

**Interpretation and Performance:  
An Investigation into Franz Schubert's Piano  
Sonata in A Major D959**

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for the degree Doctor in Music Performance

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## **Abstract**

The investigation is based on the understanding of the role of the performer as narrator in the performance of early nineteenth-century piano music in general and Schubert's Piano Sonata in A Major, D959, in particular. In addition to considering aspects of the musical and cultural context as well as piano construction in Schubert's own time, this dissertation highlights and examines two general areas. The first area contains three central themes – tempo, articulation and dynamics. The second area will shed light on a 'paradigm shift' between what Lawrence Zbikowski termed 'static form' and 'dynamic form'. The traditional sonata-form represents the 'static form' which consists of balanced structure built from regular sub-units with clear harmonic connections between each other. The 'dynamic form' was conceived as 'form as process' where the emphasis was given to a performer in defining the musical structure throughout a piece. This creative role of a performer in giving shape to music suggests the idea of narration and Schubert's Piano Sonata in A Major, D959, particularly in the first and second movements, presents an interesting example for musical narration in early Romantic music.

There appears to be no consensus as to a 'stylistically correct' rendition of Schubert's Piano Sonata in A Major, D959, and it possesses some unique musical features which invite performers and researchers to conduct an investigation of the sonata. Hence, a consequence of this investigation would be a deeper understanding and awareness of the problems of interpretation in this work as well as the unique characteristics of the sonata.

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Last but not least, my sincerest thanks for the warm support and guidance given by my beloved parents and my family members. Without all of you, I would not be able to study that for which I have the greatest affection – Music!

## Note on the Musical Examples and Identification of Pitch

This dissertation has included musical examples throughout, which have been taken from the *Neue Schubert Ausgabe* (New Complete Edition of Schubert Works) published by Bärenreiter-Verlag (Kassel). Editorial policy in the examples has been to interfere as little as possible.

Throughout this dissertation, note pitches are described as using the system below:



The image shows a musical staff with a bass clef on the left and a treble clef on the right. The staff contains several notes: a whole note on the second line of the bass clef, a whole note on the first space of the bass clef, a whole note on the first line of the bass clef, a whole note on the first space of the treble clef, a whole note on the first line of the treble clef, a whole note on the second line of the treble clef, a whole note on the second space of the treble clef, and a whole note on the third line of the treble clef. Below the staff, there are two sets of three horizontal lines representing ledger lines. The first set is below the first two notes of the bass clef, and the second set is below the first note of the bass clef. Below these ledger lines are the labels CC, FF, C, and B, with the text "Capital Letter" centered below them. To the right of these labels is a sequence of pitch labels: c, b, c', b', c<sup>2</sup>, c<sup>3</sup>, and f<sup>3</sup>.

CC	FF	C	B
Capital Letter			

c   b   c'   b'   c<sup>2</sup>   c<sup>3</sup>   f<sup>3</sup>

## Chapter 1: Introduction

*It isn't fair. The closer we get to old music, the more it seems to elude us. The more we strive to get it right, the more we seem to distort it.*<sup>1</sup>

This quotation could be regarded as a warning to musicians who attempt to re-create a performance of a work as originally conceived by the composer. Interestingly, Howard Mayer Brown writes that 'most of the performances of early music before the late nineteenth century were probably quite un-selfconscious about authenticity'. He suggested:

Either the older music had never been dropped from the active repertory and was therefore performed in the same manner as any other music (presumably the case with sacred vocal music), or else concerts were designed to introduce audiences to unfamiliar music or unfamiliar sonorities, and once the primary aim was satisfied the necessary adjustments were made to ensure the success of the enterprise, without any finicky regard for authentic details.<sup>2</sup>

Brown points out the different approaches of the performers before the late nineteenth century where they had more flexibility in performing the repertoires of the past and rarely questioned the issue of 'authentic' performance. However, the publication of Arnold Dolmetsch's work<sup>3</sup> was considered as one of the stepping stones in the growth of interest in the historical performance movement. In exploring the music of past centuries, Dolmetsch focused on written sources such as pedagogical or teaching treatises,

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Taruskin, *Text and Act: Essays on Music and Performance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 353.

<sup>2</sup> Howard Mayer Brown, 'Pedantry or Liberation? A Sketch of the Historical Performance Movement', in Nicholas Kenyon (ed.), *Authenticity and Early Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 34.

<sup>3</sup> Arnold Dolmetsch, *The Interpretation of Music of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (London: Novello and Company, 1915).

descriptive accounts of performers and performances as well as the revival of old instruments such as harpsichord. This approach has provided a good way for performers to expand their understanding and gain a fresh interpretation of a piece. Nicholas Kenyon states that ‘the search for original methods and styles of performance has brought about a sea-change in our listening habits, and indeed in our approach to the whole question of repertory and tradition in classical music’.<sup>4</sup> As musicologists tried to identify and explain ‘the whole question of repertory and tradition in classical music’, it seems that more ambiguous issues and unanswered questions were raised, in particular the repertoires in which there are very few specific sources or almost no continuous performance tradition to which a performer could refer in order to realise notation in actual sound. For instance, in the construction of performance guidelines applicable to Franz Schubert’s music, ‘source data relating directly to Schubert performance in the composer’s lifetime is relatively scarce; much has thus been made of wider contemporary treatises’.<sup>5</sup> David Montgomery has suggested several possible reasons for this:

The pedagogical sources of Schubert’s day reveal nothing about his own thinking, for he made no impact upon the theoretical world. With an actual publishing life of less than ten years (beginning with *Erlafsee*, D586, January 1818), and an influential publishing life of merely seven years (beginning with *Erkönig*, D328, 1821), Schubert could not hope that his music would be included in the fashionable composition primers of the time. He had neither Beethoven’s talent for self-promotion, Hummel’s popularity as a performer, nor Carl Czerny’s reputation as a teacher, and therefore he was excluded from the performance tutors as well. After his death, publishers neglected his instrumental music for about a decade, only after which some of the major works

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<sup>4</sup> Nicholas Kenyon, ‘Authenticity and Early Music: Some Issues and Questions’, in Nicholas Kenyon (ed.), *Authenticity and Early Music*, 1.

<sup>5</sup> Ian Pace, ‘Instrumental performance in the nineteenth century’, in Colin Lawson and Robin Stowell (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Musical Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 646-648.

began to appear; but by this time the generation of Hummel was also gone and Czerny was active mostly as a teacher to a new generation. Czerny's pupils, among them Liszt, Thalberg, Heller and Kullak, were fast creating new approaches to performance, not to mention the impact of Chopin, Hiller Moscheles and Clara Wieck-Schumann.<sup>6</sup>

The invention of new approaches to performance by Liszt and his contemporaries contributed to the further ignorance of Schubert's instrumental music in both the early nineteenth-century performance manuals<sup>7</sup> and in Viennese concert life. Their emphasis on musical virtuosity successfully attracted huge attention from the public in Vienna.<sup>8</sup> Consequently, Schubert's works, in particular his piano sonatas, were frequently treated somewhat indifferently (compared, for example, with Beethoven's piano sonatas). This is suggested by William Kinderman in his article on Schubert's piano music:

Several factors contributed to their neglect: the fact that much of this music remained unpublished during Schubert's lifetime; the dominance, in these works, of musical expression over technical virtuosity; and the overpowering influence of Beethoven, whose works set standards that are not directly applicable to Schubert.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> David Montgomery, 'Modern Schubert Interpretation in the Light of the Pedagogical Sources of His Day', *Early Music*, 25 (1997), 104.

<sup>7</sup> 'Although we know much about the instruments and ensembles of his day, that information is not specific to Schubert. And of the hundreds of performance tutors published during or since Schubert's time, few even mention his name.' David Montgomery, 'Franz Schubert's music in performance: a brief history of people, events, and issues', in Christopher H. Gibbs (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 270.

<sup>8</sup> 'Like Rossini, Paganini dazzled his audiences with incredible feats of technique, musical effects, and highly ornamented versions of popular and national tunes. He heightened the effect by playing the role of a diabolical, supernatural, and inspired performer. For his efforts, his receipts were tremendous. Still financially comfortable, if to a lesser degree, were Vienna's own piano virtuosi, such as Johann Hummel, Carl Czerny, Ignaz Moscheles, and Sigismund Thalberg, whose music dominated Vienna's concert programs, private *musicales*, and musical publications.' Alice M. Hanson, *Musical Life in Biedermeier Vienna* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 188.

<sup>9</sup> William Kinderman, 'Schubert's Piano Music: Probing the Human Condition', in Christopher H. Gibbs (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 155.



Particularly in some earlier literature, Schubert's piano sonatas have been criticised as using forms and structures which were constructed in an unusual way.<sup>10</sup> Despite the fact that 'the efficiency and success of Beethoven's forms provided an inescapable critical model for more than a century to come',<sup>11</sup> it is clear that taking Beethoven's works as models for Schubert's works can lead to a misconception of the uniqueness of Schubert's music.<sup>12</sup> The innovative approach of Schubert in the construction of musical structure was discussed by Robert Schumann (1810-1856) in his article on Schubert's Symphony No. 9:

Let me state at the outset: he who doesn't know this symphony knows little of Schubert. In view of what the world has already received from him this may seem hardly credible praise. It is so often said, and to the considerable annoyance of composers, that 'after Beethoven one should forgo symphonic ambitions', and it is true that most of those who have disregarded this advice have produced only lifeless mirrorings of Beethovenesque idioms, not to mention those sorry, dull symphonists who have managed a tolerable suggestion of the powdered wigs of Haydn and Mozart but not their heads. One may make an exception for single important orchestral works, but they have been more interesting for the light they have had on the development of their composers than for any influence they have had on the public or on the evolution of the symphony ... I had suspected and hoped – and probably many others, too – that Schubert, who had shown such a sure

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<sup>10</sup> 'Complaints of an alleged looseness of organization in Schubert's music, as expressed by critics like Theodor W. Adorno, who once described Schubert's thematic structure as a "pot-pourri", have often arisen from an inadequate understanding of the aesthetic idiom of these works.' William Kinderman, 'Schubert's Piano Music: Probing the Human Condition', in Christopher H. Gibbs (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 155.

<sup>11</sup> Charles Rosen, 'Schubert and the Example of Mozart', in Brian Newbould (ed.), *Schubert the Progressive: History, Performance Practice, Analysis* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2003), 15.

<sup>12</sup> 'In Beethoven's music we never lose our bearings, we always know where we are; Schubert, on the other hand, puts us into a dream. Beethoven composes like an architect, Schubert like a sleepwalker. This is not to say, of course, that Schubert's craftsmanship is shoddy, or that Beethoven's music remains prosaic: I mean that the attitudes of the two masters to the problems of composition were different by nature.' Alfred Brendel, *Alfred Brendel on Music: Collected Essays* (London: JR Books, 2007), 45-46.

sense of structure, such invention and such versatility in so many other forms, would also tackle the symphony from the flank and find the spot from which he could get at both it and the public.<sup>13</sup>

This article was considered as one of the earliest attempts in recognising the uniqueness of Schubert's instrumental works.<sup>14</sup> While Beethoven concentrated more on the unity of the whole work, for example, by utilising a tiny motif in his Fifth Symphony, Schubert was more concerned with presenting ideas as spacious continuous lines. His expansive thinking challenges traditional structure; the soliloquy-like quality of his music runs against the formal pillars of traditional classical sonata-form; his ability (in the Lied) to suddenly change the focus of attention puts musical continuity at risk; and his taste for modulation, in particular the juxtaposition of major and minor key, may blur the identity of sonata-form sections. Such innovative procedures – mainly derived from Schubert's achievement in song – would ultimately be of great importance for the next generation of composers. In recent years, there has been a re-appraisal of Schubert's instrumental works such as piano sonatas because of a new understanding of how Schubert's forms hold these works together.<sup>15</sup> Some of this new understanding does not directly grow out of a traditional classical conception, but rather tries to elucidate how musical narration can be used to highlight Schubert's innovative procedures in expanding the sonata form

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<sup>13</sup> Henry Pleasants (trans. and ed.), *Schumann on Music: A Selection from the Writings* (New York: Dover Publications, 1965), 164.

<sup>14</sup> 'Schumann's criticism marked an interpretive high point in Schubert's reception. He recognized, valued, and extolled Schubert's genius as had no other critic to date; he repeatedly paired him with Beethoven and asserted that his music initiated a new era of Romanticism. Moreover, his criticism probed keyboard and instrumental music, not Lieder, which mostly go unmentioned.' Christopher H. Gibbs, 'German reception: Schubert's "journey to immortality"', in Christopher H. Gibbs (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 247.

<sup>15</sup> 'In particular, the late works of Beethoven and Schubert manifest an increasing concern for gestural configuration and its structural role in thematic development and emerging form.' Robert S. Hatten, *Interpreting Musical Gestures, Topics, and Tropes: Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 121.

as well as loosening the harmonic and structural elements of traditional form. The central concern of this dissertation is to show how a performer might engage with the construction of narrative experiences in and through the performance of Schubert's Piano Sonata in A Major, D959.

In his book *Nineteenth-Century Music*, Carl Dahlhaus presents a distinct picture of the early nineteenth-century virtuoso performance tradition when he described the rhetorical role of a performer within the fantasy genre:

In contrast [to sets of Variations as well as Rondo form], the fantasy, based on a late-eighteenth-century prototype from the *Sturm und Drang*, was dominated by expressive rhetorical gestures, played with a subjective verve that swept over the cracks and fissures inherent in rhapsodic form ... However, in historical context, the fact that the fantasy took on sonata-form traits, and that virtuoso pianism served as a vehicle of "large-scale form", was in turn part of a larger process that ultimately caused the virtuoso principle to be supplanted by the interpretation of works.<sup>16</sup>

Dahlhaus discusses the ambiguous role of the pianist between 'interpreting' and 'performing' large-scale piano works. 'Works to be interpreted' require an intimate understanding of the composer's intention and conception and allow for a direct sense of involvement between the listener and the work itself. 'Works to be performed' present the performer as a kind of conduit between listener and the music, and the performance mechanism itself becomes the focus of interest. It seems that the same perspective on the difference between 'works to be interpreted' and 'works to be performed' was suggested by Peter Walls:

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<sup>16</sup> Carl Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), 137.

Thinking about the ambiguity of the term ‘interpret’ is quite a useful way of distinguishing between performances which are true to the music being performed and those in which something else (showmanship, for instance) gets in the way. We could, in fact, call the first kind of performance ‘interpretation’ (anchoring that word to its primary meaning) and the second kind ‘appropriation’ (since the musical work has, in a sense, become a vehicle for the performer’s personal agenda).<sup>17</sup>

The idea of separation between ‘interpreting’ and ‘performing’ musical works was observed by Jim Samson, where ‘from an intimately related, if not fused, pair in the eighteenth century, performance and text separated out through the nineteenth century and had been well and truly split apart by the early twentieth’.<sup>18</sup> This is due to the significant change in the status of a musical score during the nineteenth century, where ‘the score began to represent the composer’s authoritative text, the continuum that existed between the score and performances in earlier eras started to break down such that the notated music could now be understood to embody an autonomous musical artwork’.<sup>19</sup>

With regard to ‘the composer’s authoritative text’, it seems that, in a musical work, composers generally set up boundaries such as notational details in order to preserve the work and provide guidelines for performers. Despite an increasing accuracy in the musical notation,<sup>20</sup> many problems remained as composers were unable to indicate all the

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<sup>17</sup> Peter Walls, ‘Historical performance and the modern performer’, in John Rink (ed.), *Musical Performance: A Guide to Understanding* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 17-18.

