

RECASTING THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY SONATA-FORM NARRATIVE:  
COMPOSITIONAL STRATEGIES IN ROBERT SCHUMANN'S  
OPP. 105 AND 121 VIOLIN SONATAS

A THESIS

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## TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

### CAESURA FILL (CF):

The connective musical material that bridges the gap between a caesura and the next thematic module.

### CLOSING ZONE (C):

The musical material following the essential expositional closure (in the exposition) or the essential structural closure (in the recapitulation). Within the closing zone, internal sections are labeled as  $C^1$ ,  $C^2$ , etc.

### ESSENTIAL EXPOSITIONAL CLOSURE (EEC):

An important point of structural closure within the exposition, the EEC usually refers to the first successful perfect authentic cadence in the secondary area that then proceeds on to new material.

### ESSENTIAL STRUCTURAL CLOSURE (ESC):

An important point of structural closure within the recapitulation, the ESC typically refers to the first successful perfect authentic cadence in the secondary area of that then proceeds on to differing material.

### MEDIAL CAESURA (MC):

A short gap or pause that occurs at the end of the transition and serves to divide the exposition into two large sections (most often, tonic and dominant in major-mode sonatas or tonic and mediant in minor-mode sonatas). The medial caesura is often preceded by a strong half cadence in either the tonic or secondary key.

### PARAGENERIC SPACES:

Whereas certain sections of the generic sonata-space are common to nearly every sonata (such as the primary theme, transition, etc.), other sections that frame the sonata form proper, such as the coda or introduction, occur outside of the sonata-space, and thus are referred to as paragenetic spaces.

#### PRIMARY THEME ZONE (P):

The first thematic area of the sonata form proper, individual modules of which may be designated  $P^{1.1}$ ,  $P^{1.2}$ , etc.

#### SECONDARY THEME ZONE (S and $S^C$ ):

The contrasting thematic area following a medial caesura and typically leading up to a perfect authentic cadence in the secondary key (the essential expositional closure in the exposition or the essential structural closure in the recapitulation). Individual modules with the secondary theme zone are labeled  $S^{1.1}$ ,  $S^{1.2}$ , etc. In certain cases, the secondary area may introduce a theme with numerous stylistic characteristics of a closing theme prior to the attainment of the EEC or ESC; in these cases, the theme may be designated  $S^{C1.1}$ ,  $S^{C1.2}$ , etc.

#### TRANSITION (TR):

A section that follows the primary theme zone and drives toward the medial caesura.

## CHAPTER ONE

### *Introduction*

Although Robert Schumann's late style has been the subject of several probing studies in recent years, few scholars have concentrated their attention on the chamber works composed in the autumn of 1851: the Sonata in A minor for Piano and Violin, op. 105; the Trio in G minor for Piano, Violin, and Cello, op. 110; and the Sonata in D minor for Violin and Piano, op. 121. Perhaps most intriguing are the first movements of the opp. 105 and 121 violin sonatas, within which Schumann deliberately suggests a dialogue with the eighteenth-century sonata form by preserving many of the same rhetorical and structural elements. Yet throughout both movements, Schumann uses an intricate web of tonal ambiguities, metrical dissonances, and unusual key relationships to recast the internal workings of these outwardly conventional sonata forms. As he uses these techniques to undermine important structural moments of each movement, Schumann significantly changes the overall plot of the eighteenth-century sonata form, demonstrating his sensitivity to the dramatic possibilities of this historical form in the middle of the nineteenth century. Despite these formal and expressive innovations, the opp. 105 and 121 violin sonatas have suffered in their reception since the early 1850s and into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries for a variety of intertwined reasons.

Like many of Schumann's late chamber works, opp. 105 and 121 initially experienced a negative reception in part due to the politicization of the contemporary Germanic musical culture. Alluding to this context, Carl Dahlhaus commented that, in the mid-nineteenth century, chamber music functioned as something of a "nature reserve for conservatives too dazed by the new music to do anything but cling to the old."<sup>1</sup> In a culture rapidly adapting to the aesthetics of Wagner and Liszt, Schumann's continued use of both eighteenth-century forms and the intimate chamber music genre was viewed as conservative and even outmoded by certain critics. As Laura Tunbridge has suggested, Schumann's persistence in composing chamber music in his late style may be described as "a retreat from the modern mainstream."<sup>2</sup> While Schumann certainly composed in numerous genres besides chamber music throughout his late period, nineteenth-century critics such as Adolf Schubring and Theodor Uhlig purposefully positioned Schumann as a "conservative" in direct opposition to the "progressive" Wagner, though they did so for different purposes. Following Franz Brendel's pronouncement of the New German School (with Wagner as its leader) in 1859, Schubring wrote a series of "Schumanniana" articles that made a case for a Schumann School. Declaring himself a Schumannianer, Schubring defined the lines between the even more conservative Mendelssohnians and the progressive Wagnerians by positing Schumann as a composer who wrote and performed primarily in the smaller solo piano and chamber genres. Theodor Uhlig, an ardent Wagnerian, took a decidedly different approach in his review of the op. 105 violin sonata, published in 1851 in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* (then under the editorship of

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<sup>1</sup> Carl Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, trans. J. Bradford Robinson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 253.

<sup>2</sup> Laura Tunbridge, *Schumann's Late Style* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 140-41.

Brendel). In his review, Uhlig declared that there was “no further progress” to be discerned from Schumann’s compositions; rather, Schumann’s lack of originality became painfully evident in op. 105, in which “none of the movements is entirely free on the one hand of his particular laboured quality or on the other of musical banality, not to say commonplaces.”<sup>3</sup> With comments intentionally designed to distance Schumann from Wagner, Uhlig seems to willfully ignore the multiple complexities of form, harmony, and rhythm for the sake of his argument. Indeed, the early receptions of both opp. 105 and 121 were shaped more by the broad polarities of Schumann’s heavily politicized musical culture than by careful commentary on their actual content, with the result that a number of subtleties within both sonatas have been overlooked in the attempt to position these works as “conservative.”

While the immediacy of these politics has receded in the twentieth and twenty-first century, the impact of this early reception remains: only in recent years have the opp. 105 and 121 violin sonatas merited the sort of in-depth studies necessary for the rehabilitation of these works in the scholarly literature. Yet even within certain of these studies, the image of the conservative, culturally withdrawn Schumann has persisted, as scholars have failed to address the composer’s simultaneous engagement with both the conventional sonata-form model and distinctive nineteenth-century aesthetics in the violin sonatas. For example, Hans Kohlhasse’s 1978 dissertation, “Die Kammermusik Robert Schumanns,” attempts to provide one of the first comprehensive discussions of Schumann’s entire chamber music output. Throughout the three-volume work, Kohlhasse

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<sup>3</sup> Ute Bär, “Critical Report,” in *Robert Schumann: New Edition of the Complete Works* II, 2, vol. 3, ed. Ute Bär (Mainz: Schott, 2001), 201-2.

systematically analyzes each chamber work, providing commentary related to a broad variety of topics, including the composer's use of eighteenth-century forms, his thematic, harmonic, and rhythmic compositional techniques, and his occasional interruption of the formal structure and musical texture. Perhaps due to the wide scope of his research, Kohlhasse fails to address many of the more subtle issues at play in Schumann's chamber works, instead suggesting that many of these works, including the opp. 105 and 121 violin sonatas, are conventional in their form and content. Despite Kohlhasse's desire to comprehensively restore Schumann's chamber works in their critical and analytical reception, his emphasis on structural conformity has the unintentional effect of overlooking some of the most important complexities of these works.

Similarly, while Laura Tunbridge's recent book, *Schumann's Late Style*, provides an insightful cultural context for Schumann's compositions from the 1850s, her discussion of the opp. 105 and 121 violin sonatas fails to address some of the more singular structural, harmonic, and rhythmic aspects of these works. Although Tunbridge describes multiple facets of Schumann's late style with unprecedented clarity and depth, her brief comments on the opp. 105 and 121 violin sonatas are situated between more extensive, detailed discussions of the G-minor piano trio (op. 110) and the third violin sonata (woo22). In her remarks about op. 105, Tunbridge draws attention to Theodor Uhlig's 1852 review of the sonata, pointing out moments in the fourth movement of the sonata that confirm Uhlig's hearing of the repetitious alternation between the piano and violin. By way of contrast, Tunbridge's commentary on op. 121 suggests that "where Schumann impresses in the Second Violin Sonata is precisely in the kind of thematic development and formal integration I have claimed to be sometimes absent from the

other late chamber music.”<sup>4</sup> Presumably, op. 105 is one of the other late chamber works that Tunbridge feels is lacking in thematic development and formal integration. Yet, as the formal analyses of chapters 2 and 3 of this study will demonstrate, the first movements of both op. 105 and 121 reveal subtle rhythmic, harmonic, and structural details that profoundly impact the thematic development and formal integration of these works. While much of Tunbridge’s work provides a sensitive reassessment of Schumann’s late style, her discussions of op. 105 in particular seems to overlook important musical issues, thus perpetuating the long-standing bias against this work.

Linda Correll Roesner’s brief but compelling chapter on Schumann’s chamber music provides a provocative discussion of Schumann’s “ever innovative approach to large-scale composition” through a comparison of the three op. 41 string quartets from 1842 and the opp. 105 and 121 violin sonatas from 1851.<sup>5</sup> From the outset, Roesner focuses on unusual tonal, thematic, and rhythmic details of these works, building the case that Schumann, especially when working within eighteenth-century forms, “considered each composition a unique entity with its own laws, manipulating the expectations fostered by the tradition to achieve his own quite different objectives.”<sup>6</sup> Throughout her discussion of the op. 105 violin sonata, Roesner suggests that one destabilizing compositional technique common to the first two op. 41 string quartets as well as the later violin sonata is the tonal synthesis (or tonal pairing) of A minor and its submediant, F major, throughout all three works. Whereas the string quartets explore but ultimately

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<sup>4</sup> Tunbridge, 163.

<sup>5</sup> Linda Correll Roesner, “The Chamber Music,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Schumann*, ed. Beate Perrey, 123-47 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 145.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 145.

resolve the synthesis of these two keys, the op. 105 violin sonata uses this pairing to undermine “the sonata principle of tonal conflict and resolution in favour of a thematic and tonal unification that can absorb even the most disparate elements.” Roesner also points out that another way Schumann undermines the traditional sonata form in the first movements of both opp. 105 and 121 is by de-emphasizing the tonal and thematic contrast of the secondary area. However, while Roesner quite accurately describes the undermining of the eighteenth-century sonata-form structure through the use of tonal synthesis and the de-emphasizing of the secondary area, she does not address the role that metrical dissonance plays in this process. As chapters 2 and 3 of this document suggest, the combination of tonal and rhythmic analyses can contribute greatly to our understanding of Schumann’s dialogue with the sonata form within his late style.

In a forthcoming article in *Theory and Practice*, Peter Smith discusses the relationship between tonal pairing, form, and cyclical integration in the op. 105 violin sonata. To introduce the technique of tonal pairing, Smith begins by comparing Schumann’s use of this technique in several pieces from the op. 9 piano cycle *Carnaval* to the pairing of A minor and F major in the op. 105 violin sonata. Smith suggests that the tonal pairing of the violin sonata may be more clearly understood through a consideration of certain of Schumann’s earlier works, including the piano cycle *Carnaval*, which also makes use of this tonal technique. Through the recasting of this technique more frequently associated with his songs and piano works, Schumann forms the basis for the sonata’s “motivic, harmonic, and formal integration, its formal dialectic of articulation

and continuity, and its cyclical unity.”<sup>7</sup> And it is this high degree of integration and unity that Smith suggests places this sonata “on a plateau of achievement next to the great chamber works of the nineteenth century.”<sup>8</sup> Yet, like Roesner, Smith forgoes addressing the rhythmic character of the op. 105 violin sonata, stating that “the sonata’s most striking features arise not in the rhythmic dimension—although the sonata certainly includes its share of metric dissonances and subtleties of phrase rhythm—but in the realm of organic form.”<sup>9</sup> While Smith’s analysis represents one of the most detailed discussions of the op. 105 violin sonata to date, his decision not to pursue the issue of Schumann’s metrical dissonances and other rhythmic complexities in this particular article circumvents what might be a potentially important avenue to understanding Schumann’s late style.

Although the opp. 105 and 121 violin sonatas are mentioned only occasionally in Joel Lester’s 1995 article in *19<sup>th</sup>-Century Music*, Lester’s analytical approach to Schumann’s sonata-form works mirrors a common trend among revisionist scholars. Throughout the article, Lester argues that Schumann’s sonata forms need not be “set against Beethoven’s and then criticized for failing to do what Beethoven did,” as numerous earlier scholars have implied through their comparison of Schumann’s sonata forms with the eighteenth-century model.<sup>10</sup> Rather, a more complete understanding of

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<sup>7</sup> Peter H. Smith, “Harmonies Heard from Afar: Tonal Pairing, Formal Design, and Cyclical Integration in Schumann’s A-minor Violin Sonata, Op. 105,” *Theory and Practice* (forthcoming): 3. I am very grateful to Peter Smith for sharing his paper with me prior to publication.

<sup>8</sup> Smith, 3.

<sup>9</sup> Smith, 2.

<sup>10</sup> Joel Lester, “Robert Schumann and Sonata Forms,” *Nineteenth-Century Music* 18, no. 3 (Spring 1995): 190.

Schumann's compositional process might suggest that "many of Schumann's sonata forms, their neo-Classical features aside, reinterpret the form for distinctly new ends, since they pose structural problems different in kind from Beethoven's."<sup>11</sup> In his discussion of several of Schumann's sonata forms (including the first movement of the string quartet, op. 41, no. 3 and the toccata, op. 7), Lester suggests that, although Schumann models certain features of these works after the eighteenth-century sonata form, the composer also alters crucial moments to fit his own compositional aesthetic. Yet Lester also asserts that "there is a Classical era precedent for nearly every special feature" Schumann incorporates into his sonata forms.<sup>12</sup> The point that emerges near the end of the article is that Lester, along with numerous scholars whose work he criticizes, seems to think of the eighteenth-century sonata form as a rigid, prescriptive structure, a "textbook" paradigm that in actuality describes very few sonata forms of the Classical or Romantic eras. Whereas Lester's solution to this problem is to distance Schumann's sonata forms from the eighteenth-century archetype, this succeeds only in isolating Schumann's works from their historical context, a context which Schumann himself embraced in his choice to continue composing in the sonata-form structure.<sup>13</sup> Rather, perhaps the methodology for discussing both the eighteenth-century sonata form and Schumann's compositional responses to this form ought to be reconsidered by replacing

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 190.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 191.

<sup>13</sup> Indeed, Schumann considered the sonata form to be one of the highest tests of a composer's abilities, as evidenced by his comment in 1855: "If a composer puts himself to the test with one of the greatest and most important art forms, which the sonata is, the highest demands will be made of him, because not only are an honorable endeavor [and] an artistic conviction required, but after such great examples [as those of the Classical masters] there must be, besides strong talent, a perfect mastery of form and, generally speaking, the technical wherewithal—in short, a superior grade of artistic maturity." William S. Newman, *The Sonata Since Beethoven*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1972), 42.

the rigid structure that emerged in the scholarly literature with a dynamic, dialogic approach that more closely describes the sonata form as it has been practiced throughout history. Viewed from this angle, Schumann's interaction with and modification of the eighteenth-century sonata form offers insight into not only his compositional strategies, but also his revitalization of the form within the mid-nineteenth century.

