

Harmony in Beethoven

David Damschroder's ongoing reformulation of harmonic theory continues with a dynamic exploration of how Beethoven molded and arranged chords to convey bold conceptions. This book's introductory chapters are organized in the manner of a nineteenth-century *Harmonielehre*, with individual considerations of the tonal system's key features illustrated by easy-to-comprehend block-chord examples derived from Beethoven's piano sonatas. In the masterworks section that follows, Damschroder presents detailed analyses of movements from the symphonies, piano and violin sonatas, and string quartets, and compares his outcomes with those of analysts William E. Caplin, Robert Gauldin, Nicholas Marston, William J. Mitchell, Frank Samarotto, and Janet Schmalfeldt. Expanding upon analytical practices from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and strongly influenced by Schenkerian principles, this fresh perspective offers a stark contrast to conventional harmonic analysis – both in terms of how Roman numerals are deployed and how musical processes are described in words.

DAVID DAMSCHRODER is Professor of Music Theory at the University of Minnesota. His current research focuses on harmony in tonal music, a project that began with a careful examination of historical analytical practices, the basis for his *Thinking about Harmony: Historical Perspectives on Analysis* (Cambridge, 2008). The project continues with focused studies on selected repertoires: *Harmony in Schubert* (Cambridge, 2010), *Harmony in Haydn and Mozart* (Cambridge, 2012), *Harmony in Chopin* (Cambridge, 2015), and the present book. He has written textbooks on music fundamentals and ear-training / sight-singing, and his articles and reviews have appeared in numerous journals.

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Contents

Preface [page vii]

PART I METHODOLOGICAL ORIENTATION: *HARMONIELEHRE*
 (THE PIANO SONATAS) [1]

- 1 IV as intermediary between I and V [3]
- 2 II as intermediary between I and V [22]
- 3 A detailed look at the circle of fifths [39]
- 4 III on the path from I to V [49]
- 5 The mediant within the orbit of the tonic [64]
- 6 Notable linear initiatives [74]
- 7 Parenthetical passages [92]

PART II MASTERPIECES [103]

- 8 String Quartet in B \flat Major (op. 18, no. 6), *La Malinconia* in response to William J. Mitchell [105]
- 9 Piano Sonata in D Minor (op. 31, no. 2, “Tempest”), movement 1 in response to William E. Caplin [120]
- 10 Violin Sonata in A Minor (op. 47, “Kreutzer”), movement 1 in response to Janet Schmalfeldt [139]
- 11 Symphony in A Major (op. 92), movement 3 in response to Robert Gauldin [163]
- 12 Piano Sonata in E Major (op. 109) in response to Nicholas Marston [174]
- 13 String Quartet in A Minor (op. 132), movement 1 in response to Frank Samarotto [228]

Notes [254]

List of references to music examples [278]

Select bibliography [279]

Index of Beethoven’s works [290]

Index of names and concepts [291]

Preface

Beethoven of course remains a central figure in the musical pantheon – revered both for his substantial and widely performed body of work and for his influence on later musical developments. Anyone intrigued by this book’s title will require no justification for the invitation to join me in a careful study of his harmonic practice. Because the analysis of tonal music is both challenging and beset by controversy, I am committed to focusing on one or two composers at a time in depth – immersing myself in specific preferences and tendencies conveyed in a finite body of work – with the hope that I might achieve more compelling analyses (thus moving the field forward a bit) than would be possible if I were daily engaged with a centuries-wide span of repertoire. Though the intensity of this working method led me to divert to *Harmony in Chopin* immediately after I had completed *Harmony in Haydn and Mozart*, that respite from the Viennese tradition (which I explored also in *Harmony in Schubert*) has made me all the more eager and ready to encounter Beethoven in this way.