<sup>18</sup> Jim Samson, *Virtuosity and the Musical Work: The Transcendental Studies of Liszt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 67.

<sup>19</sup> Mine Doğantan-Dack, ‘Phrasing – the Very Life of Music: Performing the Music and Nineteenth-Century Performance Theory’, *Nineteenth-Century Music Review*, 9 (2012), 8.

<sup>20</sup> ‘The history of musical notation can be roughly generalized as the history of increasing precision.’ Bruce Ellis Benson, *The Improvisation of Musical Dialogue: A Phenomenology of Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 108.

subtleties of actual sounds that they intended.<sup>21</sup> For example, a performer might question the vague instructions by the dynamic and tempo markings<sup>22</sup> given in a score: what is the exact loudness implied by a *forte* or softness implied by a *piano*? Is there a different approach on executing a *forte* marking in a work between, say, Beethoven and Schubert? How fast is an *Allegro* and how slow is an *Adagio*? All these inquiries seem to reflect the allusive quality in a musical notation ‘offering the performer hints alongside the instructions, and therefore depending on the musician’s ability to understand these hints and allusions’.<sup>23</sup> That is to say, the ‘hints and allusions’ or the instructions given in musical notation subsequently provide an opportunity for a performer to consider the additional interpretative qualities of musical notation that arise in performance, and performers are subsequently considered as being integrally involved in the creative process. This creative role of performers in the rendition of a composer’s work reflects the shift of emphasis in recent musicology, where the focus has been expanded from the musical text to the performer. Great attention has been given to the temporal character of music and thus perceiving performance as a process rather than as a final product. For example, John Rink states that ‘because of music’s time dependency, musical structure should be understood first and foremost as a process, not as ‘architecture’ – especially in relation to performance’.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> ‘Most easily specified are concrete instructions. Of course, even in terms of designating relatively quantifiable aspects such as tempo, composers often find it difficult to express exactly what they want. What are we to make of Beethoven’s instructions from the opening of the *C Major Mass*: “Andante con moto assai vivace quasi allegretto ma non troppo”? How exactly should that *sound*?’ Ibid., 81.

<sup>22</sup> Stanley Boorman, ‘The Musical Text’, in Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist (eds.), *Rethinking Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 409.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 411.

<sup>24</sup> John Rink, ‘The (F)utility of Performance Analysis’, in Mine Doğantan-Dack (ed.), *Artistic Practice as Research in Music: Theory, Criticism, Practice* (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2015), 129.

The idea of approaching the musical form as a process rather than a defined structure seems applicable to Schubert's instrumental works. Nicholas Cook observed that Janet Schmalfeldt's research on Schubert's piano sonata demonstrates 'how Schubert created the potential for musical processes without fully determining their exact nature: the performer is frequently 'in charge' of the musical process ... a co-creator of the music alongside Schubert'.<sup>25</sup> The notion of 'a co-creator of the music alongside Schubert' seems to suggest the role of performer in 'directing the listener's attention (possibly overdidactically) to the structure and significance of events, although not changing or reordering the events themselves'.<sup>26</sup> The uniqueness of Schubert's musical structure in his piano sonatas offers a possibility for a performer to think in creative ways of treating the musical material so as to evoke a musical narrative. For example, a performer might bring out certain musical events that evoke something of significance in the music's shaping. These include how different thematic materials are constructed independently and how these materials relate with each other so as to create gestural energy. Consequently, such gestural energy:

... can help shape the *expressive genre*, or the dramatic trajectory of a movement or work. Gesturally derived expressive meanings can motivate striking departures from, or manipulations of, typical formal schemes or conventional formal expectations. (These will often be achieved by means of rhetorical gestures.)<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Janet Schmalfeldt, *In the Process of Becoming: Analytical and Philosophical Perspectives on Form in Early Nineteenth-Century Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); quoted in Nicholas Cook, *Beyond the Score: Music as Performance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 39.

<sup>26</sup> Robert S. Hatten, *Interpreting Musical Gestures, Topics, and Tropes: Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 226.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 177.

In other words, a deeper understanding of how musical narration seems to be implied in the rendition of Schubert's last three piano sonatas provides one of the potential interpretative approaches for a performer. As one of his last three piano sonatas, Schubert's Piano Sonata in A Major, D959 possesses a succession of intense emotional atmospheres by incorporating some compositional techniques such as 'rhetorical gestures'.<sup>28</sup> Such an approach – possibly derived from his achievements in Lieder – would seem to foreshadow his 'late' style.

### **1.1 Historical Context of Schubert's Last Three Piano Sonatas**

The investigation of the concept of late style in a composer's output by scholars such as Theodor Adorno, Anthony Barone and Martin Cooper,<sup>29</sup> to name three in particular, has thrown new light on the definition of a distinctive compositional style. Their findings clearly indicate that the social environment as well as physical and mental condition influence a composer's work. Scholars like Julian Horton and Joseph Straus were cautious about defining the concept of late style. Horton has differentiated between the term 'late music' and 'last music'.<sup>30</sup> He stated:

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<sup>28</sup> 'Rhetorical gestures, marked with respect to an otherwise unmarked musical discourse or flow ... include sudden or unpredicted pauses, changes, or shifts.' Ibid., 136.

<sup>29</sup> Theodor W. Adorno, 'Late Style in Beethoven', in Richard Leppert (ed.), *Essays on Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 564-568; Anthony Barone, 'Richard Wagner's "Parsifal" and the Theory of Late Style', *Cambridge Opera Journal* 7 (1995), 37-54; Martin Cooper, *Beethoven: The Last Decade, 1817-1827* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970).

<sup>30</sup> 'The former [late music] concerns the music's state of being, or ontology, and imputes a condition of critical self-reflection, a conscious attitude of leave-taking or a meditation on looming mortality. The latter [last music] is defined in merely chronological terms, encompassing the music a composer writes immediately before his or her death.' Julian Horton, 'Stasis and Continuity in Schubert's String Quintet: Responses to Nathan Martin, Steven Vande Moortele, Scott Burnham and John Koslovsky', *Music Analysis*, 33 (2014), 208-210.

In brief: not all last music is late music, and not all late music is necessarily last music, because last music is not always critically self-reflective or written in awareness of mortality, nor is music which engages in stylistic self-critique always written at the end of a composer's life.<sup>31</sup>

The same perspective on the clarification between late music and last music was discussed previously by Joseph Straus,<sup>32</sup> who expanded the idea of lateness with disability:

Late-style works are those that represent nonnormative mental and bodily states. The disabilities of their composers are refracted into a general sense of nonnormative bodily or mental function and inscribed in their music. That inscription then gives rise to the aesthetic category of late style. Both the music and discourse about it thus situate disability at the center of late style.<sup>33</sup>

The 'nonnormative bodily or mental function' seems applicable to Schubert, in particular his physical suffering with syphilis<sup>34</sup> in his last few years of life. Considered as 'an infection for which nineteenth-century medicine failed to produce a cure',<sup>35</sup> Matthew Jones explained:

Extant rudimentary treatments included salves made with arsenic or mercury. These were often as debilitating as the infection itself. Whereas Beethoven's deafness was, for a time, a condition he could hide, Schubert's syphilis was written on his body: a genital chancre, red papules, a rash and hair loss. Eventually, syphilis progresses to a final stage, attacking the central nervous system. The resulting neurological damage is fatal. Until the mid-twentieth century, people with syphilis had

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 210.

<sup>32</sup> 'Either way, I would argue that in the end there may be nothing late about late style in the sense of chronological age, the approach of life's end, or authorial or historical belatedness.' Joseph Straus, 'Disability and "Late Style" in Music', *The Journal of Musicology*, 25 (2008), 6.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>34</sup> Barbara Barry, 'A Shouting Silence: Further Thoughts about Schubert's "Unfinished"', *The Musical Times*, 151 (2010), 41-43.

<sup>35</sup> Matthew J. Jones, 'New Perspectives on Music, Disability and Illness', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 139 (2014), 424.



little choice but to live with or accommodate its disfiguring physical symptoms and the attendant social stigma.<sup>36</sup>

Such physical suffering with syphilis also seems to have contributed to the dual personality which was discussed by Barbara Barry:

The initial period of the disease [syphilis], from autumn 1822 to spring 1823, accordingly marks a forking in the road – for his health, which would become threatened in spite of periods of temporary well-being; for his personality, which would be affected by the mood swings that would intensify over the next five years, together with a sense of alienation and loneliness; and, inevitably, to some degree, for his music ... One side of his personality was friendly, loyal, dedicated to composing every morning; the other, darker side was characterised by uncontrolled or self-destructive behaviour including outbursts of irritability, heavy drinking and promiscuity. These outbursts were not limited to bursts of anger against friends and publishers. They also appear in his music as sudden flare-ups of unexpected rupture and violence, like the shocking disruptions in the slow movements of the A major sonata D.959.<sup>37</sup>

Barry points out the relationship between the characteristics of the music (‘shocking disruptions in the slow movements’) to a particular aspect of Schubert’s personality (‘uncontrolled or self-destructive behaviour’). This duality of character also gradually became a noticeable feature of Schubert’s compositional style in his later instrumental works such as the String Quintet, D956, with its dramatic F minor middle section which was contrasted with the calmness in the outer section; the ‘Unfinished’ symphony which consists of the unexpected explosion in both movements during the secondary theme; and last, but not least, the shocking intrusion during the middle section of the second

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 424.

<sup>37</sup> Barry, ‘A shouting silence’, 42-43.

movement of D959. With such contextual awareness, however necessary, it is still a challenge for a performer to deliver a coherent rendition of these late works, in particular the ‘chromatic disruption’ in the middle section of the second movement of D959 (Example 1.1).

Example 1.1: Schubert, Sonata in A Major, D959, second movement, bars 83-123

The image displays a musical score for the second movement of Schubert's Sonata in A Major, D959, covering bars 83 to 123. The score is presented in four systems, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The key signature is A major (two sharps). The time signature is 3/4. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings. The first system (bars 83-86) features a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with a harmonic accompaniment. The second system (bars 87-91) shows a chromatic disruption in the bass staff, with a treble staff accompaniment. The third system (bars 92-95) includes a treble staff with a triplet and a bass staff with a triplet. The fourth system (bars 96-100) continues the chromatic disruption in the bass staff, with a treble staff accompaniment. The score is marked with 'mf' (mezzo-forte) and 'cresc.' (crescendo). The notation includes various accidentals and articulation marks.

101 8  
cresc. f cresc.

105 8  
ffz ffz 3 3 3 3

108 fz 6 6

111 cresc. fz 8 6

114 8 3 3 3 p 6 6 6

117 cresc. f cresc. 8

120 8 ffz ffz p

It presents not only the challenge of ‘giving the music a sense of shape in time’,<sup>38</sup> but also the balance in expressing the duality between external (‘uncontrolled or self-destructive’) and internal (inward or sorrowful) experience. It was also regarded as one of the most extreme musical experiences which Schubert composed during the *Biedermeier* period.

The *Biedermeier* period took place between the Congress of Vienna (1815) and the revolutions in Europe of 1848. Schubert, along with Johann Nepomuk Hummel (1778-1837), John Field (1782-1837), Carl Maria von Weber (1786-1826) and Louis Spohr (1784-1859), lived during the *Biedermeier* period. Mary Wischusen stated:

Schubert was a teenager in post-Napoleonic Vienna, when Austrians wanted to put the wars behind them. He witnessed the exuberant days of the Congress of Vienna with its celebrations and gaiety, when so many of the Biedermeier ideals took root. These ideals of serenity, cheerfulness, simplicity, *Gemütlichkeit*, and “unpretentious sociability without politics”, were fostered by the rising middle class, of which Schubert was certainly a member.<sup>39</sup>

The rise of middle-class status in the social hierarchy opened up greater opportunities for composers across Europe and enabled them to define their own musical style independent of any aristocracies or patrons. Carl Dahlhaus stated ‘to be sure, composers were no longer dependent on patrons whose social and economic position enabled them to exercise an influence on the music’.<sup>40</sup> However, such freedom of expression in arts and other public activities was challenged and restricted by the heavy censorship of Metternich. Janet Schmalfeldt explained:

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<sup>38</sup> John Rink, ‘Translating Musical Meaning: The Nineteenth-Century Performer as Narrator’, in Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist (eds.), *Rethinking Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 218.

<sup>39</sup> Mary Wischusen, ‘Franz Schubert and Viennese Popular Comedy’, in Barbara M. Reul and Lorraine Byrne Bodley (eds.), *The Unknown Schubert* (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2008), 97.

<sup>40</sup> Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, 173.

By 1815 the Congress of Vienna had marked the end of the Napoleonic Wars and established a German Confederation under Austrian control. But now, as Nicholas Marston puts it, “the repressiveness of Metternich’s police state created a heightened sense of separation between public and private spheres of action and expression.”<sup>41</sup> In his memoir of 1872, Schubert’s friend Eduard von Bauernfeld looks back on life in Vienna in the 1820s and says: “The police in general and censorship in particular weighed on us all like a monkey we could not get off our back.”<sup>42</sup> Within this corrupt urban environment, where overcrowding and disease were everywhere and death was a daily event, where your neighbor might turn out to be a spy, home became sacred; it was the one place of refuge, comfort, and privacy, the safe haven where secrets could be shared, and where the piano could accommodate performances of music from the genres that “turn inward.”<sup>43</sup>

This natural reaction of turning away from the world of politics into the home might have contributed to another significant feature of the *Biedermeier* Period – the rapid development of music societies ‘where secrets could be shared’, with members mostly coming from middle-class backgrounds. Fostered by the Industrial Revolution, the dissemination of books and sheet music (for one’s own reading and playing pleasure at home) as well as the large production of household instruments, especially pianos, ‘created new opportunities for authors and composers, and lent new prestige and popularity to the genres that were best suited to private consumption’.<sup>44</sup> Music societies, such as the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde (GdMf, or Society of the Friends of Music),

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<sup>41</sup> Nicholas Marston, ‘Schubert’s Homecoming’, *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 125 (2000), 248.

<sup>42</sup> Eduard von Bauernfeld, *Erinnerungen aus Alt Wien* (Vienna, 1923), 371; quoted in Leon Botstein, ‘Realism Transformed: Franz Schubert and Vienna’, in Christopher H. Gibbs (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 22.

<sup>43</sup> Schmalfeldt, *In the Process of Becoming*, 228-229.