Drawing on James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy's recent book, *Elements of Sonata Theory*, chapters 2 and 3 of this study will consider the first movements of opp. 105 and 121 respectively from the perspective of Schumann's interaction with the structural, tonal, and rhetorical possibilities of the eighteenth-century sonata form. Building upon what Hepokoski and Darcy describe as the "heart of the [sonata] theory," the analyses of opp. 105 and 121 focus primarily on recognizing and interpreting Schumann's trajectory toward certain "obligatory cadences" within the eighteenth-century model: the medial caesura and essential expositional closure within the exposition; the corresponding medial caesura and essential structural closure within the recapitulation; and the final caesura within the coda.<sup>14</sup> Thus, chapters 2 and 3 begin by addressing the exposition's "structure of promise," through which the primary theme, transition, secondary theme, and closing area outline a succession of events and cadences that predicts the plan and purpose of the recapitulatory space.<sup>15</sup> Following this extended discussion of the exposition's trajectory, chapters 2 and 3 then examine the recapitulation's response to and resolution of the exposition's tonal and rhetorical tension. Finally, because Schumann increases the rhetorical and structural impact of the

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<sup>14</sup> James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory: Norms, Types, and Deformations in the Late-Eighteenth-Century Sonata* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 13.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

coda in the first movements of opp. 105 and 121, chapters 2 and 3 will close with a discussion of this action zone. Although the development space is crucial to the build-up of tension within the sonata form as a whole, the traditional eighteenth-century development does not rely on a single, specific pattern of expectations, such as certain action zones (for example, the primary theme or transition) or important cadential arrivals (such as the medial caesura or essential expositional closure), to create its overall trajectory; thus, the development sections of opp. 105 and 121 will not be addressed within the current discussion of Schumann's dialogue with eighteenth-century sonata-form norms and expectations.

Throughout the analyses of the first movements of opp. 105 and 121, Schumann's use of such techniques as tonal pairing, tonic monopolization, and metrical dissonance to deliberately undermine important structural cadences quickly becomes apparent. A brief description of these compositional techniques here may serve to prepare for the analytical discussion of chapters 2 and 3. The term "tonal pairing" originated in Robert Bailey's discussion of situations in which "two keys simultaneously occupy the highest position in a tonal hierarchy."<sup>16</sup> Bailey suggests that, within works using this tonal technique, either of the paired keys "may serve as the local representative of the tonic complex. Within that complex itself, however, one of the two elements is at any moment in the primary position while the other remains subordinate to it."<sup>17</sup> Both Roesner and Smith have contributed to discussions of tonal pairing within Schumann's opp. 105 and 121 violin

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<sup>16</sup> Harald Krebs, "Some Early Examples of Tonal Pairing: Schubert's 'Meeres Stille' and 'Der Wanderer,'" in *The Second Practice of Nineteenth-Century Tonality*, ed. William Kinderman and Harald Krebs, 17-33 (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), 17.

<sup>17</sup> Robert Bailey, "An Analytical Study of the Sketches and Drafts," in *Prelude and Transfiguration from "Tristan and Isolde,"* ed. Robert Bailey, 113-46 (New York: Norton, 1985), 121-22.

sonatas, but neither have fully considered the impact that this technique has upon certain crucial structural moments of the sonata-form trajectory, particularly when combined with other compositional strategies such as tonic monopolization and metrical dissonance. As chapters 2 and 3 will describe, the tonal pairing of A minor and F major (throughout the first movement of op. 105) and of F major and D minor (throughout the secondary area of the first movement of op. 121) significantly changes the overall plot of the sonata form.

In her dissertation on Schumann's 1842 chamber works, Julie Hedges Brown describes several of Schumann's methods of recasting the tonal argument of the sonata form, one of which is a technique she terms the "monopolizing tonic."<sup>18</sup> In sonata-form movements utilizing this technique, the exposition relinquishes the traditional polarity between two keys in favor of a strong tonic that influences not only the primary theme area, but also the transition and secondary key area. In the first movement of op. 105, tonic monopolization creates a situation in which the tonic key of the primary theme area (A minor) is so compelling that the transition and medial caesura are unable to successfully escape to the secondary key (C major). Although the secondary theme area struggles throughout its entire section to attain a perfect authentic cadence confirming the mediant, ultimately it achieves only an imperfect authentic cadence before being immediately drawn back into the tonic for the expositional repeat. In the first movement of op. 121, Schumann forcefully establishes the D-minor tonic with the bold opening strokes of the introduction. D minor's powerful hold over the exposition is further

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<sup>18</sup> Julie Hedges Brown, "A Higher Echo of the Past: Schumann's 1842 Chamber Music and the Rethinking of Classical Form" (PhD diss., Yale University, 2000), 180-81.

confirmed in the primary theme group, resulting in a transition and medial caesura that are unable to break free from the tonic. While the secondary area does manage to escape to the mediant (F major), its only perfect authentic cadence on F is immediately overridden by a metrically emphasized arrival on D minor. This localized tonal pairing of F major and D minor may be heard as a subtle continuation of the monopolizing tonic of the introduction, primary theme area, and transition. Unlike op. 105, the closing area of op. 121 does manage to secure a stable perfect authentic cadence on F major, thus temporarily escaping the D minor monopolization. Yet, as the recapitulation of op. 121 reveals, the undermining of the secondary key within the secondary theme area proves to have a powerful impact on the overall plot of the sonata form.

Throughout the first movements of both opp. 105 and 121, Schumann creates an atmosphere of tension and emotional unrest through the use of metrical dissonance. Throughout the first movement of op. 105, Schumann relies on both grouping dissonances and displacement dissonance to create conflict with the primary 6/8 meter; whereas, in the first movement of op. 121, the composer primarily utilizes instances of grouping dissonance to undermine both the 3/4 meter of the introduction and the common time meter of the main body of the movement. In *Fantasy Pieces*, a book devoted to metrical dissonance within Schumann's oeuvre, Harald Krebs defines grouping dissonance as "the superposition, on the regular layers of pulses that delineate the primary meter, of one or more regular layers that are incongruent with them."<sup>19</sup> Displacement dissonance, on the other hand, "arises through superposition on the

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<sup>19</sup> Harald Krebs, "The Expressive Role of Rhythm and Meter in Schumann's Late Lieder," in "A Music-Theoretical Matrix: Essays in Honor of Allen Forte (Part I)," ed. David Carson Berry, special issue, *Gamut* 2, no. 1 (2009): 277.

metrical layers of congruent but displaced layers.”<sup>20</sup> Throughout opp. 105 and 121, the layering of metrical dissonances informs not only minute details of individual measures, but also the character of entire theme groups; moreover, these metrical dissonances contribute directly to the formal and tonal issues mentioned above, demonstrating Schumann’s combination of techniques to modify and subvert the plot of the eighteenth-century sonata-form structure.

Throughout this chapter, specific compositional techniques have been repeatedly discussed in terms of their ability to modify or subvert certain normative features of the sonata form plot, thus allowing Schumann to create highly expressive structures that differ significantly from the eighteenth-century paradigm. While the analytical discussions of chapters 2 and 3 describe in greater detail the dialogue between Schumann’s sonata-form trajectories and that of the prototypical eighteenth-century sonata, chapter 4 will discuss the overall narrative suggested by Schumann’s dialogue with this historical model. Building upon Anthony Newcomb’s essay, “Schumann and Late Eighteenth-Century Narrative Techniques,” as well as Hepokoski and Darcy’s descriptions of what specific structural choices signified within the eighteenth century, chapter 4 will construct expressive readings of the first movements of both opp. 105 and 121. Furthermore, this chapter will suggest that, by expressively modifying the plot of the eighteenth-century sonata-form “story,” Schumann engages not only with the eighteenth-century model but also with his own mid-nineteenth-century musical culture.

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<sup>20</sup> Krebs, “Schumann’s Late Lieder,” 277.

## CHAPTER TWO

### *Sonata in A minor for Piano and Violin, op. 105*

Following the first public performance of the A-minor violin sonata on March 21, 1852, Theodor Uhlig published an extended review in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, in which he described Schumann as a mannerist, incapable of composing works of an original nature. Schumann was, Uhlig claimed, “so remote from life, that is to say from reality that, as the sonata in question shows, he is capable of writing entire movements in which, for example, violin and piano alternate in passages [such as in the final movement of op. 105]....”<sup>1</sup> Uhlig continued his tirade by addressing one predecessor to whom the composer’s followers might look in an attempt to validate Schumann’s methods—Beethoven. “And let not the example of Beethoven be cited, for even if we are not greater, artistically speaking, than our forebears, we do see further, because we stand on their shoulders, and as has already been said, the mistakes of a composer such as Beethoven should be avoided, not repeated.”<sup>2</sup> Yet, as already discussed in chapter 1, in choosing to compose a sonata-form work within the chamber music genre, Schumann was purposefully aligning himself with—and perhaps even comparing himself to—the Classical era and the works of the the great masters, if not Beethoven directly. In deliberately isolating the op. 105 violin sonata from its eighteenth-century model, Uhlig

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<sup>1</sup> Bär, 202.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 202.

ignored an important avenue toward understanding the subtle innovations that Schumann does make within the form. Throughout this chapter, I will examine Schumann's modifications of the eighteenth-century sonata form in order to more fully understand not only the composer's historical musical context but also his contemporary engagement with the eighteenth-century sonata-form model.

### *Formal Analysis*

From the outset, the violin's melodic line is a prime contributor to the sense of rhythmic irregularity and emotional tension. (See example 2.1.) The first instance of disruptive metrical dissonance is suggested in the first measure, with the sforzando over the F implying a 6+3 displacement dissonance.<sup>3</sup> Countered by the even more disruptive 3/2 grouping dissonance in the next measure, this early disturbance of the thematic presentation undermines any sense of metrical regularity. The relationship between F and E, emphasized here by overlapping interpretive layers, will be repeatedly referenced throughout the movement, suggesting the technique of tonal pairing described above. Measure 3 is shaded by both preceding metrical dissonances, as the repeated D#s in the violin simultaneously suggest a 3/2 grouping dissonance if they were held for an entire quarter note (as in m. 2) and a renewal of the 6+3 displacement dissonance (hence the highlighting of the second D# with a grace note accent).<sup>4</sup> The dynamic and harmonic

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<sup>3</sup> A 6+3 displacement dissonance, using Krebs's method, here refers to an instance in which the primary metrical layer, a pattern of six eighth notes, is contradicted by a secondary metrical layer, also comprising six eighth notes, which enters three beats after the primary metrical layer. The accented F in the first measure emphasizes the fourth eighth note of the notated meter, and thus initiates a secondary metrical layer that contradicts (or displaces) the notated meter at the distance of three eighth notes.

<sup>4</sup> A 3/2 grouping dissonance, again using Krebs's method, describes a situation in which the six eighth notes of the primary metrical layer are regrouped from their more normative two groups of three eighth notes into a pattern of three groups of two eighth notes each, thus creating a metrical dissonance against the primary layer.

## Example 2.1: Primary Theme Group, mm. 1-10

4<sup>te</sup> Saite

6+3 2 2 2 2 (2) 6+3

*p* *cresc.*

a: i ----- i ----- vii<sup>6/4</sup>/V -----

2 2 2 6+3 2 2 2 6+5

*f*

V<sup>6/5</sup> ----- i<sup>4-3</sup> ----- iv ----- i<sup>6/4</sup> ----- V -----

2 (2) 6+3 2 (2) 6+3

V ----- i<sup>6</sup> -----

accent on the downbeat of m. 4 establishes the consonant 6/3 meter in the midst of the 6+3 displacement dissonance, but is disrupted in m. 5 by another 3/2 grouping dissonance articulated between the violin and piano. This dissonance is more quickly resolved than that of mm. 2-3 as the violin holds a dotted half note in m. 6 while the piano emphasizes the 6+3 displacement dissonance in its iteration of the opening melody.

Throughout this primary theme group, a series of potential cadential points are suggested and then thwarted within this context of heightened metrical dissonance. In m. 5, the grouping dissonance destabilizes the motion to the tonic, negating the sense of arrival that might otherwise be felt there. The continuation to a iv chord in m. 6 further undermines the potential to hear m. 5 as a point of tonic arrival. Measure 6 retrospectively appears to serve as a preparation to the dominant arrival of mm. 7-8. In measure 6, F is accented agogically by the violin line; its role as an appoggiatura figure moving to the dominant scale degree (E) becomes apparent in the next measure. Despite these preparatory efforts, the 6+5 displacement dissonance initiated at the end of m. 7 disrupts the sense of cadential arrival by highlighting the non-dominant pitch F in the violin.<sup>5</sup> When heard against the backdrop of the preceding agogic accent on F in m. 6, the continued prominence of F detracts from the immediate importance of the dominant scale degree.

Only retrospectively does it appear that Schumann may have had four-bar hypermeter in mind as he was composing the primary theme group. Both the structural counterpoint and

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<sup>5</sup> A 6+5 displacement dissonance, using Krebs's methods, refers to a situation in which the primary metrical layer, a pattern of six eighth notes, is contradicted by a secondary metrical layer, also comprising six eighth notes, which enters five beats after the primary metrical layer. Here, the violin's accented F and the piano's accented D octaves emphasize the sixth beat of the measure, and thus initiates a secondary metrical layer that contradicts (or displaces) the notated meter at the distance of five eighth notes.

certain facets of the melodic line of the opening eight bars suggest two parallel four-measure units. (See example 2.2.) The harmonic motion of mm. 1-4 may be reduced to  $i-vii^{o7}/V-V$ , demonstrating a movement from tonic to dominant that is replicated in mm. 5-8 with the  $i-iv-V-V$  progression. Similarly, the notes  $\hat{3}-(\flat\hat{6})-\hat{5}-\hat{5}-\hat{5}$  emphasized by the violin in mm. 1-4 create a melodic profile similar to the  $\hat{3}-\flat\hat{6}-\hat{5}-\hat{5}$  line of mm. 5-8. However, although some elements of these melodic and harmonic structures suggest four-bar hypermeter, the lack of melodic clarity (caused both by the emphasis on  $\hat{5}$  and  $\flat\hat{6}$  and by the layering of metrical dissonances) mitigates this reading from being heard outright. Already within the first few measures of this work, we see Schumann experimenting with issues of hypermeter, allowing elements of both metrical dissonance and tonal pairing to impact the broader workings of hypermetrical grouping.

Example 2.2: Four-Bar Hypermeter in Violin Line, Primary Theme Group, mm. 1-9

The image shows a musical score for violin in 6/8 time, measures 1-9. The score is written on a single staff with a treble clef. Above the staff, two groups of four measures are bracketed with dotted lines, indicating a four-bar hypermeter structure. The notes are labeled with scale degrees:  $\hat{3} (\flat\hat{6})$ ,  $\hat{5}$ ,  $\hat{5}$ ,  $\hat{5}$  in the first group, and  $\hat{3}$ ,  $\flat\hat{6}$ ,  $\hat{5}$ ,  $\hat{5}$  in the second group. The score includes dynamics such as *p* and *sf*, and various articulation marks like slurs and accents. The text "4<sup>e</sup> Saitte" is written above the staff in the first measure.

The violin begins the transition and interrupts the piano's presentation in m. 11 with a reinterpretation of mm. 1-8, locally alluding to the submediant (VI), a key prepared by the F in m. 1. (See example 2.3.) Derived as it is from the primary theme group, the first section of the transition does not attain a strong cadence. After both the

## Example 2.3: Transition and Caesura Fill, mm. 11-34

**TRANSITION (1<sup>st</sup> Attempt)**

**TRANSITION (2<sup>nd</sup> Attempt)**

**M.C. Caesura Fill**

violin and piano have presented a rendition of the opening melody, a second transitional section is initiated in m. 19. This section immediately shifts away from the grouping dissonances inherent to the primary theme group and provides a section of relative metrical clarity, eventually achieving a state of metrical consonance in m. 24 that allows for a harmonic and rhythmic rush to the medial caesura. The arrival of the medial caesura on a root position tonic on the downbeat of m. 26 is the first such mutual arrival of tonic shared by piano and violin since the opening of the piece.

Despite the attainment of a medial caesura, this tonic cadence suggests the failure of an important structural moment. A medial caesura with a perfect authentic cadence on the tonic was an unusual choice within the traditional eighteenth-century sonata form structure; more frequently, the medial caesura would occur on a dominant arrival in either the tonic or secondary key. The tonic medial caesura suggests that the tonic key has an extremely powerful hold over the exposition, and that the transition is in some way ineffective in its attempt to modulate. In Schumann's op. 105, the medial caesura is prepared by a transition that fails on numerous counts, first to escape from the metrical dissonance of the primary area, and then, in its second attempt, to break free from the pull of the tonic.