Each of my analytical volumes is divided into two segments: a methodological orientation, and an exploration of masterpieces. The latter segment is devoted in part to critiques of other analysts’ readings of the same works. By this point, these segments collectively have developed into two distinct and substantial bodies of analytical writing: for the relative newcomer to analysis, the methodological orientations provide a wide-ranging grounding in how tonal analysis might be pursued, while for all who have come to appreciate the insights that can be attained by analyzing complete movements, the sum of my masterpiece essays offers both an extensive survey of compositional practice preceding and during the first half of the nineteenth century and a panoramic view (and assessment) of how, over the past fifty or so years, other analysts have come to terms with this music. The pre-1850 phase of my project on harmony in the long nineteenth century will be completed after one additional volume, *Harmony in Mendelssohn and Schumann*. Though I regret the resulting neglect of Berlioz, Rossini, and others, given my advancing age it will be time to move on: I intend to pursue an equally

robust exploration of developments in tonal music after 1850, including volumes on Verdi, Brahms, Liszt and Wagner, Mahler, and Debussy. Concurrently I am at work on a more elementary pedagogical project that begins with *Tonal Analysis: A Schenkerian Perspective* (to be published by W. W. Norton). That volume should be consulted first if the starting point of the *Harmony in . . .* books proves to be beyond a reader's current level. (Though some analysts are making significant contributions to our understanding of this repertoire without overt references to Schenker, the genesis of my analytical practice, which integrates ideas from many historical authors, would be unthinkable without my first having come to terms with the Schenkerian perspective.)

That said, for the methodological orientation of *Harmony in Beethoven I* have elected to work at a pre-Schenkerian level, more basic than in the other volumes of the series. One of the mainstays of musical life in the first half of the nineteenth century was the *Harmonielehre*, a foundational study of essential harmonic practices, often presented in the context of fabricated block-chord progressions rather than through analyses of musical repertoire. (Many such volumes are assayed in my *Thinking About Harmony: Historical Perspectives on Analysis*.) Here I offer a belated contribution to that historical body of work with my own perspective on these matters. (Given that the history of music theory has been a focal point throughout my career, it was predictable that I would sooner or later attempt something along the lines of the various books that have been so influential in shaping my perspective on harmony.) Though inevitably much of what I present echoes principles already in print (either from that era or from more recent times), I believe that my formulation is unique and worthy of consideration by anyone for whom harmony is a vital concern. Though I likewise engage with block-chord progressions, each is derived from a specific passage from a Beethoven piano sonata, whose scores should be consulted when studying my commentaries. (I take more liberties in this context than I do in my Schenkerian graphs later in this volume, especially through the insertion of pitches that one might imagine but that do not actually sound in the composition. I also have fabricated rhythmic contexts that suit the block-chord nature of the enterprise without adhering exactly to Beethoven's compositions.) To enhance readability at this elementary level, I dispense with the standard scholarly procedure of backing up my work with references to a range of published sources. The focus is exclusively the interaction between my readers and me (as was the case between nineteenth-century readers and a *Harmonielehre* author). I harbor the hope that some future scholars will

take the initiative to compare my perspective on Beethoven's sonatas with passages from the very abundant literature on that topic.

My intent is that the perspective enunciated in my *Harmonielehre* could serve as a replacement for or (more realistically) supplement to what is currently serving as harmony instruction for music of this period at universities or conservatories, following a thorough grounding in music fundamentals (including chord construction) and voice leading (incorporating a detailed study of figured bass). I pursue this method with my sophomore-level students at the University of Minnesota. In a recent end-of-term survey I asked the class whether we instead should have adhered to the conventional harmony instruction presented in our textbook (which they had followed more exactly in earlier semesters of the course sequence, under other instructors). Their response was overwhelmingly against going back to that practice. Though readers who teach undergraduate courses might not yet be ready to follow my lead in this regard, perhaps alerting select students to these other ways of thinking about harmony and encouraging them to explore my *Harmonielehre* on their own would be in order. (I currently am at work on a complement to the *Harmonielehre*: a *Catechism of Ear-Training* that I will offer as the methodological orientation of *Harmony in Mendelssohn and Schumann*.) For those who lead graduate seminars, by now my body of work is sufficiently conspicuous that your more curious students will find it even if you do not lead them in that direction.

