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A Phenomenological Approach to Robert Schumann's Fantasie op 17, 1st Movement

A supporting document submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Musical Arts in Music

by

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September 2017

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Pascal Doron Salomon

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ABSTRACT

A Phenomenological Approach to Robert Schumann's Fantasie op 17, 1st Movement

by

Pascal Doron Salomon

Performers often struggle with a discrepancy between conventional music analysis and their own performing experience. While performing, they connect with music through intuition rather than through theoretical representations of the piece. Phenomenology responds to this issue by seeking knowledge of an object through direct experience, understood as consciousness of the object, as opposed to theoretical constructions. Some music scholars have written on this topic, but no performer seems to have studied the philosophical foundations of phenomenology and applied them in a manner accessible to a broad audience of musicians. That is the project I have undertaken in this document.

The piece of music I chose for this undertaking is the fascinating, variously understood first movement of Robert Schumann's Fantasie, op 17. According to the phenomenological method, as defined in chapter 3, I describe the piece on a perceptual level in the subsequent chapters. I provide a link with traditional tools by integrating perceptual aspects of conventional analysis. Starting at the micro-level, the description progressively zooms out until a unified view of the piece emerges. Throughout the process, tension profiles visually render the perceptual experience.

This approach proposes that there is a main force, different from the thematic opposition underlying sonata form, which governs the overarching tension in the movement. This main force is a motif that initially seems peripheral because it appears as an adjunct to the other themes, but it actually constitutes the central shaping force of the piece. Overall, I discovered that interacting phenomenologically with music progressively shapes one's mind such that musical relationships become the primary focus.

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PART I: GENERAL APPROACH TO PHENOMENOLOGY

Chapter 1: What is Phenomenology?

I. General introduction to phenomenology

Phenomenology is a general approach to epistemology and knowledge, an attitude more than a science or a theory. The term itself is rooted in the concept of “phenomenon” or *phainómenon* in Greek: “that which appears.” The study of what appears to us, the investigation of how we perceive things and how we attain the knowledge of them, the search for foundational epistemology—all these very general definitions circumscribe an immensely wide scope of activities and applications. Disciplines as diverse as the social sciences, mathematics, logic, political science, morals, and the arts are approachable through the phenomenological attitude, in which one endeavors to study both the object and the way one perceives it. Phenomenology tackles the difficult challenge of combining objectivity and subjectivity within a specific field of investigation. In doing so, it tackles the study of structures of consciousness as phenomena are experienced from the first-person point of view.

Experience is often the core of human activity and knowledge. If I visit a painting exhibition, I will probably not recall all the paintings. However, some stylistic

aspects or some specific paintings will touch me and captivate my attention. The way I relate to the event and the way it speaks to me constitute most of its “significance-for-me.” The ways I will share my experience with others will probably be grounded in these personal aspects. All these things will define my knowledge of it. Phenomenology studies the way we experience things, acknowledging that experience is the root of the knowledge we have of them.

Music addresses par excellence our personal experience. There is no tangible material outcome or verbalized psychic imprint in the world once a piece of music has been performed, or even during its performance. Only the listener’s impression remains to witness its existence and character. Sounds themselves wouldn’t be music without a listener interacting with them in a personal way and living a subjective experience while they are sounding in a specific and unique context.¹ From this perspective, music exists only through the medium of human subjectivity giving meaning to the sounds.

Here we face one of the big issues Western civilization has been wrestling with: the traditional split between subjectivity and objectivity. Philosophers such as René Descartes, John Locke and Immanuel Kant debated this difficult topic. Of course, in music, the physical reality of sounds is objective: frequency, dynamic, amplitude and duration of sounds are measurable. However, these sounds become

¹ The German composer Herbert Brün writes: “I use the word *composition* whenever I wish to speak of the composer’s activity and the traces left by it. The composer is motivated by a wish of bringing about that without him and human intent would not happen.” Herbert Brün, *When Music Resists Meaning: The Major Writings of Herbert Brün* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2004), 289.

music only when a human presence is there to perceive them as such. Indeed, the role of a musician is to give a human meaning to these acoustic entities, thereby bridging objectivity and subjectivity. In fact, scientific studies of musicians showed that their *corpus callosum* (responsible for data transfer between the two hemispheres of the brain) is significantly bigger than in others,² which means that they develop a specific skill in working constantly across the intuitive and the rational areas.

Phenomenology stands precisely at the juncture of those two areas. Judith Lochhead describes the approach used by the father of phenomenology: “Husserl denies the subject/object split and proposes instead a notion of phenomena which is based on the epistemological adequacy of experience: the phenomena of consciousness ground a complete knowledge of the world.”³ Applied to music, phenomenology aims at bridging one’s subjective experience with the objectivity of sounds produced.

Regarding subjectivity, an initial observation is that we perceive phenomena (things as they appear in our mind) through consciousness. Consciousness is the window to the outside world, allowing us to be aware of things and events, of life and beings, including ourselves. Even before the very first emotion or thought, “I am aware.”

² Schlaug, Jänke, Huang, Staiger & Steinmetz. “Increased Corpus Callosum Size in Musicians,” *Neuropsychologia* vol. 33, No 8 (1995): 1047.
http://www.musicianbrain.com/papers/Schlaug_CCallosum_1995b.pdf

³ Judith Lochhead, “The Temporal Structure of Recent Music: A Phenomenological Investigation” (PhD dissertation, State University of New York at Stony Brook, 1982), 101.

The definition of consciousness is one of the most difficult and ambiguous.

The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy teases out two widely embraced visions of the concept:

The two broad, traditional and competing theories of mind are “dualism” and “materialism” (or “physicalism”). While there are many versions of each, the former generally holds that the conscious mind or conscious mental state is non-physical in some sense, whereas the latter holds that, to put it crudely, the mind is the brain, or is caused by neural activity.⁴

Regardless of how I define consciousness on philosophical grounds, the fact is that I am conscious of things; I am alive to the world and take part in it by experiencing phenomena and interacting with them. In fact, my consciousness is not something independent of the world. I am always “conscious of something,” which philosophers call the *intentional* quality of my consciousness.⁵

Two sorts of entities are now in the foreground: the phenomena (the objects as they appear to me) and my consciousness (the ego which perceives the objects). How do they interact and allow me to experience something for what it is and in its most essential ways? The phenomenological investigation provides answers through studying the structures of experience and of consciousness.

⁴ “Consciousness,” Rocco J. Gennaro, Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, accessed December 29, 2015. <http://www.iep.utm.edu/consciou/>

⁵ “If I think about a piano, something in my thought picks out a piano. If I talk about trees, something in my speech refers to trees. This feature of thoughts and words, whereby they pick out, refer to, or are about things, is intentionality.... In a word, intentionality is *aboutness*.” (“Intentionality”, Cathal O’Madagain, Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, accessed December 29, 2015. <http://www.iep.utm.edu/intentio/>)

See pp 6-8 for the phenomenologists’ perspective on intentionality.

II. The main roots of Husserl's phenomenology

Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) established the modern discipline of phenomenology, building upon major landmarks laid down by two predecessors, Kant and Brentano.

A. Kant: the 'noumenon-phenomenon' dualism

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) underscored the dualism between the sensorial world and the world of reason. Through senses we perceive things; they appear in our mind, channeled through our individual and subjective perception. Through understanding, we might conceive things independently of our perception. In other words, through sight, hearing and other senses, persons and objects appear to my subjective perception, while through mental and abstract constructions I have access to ideas and concepts. I *perceive* the sound colors of a Debussy Prelude, whereas I *know* that Alberti bass is a constituent of classical style. Kant calls the first species "phenomenon" (things as they appear in our mind), and the second species "noumenon" (things we apprehend by thought, which do not depend on our perception or senses).

Kant claims that although "the noumenal holds the contents of the intelligible world, man's speculative reason can only know phenomena and can never penetrate to the noumenon."⁶ In other words, we can only know the appearances of

⁶ Encyclopedia Britannica, Noumenon. Accessed January 22, 2016 <http://britannica.com/topic/noumenon>

things and we can never be sure that the way things are perceived is how they really are.

[T]he objects so known [through the senses] are still only “appearances”...They are appearances because all sensing is conditioned by the presence, in sensibility, of the forms of time and space, which are not objective characteristics or frameworks of things but “pure intuitions.”⁷

B. Brentano: defining intentionality

The German philosopher and psychologist Franz Brentano (1838-1917) became famous for reintroducing the scholastic concept of intentionality into contemporary philosophy, as we’ll see below. But to understand his view of intentionality, we must consider Brentano’s comparison of Aristotle and Kant on the subject of man’s relationship to knowledge and reality.

Some background is in order. For Aristotle, objects remain independent and unaffected by consciousness: the mind functions as a transparent agent receiving knowledge from objects in the world, and we always get a subjective perception of things that exist beyond our limited subjective realm.⁸ (The table I see is only a representation of the ideal Table existing somewhere although it is inaccessible to me). For Kant, the mind interacts with information received;

⁷ Encyclopedia Britannica, Immanuel Kant p.3. Accessed January 22, 2016 <http://britannica.com/biography/Immanuel-Kant/Early-years-of-the-professorship-at-Konigsberg>. Kant was the first philosopher to use the term “phenomenology.” He did so in response to the suggestion of his correspondent, the Swiss mathematician J.H. Lambert (1728–1777). In fact, at one point he had initially used the label “General Phenomenology” to describe the vast project of investigating the limitations of phenomena (human perception of things) as opposed to noumena (absolute reference), which later became his major work, *The Critique of Pure Reason*.

⁸ In fact, Aristotle inherits from Socrates and Plato’s Theory of Forms.

therefore, the knowledge of things is inevitably shaped by the perception or consciousness. (All what I know is the table before my eyes, and I cannot know if there is an ideal Table somewhere). Brentano leans toward Aristotelian philosophy and believes that “objects remain separate and unaffected by consciousness, even as consciousness interacts with them.”⁹ He recognizes that even abstract objects of thought appear “in consciousness,” which seems to raise a contradiction: how can things be inside of the mind but still be independent from the mind?

In response to this challenge, Brentano proposes a groundbreaking outlook on the inherited concept of intentionality. He focuses on the “*mentally* configured object, not the physical object.”¹⁰ As a result, the object in itself exists and is not affected by my interaction with it while I am focusing on its form in my mind and not on its objective essence outside of me. Intentionality is this directedness of my mind or focus that for me defines the object. Looking at a table, I focus on the contemplated table as it appears in my mind, not the actual table. I am not interested in the existence or non-existence of the object itself.¹¹ From Brentano’s

⁹ Lawrence Ferrara, *Philosophy and the Analysis of Music: Bridges to Musical Sound, Form and Reference* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991), 56.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, 57.

¹¹ “Every mental phenomenon is characterized by what the Scholastics of the Middle Ages called the intentional (or mental) existence of an object, and what we might call, though not wholly unambiguously, reference to a content, direction towards an object (which is not to be understood here as meaning a thing) or immanent objectivity. Every mental phenomenon includes something as object within itself, although they do not all do so in the same way. In presentation, something is presented, in judgement something is affirmed or denied, in love loved, in hate hated, in desire desired and so on.”
Franz Brentano, *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, ed. & trans. Oskar Kraus and Linda L. McAlister (New York: Routledge, 1995), 88.

concept of intentionality arises the famous expression “being conscious is being conscious about something” and its resulting neologism “aboutness.”

III. The Phenomenology of Husserl

Husserl’s initial field was logic and mathematics (in which he earned a Ph.D. in 1883), and his first publications investigated the philosophical aspect of mathematics and logic.¹² In 1900 and 1901, Husserl lays the foundations of phenomenology in the two-volume masterwork, *Logical Investigations*.¹³

A. Refining the definition of consciousness

Husserl inherits Brentano’s view of consciousness and expands its scope. Brentano had focused on the distinction between the mental act and the object itself: “Consciousness is characterized by intentionality insofar as it is always directed toward something.”¹⁴ Husserl asserts that consciousness *is* our intentionality:

¹² *On the Concept of Numbers, Psychological Analyses* (1887), and *The Philosophy of Arithmetic. Psychological and Logical Investigations* (1891).

¹³ All of Husserl’s other writings are connected and overlap in their fields of study. His other major works are:

- *Philosophy as Rigorous Science and Philosophy and the Crisis of European Man* (1911).
- *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology* (1913).
- *First Philosophy, Vol 2: Phenomenological Reductions* (1923–24).
- *First Philosophy Vol 1: Critical History of Ideas* (1925).
- *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness* (1928) is a compilation of lectures and studies between 1905 and 1910.
- *Cartesian Meditations* (1931).

¹⁴ Ferrara, 75.

“Consciousness is not a thing; consciousness is its function.”¹⁵ It “is constituted by the objects to which it points or intends”¹⁶ and only by them. In other words, “consciousness is always and in every instance, being conscious of something.”¹⁷ It is a connecting function inherent in us, not a specific organ of the mind.

B. Studying the structures of consciousness and of experience

Husserl breaks ground in his view of how true knowledge is accessible: experience has an epistemological value, and it contains in itself the ability to unite the subject who experiences with the object that is experienced. Moreover, he claims that “phenomenology is a radical empiricism because it grounds knowledge only on experience, while rejecting assumptions.”¹⁸

Since we perceive things primarily through consciousness, it is essential to understand what the structures of consciousness are and to work accordingly. Husserl’s phenomenology is the study of structures of consciousness from the first-person standpoint. It focuses on describing how phenomena are formed in my mind and how external objects are perceived by my consciousness,¹⁹ believing that subjectivity is the only way to knowledge, if adequately prepared. In the following

¹⁵ Ibid., 59.

¹⁶ Ibid., 59.

¹⁷ Ibid., 59.

¹⁸ Lochhead, 102.

¹⁹ In this document, the specific ‘I’ and the general ‘we’ are interchangeable. Husserl’s view about true knowledge is embraced: the subjective ‘I’ has to be the ground of knowledge, and vice-versa, universal knowledge is the result of all our subjective perceptions brought in agreement.

pages, we will expose what this preparation consists of and examine some major aspects of our consciousness' structure.

1. Epoché

Responding to Kant's dilemma between limited phenomenon and inaccessible noumenon, Husserl proposes another approach: since we cannot have experiential access to absolute knowledge, we need to "bracket out" considerations about any objective reality of the object²⁰ and focus instead on the perception in our mind (phenomenon). He calls this attitude "Epoché" (from the Greek ἐποχή *epokhē*: suspension). I am to suspend my judgment about the reality of the object outside of my experience, and focus on the object as I perceive it. It entails that I set aside any assumptions and beliefs about the object. This attitude is particularly significant in music: musicians usually don't claim to reach the objective truth about music they play. Music occurs for me when tones are re-composed inside of me so that I can identify musical connections between them. Then, these sounds performed *outside* of me form a unified entity *inside* of me; they bear a meaning and become music *for me*. It is a living process by its very essence, which is personal and subjective. Intellectual considerations (such as beliefs in theories or in how things should be) while I am listening might impede my direct relationship with the music flow. When someone performs Beethoven's *Appassionata* Sonata, I need to be open to how the music speaks to me; I need to leave aside my own conception of the piece, lest I

²⁰ The expression "bracket out" describes the action of identifying and setting aside assumptions that we may have.

miss other possible aspects of the work. It seems that Epoché is unavoidable in order to live out a musical experience.

2. Eidetic Reduction

The word “eidetic” has a Greek etymology: *eidos* = essence. In order to have access to true knowledge, Husserl proposes a second mental process, which consists of stripping away every non-fundamental aspect of the experienced object in order to re-constitute the object through its essential characteristics. The eidetic reduction “refers to a procedure of bracketing, or setting aside, the contingent particulars, or irrelevant details, that are attached to a given object, and of focusing, instead, on its essential principles—the features of a thing that make it be that kind of thing, and without which it could not be that kind of thing.”²¹

This process is easy to apply to physical objects: “what makes a yellow thing yellow is its color; its size and shape are utterly irrelevant...what makes a square thing square is its shape, with its color and size receding into insignificance.”²² Non-material objects can be more difficult to process with this technique, as the notion of “being essential” is more complex. Once I have set aside my possible assumptions about what the *Appassionata* Sonata is, I listen openly to the music. However, I might be distracted by the performer’s outlook, by his outfit, by the technical challenges, by one note that is out of pitch, or by the beautiful sound of the Steinway piano. I need instead to focus on the essential features of the work: its thematic

²¹ David Detmer, *Phenomenology Explained: From Experience to Insight* (Chicago: Carus Publishing Company, 2013), 64.

²² Ibid.

aspects, its rhythms and meters, its harmonic aspects, its structure. These elements drive my musical attention through the piece and pertain to the essence (or *eidos*) thereof.

The combination of Epoche and Eidetic Reduction forms what Husserl calls Phenomenological Reduction, which he believes allows access to true knowledge.

EPOCHE + EIDETIC REDUCTION = PHENOMENOLOGICAL REDUCTION

3. Internal Time-Consciousness

Husserl views time as a fundamental element of human life, and therefore studies closely the structures of consciousness related to time. He tries to define how one processes past, present and future. His investigations are presented in *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*, which contains principles crucial to our research because the essential nature of music is temporal.

The first observation is that there is a discrepancy between the physical time (years, months, days and hours) and the time we perceive. According to the way I live through specific events, I may perceive time as long or short. A span of fifteen minutes spent in a fascinating discussion with my best friend seems short, while the same time spent in a daily chore seems long. It appears that my perception of time is related to the way my consciousness is engaged. This time perceived subjectively is called “phenomenological time.”

A second observation is that my consciousness can apprehend an event that unfolds through time (e.g. music, drama, film, speech, a stroll in the countryside,

etc.) as a united entity.²³ Husserl calls such event a “temporal object.” He also calls “specious present” that fragment of time perceived as united by the oneness of the event it contains. I can refer to *the* time during which I listened to a certain piece of music. Even though it’s technically composed of a multitude of “now moments,” I experience it phenomenologically as “one.”

In order to give an account of the temporal nature of our consciousness, Husserl coins the term “flow of consciousness.” Because I am constantly aware and I live in a temporal world, my consciousness lives uninterruptedly through time. In that sense, my consciousness is like a river ever flowing.

How do my consciousness and temporal objects relate? My flow of consciousness is able to embrace a temporal object during its temporal manifestation, possibly without interruption. My direct connection with the thing itself is then expanding over time, and both are merging into a sort of unity.

Husserl further studies the structures of human’s consciousness-through-time and describes the process by which one can transform a multiplicity of “now moments” into a “specious moment.” Fortunately for musicians, he does so using musical sounds—a single tone and a melody—as examples of temporal objects.

i. A single tone

Any musical tone has a certain duration. In Husserl’s terms, “Every tone itself has a temporal extension: with the actual sounding I hear it as now. With its

²³ My relationship with the event appears as a ‘continued-over-time’ connection.

continued sounding, however, it has an ever new now, and the tone actually preceding is changing into something past. Therefore, I hear at any instant only the actual phase of the tone, and the Objectivity of the whole enduring tone is constituted in an act-continuum which in part is memory, in the smallest punctual part is perception, and in a more extensive part expectation.”²⁴ This description reveals the very structure of consciousness that allows the reconstitution of a temporal object (lasting tone) into a transcendent temporal object (while being perceived in a timely manner, transcends the succession of now-moments).

Husserl identifies two specific features of our consciousness-through-time’s structure that allow this reconstitution:

- 1) The past is constituted by “retention” and “recollection.” Retention (or primary remembrance) is the memory of a “just elapsed moment,” of a moment belonging to the same specious present. For me, this moment is still part of the present because I associate it to the same event. The perception of the sameness of a continuing note is an intuitive act of the mind. I don’t take a time interval apart to deduce that the note I am continuing to hear is the same. Husserl gives the image of “a comet’s tail which is joined to actual perception,”²⁵ the comet being the now-perceived moment and its tail being the just-passed-and-related-to-now moment. The “recollection” (or secondary remembrance) of past memories is different from retention: while recalling

²⁴ Edmund Husserl, *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*, ed. M. Heidegger & transl. J. Churchill (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964), 43-44.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 57.