<sup>44</sup> Richard Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music, Volume 3, Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 63.

also served as a good platform for promoting these new genres of works as they frequently organised both private and public concerts. John Gingerich stated:

No organization was more important to Schubert's career than the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde (GdMf) and their two series of concerts, the public "society concerts" in a large hall with large performing forces, which took place four times a year, and the semi-public "evening entertainments" or *Abendunterhaltungen*, in a small hall, which during the 1820s put on between sixteen and twenty chamber concerts a year.<sup>45</sup>

In general, private concerts featured mostly intimate musical works such as piano solos whereas public concerts tended to combine different kinds of programmes such as some movements or scenes from an opera or a symphony, alongside some sentimental or virtuosic solo pieces.<sup>46</sup> Subsequent to this exposure, the demand of these pieces, especially the virtuosic pieces, became another distinctive characteristic of the *Biedermeier Period* – the virtuoso tradition. This was part of a more general musical environment that had moved away from serious high-brow revolutionary compositions (such as those by Beethoven) towards more entertaining programmes including Italian opera by Gioachino Rossini (1792-1868) or Vincenzo Bellini (1801-1835), virtuosic pieces by violinist Niccolò Paganini (1782-1840) and works by the pianist Franz Liszt (1811-1886).

The idea of some of Schubert's piano works (such as Dances or Moments Musicaux) or Mendelssohn's *Lieder ohne Worte* being suited to the intimate setting of nineteenth-

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<sup>45</sup> John M. Gingerich, *Schubert's Beethoven Project* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 177.

<sup>46</sup> "The mixed programs of these concerts, cobbled together from symphony movements, opera fragments, and virtuoso or sentimental solo pieces, predominated roughly until mid-century, revealing that education and entertainment had not yet become separate functions." Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, 174.

century drawing rooms is the first challenge to confront in respect to modern concert hall performance, particularly the difficulties in the sound projection which the performer must overcome if this music is to be transferred from the drawing room to the concert hall.<sup>47</sup> However, Schubert's late works often indicate an indifference to *Biedermeier* culture and values. The dramatic middle section of the second movement of D959 shows the extremity in Schubert's musical expression that made him move away from the *Biedermeier* ideals – *Gemütlichkeit*. It also possess another kind of challenge in which a performer needs to find a balance in expressing the different personalities between external ('uncontrolled or self-destructive') and internal (inward or sorrowful) experience. One of the possible solutions in preserving both extreme personalities of Schubert's Piano Sonata in A Major, D959, and project within a wide open concert space is to investigate the physical characteristics of pianos that were available during Schubert's time. Despite the fact that a modern concert grand piano is better suited to large venues, it is still possible for interpreters to discover certain characteristics of the sounds without compromising the modern concert grand piano's ability to project and thus give an illusion for audiences to feel the different musical expressions (internal and external experience) of the piece.

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<sup>47</sup> 'Even in our own century, music critics, particularly the serious ones, have paradoxically demanded of lied singers or pianists playing before audiences numbering in the hundreds, or even thousands, that they convey the aesthetic impression of performing in intimate private surroundings.' *Ibid.*, 171.

## Chapter 2: Viennese Pianos in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century

There are several methods or approaches that performers can take into consideration in order to achieve a stylistic performance of Schubert's piano sonatas: to have a deeper knowledge of the composer's instruments is one of the issues that can be drawn on when trying to understand the tone colours that are available for the composer. In other words, being aware of the fortepiano as the instrument of Schubert's time and the sound it produces will help enlighten a performer in giving a stylish, convincing performance. Thomas Schmidt-Beste explains the influence of the piano's development on composers of piano sonatas in the late eighteenth century:

The piano sonata, in particular, not only had to live up to the highest historical and aesthetic standards; both the musicians and the audiences demanded a high degree of idiomatic writing for the instrument as well, which meant that composers had to take into account the increasing capabilities of an instrument which had undergone substantial development since the late eighteenth century.<sup>1</sup>

In relation to Schubert's piano sonatas, David Ward stated:

... the piano itself underwent enormous changes, from something that sounded not very different from a harpsichord to an instrument of power and range, capable of coping with the demands of the late sonatas by Beethoven and Schubert – but still a very different instrument from the one we know today.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Schmidt-Beste, *Cambridge Introductions to Music: The Sonata* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 184.

<sup>2</sup> David Ward, 'Keyboard', in Anthony Burton (ed.), *A Performer's Guide to Music of the Classical Period* (London: The Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music, 2007), 39.



The dissimilarities in the construction and mechanism between early and modern pianos have been well documented by many musicologists.<sup>3</sup> Their research and findings show that these differences have significant influences on both tone projection of the types of pianos as well as the development of playing techniques which enabled pianists to produce a variety of tone colours, articulations and dynamics. In order to further widen one's insights into the instruments which might have been available during Schubert's time, a visit to Finchcocks Musical Museum in Kent, UK, provides some indication of their technical capabilities when played as well as their distinguished sounds. Finchcocks Musical Museum has a good collection of Viennese fortepianos and the investigation into the mechanism of the Viennese fortepianos such as the damper system, strike proportion of the hammers, touch resistance, key depth, pedals as well as the keyboard range is discussed and analysed in this chapter.

In contrast to modern pianos, which possess rounder sounds and a somewhat heavier touch, Viennese pianos had shorter and narrower keys as well as a lighter touch than the pianos of today.<sup>4</sup> Martino Tirimo described Viennese pianos as having a rich tone quality for higher register notes which last for a relatively short duration, and silvery clarity, without sounding 'thick', for lower register notes.<sup>5</sup> This is due to the action of the Viennese early pianos. The damping system constructed in most of the Viennese pianos

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<sup>3</sup> For example, David Rowland, 'Pianos and pianists c.1770-c.1825', in David Rowland (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Piano* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 22-39; David Ward, 'Keyboard', in Anthony Burton (ed.), *A Performer's Guide to Music of the Classical Period* (London: The Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music, 2007), 39-50; Derek Carew, *The Mechanical Muse: The Piano, Pianists and Piano Music, c.1760-1850* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2007).

<sup>4</sup> For the purpose of this dissertation, the investigation of early pianos concentrates on those instruments which possibly were in use during Schubert's time, especially the Viennese pianos.

<sup>5</sup> Martino Tirimo, 'Schubert and the Piano', *Franz Schubert: The Complete Piano Sonatas Volume 3* (Vienna: Wiener Urtext Edition, 1999), xxix.

has a wedge shape which is placed in between two strings (Figure 2.1). This stops the vibration of the strings effectively and consistently. This results in a faster decay of sound and thus provides a clearer tone projection as well as greater clarity.

Figure 2.1: Viennese damper<sup>6</sup>

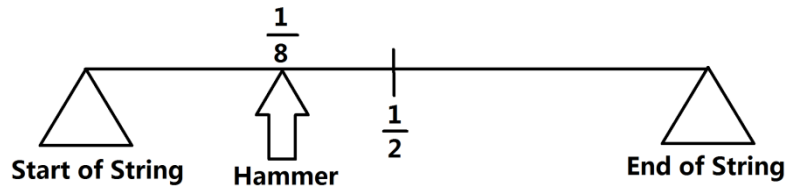


The strike proportion of hammers upon the strings inside the piano also influences the tone projection of the instrument. That is to say, the position of a hammer in hitting the strings inside the piano contributed to the quality of the tone. Taking middle C as the standard measurement, the strike proportion is  $\frac{1}{8}$  for most of the modern pianos (Figure 2.2).

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<sup>6</sup> Picture taken at Finchcocks Musical Museum on 17 October 2014. Built in 1793 by Sebastian Lengerer at Kufstein.

Figure 2.2: Strike Proportion of modern pianos



In Figure 2.2, the ‘Start of String’ is referring to the player’s position where the keyboard is located. In the investigation of late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century pianos, it seems that the hammer was gradually moving further away from the player’s position (Figures 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5). This results in the change of tone from the thinness found in the early Viennese pianos (Rosenberger, Lengerer) to a rounder quality in the Fritz and subsequently to Conrad Graf.

Figure 2.3: Strike Proportion of Rosenberger Fortepiano (1795) and Lengerer (1793)

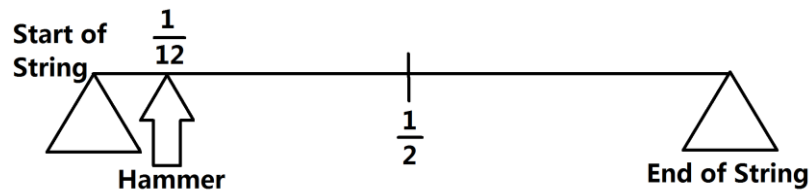


Figure 2.4: Strike Proportion of Fritz Fortepiano (1815)

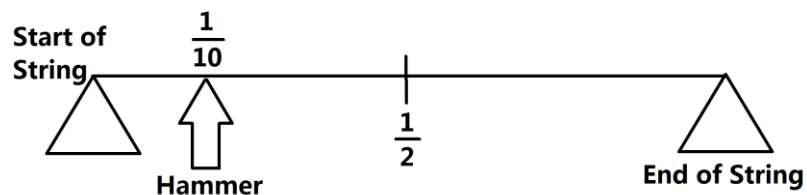
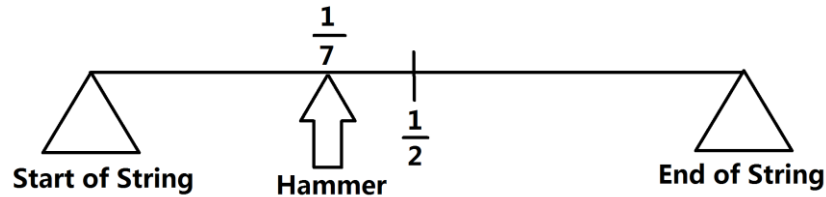
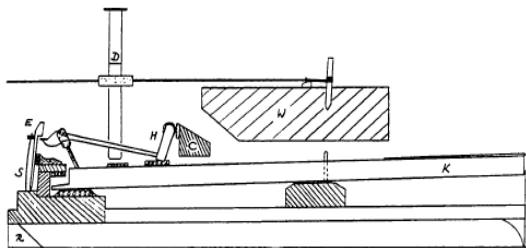


Figure 2.5: Strike Proportion of Conrad Graf Fortepiano (1826)



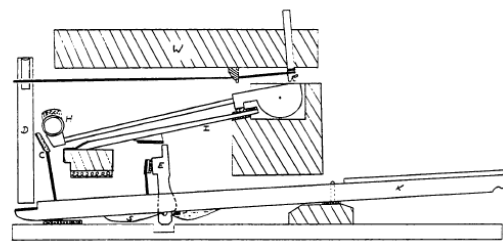
The Viennese action (Figure 2.6) produced ‘a hammer check rail whose function is to catch the hammer as it returns to its resting position’.<sup>7</sup> For an English action (Figure 2.7), the check rail was removed and replaced with individual checks for each hammer. This contributed to the level of touch required to play on the English piano which was much stronger. In other words, the presence of check provides much more consistency in the control of the touch and wider dynamic ranges than those without check.

Figure 2.6: Viennese piano action<sup>8</sup>



3 Walter’s action (after a Walter piano (SAM 454), Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)  
C = check, D = damper, E = escapement, H = hammer,  
K = key, R = action ramp, S = escapement spring, W =  
wrestplank

Figure 2.7: English piano action<sup>9</sup>



2 Cristofori’s action (after Rosamund Harding’s drawing of the action of the Cristofori piano, Grassi Museum, Leipzig)  
C = check, D = damper, E = escapement, H = hammer,  
I = intermediate lever, K = key, S = escapement spring,  
W = wrestplank  
(For the sake of clarity, parts of the actions drawn here have been omitted. The drawings are not to scale.)

However, there are some different versions of constructions for the check in these early pianos during the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century. For instance,

<sup>7</sup> David Rowland, ‘Pianos and pianists c.1770-c.1825’, in David Rowland (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Piano* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 24.

<sup>8</sup> Michael Latcham, ‘The Check in Some Early Pianos and the Development of Piano Technique around the Turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century’, *Early Music*, 21 (1993), 31.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

compared with the Broadwood grand piano which was built in 1801 (with the usual individual check for each hammer, Figure 2.8); the 1823 version was built with a single check rail (Figure 2.9).

Figure 2.8: Broadwood Grand Piano (London, 1801)<sup>10</sup>



Figure 2.9: Broadwood Grand Piano (London, 1823)<sup>11</sup>



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<sup>10</sup> Picture taken at Finchcocks Musical Museum on 17 October 2014 and please refer to Track 1 from the accompanying DVD recording.

<sup>11</sup> Picture taken at Finchcocks Musical Museum on 17 October 2014 and please refer to Track 1 from the accompanying DVD recording.

The mechanism of Viennese pianos, where ‘the hammer ... like the clavichord, mounted directly on the key, giving more – and more intimate – control’,<sup>12</sup> also results in differences in the physical strength that is required to play on both early and modern pianos. An average of 60-80 grams is required to depress the keys on a modern grand piano such as Steinway or Bösendorfer. In comparison with the late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century pianos, the differences that come to the fore are both obvious and noticeable (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1<sup>13</sup>

Piano	Touch Resistance (the weight required on depressing the key)	Key Depth (mm)
Sebastian Lengerer Fortepiano (Kufstein, 1793)	35 grams	7.0
Rosenberger Fortepiano (Vienna, 1795)	32 grams	5.0
Anton Walter Travelling Piano (Vienna, c.1805)	18 grams	4.0
Fritz Fortepiano (Vienna, 1815)	26 grams	5.0
Conrad Graf Fortepiano (Vienna, 1826)	48 grams	7.5

The key depth is very shallow on most of the early pianos. The average key depth on a modern piano such as Yamaha or Steinway is around 9.5mm (10.0mm for a concert grand). The construction of the hammer in the Viennese pianos also became bigger and heavier (Figure 2.10); in particular, compare the Fritz with all others.

<sup>12</sup> Derek Carew, *The Mechanical Muse: The Piano, Pianists and Piano Music, c.1760-1850* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2007), 29.

<sup>13</sup> Experiment carried out at Finchcocks Musical Museum on 17 October 2014.

Figure 2.10: Different Viennese Pianos hammers<sup>14</sup>



Although there is an increase in the touch resistance as well as key depth on the Viennese instruments, in particular from the Fritz Fortepiano of 1815 to the Conrad Graf of 1826, the physical strength required to play on these early Viennese pianos is still considerably less than on a modern grand piano. Both the key depth and the touch resistance relate directly to the amount of physical strength that is needed to depress a key as well as to the approach a performer will adopt to most effectively produce the desired tone colour.

In addition, the expanded keyboard range on the Viennese pianos as well as the introductions of different kinds of pedals made these instruments capable of producing a variety of tone colours and subsequently influenced Schubert's compositional style in his piano music, especially the piano sonatas (Table 2.2).

<sup>14</sup> Picture taken at Finchcocks Musical Museum on 16 October 2014.

