The Submerged *Urlinie* and Musical Narrative

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What is Urlinie Play?

- Schenkerian analysis: only soprano voice is “songlike,” melody-bearing
- Schenker: competing melodic events explained via cover tones, boundary play (Neumeyer 1987)
- *Urlinie Play*: two+ rival Urlinien traced (Yorgason 2020)
- Analogue: 3-Part Ursatz = rivalry of $^3$ and $^5$ (Neumeyer 1987)
- Submerged Urlinie: an Urlinie that does not occur in the soprano (Schachter 1995)
- Associated with Romanticism and music of Chopin
  - Rosen (1995): “Latent polyphony” = voices coming into/out of focus
- Benefits: increased in-time nuance, explanation of expression
Examples of Latent Polyphony

- Chopin Scherzo No. 1: Alto → Soprano
- Chopin Prelude Op. 28, No. 8 in F# Minor (Appendix)
- Chopin Sonata No. 3 in B minor, Op. 58, III (heterophonic polyphony) (Appendix)
Brent Yorgason’s 2020 *Music Theory Spectrum* Article:

- **Gives criteria of song-like/focal voices in *Urlinie Play***:
  - Accented metrical position, upper-voice placement, melodic variety, legato texture, independent dynamic accents (pp. 54–56)

- **Four Strategies of *Urlinie Play***:
  - Shadowing (one register clearly more prominent)
  - Role Reversion (low register yields to soprano)
  - Denial (low register avoids closure; soprano takes over globally)
  - Competition (two registers nearly evenly matched)
Yorgason’s Analysis of “The Happy Farmer” (p. 61)
Our Analysis of “Happy Farmer”
Critique of Yorgason’s Approach

- The four types of Urlinie Play do not illuminate questions of musical narrative
- Competition (as rivalry between registers) is most frequent and interesting in 19th-century art music
- “Happy Farmer:” Analysis of Competition?
  - New notations = right-pointing arrows, vocal parts, local ambiguities (?) label
  - Priority = Tenor to Tenor + Soprano (with complications)
  - Instances of Shadowing = Byproducts of Competition
The Problem and our Angle

- Competition more prevalent than other strategies
- Recent theories of musical narrative: basic oppositions between musical states, mapped to expressive opposition
  - Major = positively valenced ("good"), minor = negatively valenced ("bad")
- Hatten (1994, 2004): oppositions between expressive genres
  - minor --> major = “tragic-to-transcendent”
- Almén (2008): opposition between structural hierarchy and “transgression”
- **OUR RESEARCH ANGLE**: we reorient Urlinie Play around conflicts between different registers, and around registers as analytical objects
Models of Registral Conflict: the Options

THESIS: By tracing registral conflicts and mapping them to oppositions in mode, topics, and other parameters, musical narratives with clearly defined temporal “moments” result.

- **Question:** which registral objects engage in conflict?
  - Pitch classes and scale degrees cannot
  - Schenkerian, melodically fluent voices cannot
  - Low vs. High (relative pitches) = most general
  - S vs. A, T, B (four parts ordered from low to high) = more specific
  - S1, S2...B1, B2 (more than four parts) = most specific
Narrative Archetypes:
low/high and major/minor

● Registers: original pitch or +1 8ve = more positively valenced
● -1 8ve = negatively valenced (Jaquet, Danuser, Gomez 2014)
● Major mode positively valenced, minor negatively valenced
● Higher pitches positively valenced, lower pitches negatively valenced
● Our proposed narrative archetypes:
  ○ Low-->High (Major): Optimism (Happy Farmer, “tortues,” “l’éléphant”)
  ○ Low-->High (Minor): Terror (Chopin G Minor Prelude)
  ○ High-->Low (Major): Introspection (Chopin A Major Prelude)
  ○ High-->Low (Minor): Resignation (Chopin B Minor Prelude)
“Falling Asleep” in Chopin’s 7th Prelude, Op. 28
Registral Conflict in Chopin’s 7th Prelude
Registral Narrative of the A Major Prelude

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Antecedent (mm. 1–8)</th>
<th>Consequent (mm. 9–16)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5-line or 3-line?</td>
<td>_______________3-line!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S1</td>
<td>S1—(S2)—A—A!—(S2?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High—(higher)--------</td>
<td>High—(higher)—low—low!—(higher?)—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desc. step—asc. steps</td>
<td>Desc. step—asc. steps—desc. step</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waltz/Berceuse</td>
<td>_______________“Weightless” Nocturne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(S2)</td>
<td>(higher?)——</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(S2?)</td>
<td>———</td>
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Overview of Chopin’s B Minor Prelude, No. 6

Assai lento.

Restricted soprano

L.H. Melody

Reversion
Resignation in Chopin’s B Minor
Prelude No. 6, Pt. 1
Resignation in Chopin’s B Minor Prelude, No. 6, Pt. 2
Resignation in Chopin’s B Minor Prelude, No. 6, Pt. 3
Chopin B Minor Prelude Registral Narrative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Antecedent</th>
<th>Consequent</th>
<th>Extension</th>
<th>Consequent of Extension</th>
<th>Coda</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mm. 1–8</td>
<td>mm. 9–13</td>
<td>mm. 14–18</td>
<td>mm. 19–22</td>
<td>mm. 22–24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T→S</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>T/B→B</td>
<td>T/B→B</td>
<td>B…(S)→T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low→(high)</td>
<td>Low…</td>
<td>Lower→Even Lower</td>
<td>Lower→Lowest</td>
<td>Lowest… (higher)→Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i→HC</td>
<td>i→♭II</td>
<td>i⁶→DC</td>
<td>i⁶→PAC</td>
<td>i…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tragic heartbeat, S commentary</td>
<td>Neapolitan as release</td>
<td>Waiting</td>
<td>Waiting→Resignation</td>
<td>Dissolution/Loss of Self</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Our Conclusions and Further Directions

- Narrative archetypes describe consistent expressive effects across examples.
- This method successfully interprets registral conflict.
- Analyses have clear temporal moments.
- Increases in-time nuance in Urlinie Play model.
- Further avenues of exploration?
  - Other composers from the 19th-century.
  - Was any one composer the initial historical source of this technique?
  - How might one define narratives for works that begin and end on the same registral state?
Bibliography


Appendix: More Examples of Latent Polyphony

- Chopin, F# Minor Prelude Op. 28, No. 8 (alto focal)

- Chopin, B Minor Sonata Op. 58, III (variety of focal parts)
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