The expressive character of the transition takes on even more significance when considered from the perspective of metrical dissonance. Here, the combination of harmonic failure and metrical conflict suggest a situation of heightened stress, a lack of resolution on many different levels. Krebs has suggested that Schumann was well aware of the consequences of such metrical dissonance, even going so far as to suggest that it reflected emotional conflict experienced by the composer. As Krebs writes:

We can never, of course, be certain precisely what Schumann might have “meant” by particular instances of instrumental metrical dissonance. We shall not be far off the mark, however, if we interpret them as representing inner or outer conflict, and their resolutions as expressing a desire to come to terms with conflict, for... in his music, unlike in his life, Schumann was able to resolve all conflicts if he so wished.<sup>6</sup>

The transitional area therefore may be seen from an expressive point to view to continue some of the same harmonic and metrical tensions of the primary theme group. Despite the elimination of metrical dissonance in the second transitional attempt and the achievement of a strong tonic cadence at the close of the transition, the transition’s inability to escape the pull of the tonic key suggests a lack of emotional resolution, a theme that will become increasingly important in the final moments of this movement.

The secondary area begins in m. 35 with an adaptation of the main theme that only retrospectively emerges in C major. (See example 2.4.) Because it is derived from the primary theme group, the first module of the secondary theme group contains 3/2 grouping dissonances in mm. 36, 40, and 41. Unlike the opening, in which the grouping dissonance emerged in m. 2 while the 6+3 displacement dissonance melted into the background, here the grouping dissonance is superimposed over a strong 6+3 displacement dissonance created by the accented bass octaves. Measure 39 is a point of elision, as the piano takes on the modified melodic line midway through the bar, again emphasizing the 6+3 displacement dissonance.

The second module of the secondary area, mm. 43-59, is marked by the inflection of both mediant and tonic tonalities. This section is a mosaic of two-bar phrases, each

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<sup>6</sup> Harald Krebs, *Fantasy Pieces: Metrical Dissonance in the Music of Robert Schumann* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 172.

## Example 2.4: Secondary Theme Group and Retransition, mm. 35-67

SECONDARY THEME GROUP<sup>1,1</sup>

2 2 2 2 (2)

6+3 6+3 6+3

SECONDARY THEME GROUP<sup>1,2</sup>

6+3 6+3 6+3 6+3 12+3 12+3

12+3 12+3 12+3

C: V-----vi

12+3 12+3 12+3

C: V-----vi

## Example 2.4, continued

**EEC RETRANSITION**

The image shows two systems of musical notation. The first system (measures 59-63) is for piano and includes a vocal line with lyrics. It features a 12+3 displacement dissonance in the first two measures, indicated by a bracket and the label '12+3'. The second system (measures 64-67) includes a guitar line with a '4te Saite' (4th string) and a 'rückhaltend' (retardando) marking. It also features a 12+3 displacement dissonance in the first measure, indicated by a bracket and the label '12+3'. Both systems include various fingerings (e.g., 6+5, 6+3, 2 2 2) and dynamic markings (sf, p, sfz). Below the notation, Roman numerals and letter codes (C, a) are provided for harmonic analysis.

Im Tempo

C: I<sup>6</sup>                      V - - vi                      V - - vi

a:                                      i                                      i                                      vii - -

a: i                                      vii - - i

beginning on the second beat of the measure and emphasizing the 12+3 displacement dissonance.<sup>7</sup> From a sonata-form point of view, the goal of this module is to reach a perfect authentic cadence in the mediant, a moment referred to by Hepokoski and Darcy as the essential expositional closure. Schumann delays this important structural arrival

<sup>7</sup> A 12+3 displacement dissonance, using Krebs's methods, here refers to an instance in which the primary metrical layer, a pattern of six eighth notes, is contradicted by an overarching secondary metrical layer comprising twelve eighth notes, which enters three beats after the initial beat of the primary metrical layer, thus displacing every other measure by three beats.

through the use of V-vi deceptive cadences in the phrases ending on mm. 51 and 55. As in any minor key, the vi chord in the mediant corresponds to the tonic, and Schumann uses this equivalence to recall the lingering tonic, all the more present in our ears because of avoidance thus far of a perfect authentic cadence on the mediant. When this long-awaited cadence on I<sup>6</sup> finally occurs in m. 59, it is an imperfect authentic cadence rather than the more conclusive perfect authentic cadence, thereby denying the need for essential structural closure. In mm. 59-63, two phrases, both ending with V-vi deceptive cadences and based on material previously heard in the caesura fill, serve as a retransition back to the tonic and primary material. When in m. 63 Schumann slips back into tonic with a complete lack of dominant preparation, the full extent of the connection between vi in the mediant and the tonic is retrospectively revealed.

In his reading of this movement, Smith suggests that the inability to break away from the tonic for the medial caesura coupled with the harmonically open-ended secondary area creates a continuous rather than a two-part exposition. As defined by Hepokoski and Darcy, a continuous exposition lacks a “clearly articulated medial caesura followed by a successfully launched secondary theme.”<sup>8</sup> To what extent the secondary area may be considered “successfully launched” in a rhetorical sense is certainly a matter open to interpretation, particularly when looking at the two different modules of the secondary area. The first module is only gradually heard in the mediant, as there is neither dominant preparation nor strong cadence in the new key. As this first module is a recasting of the primary theme group, a number of similarities arise; however, the counteraction of the 3/2 grouping dissonance by the 6+3 displacement dissonance,

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<sup>8</sup> Hepokoski and Darcy, 51.

combined with the *forte* dynamic marking, suggests that this module of the secondary area might be heard at least as a distinct revision of its model. The second module of the secondary area likewise initiates a thematic area that contrasts metrically and rhetorically with the opening idea (note particularly the effect of the 12+3 displacement dissonance and the lack of the 3/2 grouping dissonance in this module). Regarding the harmonic limitations of the secondary area, I suggest that despite the inability of the secondary area to establish an essential expositional closure in the mediant, the multiple allusions to this key provide a framework of reference that allows the secondary area to be heard as a distinctive section. That the essential expositional closure is ultimately overridden produces not a continuous exposition, but rather a failed exposition.<sup>9</sup> As Hepokoski and Darcy point out, “failure to attain the EEC within the exposition suggests that the entire sonata is threatened with nonclosure in the recapitulation,” with the potential result of sonata failure.<sup>10</sup> I offer that a two-part interpretation strategically describes Schumann’s structural decisions regarding the unusual tonic medial caesura and the avoidance of the essential expositional closure in the secondary area.

In contrast to the surrounding sections of the movement, the development is significantly more straightforward in its use of both harmony and meter, and therefore does not contribute much to the current discussion of irregularities in these areas. However, the few measures connecting the end of the development with the beginning of the recapitulation demonstrate Schumann’s use of two important techniques: tonal pairing and hypermetrical irregularity. Here, Schumann blurs the boundaries between these two

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 177.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

sections by exploiting the previously latent pairing of A minor and F major and by disrupting the suggested four-bar hypermeter of this section.

The recapitulation is prepared in mm. 104-108 by a highly irregular stand on the dominant-seventh of F; this emphasis of the submediant, only alluded to in the exposition, further confirms the importance of this key within the tonal pairing of A minor and F major. (See example 2.5.) Only in m. 109 does the dominant-seventh of the tonic make an appearance, notably over a C pedal. Unprepared beyond this single measure of dominant, the tonic returns in m. 110 in first inversion. With the return of tonic, we also see a return to the opening melody; however, the augmentation of this opening melody combines with the harmonic ambiguity to prevent us from hearing the recapitulatory moment outright in m. 110.

Over mm. 110-113, the first measure and half of the opening theme are stretched into a longer phrase suggesting the first four bars of a regular hypermeter. (See example 2.6.) This potential for hypermeter, however, is undermined by the emphasis of the second measure of the four-bar phrase with the crescendo to the F of m. 111 (and here again, Schumann is referencing the important role that F plays in maintaining harmonic and structural ambiguity). Likewise, the *sforzando* in the piano on the second beat of m. 110 prevents the first beat of this measure from being heard as a clearly beginning point. The most striking disruption of this potential hypermeter occurs in the fourth bar of the phrase (m. 113), when the rhythmically augmented opening theme, now in the correct register, enters midway through the bar and interrupts the preceding phrase's completion of the opening idea. This allusion to the 6+3 displacement dissonance of the exposition, with the seemingly premature entrance of the C, jars the listener's sense of expectation,

Example 2.5: End of Development and Beginning of Recapitulation, mm. 104-17

Stand on V<sup>7</sup>/F -----

RECAPITULATION

----- V<sup>7</sup>/A over C pedal ----- a: i<sup>6</sup> -----

*etwas zurückhaltend*

## Example 2.6: Disruption of Hypermeter in Violin Line, mm. 110-17

The image shows a musical score for a violin line, measures 110-117. The notation is on a single staff with a treble clef. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The tempo is marked 'Im Tempo'. There are annotations above the staff: 'etwas zurückhaltend' and '4te Saite' (4th string). A dynamic marking 'p' is below the staff. The score includes various note values, rests, and articulations, with some notes tied across measures.

as does the sheer length of the C, which is held through the next measure. As a new augmentation of the opening motive is drawn out in mm. 113-115, the tension of this moment is further heightened by the marking *etwas zurückhaltend*. Only in m. 116, with the return of the original tempo and the 3/2 grouping dissonance, does it become apparent that the recapitulation is and has been underway for several measures.

The isolated incident of the 6+3 displacement dissonance in m. 113 suggests that Schumann introduced it for a highly expressive purpose. In his recent work on metrical dissonance and romantic longing, Yonatan Malin has connected the displacement dissonance with the concept of *Sehnsucht*, suggesting that such dissonances “may create a sense of separation, or distance, as well as motion into the distance.”<sup>11</sup> As an example, Malin cites the first song from Schumann’s “Im wunderschönen Monat Mai”:

At the end of both strophes, the piano articulates the melodic notes on the fourth semiquaver of each crochet beat, sustaining them into the following beats as the poet sings “da ist in meinem Herzen die Liebe aufgegangen” (“then within my heart love broke forth”), and “Da hab’ ich ihr gestanden mein Sehnen und Verlangen” (“then I confessed to her my longing and desire”). The piano syncopations confound the primary metre, pushing the melodic line upward as the poet gives voice to his longing.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Yonatan Malin, “Metric Displacement Dissonance and Romantic Longing in the German Lied,” *Music Analysis* 25, no. 3 (2006): 252.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

In op. 105, the connection between metrical dissonance and the concept of *Sehnsucht* can not be illustrated as exactly as the lied discussed above, as the absence of a poetic text prevents us from describing the emotional content with specific ideas and metaphors. Yet Malin's discussion provides a fascinating glimpse into Schumann's connection of metrical dissonance with an emotional idea, the possibility of which has already been suggested in this chapter. Here, the idea of *Sehnsucht* may illuminate some of the expressive characteristics of the 6+3 displacement dissonance in m. 113. One possible meaning for this moment highlights the association of the 6+3 displacement dissonance with earlier uses of the same dissonance, specifically in the opening measures of the exposition; this reading suggests that the strategic use of the 6+3 displacement dissonance may be functioning as a sort of memory device, simultaneously linking the opening measures with this later reinterpretation of the same material and demonstrating musically the idea of absence. Viewed from another angle, *Sehnsucht* may also suggest a sense of loss, abandonment, and disorientation, elements that may be read in this isolated instance of metrical dissonance. Notice that after the interruption occurs in m. 113, the next measure refuses to confirm or continue the 6+3 displacement dissonance, and instead, holds the interrupting note over a lengthy period of time as the tempo slows with the marking *etwas zurückhaltend*. A sense of relief accompanies the return of the expositional material in its original form and tempo in m. 116, for only at this point has the music found that for which it was searching; yet the relief is short-lived, for the recapitulation fails in its attempt to escape the metrical dissonance and tonic monopolization of the exposition.

As discussed above, failure to attain the essential expositional closure in the exposition sets up a situation in which the recapitulation has the option to accept or decline closure. After reprising the expositional material virtually identically to the initial presentation (with a normative shift to the tonic major instead of the mediant), Schumann forces the recapitulation to reenact the failed essential expositional closure with an imperfect cadence on the tonic major at the end of the secondary area (m. 173). (See example 2.7.) This cadence is immediately undermined by the retransitional figuration, which employs the same V-vi figuration as the exposition, this time ending on an F# minor chord in m. 175. The next figuration leads to an evaded cadence on F natural, upsetting the sense of harmonic finality expected at the outset of a coda and further emphasizing the failure of the recapitulation.

Because the recapitulation declined the potential point of structural closure in m. 173, this moment is deferred to the coda. Despite the urgency of securing a strong tonic cadence, the first section of the coda builds tension by further exploiting the relationship between F and E while delaying a stand on the dominant. Even when the opening melody returns without any metrical dissonance in mm. 179-180, the repeated F in the bass line prolongs the sense of instability. Furthermore, despite the purging of metrical dissonance from the melody, accents in the piano's left hand leading up to the violin's melody in mm. 177-178 and 181-182 suggest the 6+5 and 6+2 displacement dissonances previously seen in the retransition.<sup>13</sup> When the piano's left hand shifts down to revolve around E in mm. 181-184, any sense of dominant emphasis is undermined in mm. 185-188 as the bass

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<sup>13</sup> A 6+2 displacement dissonance, using Krebs's methods, refers to a situation in which the primary metrical layer, a pattern of six eighth notes, is contradicted by a secondary metrical layer, also comprising six eighth notes, which enters two beats after the primary metrical layer.

Example 2.7: End of Recapitulation and First Section of Coda, mm. 173-88

173

12+3

12+3

A: I<sup>6</sup>                      v---vi                      6+5  
a: V--

## CODA

177

4<sup>le</sup> Saite

6+2

6+5

6+5

---VI                      5---6                      5---6

181

6+2

6+5

6+5

5-----6---5-----6---5

185

cresc.

cresc.

6+5

6+5

6+5

line circles around D#, E, and F, with less time accorded to the E than to either of the other two notes.

The awaited stand on the dominant begins in m. 189, with an immediate shift to metrically consonant, two-bar hypermeasures signaling that the climactic moment of structural closure is near. (See example 2.8.) The rhetorical impact of this moment is highly expressive, for in its contrast with the preceding metrical complexities, m. 189 and the following section suggests that the long-awaited metrical resolution might actually be achieved. Throughout this area, the bass line continues to play an important role, revolving around the  $\hat{5}-\hat{4}-\hat{3}$  motion to gradually move to the tonic in mm. 195. After the bass line moves by a  $\hat{5}-\hat{4}-\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$  stepwise motion to an evaded cadence on the tonic major, Schumann confirms the attainment of this key through a series of sequences based on the introduction of an energy-gaining 3+1 displacement dissonance in mm. 195-98.<sup>14</sup> In m. 199, the sequential motion arrives at a much stronger statement of the tonic major. This climactic moment is highlighted by the elimination of metrical dissonance in the ensuing four measures, further elevating our hopes of achieving musical resolution with an escape from both metrical dissonance and the powerful hold of the A-minor tonic.

The reintroduction of metrical grouping dissonances in mm. 203-204 disrupts both the climactic goal and the regularity of the two-bar hypermeasures. (See example 2.9.) Here the 3/2 grouping dissonance of the opening melody is subtly reintroduced with an accent on the fifth beat of the violin part, and an added 6+5 displacement dissonance in the piano further disrupts the expectation for climax. Notably, the final cadences to

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<sup>14</sup> The 3+1 displacement dissonance, using Krebs's methods, is a metrical layer comprised of three units (the first of which is emphasized) that enters one unit after the primary metrical layer. Here, the energy-building 3+1 displacement dissonance contradicts both the first and fourth eighth notes of the primary 6/8 metrical layer.