Table 2.2<sup>15</sup>

Piano	Keyboard Range	
	Bottom Note	Top Note
Sebastian Lengerer Fortepiano (Kufstein, 1793)	FF	f <sup>3</sup>
Rosenberger Fortepiano (Vienna, 1795)	FF	c <sup>4</sup>
Anton Walter Travelling Piano (Vienna, c.1805)	C	f <sup>3</sup>
Fritz Fortepiano (Vienna, 1815)	FF	f <sup>4</sup>
Conrad Graf Fortepiano (Vienna, 1826)	CC	f <sup>4</sup>

For instance, William S. Newman has found that Schubert took ‘special delight in the new highs and lows’<sup>16</sup> in the Sonata D959, fourth movement, bar 271-279 (Example 2.1):

Example 2.1: Schubert, Sonata in A Major, D959, fourth movement, bars 271-279<sup>17</sup>

The image shows a musical score for Schubert's Sonata in A Major, D959, fourth movement, bars 271-279. The score is written in treble and bass clefs. It features a piano part with dynamic markings such as *p*, *pp*, and *cresc.* There are also markings for '8' and 'p'.

<sup>15</sup> Experiment carried out at Finchcocks Musical Museum on 17 October 2014.

<sup>16</sup> William S. Newman, ‘Romantic Sonata Form’, *The Sonata Since Beethoven* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1969), 121.

<sup>17</sup> This extract was played on both the Fritz Fortepiano (Vienna, 1815) and the Conrad Graf Fortepiano (Vienna, 1826) in Finchcocks Musical Museum on 17 October 2014. Please refer to Track 2 from the accompanying DVD recording.



The high E in bar 274 also appears in several places in the sonata: bars 185-193 in the first movement and two appearances in the dramatic middle section (bar 107 as well as bars 104-105) in the second movement.

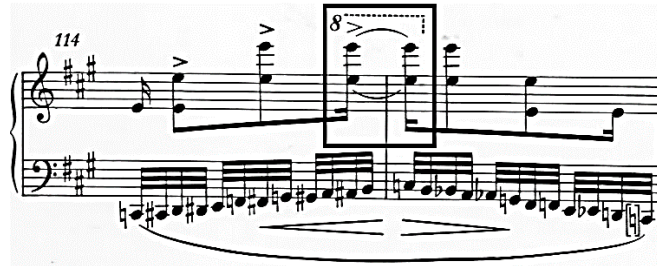
Example 2.2: Schubert, Sonata in A Major, D959, first movement, bars 185-193<sup>18</sup>

Example 2.3: Schubert, Sonata in A Major, D959, second movement, bars 104-107<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> This extract was played on both the Fritz Fortepiano (Vienna, 1815) and the Conrad Graf Fortepiano (Vienna, 1826) in Finchcocks Musical Museum on 17 October 2014. Please refer to Track 3 from the accompanying DVD recording.

<sup>19</sup> This extract was played on both the Fritz Fortepiano (Vienna, 1815) and the Conrad Graf Fortepiano (Vienna, 1826) in Finchcocks Musical Museum on 17 October 2014. Please refer to Track 4 from the accompanying DVD recording.

Example 2.4: Schubert, Sonata in A Major, D959, second movement, bars 114-115<sup>20</sup>



The physical experience of playing the musical examples (Example 2.2 to 2.4) on both Fritz and Conrad Graf Fortepiano is stimulating: a pianist experiences that the volume of the sound projection is considerably small. The clarity of sound in the low and high register of the Fritz is much thinner than the Conrad Graf. Another observation from playing on these early pianos is the need to adjust the feeling of the touching as well as responsiveness of the instrument; in particular, the smaller surface area of the key size compared with the modern piano requires different playing techniques. Rather than using the whole arm, a lighter touch, with the focus upon the use of the fingers, is required to depress the keys effectively. The feeling of the keyboard geography on the Fritz and Conrad Graf Fortepianos slightly different from modern pianos because of the smaller key size. For example, in Example 2.2, the sense of leaping between high E and B on both the Fritz and Conrad Graf Fortepianos is slightly less than on a modern piano.

Before the early nineteenth century, most Viennese pianos had knee pedals to lift the dampers. These pedals are usually constructed under the keyboard (Figure 2.11).

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<sup>20</sup>This extract was played on both the Fritz Fortepiano (Vienna, 1815) and the Conrad Graf Fortepiano (Vienna, 1826) in Finchcocks Musical Museum on 17 October 2014. Please refer to Track 5 from the accompanying DVD recording.

Figure 2.11: Knee Pedals, Lengerer Fortepiano (1793)<sup>21</sup>



In the beginning of nineteenth century, knee pedals were gradually changed to foot pedals. David Ward outlines a general picture of different types of pedals which were constructed in the Viennese pianos (Figures 2.12 and 2.13):

In the early years of the nineteenth century, pedals were introduced to the Viennese pianos, sometimes as many as five or six: one to raise the dampers (sustaining), one for the keyboard shift (*una corda* – with this the hammer could strike one or two out of the three strings), two for different thicknesses of moderator, and one for a ‘bassoon’ sound (parchment placed on the string to give a curious buzzing effect) or for ‘Turkish music’, imitating drums, bells and cymbals! So these instruments were rich in devices for producing different sonorities, particularly in the softer registers. This explains why Schubert employed so many *piano* and *pianissimo* markings in his keyboard music.<sup>22</sup>

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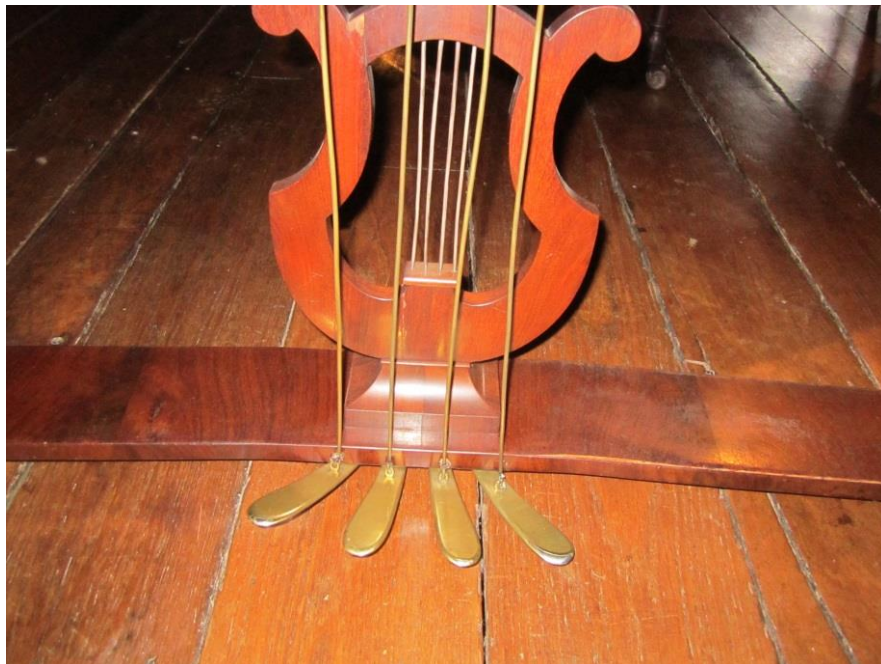
<sup>21</sup> Picture taken at Finchcocks Musical Museum on 17 October 2014.

<sup>22</sup> David Ward, ‘Keyboard’, in Anthony Burton (ed.), *A Performer’s Guide to Music of the Classical Period* (London: The Associated Board of the Royal School of Music, 2007), 43.

Figure 2.12: Foot Pedals, Fritz Fortepiano (Vienna, 1815)<sup>23</sup>



Figure 2.13: Foot Pedals, Conrad Graf Fortepiano (Vienna, 1826)<sup>24</sup>



<sup>23</sup> Picture taken at Finchcocks Musical Museum on 17 October 2014.

<sup>24</sup> Picture taken at Finchcocks Musical Museum on 17 October 2014.

Both Fritz and Conrad Graf Fortepianos have all these pedals. The ‘Moderator’ pedal consists of a leather or cloth strip brought between the hammers and the strings to produce a different kind of softness. Malcolm Bilson suggested that the ‘Moderator’ pedal was probably essential in Schubert’s *pianissimo* thinking and ‘it is clear that at least in some instances the indication *ppp* or *sordino* will refer to the “Moderator” [pedal]’.<sup>25</sup> However, David Montgomery advised that the use of pedals in Schubert’s music ‘was not meant only in dynamic terms, but sonority as well’.<sup>26</sup> That is to say, the use of certain pedals on the piano is not only confined to the projection of the volume of sound which is indicated by the dynamic markings. They also serve as a clue for a performer in exploring different tone colours for different musical expression.

For instance, in the Piano Sonata, D959, the second theme in the first movement, coda section of the second movement, trio section of the third movement, and the false impression of the return to the main theme in the fourth movement, use *piano* and *pianissimo* markings. Schubert even employed two markings of *ppp* in the first movement (bar 322-323, Example 2.5) as well as the ending of the second movement (from bar 200 onwards, Example 2.6). All these dynamics provide a hint for a performer to produce different sonorities for each musical expression, for example, a crystalline-like effect on the repeat of the second theme in a higher register (Example 2.5).

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<sup>25</sup> Malcolm Bilson, ‘Schubert’s Piano Music and the pianos of His Time’, *Studia Musicologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 22 (1980), 270.

<sup>26</sup> David Montgomery, *Franz Schubert’s Music in Performance: Compositional Ideals, Notational Intent, Historical Realities, Pedagogical Foundations* (New York: Pendragon Press, 2003), 5.

Example 2.5: Schubert, Sonata in A Major, D959, first movement, bars 314-325<sup>27</sup>

The musical score for Example 2.5 consists of three systems of music. The first system, starting at bar 314, shows a treble clef with a piano (*p*) dynamic marking. The second system, starting at bar 317, includes a piano-piano (*pp*) dynamic marking and a box highlighting a passage in bar 322. The third system, starting at bar 322, features a piano-piano-piano (*ppp*) dynamic marking and another box highlighting a passage in bar 322. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and a box highlighting a specific passage in bar 322.

Example 2.6: Schubert, Sonata in A Major, D959, second movement, bars 194-202<sup>28</sup>

The musical score for Example 2.6 consists of a single system of music. It is in treble and bass clefs with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The score includes dynamic markings such as *dim.* and *ppp*, and various musical notations like slurs and accents.

In the playing of musical examples (Example 2.6 and 2.7) on both Fritz and Conrad Graf Fortepianos, it will be found that the use of the *una corda* pedal on the far left helps to

<sup>27</sup> This extract was played on both the Fritz Fortepiano (Vienna, 1815) and the Conrad Graf Fortepiano (Vienna, 1826) in Finchcocks Musical Museum on 17 October 2014. Please refer to Track 6 from the accompanying DVD recording.

<sup>28</sup> This extract was played on both the Fritz Fortepiano (Vienna, 1815) and the Conrad Graf Fortepiano (Vienna, 1826) in Finchcocks Musical Museum on 17 October 2014. Please refer to Track 7 from the accompanying DVD recording.

achieve the softness in the *ppp* section (bars 322-323 in Example 2.5 as well as the last three bars in Example 2.6). More interestingly, the construction of the pedals on the Fritz Fortepiano allows a pianist to use his or her foot to press the pedal either fully or in half way. For example, the full press on the *una corda* results in the hammer striking two strings, whereas the half press on the *una corda* will shift the hammer to strike only one string.

Playing these early pianos offers a performer valuable insights into the relationship between the development in keyboard range, tone and pedal of the piano during Schubert's time and the way he composed instrumental works, including his piano sonatas. By playing Schubert's works on very well preserved pianos of the period, their characteristic sound as well as the technical demands can be explored.<sup>29</sup> The uncovering of the actual physical characteristics of early and modern pianos, in terms of both their capabilities and their restrictions, is advantageous as well as a refreshing experience to a modern pianist.

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<sup>29</sup> 'What is significant is the fact that the instruments do alert the player to historical difference. Different versions of a particular instrument or family will force the player to rethink his techniques and interpretative capability, and thus the repertory will have to be seen in a new light.' John Butt, *Playing with History: The Historical Approach to Musical Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 65.

## Chapter 3: Problems of Conveying Formal Coherence

### 3.1 Musical Narrative Concept – A guide to Interpretation

According to C. P. E. Bach and Carl Czerny, there are certain criteria which are adopted in composing a fantasy-like piece such as ‘varied harmonic progressions which can be expressed in all manner of figuration and motives’<sup>1</sup> as well as ‘an arbitrary interruption of the course of the ideas’.<sup>2</sup> With regard to this, Beethoven’s ‘Tempest’ Sonata was considered as one of the examples of how improvisatory elements were infused and succeeded in transforming the sonata tradition (such as the appearance of the recitative passage in the beginning as well as the longer one in the recapitulation of the first movement). Beethoven’s approach on expanding the traditional sonata-form movement in the first movement of ‘Tempest’ Sonata seems to suggest James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy’s notion of ‘Sonata Deformation’, where it ‘became an increasingly attractive option in the hands of nineteenth-century composers who, for one reason or another, wished to suggest the inadequacy of the Enlightenment-grounded solutions provided generic sonata practice’.<sup>3</sup> Thomas Schmidt-Beste stated:

Of particular interest in this context is the relationship between the sonata and the ‘neighbouring’ genre of the fantasia. As the form of the sonata became more flexible in the nineteenth century, with varying numbers of movements and fluid transitions between them, and as the ever more substantial fantasia increasingly grew from a sectional into a proper multi-movement form, composers had to decide whether a work which dwelt on the border between these two genres was ‘still a sonata’ or ‘already a fantasia’. The decision in favour of calling a work a ‘fantasia’ most

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<sup>1</sup> William J. Mitchell (trans. and ed.), *Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach: Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments* (London: Ernst Eulenburg Ltd., 1974), 430.

<sup>2</sup> John Bishop (ed.), *Carl Czerny: School of Practical Composition, Complete Treatise on the Composition of all kinds of music. Both Instrumental and Vocal Together with a Treatise on Instrumentation Opus 600* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1979), 83.

<sup>3</sup> James Hepokoski & Warren Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory: Norms, Types, and Deformations in the Late-Eighteenth-Century Sonata* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 254.



often seems to have been due to a certain reticence, a shying away from the pretensions of complexity and sophistication ‘expected’ of a sonata.<sup>4</sup>

In relation to Schubert, the dramatic middle section of the second movement in his Piano Sonata in A Major, D959, is a good example of the infusion of fantasy-like elements. The complexity of musical material presented in the middle section of the second movement such as the variety in the expressive markings, articulations, rhythmic contrasts as well as harmonic progressions evokes a need for the performer to solve problems. The problem solving is implied by thematic relations, tensions and developments that supply some of the necessary ingredients for the construction of a plan, that is, of a performance strategy by which situations and events are linked together to form a plot. Those ingredients, ambiguity in structure, in expression, and thus in performance interpretations, provide circumstances by which a performer experiences critical practice and creative performance so as to evoke musical narratives through performative approaches. John Rink stated:

Whereas the prevailing model for musical performance in the eighteenth century was oratory, in the nineteenth it was drama: indeed, a particular nineteenth-century performance rhetoric can be defined not according to the Classical tradition adapted, say, by Mattheson, but with regard to explicitly dramatic properties exploiting familiar rhetorical devices – structure, gestures, figures, inflections, emphases, pauses – to new and different ends.<sup>5</sup>

Rink observed the shift of the role of performer from an orator during the eighteenth century into a narrator during the nineteenth century. In the eighteenth century, the main

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<sup>4</sup> Schmidt-Beste, *The Sonata*, 185.