- past objects not connected to the same specious present, I make a specific act of the mind, and in a way, I disconnect myself from the now-moment.
- 2) The future is constituted by “protention” and “anticipation.” Protention is the expectation I have of the next moment, given what I am experiencing now. I have been hearing the tone sounding until now, and at any moment I am looking toward the next moment in an attitude of expectation: the tone can either last more, or change, or just stop. I am projecting myself into the just-next moment, in connection with the now-moment. It is different from anticipation. Anticipating future moments is not connected with the now-moment. Rather, I need to detach myself from it and leap over time into a different state of mind. Protention and anticipation belong both to the physical future, but only protention belongs to the same phenomenological time (or specious present).

ii. A melody

The situation of a melody is similar to that of a single note; the duration of the same tone is replaced by a succession of tones belonging to the same melodic line. However, the process of combining the successive elements into one single entity is more complex and requires a specific structure: “That several successive tones yield a melody is possible only in this way, that the succession of psychological processes are

united forthwith in a common structure. They are in consciousness one after the other, but they fall within one and the same common act.”²⁶

As a result, and more generally, Husserl has a view of the future, present and past that differs from the natural and usual view of a mere succession. He rejects the commonsense view that, since the past is no longer, and the future is not yet, we can only be perceptively aware of the present. Rather, he holds that the present is always in dynamic relation to both the past and future. The past and future are part of the horizon of the present.”²⁷ This specific connective ability of our consciousness-through-time (or time-consciousness) is what allows us to perceive a succession of tones in a holistic way, as a melody, and to transform a sonic noumenon (sounds with no specific interaction and outside of my personal sphere) into a melody phenomenon (psychologically related musical notes that combine into a meaning for me). As David Detmer puts it, “My successive perceptions of the first, second and third notes of a melody would seem separate, without the connective tissue provided by protention and retention.... Without such time-consciousness, the constitution of an object, as a unity that is sustained against the manifold of its appearances, would be impossible.”²⁸

²⁶ Ibid., 41

²⁷ Detmer, 122.

²⁸ Ibid., 125.

4. Intersubjectivity

Although each experience is personal and subjective, there is something in common among individuals. We can all share the same physical space and the same acoustic vibrations of a Rachmaninoff Prelude, and all be touched by its poetry, passion, or nostalgia. All our subjective and individual experiences of the same object (Rachmaninoff's Prelude) share common traits. Our personal perceptions thus intersect. This intersection of our subjectivities is what Husserl and his successors call *intersubjectivity*.

IV. Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology

Husserl's attitude regarding *epoché* appears as extremely radical. He considers "Transcendental Ego" (collective or universal consciousness, consciousness of man in general) as the core of his fundamental quest: through phenomenological reduction, consciousness can reach transcendence and access the true and objective essence of phenomena. However, the complete removal of cultural and education background seems very difficult—maybe utopian. Regarding music, Western culture evolved its musical syntax through intervals and scales, consonances and tonalities, rhythms and meters. With this cultural background, composers conceived music and performers studied their works. It does not seem possible to discard the fundamental elements of our musical language. Husserl's disciple, Heidegger, views radical *epoché* as inapplicable and proposes a helpful alternative.

Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) was the most brilliant philosophic mind to understand and embrace Husserl's phenomenology.²⁹ He was motivated by the same quest for transcendental knowledge (the knowledge of what is beyond our subjective perception). However, he expanded Husserl's search of the "Transcendental Ego," which he named "Being" (universal consciousness), as opposed to "being" (individual consciousness).³⁰ Heidegger posed the more fundamental questions of what is "Being" and what is "being".

As a community of human beings, we all experience the same fundamental reality that *we are*. Since we all experience this same absolute and non-circumstantial phenomenon, there must be a universal life-phenomenon overarching our individual experiences and of which we participate. Heidegger calls it "Being." He calls "being" the principle ruling each human life, perceived as deriving from this fundamental "Being"-phenomenon.

As another fundamental observation, Heidegger notes that our quality of being is intrinsically linked to the world. Human beings are *in* the world. Therefore, those two components define us: "being" as a non-circumstantial phenomenon, and "being in the world". Heidegger coins a specific term for this double quality: *Dasein* (*Da* meaning *here*, *sein* meaning *being*).

²⁹ In 1919, Heidegger became the master's assistant at Freiburg University, and in 1933 was promoted rector.

³⁰ Heidegger's fundamental question, "What is Being?" became the recurrent quest of his life. "Being" and "being" constituted the core of his main work, "Being in Time," published in 1927.

As a result of our Dasein quality, it is only as being-in-the-world and from that perspective that we observe phenomena and try to find their essences.

Consequently, if any absolute truth characterizes the observed phenomena, we cannot attain it, but only the subjective perception of them. In other words, Husserl's Transcendental Ego can no longer be the goal.

Heidegger proposes an alternative to Husserl's phenomenology: *hermeneutic phenomenology*. Man is to recognize his subjective view of the world, to seek to describe phenomena and find their essence by using his subjective and worldly view. The search is still to find out what the thing is and not what it is believed to be (phenomenon versus noumenon); the phenomenon is still meant to reveal itself through description. However, the description does not reject cultural and historical references; the things that I perceive have a meaning for me which relates to my previous life experiences. When hearing a C-major chord, I am entitled to identify it as what I have learned to be a C-major chord and to call it so. The significance of things I perceive is related to my cultural background, and therefore to the way I interpret them.

Chapter 2: Selected Scholarly Approaches to Music Phenomenology

In this chapter, I will review selectively the contributions of two major scholars in music phenomenology: Alfred Schutz and Thomas Clifton. They mostly built on Husserl's foundations. Their views and approaches enriched my research, and therefore will serve as a bridge toward defining my own method.

I. Alfred Schutz: "Fragments on the Phenomenology of Music"

Alfred Schutz (1899–1959) was an Austrian social scientist. He studied Husserl's writings intensely and visited the master often,¹ which led him to apply phenomenological concepts to the social sciences. Schutz was also educated in music and developed ideas on a phenomenology of music.

In "Fragments on the Phenomenology of Music," he reformulates and extends Husserl's descriptions of retention and protention.² Schutz innovates new and stimulating terms: inner time, vivid present, stream of consciousness³, and invokes terms and concepts coined by Henri Bergson: *temps vécu* (time lived through), *durée* (duration), tension of consciousness. The core of the study is the temporal aspect of music perception. Schutz investigates if and how human consciousness can turn different temporal fragments into a unified perception. He

¹ Schutz gained high recognition from Husserl, who asked him to be his assistant at Freiburg University. Schutz declined the offer for personal reasons.

² The essay was edited in 1976 from a manuscript written in July 1944, which Schutz had not intended for publication.

³ Schutz's stream of consciousness is similar to Husserl's flow of consciousness.

focuses on melody, and proposes a six-note melodic fragment for his practical investigations. Schutz describes our perception of a musical theme, notably by identifying repetition versus difference and identifying musical articulations. Our personal interaction with these music phenomena is analyzed through the interplay of retention and protention, and through the disposition of our mind regarding what he calls the stream of consciousness.

First, Schutz describes our lived experience as a *stream* in which consciousness follows the events we go through. He calls inner time (or *durée* in Bergson's terminology) the phenomenological time that Husserl had described: different from the time measured by a clock, and related to the subjective way we perceive the event. Schutz reminds us that physical time is always associated with a physical motion (moon evolving around the earth, earth evolving around the sun, hand of a clock turning around, etc.).⁴ Then, remarking that the stream of our thoughts is uninterrupted, he describes the two attitudes we can take:

[W]e may say that we can swim with the stream. Then we are living in our thoughts, in our acts, and we are directed toward the objects of our thoughts or acts; or, we may stop swimming with the stream, we may step out of its current, bring it to a standstill, and look back in what is called an attitude of reflection toward the past phrases of the stream of our thought.⁵

As a second step, Schutz synthesizes Husserl's view of internal time-consciousness.⁶ He identifies the same four categories of temporal events (and re-labels one of them): retention, reproduction (instead of recollection), protention, and

⁵ Alfred Schutz, ed. Fred Kersten, "Fragments on the Phenomenology of Music," *Music and Man* vol.2 (1976): 38.

⁶ See chap. 1 pp. 14-15

anticipation. On the one hand, he notes that “the two remembrance features, retention and reproduction, are equally important for the constitution of musical experience.” On the other hand, he believes that retention and anticipation are not equally fulfilled, even though they both relate to our sense of expectation: more musical events are likely to meet retention than anticipation. Especially in tonal music, we can often guess the rest of a phrase according to how it started.

Then, Schutz studies how we can interact with a piece of music and build a unified perception. He highlights the fact that music unfolds through time, which has consequences for how we can perceive its essence. He notices that the meaning of music cannot be grasped at one single glance:

At best, we can grasp in one single ray [glance] the content which the work of music conveys, the particular mood or emotion it evokes in us, or its inner form ...The work of music itself, however, can only be recollected and grasped by reconstituting the polythetic steps in which it has been built up,⁷ by reproducing mentally or actually its development from the first to the last bar as it goes on in time.... In other words, the specific existence of the ideal object, “work of music”, is its extension in time.⁸

As a practical experiment, we are given a six note sequence: “C, D, E, C, D, D.” The durations are not specified, but we understand that they are long enough to allow tone-to-tone musical connections. Schutz describes the retention-retention process that connects each new note to the previous ones. When C recurs, we look back on our just-past experience and identify the three previous notes [C, D, E] as a unit. When the following D appears, we expect the repetition of the same unit, and

⁷ A polythetic class in social sciences is a group of individuals who share common features, without being similar in nature; their common features allow them to belong to a certain class, but they could also be associated with different groups. Polythetic is opposed to monothetic, which refers to a group of individuals who are similar in their essence; they belong to the same group because of their similarity.

⁸ Schutz, 29.

therefore expect E. Instead, D is repeated. We understand, then, that the theme is not the initial three-note unit [C, D, E], but rather the six-note unit [C, D, E, C, D, D]. Schutz highlights how retention and protention work. We experience what an “attitude of reflection toward the past experience” can be, as opposed to “swimming in the stream of consciousness.”

Another fundamental aspect of perception treated in the essay is repetition. Schutz observes that from a performative and experiential standpoint, pure repetition doesn't maintain the flow of musical experience because there is no contrast, even in the slightest sense. He returns to the six-note sequence [C, D, E, C, D, D] and notices that, in this case, performers give less emphasis to the last note than to the penultimate one: “The same occurrence, if repeated, is not experienced as strictly the same, it is not even experienced as being a like [similar] experience. Our mind has changed—infinitesimally, but nevertheless, changed—by already having once pre-experienced the tone D in the same context.”⁹ These observations are crucial for performers, as they stimulate the search for meaningful ways to repeat the same music materials.

The last fundamental analysis offered in Schutz's essay is the phenomenological description of musical units called articulations. He describes how we perceive our six-tone fragment as a melodic unit:

[W]hat we really described is the experience of a person having listened to this sequence of tones, having apperceived it as a unit (called a theme), having stopped to listen to what follows, or even to expect that anything will follow, but having turned back to what he experienced and having asked himself what happened in his consciousness while he was listening. That means that the analysis offered is an analysis in hindsight. The mechanism of interlaced

⁹ Ibid., 52.

retentions only becomes visible for an attitude of reflection.... We are ... no longer living *in* our acts of listening ... We have brought this flux [the stream of our consciousness] to a seeming standstill.¹⁰

Schutz questions, additionally, why we perceive a sequence or an articulation as such. He explains that in the interplay of retention and protention, we find ourselves most of the time in a place where our inner tension is pulled forward. However, when reaching the end of a unit, the movement of our thoughts comes to a “resting place” and senses in the moment the character of “virtual finality” in relation to the whole passage. These observations draw our attention to musical articulations in general. We understand how the mental operations of retention and protention guide our perception of the musical structure.

In a more philosophical view, these reflections lead Schutz to glimpse a possible musical meaning, not based on theoretical and verbal standards, but in an experiential way: “An experience while occurring, that is, while we are living it, does not have any meaning; only the past experiences toward which we may turn back, are meaningful.”¹¹ Therefore he gives us a possible definition: “Meaning is nothing else but the attitude of the experiencing mind towards its past experiences. Only the past, therefore, is meaningful.”¹² Thus, through protention and retention it is the

¹⁰ Ibid., 58.

¹¹ Ibid., 61.

¹² Ibid., 62.

Leonard B. Meyer (1918-2007) defines musical meaning in similar terms: “Embodied musical meaning is, in short, a product of expectation. If, on the basis of past experience, a present stimulus leads us to expect a more or less definite consequent musical event, then that stimulus has meaning.”

Leonard Meyer, *Emotion and Meaning in Music* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956) 35

interplay of our consciousness between the present and the past that allows us to posit a possible meaning for music.

In focusing solely on melody, Husserl's and Schutz's phenomenological descriptions of music are limited. Schutz describes in detail the subjective interaction of consciousness with a melodic fragment, but the other musical parameters are neglected; Husserl examines a melody in general and does not provide any concrete experience. Thomas Clifton, however, extends the scope to other musical elements in his article "Music as a Constituted Object." There, he analyses Schoenberg's Bagatelle for String Quartet op. 9 no. 1, and lays out an image of overarching musical tension based not only on melodic aspects, but also on dynamics and texture. He observes how these combined parameters create a sense of motion, a sense of space, and therefore feelings. After reviewing some key aspects of Clifton's major work *Music as Heard: A Study in Applied Phenomenology*, we will review his article's practical example.

II. Thomas Clifton: "Music as Heard: A Study in Applied Phenomenology"¹³

This book stands as one of the classics in phenomenology applied to music. Thomas Clifton (1935-1978) helps us understand better what phenomenology means.¹⁴ He reminds us that it is not so much a method as a way of thinking. He

¹³ Thomas Clifton, "Music as Heard: A Study in Applied Phenomenology" (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983).

This book was posthumously published in 1983.

¹⁴ Clifton died unfortunately on June 15, 1978, in an untimely manner and in obscure circumstances. He had been Assistant Professor in the Music Theory Department at University of Michigan.

even declines to give a clear definition and rather tries to focus on phenomenological thinking:

There is, of course, a method behind this venture [of phenomenology], but... I have chosen to illustrate it obliquely, by maintaining a phenomenological attitude within the descriptive work..."Doing" phenomenology has been found to be more helpful than writing yet another manifesto about it.¹⁵

Clifton seeks a holistic experience of music. He tries to integrate all the components of both sides of the experience: the human and the musical. He observes his feelings and his visual and aural perceptions, and endeavors to combine melody, harmony, rhythm, dynamics and texture in his descriptions of musical experience. He points out the centrality of musical relationships, which will be the core of my research. As Richard Palmer puts it, the meaning of a work "is not an objective, eternal idea but something that arises in relationships."¹⁶ Musical relationships will be the systematic quest I will pursue in the analysis of Schumann's Fantasy.

An important perceptual aspect that Clifton develops is the correspondence between time and space. He notices that we often use spatial and visual terms in order to give an account of our musical perception: we speak of high, low, sharp, rounded, pointed, bright, dark, etc. For Clifton, synesthesia is part of everyone's abilities in regard to sound and image. He refers to the French philosopher and phenomenologist Merleau-Ponty:

¹⁵ Clifton, 18.

¹⁶ Richard Palmer, *Hermeneutics* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1969) 227. R. Palmer (born in 1933) is Emeritus Professor of Philosophy and Religion, specialized in Hermeneutics, and Scholar in Residence at MacMurray College, Jacksonville, Illinois.

Synesthetic perception is the rule, and we are unaware of it only because scientific knowledge shifts the center of gravity of experience, so that we have unlearned how to see, hear, and generally speaking, feel, in order to deduce, from our bodily organization and the world as the physicist conceives it, what we are to see, hear, and feel.¹⁷

Accordingly, Clifton discusses different aspects of perception in music related to time (beginning, ending, continuity, contrast and interruption), and space (musical line, surface, depth, and distance).

Regarding the essence of a musical piece, Clifton distances himself from psychologists who claim that essence is only subjective.¹⁸ He maintains that although it is not perceivable as an absolute, there is a truth about the essence that I perceive, since it can be perceived by others too. He explains that it is not an “abstractization” of the piece, and that it is perceived only through experiencing the piece, as an emanation of the musical relationships. One of his most helpful observations is that we should speak of *some essences* rather than *the essence*: “I am interested in uncovering *some* essences rather than *the* essence of any musical event.¹⁹ It will be more practical to try to find out something about *a* main point of a piece of music rather than *the* main point.”²⁰

¹⁷ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, transl. Colin Smith (New York: Humanities Press, 1967) 229.

¹⁸ The psychologist thinking, or psychologism (more recently called psychologistic philosophy in order to distinguish it from the modern clinical discipline of psychology), is a vast movement initiated towards the end of the nineteenth century, closely related to a naturalistic view of the world. It claims that everything is only the result of physical laws, and that even non-physical objects, such as the laws of logic or philosophical concepts, are the product of the human mind which in turn is an effect of chemical laws. Husserl was anti-psychologist.

¹⁹ Emphases in original.

²⁰ Clifton, 19.

Clifton gives us a few musical excerpts for which he offers phenomenological descriptions, focusing on time perception, musical space, or essence perceived through feelings. The Gavotte from Bach's English Suite in G Minor provides an excellent sample of Clifton's approach.



Figure II-1: eight first bars of Bach's Gavotte from the English Suite in G minor BWV 808

Clifton describes how we:

- discern a relationship between both hands and its consequent tension
- visualize the melodic line as a physical trajectory
- perceive a specific energy that should also be felt by other listeners.

We notice that this feeling (the aural sense connecting with the affective content of the music) is intersubjective: not only Clifton, but all of us can connect with this description in one way or another.

We notice that, like other phenomenological descriptions of musical excerpts in the book, Clifton does not attempt to unite the separate aspects of perception into a holistic gestalt. Even though the descriptions embrace all the musical parameters, we lack a sense of united perception, which I believe is the most challenging and

fascinating purpose of phenomenology. In the following section, we will examine Clifton's attempts to describe a very short piece in a holistic manner.

III. Thomas Clifton: "Music as a Constituted Object"²¹

In this article, we are presented with a phenomenological description of Webern's Bagatelle for String Quartet op. 9 no. 1. The piece lasts about thirty seconds, and provides adequate material for an overview.

The method consists of describing:

- Some essences of the piece: we journey from general (or abstract) essences towards perceived (or subjective) essences and come back to objectified essence (through intersubjectivity)
- Feeling: the feeling described is not joy or pain, which pertain to my ego and emanate from me while listening (even though they are triggered by the music). Rather, it is my direct emotional connection with the music, an organic reaction to the musical components present in the music. It is unique in nature, and the Swiss conductor Ernest Ansermet²² calls it "musical feeling."²³ Such feeling is part of the essence of the music.

²¹ Thomas Clifton, "Music as a Constituted Object," *Music and Man 2* (New York, Gordon and Breach, 1976) 81.

This article was published in 1976, two years before Clifton passed away.

²² Ernest Ansermet (1883-1969) is one of the very few music practitioners who studied Husserl and endeavored to approach the making of music accordingly. The Romanian conductor Sergiu Celibidache is the second major one.

²³ "This feeling differs in many ways from our usual feelings, it is a feeling sui generis which we will call musical feeling because of its object; however, we need to acknowledge that the music material is feeling and it could not be anything else: music is time lived through; how would this time make itself tangible through anything else than an affective consciousness?"

Ernest Ansermet, *Ecrits sur la Musique* published by J. Claude Piguët (Neuchâtel, Editions La Baconnière, 1971) 42.

Clifton follows its evolution throughout the piece. Therefore, he views it as a vector of continuity and speaks of a “form of the feeling.”²⁴

- Sense of space and motion, which is based on synesthetic associations.
- Experienced unity: the form of the feeling provides a perception of wholeness to the piece. This perceived unity derives not from a theoretical form, but rather from the experience itself.

