# Lewin and Cohn Articles

*Q1)* (Lewin, 1981): *Lewin is proposing a kind of analogy between the metrical and tonal organization of this piece; what is the analogy?*

Lewin sees a close relationship between hypermeter and the tonal function of harmonic areas in this Brahms *Capriccio*. As a central point, Lewin proposes a metric tonic that corresponds to the tonic tonality of the piece, as well as proposing metric equivalents for dominant and subdominant. For example, Lewin shows how the $\frac{6}{4}$ hypermeter (his metric "tonic") in measures 1 through 2 occurs along with the Cs (the tonal "tonic") in the left hand. Similarly, a new $\frac{3}{2}$ hypermeter appears in concert with a strong subdominant F bass tone at bar 3, while a $\frac{12}{8}$ hypermeter begins in measure 9 to coincide with a passage in e-minor (a relative minor to the dominant, G). Lewin goes on to remark how these three hypermetric states share basic 3:2 or 2:3 ratios, much like the 3:2 or 2:3 ratios between the frequencies of the root notes for tonic and dominant or tonic and subdominant in a Pythagorean tuning system. This analogy cannot be pushed too far, though, since the exact ratios of the hypermeters do not correspond directly to the ratios of harmonies as used in the piece, i.e. when the hypermeters of the piece are in a ratio of 3:2, the harmonies of those areas are in a frequency relationship of 2:3 (and vice versa). Despite this shortcoming in the analogy, Lewin ultimately suggest a sort of rhythmic circle-of-fifths as a concomitant of the tonal fifth-relations we already take for granted.

*Q2)* (Cohn, 1992): *What is the primary "hypermetric conflict" in this piece [Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, Scherzo], and how does it play out?*

Cohn views the "hypermetric conflict" in the Scherzo as a basic one between duple and triple, a conflict that Cohn desires to raise to the level of dramatic action. To clearly describe this conflict, Cohn defines hypermetrical areas of the piece as "pure," such as "pure duple" or "pure triple," meaning that each meter manifests itself throughout all hypermetrical levels. For example, a pure duple section would group into complexes of 2, 4, 8, 16, etc., whereas pure triple sections would group into 3, 9, 27, 81, etc. Of course, the pure duple sections are not completely devoid of triple meter since the notated meter is $\frac{3}{4}$, but Cohn is more concerned with meter from the level of the tactus and up, i.e. from the level of the measure and higher. In transitional areas, Cohn recognizes "mixed meters," such as $\frac{6}{4}$, $\frac{3}{2}$, and $\frac{12}{8}$, which allow themselves to group into combinations of threes and twos at different hierarchical levels. The basic conflict in the Scherzo plays out into a large-scale ABA form, where the meter of pure duple becomes pure triple and then returns to pure duple again. During this drama, periods of mixed meters bridge most of the transitions (except at bar 234) and add variety within the sections of "pure" meter.

*Q3)* (Cohn, 2001): *Using L&J-like metrical grids, show what is being represented in Figure 4b. On pp. 300-301, Cohn observes that the system he uses in Figure 4 is not optimal; why not?*

See presentation.

**WORKS CITED**

Cohn, Richard. 1992. "Dramatization of Hypermetric Conflicts in the Scherzo of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony." *Nineteenth-Century Music*, 15/3, 188-206.

Cohn, Richard. 2001. "Complex Hemiolas, Ski-Hill Graphs, and Metric Spaces." *Music Analysis*, 20, 295-326.

Lewin, David. 1981. "On Harmony and Meter in Brahms's Opus 76 No. 8." *Nineteenth-Century Music*, 4, 261-265.