## Example 2.8 Final Section of Coda, mm. 189-209

189

193

5-----4-----3-----2-----1

197

201

6+5 6+5

205

6+3 6+3

Example 2.9: Disruption of Two-Bar Hypermeter at End of Coda, mm. 203-209

The musical score for Example 2.9 consists of two systems of staves. The first system includes a piano part (left hand) and a vocal part (right hand). The piano part features a complex rhythmic pattern with many beamed notes. The vocal part has a melodic line with some rests. The second system continues the piano part and includes a vocal line with a prominent melodic phrase. Annotations include '6+3' in two places, indicating a disruption of the two-bar hypermeter. The word 'Coda.' is written at the end of the piano part in both systems. The score is written in a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a common time signature (C).

tonic major in mm. 203-205 occur within the context of this metrical dissonance. With the cadence on m. 205, the two-bar hypermeasure in mm. 203-204 is skewed by the lengthy hold on the tonic major, which extends the preceding two-bar segment rather than completing it or eliding with another active measure. The crescendo from m. 205 into 206 provides a certain sense of cohesion to these two bars; although the phrase fails to maintain the preceding two-bar hypermeter, it does not entirely undermine it either. However, mm. 206-207 may be heard retrospectively as a two-bar hypermeasure based on the opening motive of the melody.

As the metrical structure crumbles in mm. 205-206, the parallel shift from A major to minor alludes to another sort of collapse. Up to this point in the coda, Schumann had been clearly pointing toward a triumphant Picardy third ending, a sort of reversal of fate in a thus far melancholic movement. But with the sudden parallel shift between mm. 205 and 206, Schumann thwarts this expectation for victory by returning to the A-minor tonic, which sounds all the darker now due to its sharp juxtaposition with A major. That this fateful moment also occurs at the moment of metrical breakdown is surely not a coincidence.

The augmented return of the opening motive in mm. 206-207 initiates the potential for a metrically consonant, four-bar phrase, much like it did in opening of the recapitulation (mm. 110-13). In a similarly jarring twist of fate, Schumann reintroduces the 6+3 displacement dissonance with the last cadential figuration in mm. 208-209. The connection between this iteration of the melodic line and that of the opening measures of the recapitulation is unmistakable, for in both instances the augmented melody had the possibility of attaining four-bar hypermeter, only to have the moment unexpectedly

disrupted by metrical dissonance. The 6+3 displacement dissonance of the recapitulation now seems less like an isolated incident, as the last bars of the coda remember the earlier use of that particular dissonance. The musical links between these two moments also suggest a similar expressive association, and here again we may turn to Malin's idea that the displacement dissonance illustrates musically the feeling of *Sehnsucht*. Whereas the earlier instance of the 6+3 displacement dissonance was interpreted in terms of its literal and figurative motion away from the primary theme idea of the exposition, this later occurrence prompts a reconsideration; perhaps the metrical dissonance of the opening bars of the recapitulation should be read both in terms of moving away from one moment and towards another. That the corresponding moment in the coda continues this process has a deeply expressive impact on our hearing of the entire sonata, for now these three ideas—the opening phrase in the exposition, the augmented phrase of the recapitulation, and the final bars of the coda—are linked as if part of an overarching trajectory. The abrupt ending in m. 209 cuts short this trajectory, eliminating the possibility of resolution within this movement.

The long-awaited structural arrival on tonic heightens the lack of resolution in the final bar. Notice here that the final tonic chord only occurs in root position if the pianist catches the low A with the pedal; otherwise the piece ends on a tonic six-four chord. That this cadence—deferred until literally the last moment—is scored in such an unstable, variable inversion is the ultimate irony. Here it seems that Schumann is, yet again, highlighting the sense of failure that ensues when conflicts and contradictions are not resolved—the harmonic failure to attain tonic major (or indeed any key but the tonic

minor for any length of time), the hypermetrical failure caused by metrical dissonance, and even the cadential failure to attain chords in proper inversions.

### *Conclusion*

In positioning the op. 105 violin sonata as conventional and conservative within its mid-nineteenth-century culture, contemporary critics attempted to construct a framework of reference against which Schumann's work might be judged. For Theodor Uhlig, Schumann's A-minor violin sonata was a remnant of the outmoded eighteenth century, the aesthetics of which were growing increasingly irrelevant in the face of nineteenth-century innovations. In connecting Schumann's op. 105 with the works of Beethoven, Uhlig sought not to place the later work within a context of understanding, but rather to condemn it for emulating, rather than renovating, facets of an eighteenth-century compositional style. Yet Uhlig fails to notice the many ways in which Schumann's work subtly transforms the eighteenth-century model. Within the first movement of the op. 105 violin sonata, comparisons with the eighteenth-century sonata-form model may still provide a framework of understanding, a context within which we might appreciate more fully the composer's modifications to the form. As Schumann uses such distinctly nineteenth-century techniques as tonal pairing, metrical dissonance, and tonic monopolization to modify his form, he interacts with the eighteenth-century form to create a work that is completely new, yet rich with historical context. Whereas Uhlig described the mid-nineteenth-century composers as standing "on the shoulders" of the Classical masters such as Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, I offer that Schumann saw himself standing alongside his predecessors, conversing with them rather than attempting to surpass them.

## CHAPTER THREE

### *Sonata in D minor for Violin and Piano, op. 121*

Writing in 1882, Philipp Spitta described several of the late chamber works, including opp. 105, 110, and 121, as products of a mentally, physically, and artistically exhausted composer.<sup>1</sup> While these works still reflected “the same artistic aspiration,” Spitta found little by way of artistic inspiration in these works; instead, he described the violin sonatas as “gloomy, passionate compositions which one can scarcely hear without feeling uncomfortable.”<sup>2</sup> The Viennese critic Eduard Hanslick heard in the outer movements of the op. 121 violin sonata “a certain passionate urgency,” but suggested that although the inner movements are “technically grateful and brilliant,” they lacked the intensity of many of Schumann’s earlier works. In these middle movements, Hanslick heard “a conspicuous decline of all spiritual powers, a waning of the earlier energy and plenitude.”<sup>3</sup> Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, numerous critics and biographers have been similarly unable to erase the image of the artistically exhausted, mentally unstable composer from discussion of his late works. Yet, much like the politicized reviews discussed in chapter 1, these comments seem to reveal a great deal about the mindset of the critic, but fail to adequately describe the work at hand. Through

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<sup>1</sup> Bär, 193.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Tunbridge, 163.

the current reassessment of Schumann's aspirations in dialoguing with the eighteenth-century sonata-form model throughout the op. 121 violin sonata, I offer that the composer's artistic inspiration becomes more evident.

### *Formal Analysis*

Marked *Zeimlich langsam (kurz und energisch)*, the weighty, twenty-measure introduction sets the stage for the epic dimensions of the body of the movement. Over the course of these twenty measures, the three individual presentations of the introductory motto initiate important harmonic, melodic, and metrical issues that will impact the ensuing sonata-form structure. In the first two measures, the bold, homorhythmic strokes of the violin and piano outline the four musical letters of the dedicatee's surname (D-A-F-D, for Ferdinand David), but the entire first statement of the introductory motto continues well beyond these four chords to cadence in m. 6. (See example 3.1.) In both of the first two measures, the chords occur on beats 1 and 2, the second of which is agogically accented because of the rest notated on beat 3. These groups of two chords seem to emphasize the second of the two chords, with the Schumann's pedal marking extending the second chord through the beat of rest. Likewise, the second chord of mm. 1 and 2 serves to lead away from the tonic chord on beat 1 of both measures; in m. 1, the harmony moves from a root position tonic chord to a  $V^{4/3}$  chord, and in m. 2 a first inversion tonic chord moves to a iv chord. Schumann's compositional process here seems to suggest that he is simultaneously drawing the harmony away from the tonic of the first beat and toward the relatively less stable chord of the prolonged second beat. In mm. 3-4, the process is reversed harmonically through a series of two-chord groups moving in m. 3 from a V chord to the tonic, and in m. 4 with a V/III secondary dominant moving to a III

## Example 3.1: Opening Motto, mm. 1-6

Kurz und energisch.

*f* *f* *dim.* *p*

*f* *f* *dim.* *p*

♩. \* ♩. \* ♩. \* ♩. \* ♩. \*

d: i V<sup>4/3</sup>: i<sup>6</sup> iv V i iv V/III III iv V vii<sup>04/3</sup>/V V

chord. Here the harmonic progression confirms the preceding suggestion of an emphasis on the second beat of each measure, with root position dominant-to-tonic type cadences occurring on beat 1 to 2 in both mm. 3-4. Notice as well that the second chord of m. 3 is notated in both piano and violin as a dotted quarter note, held significantly longer than the eighth notes of the preceding groups. Because of the length of this note, mm. 3-4 are not separated by a full beat of rest; in addition, a sixteenth-note iv chord at the end of m. 3, acting as an upbeat to the next set of two chords in m. 4, further shortens the length of the rest.

Because of the strength thus far of the two-chord groups, one may tend to hear the iv chord in m. 3 only as a passing chord. However, in the next measure, iv is featured more prominently on the third beat of m. 4 rather than as an upbeat into another bar. Here iv seems to act as the first beat of a two-chord group moving across the bar line to V on the downbeat of m. 5. While this reading works particularly well with the violin's line, which lands on the dominant root on the downbeat of m. 5 and continues to hold the chord

through m. 6, the piano accompaniment is disturbed by the immediate motion to  $\text{vii}^{04/3}/\text{V}$  on the second beat of m. 5, which prolongs the tension of the moment into a cadence on  $\text{V}^7$  in m. 6. Within the microcosm of these opening six bars, the second beat of m. 5 is an anomaly; with its placement on the second beat of the measure, we expect it to be emphasized, yet with the almost early arrival of the iv chord in m. 4, the  $\text{vii}^{04/3}/\text{V}$  on the second beat of m. 5 neither initiates another two-beat group nor is emphasized as the second chord of an already established grouping. One important function that this chord does serve is to retain our interest into m. 6, thereby adding an extra layer of ambiguity to the length of the motto; while the melodic portion of the motto was clearly completed on the downbeat of m. 5, the harmony extends an extra measure, suggesting that in the future we could expect four- or five-measure versions of this theme. Throughout this opening presentation of the motto, the emphasis on the second beat of each of the first four measures prefigures important moments still to come in the sonata form proper.

After the “heraldic call to attention” of mm. 1-6, the violin takes flight in a cadenza-like stand on the dominant in mm 6-8.<sup>4</sup> Here, the irregular groupings of the violin’s sixteenth notes undermine the already insecure sense of meter. By constructing and then undermining a pattern of four notes, Schumann destabilizes both the notated meter and the violin’s phrase marking. (See example 3.2.) The first two grouping of four sixteenth notes each correspond with the phrase marking notated in the score, and both have a similar melodic shape with an opening leap of a fifth followed by three descending stepwise notes. Notice that the first note of the second four-note phrase (C#)

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<sup>4</sup> Hepokoski and Darcy, 297.

Example 3.2: Second and Third Presentations of Motto, mm. 6-20

M. 6

$d: i \quad V^{4/2} \quad i^6 \quad iv \quad V \quad i \quad iv^6 \quad V/III \quad III \quad iv$   
 $1 \quad 2 \quad 1 \quad 2 \quad 1 \quad 2 \quad 1 \quad 2 \quad 1$

M. 13

$V \quad vii^{\circ 4/3} / iv \quad V^{4/2} / iv \quad iv^6 \quad V^{4/2} / III \quad III \quad IV \quad III \quad V^{4/3} \quad i \quad V^7 / V \quad V \quad V^7 / V \quad V \quad vii^{\circ 7}$   
 $2 \quad 1 \quad 2 \quad 1 \quad 2 \quad 1 \quad 2 \quad 3 \quad 1 \quad 2 \quad 3 \quad 1 \quad 2 \quad 3 \quad 1$

M. 20

*Schneller.*

$2 \quad 3 \quad 4$

repeats the final note of the preceding phrase, further clarifying the break in articulation between the two groupings. Another group of four notes might be suggested in m. 7, with the E on the downbeat serving as both the final note of the preceding four-note phrase and the first note of the next. However, the lack of a rearticulated starting note for the third phrase causes it to sound more like a set of three notes descending by step, a pattern that is confirmed with the grouping of three notes on the second beat of m. 7. The large leap from the C# to the Bb initiates a grouping of seven sixteenth notes descending by step, with a smaller leap from C# to E in the first beat of m. 8 serving to break off the preceding grouping and begin another, this time a set of ten descending sixteenth notes that lead into the second presentation of the motto.

When the piano reenters in m. 9 with the second statement of the motto, it does so with the same harmonic progression and two-chord groupings, though with a dramatically quieter dynamic marking. The violin line, however, does not play in unison with the piano, but rather enters on the second half of beat two (m. 9) with a melodic extension of the dominant chord. Retrospectively, it becomes apparent that the piano's second beat in m. 9 serves to launch a contradicting three-beat pattern by extending the harmony of beat two through beat three to resolve on beat one of the following measure. The result is a short-lived metrical displacement dissonance (D3+1) that continues through the first beat of m. 11.<sup>5</sup> With the introduction of the D3+1 metrical dissonance on the second beat of m. 9, the first beat of m. 6 retrospectively seems to be linked with the first beat of m. 9, as if it were another, albeit extended, two-chord grouping. As the

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<sup>5</sup> The 3+1 displacement dissonance, using Krebs's methods, is a metrical layer comprised of three units (the first of which is emphasized) that enters one unit after the primary metrical layer. Here, the primary metrical layer comprises three quarter notes per measure (3/4 meter), which the 3+1 displacement dissonance contradicts by entering on the second quarter note of the measure.

harmonic rate quickens, the D3+1 metrical dissonance disintegrates as the violin line begins to emphasize the back half of beats two and three in m. 11 and of all three beats in m. 12. Both the D3+1 metrical dissonance and the emphasis on the second half of beats in this statement of the motto will return in various guises throughout the rest of the movement.

This second statement of the motto closes in m. 13, this time without the cadential extension into the next measure. In its place is a  $\#vii^{04/3}/iv$ , which leads directly into a truncated and much varied statement of the motto in mm. 14-17. Here, the violin line of mm. 13-15 is derived from that of mm. 9-11, while the sixteenth note upbeat in the piano in m. 13 leading to a two-chord grouping in m. 14 is similar to a rhythmic figure found midway through both of the first two presentations of the motto (mm. 3-4 and 11-12). In this third presentation, the D3+1 metrical dissonance initiated in m. 13 conflicts with two-chord groupings in the piano in mm. 14 and 15. As the D3+1 metrical dissonance created by the piano and violin combination begins to break down in m. 15 (much like it does in m. 11), the pianist's left hand retains the violin's melodic line, preserving the metrical dissonance on the last beat of m. 15. In m. 16, the notated meter is briefly reinstated with the piano's chords on each beat; here the violin's eighth notes played off of the main beats are not strong enough to undercut the meter. Notice, however, that while the violin reaches an agogic arrival on the downbeat of m. 17, the piano chords push through into the second beat of m. 17 to reach an arrival on the dominant. Only on the third beat of m. 17 does the violin reach the dominant root (A), with a brief, questioning quarter note that immediately returns to E on the downbeat of m. 18 as the piano reiterates the cadential figuration of the preceding measure. On the third beat of m.

18, the violin attains its lowest A and extends it into m. 19, effectively undermining the meter regained only a few measures prior. This final breakdown of the meter in the cadential extension of the final motto presentation reminds us again of the malleability of the cadential extension to the initial presentation of the motto.

In m. 19, the violin repeats the low A, this time as a fortissimo sixteenth-note upbeat into the quadruple-stop  $vii^{07}$  chord on the third beat of the measure; the piano likewise has a low A grace-note leading into a sforzando  $vii^{07}$  chord on the same beat. (Notice that the piano's low A is retained through the use of the pedal, allowing the dominant linger through the end of m. 20.) Two sforzando markings surround the piano chord, one over the chord and one under it, suggesting not only that Schumann desired an unusually muscular sound at this point, but also that he intended to indicate an important new metrical beginning point. As the violin spins out in m. 20, the leap from C# to a sforzando G on the second beat of the measure initiates a new grouping of sixteenth notes. Here, the number of sixteenth notes in each grouping matters less than the beat on which each grouping is initiated; the Bb on beat 3 of m. 19 may be considered to start the first grouping, while the G on beat 2 of m. 20 begins the second. The four beats under consideration here may be seen as outlining a broad common time meter, with a heavily emphasized beat one and a slightly less emphasized beat three, in preparation for the common time meter of the primary area.