For Clifton, feelings seem to play the main role in defining the essences of music. He attempts to describe music by relating it to his feelings in a broad sense, including the synesthetic correspondences and, subsequently, musical space and motion. His initial reflective attitude consists of asking himself: What musical space can I see? Which musical time can I perceive? Which motion can I experience?

As an application of the method, Clifton tries to discern what elicits his musical feelings and how they evolve through the piece:

- The author feels a sense of gracefulness, and observes that in the first part of the piece (bb. 1-3²), the melodic motion (provided by the successive interventions of the four instruments) is *curved* and *convex*, the texture is light, and the dynamic soft.

²⁴ Thomas Clifton, “Music as a Constituted Object,” 81.

- A sense of compression of the space occurs in the second phrase (bb. 3³-4): shorter duration and thicker textures.
- Clifton notes that the initial feeling of grace recedes further in the piece (b. 5), and that a feeling of spasms takes over. He observes that the “melodic foreground” is replaced by a process of “disruption”: the tones become isolated, the dynamics increase and the tempo accelerates. This explains his “spasmodic” feelings. Then, Clifton identifies a “violent” character which defines the climax (bb. 6-7), which recedes back to the initial serenity at the end of the piece.

Clifton is very careful to present his perceptions as suggestions, not as objective realities. He uses expressions such as “I suggest,” “it seems that,” “it encourages to perceive,” and refrains from asserting that his feelings and perceptions reveal the truth about the piece. This underscores the *for-me* standpoint of phenomenological description. However, we can identify more or less with Clifton’s description and therefore notice a tangible bridge between subjectivity and objectivity.²⁵ His concept of a “form of a feeling” as a perception that unfolds in time is probably the most groundbreaking and enlightening aspect of his phenomenological research.

²⁵ This is due to the intersubjectivity aspect of our consciousness-based perception.

Chapter 3: My Own Approach to Music Phenomenology

In this chapter, I will apply the concepts of phenomenology to music in order to define a general approach to “doing music phenomenology.” I will describe general attitudes and focuses—notably those regarding consciousness—that appear crucial. I will explain how to apply Husserl’s and Heidegger’s concepts to music. I will then lay out my own phenomenological method. The reader should keep in mind that, rather than a theoretical concept, this method is a set of attitudes and focuses on enhancing the musical experience.

I. General attitudes and intentions

Music phenomenology describes music from a first-person perspective. It pursues a consciousness-based description by focusing on what we hear, and how we perceive it. Through highlighting musical tension as the overarching parameter fundamental to musical experience, phenomenology activates our synesthetic abilities to bridge various perceptual faculties. Ultimately, it aims at synthesizing multiple dimensions of a musical work into a unified perception in order to reveal a gestalt. Throughout, we will remain aware that a written description doesn’t provide any real experience but rather points out concrete elements to guide the reader.

A. A consciousness-based perspective both encompasses and transcends emotions and thoughts

A consciousness-based perspective contrasts with rational thinking, typical of traditional analysis, and emotion-based descriptions, sometimes found in music literature. This approach broadens the scope of experience. When my “stream of consciousness”¹ is able to “flow” with the music, it merges with the music and I become one with it. I may then realize that my consciousness encompasses and transcends my emotions and thoughts. In addition, consciousness is able to embrace simultaneously multiple elements. It also allows an uninterrupted connection through time.

When I say, “I feel the enthusiasm of that music,” I focus on the emotions the music triggered in me rather than the music itself, which exists independently of my emotions. In fact, although the music triggers some enthusiastic emotions in me,² it could be that others might feel a totally different emotion. Conversely, when I say, “I perceive the music with its enthusiastic feeling,” I redirect the focus to the music itself while acknowledging its emotional significance for me. In turn, my analytical mind can consider what I have heard, but as soon as I start thinking rationally, I am no longer “in the music”; my thoughts arise from the music as a reaction to it, but they are not the music, which exists independently of my thoughts. When I am simply *aware* of the music, I exist jointly with it; my flow of consciousness merges

¹ See wording used by Husserl (chapter 1 p. 17) and Schutz (chapter 2 p.21)

² See the Theory of Projection explained in:
Alfred Pike, "The Phenomenological Approach to Musical Perception." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 27, no. 2 (December 1966): 247-54.

with the music as an experienced reality. Hence, neither my emotions nor my thoughts equal my consciousness in its ability to experience the essence of music.

Another difference between the mind and consciousness has to do with the ability to engage multiple objects simultaneously. My consciousness is able to embrace several things at the same time, without my brain necessarily being selectively and intentionally engaged with them. Conversely, my mind can only focus on one single thing at a time. It may shift very swiftly from one object to another, but its intentionality can only be directed at one thing at any specific moment. "The brain is a lot like a computer," writes William R. Stixrud, Ph.D., a neuropsychologist in Silver Spring, Maryland. "You may have several screens open on your desktop, but you're able to think about only one at a time."³ In the opening bars of the *Alla Turca* Mozart sonata, I can be simultaneously aware of the minor key, the left hand's accompaniment, and the right hand's ascending motion combined with multiple melodic turns. This multi-level awareness provides me with a complete picture of what the "Alla Turca" opening is. Phenomenology envisions consciousness as able to embrace multiple components at the same time.

The last aspect of our consciousness-based perspective is that it allows for uninterrupted connection with the music. Any musical piece is uninterrupted in time;⁴ accordingly, I live through a unified experience unfolding in time as my "flow

³ Interview with Scholastic.com. Accessed March 5, 2016
<http://www.scholastic.com/parents/resources/article/homework-project-tips/perils-multitasking>
In fact, it is our interaction with the computer that can describe our brain's activity, rather than the computer itself: although the computer may perform many tasks at the same time, the brain can only watch actively one window at a time, and therefore perform one thing at a time.

⁴ In a single musical work, rests and pauses are part of the music. In a multiple-movement piece, the pauses between the movements are also part of the temporal experience of the music.

of consciousness” merges with the music. This is due to retention and protention constantly interacting and creating a unified network of connections.

B. The search for continuity and gestalt

As a result of the previous observation, we can envision a unified perception, freed from the fragmentation which so often characterizes our musical experience. This perceptual unity is what we will seek in our phenomenological description, throughout the process and especially at the end of the analysis.

C. Synesthesia: correlation between sound, spatial sense and visual sense

Throughout our description, we will rely on space and motion perception. We will see how they enrich our perception of music, and work together to holistically mold the various aspects of experience.

D. Musical tension

While trying to unify our perception of the music, we will notice that there is one overarching parameter that underpins all the other elements: musical tension. It infuses all music parameters: melody, harmony, rhythm, meter, dynamics, and texture, and can be felt as a result of their action and interaction. As such, tension is probably the most general vector of musical expression, and it relates directly to the continuity and the gestalt of a piece. We will study separately how musical tension is generated by each of the music parameters mentioned above.

II. Implementing the main Husserlian concepts in music

A. Epoché:

1. No assumption about the form: I will start describing the piece without any preconceived formal pattern.
2. No correlation with extra-musical elements: although many literary references and musical allusions to Beethoven's works illuminate Schumann's *Fantasie* from a musicological viewpoint, I will not consider them. The only focus will be the music itself and how my consciousness engages with it.
3. Conventional music analysis will be "bracketed out" as much as possible;⁵ that is, pre-existing elements such as intervals, chords, scales, arpeggios, formal structure, etc., won't be considered *in themselves*, but only regarding their organic function. I am not interested to know that the piece is in the key of C major; I rather try to see how the key of C major sets me in motion.

B. Eidetic reduction:

1. Melody, harmony, rhythm, meter, texture, and dynamics are essential when perceived as organic elements, i.e. when I perceive their contribution to the music and its character.

⁵ See footnote 18 in chapter 1 regarding the expression "bracket out".

2. Musical connections are the core of the work. They allow me to live through the music and have a deep musical experience. Without them, the work would be only a succession of sounds with no meaning.
3. My feelings (sense of space, sense of motion, emotions, and images popping up in my mind) contribute to define the essence of the piece.

C. Internal time consciousness:

Retention and protention combine at each moment to engender a sense of musical trajectory and continuity. This is the ground on which I can perceive the unity of a temporal object.

D. Intersubjectivity:

As a reminder, all the musical experiences are described from the first-person standpoint, based on the assumption that our subjectivities intersect and that we share similar perceptions. Therefore, my subjective phenomenological description can help others to experience the music similarly, even though each experience remains unique.

III. The Heideggerian component of hermeneutic phenomenology

I carry my cultural background with me. This ever-evolving fabric of knowledge and experience constitutes my musical personality. Since music is a subjective experience, I have an unavoidable tendency to filter and interpret specific music according to my musical personality. Therefore, even though I avoid thinking about the extra-musical elements or about any pre-conceived structure (partial

Epoche), I cannot help ascribing personal meaning to what I hear. The music *speaks to me*. When Schubert inflects a music fragment from its major to its minor mode, I understand the darkening or saddening process at work.⁶ Therefore, the phenomenological description will give an account of my interpretive perception.

As a result, I will use the traditional analytical tools of our Western music, such as intervals, chords, keys, meters, etc., within a phenomenological perspective.

IV. A systematic study of musical tensions

As stated earlier, musical tension is the overarching parameter. In tonal music, it is felt as a result of the following musical elements: intervals, consonances or dissonances, harmony, rhythm and meter, dynamics, and texture. Related to any of these elements, tension is felt as a move from stability toward instability, and therefore as a contrast between what is expected and what is heard. Here is a possible general definition:

Musical tension is the tension generated by contrasts or oppositions

Because tension will be crucial in our analyses, I will presently describe how it can be perceived in each musical parameter, using examples.

A. Intervals:

Regardless of the harmonic context, the more distant two pitches are from each other, the more contrast we feel. The following excerpt from the first

⁶ My emotions might picture a smiling face with tears coming down when the minor key inflection occurs because I am used to feeling sad or somber emotions associated with minor music.

movement of Beethoven's piano sonata op. 111 shows an extreme registral contrast of pitches that generates a cumulative apex right before the second theme (fig. III-1), especially in the second bar where the interval ascends.

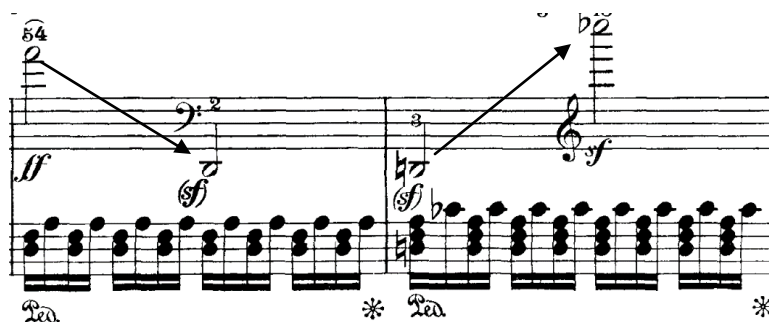


Figure III-1: tension apex with intervallic contrasts in Beethoven Sonata op 111, 1st movement (bb. 47-48)

B. Consonances and dissonances:

While the perception of consonance and dissonance varies according to culture and personal musical preferences, it is generally admitted that in tonal music, the notes constituting a certain chord sound consonant with that chord, while others sound dissonant. Observe how in Prokofiev's Sarcasm No. 3 (fig. III-2) the dissonance between the right hand (F-sharp minor harmony) and the left hand (B-flat minor harmony) creates tension and suggests sarcasm.



Figure III-2 Prokofiev Sarcasm No 3

C. Harmonic relationships:

The tension between two chords is proportionate to their distance from each other on the cycle of fifths (fig. III-3). The same law applies to tonalities.

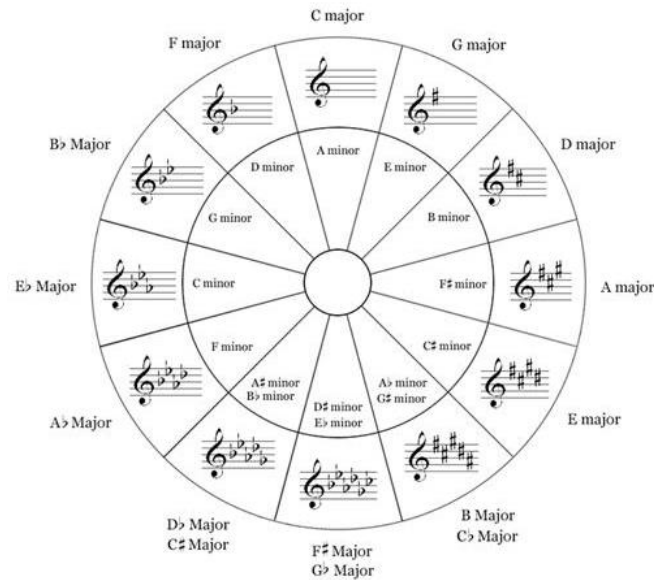


Figure III-3: The cycle of fifths

As an example, observe how Liszt uses harmonic distance in order to build to an apex in his *B-minor Sonata* (fig. III-4). The key of the “Grandioso” theme is D major. The fifth bar of the theme turns into C-major harmony. The sixth bar turns into E-flat major harmony, which brings us to the opposite side of the cycle of fifths and creates a peak of tension.⁷

⁷ We notice that the melodic apex confirms the harmonic culmination in this last bar.



Figure III-4: Excerpt of Liszt's *Sonata in B minor* - tension culmination created in the last bar by opposed positions regarding the circle of fifths, confirmed by the melodic apex A.

D. Rhythmic relationships:

Contrasts in tone duration may generate tension. In the opening of Beethoven's *Sonata op. 111*, for example (fig. III-5), the contrast between the extremely brief thirty-second notes and the long notes that follow (b.1) heightens the dynamic and harmonic tension.⁸ A similar opposition appears in the second bar between the rests and the rapid arpeggio.

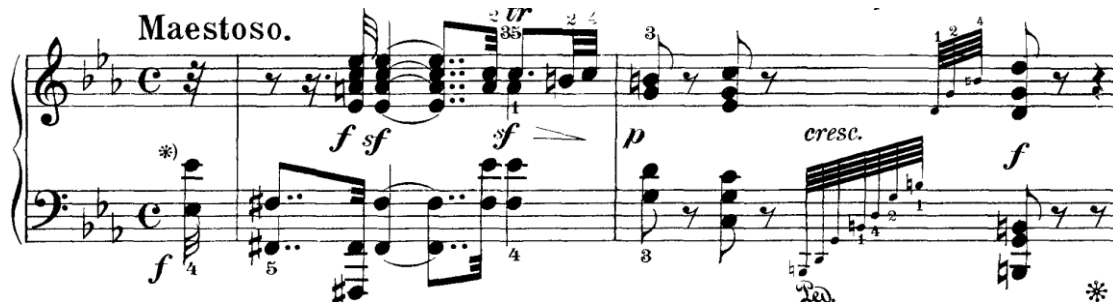


Figure III-5: Rhythmic values contrasts in Beethoven *Sonata op. 111*'s opening

⁸ According to the paragraph above, we notice that the 7th diminished descending increases the tension even more.

drops to piano. All of these changes evoke a sense of a new space, and therefore an expectation.



Figure III-7: contrasts of texture in Schumann's Fantasie 1st movt. (bb.38-41)

V. The phenomenological method

In line with the general attitudes and intentions set out at the beginning of this chapter, and in accord with Husserl's and Heidegger's principles, we are now able to formulate a general phenomenological approach.

A. First, I observe and describe each music parameter:

1. Melody: I observe the melody (eventually the counterpoint), with its motion, shape, and articulations.
2. I study the harmonies: how they match the melody, how they relate to each other and therefore build a harmonic trajectory.
3. I integrate the rhythmic aspect: what kind motion is created, how it relates to the melody and the harmonies, where the rhythmic changes lie and how they affect the musical flow.
4. I observe which features of texture are emphasized, and therefore how these features speak to me.

5. I integrate the dynamics and their expressive contributions to the music.

B. The whole music

Second, I unite the parameters into the original music and try to see what touches me. I describe the sense of space and motion, the feelings generated, the mental images created. I don't explain, I only describe what occurs and how I perceive the musical phenomena. These emotions are essential to the specific nature of the music and as such are part of the eidetic reduction.

C. The use of traditional analytical tools:

According to Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology, I use traditional analytical tools such as phrase and sections, chords and modulations, note values and rhythmic patterns. However, I keep in mind that these tools are only aids to understand real musical entities, and I refrain from using them as abstract objects disconnected from an actual musical experience.

D. Epoché:

Throughout the process, I refrain as much as possible from assumptions in specific areas:

1. I don't assume any structural form. This form reveals itself step by step and can be identified only a posteriori.
2. I will also restrain from identifying programmatic features that might arise from associating musical elements with extra-musical sources. Music has to speak for itself ("back to the thing itself" according to Husserl).

3. I do not refer to recordings or to suggestions for interpretation. I only interact directly with the score in order to let the music reveal itself as directly as possible.

E. Progressive scope of description:

I apply this method on the micro-level (small segments and phrases), on a slightly larger scale (small sections), on the macro-dimension (whole sections), and, lastly, to the whole piece.

F. Sense of gestalt, including tension profiles

I endeavor to find continuity and the sense of unity at all possible levels: how each phrase can be felt as a single unit, how each section can be perceived as a whole, and eventually how a sense of gestalt can be experienced for the entire piece. Musical tension is a connecting factor. For this reason, and in order to provide a tangible account of the continuity, I sketch a profile depicting the tension for each section, and summarize the successive profiles in a single graph at the end of the analysis.¹⁰

Remark:

We will note that these different aspects of the phenomenological description, although presented here in sequence, are not to be envisioned individually as in a recipe. Rather, they are interrelated aspects of a unified approach.

¹⁰ Hans Mermann drew similar graphs of musical tension in one of his articles. Hans Mermann, "Versuch eine Phenomenologie der Musik," *Zeitschrift für die Musikwissenschaft* 5 (1922-25): 226-269.

PART II: PHENOMENOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION OF SCHUMANN'S FANTASIE OPUS 17, 1st MOVEMENT

Let's review the general outlines of our phenomenological approach. We will focus only on how we perceive the musical elements, putting aside any assumptions related to the music's narrative meaning or structural form. This means that literary components, such as Schumann's longing for Clara or Beethoven's thematic influence, will not affect our perception of how the music speaks through sound; these kinds of external considerations may intervene only after the music has delivered its content, and then, only as a confirmation of its musical traits. This also means that no overall structure can exist *a priori*, so the form must appear as an "experienced structure" from our phenomenological descriptions. Chapter 4 is dedicated to teasing out what this specific structure is. Moreover, since macro-structure emerges from micro-structure, our descriptions will be extensive in order that the macro-structure can reveal itself. Chapter 5 will flesh out all the steps in this method. In order to avoid a too lengthy document, beyond the scope of a DMA thesis, we will describe our detailed analysis for the whole movement: chapter 6 will only give an account of the most significant phenomenological traits for the rest of the piece, i.e. sections B through E, and rather give the results of our investigation, including the tension graphs.

As a reminder, readers need to keep in mind that all written descriptions are only mental representations of lived experience. Description can never replace individual experience, and this is especially true in the realm of musical sounds. My goal

here is to bring readers to a state of mind where they can open themselves to the possibility of similar experiences.

Chapter 4: General Structure of the Piece - First Phenomenological Steps

In this chapter, we will experience what “doing phenomenology” means from the specific structural aspect. We will describe the music as it appears to consciousness and independently from any preconceived form, especially the conventional sonata design. This will lead us to delineate five specific sections, and therefore to define an overall phenomenological structure.

