Harmony in Schubert

One of Western music's great harmonists, Franz Schubert created a wondrous and treasured body of music that has retained its fascination to this day. His innovative harmonic practice has been a topic of lively discussion among analysts for generations. *Harmony in Schubert* presents a fresh approach, yielding insightful readings of a large and varied range of excerpts, as well as readings of fifteen complete movements spanning Schubert's chamber, choral, orchestral, piano, and vocal output. Damschroder reformulates the apparatus for Roman-numeral harmonic analysis, integrating his own speculations with various strands of historical analytical thought, including Schenkerian principles and historical perspectives. In addition, he juxtaposes his readings of complete movements by Schubert with discussions of how they have been interpreted by other Schubertian analysts. The book sets a new direction for the future of music analysis, proposing innovative improvements on existing methodologies.

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Harmony in Schubert

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Preface

How we think about harmony, what we write or say to convey our thoughts, is a fundamental component of musicianship. For centuries the elucidation of harmonic theory has been a compelling field of inquiry and a vital aspect of musical training. The conscientious and diligent striving of numerous thinkers over many generations has produced a wide array of methodologies and insights. The topic remains engaging today, its importance undiminished for those who take a keen interest in tonal music.

Harmony in Schubert is addressed to musicians who strive to attain a deep understanding of how harmony works, to seekers who are eager to explore sophisticated speculations that may shed new light on a treasured body of music. The goal of this study is to foster more enlightened performance of and more astute listening to music, especially that of Schubert and his contemporaries.

A music analyst coordinates myriad individual judgments to form a coherent conception. Much depends upon the ability to hear beyond surface differences to the essence of things. Developing analytical insight is a cumulative process, with each new analysis drawing upon the perspective attained through all previous endeavors. A challenging passage may eventually yield its secrets when one comes to realize that it extends a more straightforward formulation whose workings one understands. To maximize the benefits from comparing related music examples, this study draws upon a finite body of repertoire: the music of Franz Schubert. By so limiting our purview the hunches that are essential to sophisticated analysis can be made with greater assurance, and one may hope that a gradually emerging perspective, evolving out of close study of hundreds of works from the same pen, will offer insights that could not be achieved were one to explore a more extensive and diverse corpus of music. My plan has been to forge ahead in conceptualization about harmony through a study focused on Schubert's music (does a better candidate for such an undertaking exist?), to share the results of my speculations with fellow seekers in this volume, and then to extend the scope of what I develop here to a broader repertoire - both before and after Schubert - in future publications.

I expect that readers will have a strong interest in and significant prior

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exposure to the main trends in tonal music analysis, including Schenkerian analysis. Because my project seeks to extend the range of what music analysis can accomplish, I am in constant dialogue with existing methodologies, both historical and contemporary. Though I address many basic issues, I do so from the perspective of *re*-orientation, rather than that of initial exposure. For example, when I develop the notion that $A\flat$ -C-E \flat -F \sharp in the key of C is an evolved supertonic chord, I will expect that readers already have dealt with this pitch combination in some way and have noticed its similarity in both construction and function to other chromatic chords, such as A-C-E \flat -F \sharp and A-C-D-F \sharp .

The two key ingredients in my synthesis are the analytical practices of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, extensively documented in my Thinking About Harmony: Historical Perspectives on Analysis (Cambridge University Press, 2008; hereafter abbreviated as TAH), and the Schenkerian perspective, especially that presented in Schenker's Der freie Satz (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1935; translation of Oswald Jonas's 1956 edition by Ernst Oster as Free Composition, New York: Longman, 1979; hereafter abbreviated as FC). I draw upon many insights that were in circulation around Schubert's time, though I inject levels of hierarchical thinking that entered mainstream analytical practice only as a result of Schenker's writings a century later. Likewise I make extensive use of Schenkerian principles, though my high regard for what some of Schenker's predecessors accomplished has led me to draw freely from their methods. Thus the post-Schenkerian perspective that prevails in Harmony in Schubert derives in part from pre-Schenkerian notions that I resuscitate (despite Schenker's rejection or indifference) because I find them indispensable, in part from Schenker's writings, and in part from my own speculations. In addition, I critique an array of Schubert analyses by prominent modern thinkers. By placing my analyses side by side with theirs, I hope that readers will come to understand what issues are at stake, how our differing perspectives respond to them, and why my reaction to the alternative methodologies that I explore is sometimes unenthusiastic.

Harmony in Schubert is presented in two parts. Readers will want to work carefully through the first part (Methodological Orientation) before proceeding to the more challenging second part (Masterpieces). I have attempted in the early chapters to provide a clear and detailed accounting of my procedures, terminology, and symbols, which differ from conventional practice in numerous ways. Once introduced, I assume that readers will be able to correlate those generally straightforward instances with more complex formulations in the works examined later.

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The Methodological Orientation intermixes explorations of numerous individual topics with analyses of short movements by Schubert. These materials are arranged in an order that offers both a logical development of the analytical framework and a gradual increase in complexity, so that readers may develop or extend their capacities expediently. I rely upon *TAH* for grounding in pre-Schenkerian procedures, using the endnotes to alert readers to enrichment available from that source. (Because it offers numerous English translations and other aids to understanding, these authors generally will be accessed via *TAH* rather than directly from their treatises. *TAH* supplies full bibliographical data on the authors mentioned.) In the same manner, I cite *FC* to clarify concepts derived from Schenker. In almost all cases, musical scores or their reductions are provided where warranted.