<sup>5</sup> John Rink, ‘Translating Musical Meaning: The Nineteenth-Century Performer as Narrator’, in Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist (eds.), *Rethinking Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 220.

linguistic counterpart of music had been rhetoric. The focus of rhetoric is the form of oration and on the devices which the orator could utilise to affect the listener. However, during the early nineteenth century, the idea of telling a story and narration became a crucial linguistic counterpart for music. The emphasis was given to the temporal quality of music and how the performer can make the music cohere in time. The idea of the application of narration in music has attracted much attention in musicology during the past few years.<sup>6</sup> Some of the findings suggest that there are parallels between the construction of a piece of music and a work of literature, for example, a novel. Seaton stated:

For this reason, it is necessary to define narrativity in positive terms. To say that a piece of music is a narrative means that it has two essential features: plot and voice. In other words, a musical work possesses the quality of narrativity in the same way that a work of literature does so.<sup>7</sup>

Although there is still a difference in terms of the application of the narrativity for music and literature respectively,<sup>8</sup> the idea of a musical plot as referred to in this dissertation is ‘musically constituted: a time-dependent unfolding of successive musical events, palpably linked to produce a coherent “statement” embodied in sound alone, which is of course the principal expressive medium available to the instrumentalist’.<sup>9</sup> That is to say, a musical plot was understood not only as a temporal sequence in which one event follows

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<sup>6</sup> See Edward T. Cone, *The Composer's Voice* (California: University of California Press, 1974); Susan McClary, ‘Narrative Agendas in “Absolute” Music: Identity and Difference in Brahms’s Third Symphony’, in her *Reading Music: Selected Essays* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2007); Byron Almén, *A Theory of Musical Narrative* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008); Kofi Agawu, *Music as Discourse: Semiotic Adventures in Romantic Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 102-106; Douglas Seaton, ‘Narrativity and the Performance of Beethoven’s Tempest Sonata’, in Pieter Bergé (ed.), *Beethoven’s Tempest Sonata: Perspectives of Analysis and Performance* (Leuven: Peeters, 2009), 273-292.

<sup>7</sup> Douglas Seaton, ‘Narrativity and the Performance of Beethoven’s Tempest Sonata’, in Pieter Bergé (ed.), *Beethoven’s Tempest Sonata: Perspectives of Analysis and Performance* (Leuven: Peeters, 2009), 274.

<sup>8</sup> ‘... in a short story or novel the action appears to exist apart from the words on the page, while in a piece of music this is not the case.’ *Ibid.*, 274.

<sup>9</sup> John Rink, ‘Translating Musical Meaning’, 218.

the other, but also as a causal sequence where the former event makes the latter happen. In other words, a musical plot should consist of a temporal trajectory which is usually started from stability through rising conflict or problems to final resolution. Hepokoski and Darcy observed that the genre of the sonata can be viewed as a metaphor of human action and it invites an interpretation as a musically narrative genre.<sup>10</sup> A similar observation was made by Seaton that sonata-form was recognised as a good example of a musical plot where the structural organisation resembles the different conditions of a plot:

On the other hand, the paradigmatic instance of plot – or drama – for music (and, one might argue, for all art) is the so-called sonata form. In principle, a sonata first movement has a clear beginning and end, establishing its material and its position of stability (the tonic key) at the outset and ultimately returning to stability at the close.<sup>11</sup>

In an exposition, the establishment of its material in the beginning, such as the principal theme in the home key, gives a sense of stability. Gradually, the forward motion of the theme towards a different key creates a tension that demands resolution. However, the modulatory character in the development section suspends the tonal identity and thus increases the tension or problem. Eventually, the recapitulation functions as a section where the previous conflicts of the principal theme resolve back into its home key and re-establishes its harmonic stability.

The idea of a musical plot was not only confined to sonata-form, but also applicable to other structural designs which present comparable features of a plot, in particular the

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<sup>10</sup> Hepokoski & Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory*, 251-252.

<sup>11</sup> Seaton, 'Narrativity and the Performance of Beethoven's Tempest Sonata', 275.

element of causal connection where one event makes another happen. Being one of the most dramatic musical experiences composed by Schubert, the second movement of Sonata D959 offers the possibility to be considered as a plot. Constructed in a ternary form, it has the same kind of criteria as in a sonata-form: there is a departure from stability towards increasing conflict in the middle section, before the music is guided back to stability.

In the ‘translation’ of the dramatic qualities of a musical plot, each performer might have different responses to these dramatic aspects of the music such as which musical event needs spotlighting, which sections require to be persuasively sustained beyond the tensions inherent in the musical materials, which moments of premature resolution must be subverted, which characteristics must be intensely captured or reflected upon, and so on. In other words, this difference is based on how a performer identifies the ‘dramatic properties’<sup>12</sup> throughout the musical plot and this sort of ‘reading’ will vary from performer to performer. For instance, one of the ‘dramatic properties’ which Schubert may have utilised in sonata D959 is the rhetorical gesture.<sup>13</sup> Such gesture reflects Schubert’s unique approach in loosening the classical sonata conventions and was applied extensively throughout the sonata. The ‘shocking disruptions’ which appear in the middle section of the second movement (Example 1.1)<sup>14</sup> as well as the abrupt shift to the foreign key in the third movement (Example 3.1) are examples of rhetorical gestures. They serve as dramatic moments in the course of a successive musical event.

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<sup>12</sup> The points or moments that initiate the subsequent action or event in the course of a musical plot.

<sup>13</sup> See Chapter 1, 10.

<sup>14</sup> See Chapter 1, 13-14.

Example 3.1: Schubert, Sonata in A Major, D959, third movement, bars 24-36

The image displays a musical score for the third movement of Schubert's Sonata in A Major, D959, specifically bars 24 through 36. The score is written for piano and is in 3/4 time. It features a treble and bass clef. The key signature is A major (two sharps). The score is divided into three systems. The first system (bars 24-30) shows a complex texture with rapid sixteenth-note passages in the right hand and a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the left hand. The second system (bars 31-35) begins with a 'decresc.' (decrescendo) marking and ends with a 'ff' (fortissimo) marking. The third system (bar 36) shows a final chord with a 'fz' (forzando) marking. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

However, Schubert's ability to suddenly change the focus of attention in a sonata-form movement also puts musical continuity at risk. This is one of the unusual features in Schubert's musical idiom that would appear to challenge the principles of traditional sonata form. As one of the leading interpreters of Schubert's piano works, Alfred Brendel has written that 'in his larger forms, Schubert is a wanderer. He likes to move at the edge of the precipice ... To wander is the Romantic condition'.<sup>15</sup> Sonata D959 is a very good example of that 'wanderer condition', and ultimately highlights Schubert's unconventional approach in composing the sonata by constructing the musical themes which seem to move beyond the verge of a conventional sonata form. In order to have a clearer understanding of how the traditional sonata-form was developed in the early nineteenth-century which leads into new conceptions of musical presentation, together with the focus on how a performer could construct a musical plot in the Sonata D959, the

<sup>15</sup> Alfred Brendel, *Alfred Brendel on Music: Collected Essays* (London: JR Books, 2007), 165.

possible interpretations that may be adopted by a performer of certain sections of Schubert's Piano Sonata in A Major, D959 will be discussed in the following section.

### **3.2 Dynamic Form**

The issue of interpretation and performance of Schubert's piano sonatas raises several important points. One of them is that Schubert emphasises improvisational quality in D959 with the use of rhetoric gestures which serve as dramatic moments in the course of a successive musical event. Such compositional approach reflects Schubert's unique musical idiom in expanding the classical sonata conventions. At the same time, it also offers the possibilities in expanding a performer's conception on interpreting and performing Schubert's D959.

When performing Schubert's piano sonatas, a pianist might wish to re-evaluate his or her internal conception of the classical sonata-form model. The 'paradigm shift' which took place in nineteenth-century performance leads into new conceptions of musical presentation: Schubert presented the music in a more spontaneous and less predictable way, and he provides the coherence of the whole piece (which was built with different musical ideas) by means of articulation as rhetorical devices. All these approaches contributed to the overall structure of the piece and this opens another new understanding of the musical form adopted. Compared with the traditional sonata-form which was prevalent during the classical period, Schubert's perception of the sonata-form, including his last three piano sonatas, is evolutionary, and he seems to try to transform the sonata-

form into a ‘means to attaining an expressive purpose’.<sup>16</sup> This is an inventive form which Lawrence Zbikowski termed as a ‘dynamic form’ which he distinguishes from the traditional sonata-form as a ‘static form’:

As the study of form developed and was continued through the nineteenth century, theorists worked with two basic – and seemingly opposed – models of musical form, one static, the other dynamic. Musical form, viewed from a static perspective, is reminiscent of architecture (a parallel all the more ironic, given Friedrich von Schelling’s characterization of architecture as “frozen music”) and typically consists of either a framing structure clad with musical material or relatively abstract containers filled with musical events. Musical form from a dynamic viewpoint is processive and a bit unpredictable: the musical work emerges over the course of time, and musical materials are both the substance of and *raison d’être* for this emergence.<sup>17</sup>

Zbikowski points out the difference between the traditional sonata-form (‘static form’) and the inventive form (‘dynamic form’) where the traditional sonata-form (Figure 3.1) consists of balanced structures built from regular sub-units with clear connections between each other. The inventive form (Figure 3.2) was conceived as a process where the unexpected relationships in the musical materials provides a variety of interpretative possibilities. The emphasis was given to a performer in defining the overall structure throughout the piece:

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<sup>16</sup> Irving, ‘Invention of Tradition’, 199.

<sup>17</sup> Laurence M. Zbikowski, *Conceptualizing Music: Cognitive Structure, Theory and Analysis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 288.

Figure 3.1: Static Form

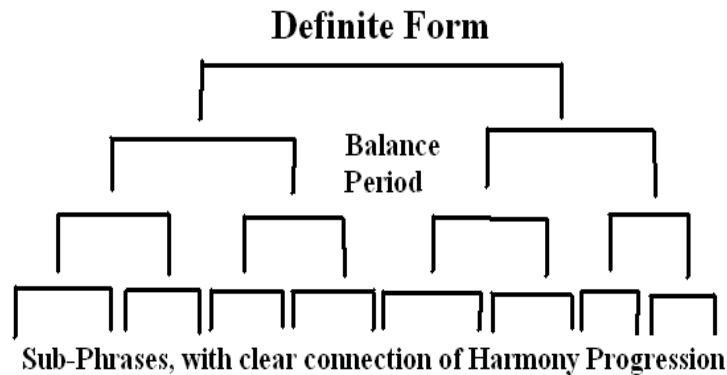
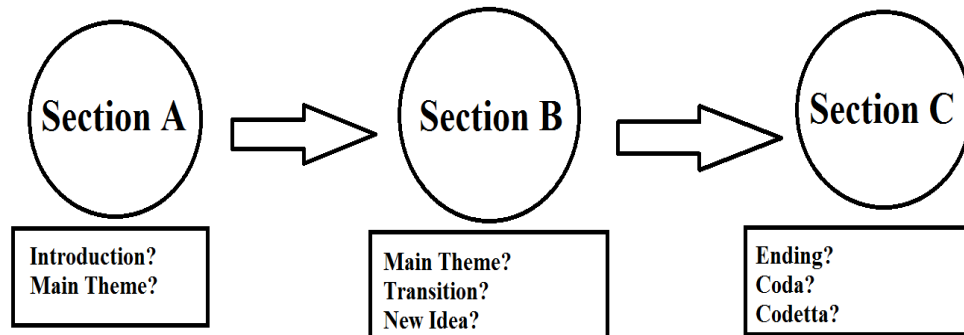


Figure 3.2: Dynamic Form



It seems that a similar perception of the difference between ‘static form’ and ‘dynamic form’ was observed by Janet Schmalfeldt:

... toward the end of the eighteenth century and into the next, new compositional approaches to certain, by then well-established conventions of musical forms seemed intent upon shifting our focus away from the perception of forms as the product of successive, functionally discrete sections within a whole. Instead, these new approaches encouraged the idea that the formal process itself becomes “the form”. Listeners of this kind of music are being asked to participate within that process, by listening backward as well as in the moment – by remembering what they have heard, while retrospectively reinterpreting formal functions in the light of an awareness of the interplay between conventions and transformations. As perhaps the most active of all listeners,



performers themselves are being urged to play a far more authoritative role in articulating such form-defining moments as beginnings, middles, and endings, while projecting the overall shapes that these might define.<sup>18</sup>

As Schmalfeldt highlights the role of performer as a co-creator in performing early nineteenth-century instrumental works, especially ‘in articulating such form-defining moments as beginnings, middles, and endings’, this implies the variables of structural readings in the early nineteenth-century instrumental works and it could be argued that Schubert’s last three piano sonatas, including the Piano Sonata in A Major, D959, have such potential to be interpreted in many unique ways, and to evolve continuously. Possibly constructed in a ‘dynamic form’, Schubert’s D959 give room to a performer to interpret the musical materials such as the large-scale harmonic constructions, the interplay and transformation of themes, the variety in the phrasing and the expressive musical markings such as articulation and rhythmic contrasts, as well as the understanding of meter and pulsation. Taking this a step forward, the variety of possibilities in interpreting the musical materials of Schubert’s D959 extends into a variety of performance approaches, that is, the performer’s interpretative considerations while formulating performances, as the subsequent discussion will help to elucidate.

It should be noted that the performance approaches shown in this dissertation are influenced by John Rink’s idea of ‘structural potentialities within musical materials and

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<sup>18</sup> Janet Schmalfeldt, *In the Process of Becoming: Analytical and Philosophical Perspectives on Form in Early Nineteenth-Century Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 116.

then realising them as they see fit within the broader musical narrative of their performance',<sup>19</sup> which entails possibly four principles:

1. Musical materials do not in themselves constitute structure(s): they *afford* the inference of structural relationships.
2. Inference of this kind will be individually and uniquely carried out whenever it is attempted, even if shared criteria result in commonalities between discrete structural representations.
3. Musical structure should therefore be seen as constructed, not immanent; as pluralistic, not singular.
4. Furthermore, because of music's time-dependency, musical structure should be understood first and foremost as a process, not as 'architecture' – especially in relation to performance.<sup>20</sup>

In turn, the discussion that follows takes the above mentioned principles into consideration as part of an attempt to articulate and to document what is happening in the music and how a performer reacts to it. The first section focuses on how a performer might construct a musical plot in each movement of Schubert's D959, which includes what connections to imply or emphasise at what point and why. The second section moves a step forward on how the connections between the musical events evoke narrative interpretations in relation to the musical plot.

