

The *Submerged* *Umlinie* and Musical Narrative

Ben Wadsworth and Meghan O'Harra
Kennesaw State University
2021 Annual Meeting SCSMT
February 20, 2021



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 \wedge^3 and \wedge^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

Molto più lento. M. 108.

II

sotto voce e ben legato

p

4) a.

12 12 4 12

1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1

1 2 1 2 1 2 1 2 1

- 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)



m. 1 4 / 8 9 / 15 11 / 17 14 / 20

$\hat{5}$ (n.n) $\hat{5}$ $\hat{4}$ $\hat{3}$ ($\hat{2}$) $\hat{2}$ $\hat{5}$ $\hat{4}$ $\hat{3}$ $\hat{2}$ $\hat{1}$

F: I V I ii⁶ V⁷ I

Our Analysis of "Happy Farmer"

The image displays two systems of musical notation for the piece "Happy Farmer". The top system is in 2/4 time and features a treble and bass staff. The treble staff contains a melodic line with a box labeled 'S' above it. The bass staff contains a bass line with a box labeled 'T' above it. Chord symbols 'I' and 'V' are placed below the bass staff. Fractional annotations '1/5', '4/8', '9/15', and '10/16' are placed above the treble staff. A yellow arrow points to a specific measure in the treble staff, and a blue arrow points to a measure in the bass staff. The bottom system is also in 2/4 time and features a treble and bass staff. The treble staff contains a melodic line with a box labeled 'S+T' above it. The bass staff contains a bass line with boxes labeled 'T' above it. Chord symbols 'I', 'V⁷', 'I', 'ii⁶', 'V', and 'I' are placed below the bass staff. Fractional annotations '11/17', '13/19', and '14/20' are placed above the treble staff. A red arrow points to a measure in the treble staff, and a yellow arrow points to a measure in the bass staff. The entire analysis is set against a dark blue background with a decorative blue and green arrow graphic in the top left corner.



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 Umlinie 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’elephant”)
 - Low-->High (Minor): Terror (Chopin G Minor Prelude)
 - High-->Low (Major): Introspection (Chopin A Major Prelude)
 - High-->Low (Minor): Resignation (Chopin B Minor Prelude)

Registral Conflict in Chopin's 7th Prelude



The image displays the first 15 measures of Chopin's 7th Prelude in A major. The score is presented in two systems, each with a treble and bass clef staff. A green arrow points to measure 1, and a yellow arrow points to measure 11. The first system (measures 1-7) includes a box labeled 'S1' above measure 1 and a triplet bracket over measures 6-7. The second system (measures 9-15) includes boxes labeled '(S2)', '(A)', and '(S2?)' above measures 11, 13, and 15 respectively. Below the staves, harmonic analysis is provided for each measure.

Measures 1-7:
1: (I) V⁷ 3: I 5: V⁹₇ 7: I

Measures 9-15:
9: V⁷ 11: I 13: (V⁷/ii) 15: ii V⁹₇ I



Registrational Narrative of the A Major Prelude

Antecedent (mm. 1–8)	Consequent (mm. 9–16)
5-line or 3-line?	_____3-line!
S1	S1—(S2)—A—A!—(S2?)
High_____ (higher)_____	High—(higher)—low—low!—(higher?)—
Desc. step—asc. steps_____	Desc. step—asc. steps—desc. step
Waltz/Berceuse	_____“Weightless” Nocturne

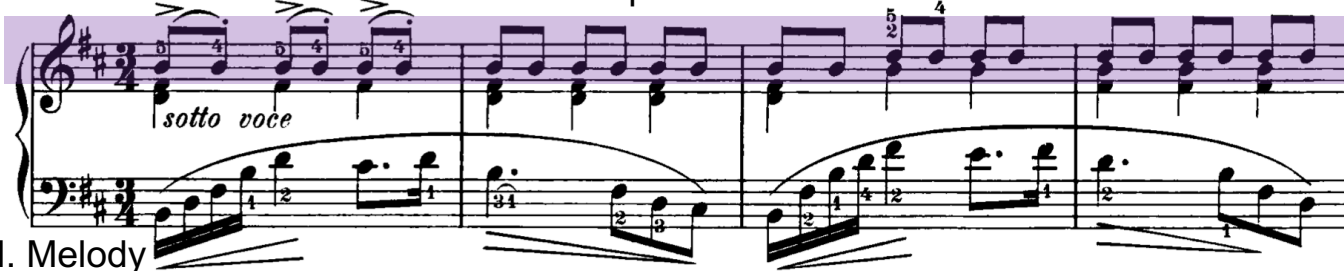


Overview of Chopin's B Minor Prelude, No. 6

6. *Assai lento.* Restricted soprano

sotto voce

L.H. Melody



Reversion





Resignation in Chopin's B Minor Prelude No. 6, Pt. 1

1. *Antecedent*

1 3 7 8

T S

i 5 6 i 6 V

Resignation in Chopin's B Minor Prelude, No. 6, Pt. 2



The image displays a musical score for Chopin's B Minor Prelude, No. 6, Pt. 2, with harmonic analysis. The score is written in B minor (two sharps) and 3/4 time. It is divided into two sections: *2. Consequent* (measures 9-13) and *3. Extension* (measures 13-18). The analysis includes chord symbols and figured bass notation below the bass staff.