I. Observing combined rhythmic and melodic aspects leads us to define a first section, which we will call section A.

In bars 1-81, we perceive the left-hand accompaniment as both unifying the discourse and contributing to the structure. It unifies the section through the continuous rhythmic motion created by the sixteenth-note accompaniment. In spite of the many sections appearing at the melody, this gushing, repetitive motion barely breaks until bar 49 (merely short breaths in bb. 16-17 and b. 28). Even the pause in the accompaniment during syncopations (bb. 33-41) is not really felt as a release but rather as emphasizing the tension in the conflict between the hands. The unifying function of the accompaniment continues, although it progressively slows starting at bar 49. At that point, it shifts to eighth-note triplets, yet these triplets sustain the flowing accompaniment until the next rhythmic change in bar 61, where the same accompaniment slows to simple eighth notes. The motion slows further in bar 73 with a quarter rest, again in bar 74 with only upbeat eighth notes, and finally in bars 76-81 with quarter and half notes. The moderate yet steady changes in bars 49-81, lacking in any

kind of surprise or abruptness, continues a sense of cohesiveness. Overall, the accompaniment starts as an impetuous flow but gradually calms in order to lead us to a state of lull and hush.

Durchaus phantastisch und leidenschaftlich vorzutragen Opus 17

♩ = 80

Figure VI-1: beginning of section A - unifying left-hand accompaniment

The accompaniment's interaction with the melody also helps us experience structure. Throughout the initial 81-bar period, the melody is driven by the accompaniment; its line is continuous, unable to stop. As a result, the accompaniment is perceived as more than mere ornamentation of the melody; it stands as a constitutive part of the driving forces.

For all these reasons, we are led to define this 81-bar segment as section A.

II. Epoché and eidetic reduction underpin the description process

We have seen how observing and describing musical events as they unfold allow us to recognize a general musical area as a structural entity (as opposed to searching for an *a priori* structure). In doing so, we have applied the concept of Epoché¹: that is, we have set aside our assumptions about form and let the structure appear to us as we listen, observe, and describe the musical attributes of the piece.

Moreover, embracing Epoché opened the way to eidetic reduction.² That is, we have reduced the object (music) to an essential feature. Our phenomenological description here, in which we observe the influence of the accompaniment on the melody's uninterrupted flow, leads us to see it as essential.

III. Defining Section B through recollection and anticipation

Referring back to our chronological overview of the first 81 measures, we realize that our recollection³ (memory) of the structural rest in bar 81 – the end of section A – is an experience from which our anticipation⁴ could expect similar upcoming patterns. This expectation is realized in the section that follows.

¹ 'Epoché' is the attitude of 'bracketing off' the natural tendency to assimilate the object to something we already know, and of putting away the assumptions we might have; on this ground, we let the thing appear to us as it is, assuming that the phenomenon (what I perceive) is real, in opposition to the belief that only the noumenon (the thing-in-itself) is real. (For a detailed description, see chap. 1 p. 10, and chap. 3 p. 37)

² Eidetic reduction is the act of reducing an object (e.g. a piece of music) to its essence, to the features that make it what it is and without which it wouldn't be that kind of thing. This can be attained by setting aside irrelevant details, such as technical difficulties or sound qualities. For example the melody, the harmonies, the rhythm and meters of a piece constitute its fundamental features and therefore pertain to its eidetic structure. (For the detailed description, see chap. 1p. 11, and chap. 3 pp. 37-38)

³ See Husserl's definition of recollection on chap. 1 p.14

⁴ See Husserl's definition of anticipation on chap. 1 p. 15

We experienced the musical rest and its calming context in bar 81 (fig. VI-2) as a major musical articulation and a transition toward the next section. Let's examine how the music that follows influences our perception of structure.

Figure IV-2: the rest in bar 81 transitions from section A to section B

Bar 82 starts with a very energetic, impassioned, and internally conflicting expression (see fig. IV-2). The syncopations and accents, the *ff* and crescendo dynamics, the heavy chords, the opposing motions between the hands and the conflicting rhythms created by their alternations—all of these elements contribute to a turbulent character. However, in bar 97 the music quickly returns to the initial phrase (see bar 19) in a *piano* dynamic. It sounds like a recapitulation because it re-presents the same elements of the initial theme, albeit in reverse order: first softly (b.97), then loudly (b.119). On the other hand, the segment between the two thematic returns at bars 105-118 (like the one at bars 82-96) sounds like a development based on the second interval with chromatic rising steps underneath. These antagonistic directions seem to create a climax of energy around bar 119, after which the music again progressively subsides. In bar 128, the musical flow stops on a semi-conclusive C-major chord. Then the right hand sings out a recitativo-like descent and ends on a long

fermata. We perceive an organic continuity to bars 82-128, and the sense of anticipation we formed earlier through a first major musical articulation is confirmed in this second major turn. We will call bars 82-128 section B.

IV. Defining Section C: a closed unit

This central section appears to be a self-sufficient unit within the movement. It is built upon a new theme (Th.C) with a poised and tender character in contrast to the previous impassioned agitation (see fig. VI-3). It follows a variation process that intensifies until the climax is reached in the fourth variation (bb.204-215), after which the music concludes tenderly and in the same key (fig. VI-4). Along the way, two digressions (bb.156-173 and bb.181-203) remind us of some previous material, thereby linking us back to the previous sections. Also, similarly to the previous sections, the last chord lingers on a fermata (fig. VI-4 b.224), releasing the tension experienced throughout the section. Again our recollection of the previous major articulations confirms our present perception. We have defined section C phenomenologically.

Im Legendenton ♩ = 72

Figure VI-3: start of section C Theme C: in G minor, and then in C minor as its definitive key - beginning of the first variation in b.140

Figure VI-4: conclusion of section C in C minor - a harmonically and melodically closed section

V. Defining Sections D and E through places of rest, recapitulation process and return to the tonic key

Phenomenology leads us to group sections according to the experienced sense of structure. In these last two sections, D and E, the recapitulation process prompts us to identify them together as roughly equivalent to section A +B. Moreover, the return of the tonic key and its concurrent feeling of “returning home” occur across a structural

rest, which marks a major articulation in the recapitulation: the transition from section D to section E.

In bar 225, the concluding soft C-minor chord and its fermata are followed by a sudden and violent eruption of the initial music (fig. VI-5). However, rather than a return of the initial phrase, we are thrust into the middle of the exposition: bar 225 corresponds to bar 29 of the exposition.⁵ Apart from this shortcut, section D follows the pattern of a conventional sonata recapitulation. The two appearances of the second theme are in C minor (b. 235) and E \flat major (b. 254), which entails the same third relationship as the corresponding keys in section A (D minor and F major). We will call the fragment in bars 225-273 section D, which is a counterpart to bars 29-81 in section A.

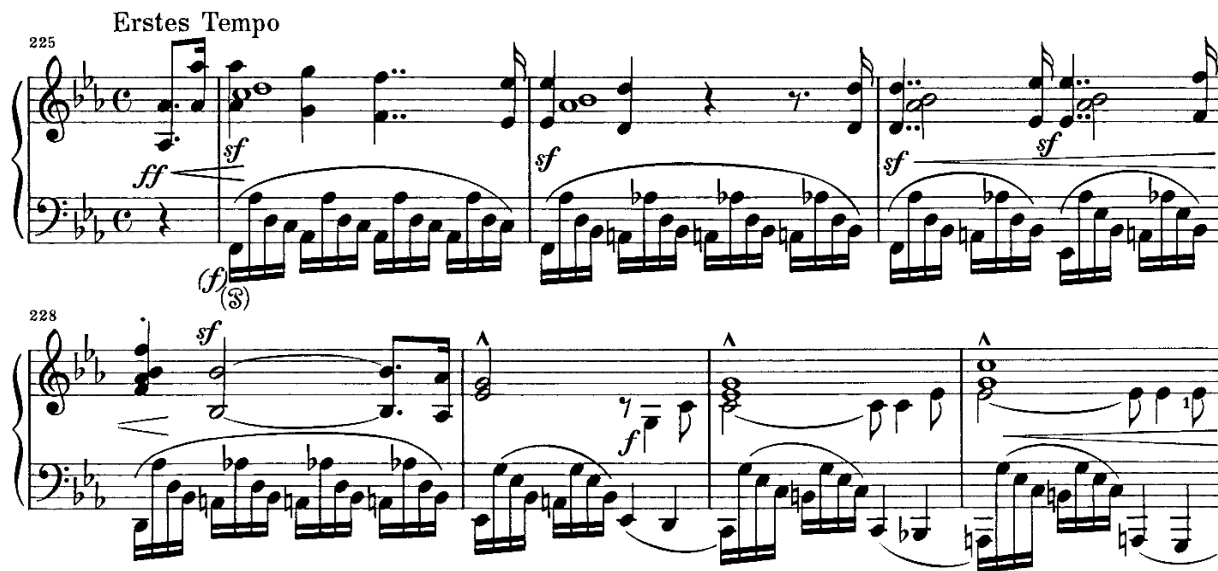


Figure IV-5: section D is the returning material of section A following section C's conclusion

Again, the questioning harmony with a fermata rest in bar 273 is followed in bar 274 by a triumphant affirmation of the key of C major (fig. VI-6). As a result, we feel this

⁵ We use the terms *exposition* and *recapitulation* not in reference to the sonata design, but in their original sense: material exposed and returning later in the piece.

rest as a structural turn, similar to the feeling we had during the exposition in bars 81-82. Since the tonic key has never been completely affirmed until now, we get a strong sense of being “back home” and even relieved after the extended harmonic journey. After a brief modulatory fragment (bb. 276-285), we come back immediately to the key of C major with a last statement of the initial theme in a muted dynamic (b. 286). Through a seamless transition, the music then flows into the coda (bb. 295-307), which constitutes the final appeasement. Aside from the 9-bar harmonic digression, the ending is in a now stabilized C major, which is felt as a definitive resolution. We also perceive retroactively that the tonic-key affirmation in bar 274 was announcing the end. We will call this last segment (bb. 274-309) section E, which can be perceived as a concluding unit centered on the tonic key.



Figure VI-6: beginning of section E - the first unequivocal affirmation of C major

VI. The concluding theme as the point of convergence

The very last fragment of the piece (bb. 295-309) is perceived as naturally concluding the whole piece. We encounter a final lyrical theme (fig. IV-7)—a quote of

Beethoven's lied "An die ferne Geliebte."⁶ This theme leans on a perfect authentic cadence in C major, the first one in the whole piece. In that sense, it arrives as a harmonic resolution. It also merges with the previously heard main theme without any disruption of the melodic line in such a way that Beethoven's Lied sounds like it emerges from the main theme. The tempo gradually slows and the dynamic softens through successive thematic statements (*mf*, *p*, and *pp*). The feeling of final appeasement makes us perceive this theme as the central point towards which everything has been converging. It bears a concluding function while the other thematic elements are at this point in the phenomenological past.

⁶ This is the main theme of the sixth Lied in "An die ferne Geliebte," op. 98, which is originally in the key of E ♭ major:

VI. Andante con moto, cantabile

Nimm sie hin denn, die - se Lie - der,

Adagio ritard.*)

299 *ritard.* *p* *ritard.* *pp* *ritard.*

304 *ritard.* *p* *ril.* *p* *Pedal*

Figure IV-7: end of section E (bb. 295-309) –
Conclusion to the whole movement with Beethoven's Lied "An die ferne Geliebte" in C major

Chapter 5: Detailed phenomenological analysis of section A

As explained at the outset of Part II, chapter 5 will show a full application of the method for section A. Starting from a detailed description, we will progressively zoom out until we get an overview, still based on our experience of the music.

I. First thematic area: bars 1-28

At the very outset of this piece, the accompaniment appears first. As we observed in chapter 4, it has a fundamental role: it creates an overall dominant suspension throughout the first 28 bars, and its fast spinning motion propels us in an intense drive forward. Its first tone is a low pedal G that endures for 28 bars below a fast, whirling, sixteenth-note accompaniment in the left hand.

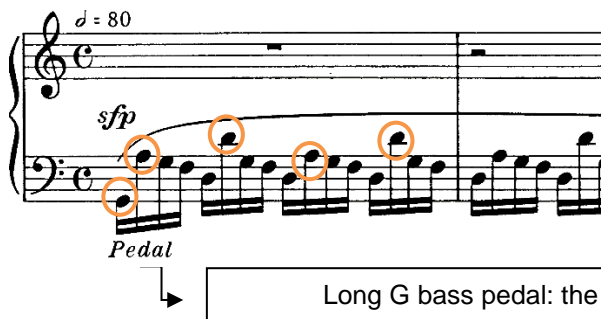


Figure V-1: Left hand's accompaniment with its prominent notes and its descending 5th A-D.

Pedal

Long G bass pedal: the dominant function overruns the first 28

The initial harmony can be understood in either of two ways: as a D minor chord over a G bass pedal or as a G 9th chord. In both views, we have a dissonance between the bass G and the two notes A and F. The notes A and D are prominent in this gushing flow because they are the top notes of each four-note group. Thus, the

three notes G, D, and A appear to be the sound edges¹ of this fast spinning motive (fig. VI-1). Our G bass pedal is sustained for the first twelve bars, then steps up to A in bar 13 as the root of an A minor chord. Through the harmonies of G major $\frac{6}{4}$ in bar 15 and D major in bar 16, we gently return to a G major chord in bar 19¹ and the initial material returns (fig. V-5). Although the tonic key is C major, none of this music spells out the first degree of C major. We are in a “tonal feeling” of C major without the tonic harmony being explicit. The dominant function pervades these first 28 bars. In fact, instead of C major, we are locally stabilized in G major through a tonicized dominant pedal on G in bars 18-19 (fig. V-5).

The whirling sixteenth-note motif creates a restless motion that drives us forward. Combined with the suspended dominant pedal, it creates a specific frame for the melody.

A. Bars 1-9: Theme A and its unity

Now let's examine the melodic aspect of the initial 28 bars. The first tone in the melody is A. Although it's dissonant with the bass G, it confirms the prominent A that we just heard in the left-hand introduction. Thus, we have been prepared for this A by the accompaniment. In addition, the stepwise descending melodic line A, G, F, E, D delineates the nearly identical motif A, G, F, D we just heard in the accompaniment between the prominent notes A and D (fig. V-1). The ear has been prepared for this melodic motif so that when it comes, we integrate it as part of something already present. As a result of these preparations, our retention is

¹ The expression “sound edges” refers to a synesthetic comparison of this motif to a visual structure.

activated, and consequently, we feel a strong connection between the melody and the accompaniment. This musical feeling² emerges from the structure of our consciousness, specifically our *retention* and *protention* abilities to connect musical fragments.³

Durchaus phantastisch und leidenschaftlich vorzutragen Opus 17

♩ = 80

Pedal

Motif z

Motif y

Motif y

sf

sf

sf

Figure V-2: Theme A, constituted of motif z (bb. 2-5) and motif y (bb. 6-9)

In addition, the just past element merges into the present event, and the two combine to become a new entity.

We will call (see fig. V-2):

² See pp. 32-33 for a discussion of musical feeling.

³ Retention is our recollection of a just past phenomenon in the now moment, so that we perceive the now in relation to the past; there is no interruption in the mind between the now and the immediate recollection of this event. Protention is our anticipation of the next moment, that is, the moment that has yet to be perceived. For a more detailed description of these concepts, see chapters 2 and 3. Further phenomenological observations will constantly rely on these notions, although we will skip explicit references to them most of the time.

- The descending line in bars 2³-6² **motif z**
- The three following ascending notes (D, E, F) in bars 6³-10² **motif y**
- The material defined by the combination of motifs z and y (bb.2³-10²)

Theme A

We can identify rhythmic and melodic similarities connecting motif z and motif y. In motif y, as the harmony changes to G 9th in bar 9, the rhythm in the right hand becomes whole-note chords (accentuated with *sforzandi*) anticipated by eighth-note upbeats. This heavy rhythmic energy is a shift from the mainly lyrical expression of motif z. However, the rhythmic cell [.] which launched motif z reappears in motif y and ripples in the next two bars through the eighth-note upbeats: it emphasizes something already heard. The two motives are also connected by the common note D that ends z and starts y in bar 6. Therefore, a real sense of continuity binds both motives into one single unity: Theme A.

We will now draw a subjective tension profile of Theme A. The harmonic element is unchanging so it need not be represented. The melodic aspect is the main shaping factor. The left-hand introduction has its own initial impact and resolution over one and one-half bars. The melody enters as an energy outburst that declines throughout motif z because of the melodic descent and ascends again through motif y. The energy remains high.

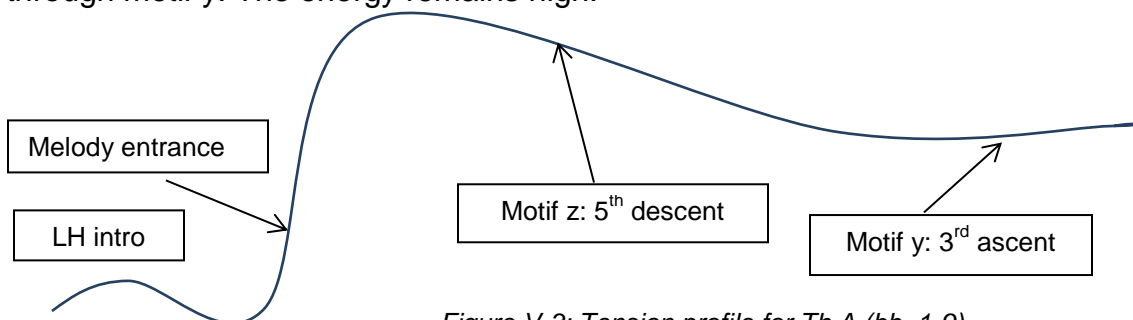


Figure V-3: Tension profile for Th.A (bb. 1-9)

B. Bars 10-14: second statement of Theme A

In bars 10-14, as we hear a repeat of motif z, we perceive both continuity and demarcation. On the one hand, continuity is sensed in the continuation of G 7th harmony during the transition and in the hearing of the same motif z. On the other hand, when this motif starts again, it's now a step higher (note B in b. 10), and the augmented 4th interval between the final note of Theme A and this first note B creates a sort of distance: the tritone relationship requires an inner stretching.⁴ This intervallic distance is combined with a dynamic contrast: bar 11 starts in a sudden *piano*. This new tender sentiment is emotionally distant from the initial boisterous and passionate expression of this motif. In other words, the flow of energy is still present in the left hand's agitation, but it is contained by the intervallic and dynamic distance described above. In order to verbalize the musical feeling, I would suggest an image: the left hand's continuity could be pictured as a rooting that keeps us tied to a geographical spot, while the distance created by the right hand's contrasts can be viewed as a force that pulls us forward.⁵

C. Bars 14-19: appearance of Motif X as a soothing continuation of Theme A

In the next fragment, bars 14-19, a new motif appears, perceived as a soothing continuation of Theme A.

In bar 14, we transition toward a conclusion of our initial thematic exposition (fig. V-4). At the end of the second appearance of motif z, the melody jumps a 3rd to

⁴ It's a stretch in the sense of the physical inner motion that a singer would experience across such an interval.

⁵ See Eugene Ansermet's definition of musical feeling in p. 29 chap. 2.

G (b. 14⁴). This G is the tonic of the tonicized dominant. Eventually, in bars 18-19 we arrive on a perfect cadence in G major (fig. V-5, bb.18-19) as the melody steps down: G, D, D, C, B. This is our first resolution point so far: the initial burst of tension was maintained through a restrained second statement and is now released in a conclusive cadence I(⁶/₄)–V–I in the tonicized dominant. However, since we still perceive G as the dominant of the main key, this release is felt not as complete, but rather temporary.

The full phrase (bb. 14³-17¹) E, G, G, D, D, C, B defines a pattern that will recur six more times in the piece. We will call this first appearance motif X1 (and each recurrence will be labeled accordingly). The pitch range of this motif is lower than Th.A, the dynamic is soft, and the motion is descending. This signifies a tension decrease, which is subjectively felt as soothing.