In my own teaching I integrate instruction on how to proceed in analysis with detailed critiques of how one ought not to proceed. (With modern technology it is easy to project students' homework assignments onto a screen, so that the class may compare a range of readings and assess their perspicacity.) In that I find this method very effective for coming to terms with many fine points – both conceptual and notational – in the practice of analysis, I have developed a means of providing a similar experience for the readers of my analytical volumes by selecting masterpiece compositions that have been treated at least once already in the recent analytical literature. A significant part of my essay on each work is a detailed critique of that other analysis, set off from the flow of my own reading through the use of shading. Though this limits the repertoire I may deal with, I have found the benefits to far outweigh that drawback. Because these other analyses are very sophisticated, I of course extend beyond the *Harmonielehre* level for my analyses in the Masterpieces section of this volume. Though presented in the context of Schenkerian graphs, the Roman numerals in the examples conform to the practice introduced

in the *Harmonielehre* section. (That practice also matches the Roman numeral usage in my forthcoming *Tonal Analysis: A Schenkerian Perspective*.)

Given my intense involvement in the analysis of tonal music both as an author and as a teacher, I have given much thought to the process of developing skill as an analyst. Some observations regarding how I undertake this process, intermixed with pointers for aspiring analysts, are provided in a supplementary essay entitled “Developing analytical insight,” available as an online resource at www.cambridge.org/9781107134584.

It is no secret that books such as this one generally are read in part or in whole by numerous individuals before publication. I thank first the members of my Beethoven seminar at the University of Minnesota for spending a term working through most of the chapters with me. I also appreciate the encouragement and advice of the reviewers commissioned by Cambridge University Press. I thank the University of Minnesota for supporting my work through an Imagine Fund award, which covered the cost of setting the music examples and provided the resources to acquire books and to visit major research libraries. I am grateful to the New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations, for allowing me to purchase on microfilm and to make references to the Oster Collection: Papers of Heinrich Schenker. As in the earlier volumes of my project, Peter Smucker has provided expert setting of the music examples.

Conventions regarding note relations, chords, keys, and Roman numerals

Pitch simultaneities (such as C-E-G) are indicated using hyphens (-), while pitch successions (such as C-E-G) are indicated using dashes (–). Direction may be indicated in melodic succession: ascending as C<E<G, descending as G>E>C. A black arrow may be used to indicate a descending-fifth relationship that is or emulates a $V^{(7)}$ -I succession, whereas an outline arrow may be used to indicate a succession from a chord of the augmented-sixth type: for example, C→F–D→G→C; C–A^b–D⇒G→C.

Keys and chords are distinguished as follows: C Major (with a capital M) is the key of C Major; C major (with a small m) is a C major chord.

Unless another analyst’s methodology is being discussed, Roman numerals are presented in capital letters regardless of a chord’s quality, modified by one or more accidentals if the chord is altered. Thus C Major: I

II V I and not I ii V I; and A Minor: I II V \sharp I \sharp (closing on a major tonic), not i ii $^\circ$ V I. An accidental to the left of the numeral corresponds to the chord's root, to the right corresponds to its third. If the chordal fifth, seventh, or ninth is altered, the analytical symbol will incorporate the corresponding Arabic numeral, as in C Minor: II $\overset{5\flat}{\sharp}$. (Arrow notation – here II \rightarrow – offers an attractive, though less precise, alternative to the complete analytical symbol.) The bullet symbol (\bullet) indicates an absent root. For example, B-D-F in C Major will be analyzed as V $\overset{\bullet}{7}$ (or, with less precision, as V \rightarrow).

Likewise a progression of chordal roots generally is presented in capital letters (C–D–G–C), though on occasions when quality is a factor in the discussion a capital letter may refer to major quality, a small letter to minor quality, and a small letter followed by a degree circle ($^\circ$) to diminished quality: for example, C–a–F–d–b $^\circ$ –G–e–C.

