

Beethoven's Theme of the Slow Movement of Piano Sonata Op. 13: Phrasing, Functional Cycles, Metre and Dramaturgy

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Abstract

In this article the author tackles the issues of phrasing, functional cycle, metric hierarchy, form and dramaturgy as related to the analysis of the second movement of Ludwig van Beethoven's Piano Sonata Op. 13. These elements are heterogeneous and, perhaps, would be better discussed separately. However, the author goes back to nineteenth-century music scholarship as an example of dealing with heterogeneity despite the incompatible character of its elements. Phrasing is thus related to tonal-functional cycles of various designs; these are both linked to the metric hierarchy on the local level (iambic unit) and on the level of the metric period, as suggested by Hugo Riemann. The author points to some parallels with the poetic structure of the four-foot iamb. Beethoven mixes and matches diverse patterns in a contemplative and reflective flow of ideas, appropriate for such a noble Adagio. The author then compares several editions of the Adagio with regard to articulation of phrasing. Finally, Beethoven's slow movement is analyzed in terms of musical dramaturgy – a category well researched in the Russian tradition by Viktor Tsukkerman and Viktor Bobrovsky. The ultimate goal of the article is to bring to the attention of the readers the complexity and perfection of Beethoven's musical poetics on the 250th anniversary of his birth.

Introduction

There are several very interesting and intellectually challenging concepts of Classical form in circulation today, mostly of North American origin. The clusters of new ideas are focused on the publications of two scholars, William E. Caplin and James Hepokoski. Somewhere down the road, there has been an intentional interruption of the tradition of nineteenth-century *Formenlehre*, which had a great influence on the teaching of Hugo Riemann. It has been widely discredited in the 1960s–80s; today however, the interest in this monumental figure is constantly growing, as may be seen in the references at the end of this article. Thus, recent collections such as *The Oxford Handbook of Neo-Riemannian Music Theories*, edited by Edward Gollin and Alexander Rehding (2011), and *The Cambridge History of Western Music Theory*, edited by Thomas Christensen (2002), dedicate much time and effort to a thorough and informed investigation of the oeuvre of Riemann. Monographs by Alexander Rehding (*Hugo Riemann and the Birth of Modern Musical Thought* (2003)) and Daniel Harrison (*Harmonic Function in Chromatic Music: A Renewed Dualist Theory*

and an Account of its Precedents (1994)) carefully approach and examine the extensive output of Riemann. William Caplin's discussion of metric accent in his "Theories of Musical Rhythm in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries" from the above-mentioned *The Cambridge History* of 2002, as well as his views on and applications of the category of the tonal-harmonic function present a steppingstone to understanding and restoring the status of nineteenth-century theory. The conceptual framework of this article is based upon several postulates that come from nineteenth-century theory and elaborations of its premises in the Soviet teaching of Classic-Romantic form.

I. From motif to dramaturgy

Soviet *Formenlehre*, like that proposed by Adolf Bernhard Marx and maintained in the 20th century by Arnold Schoenberg, is based upon an ascending hierarchy of the emergence type, one that begins with the motif, rises to the level of smaller and then larger forms, and, in the case of Soviet scholarship of the 1970–80s, attains the level of instrumental dramaturgy, akin to works for the dramatic stage.