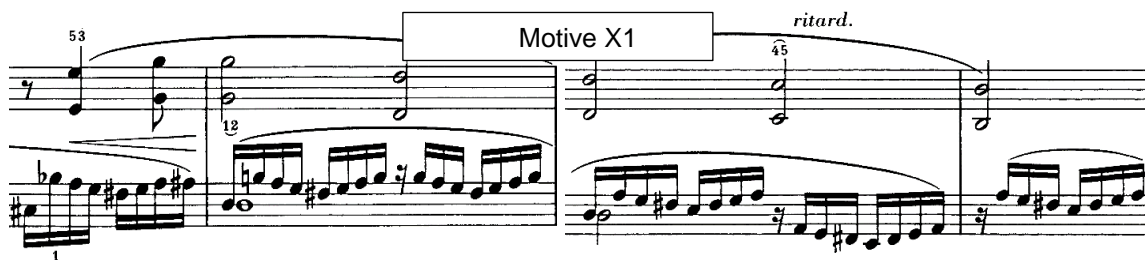


Figure V-4: first statement of motive X1 (bb. 14³-17¹)

Interestingly, Schumann deemed it necessary to repeat this concluding phrase in bars 17³-19¹, not only as a way of emphasizing its structural place of rest, but also to create a sense of push-pull musical motion. In the first ending (b.17¹), no root note underlies the B; things sound less conclusive than in the second ending (b. 19¹), which now leans on the root note G in the bass. The slower accompaniment in

bars 17³-18 (*ritardando*) reinforces the conclusive feeling: we breathe a little bit. It is noteworthy that this is the only slowing in section A (except the ending). Hence, we will retroactively identify this passage (bb. 15-19) as a major structural articulation in the entire section. This is confirmed by the understanding we discussed in chapter 4: places of rest generally define structural turns in the piece.

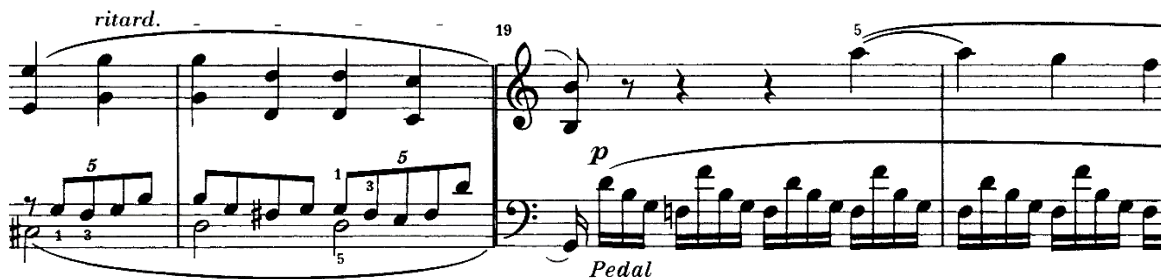


Figure V-5 (bb. 17-20): repeat of X1 (the melody speeds up but the accompaniment slows) and return of Th.A soft.

There is a more subtle relationship between the two statements of X1: the rhythm in the accompaniment slows from sixteenth notes in the first statement to eighth notes in the second, but the rhythm of the melody increases from half notes to quarter notes. The two processes contradict one another: the accompaniment motion decelerates while the melodic motion accelerates. This contradiction might indicate that the music is both concluding the first fragment while leading toward the next. The metric element could be imagined as an elastic band stretching and expanding.

Looking at the larger fragment we have just considered (bb.1-19¹), we perceive an overall tension release through a specific melodic and harmonic coherence. Let's compare the first statement of Theme A (bb. 2-9) with its restatement combined with X1 (bb. 10-19¹). The melodic pattern A, G, F, E, D - D, E,

F is followed by a similar pattern B, A, G, F, E - E, G, that is, a descending 5th followed by an ascending 3rd, although the second fragment is musically not divisible and keeps descending (G, D, C, B). In the Schenkerian sense of middle-ground melody, the descent A, G, F, E, D is completed in bar 16 by the last three notes D, C, B.

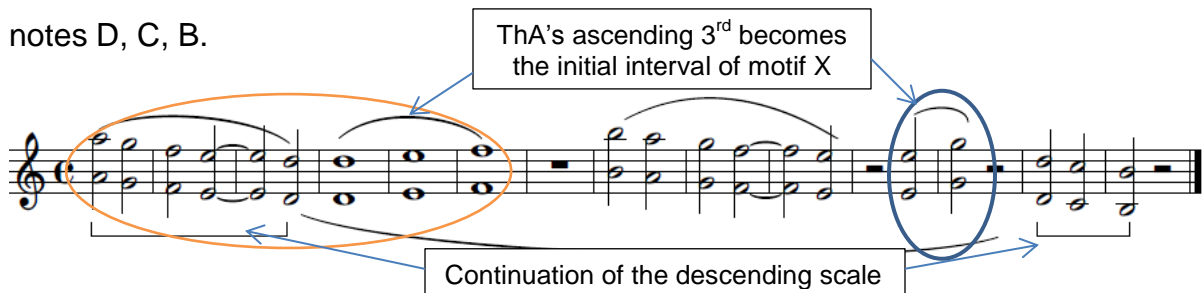


Figure V-6: Melodic continuity between Th.A and X1: the simplified melodic thread shows how the ending [D,C,B] completes the initial descent

Considering the harmonic aspect, we perceive the tension due to the initial G dominant pedal being released in X1: in bar 13, the bass moves up to A and supports the deceptive cadence with the A minor harmony; then it steps up to D (b. 15) and generates a perfect cadence in the tonicized dominant (G major). Connecting the beginning with the end of this long fragment (bb.1-19¹), we see the initial G dominant 9th harmony stripped of its dissonance, as a sort of resolution to its simple triad.⁶ This is very unconventional, especially at the start of a piece. As a result, X1 is overall the resolution of Theme A, which confirms our perception of the relationship between Theme A and X1.

Hence, we observe an organic unity between those two units. Combining the harmonic, melodic, dynamic, pitch range, and metric elements helped us to get an integrated perspective and experience a living relationship between two fragments.

⁶ Here, *resolution* is to be understood not in the sense of a specific harmonic progression, but in its general meaning: a release from an initial tension.

Here is a tension profile that could be perceived for these initial 19 bars:

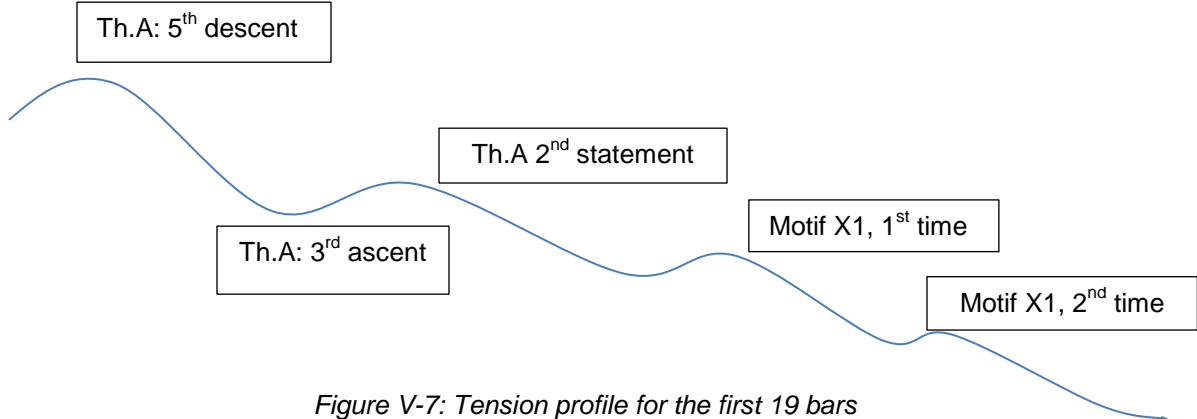


Figure V-7: Tension profile for the first 19 bars

D. Bars 19-23: third statement of Theme A - relationships on micro and macro-levels

In bar 19, motif z returns in a soft dynamic, still in C major, but now in diminution values. This rhythmic change had been initiated seconds before: the repeat of X1 had introduced quarter-note melodic motion. So again, we feel continuity in the transition from X1 to the return of Theme A.

The rhythm varies slightly from the initial statement of Th.A. We now feel an underlying expectation because of the still rapid accompaniment combined with the soft dynamic: things sound expectant. Indeed, a change occurs in bar 23 after the restatement of Th.A: the melody reaches an accentuated high C, which is the highest pitch heard so far. Stepping back and looking at the three statements of Th.A, we see that they have similar lengths: 8 bars (bb. 2-9), 10 bars (bb. 10-19), and 9 bars (bb. 20-28). We also notice that the apex notes associated with these three fragments ascend stepwise—A (b.2), B (b.10) and C (b.23)—which creates a melodic ascent in the Schenkerian sense of middle-ground melody. Hence, the

melodic aspects build tension through the three statements of Th.A, though the harmonic and dynamic parameters decrease tension.

Let's describe how the music following the high C (bb. 24-27) gathers energy for another outburst.

Figure V-8: descending after the apex note C, following the third statement of Th.A (bb. 23-27)

The musical tension must be evaluated in the context of contradictory forces:

- Increasing tension: a trill is added below the melody and above the accompaniment, which increases the activity; the harmony shifts every bar, swinging between G 7th and D min 7th over G bass chords; and the bass is unstable as it stresses the neighbor notes G# and C#;
- Decreasing tension: over the course of these four bars, the melody steps two octaves down and the *ritardando* and *diminuendo* emphasize a sense of restraint.

These contradictory forces create the impression of a retreating wave that gathers energy as it ebbs in order to return with greater strength later on. Throughout the musical discourse, protention and retention work together in order to give me an understanding of where I came from and where I am heading. As a result, I incrementally construct a unified perception of the piece.

Here is a possible tension graph that zooms out from the first graph (bb. 1-19, fig. V-1) and combines with the perception of bars 19-28:⁷

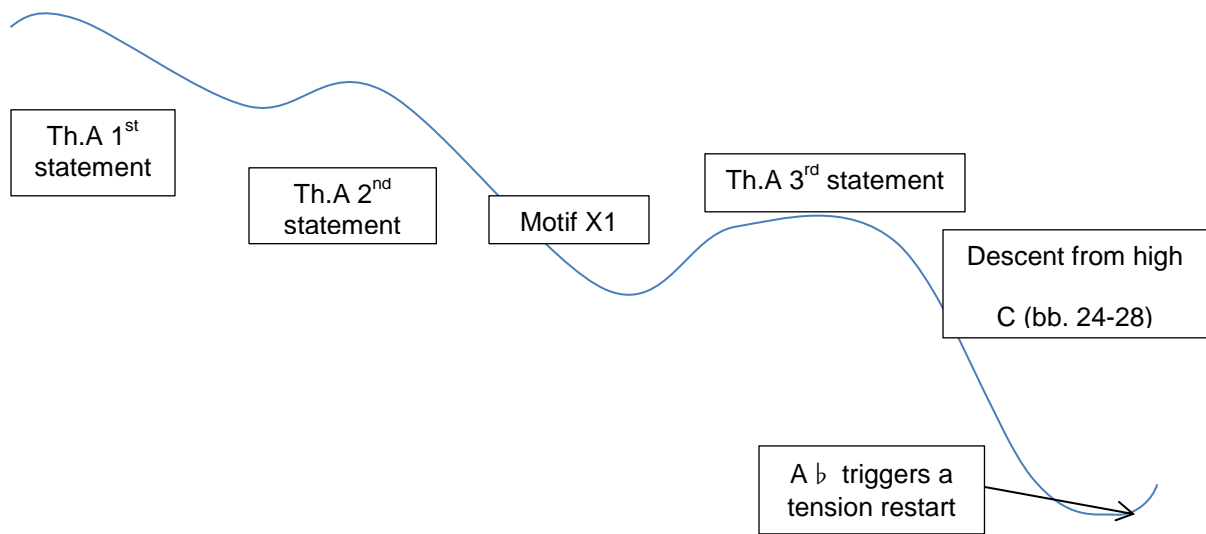


Figure V-9: Tension profile for bars 1-28

⁷ As explained in chapter 3, successive tension graphs are obtained through zooming out from previous local graphs, moving toward a more global outlook, and integrating new fragments.

II. Transition toward the second thematic area: bars 28-41

We formed an expectation of a new energy surge in bars 24-28. This protention is confirmed by a sudden modulation in bars 28-41¹. The previously stressed G \sharp in the bass in bars 24 and 26 finds connection with its enharmonic A \flat in bar 28. In this bar, A \flat expands suddenly through a four-octave range on the keyboard and becomes the first note of a fourth declaration of Th.A, in a full fortissimo outburst (fig. V-10). The expectation triggered by the previous descending wave is confirmed. However, the modulation has been surprisingly short and unprepared. In fact, the preparation is bar 28 itself, as the downbeat A \flat supersedes the previous neighbor tone G \sharp , becomes a structural tone, and initiates a sudden modulation.

A. Bars 29-33: first modulation carried by Th.A in E \flat major

In the fourth statement of Th.A, we hear a change in expression and a transition toward new horizons. Th.A is now in E \flat major, which renders a warmer feeling than C major.⁸ This time, the key is affirmed by an imperfect cadence (see fig. V-10 bb. 32-33). The sixteenth-note upbeat here inject a higher energy and a more impatient expression than their eighth-note counterparts in the beginning of the piece. This brisk energy will lead to a very different character in the ensuing fragment (bb. 33-40).

⁸ This feeling is confirmed by key relationships in the cycle of 5ths: we move 3 increments toward the more introvert keys (See fig. III-3 page 41).

Figure V-10: Th.A in E flat major (bb. 28-33)

As opposed to its initial statement in bar 10 where Theme A's melody climbed to a new start on B, it now falls a 5th from F to B \flat (b. 32) and it enters the lower and warmer colors of the instrument. These changes—or even contrasts—present a new and different kind of expression of Th.A. This is probably preparing us for a new element to come.

B. Bars 33-41: transition to motif T

The expected change occurs in bar 33: a strong, syncopated melodic element appears in the right hand, rhythmically and melodically opposed to the bass. (The two hands are offset from one another and move in opposite melodic directions). This new melodic element is sustained by full chords on each downbeat and given prominence by breaks in the sixteenth-note accompaniment on beats 3 and 4. The first bar's rhythmic pattern repeats over the next eight measures (bb. 33-40). As the melody unfolds, interrupted by the resurgent accompaniment, we identify a new

melodic motif: G, C, C/ C, Eb, Eb/ Eb, Eb, Eb/ D, A, Bb. (bb. 33-37). As we will see later, this is a transition toward the second thematic area. We will call it **motif T**.⁹

The image displays a musical score for piano, focusing on bars 33-37. The right hand (treble clef) plays a melodic motif, while the left hand (bass clef) provides a bass line. Annotations include 'Tension apex' pointing to a circled note in bar 35 and 'Tension resolution' pointing to a circled note in bar 37. A small inset in the top right shows a close-up of the first two notes of the motif with fingerings 1 and 2. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings like 'ff'.

Figure V-11: motif T in bars 33-37. Opposite motion between top and bass. Building tension toward the lowest bass F# with its diminished chord (3rd bar), and resolution in the 4th bar.

C. Bars 33-41 continued: Description of T, a contrast with the rest of the section

Over the eight bars 33-41, the tonality is unstable and the music sounds wild and extremely taut. T appears in two four-bar statements: the first one moves harmonically from C minor to G minor and the second from G minor to D minor. In

⁹ Let's note that in spite of the change, the common note G across the octave drop at the top of the right hand (b. 33) provides a melodic continuity, which is an essential component of the movement.

each of those two four-bar phrases, the opposing motion between the top and bass notes reaches its widest point in the third bar, where the bass descends to the leading tone of the upcoming tonic (F# in b. 36 and C# in b. 40) while sustaining a diminished chord. This means a local crest in the third bar of T, which resolves in the fourth bar. The pitch of the second phrase (bb. 37³-41¹) stands a fifth higher than the first one, thereby creating significantly greater tension. The constantly interrupted melody and its disjunctive contour and ragged character depart from the continuous lyrical character of the piece up to this point.

Motives T and X1 are particularly opposed in several ways. Although their structural intervals are the same, the intervals are inverted: X1 mainly consists of a descending 4th (G-D, see fig.V-4) followed by a filled descending 3rd (D descending down to B through the passing tone C). T is composed of a rising 4th (G-C) followed by a rising 3rd (C-E \flat). The dynamics (*forte* versus *piano*) and therefore the characters of the phrases are opposite. The harmonic profile is different as well: X1 stabilizes the key of G major, whereas T is unstable and modulates from C minor to G minor. Therefore, in their melodic, harmonic, and dynamic features, X1 and T are opposed. We suggest here a graph of the tension up to b. 41:

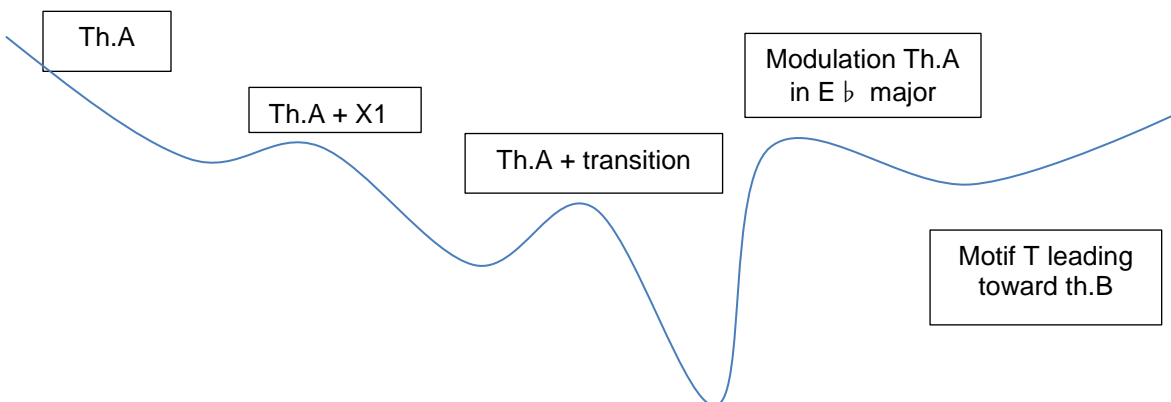


Figure V-12: Possible tension graph until b. 41

Interestingly, T is a melodic anticipation of the *Legendenton* theme we will find in section C, though in a radically different character. This fragment, which stands out from the rest of the section in its character and essence, is the thematic kernel of the middle section's theme.

III. Second thematic area: bars 41-72

A. Bars 41-48: Theme B in D minor with interwoven soprano and tenor

At the end of motif T (b.41²), the dynamic suddenly drops to *piano* and the harmony resolves to D minor (fig. V-13). In this new key (which lasts until b. 52 and sounds more established than the previous unsettled tonality), a new thematic element appears in a high register (bb.41-48), doubled by octaves in the left-hand accompaniment. Since D minor is settled for a while, and because the same thematic element appears later in b. 62, a thematic weight stands out in our consciousness, and we will label bars 41-47 as Theme B.

Theme B is articulated in two four-bar fragments. The first fragment is doubled two octaves lower by the left-hand bass, which overlaps the top melody and thus creates a melodic connection with the second fragment (b.44). This subtle counterpoint starts as an unnoticed unison in bar 41, masked by the prominent soprano, so it sounds as if it is emerging from the soprano's shadow when it stands alone in b. 44. It creates a connection between the soprano fragments such that we perceive the next soprano phrase as deriving naturally from what preceded: in bars 45-46, the soprano repeats what the bass had anticipated in bars 43-44. In bars 47-48, the top left hand should land on D but yields to the soprano entrance on D (one octave higher in b.49), which resolves its previous leading tone C#. Overall, the main

voice in the soprano and its counterpoint start in unison and then depart and alternate with each other, interweaving in a way that evokes a love relationship.

The image displays three systems of musical notation for Theme B, measures 41 through 47. Each system consists of a vocal line (soprano or tenor) and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The time signature is 8/8. The first system (measures 41-43) shows the soprano and tenor voices starting in unison. The piano accompaniment features a complex rhythmic pattern with many beamed eighth notes. The second system (measures 44-45) continues the vocal interplay, with the piano accompaniment maintaining its intricate texture. The third system (measures 46-47) shows the vocal lines becoming more melodic and separated, while the piano accompaniment continues with its characteristic rhythmic drive. Dynamic markings include *sf* (sforzando) and *p* (piano). Fingerings and articulation marks are also present throughout the score.

