harmonic link between first and second strain, which continues as below:

Tuesday, February 9, 2010

Toward the androgynous ^5 and ^6

Here are several more examples of characteristic uses of ^6, this time adumbrations of Schubert's later, "androgynous" treatment of ^5 and ^6 in the Ländler repertoire. To give some sense of how characteristic an emphasis on ^6 was in Ländler, six of the first seven in D145 (all improvised/composed no later than 1821) feature it.

In n1, which shifts the typical Ländler key of D major up expressively to Eb, the subdominant embellishment in bar 1 is reinforced in the left hand, and in the second strain a very characteristic use of ^6 appears, as the harmony flirts with an outright V9. (Recall that you can click on the thumbnail to see the original size image.)

In n2, probably meant as the trio for n1, ^6 is offered very directly as a rising melodic embellishment in the first strain.

In n3, the play of ^5 and ^6 generates a simple motif—the pairing of ^3 and ^5, the latter figured with ^6, should seem familiar from D779n13. In the second strain, the subdominant harmony suggested in n1 comes into full bloom, and we also hear the simple ^6 embellishment above I.

In n4, ^6 is an emphatic leap that announces the significance of the upper octave—the strain closes on Db6, not Db5.

In n5, the alternate harmonization, with vi, is prominent, again followed by a characteristic embellishment, the V9. In the second strain, the V9 with its ^6 is given a very direct violinistic treatment, and the ending might well have gone differently—see the alternate cadence below the score.

In n7, ^6 is buried in a trill on ^5, but in the second strain ^6 is again harmonized. The strong pairing of ^5 over ^3 with descending cadence motions (^4 over ^2, and finally (^3 over?) ^1) strongly implies ^3 as the alternate ending shows.

Wednesday, February 10, 2010

The Blue Danube

One of the most memorable treatments of ^5 and ^6 is in the first waltz of *An der schönen, blauen Donau*. Johann Strauss, jr's opus 314 was published in 1867, at the height of his success as a dance composer and conductor and not long before he turned to composing operettas. The design is standard: five waltzes, each of which consists of two strains with both repeated to create a double reprise (waltz-trio-waltz-trio) effect, plus a substantial introduction and a coda that quotes all but the last waltz. The tonal design of the set is also not unusual:

See the piano score for waltz 1, first strain, below. The circles show the expanded treatment of ^5 and ^6, including the "last second" retreat from a tonic with added sixth at the very beginning of the third system. The rectangles sketch my view of the design, which is based on the registral pattern established immediately, then shifted into the upper octave midway through the third system. I would read the strain as derived from a proto-background ^1-^5.

Schenker's desire for a unified, teleological tonal motion leads him to mis-read the first waltz in *Free Composition*: he maps onto the piece a waltz-trio-waltz design with the expected interruption covering the second strain (which is in A major). In fact, the waltz ends in A major because both strains, not just the first, have their reprise (the *alternativo* design already common in Mozart's generation).

William Rothstein uses the first strain as a study object for his exploration of the meaning of the term "phrase." Along the way, Rothstein presents a foreground reduction with bar lines and four-bar "phrase" markings, two levels of durational reductions (after Schachter), and a "standard" Schenkerian graph. He describes the figures of this last as follows:

> The first sixteen measures are ultimately static, ending where they began, with only minimal motion along the way. The gradual ascent that follows picks up from this same point, without which it would lack a firm beginning. The complete tonal motion therefore comprises the entire excerpt: all of it is to be performed " . . . figuratively, in a single breath."

> The most striking feature of this larger motion—and what elevates this unpretentious waltz to high artistic rank—is the broad melodic arpeggiation from the initial ^5 . . . up to the climactic ^3 . . . .One can see how this large arpeggiation mirrors and fulfills the smaller arpeggiations of the several upbeat measures. The ascending sixth [A4-F#5] in mm. 27-28 summarizes the entire ascent in a burst of melodic energy . . . . The concluding melodic descent then gradually dissipates the accumulated

tension.

Rothstein's reading does a good job of following the broad contours of registral (and dynamic) change through this first strain. It certainly improves on Schenker's reading, which ignores the melody of the inner voice to choose ^3 from the repeated quarter note figures in the upper voices; when these figures cease in m. 24, the voice-leading moves into the arpeggio-based melody. This in itself, although peculiar, is not damning because there is indeed a distinct change of texture (and orchestration) at mm. 24-25, but Schenker flattens out the large registral shape that Rothstein shows so clearly—Schenker locates the first Urlinie note at the beginning (m. 3-4) and describes the broad figure reaching F#6 (and then dropping back to F#5 for the cadence) as unfolding, although the far more likely label would be coupling, or middleground registral doubling.

