

**Comments on the Schenkerian Graph for Tamino's Aria
("Dies Bildniss ist bezaubernd schön") from Mozart's *Magic Flute***

This aria divides cleanly into three parts to produce an ABA form. This ternary division is evident through each section's contrasting harmonic areas, but the tripartite form can also be seen clearly in the text itself. As proof, note that from mm. 1-15, the harmonic center is Eb major; during this initial section, Tamino sings expository material about the portrait's beauty. While Tamino expresses confusion with these feelings and poses his soul-searching questions through bars 15-44, the music shifts to a center of Bb – dominant to the opening key. Finally, with the large-scale resolution to Eb major in m. 45, Tamino similarly undergoes his own resolution as to how he is going to deal with these emotions evoked in the opening.

From a Schenkerian stance, how can we best represent this path from initial realization, through internal conflict, to final resolve? Given a \wedge^3 -line scenario, perhaps the most simple representation might be to have \wedge^3 active for the opening section, \wedge^2 active over the dominant of the B section, and then have \wedge^1 as covering the entire final section. The first few bars of the second A section (mm. 45-47) certainly exhibit a strong sense of \wedge^1 as potential *Kopftön*.

I have rejected this reading of \wedge^1 throughout the final section, however. Firstly, the vocal line of the B section ends with a rather prominent Ab (a seventh), which, despite its low register, demands resolution. With the tonic in bar 45, we must imagine this Ab resolving – if not immediately in the vocal part then in the viola. More importantly, however, a reading of \wedge^1 would imply that this entire second A section is not an A section at all but "merely" a coda. The aria would be in some sort of A-B-coda form, which does not coincide well with traditional *da capo* structure. Of course, the second A section is varied significantly since its initial statement (and thus cannot be strict *da capo* form), but to me, the reappearance of mm. 10ff in mm. 52ff is

more than just an echo of the opening; as \wedge^3 was active in the first A section during this embellished chain of 10ths, so I think should \wedge^3 be active in the parallel ending sequence.

I have also rejected a reading that posits an interruption at the end of the B section (and thus assumes a restart of the *Urlinie* in bar 45). Tamino's thoughts regarding the portrait are not starting over again; he does not return to expressing its beauty. Instead, Tamino continues what has been an evolution of his thinking – an evolution that has passed through the dissonance of his own uncertainty but which is one long unbroken transformation.

There are also structural and motivic reasons, of course, as to why I settled on my particular voice-leading. Foremost, the double neighbor motive in the opening bars seems to be a germinal figure. The upper neighbor of Ab is distilled from this motive to expand until the cadential material in bar 13. On an even higher level, this Ab upper neighbor acts as structural *Kopftön* for the B section, thus giving a three-level motivic continuity. This Ab, however, does not clearly appear until after the move to F as dominant of Bb. I see F as being active in the upper voice at the start of the B section. Coupled with the Ab, the F creates a double neighbor on a higher level – a mimic of the opening – but now in reverse order (perhaps paralleling the switch from stability to instability in this section with regard to Tamino's mental state).

One final comment: The tonicization of F (the dominant of the dominant) in this B section may seem odd, but I believe this event arises from the text itself. Each time Tamino asks himself a question, the music responds to his answer with a cadence. Since Tamino asks two questions ("Is this love?" and "What should I do?"), the music thus requires two resolutions. Traveling to V/V allows two structural cadences to represent each consequent answer as a progression of harmonies. Perhaps in a related way, the two questions each receive answers just as both members of the double neighbor figure receive resolutions.