### 3.2.1 Musical Plot and Dramatic Properties in the First Movement

The structural organisation in the first movement of D959 involves different temporal phases in the musical narration. These include the contour of stability, tension, conflict,

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<sup>19</sup> John Rink, 'The (F)utility of Performance Analysis', in Mine Doğantan-Dack (ed.), *Artistic Practice as Research in Music: Theory, Criticism, Practice* (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2015), 129.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 129.

resolution and dénouement. Table 3.1 illustrates an overview of the design of musical plot in the first movement.

Table 3.1: Musical Plot in Schubert's Sonata in A Major, D959, first movement

Section	Plot Condition	Harmony	Musical Material	Dynamics Markings	Bar(s)
Exposition	Stable	I	Principal Theme (PT)	<i>f</i>	1-6
				<i>p-cresc.-&gt;</i>	7-15
				<i>fp</i>	16-21
				<i>pp-cresc.</i>	22-27
	Increasing tension	Modulatory	Transition (Trans)	<i>f-p-f-cresc.-ff-decresc.</i>	28-54
Contrasting section	V	Secondary Theme (ST)	<i>pp-dim.</i>	55-81	
			<i>f-cresc.-p</i>	82-116	
			<i>pp-dim.</i>	117-129	
Development	Unstable, immediately suspended action	Modulatory	ST?	<i>p-pp-cresc.-ff-decres.-p-pp</i>	130-172
		A minor, the long dominant pedal note for leading to Recapitulation		<i>pp-p-cresc.-f</i>	173-197
Recapitulation	Resolution?	I	PT	<i>ff</i>	198-203
	Keep searching for the definite identity of PT			<i>p-cresc.-&gt;</i>	204-212
				<i>fp</i>	213-218
				<i>pp-cresc.</i>	219-230
		Modulatory	Trans	<i>f-p-f-cresc.-ff-decresc.</i>	231-255
		I	ST	<i>pp-dim.</i>	256-282
				<i>f-cresc.-p</i>	283-317
	<i>pp-dim.</i>			318-330	
Coda	Dénouement		PT	<i>pp-dim.</i>	331-357

In the exposition, the principal theme is constructed with four different phrases (A, B, C and D) from the beginning until bar 27 (Example 3.2).

Example 3.2: Schubert, Sonata in A Major, D959, first movement, bars 1-28

**Allegro**

**Phrase A**

**Phrase B**

**Phrase C**

**Phrase D**

**cresc.**

**f**

**fz**

**p**

**fp**

**pp**

**cresc.**

**f**

The first six bars contain a succession of block chords in the right hand, with a strong rhythmic motif of two crotchets in the left hand which gives a majestic character (Phrase A). The arrival of the imperfect cadence in bar 6 raises the question of how to continue from this phrase. Subsequently, Schubert introduces a new idea from bar 7 (Phrase B) which consists of the falling gesture of triplets and arpeggiation. This contrasting idea represents a kind of response to the opening idea (Phrase A), with its idiosyncrasies which seem ‘unsuitable for incorporation into either a period or sentence structure’.<sup>21</sup> Phrase C resembles Phrase A, with a difference in the texture in that the left hand uses similar materials to that of the right hand from Phrase A and a new counter melodic line is adopted in the right hand. This return of the previous idea gives a stronger sense of stability. The beginning of Phrase D, which starts as a quiet confirmation of the tonic resolution of the end of Phrase C, creates an illusion that the music seems to be secure in terms of harmonic stability. However, the sudden intrusion of D-sharp in bar 27 is the next dramatic point: it shifts the harmony to the dominant key and thus sets up the subsequent modulatory passage from bar 28 onwards.

During the transition, there is an increasing tension from bar 28 onwards, ‘but in fact it [the transition passage from bar 28 to 54] only goes from E major back to E major and the motion is small-scale, the larger movement being an illusion, a sleight of hand’.<sup>22</sup> The resolution of the V/V to V in E major at bar 55 launches the secondary key – the dominant major, which is common in a major-key movement. The theme that expresses

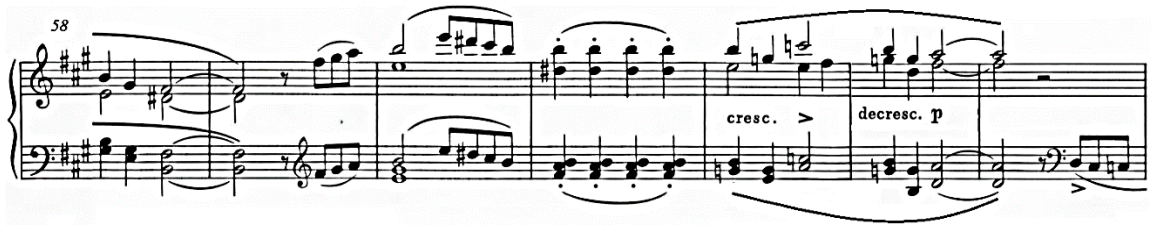
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<sup>21</sup> Charles Fisk, *Returning Cycles: Contexts for the Interpretations of Schubert's Impromptus and Last Sonatas* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001), 207.

<sup>22</sup> Charles Rosen, ‘Schubert and the Example of Mozart’, in Brian Newbould (ed.), *Schubert the Progressive: History, Performance Practice, Analysis* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2003), 19.

this secondary key is also in a typical lyrical mode. In bar 62, the sudden shift into its parallel minor provides another turning point in the music where it initiates the harmonic movement into the remote key of G major (Example 3.3).

Example 3.3: Schubert, Sonata in A Major, D959, first movement, bars 58-64



The secondary theme maintains the lyrical character, while a move into bar 82 introduces a more energetic idea which utilises the rhythmic motive of the two crotchet beats from the beginning. The momentum is built up gradually from this chromatic fugal passage, and the complexity in the texture, in particular the combination of triplet and duplet figurations from bar 105 onwards, brings the music to a climax in bar 111 (Example 3.4).

Example 3.4: Schubert, Sonata in A Major, D959, first movement, bars 104-115



After a full bar of silence, a final surprising point is presented in bar 113 where the unaccompanied right-hand part, with *piano* indication, leads the music gently back to the

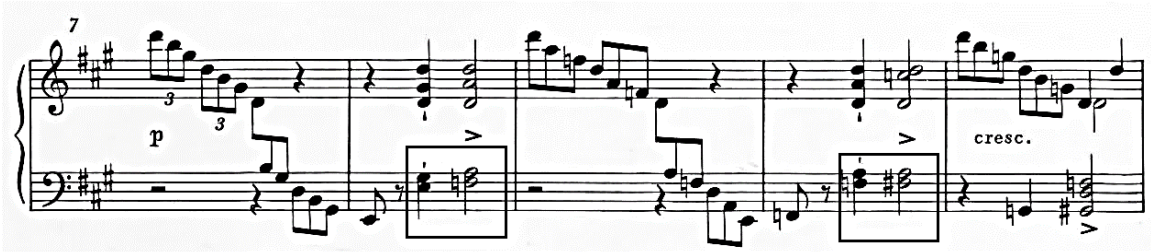
previous lyrical mode, as if trying to ignore the previous conflict or problem created from bar 105.

In summary, as a plot exposition, the most striking feature has to do with its beginning, especially the principal theme (bar 1-27) where the appearance of different phrases with weak cadential close in bars 6, 13 and 21 suggests a sense of uncertainty. The imperfect cadence in bar 6 is left unresolved. The cadence is weak in bar 13 and in bar 21: the dominant-seventh harmony is not in root position and thus less definitive and structurally significant. As soon as the opportunity comes (from bar 22) for a stable point of departure, the appearance of D-sharp in bar 27 interrupts the stability immediately and allows the music to take off abruptly for a new region. Although the eventual level of tension that the plot reaches in the secondary theme is resolved by the usual dominant major with its lyrical character, the two appearances of the sudden half-step shift from E to F-natural in the bass line (bar 123 and 125, Example 3.5) are a reminder of the uncertain feeling of the principal theme (in particular Phrase B with the similar shift in the bass line, Example 3.6). Therefore, a performer's handling of the rest of the plot will depend on how this problem is resolved in the next section.

Example 3.5: Schubert, Sonata in A Major, D959, first movement, bars 123-128

The image shows a musical score for Schubert's Sonata in A Major, D959, first movement, bars 123-128. The score is written for piano and consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The key signature is A major (two sharps). The time signature is 4/4. The score begins at bar 123, marked with a piano (*pp*) dynamic. The music features a half-step shift in the bass line from E to F-natural in bars 123 and 125. The score ends at bar 128, marked with a *dim.* (diminuendo) dynamic. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Example 3.6: Schubert, Sonata in A Major, D959, first movement, bars 7-11



Before the beginning of the development, there are two interesting endings. The first ending opens up the issue of repeating the exposition in the first movement. Schubert's Piano Sonata in A Major, D959 contains a repeat sign for the first movement's exposition section, and the first ending of the exposition section consists of an additional four bars of musical materials, leading back to the beginning of the movement (Example 3.7).

Example 3.7: Schubert, Sonata in A Major, D959, first movement, bars 124-132



In the context of the first movement of Schubert's last three sonatas, the issue of repeat signs has been debated among musicologists and pianists.<sup>23</sup> It seems that the repeat of the

<sup>23</sup> For example, David Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance: Compositional Ideals, Notational Intent, Historical Realities, Pedagogical Foundations* (New York: Pendragon Press, 2003); Edward T. Cone, *Musical Form and Musical Performance* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1968);



exposition section became questionable in terms of the overall coherence in structure as well as the necessity of presenting the extra musical materials during the first ending. This poses an intriguing question for pianists: whether they should follow the repeat instruction accordingly or omit the exposition repeat entirely. Although Montgomery has proposed several reasons for not repeating the exposition,<sup>24</sup> he nevertheless, along with Cone and Schiff, is a proponent of repeating the exposition in Schubert's last three sonatas. Contrastingly, Brendel and Tirimo believe the repeat of the exposition is optional and more priority should be given to the musical flow.

The omission of the repeat of the exposition section results in the musical materials in these bars being totally omitted from the performance, as they do not appear in the second ending. András Schiff discusses his decision on the issue of repeat where 'in the last two sonatas, D959 and D960, the opening movement contains some strikingly original and important bars of new music in the first ending (*prima volta*) ... Omitting these bars is like the amputation of a limb'.<sup>25</sup> If a performer takes Schiff's idea as a starting point, it might seem that he conceives the contribution of the extra musical materials of the first ending to the whole structure of the movement. This is due to the piercing chord in bar 131 (Example 3.8), a dominant-seventh chord of A major with the

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Martino Tirimo, *Franz Schubert: The Complete Piano Sonatas Volume 3* (Vienna: Wiener Urtext Edition, 1999); Alfred Brendel, 'Schubert's Last Sonatas', *Alfred Brendel on Music: His Collected Essays* (London: JR Books, 2007), 160-163; András Schiff, 'Schubert's Piano Sonatas: Thoughts about Interpretation and Performance', in Brian Newbould (ed.), *Schubert Studies* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 1998), 191-208.

<sup>24</sup> 'We cannot say exactly when or why the practice of ignoring repeat signs arose. Presumably it happened in the course of the mid-to-late nineteenth century, but certainly by the early recording age, when the impetus for doing so became entwined with considerations of limited roll or disc space. It may well have arisen during the formative age of German musicology (the 1880s), which coincided with the age of through-composed sonata forms, including even some of Brahms's works.' Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance*, 37.

<sup>25</sup> Schiff, 'Schubert's Piano Sonatas', 197.

dissonant flattened ninth note (F-natural) as well as the *forte* sign, which feels unprepared and interrupts the flow of the exposition and results in a listener hearing the repetition in a different light. It is this interruption that provides a foretaste of the interruption to come, namely the central section of the second movement.

Example 3.8: Schubert, Sonata in A Major, D959, first movement, bars 129-132



Brendel considers the additional four bars as inessential and prefers to omit the repeat; he argued that ‘Repeat marks should not be taken as a command and obeyed unquestioningly, as if the section had been written out in full by the composer’.<sup>26</sup> Brendel believes that the omission of these extra musical materials actually contributes to the coherence of the whole sonata. He explained: ‘In Schubert’s last sonatas the final rondos adopt features of sonata form; their symmetrical scheme, with a central development section, seems to me much more happily matched if the first movement repeat is not taken’.<sup>27</sup>

However, it seems that the approach adopted by Schiff was much more convincing as the repeat in the first movement’s exposition section leads into a stronger sense of the

<sup>26</sup> Brendel, *Collected Essays*, 160.

<sup>27</sup> Brendel, *Collected Essays*, 161.

evolving musical momentum throughout the sonata. That is to say, by repeating the whole exposition of the first movement, more attention is given to the musical tension or problems in the first movement such as the unresolved flattened sixth note (F-natural) in bar 8 and thus reinforces the anticipation of the possible resolution in the following movements. Montgomery stated that ‘listeners who are not given the second chance to sort out one of Schubert’s great harmonic journeys, for example, through an exposition repeat, have not only been misguided by the player, but actually deprived of a major roadsign’.<sup>28</sup>

For the second ending (Example 3.9), the sudden half-step shift in bar 129 from E major into C major via the dominant-seventh chord of C major leads the music into the development section.

Example 3.9: Schubert, Sonata in A Major, D959, first movement, bars 123-130



In the beginning of the development, Schubert immediately provides the first dramatic property by suspending any action instead of continuing the previous harmonic tension.

<sup>28</sup> Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance*, 37.

In bars 131-150 (Example 3.10), the oscillation between C major and B major creates the impression of suspension of time – it simply passes the previous secondary theme through a consistent 5-bar phrase, alternating between C major and B major from bar 131 onwards. It is as if a listener is now observing a tableau rather than a narrative trajectory.

Example 3.10: Schubert, Sonata in A Major, D959, first movement, bars 131-150

The image displays a musical score for Schubert's Sonata in A Major, D959, first movement, covering bars 131 to 150. The score is presented in a piano reduction format, with the right hand (treble clef) and left hand (bass clef) parts. The key signature is A major (one sharp). The time signature is 3/4. The score is divided into systems, with bar numbers 130b, 134, 138, 141, 144, 147, and 150 marked at the beginning of their respective systems. The music features a consistent 5-bar phrase structure, alternating between C major and B major. The right hand part consists of a melodic line with various ornaments and dynamics, including *p* (piano) and *pp* (pianissimo). The left hand part provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving lines. The score concludes with a *cresc.* (crescendo) marking in bar 150.

As a consequence, the music suddenly loses any sense of tonal direction and establishes an atmosphere of fantasy.<sup>29</sup> In other words, a new approach was adopted by Schubert in constructing the development section. Charles Rosen stated:

This development uses Classical form for entirely new purposes. The traditional driving force of a development is suspended: in place of the energetic sequential movement that had once seemed essential and that we expect from a development, Schubert creates lyric sequences that have no direction, but rock back and forth.<sup>30</sup>

The ‘lyric sequences’ implying the idea of ‘lyricism’ in Schubert’s instrumental music has been witnessed and discussed by musicologists such as Su Yin Mak,<sup>31</sup> James Webster,<sup>32</sup> Carl Dahlhaus,<sup>33</sup> and many more. The characteristics of the ‘lyrical form’ such as ‘melodies in moderate tempo with relatively even note values, regular phrasing, and simple chordal accompaniment’<sup>34</sup> are applicable to the whole development section.

