Articles by Headlam and Willner

Two Articles

Q1) Headlam offers a bold and unconventional analysis of the structure of the first tonal area, mm. 1-108. What, in his view, is the basic structure of this section? Do you find this view convincing?

Headlam views the structure of this first tonal area (mm. 1-114) as mapping to the initial four-bar rhythm that opens the movement. In his own words, "...the higher-level rhythmic organization of the first key area is a large-scale reflection of the structure of the principal rhythm" (122). The similarity between the initial rhythmic motive and its large-scale corollary can be found through the way in which both use rhythmic expansion as well as interruptions of forward momentum.

To evince this analogy, Headlam calls our attention to the fact that the first two bars of the principal rhythm begin with sixteenth notes that "get stuck" (121). Only in the third bar do these beginning sixteenth notes continue forward in an unimpeded stream. The method by which the sixteenth notes are "blocked" is through the use of expansion, since the pairs of sixteenth notes in the first two bars turn into larger units of eighth notes.

At a higher-level, bars 29-39 and 68-79 correlate to the opening two bars, as their tonal motions towards an expected dominant key area "get stuck" on the mediant. Furthermore, this way station of a mediant tonality is expanded in the measures following these two examples. Only in bars 101-114 do we see a consequent phrase that fully modulates to a dominant key (despite being inflected with a flattened third to a minor sonority).

Headlam's Example 2 attempts to show a hierarchy to the path of the large-scale structure in order to more clearly elucidate the ties between this large-scale structure and the opening rhythm. The lower-level tonal expansions have been relegated to a bottom rung of the chart. A level up, the subverted consequent phrases and transitions are grouped together. Finally, at the highest level, the opening antecedent and successfully-modulating third consequent phrase act to oversee the general direction up until the second key area.

While the tale of organicism in this exposition that Headlam has woven may be analytically seductive, I have a hard time believing that Beethoven (consciously or subconsciously) intended such a link. Instead, I feel that any similarities between the local and global structures that Headlam discusses are based more on basic patterns of aesthetic sensibilities. In other words, I think many musicians (including Beethoven) naturally feel that a musical something (e.g. a motive, phrase, or section) is satisfying when repeated once but then needs to be changed somehow to avoid a third and literal instantiation of the thing. Moreover, Headlam seems to take a few too many liberties by assuming that one can hear some "true" consequent phrases as related to the "true" antecedent that appeared some hundred bars prior. Are these musical segments he labels "antecedent" and "consequent" really heard as such, or are they not merely restatements of a motivic device? Without looking at the overall form of the piece, though, Headlam's view of this movement as sonata form creates a very odd and atypical exposition indeed.

Q2) What does Willner mean by "counterstress"? He also talks about the "dissipation" of counterstress as a piece goes on; what is meant by this and how is it reflected in the Bach F-major Prelude?

See presentation.

Meter in Baroque Music

Q1) A score is attached of the Allemande of Bach's French Suite No. 6. Do a metrical/hypermetrical analysis, using L&J's dot notation, showing half-measure and one-measure levels.

See Figure 1 (attached).

Q2) A score is attached of "Thus the ever grateful Spring" from Purcell's The Fairy Queen. *...At least one natural hearing of this piece would be to hear the second beat of each measure as strong. There are two possible explanations for this: a) Purcell thought of the music as notated in my analysis–with the second beat of each notated measure metrically strong; or b) Purcell heard the music as he notated it, with the first beat of each notated measure metrically strong. Which of these views do you think is more plausible and why? (Is there* musical *evidence in the piece that bears on this issue?)*

The issue of strong beats in "Spring" from Act IV of *The Fairy Queen* centers on whether beats 1 and 3 or beats 2 and 4 should receive emphasis. As pointed out, one possible hearing assigns beats 2 and 4 as the strong beats, thus assuming that Purcell had a different interpretation of what barlines indicate. This view of beats 2 and 4 as strong is supported mainly by the vocal line, whose entrances and line breaks always occur on beats 2 and 4. In fact, every phrase of text in the vocal part cuts across a barline, creating a melodic grouping structure that is consistently out-of-phase with the notated metrical structure. Beat 2 (such as in mm. 10 or 14 for example) as well as beat 4 (such as in mm. 20 or 24) both act as starting points for the melody, thereby giving a certain weight to those beats throughout the piece.

This melodic weight, however, seems to be overcome by the harmonic gravity of the piece. Many harmonies span beats 1 and 2 or beats 3 and 4, with the onset of the harmony in beats 1 or 3 giving emphasis to those odd beats. Bar 5, for example, gives a solid instance of where an "even-strong" hearing becomes very difficult. Moreover, a preponderance of low bass notes on beats 1 or 3 anchor the feeling of strength to an "odd-strong" hearing. The recurrent motivic low F# (appearing first in bar 3 and again in mm. 11 and 28), despite a even-beat counterbalance in bar 4, acts together with many other low bass notes to argue for hearing the strong beat on beats 1 and 3. As well, the last bar of the piece would seem ridiculous to hear in an "even-strong" context, as the song would certainly have a very unsatisfactory close. Therefore, we must conjecture that Purcell viewed "end-accented" phrases as a normal and stable condition, comfortable with the non-alignment of phrase and meter.

WORKS CITED

Headlam, David. 1985. "A Rhythmic Study of the Exposition in the Second Movement of Beethoven's Quartet Op. 59, No. 1." *Music Theory Spectrum*, 7, pp. 114-138.

Willner, Channan. 1988. "Stress and Counterstress: Accentual Conflict and Reconciliation in J.S. Bach's Instrumental Works." *Music Theory Spectrum*, 20, pp. 280-304.