2. Consequent

3. Extension

Chord symbols and figured bass notation below the bass staff:

- Measure 9: i^5
- Measure 10: 6
- Measure 11: (bII)
- Measure 12: (i^6)
- Measure 13: iv^7
- Measure 14: V
- Measure 15: (VI)

Annotations in the score include a box labeled 'T' in measure 9, a box labeled 'B/T' in measure 13, and a box labeled 'B' in measure 15. Measure numbers 9, 13, and 18 are indicated above the treble staff.



Resignation in Chopin's B Minor Prelude, No. 6, Pt. 3

4. *Consequent to Extension* 5. *Coda*

19 22 23

B/T B T (S)

ii^{\flat}_5 V^{\flat}_7 (i^{\flat}) $(iv^{\flat}7)$ i



Chopin B Minor Prelude Registral Narrative

Antecedent	Consequent	Extension	Consequent of Extension	Coda
mm. 1–8	mm. 9–13	mm. 14–18	mm. 19–22	mm. 22–24
T→S	T	T/B→B	T/B→B	B...(S)→T
Low→(high)	Low...	Lower→Even Lower	Lower→Lowest	Lowest... (higher)→Low
i→HC	i→ _b II	i ⁶ →DC	i ⁶ →PAC	i...
Tragic heartbeat, S commentary	Neapolitan as release	Waiting	Waiting→Resignation	Dissolution/ Loss of Self



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 Umlinje 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

- Almén, B. (2008). *A theory of musical narrative*. Indiana University Press.
- Burkhart, C. (1973). The Polyphonic Melodic Line of Chopin's B-Minor Prelude. *Chopin Preludes, Op. 28: An Authoritative Score*.
- Burkhart, C. (1990). "Departures from the Norm in Two Songs from Schumann's *Liederkreis*." *Schenker Studies*, 146-164. Cambridge University Press.
- Cinnamon, H. (1992). "New observations on voice leading, hemiola, and their roles in tonal and rhythmic structures in Chopin's prelude in B minor, op. 28, no. 6." *Intégral: The Journal of Applied Musical Thought*, 6, 66–106.
- Gagne, D. (1990). "The Compositional Use of Register in Three Piano Sonatas by Mozart." *Trends in Schenkerian Analysis*, 23-39. Schirmer Books.
- Hatten, R. S. (2004). *Interpreting Musical Gestures, Topics, and Tropes : Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert*. Indiana University Press.
- Jaquet, Lucas, Brigitta Danuser, and Patrick Gomez. 2014. "Music and felt emotions: How systematic pitch level variations affect the experience of pleasantness and arousal." *Psychology of Music* 42 (1): 51–70.
- Neumeyer, David. 1987. "The Three-Part Ursatz." *In Theory Only* 10 (1–2): 3–29.
- Oster, E. (1961). "Register and the Large-Scale Connection." *Journal of Music Theory*, 5(1), 54.
- Rosen, Charles (1995). *The Romantic Style*. Harvard University Press.
- Schachter, C. (1994). "The Prelude from Bach's Suite No. 4 for Violoncello Solo: the submerged Urlinie." *Current Musicology*, 56, 54.
- Schenker, H. (1979). *Free Composition*. Schirmer Books.
- Wen, E. (1999). "Bass-line Articulations of the Urlinie." *Schenker Studies* 2, 276-297. Cambridge University Press.
- Yorgason, B. (2020). "Submerged Urlinien, Shadow Urlinien, and Urlinie Play in the Left-Hand Melody Piece." *Music Theory Spectrum*, 42(1), 54–80. <https://doi.org/10.1093/mts/mtz022>

Appendix: More Examples of Latent Polyphony

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

Molto agitato.

8.

♩. * ♩. * ♩. * ♩. * ♩. * ♩. * ♩. *

This musical score shows the first few measures of Chopin's F# Minor Prelude Op. 28, No. 8. The tempo is marked 'Molto agitato'. The piece is in 3/4 time and F# minor. The right hand features a rapid, continuous eighth-note pattern, while the left hand plays a more rhythmic accompaniment with eighth and sixteenth notes. The score includes a large number '8.' at the beginning and a series of 'Ped.' and '*' markings below the bass staff, indicating pedal points and specific fingering or articulation instructions.

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

sostenuto

p

12 35

Ped. *

This musical score shows the beginning of the third movement of Chopin's B Minor Sonata Op. 58, III. The tempo is marked 'sostenuto'. The piece is in 3/4 time and B minor. The right hand plays a melodic line with various ornaments and slurs, while the left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and single notes. The score includes a large number '12' and '35' at the beginning, and 'Ped.' and '*' markings below the bass staff, indicating pedal points and specific fingering or articulation instructions.



Contact Us

- Ben Wadsworth
 - Email: bwadsw2@kennesaw.edu
- Meghan O'Harra
 - Email: meghan.oharra@gmail.com