

Towards a Performer-Oriented Analysis: Communication between Analysis and Performance in Schumann's D-minor Piano Trio

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Abstract

Although historically informed performance practice has come to encompass the music of the 19th century in the past decades, Romantic music still presents many challenges for performers, especially in musical shaping and timing. This paper tries to shed light on these interpretative issues by combining aspects of analysis and performance in the opening movement of Robert Schumann's D minor Piano Trio Op. 63 (1847). The main analytical methods are Schenkerian harmony and voice-leading analysis, which are flexibly combined with formal and narrative aspects, among others.

The analytical discussion of the movement begins with the distinctive, harmonically unstable opening phrase, which reaches the structural tonic only at the end of the phrase together with a local culmination. The analytical insights lead the author to suggest two alternative, yet equally justifiable, ways how to shape the phrase in performance.