Figure V-13: Theme B (bb. 41-47) – interplay between soprano and tenor

B. Resemblances and oppositions between Th.A and Th.B

The first four measures of Th.A and Th.B have strong connections to each other that might be perceived unconsciously by listeners. Let's examine the ways they are connected and how they differ.

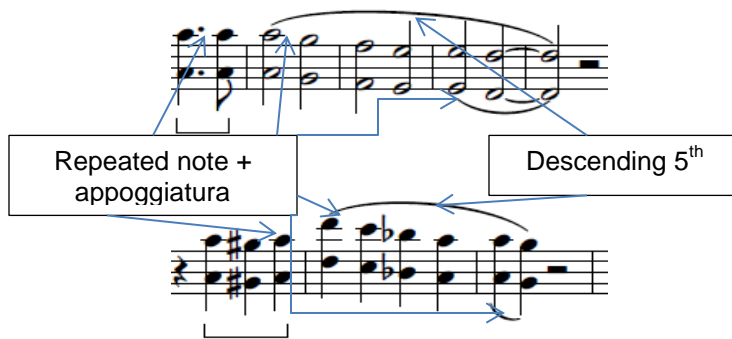


Figure V-14: Resemblances between Th.A (bb.2—6) and Th.B (bb.41-43)

1. Similarities:

- The first note A is the same for both themes.
- Both themes consist of an initial anacrusis (upbeat on note A in Th.A, and melodic anacrusis A, G \sharp , A in Th.B) followed by a stepwise descending motion; the descent span is a 5th in both cases: A \searrow D in Th.A and D \searrow G in Th.B.
- The accompaniment is the same flow of sixteenth-note arpeggiated motives.
- They have the same length: eight bars for both.
- They both land on the last note through its respective repeated appoggiatura: the repeated E (b. 5) is an appoggiatura to the D in Th.A, and the repeated A (b.43) in Th.B is an appoggiatura to the last note G (which is itself ornamented)
- Although Th.A is tumultuous, its soft and tender return brings it closer in character to Th.B. Viewed this way, Th.A in bars 19-23 could be perceived as a sort of emotional kernel that germinates and produces Th.B.

The elements above might describe what a careful listener perceives intuitively: similarities in the nature of these two themes. While listening, we feel unconsciously the strong connection between Th.A and Th.B through a sort of flowing melodic continuity. However, this sense of continuity is mixed with oppositions.

2. Contrasting features:

- Th.A is in a major key, loud, and overflowing with passion. The dominant bass pedal G is stable.
- Th.B is in a minor key and soft, which creates a sense of frailty. The ascending anacrusis expresses a feeling of aspiration. The tonic bass pedal D moves in the second half of the theme. The two-octave distance between the soprano and its counterpoint creates an impression of spatial distance, the counterpoint being perceived as a sort of echo to the main voice; one could feel a longing sentiment.

This blend of similarities and differences gives a unique feel to the piece. We find here an ambiguous relationship: the melodic and rhythmic resemblance between both themes suggests a single monothematic structure, while their psychologically opposed character suggests a binary structure. So we could oscillate between mono-thematic and bi-thematic perceptions. Phenomenology invites us to stay away from any preconception¹⁰ and from the intellectual tendency to choose one side over the other. Rather it proposes openness and acceptance of the object

¹⁰ See the definition of Époche or “Bracketing” attitude in chapters 2 and 3.

as it is, trusting that further investigation will allow us to understand its real nature and believing in an organic unity revealed through this approach.

C. Tension of T (bb.33-41) is transferred to Theme B (bb.41-48)

T. was in high tension, and that tension was not released at its conclusion in bar 41 by a transition or any other means. Rather, Th.B immediately follows as a juxtaposition. As a result, the tension in T is transferred to Th.B and continues.¹¹

Although the lyrical character and the soft dynamic of Th.B create a tender expression, we feel a latent anxiety from the continuing restless accompaniment, which confers to the melody a supplicating tone.

D. Bars 49-52: motif X2 - its continuation and melodic similarity to Th.B

Bar 49 contains the first slowdown of the sixteenth-note accompaniment to eighth-note triplets. Motive X reappears without the two-note initial upbeat, and in D minor. We will call it **motive X2**. We perceive it as a continuation of Th.B, just as we did with X1, not only because of the tonal coherence, but also because of the melodic connection between X2 and Th.B. Let's flesh out this connection:

¹¹ Overall, the ongoing tension driving us through section A confirms the one-single-section cast that we identified above. In every portion of this section, we remain under the propelling force that burst out at the beginning of the piece and continued driving us forward. What we heard, what we are hearing at the present moment, and what we expect to hear blend into a united musical section.

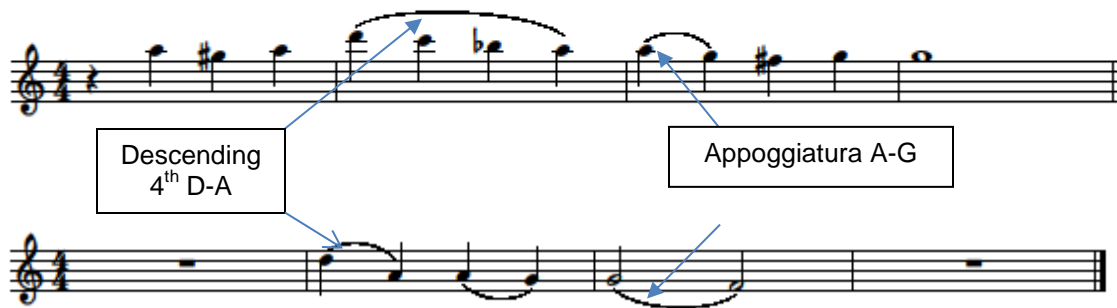


Figure V-15: melodic resemblances between Th.B and X2

- The D at the beginning of X2 is the resolution of the C# that ends Th.B. We rather expect this note, even though we don't know beforehand that it is going to be a return to the X motive.
- In Th.B, the most important notes structuring the melody are A, D, A, G. The G# is an ornamental neighbor tone; from D we step down a 4th through passing tones C and B \flat in order to land on A at the next downbeat (bar 43), which is itself an appoggiatura resolving down to G.
- In X2, we meet a similar pattern: no more upbeat, but the same descending 4th (D-A) brings out the four notes D, A, G, F (hence, the first three notes recall the same three anchoring notes of Th.B), with the same appoggiatura relationship between A and G. Furthermore, X2 takes us one step further down: the second resolved appoggiatura leads one note lower than in Th.B, namely to the F: it could be perceived as a melodic extension of Th.B. (Again, we encounter the fundamental phenomenon of protention- retention, which underpins each musical connection as a sound lived experience.)

E. Connections between all the themes and motives in section A

So far, we have identified melodic and character connections between:

- Theme A and X1
- Theme A and Theme B (through intervallic similarities, and because Th.A's soft version brings its character close to Th.B.)
- Theme B and X2
- Motif T and X (inverted intervals with opposed characters)

However, stepping back and looking at how we became aware of these connections, we realize that the first step was an intuitive awareness, a sort of musical reality we got caught up in, rather than an intellectual investigation that unveiled this. Stepping back further and intentionally looking for musical explanations led us to discover a musical continuity that binds all of the thematic elements together in one organic collection.

F. Bars 53-61: transition between Theme B in D minor and Theme B in F major

The motion in bars 53-61 is too fast and complex for the ear to perceive a lyrical character (fig. V-16). Nevertheless, the hands play in unison without any harmonic support, so the motion can still be described as a melodic line, albeit a very fast one. The intervals change swiftly from large to small: 4th, 2nd, 5th, augmented 2nd, ½ tone. We hear soft rustles, which could be depicted as waves because of their up and down motion. Observing more closely, we can hear in bar 54 a clearer melodic motion emerging out of this fuzzy line: five stepwise ascending

notes B \flat , C, D, E \flat , F. Schumann included accents on these notes so they would stand out from the intricacies of the music. From the outset, this melodic fragment sounds disconnected from the music we heard previously. But, in fact, it is the inversion of the initial five descending notes of Th.A (A, G, F, E, D, the fourth one not being repeated). This five-note motive is restated with a B \natural in bar 56, and eventually appears in bar 57 with the original inverted notes of Th.A: D, E, F, G, A. Interestingly, a crescendo finds its culmination with a *forte* marking on this very bar; is it a coincidence or conscious planning? No one can tell. However, this affects our hearing and we connect better with the melodic motion of Th.A at this point. Our retention activates a most probably unconscious connection, but it still affects our perception of coherence.

From the next bar on, the agitation subsides (*ritardando*) and the left hand becomes fragmented and softer (bb. 59-60), which sounds like another step in the slowing process.¹² The music reaches C, the dominant of F major. This will lead to the second statement of Th.B in that new key.

¹² This can be perceived as if the left hand was losing strength, similar to a tired runner in need of recovering his breath.

Figure V-16: transition between the two statements of Th.B

G. Bars 61-72: Theme B + X3 in F major - calmer and more concluding than in D minor

In bar 61, the triplets from the former segment turn into eighth notes,¹³ and the rhythm calms one notch further. The dominant C arrival is transferred to the right hand¹⁴ and becomes the melodic start of a new statement of Th.B in F major. The

¹³ The eighth-note rhythm is heard as a result of the syncopated alternation between the hands.

¹⁴ The sound of this dominant C in both the low register (with its broad resonance) and simultaneously three octaves higher at the top of the right hand conveys a sense of space. This emphasizes even more strongly the perception of the dominant function.

mood is calmer than in the first statement. Again, as in bars 49-52, motive X (now **X3**) follows as a continuation and a sort of simplification of Th.B (see fig. V-15). Now, however, the harmony is stable compared to bars 48-51: it just leans on tonic and dominant degrees. A syncopated echo of X3 re-sounds in the middle register (b.70). Both X3 and its echo are ornamented in bars 71-72. Overall, we hear X3 with its dominant-tonic resolution four times, and our perception of resolution is very strongly confirmed. The minimum-tension point is bar 72 where X3 occurs for the fourth time, extremely slow (with a second *ritardando*), to the extent that it leads to silence on the downbeat of b. 73. This is the first rest in the piece. At this point, the musical flow has slowed to a pause.

H. Updated tension profile

We will now update our tension analysis. Looking back to the initial outburst and the huge energy maintained throughout the section, we followed an overall descending tension curve, and we are now right at the very bottom of the curve, as the tension graph below shows (fig. V-17):

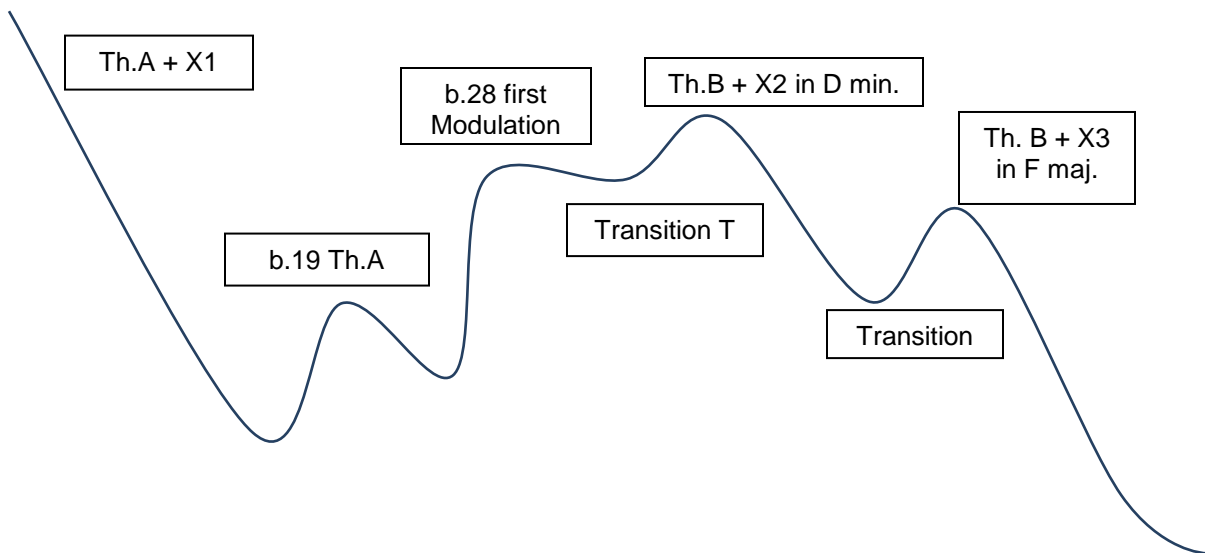


Figure V-17: suggested tension profile until bar 72

IV. Segment transitioning toward section B: bars 73-81

The function of the final fragment, bars 73-81, is elusive at first glance. We need to detail each musical parameter in order to perceive how their combination makes sense. We will learn that this fragment combines a rhythmic augmentation with a new harmonic rising tension and a more polyphonic texture, and that it serves as a transition to section B.

A. Description

The rhythmic values are progressively stretched in bars 74-76 (fig. V-18). They begin one quarter-note distant (bb.74-75), change to one half-note distant, then change to one dotted-half-note distant (b.76). This rhythmic stretch is combined with a *ritenuto* in bar 75 reinforced by a second *ritenuto* in bar 76 – ritardando upon

ritardando. All these rhythmic indications signify a huge time protraction that continues with the new Adagio tempo appearing in bar 77, where the melody stops until bar 79. Then, in the final two bars (bb.80-81) it hesitates protractedly on F and E before finally ending on F, followed by a fermata rest. At this point, we cannot perceive pulse anymore, and our sense of time is dilated so much that it stops.

On the melodic level, the last note (G) of the previous fragment arrives on F (b.73²), lingers there for one bar, then rises again step by step to the D (bb.74-77). After its interruption (bb. 77-79), the top melody completes its ascent and hesitates on F and E. In spite of the interruption, we can identify a melodic line through the one-octave ascent F-F, which gives this entire fragment a sense of coherence.

Harmonically, in bar 73, motif X3 turns into F7 (instead of resolving on an F major chord) and resolves into B \flat harmony in bar 74¹. The harmonic context in bars 74-79 is ambiguous as we oscillate between B \flat major and G minor. The final harmony freezes on a C \sharp -diminished chord in bars 80-81. We end this fragment on a tense harmony, which signals that more music will follow. After the tension trough in bar 72 (depicted on the tension graph in figure V-19), the harmonic tension starts rising again at the end of section A.

A change in texture seems to confirm the significance of bar 72 as an important moment in the whole section. Since X3 (b. 69), we have had a four-voice polyphonic texture. Interestingly, a fifth discrete voice appears in bar 72, which is precisely the location of the turn in harmonic tension. In the next bar, we are back to our four-voice texture. It seems that in bar 72, Schumann was led to generate a sense of density through a more polyphonic texture and especially to point out the

tension turn occurring there.

Figure V-18: bb. 70-81 = ending fragment of section A and transition to section B, preceded by X3

B. Resulting perceived transition

We see how, in this final fragment, the elements described above work in opposite directions. On the one hand, the music sounds unexpected—as a sort of improvisation—and creates a sense of stepping out of time until it literally stops (rhythm). On the other hand, tension slowly rises again (harmony, melody and texture).

Let's examine how our retention and protention integrate these two tendencies:

- In past events, we felt a strong sense of lyric, rhythmic, and harmonic continuity. We arrived here through a continuous musical discourse, so our retention has not been interrupted and is very strong.
- Conversely, the present melodic discontinuation, time-stretching, and harmonic wandering is radically opposed to what we experienced before. We left behind the flow of energy that characterized all of section A to this point. This contrast in itself generates an expectation: we perceive something else is coming.

In other words, our strong retention helped build up an even stronger protention. We are experiencing the essence of a transitional passage. The ultimate F stands out of the harmony and remains alone in the middle of nowhere, as though completely lost in its own question. On this last note, we feel stretched in a strong protention, although the following fermata leaves our expectation in suspense.

V. Conclusion to section A with a suggested global eidetic reduction

Here is a graph for the whole section A, including this last arising tension:

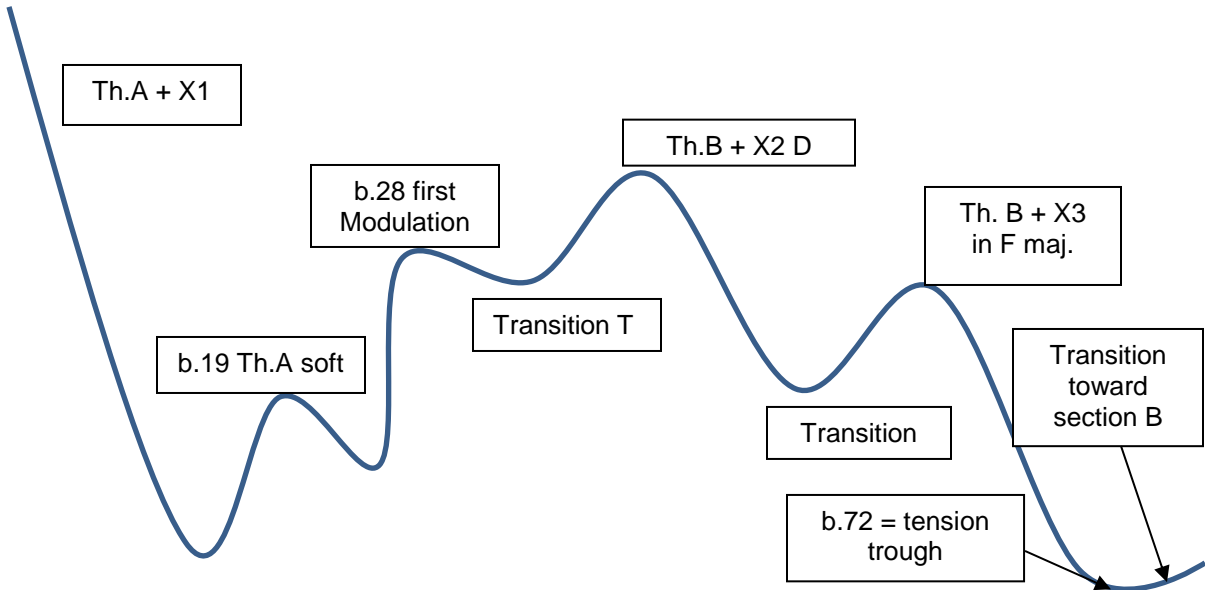


Figure V-19: suggested tension profile for the entire section A

Here is a simplified graph for section A:

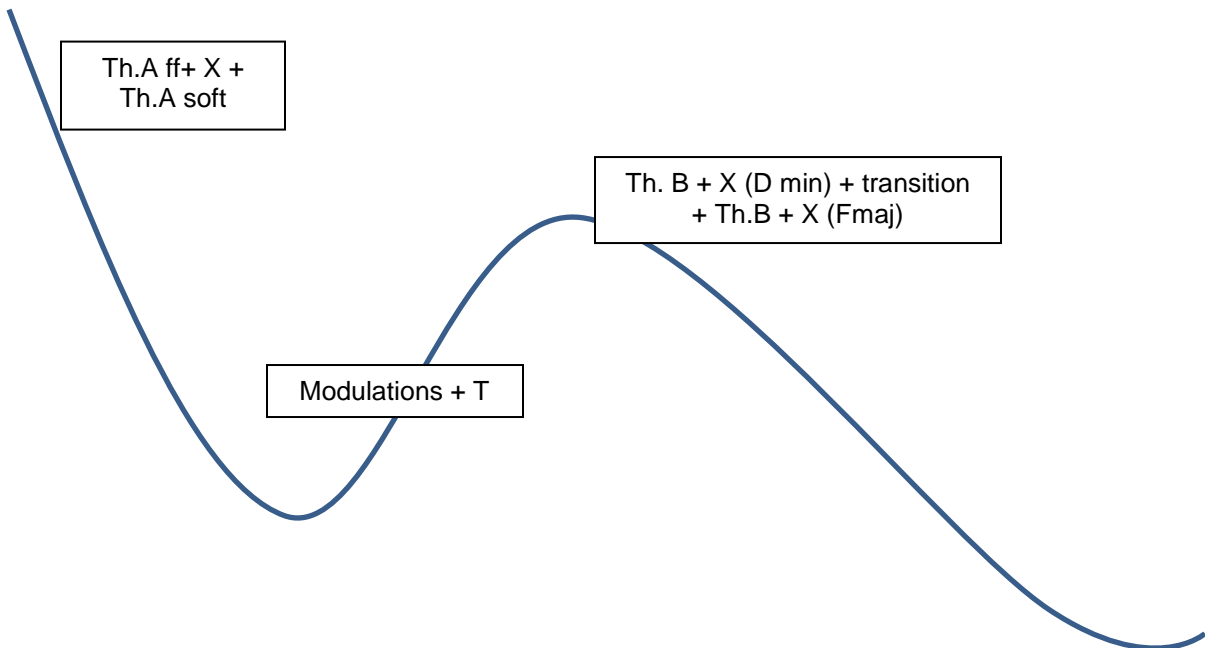


Figure V-20: simplified tension profile for section A

In concluding our phenomenological description of section A, we review here its essential components. The uninterrupted melodic lyricism engenders a sense of continuity. The accompaniment's intense, continuous flow actively abets the melodic continuity. The tension profile reveals an essential energy outburst at the beginning of the piece that gradually subsides towards the end; its two culminating points correspond with the piece's two main themes.

