

Schenker's late theory in overview

Heinrich Schenker : *Der freie Satz* (1935)

Part III of *Neue musikalische Theorien und Phantasien*, the others being his *Harmony* (1906) and his *Counterpoint*. “*Der freie Satz*” is translated into English as “Free Composition”, though a more traditional translation would be “Free Counterpoint”.

Heinrich Schenker : *Der freie Satz* (1935)

Schenker outlines a hypothesis that the structure of great tonal compositions is governed by an *Ursatz*, a paradigmatic “background” framework of contrapuntal voices, that successively generates elaborations in “middleground” and “foreground”.

Heinrich Schenker : *Der freie Satz* (1935)

The *Ursatz* (usually translated “fundamental structure”) combines an upper-voice *Urlinie* (“fundamental line”) and a bass *Bassbrechung* (“bass arpeggiation”, I-V-I, regarded both harmonically, as chords on tonic and dominant, and melodically, as an arpeggiation of the tonic triad). It can take three main forms, all with stepwise descents in the upper voice, from the third, fifth and eighth degrees of the scale respectively (these are also constituent notes of the tonic triad).

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In the following examples, taken from his first chapter dealing with the middleground, Schenker systematically shows the various possibilities for elaborating each of these three patterns at the first middleground level (i.e. the level closest to the background).

FREE COMPOSITION

(Der freie Satz)

Volume III of New Musical Theories and Fantasies

HEINRICH SCHENKER

Supplement: Musical Examples

*Semper idem
sed non
eodem modo*

Translated and edited by Ernst Oster



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Possible elaborations of the 3-2-1 *Urlinie* at the first level

Fig. 15

15

1 a) $\overset{\wedge}{3}$ $\overset{\wedge}{2}$ $\overset{\wedge}{1}$ b)

I (I⁶) V I || I (III^{4#}) V I

2 a) b) c) d)

I — (I⁶) — V — I I — (III^{4#}) — V — I I — IV⁷ — V — I I — II V I =IV⁽⁵⁾⁶ I II — V I

3 a) b) c)

I (I⁶) — V I I (III^{4#}) — V I I — (I⁶) II V I I — (p.t.) — IV⁷ V I I — (p.t.) II⁶ V I =IV⁽⁵⁾⁶

4 a) b) See 1b, 2b, 3b.

I — (I⁶) — V I

5 a) b)

I IV⁷ V I I II V I =IV⁽⁵⁾⁶

6

I II V I (=8 — 5 — 8)

Possible elaborations of the 5-4-3-2-1 *Urlinie* at the first level

16

1 a) $\overset{\wedge}{5}$ $\overset{\wedge}{4}$ $\overset{\wedge}{3}$ $\overset{\wedge}{2}$ $\overset{\wedge}{1}$ b)

(I⁶) (III^{#4})

2 a) b) c) d) etc.

I — IV⁷ V I, I — II V = IV⁽⁵⁾⁶, I II — V I etc.

3 a) b) c) etc.

I — (p.t.)-IV⁷ V I, I (p.t.) IV — V I, I — (p.t.)-II V I = IV⁽⁵⁾⁶ etc.

4 a) b) See 1b, 2b, 3b.

b) See 1b, 2b, 3b.

5

I — IV⁷ V I, = I IV — V I, I — II V I = IV⁽⁵⁾⁶, I IV V⁶⁻⁵ I (II⁶) 4-3

6

I II V I I II V I

Possible elaborations of the 8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1 *Urlinie* at the first level

Figs. 17-18

a) $\hat{8}$ $\hat{2}$ ($\hat{1}$) **b)** $\hat{5}$ — $\hat{2}$ ($\hat{1}$) **c)** $\hat{8}$ — $\hat{2}$ ($\hat{1}$)

17 I V I V I V

18 1 $\hat{8}$ $\hat{7}$ $\hat{6}$ $\hat{5}$ $\hat{4}$ $\hat{3}$ $\hat{2}$ $\hat{1}$ etc. (I⁶) I III(4[#]) V I etc. etc. etc. etc. etc. etc.

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The supplementary volume with the extensive music examples has no comprehensive analyses. The fullest example illustrates three levels of the second song of Schumann's cycle, *Dichterliebe*. It was chosen by Allen Forte for his article introducing Schenker's theory.

Nicht schnell.

5

Aus mei-nen Thränen spriessen viel blü-hende Blumen her-vor, und mei-ne Seufzer

2.

p *pp* *p*

10

wer-den ein Nachti-gallen-chor, und wenn du mich lieb hast Kind-chen, schenk'ich dir die Blumen

pp *p*

15

ritard.

all', und vor dei-nem Fenster soll klin-gen das Lied der Nach-ti-gall.

pp *pp*

Ped. *

Arthur Komar, “The Music of *Dichterliebe*: The Whole and its Parts”, in Arthur Komar, ed., *Robert Schumann: Dichterliebe*, Norton Critical Scores, London: Chappell, 1971, pp. 63-94 (p. 71)

“The song is remarkable in several respects:

- 1) the note B is left unresolved in the voice part at the ends of phrases 1, 2, and 4;
- 2) the middle of the song contains an unusual harmonic progression: E major – B minor – C# major – A major⁷ – D major – A major; and
- 3) while the melodic ‘recapitulation’ occurs at the beginning of phrase 4, the harmony at that point tonicizes D major, rather than A major.”