Note: establishing the "priority" text for this famous composition is something of a problem, believe it or not. *An der schönen, blauen Donau* was issued first in May 1867 in an arrangement for solo piano; from August to October of the same year, editions appeared for orchestra, men's chorus and piano, piano four-hands, and violin and piano. In all, between May 1867 and August 1869, fifteen versions were published. The preponderance of early public performances were the version for men's chorus, whose original text is a light inducement to enjoy the Carnival season: it begins "Wiener seid froh," to which the upper-voice ornaments (in the tenors) answer "Oho, wie so?" This banter continues till all the voices join forces for the final phrase and cadence, "Was nutzt des Bedauern, des Trauern? Drum froh und heiter seid!" (*Very* roughly: What good is sadness? Have fun!")

Thursday, February 11, 2010

Schachter and the rising Urlinie, Part 13b

In Part 13a of this series, I responded to one point in the appendix to Carl Schachter's article "Schoenberg's Hat": what I regard as his misreading of a graphic from Victor Zuckerkandl's book *Sound and Symbol*. Here I will respond to a second point, and tomorrow to a third.

The last two paragraphs of the appendix acknowledge that two of my readings are convincing. The pieces are D779n2 and D969n7. In a footnote, Schachter says he still prefers a descending Urlinie from ^3 for D969n7, but that my version is "a plausible alternative" (341n23). The rising line ^5-^8, however, is lumped with other *Urlinien manquées*: "'incomplete' . . . (notably 5-^4-^3) or . . . ending on ^2 [over V]" (339), and these as a group are the exceptions that prove the rule: "their existence in no way diminishes the importance of the norms to which they form exceptions." Those norms:

(a) "tonal melodies come to rest on ^1" ---- or ^8, of course, since ^8 is equivalent (identical, really) in a modal pitch-class space system with octave equivalence. Up/down might be a schema, but octave equivalence has been an element of European pitch systems for a very long time.

(b) "complete harmonic structures end on the tonic chord" ---- but what can "complete" possibly mean apart from actual compositions, where we know that bifocal tonality (La-Rue), double-tonics, and tonally meandering opera szenas or film cues can be found everywhere.

(c) "differences between rising and falling motion reflect fundamental properties of the tonal system" ---- I quite agree with this one, but with two large caveats: (1) I would change "fundamental properties" to "basic expressive properties"; and (2), as this series of posts will have shown, I don't share Schachter's particular notion of "tonal system."

Friday, February 12, 2010

Schachter and the rising Urlinie, Part 13c1

This continues Part 13b and is the final installment in the Schachter series—though, because of length, I have broken it in two, as 13c1 and 13c2. The latter—the final, final installment—will be posted tomorrow.

In a lengthy footnote (341n22), it is understood that I misread Schenker's statements about the *Bassbrechung* (background I-V-I) in relation to the harmonic series.

Here—in condensed form—is what Schenker says in the first two sections of Chapter 2 (The Fundamental Structure)

> In nature sound is a vertical phenomenon [but] art manifests the principle of the harmonic series in a special way, one which still lets the chord of nature shine through. . . . a horizontal arpeggiation.

> This basic transformation of the chord of nature into an arpeggiation must not be confused with the voice-leading transformations of the fundamental structure which occur in the middleground.

> [Section 2 is labeled] The fundamental structure as transmitter of the primary arpeggiation

> In the service of art, the arpeggiation throws off the restrictions of nature and claims the right to assert itself in either an upward or a downward direction. The following two forms represent the briefest and most direct ways for the harmonic series to be realized by human vocal organs: [Fig. 3 shows two arpeggiations through an octave: C3-E3-G3-C4, then C5-G4-E4-C4]

> The upper voice of a fundamental structure, which is the fundamental line, utilizes the descending direction [from Fig. 3]; the lower voice, which is the bass arpeggiation through the fifth, takes the ascending direction [here he refers again to Fig. 1, which shows an Urlinie E5-D5-C5 against a Bassbrechung C3-G3-C3]. As in the natural development of the arpeggiation, the ascending direction is the original one; indeed, in the fundamental structure it serves as a constant reminder of the presence of the chord of nature.