The primary theme group (mm. 21-33) comprises several overlapping thematic statements derived from the introductory motto. (See example 3.3.) In mm. 21-26, the first presentation of the primary theme recasts the motto both by changing the rhythmic character of the introductory motto and by adding a new accompaniment figure that

## Example 3.3: Primary Theme Group, mm. 21-34

**M. 21**  $p^{1.1}$

d: i V<sup>4/2</sup> i<sup>6</sup> iv V i iv

**M. 24**  $p^{1.2}$

Cadential Extension

V/III III iv V V<sup>4/3</sup>/V V V<sup>4/2</sup> i<sup>6</sup> vii<sup>06</sup> V<sup>7</sup> VI bII (N)

**M. 29**  $p^{1.3}$   $p^{1.4}$

Accented Piano Extension

Cadential Extension

TRANSITION

ii<sup>06/5</sup> V/iv iv VI V<sup>6/5</sup> i i<sup>6</sup> vii<sup>04/3</sup> i<sup>6</sup> V<sup>6/5</sup>/iv iv V VI

undermines the common time meter with metrical displacement dissonances. While in mm. 21-26 the violin melody and piano bass line retain the same harmonic progression of the corresponding measures of the introductory motto (mm. 1-6) with only minor changes in the cadential extension (mm. 25-26), the rhythmic character of the primary theme is changed significantly from that of its model. Instead of being presented primarily in terse, clipped eighth-note chords, the motto here is drawn out through the use of half and quarter notes, creating a lyrical presentation in place of a declamatory idea. Likewise, several points of the primary theme motto are emphasized through agogic and notated accents that were not stressed in the introduction. With the quickening of the harmonic rate in mm. 23-24, Schumann accents the third and fourth beats of m. 23 in both the violin and bass lines, propelling the motto into the second beat of the next measure, which is accented agogically in both parts and with a marked accent in the violin part. These accents in mm. 23-24 serve to locally disrupt the metrical clarity of the opening presentation of the primary theme, which in turn causes the return to a stable common time meter with the cadential extension of mm. 25-26 to feel all the more necessary. Yet even within the cadential extension, the violin's crescendo to the third beat of the measure creates an unsettling accent; this crescendo also serves to drive the cadential extension through mm. 25-26 and into a sforzando tonic arrival on m. 27. Despite these important changes to the rhythmic character of the motto, rhythm serves as a vital link between the introduction and the primary theme area; like the introduction, the melody and bass lines of the primary theme are presented homorhythmically throughout the entire area with only minor exceptions (mm. 30-31). Much like the homorhythmic presentation of the primary theme motto connects it with that of the introduction, the

metrical emphasis on beat two in m. 24 is a souvenir from the introduction, in which harmonic and agogic accents on beat 2 recurred frequently.

The addition of a new piano accompaniment figure in mm. 21-26 further complicates the common time meter, with numerous off-beat accents suggested through the use of agogic and articulative emphasis. In mm. 21-23, the accents on the off-beats of beats 1 and 3 initiate a metrical displacement dissonance (D4+1) that shifts the focus away from the motto presentation occurring on beats 1 and 3.<sup>6</sup> Although the violin and piano bass line reinstate the emphasis on the beat in mm. 23-24, the rolled piano chords of the accompaniment continue to contradict the motto by stressing the off-beats in these measures. When the violin accents beat 2 of m. 24, the piano accompaniment responds with an off-beat accent in the same beat that undermines the violin's already irregular metrical emphasis. While certainly the piano accompaniment context of these metrical off-beat accents is new to the primary theme area, Schumann has already introduced the off-beat emphasis in mm. 11-12 of the introduction, further linking the two sections on a micro-level.

The rhythmic character of the primary theme motto plays an important role in helping to define the start of the second presentation of the motto. With the start of the cadential extension in m. 25, the right hand of the piano begins to play the half-note motto melody, this time up a fifth and emphasized heavily with accents. As the rhythm of the bass line continues to align with the right hand melody, it retrospectively becomes

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<sup>6</sup> The 4+1 displacement dissonance, using Krebs's methods, is a metrical layer comprised of four units (the first of which is emphasized) that enters one unit after the primary metrical layer. Here, although the overarching primary meter is four quarter notes per measure (common time meter), the active figurations in the accompaniment suggest a further subdivision into four eighth notes per half measure. Thus, the 4+1 displacement dissonance contradicts the regular eighth note metrical layer by emphasizing the second eighth note of this pattern.

apparent that mm. 25-29 are rhythmically parallel to mm. 21-25, further establishing mm. 25-29 as a second statement of the motto. While the piano melody and bass outline the motto, the piano accompaniment continues to fill in harmonies with figurations drawn from the preceding motto statement, yet throughout this statement the accompaniment lacks the off-beat accents (both notated accents and rolls) that previously added a layer of metrical dissonance. While the lack of metrical dissonance in the piano accompaniment allows the motto to be heard more clearly, the violin's accompaniment pattern (particularly the double-stops which mirror the piano's previous rolls) in mm. 27-28 once again recalls the off-beat metrical dissonance.

The second presentation does not end with a two-bar cadential extension. Instead, after the  $V^7$ -VI cadence in the fourth bar (m. 28), the harmony pivots to the subdominant via a Neapolitan chord, in preparation for the third statement of the primary theme (mm. 29-33). As the violin and piano bass line begin the third statement on the downbeat of m. 29, the piano's right hand continues accenting the half notes in that measure, creating a similar effect as the cadential extension did in m. 25. As the piano's right hand suggests another overlapping between presentations, it simultaneously doubles the violin's melody, which allows the third statement of the motto to ring out amidst the complexities of the elision. After this measure, however, the piano plays only accompaniment notes throughout the rest of the third statement, allowing the violin's statement of the motto to be heard more clearly than that of the preceding statement.

Throughout the third statement, the violin retains the accents that the piano's right hand introduced to the melody in the second statement. However, the piano accompaniment changes significantly, with fewer notated off-beat accents than either of

the preceding statements. Like the second presentation, the third measure of the third statement (m. 31) is emphasized with an arrival on a sforzando half note in the violin; yet, this moment does not suggest the same point of arrival that the corresponding point did in the preceding statement (m. 27). Whereas the second statement overlapped with the two-bar dominant cadential extension that arrived on a sforzando tonic in m. 27, the third presentation lacks the harmonic drive of an overlapping cadential extension altogether. Here, the third statement's harmonic progression allows the sforzando in m. 31 to sound more like a continuation of the preceding succession of accents than a new beginning point.

Examined individually, the three presentations of the motto discussed thus far are straightforward statements of the primary theme. However, Schumann's overlapping of the first two statements adds a layer of complexity and ambiguity to the entire primary theme area. The first statement's two-measure cadential extension undermines the beginning of the next statement by suggesting a new beginning point midway through the second presentation. While the lack of a cadential extension at the end of the second statement allows the third to emerge with striking clarity, the subtle continuation of the accented half notes in the piano's right hand (m. 29) suggests that Schumann continued to conceive of the primary theme as a series of overlapping statements.

At the end of the third statement, Schumann plays on the listener's inclination to hear another motto emerging from the fifth bar of the statement. After an arrival on the tonic in m. 32, the violin extends the third statement with two accented half notes in m. 33; at the same time, the harmonic progression of m. 33 prepares for an imminent return to the tonic. Although we expect to see the piano's right hand take over the motto

statement with accented half notes (like m. 25), in m. 33 the piano instead doubles the violin line with off-beat accents, once again suggesting the D4+1 metrical dissonance of the opening measures of the primary area. With the refusal of the right and left hands to align rhythmically, we could tend to hear this moment as only an extension of the third statement. Yet, at the same time, the overlapping of each of the preceding statements with some kind of extension makes us want to hear this measure as a new beginning point. Although the actual intervals of this potential fourth presentation vary from the motto, the accented violin line in m. 33 might serve as both a starting point as well as an extension of the preceding line. However, instead of exploring this fourth statement, in m. 34 Schumann disrupts the primary theme area with sudden shift in texture and a jarring deceptive cadence to iv.

With the deceptive cadence on the downbeat of m. 34, Schumann initiates a number of musical changes that suggest that the transition to the secondary area has begun. (See example 3.4.) First (and perhaps foremost), the rhythmic character immediately shifts from the homorhythmic motto pattern of half and quarter notes to a much quicker figuration that alternates between instruments. Another element that contributes to the change in character is the slowing of the harmonic rhythmic to one chord per measure in mm. 34, a process that also occurs in mm. 38-39. With these sudden changes, Schumann seems to be highlighting m. 34 as a new beginning point. Notably, the fracture in m. 34 between the primary theme area and the transition occur not only with a deceptive cadence and a change of rhythmic and thematic character, but also with a *sforzando* dynamic marking in both the piano and violin, a dynamic accent which is repeated frequently throughout this section. Previously in this movement, we have

## Example 3.4: Transition, mm. 34-43

M. 34

d:  $iv^6$  -----  $V^7$   $iv^6$   $i$   $IV^6$  -----  $vii^{o6/5}$   $V^{6/5}$   $i^{6/5-iv^6}$   $vii^{o6/5/III}$

M. 39

$vii^{o7/V}$   $i^{6/4}$   $V^7$   $i^{6/4}$   $V^7$   $i^{6/4}$   $vii^{o/V}$   $V^7$   $i$

already seen Schumann using the sforzando as a marker for important junctures or starting points. For example, the sforzandi of mm. 19-20 initiated the broad common time meter immediately prior to the primary theme area, and that of m. 27 suggested a new segment within the overlapping presentations of the primary area. Here, each sforzando marking recurs with another modification of the opening two measures of this section (mm. 34-35), thus drawing attention to the dramatic intensification of this area.

Measures 36-37 represent only a slight modification of mm. 34-35, and likewise retain the sforzando on the downbeat while the harmony is inflected to the major subdominant. Measure 38 and 39 each respectively demonstrate a foreshortened version of mm. 34-35, with the sforzandi shifted to the piano's third beat and the violin's fourth beat of each measure; the delay and subsequent rush up to the sforzandi in these measures

propel the music forward in to the tonic six-four chord in m. 40. As Schumann introduces this rhetorical signal that a cadence is near, he also initiates an off-beat figuration in the violin on the second half of beat one of m. 40 that drives the music forward through the  $V^7$  of the second half of the measure to the tonic six-four of the next measure. The violin's off-beat figuration in m. 40 (and again, in the piano's right hand in m. 41) introduces an important idea that will recur throughout the movement, but more notably, this figuration continues the off-beat emphasis already addressed in both the introduction and the primary theme area. With the arrival of the primary theme group's first perfect authentic cadence on the tonic in m. 43 (after a sforzando  $V^7$  on beats three and four of m. 42), the exposition achieves the medial caesura; yet, like the corresponding moment in the first movement of the A-minor violin sonata, this tonic cadence suggests the failure of an important structural moment. Instead of a more traditional dominant arrival in either the tonic or secondary key, the tonic medial caesura suggests that the tonic key has a tremendously powerful hold over the exposition, so much so that the transition is incapable of modulation to another key. In the A-minor sonata, the medial caesura was prepared by a transition that began as a dissolving restatement of the primary theme group, inundated with the metrical dissonances inherent to that section, that then broke away from the primary theme material only to fail to reach a new key. The transition in the D-minor sonata is strikingly assertive, with its sudden break from the primary theme material in m. 34, yet it is still incapable (or unwilling) to attain the modulation to a new key. Although certain scholars, including Roesner, have argued that mm. 34-43 are part of the primary theme group (presumably on the basis of the perfect authentic cadence in

m. 43), I offer that these measures instead may be interpreted as the transition.<sup>7</sup>

Numerous rhetorical signals already discussed support my suggestion, including: the motivic spinning of the opening measures of the transition, sequential activity, accumulative rhetorical energy, and a drive toward a point of structural closure.<sup>8</sup>

With the caesura fill, Schumann highlights a segment of his sonata form that often served a more perfunctory role in a traditional, eighteenth-century sonata form. Because no modulation was attained in the transitional area, the caesura fill (mm. 43-56) is burdened with the necessity of modulating to a new key, in preparation for the secondary theme area. (See example 3.5.) Further complicating this task, the caesura fill is inundated with metrical dissonances threatening to unravel the musical texture of not only this section, but also that of the secondary area, should this metrical disquiet spill into it. Throughout this section, Schumann weaves a complicated pattern of accented and non-accented beats, often using multiple types of note stress within a short segment of music. Most noticeable, especially given the preceding discussion, is the interplay of the *sforzando*, *sforzando-piano*, *forte*, and *piano* markings, but Schumann also uses registral effects to create certain metrical dissonances.

Building on the off-beat cadential six-four figuration initiated by the violin in m. 40, a four-bar unit is introduced in mm. 43-46, with the first two bars alternating the cadential six-four figuration and the last two bars presenting a contrasting, descending scalar pattern that tonicizes A. Notice within this segment that, while the first measure of the off-beat figuration initiates a D8+1 metrical dissonance with the *forte* marking in m.

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<sup>7</sup> Roesner, 140-41.

<sup>8</sup> Hepokoski and Darcy, 94.

## Example 3.5: Caesura Fill, mm. 43-56

M. 43

d: i                      i:<sup>6/4</sup>                      vii:<sup>04/3</sup>/V (A)                      a: i<sup>6</sup>

M. 48

vii:<sup>04/3</sup>/V (E)                      e: i<sup>6</sup>    F: V<sup>4/2</sup>    I<sup>6</sup>    g: V<sup>4/2</sup>

M. 53

*etwas zurückhaltend*

*etwas zurückhaltend*

i:<sup>6</sup>                      \*                      vii:<sup>06</sup>/VII (F)                      F: V<sup>6/5</sup>    IV<sup>6</sup>                      V<sup>7</sup>

43, it leads to an even stronger, sforzando accent on the downbeat of m. 44 that reinstates the regular common time meter.<sup>9</sup> The downbeat of m. 44 is immediately counteracted, however, by the violin's forte imitation of the off-beat D8+1 figuration, which in turn leads to a sforzando-piano downbeat on m. 45. In m. 45, the piano plays a single low

<sup>9</sup> The 8+1 displacement dissonance, using Krebs's methods, is a metrical layer comprised of eight units (the first of which is emphasized) that enters one unit after the primary metrical layer. Here, although the overarching primary meter is four quarter notes per measure (common time meter), the active figurations in the accompaniment suggest a further subdivision into eight eighth notes per measure. Thus, the 8+1 displacement dissonance contradicts the eighth note metrical layer by emphasizing the second eighth note of this pattern.

eighth-note (D), and then leaps up several octaves to play another D8+1 off-beat pattern, this time a quiet scalar pattern that decrescendos as it descends. After the violin reemphasizes the downbeat of the next measure (m. 46) with another sforzando-piano, the descending scalar pattern repeats and lands on a forte, first-inversion, A-minor chord on the downbeat of m. 47. These four measures introduce the struggle between the regular common time meter and the D8+1 metrical dissonance that will be played out further in the ensuing measures, even as the caesura fill attempts to modulate. In mm. 47-50, the pattern introduced in the preceding four measures is sequenced up a fifth, with the final two bars of the sequence tonicizing E. Throughout this four-measure unit, many of the metrical accents are retained: the forte downbeat of m. 47 is contradicted by a forte off-beat figuration (based on the violin line of m. 40), which leads in turn to a sforzando downbeat on m. 48. This downbeat is offset by the forte off-beat figuration in the piano part, which leads to a sforzando downbeat in the piano's right hand, supported by the accent in the left hand. As the violin takes over the descending scalar pattern in mm. 49-50, a decrescendo is marked in both measures, suggesting a similar sound as the piano's early version.