In the end, we experience a transition that both pushes forward and pulls back. We are connected to past music but also pulled towards upcoming music, creating a sense of elasticity. The expression "elastic tension" could describe the interplay between past events and upcoming musical ideas.

Chapter 6: Sections B to E – Survey of the Most Significant Phenomenological Observations

In this chapter, I will present the results of my phenomenological investigation into the rest of the piece: sections B through E. I will start by looking at the tension profile for each section, highlight some of the markers that shape each graph, and note some of the most significant phenomenological aspects of the piece. Finally, I will offer the movement's overall tension profile and draw conclusions related to a unified perception of this piece.

I. Section B (bb. 82-128) combines development and recapitulation

Here is a graph that sketches the musical tension in section B (bb.82-128):

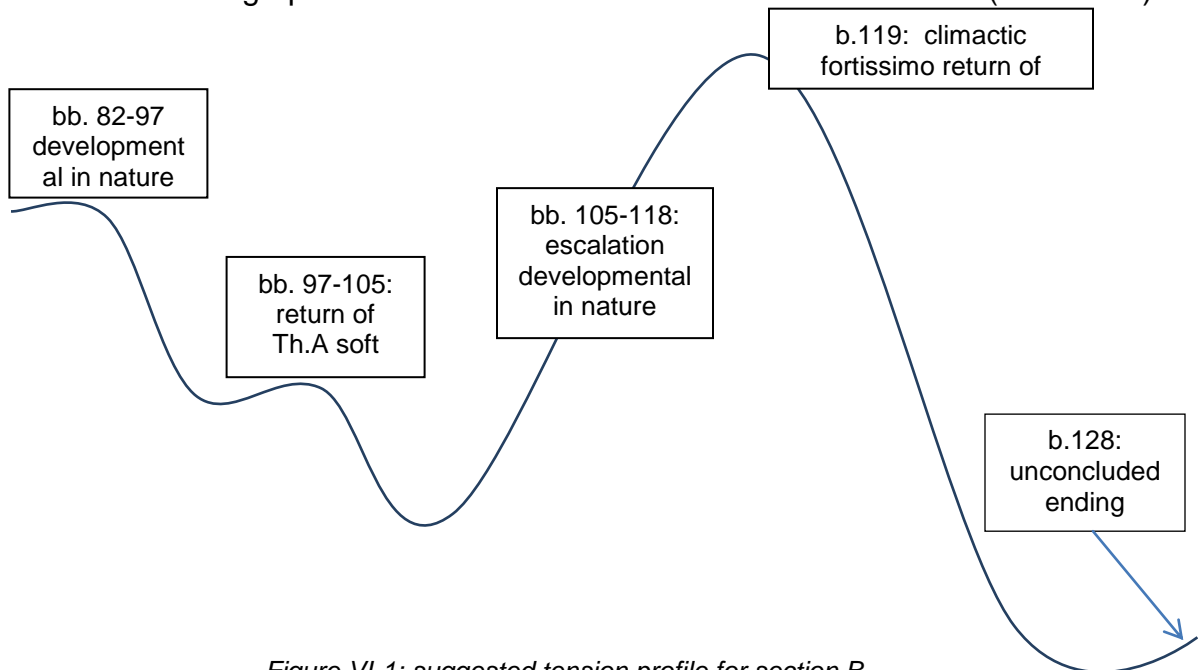


Figure VI-1: suggested tension profile for section B

This graph gives an account of the two non-thematic fragments (bb. 82-97 and bb. 105-118) that appear developmental in nature. These fragments build up tension through tonal modulations or uncertainty, syncopated and jagged rhythms, and loud dynamics. Their motion is shaped in tumultuous waves. Alternating with these developmental fragments are two returns of Th.A (in its soft version at bb.87-105 and as a climactic fortissimo at bb.119-127) that release the previously accumulated tension.

II. Relationship between section A and section B

We will show now that the musical tension in section B is greater than in section A.

Tension is generated by contrasts.¹ On the scale of a large musical segment, tension is partially the result of the contrast between its lowest and highest points of energy. In this regard, section B harbors more tension than section A. Also, section B carries the same thematic material as the beginning of section A but leads to an unprecedented outburst with a triple forte in its culmination (b. 119). Moreover, we notice that the tender and rather soothing motif X and Th.B do not reappear at all in

¹ See chapter 3 p. 39

the section, which concentrates tension elements within a shorter musical segment.² Thus, the culmination in section B is perceived as greater than that in section A. Following this climactic moment, the ending of section B eventually subsides. The entire 10-bar fragment at bars 119-128 is grounded on a tonic pedal, providing a strong sense of stability.³ After the final chord (b. 128¹), the melody is transferred to the trill and keeps descending to the low G. This descending motion dips lower than in the corresponding passage in section A (bb. 23-28). Finally, in bar 128, we are in an almost-stabilized C major; we have lost our rhythmic pulse through the cadential run; the last pitch is very low; and the music halts on a long fermata. Conversely, section A ended on a tense harmony (diminished chord) and on a middle-range pitch. Therefore, the energy at the end of section B is much less than that of the end of section A.

Consequently, we perceive section B as providing more contrast than section A between its culminating and minimal points and therefore encompassing more tension.

When stepping back from the detailed curves, we can zoom out from the tension curves of sections A and B and suggest a graph of their combination:

² Section B is 81 bars longer than section A.

³ However, we notice that the tonic chord is still not clearly stated.

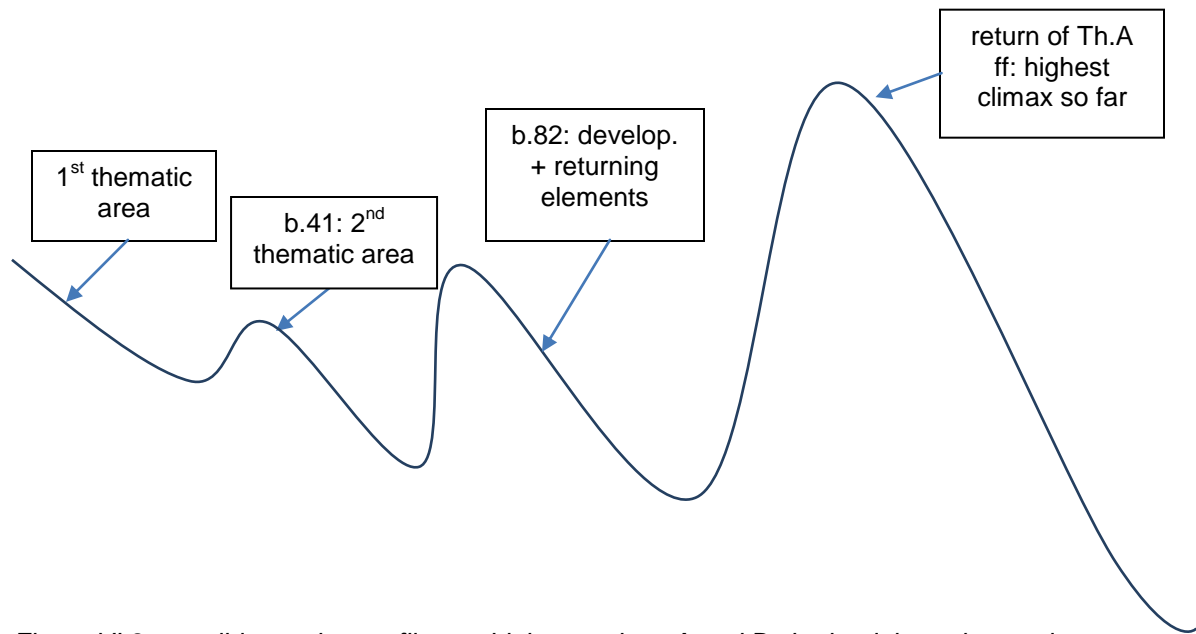


Figure VI-2: possible tension profile combining sections A and B obtained through zooming out

III. Section C (bb.129-224): a closed central unit

This central section appears as a self-sufficient unit within the movement. It is built upon a new theme (see Th.C in fig. VI-3) with a poised and tender character, as opposed to the general impassioned agitation in the previous music. It follows a variation process with an increasing intensity until the climax is reached in the fourth variation (bb. 204-215), after which a soft epilogue concludes in the same key (see fig. VI-6). Along the way, as a link to the rest of the piece, two episodes remind us of some previous material: motif X4 at bb.156-160, which turns into a non-thematic episode (bb.160-173), and Th.B in D \flat major at bb.181-194, which also turns into a non-thematic episode (bb.195-203).

Im Legendenton ♩ = 72

129

p

Pedal

ritard.

p

Pedal

135

ritard.

Figure VI-3: new Theme C, spelled out first hesitantly in G minor (bb.129-132¹) and then in its definitive key of C minor (bb.132²-140¹)

Here is a possible tension profile for section C:

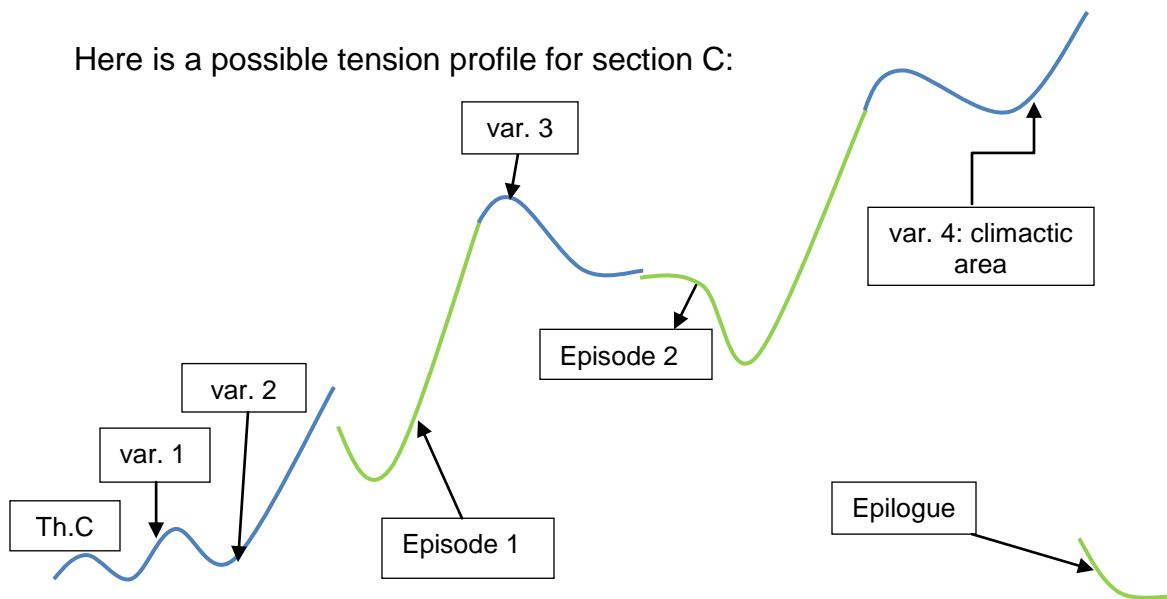


Figure VI-4: tension profile suggested for section C. Th.C and its variations are in blue, Episodes 1 & 2 and the Epilogue are in green

This unified tension profile of section C shows increasing tension across the variation process. Each wave fleshes out a specific variation. Each of the two episodes escalates the energy, so that the following variation comes with a greater tension than the previous one. The end shows a culminating area and a subsiding epilogue.

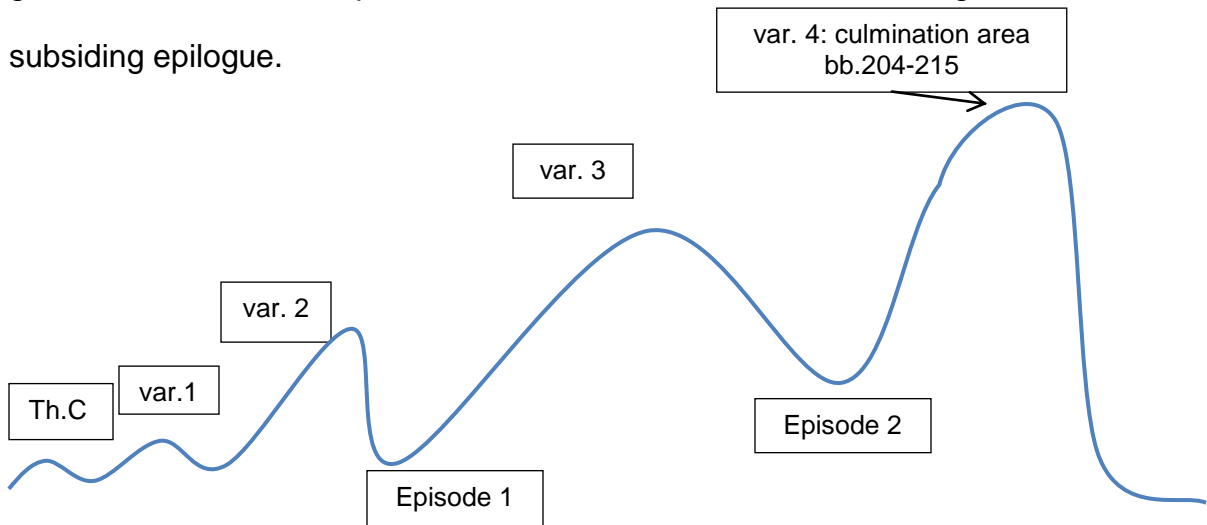


Figure VI-5: unified tension profile of section C

IV. A and A \flat : interconnecting notes throughout the piece

The notes A and A \flat recur as pivotal pitches in successive climactic areas, thereby connecting the areas in our experience of the piece.

In section A, we notice that the greatest tension point is the initial energy outburst, which is precisely initiated by the note A, and that A \flat initiates the

modulation fragment (bb. 28-29) that becomes the most abrupt turn of the section.⁴ In section B, the climactic return of Th.A strongly emphasizes A (b.119), but as an ultimate turn of the immediately preceding boisterous A ♭. This creates a sense of conflict between the two notes and makes A ♯ sound like a heroic victory. In section C, the climactic area (bb.204-215) is centered on the note A ♭ : the note serves as the highest one in the melody (bb. 205, 212 and 215) and coincides with the diminished chords and the fermata (bb. 212 and 215) that bear the main stresses of the phrase (see fig. IV-6). The melody in the following epilogue is the C-minor triad altered by this same note A ♭. We might perceive this note as a force affecting the shape of the music. In section D, A ♭ initiates (in b.225) the sudden return of the modulation fragment we had heard in b.29 (fig. VI-7). In section E, A ♯ introduces the soothing and concluding Motive X7 (see fig. VI-10), which as we will see is the point of convergence for the whole piece. Overall, these two notes appear as essential to the successive climaxes and main structural points of the piece. A ♯ and A ♭ are interconnected throughout the movement and contribute significantly in shaping it.

⁴ See the tension profiles in fig. V-17 and fig. V-19: bar 28 presents the most abrupt tension increase.

204 *sfz* *fff* *sf* *sf* *sf* *sf* *sf*

209 *ritard.* *ff* *Pedal* *ritard.*

214 *p* *

220 *ritard.*

Figure VI-6: climactic area centered on the note A \flat bb.204-215, affecting the epilogue's C minor triad



Figure VI-7: beginning of section D with the return of A \flat

V. Section D (bb.225-273): a truncated recapitulation

This section appears as a recapitulation of section A deprived of its beginning. Following the gentle ending of section C, Th.A reappears abruptly (b.225). However, the first two pages of section A are missing, and we are thrust into the moment where section A had departed from the main key, i.e. at b.29. As in a sonata recapitulation, the tonality then departs from the exposition's: in b.233, Th.B returns in C minor instead of D minor. The relative major key (E \flat major) underpins the second statement of Th.B in b.254. In b.274, the major key inflection of the tonic introduces the last section of the piece in the concluding key of C major.

Here is a graph of the musical tension in section D:

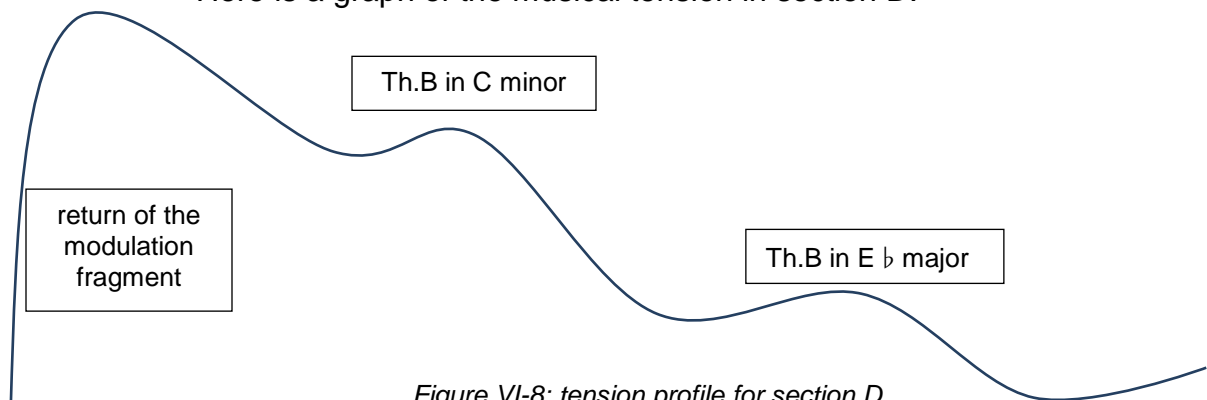


Figure VI-8: tension profile for section D

VI. Comparing section A and section D

Overall, section D shows less tension than section A. The first statement of Th.B at b.233 is in the same key (C minor) as the transition T. at bb.229-232. We therefore perceive tonal continuity rather than the contrast we experienced in section A (as to Th.B's tonality). C minor and the home key have the same tonic degree, which provides a sense of being "almost home," and at this point, we might anticipate a resolution of the whole piece. Looking more broadly, at this point we have experienced the huge climaxes of sections B and C, and we may now experience the recapitulated material as moving toward a conclusion rather than toward new developments.⁵ Consequently, even though the musical material is the same in section D as it was in section A, we perceive a lower tension level in section D and the respective graphs will show this in the final overall sketch.