Rosen explained the ‘suspended’ effect in this section:

The destruction of large-scale direction, however, can be the occasion for some of Schubert’s greatest inspirations, as in the development section of the first movement of this A major Sonata, where the harmony oscillates: C major, B major, C major, B major, C minor, A minor, returning

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<sup>29</sup> ‘An extreme instance is the opening movement of D959, where almost the entire development is based on a single motive (derived from a figure which had first appeared at the very end of the second group) and the alternation of C major and B major/minor planes. As a result of the enormous dimensions of the single movements, the whole ‘process’ appears even more relaxed than elsewhere in Schubert – a quality which has led to attributes such as ‘transfigured’, ‘other-worldly’, and ‘melancholic-wistful’ in the literature, not least in view of the composer’s imminent death.’ Thomas Schmidt-Beste, *Cambridge Introductions to Music: The Sonata* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 134.

<sup>30</sup> Charles Rosen, ‘Schubert’s inflections of Classical form’, in Christopher H. Gibbs (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 91.

<sup>31</sup> Su Yin Mak, ‘Schubert’s Sonata Form and the Poetics of the Lyric’, *The Journal of Musicology*, 23 (2006), 263-306.

<sup>32</sup> James Webster, ‘Schubert’s Sonata Form and Brahms’ First Maturity’, *19<sup>th</sup>-Century Music*, 2 (1978), 20-26.

<sup>33</sup> Carl Dahlhaus, ‘Sonata Form in Schubert: The First Movement of the G-Major String Quartet, op.161 (D.887)’, in Walter Frisch (ed.), *Schubert: Critical and Analytical Studies* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), 1-12.

<sup>34</sup> Mak, ‘Schubert’s Sonata Form’, 264.

suddenly in this surprising way to the tonic. Appreciating Schubert's conception here, nevertheless, forces us to revise our habitual expectations of tonal form. The return of the tonic in this case is neither a final goal nor the ultimate resolution of an increase of harmonic tension: it is part of an idiosyncratic process which has suspended any conventional feeling of pressing forward in a classical development.<sup>35</sup>

The local lyricism presented in this section forms no part of the unfolding musical plot. It dislocates completely the sense of how the music should proceed, and it does not represent any character within the plot. Although there is an attempt to build up the forwardness in the harmonic motion from bar 150 onwards, the repeated occurrences of the juxtaposition between C major and B major in the previous passage make a very strong impression. Thus, Schubert continues to utilise similar harmonic motion from bar 151 until bar 160, with a different arrival on B minor in bar 155. This action, once again, prolongs a listener's anticipation of the necessary increasing tension of harmony and plot.

The next highlight in this development section is the transitional link that connects C minor to A minor in bars 168-169 (Example 3.11). The appearance of the diminished-seventh chord in bar 168 serves as a bridge (enharmonic relationship where the A-flat in C minor was treated as G-sharp in A minor) in guiding the music back to the parallel minor of the home key. Eventually, from bar 180 onwards, the music seems to be preparing to go back to its home key by a long pedal on the dominant which gradually re-establishes harmonic stability.

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<sup>35</sup> Charles Rosen, 'Schubert and the Example of Mozart', in Brian Newbould (ed.), *Schubert the Progressive: History, Performance Practice, Analysis* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2003), 19.

Example 3.11: Schubert, Sonata in A Major, D959, first movement, bars 167-171

(Ab = G#)

167

*pp*

*pp*

decesc.

Cm:  $i_4^6$      $V^7$      $vii_3^{o4}$   
 Am:  $vii_2^{o4}$      $vii_5^{o6}$      $i_4^6$

As a general observation, the design of the plot from the second ending to this point is particularly unexpected. The suspension quality which was initiated by the oscillation between C major and B major in bars 131-150 seems to ignore the previous ongoing action or tension. Another unusual feature of this plot is the way the music returns to the home key, in particular, the preparation of the recapitulation where ‘the return of the tonic in this case is neither a final goal nor the ultimate resolution of an increase of harmonic tension: it is part of an idiosyncratic process which has suspended any conventional feeling of pressing forward in a classical development’.<sup>36</sup>

In general, the recapitulation retains most of the materials from the exposition, despite establishing them in the home key. However, there is one significant point in this section: the sudden shift into its parallel minor key in bar 219 (Example 3.12).

Example 3.12: Schubert, Sonata in A Major, D959, first movement, bars 216-219

216

*pp*

decesc.

Cm:  $i_4^6$      $V^7$      $vii_3^{o4}$   
 Am:  $vii_2^{o4}$      $vii_5^{o6}$      $i_4^6$

<sup>36</sup> Rosen, ‘Example of Mozart’, 19.

Instead of using the moving triplets as in the exposition (bars 22-28), Schubert utilises a similar phrase to the previous phrase (bars 213-218), but presented in a minor key an octave higher to represent an echo of the previous phrase.

As the music seems to keep searching for resolutions of the ambiguous identity of the principal theme and the harmonic tension, the coda section serves to provide the solution. The principal theme appears again in bar 331, but now *pianissimo*, and the phrase structure is extended, with two clear perfect cadence points in the home key of A major (Example 3.13).

Example 3.13: Schubert, Sonata in A Major, D959, first movement, bars 331-357

331  
pp

336

A:  $V_{4/6} \text{ — } 7 \text{ — } I$

341  
cresc.

346  
p  
decresc.  
pp

A:  $V_{4/6} \text{ — } 7 \text{ — } I$





The character of the principal theme is transformed from majestic in the beginning into a more reflective manner. Eventually, Schubert provides a final dramatic point in bars 351-352 where there is a silent intrusion of an augmented sixth chord over B-flat. It shows that by now, the uncertain feeling which was apparent since the beginning still exists and is unresolved. In other words, it is this interruption that provides a foretaste of the disruption to come, namely the central section of the second movement.

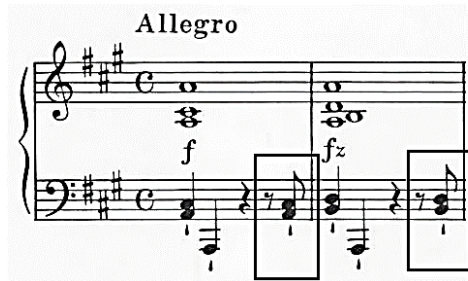
### 3.2.2 Performance Considerations

From the point of view of the performer as a narrator in this movement, there are suggestions of possibilities in performing this piece by taking into account the musical plot which has been discussed in the previous section.

In the first fifteen bars, the characteristic features of the music present an uncertain feeling, in particular with the unresolved cadence point in bar 6 as well as the appearance of the flattened sixth note (F-natural) in bar 8. The majestic main theme in this section presents the first challenge for pianists to interpret: should a pianist interpret the quavers

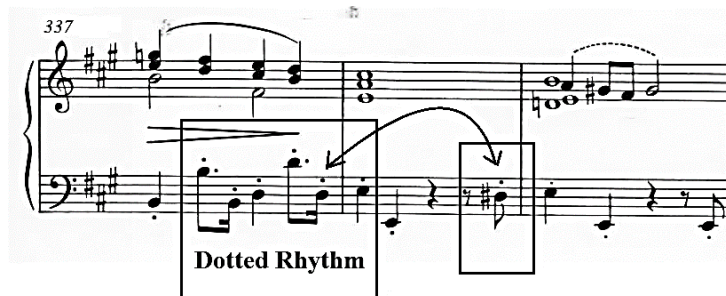
in the left hand part (Example 3.14) as sharply dotted rhythm or merely treat them as a normal quaver value?

Example 3.14: Schubert, Sonata in A Major, D959, first movement, bars 1-2



Malcolm Bilson suggested that a stronger dotted rhythm was more effective in projecting the majestic character of the main theme.<sup>37</sup> This is because he observed a similar notation adopted by Schubert in the Coda section (Example 3.15), where the previous dotted rhythm in bar 337 might indicate a dotted rhythm for the quaver note in bar 338.

Example 3.15: Schubert, Sonata in A Major, D959, first movement, bars 337-338



However, the rhythmic context in bars 1-6 seems to suggest a normal quaver value is more applicable. This is due to the clear indication of four quavers in bar 4 which might imply the same rhythm to be conceived in bars 1 and 2 so that the majestic character of the main theme could be built up gradually until the arrival of the dominant key in bar 6.

<sup>37</sup> 'The opening bars represent a fanfare, and are, I believe, to be overdotted and played somewhat sharply.' Malcolm Bilson, 'The Future of Schubert Interpretation: What Is Really Needed?', *Early Music*, 25 (1997), 720.

Although the section in bars 16-26 seems to gradually become more stable based on the harmonic progression, the plot suddenly takes off in the direction of an increasing tension from bar 27 onwards. The momentum might be built up gradually to give a stronger sense of the arrival of the secondary theme in bar 55. The crucial element of the secondary theme is its lyrical character, with attention to the sudden shift of harmonic motion in bar 62 where a noticeable rhythmic flexibility might be adopted. The fugal passage in bar 82, with *forte*, could be made to sound agitated and, at the end of the exposition, some suspense before the return of the beginning could be achieved by emphasising the intense quality of the dissonant chord in bar 131, with the help of *crescendo* from bar 129.

The surprising element of the suspended action in the beginning of the development section (from bar 130 onwards) might suggest an improvisational-like treatment of the local lyricism of this passage. Such musical expression seems to imply that much more flexibility in the treatment of tempo might be adopted in the development. For instance, the oscillation between C major and B major in bars 131-150 could be adopted in a slower and consistent pulse so that the quality of calmness ‘which has suspended any conventional feeling of pressing forward in a classical development’<sup>38</sup> could be achieved effectively. The dynamics move within the range of *piano* and *pianissimo* (bar 131 to 150), so that the *crescendo* and *diminuendo* remain modest. The *forte* that Schubert indicates in bar 151 to mark the stretched phrasing might be played without being too harsh. Although the sense of forwardness in the harmonic progression is gradually built up from bar 150 (which is also enhanced by the frequent appearance of the *crescendo*

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<sup>38</sup> Charles Rosen, ‘Schubert and the Example of Mozart’, in Brian Newbould (ed.), *Schubert the Progressive: History, Performance Practice, Analysis* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2003), 19.

sign), the music seems to be suspended again in bar 160, and a more melancholic character (with the arrival of the C minor key) is adopted from bar 161 onwards (Example 3.16):

Example 3.16: Schubert, Sonata in A Major, D959, first movement, bars 150-161

C: I V<sup>7</sup>/vi vi V<sup>7</sup> | Bm: Ger<sup>+6</sup> i<sub>4</sub><sup>6</sup> ii<sub>5</sub><sup>06</sup> i iv<sub>4</sub><sup>6</sup>

Bm: i V<sup>7</sup>/VI VI<sub>4</sub><sup>6</sup> ? | Am: Ger<sup>+6</sup> i<sub>4</sub><sup>6</sup>

Am: III<sup>6</sup> | C: I<sup>6</sup> V<sub>5</sub><sup>6</sup> I iv<sub>4</sub><sup>6</sup> I | Cm: i

This is one of the most mysterious passages, serving as a bridge in connecting the C minor to A minor (Example 3.17). This results from an enharmonic relationship in bars 168-169, where the A-Flat is treated as G-Sharp. Thus, a certain amount of space in the pulse seems to be implied in this short passage in order to convey the mysterious character.

Example 3.17: Schubert, Sonata in A Major, D959, first movement, bars 167-174

(Ab = G#)

Cm:  $i_4^6$      $V^7$      $vii_3^{04}$

Am:  $vii_2^{04}$      $vii_5^{06}$      $i_4^6$

Am:  $V^7$      $i$      $vii^{07}$      $i$

The arrival at the tonic minor from bar 173 onwards is followed by a very long pedal on the dominant in order to prepare for the recapitulation. The vibrating quaver accompaniment figures could be highly charged to help to achieve a stronger sense of the arrival of the recapitulation. However, the return of the home key seems to be neither the final goal nor the eventual resolution of an increase of harmonic tension.<sup>39</sup> In other words, the previous suspended harmonic motion, in particular the oscillation between C major and B major from bar 130 until bar 150, decreases the sense of a directed goal which would appear to contradict the principles of a traditional sonata-form.

This is a clear example of Schubert's innovative procedure in expanding the traditional form and his expansive thinking seems to contradict the principles of traditional sonata form. His exploration of new uncharted routes was shown in his taste for modulation, especially in the development section where the sudden shift into a static harmonic

<sup>39</sup> Charles Rosen, 'Schubert and the Example of Mozart', in Brian Newbould (ed.), *Schubert the Progressive: History, Performance Practice, Analysis* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2003), 19.

progression gives the impression of suspension of time. A performer might need to consider the balance between controlling the amount of space in the pulse to highlight those expressive modulatory passages and maintaining the overall musical continuity over long spans of time.

In the recapitulation, the return of the principal theme may remind the listener of the unresolved flattened sixth note (F-natural) and anticipate a resolution. The reappearance of the contrasting idea in bar 204, with *piano*, could sound almost suspenseful. The lyrical character that enters in the secondary theme in the home key of A major could sound as if it is an arrival, but not relaxed, and that intense character continues until bar 329. Finally, during the coda section, the last significant point is reached where the appearance of an augmented-sixth chord over B-flat in bars 351-352 represents the unresolved problem which gives anticipation of the extreme musical experiences to come in the second movement. So a performer might adopt more flexibility in the pulsation to fully express this musical gesture.

### 3.2.3 Musical Plot and Dramatic Properties in the Second Movement

As mentioned previously,<sup>40</sup> the idea of a musical plot was applicable to other structural designs and the second movement could be regarded as one of the examples that resembles comparable narrative schemas. An overview of the design of musical plot in the whole second movement is illustrated in Table 3.2.

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<sup>40</sup> See 38-39.

Table 3.2: Musical Plot in Schubert's Sonata in A Major, D959, second movement

Section	Plot Condition	Harmony	Musical Material	Dynamic Markings	Bar(s)
A	Stable, with clear phrase structure and cadential point	i	Principal Theme (PT)	<i>p-pp-fp-pp</i>	1-32
			Repeated with an octave	<i>pp-fp-pp-dim.</i>	33-68
B	Unstable, immediately increasing tension to climax	Modulatory	Improvisational	$\ll \gg$	69-84
		v		<i>mf-cresc.-ff</i>	85-122
	Preparing to go back to the previous lyrical section	V	Transitional passage	<i>pp</i>	147-158
A	Resolution	i	PT	<i>pp-f-decresc.-</i>	159-188
	Dénouement			<i>ppp</i>	189-end

In the beginning, the phrase structure is constructed in a simple and regular way, with stable harmonic progression which moves around the tonic and subdominant as well as the dominant of F-sharp minor in the first eighteen bars. Frequent stepwise motions in the melody and a gently alternating, repetitive accompaniment figure contribute to the generally static quality of this passage (Example 3.18).