One important difference occurs between these two four-bar segments. After the tonicization of E in mm. 49-50, a first-inversion E minor chord quietly appears in the first two eighth-note beats of m. 51, with a crescendo into the forte third beat of the same measure. (Compare this with the first-inversion A-minor chord's sudden, forte appearance on the downbeat of m. 47.) Though seemingly insignificant, introducing the E-minor chord with this more lyrical character while gradually increasing the dynamic level serves to deemphasize the downbeat of the measure, while allowing the next chord

(a secondary dominant attempting to tonicize F) to take the precedence. With the weak arrival of a first-inversion F-major chord on the downbeat of the next measure (m. 52), a similar pattern is enacted with a crescendo into another secondary dominant ( $V^{4/2}/G$ ) on the third beat. This in turn is only weakly resolved with a first-inversion G-minor chord in m. 53. While mm. 51-52 did not eliminate the off-beat emphasis that was so prominent in the preceding measures (notice the subtle continuation of the descending scalar pattern in the piano right hand line in m. 51-52), m. 53-56 reinstate the importance of the off-beat accent. Measures 53-54 feature notated off-beat accents in both piano and violin, as the harmony arrives on G minor in m. 53 and then sets up a return to F with a  $vii^{06}$  of F in m. 54. In mm. 55-56, as the harmony attempts to harmonize F, the piano's bass notes serve as a sort of springboard for the off-beat chords in both instruments. In these two bars, the "etwas zurückhaltend" tempo marking combines with the attempted tonicization of the expected secondary key (III) to rhetorically suggest that the secondary area is imminent; yet, instead of the F major key, G minor gradually slips in with the secondary thematic area (beginning in m. 57). Retrospectively, the caesura fill may be heard as two four-bar units (mm. 43-46 and 47-50) that are modified and compressed into three individual two-bar segments (mm. 51-52, 53-54, and 55-56). The two four-bar units outline a partial circle-of-fifths progression (D minor-A minor-E minor), while the three two-bar segments attempt to imply both iv and III as possible secondary keys. Yet, with the rhetorical signals of the final two-bar unit (mm. 55-56), the tonicization of III feels as if it might be successful in procuring the traditional secondary key for a minor-mode sonata. When the secondary thematic area slips in with the shift to G minor, the key feels strikingly unprepared despite the numerous allusions to it prior in the caesura fill. Despite

this startling motion to the wrong key, numerous rhetorical signals, including the quieter dynamic level, the change of accompaniment pattern to a figuration drawn from the primary theme (itself derived from the introduction), and the lyrical melody comprised of relatively longer notes than the preceding section, suggest that this moment is indeed the beginning of the secondary area.

Like the caesura fill, the secondary theme area (mm. 57-79) introduces a pattern of subtly varied beat stresses. (See example 3.6.) Particularly important to this section is the emphasis on the second beat (of numerous measures), which serves a variety of structurally significant purposes. Notice that, with the outset of the secondary area in m. 57, the second beat of the measure is agogically accented in the violin through the step down from the quarter-note B $\flat$  to the half-note A. Likewise, Schumann carefully begins a crescendo on the fourth beat of m. 57 that culminates on the second beat of m. 58 (and then decrescendos throughout the last two beats of the measure). Measure 59 maintains a relatively stable common time meter, but is immediately followed by another measure emphasizing the second beat (through a crescendo-decrescendo marking) of m. 60. The harmonic progression of mm. 59-60 further propels the metrical emphasis into the second beat of m. 60, for although the ii $^{\circ}$ -V $^7$  (in G minor) progression prepares for a cadence to the G-minor tonic, Schumann instead surprises us in m. 60 with a cadence to the submediant over the first two beats of the measure. Here, beat two is emphasized with the violin's retardation on the first beat of the measure followed by a cadence confirming VI on the second beat; likewise, the piano's accompaniment pattern plays an F $\sharp$  (stressing the same note as the violin) on the second half of beat one before outlining part of the VI chord on the second beat.

Example 3.6: Secondary Theme Group, mm. 57-79

M. 57

S<sup>1.1</sup> S<sup>1.2</sup>

*Im Tempo.*

g: vii<sup>o4/3</sup> i<sup>6</sup> ii<sup>o</sup> V<sup>7</sup> VI Prefix to S<sup>1.2</sup> F: vii<sup>o6</sup> V<sup>4/2</sup> I<sup>6</sup>

M. 63

Cadential Extension Repeat of Cadential Extension

F: ii<sup>6</sup> V<sup>7</sup> vi<sup>9d.</sup> \* V IV I<sup>6</sup> ii V I vi V IV I<sup>6</sup> ii V vii<sup>o4/3/ii</sup> g: vii<sup>o4/3</sup>

Overridden PAC/EEC

M. 69

S<sup>2.2</sup>

*mit Ped.* R. S. 30. Prefix to S<sup>2.2</sup>

g: i iv<sup>7</sup> V<sup>7/III</sup> III F: V<sup>7/V</sup> V V<sup>4/2</sup>

M. 74

Cadential Extension

F: I<sup>6</sup> V<sup>4/2</sup> I<sup>6</sup> d: V<sup>4/2</sup> i<sup>6</sup> V<sup>4/2</sup> i<sup>6</sup> V<sup>4/2/VI</sup> VI<sup>6</sup> g: V V<sup>4/2</sup> i<sup>6</sup>

In m. 60, the piano introduces another metrical dissonance that interrupts both the regular common time meter and the already established layer of metrical dissonance emphasizing the second beat (D4+1).<sup>10</sup> Here, the third beat of m. 60 is the climax of a miniscule crescendo-decrescendo figure. This emphasis on the third beat of the piano accompaniment allows the bass line's initiation of a prefix to the second statement of the secondary area to emerge from the texture. Yet, the violin's entrance on F-natural on the fourth beat of m. 60 (and its subsequent hold across the bar line into m. 61) clouds the expected arrival on the downbeat of m. 61. Due to the prefix beginning on beat 3 of m. 60 and the violin's melody beginning on beat 4 of the same measure, the second statement retrospectively appears to grow out of the first statement, only gradually emerging as an individual unit within the secondary area. The emphasis on the third beat is continued in m. 61, with the crescendo-decrescendo figure in the violin part again climaxing on the third beat. After this, the emphasis on the third beat is eliminated, yet, despite its brevity, this metrical dissonance served to destabilize the beginning of the second four-bar statement of the secondary theme idea in mm. 61-64. (It is interesting to note that, in the corresponding measures of the recapitulation, Schumann eliminates both of these accents on the third beat.)

Just as the first statement implied G minor and prepared for a V<sup>7</sup>-i cadence in this key in mm. 59-60 (which ultimately did not materialize), so too the second statement suggests F major and attempts to produce a V<sup>7</sup>-I cadence in F in mm. 63-64. Instead of procuring the cadence to F, however, Schumann again institutes a deceptive cadence to vi

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<sup>10</sup> Whereas previously the 4+1 displacement dissonance described a situation in which a secondary layer of four eighth notes contradicted with a primary layer of four eighth notes, here the 4+1 displacement dissonance refers to a secondary metrical layer of four quarter notes that contradicts the primary common time meter by emphasizing the second quarter note of the primary layer.

in m. 64 with a similar retardation and delayed resolution, this time in both the violin and the right hand of the piano. Notice that the second beat of the piano's line is emphasized with the same crescendo-decrescendo figuration as the violin's line in m. 60, but here the accent on beat two in the piano initiates an elided two-bar cadential extension featuring a new melodic idea. Despite the cadential extension's attempt to bring about a successful perfect authentic cadence on F (which would thereby produce the awaited essential expositional closure), the segment only briefly cadences on F on the downbeat of m. 66 before arriving on the agogically and dynamically emphasized D minor chord (vi in the key of F) on the second beat of the measure. This accented vi chord commences another two-bar cadential extension with a near-identical harmonic progression that sets up another attempted perfect authentic cadence to F, but at the crucial moment of arrival in m. 68 Schumann substitutes a  $vii^{04/3}/ii$  for the F tonic chord. (Here, the agogically accented second beat of m. 68 confirms rather than undermines the  $vii^{04/3}/ii$  chord, changing the function of the accented second beat to match the surprising shift in harmonic progression.) The end of this second cadential extension overlaps with the beginning of the third statement of the secondary thematic idea (mm. 68-71).

The third statement introduces several new characteristics to the secondary theme idea. First, while the presentation begins with inflections to G minor, the final two measures of the segment initiate a successful V7/III to III (in the key of G minor) in place of the deceptive cadence that predominated in the previous two statements of the secondary theme. (Notice, however, that the cadence to Bb is not entirely forthright; much like m. 60, the C# on the downbeat of the piano melody acts a retardation that resolves into the D on the second beat of m. 71.) While the B-flat tonality is short-lived,

the successful cadence here offers the possibility of other successful cadences in the future (perhaps even a perfect authentic cadence on F which would secure the essential expositional closure). Another variation of this statement involves the character of the metrical dissonances. Whereas the melodic line contains relatively fewer stressed notes than either of the two preceding statements (only mm. 68 and 71 contain any sort of accent at all, in the form of agogic stress on beat two), the bass line initiates a strong syncopation that emphasizes beats two and four of the first two measures. (Notice that the bass line begins this syncopation on the fourth beat of m. 67 and continues it through m. 69, further overlapping the third presentation with the prior cadential extension.) The increased energy that this bass syncopation creates serves to propel the music through the G minor inflections of mm. 68-69 into the more regular meter of mm. 70-71, which as noted above suggests Bb major. One final change to this statement occurs in the violin accompaniment, as it recalls and varies the piano accompaniment figuration of the primary theme area (see especially m. 20), an idea that subtly connects the primary theme area (and even the off-beat accents of the introduction) with the secondary area.

Much like the second statement, the fourth statement grows out of the preceding statement, with the bass A-flat on beat four of m. 71 serving as a prefix to the next measure. Also, the violin's C-natural on the last beat of m. 71 carries over into the next measure, thus off-setting and undermining the start of the fourth statement in m. 72. Like the third presentation, this final statement (mm. 72-75) introduces several notable modifications of the thematic idea. For the first time, the crescendo-decrescendo marking occurs in such a way as to emphasize the downbeat of the second measure of the segment (m. 73), which deliberately prepares the listener for a change of rhythmic character

through the rest of the statement. After the dominant preparation of mm. 72-73, the statement cadences via a  $V^{4/2}$  chord to a  $I^6$  in F major in mm. 73-74, and again in mm. 74-75. Both of these cadences place a strong harmonic and agogic emphasis on the downbeat of each measure, yet neither achieves the essential expositional closure that we have been waiting for because the inversions of the dominant and tonic chords are not stable enough to establish a perfect authentic cadence. Although the accompaniment pattern in the violin in mm. 72 and 74 and in the piano in m. 75 is drawn from the same off-beat figuration that undermined the meter of the primary theme area (see m. 21), the dynamically accented downbeat of m. 73 combines with the agogically and harmonically accented downbeats of mm. 74-75 to prevent the accompaniment pattern from destabilizing the meter.

Retrospectively, it becomes apparent that the beginning of a new four-bar cadential extension overlaps with the final two bars of the fourth statement. Beginning in m. 74, the piano's second attempt to reach a more stable dominant-tonic arrival in the key of F initiates the cadential extension, while the violin plays the accompaniment pattern drawn from m. 21 of the primary theme area. With the arrival on a first-inversion F major chord on the downbeat of m. 75, the violin takes over the cadential figure of the preceding measure, setting up a  $V^{4/2}$  chord (in D minor) that cadences to a first-inversion tonic chord in the next measure; throughout this measure, the piano takes over the off-beat accompaniment pattern. Just as mm. 73-75 twice attempted to effect a dominant to tonic cadence in the key of F major, so too the cadential extension tries twice to reach a D minor arrival, with the piano taking over the cadential figuration in m. 77 as the violin continues the accompaniment pattern. In m. 76, this second attempt to secure a

convincing cadence on D minor fails with the arrival of a first-inversion D-minor chord, and the second half of the measure sets up a  $V^{4/2}$  chord (in Bb major) that cadences on yet another first-inversion tonic chord on the downbeat of m. 78. The Bb chord gives way a two-bar, G-minor bridge in mm. 78-79 that reinstates the sforzando accents on beats two and four, leading immediately to the closing section and effectively defeating any hopes of attaining the essential expositional closure within the secondary area.

Whereas some might be tempted to think of the perfect authentic cadence on F in m. 66 as a sort of weak essential expositional closure, Hepokoski and Darcy suggest that the moment of essential expositional closure necessary to complete the secondary area must be followed by differing material (most often, the closing section).<sup>11</sup> In a situation like the perfect authentic cadence of m. 66, which is immediately followed by a repetition of the same cadential extension idea, the effect is “that of undoing the closure provided by the preceding cadence in order to resituate it a few measures later... metaphorically, such a situation is like that of closing a door behind one (the first PAC), then reopening it and walking through it a second time (with the second “door-closing” PAC serving as the EEC).”<sup>12</sup> Yet in this specific situation, Schumann reopens a door, but does not walk through it again; although he repeats and varies the cadential extension in mm. 66-68, he provides it with a different ending (a  $vii^{04/3}/ii$  in F, which sets up the inflection to G minor for the third presentation of the thematic idea). As the cadential extension is modified to allow for a continuation of secondary theme material, the essential expositional closure is

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<sup>11</sup> Hepokoski and Darcy, 150.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

deferred to some unknown point, suggesting that “the EEC might be in danger of being lost altogether.”<sup>13</sup>

Another problem that prevents the perfect authentic cadence in mm. 66 from serving as a satisfactory point of closure is the persistence of secondary material past that cadence. As Hepokoski and Darcy state, “In order for a PAC to ‘stick’ as an EEC, S-material must normally be relinquished at the moment of the cadence, moving on to a differing thematic idea.”<sup>14</sup> As described above, two more statements of the secondary theme (complete with another, new cadential extension) follow the cadential extensions of mm. 64-67, creating a structure that reveals a striking degree of uniformity from a broad perspective. Throughout the twenty-one measures that comprise the secondary theme group, there are four statements of the brief, four-measure opening thematic idea (mm. 57-60, 61-64, 68-71, and 72-75). The first two statements feature inflections to G minor and F major in turn, with a four-bar cadential extension that attempts to attain an F-major perfect authentic cadence but is undermined by a D-minor chord. Likewise, the last two statements feature inflections to G minor (and Bb major, G minor’s relative major) and F major in turn, and concludes with a cadential extension that once again endeavors to reach a stable cadence on F major, but instead is undermined by a turn to D minor. With so much secondary theme material presented after the perfect authentic cadence of m. 66, we must admit that the potential for that perfect authentic cadence to accomplish the essential expositional closure has been severely undermined.

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<sup>13</sup> Hepokoski and Darcy, 151.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

Yet another issue contributing to the secondary area's failure to attain the essential expositional closure is the tonal pairing of F major and D minor throughout this theme group. Despite D minor's role as the overarching tonic of the entire movement, within the localized space of the secondary theme area the constant intertwining of F major and D minor suggest the nineteenth-century practice of tonal pairing, in which a dialogue between two keys "produces harmonically open formal units, continuity of tonal process across both local and large-scale formal boundaries, and ambiguity regarding which of the two harmonies might eventually emerge as main tonic."<sup>15</sup> Within the first movement of the A-minor violin sonata, Schumann has already used the technique of tonal pairing to emphasize the overall tonic (A minor) and the submediant key with which it is paired (F major). In the secondary area of the first movement of the D-minor violin sonata, Schumann repeatedly attempts to achieve a cadence on F major, only to undermine it with D minor. We can see this process beginning with the deceptive resolution to a D-minor chord in at the end of the second statement of the second theme in m. 64. Here the delayed arrival on the D-minor chord in the violin and the piano's right hand creates a strong emphasis on the second beat of the measure, which is hard to overcome even when faced with a perfect authentic cadence on F major on the downbeat of m. 66. The pull of the second beat causes the perfect authentic cadence to F major to be immediately overridden with a D-minor chord on the second beat of m. 66. Similarly, although the end of the fourth statement of the secondary area attempts to attain a more stable arrival on F major, it proves to be incapable of doing so and instead cadences to the unstable first inversion F chord in m. 74. After making another, weaker attempt to secure

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<sup>15</sup> Smith, 4.

an F-major arrival (which in turn ends with another unstable first-inversion F chord), D minor steps in and makes its bid for closure of the secondary area. Just as mm. 74-75 repeated the cadential figuration twice (as if hopeful that the second time would somehow manage to achieve the desired cadence), so also the cadential figuration tonicizing D minor repeats twice in mm. 76-77. Though ultimately neither is successful in asserting a strong tonic for the secondary area, the continuous strain created by these two competing keys, as well as the multiple phrase elisions and metrical dissonances, all contribute significantly to the unstable, tense environment of the secondary key area, and moreover, to the overriding of the attempted essential expositional closure.