VII. Section E (bb.274-309): conclusion through the affirmation of C major and Beethoven's theme

For the first time in the entire piece, C major is unequivocally affirmed with an energetic tonic chord at the opening of section E (fig. VI-9). This is section B returning in the home key.

⁵ This is because of protention and retention, and because we remain aware of the relationship with the sonata form, despite the extreme deviations.

in E flat major).⁶ X7 carries the very first and long awaited C-major conclusive cadences (authentic cadence in bb. 296-297, and perfect authentic cadence in bb. 298-297) , in an appeased mood and much slower tempo,⁷ which leads us to perceive it as the final resolution to the whole movement (see fig.VI-10).

⁶ No record from Schumann's correspondence indicates a deliberate intention of quoting Beethoven's lied, originally in E flat major.

- Hermann Abert was the first scholar to identify the connection:

“Am Schlusse klingt's wie fromme Ergebung, und gewiss nicht ohne Absicht hat Schumann hier wiederum Beethovens 'ferne Geliebte' heraufbeschworen, die schon im 14.Takt erschienen war.”
“At the end it sounds like pious resignation, and Schumann certainly did not conjure up withoutintention Beethoven's 'distant lover', which had already appeared in the 14th bar” (my translation).

Hermann Abert, *Robert Schumann*, 2nd ed. (Berlin: Schlesische Verlagsanstalt, 1910) 64

- Nicholas Marston confirms the probably conscious but still unconfessed quote:

“[[T]here is no certainty that Schumann was alluding to the Beethoven work here: the connection appears to have been made as late as 1910, in the second edition of Hermann Abert's book on Schumann....In any case, that Schumann did not admit to a reference to *An die ferne Geliebte* in the first movement of the *Fantasie* in no way excludes the possibility that he as well aware of one.”
Nicholas Marston, *Schumann Fantasie op 17* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) 36

⁷ The tempo even slows one more step for each additional statement of X7, until the ultimate very long double appoggiatura E-D and D-C at bb.305-308

292 $4/4$ *ritard.*

sf

295 *Adagio* **Motif X7** *ritard.*)*

mf

Authentic C-major cadence I ($\frac{6}{4}$) – V (7) – I

Perfect authentic C-major cadence I ($\frac{6}{4}$) – V (7) – I

299

Detailed description: This figure shows three systems of musical notation. The first system (measures 292-294) features a piano accompaniment with a treble clef and a bass clef, marked with a forte dynamic (*sf*) and a 4/4 time signature. The second system (measures 295-298) is marked *Adagio* and includes a vocal line in the treble clef and piano accompaniment in the bass clef, with a mezzo-forte dynamic (*mf*). A red box labeled 'Motif X7' is placed above the vocal line. The third system (measure 299) shows a piano accompaniment. Two boxes below the score identify cadences: 'Authentic C-major cadence I (6/4) – V (7) – I' and 'Perfect authentic C-major cadence I (6/4) – V (7) – I'. Red circles and lines highlight specific notes and motifs across the staves.

Figure VI-10: oscillation heading toward Motif X7 (quoting Beethoven's Lied "An die ferne Geliebte") and its concluding C-major cadences.

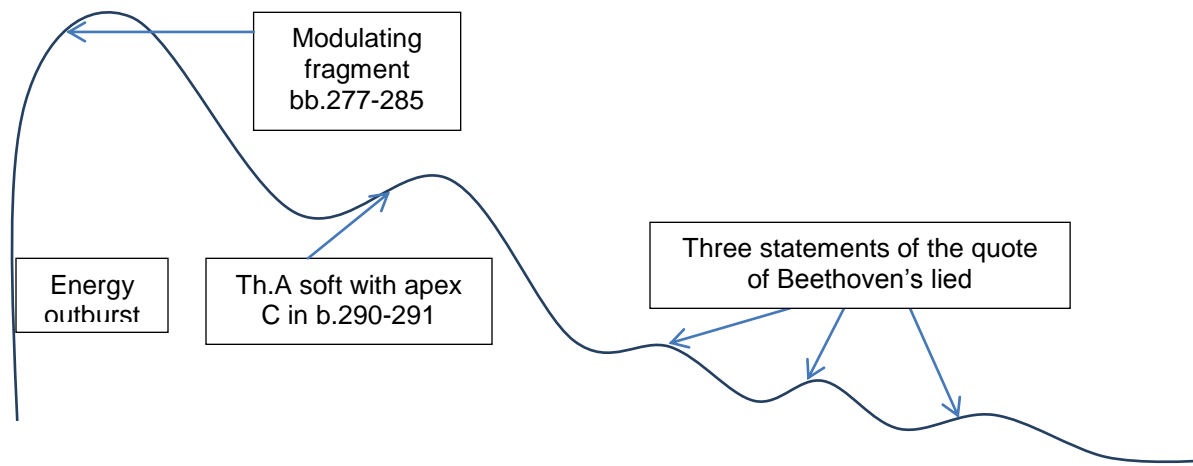


Figure VI-11: tension profile of section E: moving toward the final resolution

The tension profile of section E in fig.VI-11 reflects an initial burst of energy followed by a progressive release. The curve illustrates successively the modulating area with its apex (reached in b.279), the apex in the return of Th.A (in bb. 290-291), and the three successive statements of X7. The full resolution is reached in the last two C-major chords.

VIII. Suggested tension profile of the whole movement

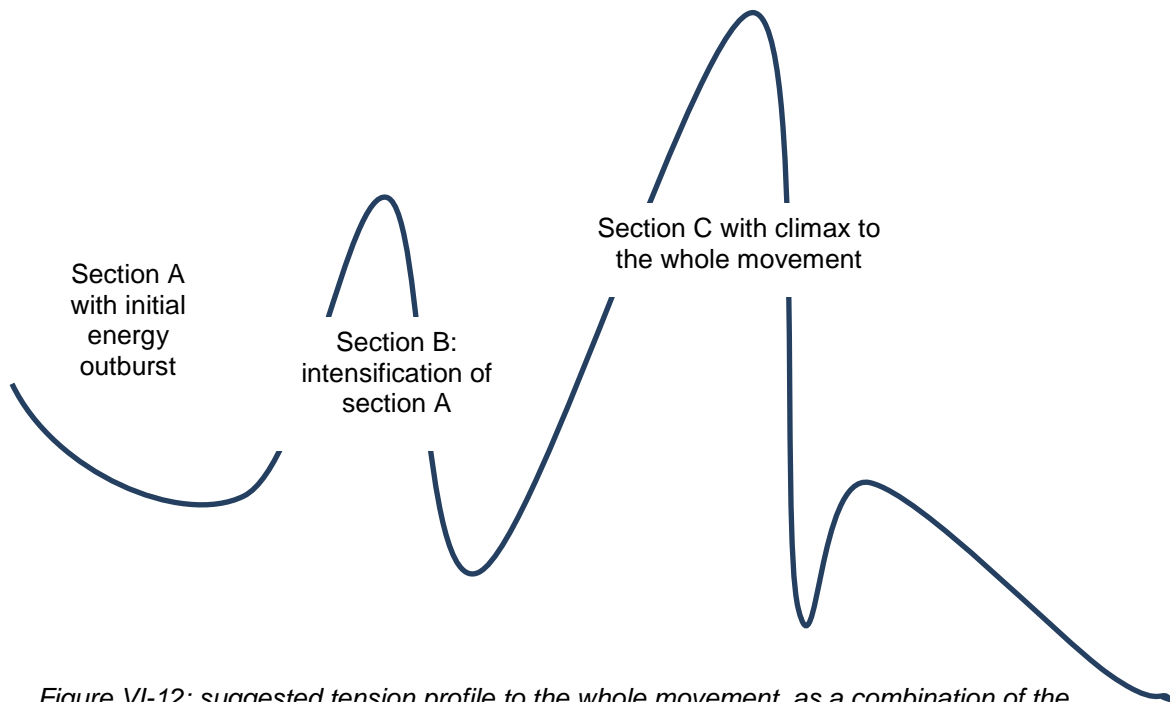


Figure VI-12: suggested tension profile to the whole movement, as a combination of the 5 sectional graphs

Through the process of zooming out and linking the graphs of the five sections, we can summarize the movement's tension profile in a final graph. It shows

the initial energy outburst in section A, the first climax in section B, and the tension peak at the end of section C. The last portion (sections D & E) reveals the same shape as section B, but with a lower overall energy level.⁸

IX. A specific and subtle relationship binds motif X to all the other themes and motifs in the piece.

Motif X plays a soothing role in the piece. It recurs seven times, in different keys and shapes, until its final form, X7, concludes the piece. Because of its descending melodic motion, its double appoggiatura, and its general closing profile (an authentic cadence underpins the motif), we perceive it as a soothing element.⁹ It follows the main themes:¹⁰ Th.A, Th.B and even Th.C (under X4 in b.157). From this perspective, it is perceived as a force that always attenuates the recent tension, and calms the general impassioned character of the movement.

Motif X is related to the other themes through specific melodic similarities. We already observed how Th.A and X are connected by intervallic

⁸ As a reminder, this curve is subjective and open to changes according to various performances and listeners. It does not rigidly circumscribe any experience but rather suggests what a listener attentive to the essence of the music may perceive.

⁹ See chapter 5 pp. 63-64

¹⁰ See chapter 5, p. 80

In sum, motif X can be perceived as secretly tied to the other themes through melodic similarities and continuities, and as injecting a soothing function into the whole piece. Therefore, hearing X7 concluding the piece is perceived as a natural point of convergence and a consequence of all previous musical events.¹⁴

X. Phenomenological look at the form of the whole movement

To conclude our phenomenological analysis, we will observe where the main musical confrontations lie and how they are resolved. This will determine the specific form from a phenomenological perspective.

A. Main conflict in section A + B

In section B, we noticed an alternation between developmental and recapitulatory fragments.¹⁵ As a result, most scholars who endeavored to analyze this movement with traditional means struggled to identify the resulting ambiguous form, especially regarding its relation to sonata design.¹⁶

¹⁴ Things do not appear so clearly while listening, but are rather intuitively perceived so.

¹⁵ See p. 92

¹⁶ Walter Dahms, Charles Rosen, Joan Chissel, Yonty Solomon, John Daverio, Anthony Newcomb, Adriana Ponce, Nicholas Marston.

Phenomenology focuses instead on the relationship between tension-escalating elements and stabilizing ones. This approach helps to free us¹⁷ from comparing with the sonata form, to observe and interact with the music itself, and to let the specific essence reveal itself.¹⁸ I was led by the music to see the alternation between returning and developmental elements as interplay between opposite forces: destabilizing forces (developmental process) and stabilizing forces (thematic and tonality returning process). After a confrontation between these forces reaches its culmination at bb.115-118, a stabilizing element prevails with the triumphant return of Th.A in C major in b.119. At this point, we notice that Th.A and Th.B didn't create a major conflict and its consequent development¹⁹ (as required by the sonata pattern). Rather the destabilizing and stabilizing tendencies oppose each other, and the stabilizing force prevails at the end of section B.

So far, the main shaping process is a tension-attenuation model. The tension profile of section A shows an initial outburst progressively soothed.²⁰ In chapter 5, the soothing nature of motif X is grafted on the two main themes (Th.A and Th.B)

¹⁷ Epoche attitude described in chap. 3 p. 37.

¹⁸ Eidetic reduction described in chap. 3 pp. 37-38.

¹⁹ As we observed in chapter 5, the subdominant key of Th.B doesn't provide a tonal opposition with the home key, and conversely, Th.A and Th.B present several strong similarities.

²⁰ See fig. V-20 in chapter 5.

and thereby brings their energy level down. In section B, the other sudden outburst (b.82) is also soothed until Th.A returns softly (b.97). The stabilizing recapitulatory force wins over the tension-escalating developmental force. Hence, we see an overall calming pattern in this first big section of the piece.

B. Integrating section C into our general outlook

In contrast with the first big section A + B, section C brings a new paradigm: tension escalation. Indeed, at the micro-level, Th.C shows an arch-type where the tension culmination appears in its 3rd bar and then is released.²¹ Similarly, at the macro-level, throughout section C the music builds tension in waves until the climax arrives at bb.204-215. The epilogue comes as a sort of short, closing appendix. In that regard, the shaping paradigm of section C is tension escalation, the opposite of section A + B.

²¹ Theme C showing the tension highest point in b.132¹. The culmination in is built through the melodic motion (opposite motion between top and bass parts), and the diminished chord (which creates the highest harmonic tension):

Im Legendenton ♩ = 72

The musical score shows two staves. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. Both are in 2/4 time. The key signature has two flats. The tempo is marked 'Im Legendenton ♩ = 72'. The dynamics are marked 'p'. The score includes fingerings (5 2, 5 4, 5 4) and a 'Pedal' marking in the bass staff. A red oval highlights a diminished chord in both staves at measure 132, which is the tension peak mentioned in the text.

This leads us to realize that the true musical confrontation is between motif X and Th.C. The tension-attenuation pattern observed in section A + B is closely linked to the pervasive presence of motif X. In that sense, we can perceive X as the main shaping element of the tension in that big section. Conversely, Th.C—built on a tension-increase pattern—generates the whole section C. We can then look at section C as the opposite of section A + B. Section C is built on tension-increasing Th.C, while section A + B is shaped by tension-attenuating motif X. In this sense, the true opposition within these two main sections is carried respectively by motif X and Th.C.

Taking into consideration the melodic relationship between X and Th.C (see fig. VI-12 and VI-13) we can see the two as one thematic entity that is modified throughout the piece. X is transformed into Th.C with an inverse shape, while giving the opposite tension paradigm to the related section. Seen in this way, motif X is a single and changing entity shaping the whole piece, and the confrontation lies between its two opposite forms.

C. How section D + E responds to the previous forces

Section D + E naturally heads toward a resolution precisely in regard to the thematic confrontation: the soothing material X7 concludes and resolves the conflict. It is the final response to Th.C.

D. Phenomenological shape of the whole movement

With all this in mind, we can now see the overall form of the piece from a phenomenological perspective:

- a) The first major portion of the piece (section A +B) displays a force (X1, X2, X3) soothing the boisterous and strained Th.A and its related supplicating Th.B. The general tendency is to calm initial passions.
- b) Conversely, the central section, C, progressively escalates the tension from the initial poise of Th.C toward the climax of the whole piece. Motif X, under its inverted form Th.C, generates an increasing tension.
- c) The third part of the piece (section D + E) stabilizes again through the harmonic pathway that leads to C major and the soothing influence of X. It de-escalates the energy of all the experienced events until X7 comes as a final resolution to Th.C.

All of this process is carried by motif X which pervades the whole piece under different forms.

An image of the very general tension motions could represent the previous scheme as follows:

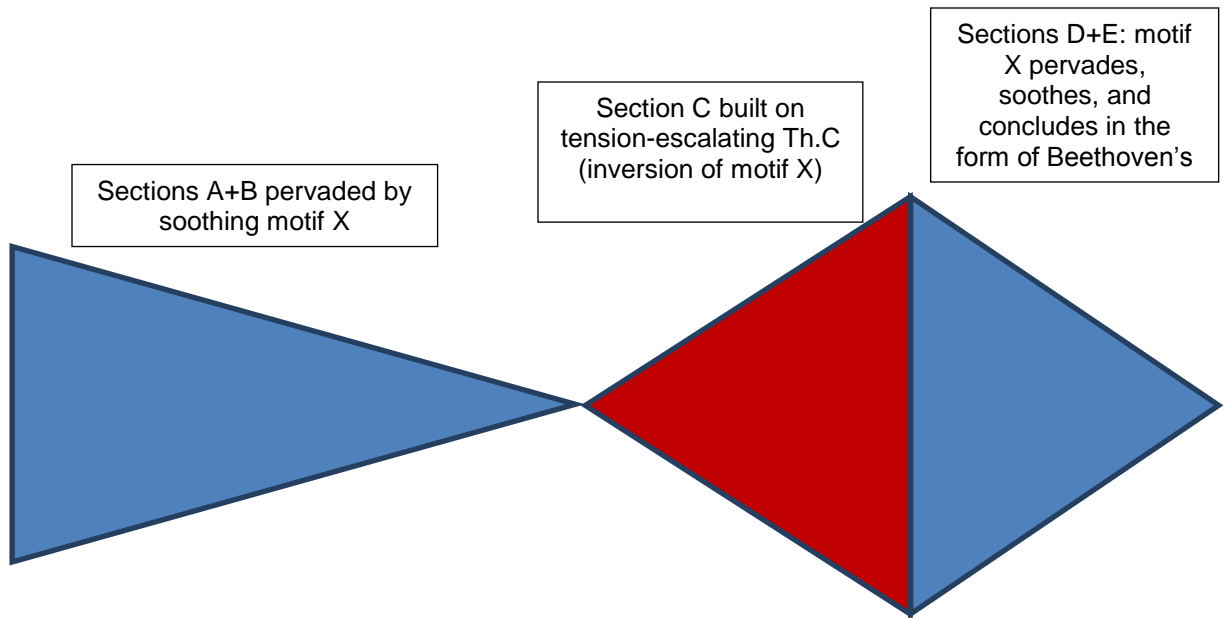


Figure VI-15: general tension shaped by motif X and its counterpart Th.C

Chapter 7: Conclusion

I. Perceiving the gestalt of a piece

Our phenomenological description of Schumann's *Fantasie* has led us to identify Motive X as the driving force underpinning the whole movement, even though it is perceivable as a separate entity only at the end of the piece. We have been able to flesh out the general tension profile, as a result of X's interaction with the other musical elements. In that sense, phenomenology has allowed us to perceive the essence of the compositional process and the core of the work. This understanding would not have been possible through a conventional approach, where, as with a jigsaw puzzle, one tries to define and arrange the different parts of a piece from an intellectual viewpoint rather than an assumption-free and perceptual approach.

II. What benefit is there for performers?

The interest of our exercise resides less in the final result of the tension profile or a general scheme of the shape than in the whole process of a living and evolving relationship with the music. Words are certainly not able to create a real relationship; only the experience of musical sounds can do that. However, our description reflects a sound-relationship arising from our phenomenological approach.

This dissertation chronicles my search for a deeper and more meaningful relationship with music. As in coming to know a person, coming to know a musical work phenomenologically involves observing not only its features, but also our own

reactions and subjective perceptions of it. Doing phenomenology over several years has shaped my attitude such that I now tend to systematically seek *musical relationships*. After living with a piece for a while, I achieve an intimate knowledge of the music (both physical accommodation and mental representation) that allows me to be sensitively receptive of *musical continuity*. This sort of insight into music has been highly valued by listeners. It has also been enthusiastically received by music students who were enabled to understand and better shape musical phrases, and thereby felt enriched and closer to the music.

The phenomenological project is not intrinsically new to musicians: every artist endeavors, consciously or not, to achieve musical understanding and to communicate it while performing. The difference lies in a systematic search for musical connections—from local entities to the global dimension of the piece—and for experiencing the essence of a piece through phenomenological reduction. Phenomenology helps to free us from factors that influence non-essential perception of the music, and guides us toward a more direct connection, notably through Epoche.

III. Possible further research

Along with our description, we explained how our intuition was led to establish specific shapes of the tension profile. In some instances we felt that one or several specific parameters (harmony, melody, rhythm, etc.) prevailed over others, and therefore dictated the general tension of the fragment.

Further research could investigate how to compare the individual tension contour of each musical parameter, and try to explain why, in specific passages, some parameters play a larger role in determining the general tension. In my experience, harmony often seems to prevail over other elements. We know that certain composers or musical styles are predominantly rhythmic, or harmonic, or melodic. We know the melodic nature of Schubert's music, for instance, and the essentially rhythmic drive of many of Beethoven's compositions. We could search to see if the melodic parameter prevails in Schubert's tension graphs, and if the rhythmic one dictates the tension profile of the most energetic Beethovenian works. We might also ask whether it is only the human characteristics of composers that influence their music, or if some general laws determine whether harmony, melody, rhythm, or some combination of them will predominate in our perception of the musical trajectory of the piece under investigation.

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