The Masterpieces section (so named in homage to Schenker's *Das Meisterwerk in der Musik*) offers detailed analyses of a range of movements by Schubert. To follow the discussion fully, readers will need to obtain scores for these works, as well as the publications that contain the alternative analyses (by authors such as Richard Cohn, David Lewin, and Richard Taruskin) that I critique. These items should be easily accessible in North American and British research libraries (a promise that necessitates restricting our purview to works in English, though my own study has extended beyond that boundary), and some are available on the Internet. Though the Methodological Orientation section should be read first and in the order presented, the chapters of the Masterpieces section, which is arranged chronologically, may be read selectively or out of order. Some readers may prefer to begin with the relatively straightforward chapters 8, 9, and 11, then continue with the more challenging chapters 6, 7, and 10 before concluding with chapters 5 and 12.

The juxtaposed analyses presented in the Masterpieces section will allow readers to assess various contemporary methodologies and to chart a course for their future analytical efforts. Though presented here in a high-level formulation, *Harmony in Schubert* calls into question many time-honored conventions of lower-level analytical pedagogy. It is a manifesto for a top-to-bottom transformation in the way musicians think about harmony.

Success has been an onerous burden to harmonic analysis. On one hand, the fact that a series of courses on harmony has become a mainstay of academic training in music (at least in North America and Great Britain) means that the curriculum often must accommodate students with weak backgrounds and limited capacities. Methodologies requiring complex or subtle thought too often are eschewed, with the unfortunate consequence х

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that many fine musicians are never exposed to harmonic analysis at its best. On the other hand, because other branches of theoretical study such as species counterpoint and figured-bass realization are often neglected, analytical procedures are more dependent on harmonic explanations for a range of musical phenomena than they ought to be. In my view harmonic theory as understood by most musicians is not a suitable starting point for advanced work. Consequently I cleared the slate when I began writing Harmony in Schubert, readmitting concepts and procedures only upon careful consideration of various options. Among the most notable casualties in this process have been mainstays of elementary pedagogy such as applied dominant chords (e.g., V/V), the use of capital and lower-case Roman numerals to designate chordal quality (e.g., C Minor: i ii^{o6} V⁷ i), figured-bass notation to the right of a Roman numeral to indicate chordal inversion (e.g., I6), chord nicknames (e.g., "French," "German," "Italian," "Neapolitan"), and Roman-numeral labels for the internal chords of circular, parallel, and sequential progressions (e.g., I IV VII III VI II V I). Why must these traditional symbols and procedures be sacrificed? Because they rest on faulty notions of what harmony is, how harmony absorbs chromaticism, how voice leading interacts with harmony, and how a harmony may evolve as it is prolonged. Though I appreciate that my proposed reforms will widen the gap between musical speculation and elementary pedagogy as currently practiced, certainly one should not hold back advances in the field to accommodate its initiates. Instead I call upon music theory's pedagogical branch to develop the resources to align itself better with the speculative branch.

A number of students and colleagues (plus two anonymous reviewers) have kindly encouraged and assisted me as I pursued this project. Two former students offered extensive and indispensable aid as the book took shape: Christopher Brody's astute critiques of most of my draft chapters have prompted many improvements in both content and tone; and Peter Smucker's setting of the music examples saved me from worry, transforming my longhand jottings accurately and attractively. A sincere "Thank You" to all!

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

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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 arrow in outline may be used to indicate a succession from a chord of the augmented sixth type: for example, C→F–D→G→C; C–A \flat –D= \flat 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, though 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 C Minor: I–II–V#–I# (closing on a major tonic), not i–ii°–V–I. An accidental to the left of the numeral corresponds to the chord's root, to the right corresponds to its third. The modification of the chordal fifth, seventh, or ninth requires the inclusion of the corresponding Arabic numeral, as in C Minor: II_{\sharp}^{5h} . The bullet symbol (•) indicates an absent root. (For example, B-D-F in C Major will be analyzed as V⁷₂.)

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 (°) to diminished quality: for example, C–a–F–d–b°–G–e–C.

A bracket is used to connect the analytical notation for two musical events that normally would follow one another but which in the context under discussion occur at the same moment: for example, $C \ F\# B \ E$ when an F#-A#-C# 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 harmonic I and IV.

Schubert's chordal spellings occasionally do not coincide with the structurally appropriate spellings (for example, the substitution of easier-to-read F#-A-C# for cumbersome Gb-Bbb-Db). I generally will use the structurally xii

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appropriate spellings in my examples and commentaries, often placing Schubert's spellings within square brackets to assist readers in finding the pitches in question within the score.

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 *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. Especially in the early chapters I offer abundant written commentary, which will give readers the opportunity to develop facility in interpreting my graphic notation. Occasional annotations using abbreviations indicate functions of individual pitches, as follows:

- CP chromatic passing note
- IN incomplete neighboring note
- N neighboring note
- P passing note
- W wobble
- ant. anticipation
- prg. progression
- susp. suspension

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