Because of the failure of the secondary area to achieve the essential expositional closure, we are faced with the tonal failure of the exposition to achieve one of the three important tonal areas of the sonata form. As Hepokoski and Darcy note, the overwhelming purpose of the secondary area is to drive to a stable perfect authentic cadence in the new key area. As they state, “Were that PAC/EEC left unaccomplished—as a fully intended expressive strategy on the part of the composer—the exposition would be an illustration of frustration, nonattainment, or failure.”<sup>16</sup> And as the first movement of the A-minor violin sonata demonstrated, a failed exposition may impact the course of the entire movement.

Despite the failure of the exposition’s secondary area, the closing section offers a curious reversal of fate. (See example 3.7.) Although the first four measures of this section are in G minor, in m. 84 the harmony slips once again into F major in m. 85 (via

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<sup>16</sup> Hepokoski and Darcy, 177.

## Example 3.7: Closing, mm. 80-96

**M. 80**  $S^{C1.1}$

*cresc.*

*cresc.*

**g:** i ii  $V^{4/2}$   $i^6$  i iv  $vii^{07}$  i **F:**  $vii^{07}/vi$

**M. 84**  $S^{C1.2}$

*cresc.*

*cresc.*

**F:** vi  $V^{6/5}$  I  $V^{4/3}$   $I^6$  vi ii vi  $V^{6/5}$

**M. 88**  $S^{C1.3}$

*mit Ped.*

**F:** I  $V^{4/3}$   $I^6$   $IV^6$   $I^{6/4}$   $V^6/ii$  ii  $V/iii$

**M. 92**  $S^{C2.1}$

*ten. ten. ten. ten.*

*ff*

*ten. ten. ten. ten.*

*p*

D minor, creating another allusion to the tonal pairing of the secondary area) for the remainder of the closing, which strikingly leads to two perfect authentic cadences on F major in mm. 93 and 96. Such strong cadences in a key vital to the success of the secondary area give the impression of being a sort of late attempt to redeem the situation from imminent failure. Although in the traditional eighteenth-century sonata form, “nothing should exist conceptually as C until the EEC has been secured,” Hepokoski and Darcy admit that “one can imagine situations, especially after 1800, in which a composer might have intended to portray just such an S-breakdown.”<sup>17</sup> In situations such as these, Hepokoski and Darcy suggest:

Here one might cautiously entertain the option of defying the definition of C as post-cadential and considering the breakdown of S to be an EEC-deformation. Such a deformation would portray a manifest collapse of S before attaining the EEC. Under this interpretive option (relying on the principle that even strong generic norms can be overridden for extreme effects) the S-breakdown would be followed by a precadential (pre-EEC!), rhetorical C that now has to take on the EEC-burden of S. The hermeneutic implications of this situation are obvious. This interpretive option requires stressing the hazy notion of “C rhetoric” in what technically remains S-space.<sup>18</sup>

Despite the flexible rhetoric of the closing zone, one principle regarding the closing section did emerge from the eighteenth-century sonata form tradition: “When the preceding S had been deployed as a contrast to P... then the subsequent C is unlikely to contain significant material from the S-zone, especially at its outset.”<sup>19</sup> As we can see from the following survey of Schumann’s closing zone, here we are confronted solely with ideas from the first half of the sonata, including modified material from the

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<sup>17</sup> Hepokoski and Darcy, 190.

<sup>18</sup> Hepokoski and Darcy, 191.

<sup>19</sup> Hepokoski and Darcy, 181.

introduction, the primary theme group, and the transition, but nothing from the caesura fill or the secondary theme group. In m. 80, the closing begins with a G-minor statement reminiscent of the primary theme in its melodic line, accompaniment pattern, and unified rhythm in the violin and bass lines. From the perspective of metrical dissonance, mm. 80-83 combine accents seen throughout the primary area. In m. 81, the violin line features a crescendo into the downbeat of m. 82, which is accented in both the violin and piano's left hand. The second half of m. 82 and the beginning of m. 83 feature heavy accents on and off the beat, propelling the music forward into a cadence on G minor on the second beat of m. 83.

With the second, F-major statement in mm. 84-87, the accompaniment pattern changes to a more flowing pattern, and the off-beat accents are essentially eliminated. However, the emphasis on beat two remains, as can be seen in m. 87 with the cadence to D minor (vi in F major). This allusion to the tonal pairing of the secondary key area not only links the two sections from a topical perspective, but also continues the dialogue between the two keys, further delaying the sonata's attainment of a secure point of closure.

With a stronger return to F major at the beginning of the third statement, the accompaniment pattern and rhythmic character changes yet again, this time with accents on beats two and four in the violin contrasting with the accented, ascending half notes on beats one and three in the piano bass line. This third presentation is truncated in m. 90 with a tonic six-four chord signaling the imminent arrival of a cadence. Notice here that the off-beat pattern in the violin in mm. 90-91 is a more forceful version of the cadential figuration found in the transition (m. 40), but here the piano accompaniment also

emphasizes the off-beats with accented chords driving the music forward to the sforzando arrival on the dominant on the second beat of m. 92.

The long-awaited perfect authentic cadence on F finally arrives on the downbeat of m. 93, but is immediately repeated with fortissimo and tenuto markings in both the piano and violin parts on the second beat of the same measure. This final emphasis on the second beat—even when this second beat serves only to confirm the chord presented on the first—draws further attention to Schumann's emphasis of the second beat throughout the entire exposition. The second F major chord in m. 93 serves as a peculiar point of elision, serving both to complete the preceding perfect authentic cadence to the closing area and to initiate a thematic idea in mm. 93-96 that serves to lead to the expositional repeat. Although based on the introductory motto, mm. 93-96 feature several important modifications to its model. First, these measures confirm the key of F major, which causes the return to the primary theme area to be harmonically unprepared except for a brief arpeggiation inflecting the seventh of the tonic (C#) in m. 96. In addition, Schumann skillfully separates the first four chords of this section (mm. 93-94) with rests, which serves both to remind the listener of an important element of the introduction and to undermine the regular common time meter. With the increased harmonic rate beginning on the second beat of m. 95, Schumann allows the music to drive forward to a final perfect authentic cadence on F on the second beat of m. 96. Certainly Schumann's closing zone fulfils the strongest tradition regarding thematic material—no material from the secondary theme is revisited.

If we allow one of the perfect authentic cadences of the closing section to function as the essential expositional closure, we would be faced with an unusual deformation of

the secondary theme area—but the exposition would not have failed in its attempt to secure a perfect authentic cadence in III, thereby lessening or even eliminating the possibility of overall sonata failure, depending on what occurs in the recapitulation space. Either interpretation has the potential to powerfully impact our interpretation of Schumann's interaction with the paradigmatic plot of the traditional sonata form structure.

The few measures that connect the end of the development with the beginning of the recapitulation bear discussion, due to Schumann's destabilization of the recapitulatory return through a delayed return to the tonic (D minor). Despite the stand on the dominant that occurs in the last five measures of the development (mm. 183-88), the recapitulation of the primary theme does not begin on a tonic chord in m. 189. Although the violin maintains the original pitches of the primary theme (D-A-F-D) from the outset of the recapitulation, the harmonic progression of these first two recapitulatory measures represents a delayed return to the opening harmony with a  $iv-V^7-VI-vii^{o6/5}/V$  progression. When the harmony returns to its original track in m. 191, it still lacks the harmonic stability of the exposition because of the non-tonic opening. Like the exposition, a perfect authentic cadence to D minor is not secured until the recapitulation of the medial caesura in m. 211.

Once underway, Schumann recapitulates the expository material in mm. 189-267 with only a few changes. The shift to D major instead of F major (tonic major rather than the mediant) for the secondary area is a normative change for a minor-mode sonata. Aside from the two measures altered to prepare for the shift to D major (mm. 223-24), Schumann recapitulates the secondary theme group identically to its expository

counterpart. Here the first presentation (mm. 225-28) of the secondary theme group is inflected to E minor, but ends with a deceptive resolution to C major (VI in E minor). The second statement (mm. 229-232) attempts to establish a cadence to D major, but like the exposition attains only a deceptive resolution to B minor (vi in D) in m. 232. This B minor chord serves as a catalyst for the cadential extension in mm. 232-33, which prepares for and attains a brief perfect authentic cadence to D major on the downbeat of m. 234, only to be overridden by the immediate shift to B minor on the second beat of that measure. (For the corresponding overridden perfect authentic cadence in the exposition, see m. 66.) This second B-minor chord reopens the cadential extension and again attempts to establish a stable D-major chord, but instead slips back into E minor for the third presentation of the secondary theme. Aside from these normative harmonic changes, the rest of the secondary area is recapitulated nearly identically to the exposition, including the metrical dissonances so vital to undermining important moments of the exposition. Particularly in light of the previous discussion of the secondary area's deformation of the essential expositional closure, it is interesting to notice that Schumann changes nothing about this moment in the recapitulation except for the requisite shift in key. In repeating the same deformation, Schumann places an enormous amount of harmonic and rhetorical emphasis on the closing area of the recapitulation, for it is this space that will likely seal the first movement's fate.

Unlike the secondary area, the recapitulation of the closing section does make a significant change to the sonata form structure. (See example 3.8.) Although the closing begins in m. 248 in E minor, after the first four-measure presentation of the closing theme, the tonality shifts into D minor (via a deceptive  $V^7$ -VI cadence in D minor) at the

## Example 3.8: Closing in Recapitulation, mm. 248-267

**M. 248**  $S^{C1.1}$

**M. 250**  $S^{C1.2}$

**M. 253**

**M. 256**  $S^{C1.3}$

**Figured Bass Symbols:**

**M. 248:** e: i IV ii V<sup>4/2</sup>

**M. 250:** e: i<sup>6</sup> i v<sup>6</sup> i d: V<sup>7</sup> VI V<sup>6</sup>

**M. 253:** d: i vii<sup>06</sup> i<sup>6</sup> iv ii<sup>0</sup> vii<sup>06/5</sup>/V V<sup>6/5</sup>

**M. 256:** d: i vii<sup>06/5</sup> i<sup>6</sup> iv i<sup>6/4</sup> vii<sup>06/5</sup>/iv N<sup>6/4</sup> vii<sup>06/5</sup>/V

Example 3.8, continued

M. 260

d: V V<sup>7</sup> i i V<sup>4/3</sup> i<sup>6</sup> IV V i iv v<sup>7</sup>/III III vii<sup>6/5</sup> v<sup>7</sup> VI vii<sup>o</sup>/iv iv vii<sup>o7</sup> i<sup>6/4</sup> V<sup>7</sup> i

PAC/ESC

precise point that it shifted to F major in the exposition (see m. 84 in the exposition). The shift in key here drastically influences the plot of Schumann's sonata form, for as we saw in the exposition, the main key of the closing section is also the tonic on which the perfect authentic cadences arrive (mm. 93 and 96). In the recapitulation, these cadences are brought back almost identically to the exposition in mm. 261 and 267, yet with one crucial change—as predicted, both are in D minor, rather than the implied key of the secondary area and closing, D major.

With the recapitulation of both perfect authentic cadences in D minor (mm. 261 and 267), we are forced to reconsider the closing's ability to attain the essential structural closure. While the perfect authentic cadence of m. 93 could be interpreted as the moment of essential expositional closure in the exposition, this reading relied upon its attainment of a new key. Here in the recapitulation, it is unclear whether m. 261 can still fulfill the same purpose because of its inability to attain the major mode. Can this moment function as the point of structural closure for the entire movement, despite its tonal failure?

The answer to this question lies in the coda, which begins with the perfect authentic cadence to D minor in mm. 267. (See example 3.9.) Although the piano adheres to the notated meter (with lower bass notes on the stronger beats one and three of the common time meter), the violin enters on the third beat of m. 267 with a sforzando. When the violin repeats this sforzando, this time seconded by the piano on the third beat of m. 269, the sforzando of m. 267 retrospectively seems to have been initiating an 8+2 displacement dissonance.<sup>20</sup> In m. 271, this displacement dissonance is abruptly cut short with the violin's accent on the first beat of the measure reinstating the notated meter, and accents on downbeats of mm. 272-74 confirm the return to the common time meter. But in m. 275, the violin again emphasizes the third beat of the measure with a sforzando, thus interrupting the notated meter. However the violin fails to carry out the expected 8+2 displacement dissonance, and instead, the violin and piano both emphasize the off-beats (two and four) in m. 276. In m. 277, the violin again plays a sforzando on the third beat, but again, the expectation for a sustained metrical dissonance is cut short by the piano bass line's insistent accenting of every beat, beginning on the third beat of m. 278 and continuing through m. 279. The acceleration of the metrical dissonance prepares for the increase in tempo with the "Schneller" marking in m. 280. It is interesting to note here that the "Schneller" indication also coincides with a sforzando marking, both of which occur on the third beat of m. 280.

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<sup>20</sup> The 8+2 displacement dissonance, using Krebs's methods, is a metrical layer comprised of eight units (the first of which is emphasized) that enters two units after the primary metrical layer. Here, although the primary meter is four quarter notes per measure (common time meter), the violin's melodic line stretches over two measures (eight quarter-note beats). Thus, the 8+2 displacement dissonance contradicts the common time metrical layer by emphasizing the third quarter note of every other measure.

## Example 3.9: Coda, mm. 267-95

M. 267

D8+2

D8+2

d: i i<sup>6/4</sup> i<sup>6</sup> i<sup>6/4</sup> iv iv<sup>6/4</sup> V V<sup>6/4</sup> i<sup>6</sup> i i<sup>6</sup> i<sup>6/4</sup>

M. 270

d: iv iv<sup>6/4</sup> V V<sup>4/2</sup> VI VI<sup>6/4</sup> vii<sup>06/5</sup>/V vii<sup>04/2</sup>/V

M. 273

d: V<sup>0/3</sup> V<sup>0/3</sup> V<sup>4/2</sup> i<sup>0</sup> iv

R. S. 30.

M. 276

D8+2

d: i<sup>6/4</sup> i<sup>6</sup> iv V<sup>6/4</sup> i<sup>6</sup> iv VI<sup>6/4</sup> i<sup>6/4</sup> V

## Example 3.9, continued

M. 279

*Schneller.*

d: d: d iv i<sup>6/4</sup> V i i<sup>6</sup> i iv iv<sup>6/4</sup> V V<sup>6/4</sup>

M. 282

d: i<sup>6</sup> i iv iv<sup>6/4</sup> v<sup>7</sup> V<sup>7</sup>/iv iv<sup>6/4</sup>

M. 285

d: vii<sup>7</sup> (over D pedal) V (over D pedal) i

M. 288

d: vii<sup>7</sup>/V (over A pedal) V<sup>7</sup> i R.S. 30. vii<sup>7</sup>/V (over A pedal) V<sup>7</sup>

M. 291

d: i V i

The sforzando markings in m. 282 (on the third beat of the violin and on the off-beat of the third beat in the piano's right hand) suggest that an 8+2 displacement dissonance has been established. Yet the third beat of m. 284 lacks any kind of metrical dissonance, and the downbeat of m. 285 is heavily accented with a sforzando-piano marking in both piano and violin. (The piano also plays an accent on the third beat of m. 285, suggesting another 8+2 displacement dissonance, but this metrical dissonance ultimately fails to materialize when the piano accents the downbeat of m. 286.) In mm. 287-88, both piano and violin initiate a two-bar unit with a crescendo through m. 287 up to the downbeat of m. 288 and then a decrescendo throughout the final three beats of that measure. Measures 289-90 enact a similar dynamic accent on the downbeat of m. 290. While mm. 291-92 lack the crescendo-decrescendo effect of the preceding two-bar units, these measures still clearly affirm the notated meter in a third two-bar segment. As the movement winds down to a quiet close in mm. 293-94 (presumably the fourth and final two-bar unit), a sudden forte chord played by both piano and violin on the third beat of m. 294 violently reintroduces the metrical dissonance so prevalent throughout the coda. When m. 295 (the final measure) repeats the forte tonic chord of the preceding measure, the listener's perception of this moment is much the same as the unusual phrase elision that occurred in the closing at the moment of essential expositional closure (m. 93 in the exposition) and essential structural closure (m. 261 in the recapitulation). The destabilizing effect of these two chords, despite their affirmation of the tonic, heightens the tension of this point of final structural closure.