Heinrich Schenker, *Der freie Satz* (2nd revised ed., 1956, appendix, fig. 22b, p. 8)

Vdg

I — IV — V — I

(A1)

V — (

B

) — I

(A2)

Schenker's Conception of Interruption

- Schenker came to regard the *interruption* structure he finds in the Schumann song as basic to the generation of form, and to sonata form in particular. It is the most powerful middleground elaboration of the *Ursatz* in its capacity to generate form.
- The following models show how it typically functions.

Interruption structure in the major

The image displays a handwritten musical score for an interruption structure in the major mode. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff (top) and a bass clef staff (bottom). The key signature is one sharp (F#).

Treble Clef Staff:

- Handwritten notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter).
- Handwritten fingerings above the notes: $\hat{3}$ - $\hat{2}$ - $\hat{2}$ " $\hat{3}$ - $\hat{2}$ - $\hat{1}$
- Handwritten Roman numerals below the notes: I - #IV - V -

Bass Clef Staff:

- Handwritten notes: G3 (quarter), F#3 (quarter), E3 (quarter), D3 (quarter), C3 (quarter), B2 (quarter), A2 (quarter).
- Handwritten Roman numerals below the notes: I - V - -V " I - V - I

The notation includes various musical symbols such as beams, slurs, and double bar lines, indicating the structure and phrasing of the piece.

Interruption structure in the minor

The image shows a handwritten musical score for an interruption structure in the minor. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff (top) and a bass clef staff (bottom). The key signature has one flat (B-flat).

Melodic Line (Treble Clef):

- First measure: $\hat{3} - \hat{2} -$ (Interval markings above notes G4 and F4)
- Second measure: $-\hat{2} \parallel$ (Interval marking above note E4)
- Third measure: $\hat{3} - \hat{2} - \hat{1}$ (Interval markings above notes G4, F4, and E4)

Bass Line (Bass Clef):

- First measure: $I - \underline{III} - \underline{V} -$ (Roman numerals below notes G3, B2, and D3)
- Second measure: $-\underline{V} \parallel$ (Roman numeral below note D3)
- Third measure: $I - \underline{V} - I$ (Roman numerals below notes G3, D3, and G3)

Additional Annotations:

- A bracket connects the first two notes of the treble line (G4 and F4).
- A bracket connects the last two notes of the treble line (F4 and E4).
- A bracket connects the last two notes of the bass line (D3 and G3).
- Below the first two notes of the bass line, there are markings: $p - \dots - \# - p - \dots$ and $8 - 8$.
- Double bar lines with repeat dots are used to separate the three measures.

Case study: Mozart Minuet K255

Mozart Minuet K355

Musical notation for measures 1-4. The piece is in 3/4 time and G major. The first measure is marked *dolce*. The melody is in the right hand, and the bass line is in the left hand.

Musical notation for measures 5-8. The melody continues in the right hand, with dynamic markings *p* and *f*. The bass line provides harmonic support.

Musical notation for measures 9-12. The melody features a series of eighth-note patterns in the right hand, with dynamic markings *f* and *p*.

Musical notation for measures 13-16. The melody continues with eighth-note patterns, marked with a *f* dynamic. A fermata is present over the final note of the right hand in measure 15.

Musical notation for measures 17-20. The melody continues with eighth-note patterns, marked with a *f* dynamic.

Musical notation for measures 21-24. The melody continues with eighth-note patterns, marked with a *f* dynamic.

Musical notation for measures 25-28. The melody continues with eighth-note patterns, marked with *marcato* and *dolce* dynamics.

Musical notation for measures 29-32. The melody continues with eighth-note patterns, marked with *p* dynamics. Fermatas are present over the final notes of the right hand in measures 31 and 32.

Musical notation for measures 33-36. The melody continues with eighth-note patterns, marked with a *p* dynamic.

“Mixture” (i.e. mixture of major and minor mode) as another essential form-generating technique

“Mixture” is Schenker’s concept for explaining the relationship known in German theory since Hugo Riemann (1880s) as the “third relationship” (*Terzverwandtschaft*).

Mixture I

Fig. 1

$4\hat{3} - - b\hat{3} \quad \hat{2} \quad \hat{1}$

The image shows a handwritten musical score for a four-measure phrase. The notation is written on two staves: a treble clef staff on top and a bass clef staff on the bottom. Both staves have a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody in the treble staff consists of four quarter notes: G4 (first measure), F#4 (second measure), E4 (third measure), and D4 (fourth measure). The bass staff consists of four quarter notes: G2 (first measure), F#2 (second measure), E2 (third measure), and D2 (fourth measure). A bracket connects the F#4 note in the treble staff to the F#2 note in the bass staff in the second measure. Above the treble staff, there are handwritten annotations: a hat over the number 4 in the first measure, a hat over the number 3 in the second measure, a flat sign before a hat over the number 3 in the second measure, a hat over the number 2 in the third measure, and a hat over the number 1 in the fourth measure. Below the bass staff, there are Roman numeral chord symbols: I in the first measure, -I in the second measure, V in the third measure, and I in the fourth measure. Dashed lines connect the notes in the bass staff to these Roman numerals.