And here is the first of Schachter's two explanations of my "slightly inaccurate account of Schenker's view of bass structure."

> When Schenker, in *Free Composition,* speaks of the bass motion as upward, he refers to the ascent from I to V, but not to a continued ascent up a fourth to the closing I. His Figure 1 and the accompanying discussion on p. 4 make this clear. Thus when Neumeyer (p. 281) says that "the descending fifth from V to I in I-V-I represents what should have been a rising fourth", he is not, I think, reporting what Schenker really means.

True, as far as it goes. Schenker quite deliberately "reverses" the direction of the move from V to I, from ascending as it should do, to descending. This dictum is pointless, however, because, as we shall see tomorrow, Schenker is quite lax about the obligations of obligatory register, so to speak. Yet he is determined to make the bass conform to the principle of obligatory register, and it would seem the reason is that he wants to set up a firm wall between the harmonic origins of the tonal system—he was unequivocal about giving priority to the bass ascent in section 1—and the artistic priorities of the tonal system as he conceives it and as they are contained in the *Ursatz*. My *MTS* article was concerned in part with the suggestion that the wall is permeable (intervals as non-expressive themes generate lines, etc., as expressive themes)—or, really, that the wall is a chimera.

Postscript: It is unfortunate that Allen Cadwallader and David Gagné simply parrot Schachter's assertions in their textbook. That sort of pedagogical hardening is not good for theoretical discourse.

Saturday, February 13, 2010

Schachter and the rising Urlinie, Part 13c2

Schachter's second criticism is that I confused levels. Here is what I wrote:

> it is not just the direction of the motion but the goal of that motion that is important. Schenker accepts this implicitly with respect to the bass arpeggiation, in that he allows it to rise, rather than fall, from the V to the final I, despite his own rule of the obligatory register in the bass. Yet if any voice should be sensitive to motion toward the fundamental, it is certainly the bass! (280)

To which Schachter responds:

> the placement of V below I . . . results from prolongations at later levels, which trans-
> form the underlying shape of the bass arpeggio. Through ascending and descending
> register transfers in the upper voice, Schenker also allows for octave displacements
> of the Fundamental Line's final tone at later levels.

Here I have to say that neither of us apparently understood what Schenker said. I was wrong to tie the *Bassbrechung*-as-expression-of-nature to the obligatory register, and it was Schachter who confused levels. In section 268 of *Free Composition*, Schenker says that obligatory register applies to both upper and lower voices and means a return to a voice's "basic register" (107), which he defines as "the register of the first tone of the fundamental line." His upper-voice examples do refer to the fundamental line; the two lower-voice examples, however, are both foreground details. Still, given the care with which he matches the first and last tonic notes in the bass in the abstract figures, it is reasonable to assume that he meant for the same to be true of the background bass.

Whether or not Schenker intended a background return to the register of the first bass note at the end of a piece, Schachter is clearly incorrect in isolating displacements to later levels. Schenker says on p. 107: "Nevertheless, the final tone of the [*Urlinie*] sometimes appears an octave lower or . . . higher." And the basses in his figures showing readings of pieces vary quite a bit, though more often holding to the configuration of the abstract examples, as in Fig. 7a: C#3-G#3-C#3. But already in Fig. 7b the position of V is reversed: F3-C3-F3. The well-known Fig. 21b (Schumann, "Aus meinen Tränen Spriessen") is interesting in this respect: in the foreground, A4-E3-A3; this becomes A3-E4-A3 in the two middleground graphs. (He does something similar in Fig. 39,2.)

All my theoretical maneuvering in that section of the *JMT* article was irrelevant, I now think, to justification of the rising *Urlinie.* Although Schachter's criticisms are off the mark, the specific justifications from *Free Composition* that he attacks were not very strong, that's clear, especially insofar as they tried to conform to Schenker's own poorly defined notions of the relation of acoustics and art and to his equivocation about register in the background. At the time of the *JMT* article, I didn't have the style statistics in hand that I have accumulated since. From Schenker all I really needed was: "In the service of art, the arpeggiation throws off the restrictions of nature and claims the right to assert itself in either an upward or a downward direction." From this follows a principle of symmetry (the up/down schema is not fundamental but expressive) that is neatly realized in Zuckerkandl's graphic of the major-key scale.

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