Although in earlier works, Schumann deferred the possibility for redemption from the minor mode into the major into the coda space (see, for example, the coda to the first

movement of the A-minor violin sonata), the coda to the D-minor sonata demonstrates no such possibility, remaining firmly entrenched in D-minor throughout its entire section (mm. 267-95). This suggests that the perfect authentic cadence of m. 261 could logically serve as the point of essential structural closure, a point that has important ramifications for the plot of the sonata form and will be considered further in chapter 4.

Because the exposition of the movement suggested the emancipation of the tonic minor mode into the major mediant, Schumann has raised the possibility that this same redemptive process might occur in the secondary area of the recapitulation. When it does indeed occur (with the harmonic movement to the tonic major in the secondary area of the recapitulation), Hepokoski and Darcy suggest we could normatively expect a positive, major outcome to the ending of the movement. With the shift in mode at the closing, however, we see a dramatic turn of events, for a minor-mode sonata form that returns to the tonic minor for the essential structural closure suggests that “the emancipatory paradigm has been unfulfilled.”<sup>21</sup> Here, the expressive idea is one of hopes sustained over an extended period of time only to be dashed in a moment; the shift to the minor mode for the closing of recapitulation feels like a cruel twist of fate after the emotional rollercoaster of the exposition.

### *Conclusion*

Throughout the first movement of the op. 121 violin sonata, Schumann powerfully engages with the paradigmatic plot of the eighteenth-century sonata form to create a new story line, one that compellingly alters the emotional impact of the

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<sup>21</sup> Hepokoski and Darcy, 313.

conventional sonata form. Through the strategic use of such techniques as tonal pairing, metrical dissonance, and tonic monopolization, Schumann subverts important structural moments of the first movement of op. 121, thus dramatically changing the overall narrative of the movement. Notably, the first movement of op. 121 alters not only the plot of the eighteenth-century sonata form, but also that of the first movement of the op. 105 violin sonata, written only a few weeks prior. Throughout the first movements of both opp. 105 and 121, Schumann modifies the traditional sonata form for his own expressive ends; yet a marked difference may be noted in the complexity of the approaches. In op. 121, Schumann attributes a high level of structural importance to the closing area, with both the essential expositional closure and essential structural closure occurring within this area (in the expositional and recapitulation, respectively). Although Schumann alludes to an eventual escape into the major mode with his essential expositional closure in the major mediant key (in the exposition), his shift to the tonic minor for the corresponding essential structural closure (in the recapitulation) dramatically reverses the suggested fate of the sonata form. Far from the physically, mentally, and artistically withdrawn composer that Spitta perceived, I offer that the large-scale harmonic drama of this work demonstrates Schumann at the height of his artistic—and emotional—maturity.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### *Eighteenth-Century Narrative Techniques and the Failure of the Sonata Form*

Within the first movements of the opp. 105 and 121 violin sonatas, Schumann deliberately engaged with the eighteenth-century sonata-form model by adhering to a similar trajectory of action-zones and structural cadences. Much like his eighteenth-century predecessors, Schumann had a constellation of possible compositional options from which to choose, each of which had the potential to impact not only the character of the movement, but also the overall narrative of the sonata-form plot. As chapters 2 and 3 suggested, Schumann's selection of certain features considered uncommon within the eighteenth-century sonata form—such as the tonic medial caesura or the overridden essential expositional closure—served to modify and subvert structural moments of both sonata forms. While certainly Schumann's sonata-form irregularities had already become more widely accepted within the first half of the nineteenth century, Schumann's consistent dialogue with the eighteenth-century sonata form in both violin sonatas suggests that the composer understood the significance that every choice, common or uncommon, had within the sonata-form narrative. Furthermore, Schumann's description of the sonata form as “one of the greatest and most important art forms” suggests that he was heavily influenced by the weight of historical expectations, to the extent that composing a sonata-form movement “was to place one's individual achievement into a

dialogue with a community-shared pool of preexisting works... that formed the new work's context of understanding."<sup>1</sup>

In an essay devoted to Schumann's interaction with late eighteenth-century narrative techniques, Anthony Newcomb suggests that one method of developing a "context of understanding" is to compare the musical events of the new work with the conventional sequence of events within its historical model. Newcomb draws an analogy between the paradigmatic plot structures found in eighteenth-century music and the narrative conventions of the Russian folktale, a "closely circumscribed and highly conventionalized body of literature."<sup>2</sup> Drawing on the literary criticisms of the Russian Formalist Vladimir Propp, Newcomb describes the Russian folktale as a narrative in which "the basic unit of the tale is not the character but his function," and "the sequence of these functions is always the same."<sup>3</sup> Such descriptions, Newcomb claims, might apply to any number of eighteenth-century instrumental musical forms, including the highly formalized sonata form and rondo structures. In his analysis of the finale of Schumann's A-major string quartet, op. 41, no. 3, Newcomb describes the overall form as a rhetorically and structurally straightforward rondo in which the functions of the refrains and episodes are drastically changed: the refrains are gradually heard as the unstable connections between the episodes, which are tonally and metrically more stable than the refrains. By clearly suggesting a conventional paradigmatic plot and then denying the function of certain conventions, Newcomb suggests that Schumann is offering the listener

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<sup>1</sup> Hepokoski and Darcy, 9.

<sup>2</sup> Anthony Newcomb, "Schumann and Late Eighteenth-Century Narrative Strategies," *19th-Century Music* 11, no. 2 (Autumn 1987): 165.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

the opportunity “to move beyond static recognition of formal schemata to dynamic questions of formal procedures.”<sup>4</sup> As Schumann engages with the eighteenth-century model of the rondo in this way, Newcomb suggests that the composer “defamiliarizes” the narrative conventions of the form, thus giving the structure back some of its “original power.”<sup>5</sup> Within the first movements of the opp. 105 and 121 violin sonatas, Schumann similarly defamiliarizes the conventional eighteenth-century sonata form by altering and subverting the function of critical moments throughout the exposition and recapitulation. Yet the paradigmatic plot of the sonata form (and especially the minor-mode sonata form) is significantly more complex than that of the rondo, and thus offers a broader array of interpretive considerations. The following discussion will explore the narrative of the first movements of opp. 105 and 121 through a consideration of such issues as Schumann’s dialogue with the expectations inherent to the minor-mode sonata form and the trajectory of failed structural cadences throughout the expository and recapitulatory spaces.

From a tonal perspective, the minor-mode sonata form offers the dramatic possibility of escaping from the minor mode into the parallel major mode near the close of the movement, a possibility that significantly alters both the process and the fate of minor-mode sonatas. As Hepokoski and Darcy suggest, minor-mode sonata forms share an “additional burden” beyond the familiar trajectory of the conventional major-mode sonata form: “that of the minor mode itself, generally interpretable as a sign of a troubled

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 174.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

condition seeking transformation (emancipation) into the parallel major mode.”<sup>6</sup> While numerous minor-mode sonatas within both the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries never escape into the parallel major mode, Hepokoski and Darcy suggest that the point here is not whether the minor-mode sonata manages to effect this tonal shift, but rather that it is uniquely capable of doing so. Although the first movements of both opp. 105 and 121 allude to the possibility of shifting into the parallel major mode, suggesting a dramatic shift in the fate of these movements, neither achieves this change of fate permanently and instead cadence in their respective minor tonic keys. That both movements begin and end in a tonally “troubled” state is not unusual for eighteenth- or nineteenth-century sonata forms; rather, the idiosyncrasies of these movements lie in how Schumann navigates the space between the opening and closing tonic minor keys, offering and then withdrawing the possibility of the parallel shift through an expressive trajectory of delayed and undermined structural cadences.

Throughout the first movements of opp. 105 and 121, a distinctive sonata-form drama begins to unfold with Schumann’s treatment of the medial caesura in the exposition. As discussed in chapter 2, within the eighteenth-century model the medial caesura would most frequently occur on a dominant arrival in either the tonic or secondary key. Yet, in both violin sonatas, Schumann forces the medial caesura to remain entrenched in the tonic minor, thus indicating the powerful role that the tonic serves in both movements and the ineffectiveness of the transition to accomplish its traditional function of modulation to a new key. Extremely rare within the eighteenth-century, Hepokoski and Darcy cite the example of the first movement of Mozart’s String Quintet

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<sup>6</sup> Hepokoski and Darcy, 306.

in G minor, K. 516, in which “the negative pull of G minor is apparently so strong that the transition finds itself unable to escape its control,” resulting in what they call “one of the bleakest medial caesuras in the repertory, the tonic perfect authentic cadence.”<sup>7</sup> Similarly, in Schumann’s opp. 105 and 121, we begin to perceive the tonic medial caesura as a dramatic indicator of failure looming, as the troubled minor key begins to manifest its hold over the exposition. In both of these movements, the failure of the medial caesura to escape the tonic minor foreshadows the secondary area’s struggle to establish a new key area.

Perhaps the most defining event of the entire exposition is the essential expositional closure, which is typically the first perfect authentic cadence to secure the new key within the secondary area. Hepokoski and Darcy suggest that the path leading up to this moment demonstrates a “strategy of promise,” because the composer’s approach to the essential expositional closure anticipates and predicts the eventual course of the recapitulation in its attempt to reach the essential structural closure, which is the “*telos* of the sonata as a whole, the goal toward which the sonata-trajectory aims.”<sup>8</sup> Within the eighteenth-century sonata form, the harmonic trajectory of the recapitulation will most often react to that of the exposition, thus creating a parallel effect between the two regions: minor-mode sonata forms that shifted to the mediant major in the secondary area of the exposition would most likely shift to the tonic major for the secondary area of the recapitulation. However, if the secondary area of the exposition fails in some regard to secure a perfect authentic cadence in the new key (thus leaving the key area unstable), the

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 177.

recapitulation has little against which to react and thus may fail in its attempt at structural closure. Hepokoski and Darcy offer that the “failure to attain the [essential expositional closure] within the exposition suggests that the entire sonata is threatened with nonclosure in the recapitulation (sonata failure). To undermine S’s *raison d’être* in this way suggests that something has gone amiss, that the whole point of undertaking a sonata (as a metaphor for human action) has proven futile.”<sup>9</sup>

In the exposition of op. 105, Schumann slips in and out of the secondary area without a single perfect authentic cadence to the mediant (C major). Although he alludes to the mediant repeatedly, Schumann uses a series of deceptive cadences (V-vi in C major) to avoid arriving on the new local tonic. (As discussed in chapter 2, these deceptive cadences further demonstrate the role of the monopolizing tonic, because vi in C also doubles as the overall tonic of A minor.) The secondary area manages to secure only an imperfect authentic cadence to C, which is immediately undermined through a return to A minor in the brief retransition. The secondary area’s failure to attain a successful essential expositional closure sets up a situation in which the recapitulation has the option to accept or decline sonata closure. After reprising the expositional material virtually identically to the initial presentation (with a normative shift to the tonic major instead of the mediant), Schumann forces the recapitulation to reenact the failed essential expositional closure with an imperfect cadence on the tonic major at the end of the secondary area (m. 173). Here it is vital to note that Schumann suggests the possibility of emancipating the sonata form from the tonic minor into its parallel major, yet fails to come through on this promise because he recapitulates the failed essential expositional

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 177.

closure at the point of structural closure. The only remaining option for the redemption of the sonata form rests in the coda, thus placing an unusual degree of rhetorical and structural emphasis on a paragenetic space. Within the coda, Schumann momentarily shifts into the parallel major, suggesting that, with so little time left in the sonata form, the coda might manage to secure the transformation of key that the exposition and recapitulation were unable to attain. But at the last moment, Schumann dramatically alters the fate of the sonata form by returning to A minor with only a few measure left in the coda. The final cadence serves as the only successful point of structural closure, and even this moment is destabilized through the piano's variable chord inversion.

In the exposition of op. 121, Schumann further explores the failure of the essential expositional closure within the secondary area through the use of deceptive cadences and metrical dissonance. Throughout this section, Schumann uses a series of off-beat deceptive cadences in both G minor and F major to create harmonic ambiguity while simultaneously creating an expectation for off-beat arrivals, so much that when a perfect authentic cadence on F arrives via the cadential extension to the second phrase, it is immediately undermined by an off-beat arrival on D minor. (Throughout this area, the deceptive arrivals on D minor suggest both a localized tonal pairing between that key and F major, as well as a continuation of the monopolizing tonic of the primary theme and transition.) When no other perfect authentic cadence materializes within the secondary area, it seems that, much like op. 105, the exposition of op. 121 has also failed. However, Schumann offers the exposition of op. 121 one further option that he withheld from op. 105: the possibility for the closing area to achieve the essential expositional closure. Although the closing begins in G minor, it eventually returns to F major and manages to

secure a perfect authentic cadence in F just before the expositional repeat. Through this highly unusual strategy, Schumann permits the closing zone to serve as both a rhetorically distinct area of the sonata form as well as a continuation of the secondary theme's goal. If we accept the closing zone's perfect authentic cadence as the point of essential expositional closure, then we accept the liberation of the tonic minor mode in the major mediant key, which raises the possibility that a similar redemptive process might occur in the recapitulation. With the harmonic shift from mediant to the tonic major in the secondary area of the recapitulation of op. 121, we expect the recapitulation to behave much like the exposition, with a series of deceptive cadences in the secondary area leading to the essential structural closure in D major within the closing zone.

However, while the reprise of the secondary area does indeed act as we expect (with only slight changes between it and the exposition), Schumann drastically changes the character of the closing with a parallel shift back to D minor. With this shift in mode, the essential structural closure is recapitulated not in the expected major key, but in the tonic minor, thus refusing to fulfill the redemptive paradigm suggested by the exposition. Hepokoski and Darcy comment that "there is little more powerful or more affecting within minor-mode sonatas [that move from i-III in the exposition] than the realization that all of part 2—sounded in major in the exposition—might come back entirely in minor in the recapitulation. To sound all of part 2 in minor is... to cancel out the hopes raised in the exposition: a moving wave of despair passes through this music, inexorably reversing former hopes."<sup>10</sup> While in Schumann's D-minor sonata, the recapitulation of the secondary area does manage to escape into D major, the recapitulated EEC-deformation

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 313-14.

of the secondary area pushes the point of essential structural closure into the closing, thereby extending the technical secondary area space. This suggests a deformation that affects the sonata form structure on several levels. At the broadest level, the entire emancipatory paradigm of the sonata form has been left unfulfilled by the return to the tonic minor for the essential structural closure and the coda. And as described above, the return to the tonic minor for portions of the recapitulation that had once been in the major mediant key creates a striking sense of despair—another level of sonata form failure. Finally, the recapitulation of the secondary area in the tonic major raises the listener's hopes for the rest of the recapitulation, only to dash these hopes in the closing section.

When compared with the paradigmatic plot of the eighteenth-century sonata form, the narrative suggested by the sonata-form trajectories of both opp. 105 and 121 is one of deep-rooted structural failure. By invoking the idea of “sonata failure,” I do not mean to suggest any sort of negative impulse or flaw in the nature of Schumann's forms; rather, I use the term as Hepokoski and Darcy have defined it to describe a situation in which the movement refuses to comply with some tonal or formal outline of the conventional sonata form, often for the composer's own expressive ends. In this light, Schumann's narratives may be heard as defamiliarizing the listener with the plot of the eighteenth-century sonata form narrative in order to give the work back some of its original dramatic power, much as Anthony Newcomb suggested Schumann did in the rondo of his A-major string quartet, op. 41, no. 3. In so doing, Schumann encourages the listener to actively engage in the story, to reexamine the main characters and their functions, to “move beyond static recognition of formal schemata to dynamic questioning of formal

procedures.”<sup>11</sup> By forcing the listener to confront expectations within the moment of performance, Schumann engages not only with the historic concept of the sonata form but also with his contemporary audience, thus suggesting that Schumann thought of the sonata form as a dynamic means of dialogue across historical and cultural divides. Although these works were described within their own time in terms of cultural withdrawal, I offer that the opp. 105 and 121 violin sonatas demonstrate Schumann’s engagement with his surrounding culture rather than any kind of retreat from it, as he rethinks—and thus revitalizes—the eighteenth-century sonata form.

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<sup>11</sup> Newcomb, 174.

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