I - -I V I

Mixture II

Fig. 2

$\hat{4}\hat{3}$ - $\flat\hat{3}$ $\hat{2}$ $\hat{1}$ CF.: $\hat{3}$ $\hat{2}$ - $\hat{1}$

The musical score is written on two systems. Each system has a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The first system is in G major (one sharp) and the second system is in G minor (two flats). The treble staff contains a melodic line with a dashed line above it, and the bass staff contains a bass line. Roman numerals are written below the bass staff of each system. A circled annotation with a sharp sign is present in the first system.

System 1 (G major): Treble staff notes: G4, B4, A4, G4. Bass staff notes: G2, B1, A1, G1. Roman numerals: I, III, V, I. A circled annotation with a sharp sign is placed over the B4 note in the treble staff and the B1 note in the bass staff.

System 2 (G minor): Treble staff notes: G4, Bb4, Ab4, G4. Bass staff notes: G2, Bb1, Ab1, G1. Roman numerals: I, III, V, I.

Mixture III

Fig. 3

4[̂]3 - -b3 2 1

I V I

Case study: Schubert *Trauerwalzer* op. 9 no. 2

„Trauerwalzer“ 29

The first system of the musical score consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and the lower staff is in bass clef. The key signature has three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The music begins with a melodic line in the right hand, featuring a half note followed by a quarter note, and continues with a series of eighth and sixteenth notes. The left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and single notes.

The second system of the musical score consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and the lower staff is in bass clef. The music continues from the first system. A measure rest is indicated by a '5' above the first measure of the upper staff. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

The third system of the musical score consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and the lower staff is in bass clef. The music continues from the second system. A measure rest is indicated by an '11' above the first measure of the upper staff. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Schenker's graph of the waltz, illustrating its use of mixture

NB: The text he used has a variant in the bass

Schubert, Waltz op. 9 no. 2

b)

The image displays two musical staves with Schenkerian graphing. The top staff shows the original bass line with annotations: $\hat{3}$ above the first measure, $5-$ and 8 below the first two measures, $5-$ and 8 below the next two measures, $-b3-$ above the first measure of the second system, $-b3-$ above the second measure, $-b3-$ above the third measure, $\hat{2}$ above the fourth measure, and $\hat{1}$ above the fifth measure. Roman numerals $I-$ are below the first measure, and I is below the fifth measure. The bottom staff shows a variant with annotations: $\hat{3}$ above the first measure, $b3-$ above the second measure, $\hat{3}$ above the third measure, $\hat{2}$ above the fourth measure, and $\hat{1}$ above the fifth measure. Roman numerals I are below the first measure, IV^{b7} below the second measure, V below the third measure, and I below the fifth measure. Both staves include interval lines and dashed lines indicating structural relationships. The word "(arpeg.)" is written below the bass line in both variants.

Case study: Schubert *Nacht und Träume* D827

10. Nacht und Träume

Matthäus von Collin

D 827

Erste Fassung *)

Langsam

sempre legato

pp

3

Heil' ge

6

6

Nacht, du sin-kest nie - der! nie - der wal-len auch die

9

Träu - me, wie dein Mondlicht durch die Räu - me,

12

durch der - Men - schen stil - le, stil - le Brust. Die be-

15

lau - schen sie mit - Lust, die be - lau - schen sie mit -

ppp

18

Lust, ru - fen, wenn der Tag er - wacht: Keh - re

21

wie - der, hol - de Nacht, hol - de Träu - nie, keh - ret

23

wie - der, hol - de Träu - me, keh - ret wie -

26

der.

Nacht und Träume, rough graph

The image displays handwritten musical notation for the piece "Nacht und Träume" in G major. The notation is divided into two staves, both featuring a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C).

The upper staff is written in treble clef and contains the following notes and markings:

- Key signature: G major (F#).
- First measure: A quarter note G4 with a circled 3 above it, followed by a dotted half note G4.
- Second measure: A quarter note G4 with a circled 3 above it, followed by a dotted half note G4.
- Third measure: A quarter note G4 with a circled 2 above it, followed by a dotted half note G4.
- Fourth measure: A quarter note G4 with a circled 1 above it, followed by a dotted half note G4.

The lower staff is written in bass clef and contains the following notes and markings:

- Key signature: G major (F#).
- First measure: A whole note G2 with a circled 1 below it.
- Second measure: A dotted half note G2.
- Third measure: A dotted half note G2.
- Fourth measure: A whole note G2 with a circled 2 below it.
- Fifth measure: A whole note G2 with a circled 1 below it.