A bracket is used to connect the analytical notation for two musical events that normally would follow one another but that in the context under discussion occur at the same moment: for example, C $\overline{F\sharp B}$ E when an F \sharp -A \sharp -C \sharp chord sounds with, rather than before, root B in a descending circle of fifths.

Parentheses around a pitch in an analytical example indicate that it is not actually present in the score, though it is understood. Parentheses around analytical notation may refer to the expansion of a deeper-level harmony (for example, when I is expanded by I IV V I) or to the harmonic assertion of a voice-leading phenomenon (for example, when the 6 phase of a I $^{5-6}$, as in C-E-G to C-E-A, asserts the harmonic role of VI). Open parentheses designate a voice-leading transition between two harmonies. For example, I () IV indicates that the chords between I and IV (perhaps a circular, parallel, or sequential progression) do not themselves participate in the harmonic progression, but instead serve to connect the harmonies I and IV.

When a score's chordal spellings do not coincide with the structurally appropriate spellings (for example, the substitution of easier-to-read F \sharp -A-C \sharp for cumbersome G \flat -B \flat -D \flat), I generally will use the structurally appropriate spellings in my examples and commentaries, often placing the enharmonic spellings within square brackets to assist readers in locating the pitches in question within the score.

I pay very close attention to hierarchies among pitches and chords. To alert readers to various hierarchical relationships I often will underline some pitch names to indicate their hierarchical prominence. For example, C<E D>B C above bass C–G–C conveys the relationship between two

unfolded strands: a more prominent outer strand $E>D>C$, and a subordinate inner strand $C>B<C$.

Because diverse musical contexts are analyzed using graphs, it is difficult to pin down precise guidelines for how their notation should be crafted and read. Many styles of “Schenkerian” notation have appeared since the publication of Schenker’s *Free Composition* (hereafter abbreviated as *FC*), which itself does not present a single normative style. I regard the creation of a reductive graph as an art, endeavoring to use notation that is as clear and informative as possible. In general, open noteheads in my graphs represent deeper structural or harmonic events than filled-in noteheads, while notes at the endpoints of beams or slurs are deeper than internal notes. Notes connected to a beam by a stem are more integral to the structure than those that are not. Occasionally annotations using abbreviations (those pertaining to form borrowed from James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy’s *Elements of Sonata Theory*, Oxford University Press, 2006), indicate functions of individual pitches or formal events, as follows:

ant.	anticipation
C	closing zone
CP	chromatic passing note
CV	chromatic variant
EEC	essential expositional closure
ESC	essential structural closure
HC	half cadence
IAC	imperfect authentic cadence
IN	incomplete neighboring note
MC	medial caesura
N	neighboring note
P	an individual pitch: passing note
P	form: primary-theme zone
PAC	perfect authentic cadence
prg.	progression
S	secondary-theme zone
susp.	suspension
TR	transition
W	wobble

Of course, the graphs often will incorporate Roman numeral harmonic analyses, and in this regard I sometimes depart from Schenker’s practice. Because it is innovative, I document my Roman numeral usage very carefully as the chapters unfold.

Because measure numbers are a pervasive feature in my close analyses, I have developed an abbreviated style of reference, in the form $\text{measure}_{\text{beat}}$. For example, the symbol 2_3 indicates the third beat of measure 2. Generally the word “measure” will not precede the number. I regard measures in $\frac{2}{2}$ and $\frac{6}{8}$ as containing two beats. A measure designation such as 14/16 means that a given chord is prolonged from measure 14 through measure 16, with contrasting content occurring between statements of the chord, whereas the designation 14–16 indicates a continuous prolongation of a single chord without significant internal contrast. The symbol 15|16 indicates measure 16 along with its upbeat. When an x appears among the measure numbers in a music example, it signifies either that the example’s content at that point does not actually sound but instead is suggested by the context or that the example displays a hypothetical continuation that the composer does not in fact pursue.