Example 3.18: Schubert, Sonata in A Major, D959, second movement, bars 1-18

Andantino  $\text{♩}$   $\text{♩}$

*p*

*simile*

F#m: i V<sup>6</sup> i V<sup>6</sup> i<sup>6</sup> vii<sup>06</sup><sub>4</sub> i<sup>6</sup> vii<sup>06</sup> i V

*fp*

F#m: i V<sup>6</sup> i V<sup>6</sup> iv<sup>6</sup><sub>4</sub> i V i V i

In bars 19-26, the melodic line appears in a similar way to its first statement in the first eight bars, but slightly decorated. A surprising effect is achieved here where a whole tone down on the bass line from F-sharp to E momentarily shifts the tonality from minor to its relative major key. In bars 25-32, the music is guided back into the home key of F-sharp minor (Example 3.19).

Example 3.19: Schubert, Sonata in A Major, D959, second movement, bars 19-32

A sense of stability is maintained from bar 32 onwards, using similar materials from the beginning, but an octave higher in the right hand part. In summary, the general spirit in this section seems to be lyrical and the music seems to be secure in terms of phrasing and harmonic stability. However, the improvisation-like gesture in bars 69-72, with silence in the left-hand part, seems to serve as a clue that the music starts to move away from the home key (Example 3.20).

Example 3.20: Schubert, Sonata in A Major, D959, second movement, bars 69-72



The tension of the music is gradually built up, in particular the appearance of the first dramatic point in bars 73-75 where the sudden shift of G-sharp into G-natural in the left-hand part expands the harmonic journey throughout the middle section. The expectation of resolving the diminished chord in bars 73-74 into the home key of F-sharp minor is suspended and such tension provides alternative ways of exploring more distant keys in the tonal landscape, especially the abrupt shift from G-sharp to G-natural that prepares the dominant harmony at the end of bar 84 leading to a decisive arrival of the remote key of C minor on the first beat of bar 85 (Example 3.21).

Example 3.21: Schubert, Sonata in A Major, D959, second movement, bars 73-89

73  $F\#m: vii^o_5$  (F natural = E sharp) (?) Cm:  $V^7$

77 Cm:  $vii^o/vi$   $vii^o/V$

81 Cm:  $V^{b9}$   $V^7$

85 Cm:  $i$

Character and action here are striking and unusual, and the theme from bar 85 is bold and decisive. Yet its assertiveness, by which it nails down each harmony in a quick gesture, allows it to take off suddenly for a new region. For instance, the gesture of the trill on G in bar 89 as well as on B in bar 98 provides another dramatic point where both trills create the unstable quality, and leads the music into chromatic transition from bar 90 to C-sharp minor in bar 91 as well as bar 99 leading to F minor in bar 100 (Example 3.22).

Example 3.22: Schubert, Sonata in A Major, D959, second movement, bars 85-100

The adventurous harmonic progression from bar 85 onwards contributes to the increase in the tension of the musical plot and the half-step shift from F minor (bars 100-102) into F-sharp minor (bar 103) prepares for the dramatic high point of the whole movement, which lasts from bar 107 until bar 122 in C-sharp minor (Example 3.23). During this dramatic high point, the continuously running notes, the addition of syncopation and the registral shifts maintain the level of intensity in the musical plot.

Example 3.23: Schubert, Sonata in A Major, D959, second movement, bars 107-122

The image displays a musical score for the second movement of Schubert's Sonata in A Major, D959, specifically bars 107 through 122. The score is written for piano and is in 3/4 time. It consists of six systems of music, each with a treble and bass clef staff. The key signature is A major (one sharp). The score includes various musical notations such as dynamics (ffz, fz, cresc., p, f, fffz), articulation (accents, slurs), and fingerings (3, 6, 8). The first system (bars 107-108) features a complex rhythmic pattern with triplets and sixteenth notes. The second system (bars 109-110) shows a more rhythmic bass line with chords in the treble. The third system (bars 111-112) includes a crescendo and a forte dynamic. The fourth system (bars 113-114) features a piano dynamic and a melodic line with slurs. The fifth system (bars 115-116) shows a crescendo and a forte dynamic. The sixth system (bars 117-122) concludes with a fortissimo dynamic and a final cadence.

The design of the musical plot to this point is particularly unexpected; it has harmonic twists and does not suggest any specific resolution of the conflicts from the beginning of the middle section, in particular with the abrupt shift of the harmony in bars 73-75. Consequently, a listener may wonder how the plot can arrive at a well-defined resolution

after such intense climax. To guide the situation back into stability, Schubert intelligently provides a recitative-like passage (bars 123-146) to serve as a bridge between the different sections. In other words, this recitative-like passage has an essential function in a listener's experience of the musical plot. At the moment when some attempts to resolve the tensions of the plot seemingly must arrive, this passage seems to be a response to the frustrated expectation of a resolution. It represents a completely different level of discourse from the action that a listener has been following to this point, and it interrupts the action at exactly the point when the listener's expectation of a solution peaks. As it turns out, this recitative passage simply prolongs the resolution, at least on the level at which a listener would anticipate one.

The resolution, as it turns out, is starting from bar 147 where there is an attempt to stay firmly in the dominant in order to lead back to the previous stable section. In bar 159, the music of the entire opening section returns, with a string-quartet-like texture where there is a dialogue between the upper lines in the right hand part. Before the ending of the movement's plot, the coda section in bar 189 presents a last dramatic point where the music seems to keep wandering through several keys by sudden shifts in the pitch (for example, the A-G natural-F-sharp-E in bars 189-192, Example 3.24).

Example 3.24: Schubert, Sonata in A Major, D959, second movement, bars 189-192



In enhancing such an expressive effect, the approach of the sudden shift in pitch appears frequently from bar 192, where the bass line descends from C-sharp to C-natural and subsequently to B in bar 193, which leads the music to a Neapolitan chord. Instead of the usual arrival of the second inversion from its previous Neapolitan chord in bar 194, Schubert uses the first inversion, and the same unusual voice-leading also occurs in bar 195, where the bass line descends by semitone shifts from G-sharp to G-natural and eventually to F-sharp in bar 196 (Example 3.25).

Example 3.25: Schubert, Sonata in A Major, D959, second movement, bars 194-196

The image shows a musical score for Schubert's Sonata in A Major, D959, second movement, bars 194-196. The score is written in treble and bass clefs. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#). The music is in 3/4 time. The bass line is highlighted with circles and arrows, showing a descending semitone sequence: C# (bar 192), C (bar 193), B (bar 194), G# (bar 195), G (bar 195), and F# (bar 196). The score includes a 'dim.' marking and a '7' marking.

### 3.2.4 Performance Considerations

In the first section (bars 1-68), the music presents a sense of stability, with subtlety of feeling. A performer might choose a steady tempo and dynamics moving within the range of *piano*, so that the *crescendo* and *diminuendo* remain modest. Even the *fortepiano* that Schubert indicates to mark the stretched phrasing in the main theme (bar 13, 23, 45 and 59) might be taken subtly.

The section in bars 69-72, which serves as a link into the middle section, might suggest the atmosphere of a fantasy world for the action. So a performer might choose to emphasise the rhythmic flexibility and allow more space of time. For instance, the

articulation marks within bars 69-72 suggest the phrasing, which is irregular in this short passage. The first group has a continuous slur from the E-sharp in bar 69 to the high C-sharp in bar 71, the second group has the dots under a shorter slur (B-A-G-sharp-F-sharp) in bar 71, and the third group in bar 72 has both articulation markings as the first and second, except for the last three notes (A-G-sharp-F-sharp) which are combined into a triplet. Despite the whole piece being constructed in a time signature of 3/8, it seems that the difference of phrase slurs in bars 69-72 contradicts the feeling of 3/8 and thus implies a different pulse and certain amount of space between them. In addition, the silence of the left-hand part of this particular passage suggests the improvisational character of the right hand and thus conveys a stronger sense of the expressiveness of the musical gestures. Thus, a performer could choose to slow down for the first two notes in bar 69 and gradually get faster towards the highest D in bar 71 before slowing down again at the end of this passage. However, some performers might consider that the first two notes in bar 69 should not be slowed down. This is due to the first announcement of the new idea, and thus a stricter pulse is more suitable in order to keep the smoothness of musical flow.

Almost immediately, however, the plot would need to take off in the direction of increasing tension. In the central section of the second movement, the tonal scheme is constructed in an unclear direction and Schubert moves away from the home key with unusual chord progressions (Example 3.26).

Example 3.26: Schubert, Sonata in A Major, D959, second movement, bars 66-89

66

73

77

81

85

F#m: i

F#m: vii<sup>o6</sup><sub>5</sub> (?)

(F natural = E sharp) Cm: V<sup>7</sup>

Cm: vii<sup>o7</sup>/ii vii<sup>o7</sup>/V

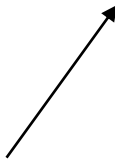
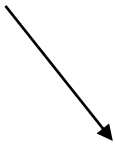
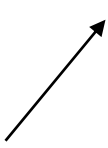
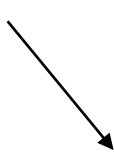

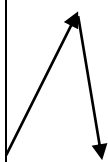


Cm: V<sup>b9</sup> V<sup>7</sup>

Cm: i

As illustrated in Example 3.26, Schubert moves from the home key which is F-sharp minor into the foreign key of C minor, which is considered as the beginning of the dramatic section. The continuity of the chord progression is disjointed in bar 75, where the diminished chord seems to be resolved to the first inversion chord of F-sharp minor,

but the natural sign given to the G-sharp results in a sudden shift into the remote key of C minor. The foreign relationship between the home key (F-sharp minor) and the remote key (C minor) as well as the disjointed chord progression in bar 75 makes the character of this passage mercurial. In order to enhance such a dramatic quality, Schubert also uses the gesture of the ascending and descending lines as a way of musical expression and constructs a balanced order of the gesture in this particular passage (Table 3.3):

Table 3.3: The order of Ascending and Descending lines in  
Schubert's Sonata in A Major, D959, second movement, bars 69-84

Bar(s)	69-70	71-72	73-74	75-76	77-78	79-80	81-82	83-84
Line								

In order to express this musical gesture clearly in this section, the rising line (bars 69-70 and bars 73-74) implies an increase in the volume and subsequently a decrease in the volume for the descending line (bars 71-72 and bars 75-76). The sudden shift from G-sharp into G-natural in the bass line in bars 73-75 might be stressed. However, from bar 77 onwards, a performer could choose to continue the gradual rising of the volume from bar 77 so that a stronger sense of arrival of the C minor section in bar 85 could be achieved effectively.

The tension and character from the C minor section (bar 85) suggest a strong sense of boldness and increases the tension in the musical plot. The trills on the G and B in bar 89 and 98 could be made to sound ominous. During the dramatic high point from bar 105



(Example 3.27), the crucial element of the C-sharp minor key, together with its frantic rhythm and harmonic progression, deserves emphasis.

Example 3.27: Schubert, Sonata in A Major, D959, second movement, bars 105-123

The image displays a musical score for Schubert's Sonata in A Major, D959, second movement, bars 105-123. The score is written for piano and consists of six systems of music, each with a treble and bass clef staff. The key signature is A major (two sharps). The tempo is marked 'Allegretto'. The score features a variety of musical textures and dynamics. Bars 105-107 are marked 'ff' and feature an 8-measure phrase. Bars 108-110 are marked 'fz' and feature a 6-measure phrase. Bars 111-113 are marked 'cresc.' and feature an 8-measure phrase. Bars 114-116 are marked 'fz' and feature an 8-measure phrase. Bars 117-119 are marked 'cresc.' and feature an 8-measure phrase. Bars 120-123 are marked 'ff' and feature an 8-measure phrase. The score includes various rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. The dynamics range from 'ff' (fortissimo) to 'p' (piano). The score is presented in a clear, legible format with standard musical notation.

This section could be divided into several independent groups based on the musical ideas presented, and these unrelated musical ideas pose another great challenge for pianists to interpret: how to convey a sense of continuity on all these different groups of musical

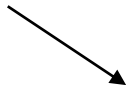
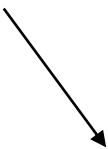
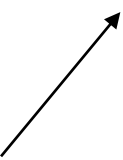


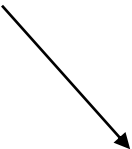
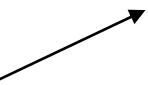
ideas in a performance. In Example 3.27, Schubert seems to be trying to distinguish each group by using different articulation marks: bars 105-106 and bars 114-115 contain the accent (>), bars 107-108 and 113 have *fz*, bars 109-112 has staccato (·) in the right-hand part, and both staccato and staccatissimo (▼) are indicated in bars 116-122.

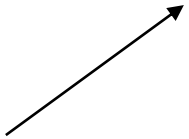
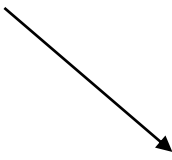
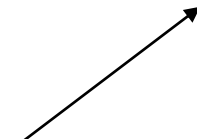
However, a different subdivision of each musical idea could be deduced from the harmonic construction: bars 105-106 remain within the F-sharp minor region, but the six-four chord in C-sharp minor unites bars 107-110. In spite of the same figuration as the previous bars (109-110 with the staccatissimo), the addition of G-natural in the right-hand part of bar 111 starts a new harmonic unit and the stepwise chromatic ascent in the bass line in bar 112 forms another harmonic unit. The E minor scalar passage in the right hand gives a single harmonic unit and the chromatic lines in the bass line in bars 114-115 form another harmonic unit. Eventually, the long pedal tone on C-sharp in the left hand from bar 116 onwards, which culminates in the climax of bar 122, with the full first-inversion chords of C-sharp minor in both hands, forms the last harmonic unit.

Both subdivisions of the different musical ideas presented in this section suggest there is continuity between bars 107-108 and bars 109-110: the combination of bars 107-108 and 109-110 forms a single group due to the tonal coherence where a similar chord (six-four chord in C-sharp minor) is adopted in bars 107-110. In order to achieve more continuity between these different musical ideas, Schubert utilises the similar gesture of ascending and descending lines which was initially announced from the beginning of the middle

section<sup>41</sup> where the ascending line for bars 69-70 was counterbalanced by the descending line of the following bars, 71-72 (Table 3.4):

Table 3.4: The order of Ascending and Descending lines in  
Schubert's Sonata in A Major, D959, second movement, bars 105-122

Bar(s)	105-106	107-108	109-110	111-112	113
Line	 Right hand			 	
	 Left hand				

Bar(s)	114	115	116-122
Line			

The appearance of the recitative passage in bars 123-146 suggests a different performative approach. The awkwardness that emerges from the rests, the irregular phrases, and the fragmentary gestural melody in the right hand implies a sense of uncertainty. Rhythmic flexibility, dynamic declamation, and clear articulation between the legato right-hand part and arpeggiated, strongly detached left-hand chordal accompaniment in bars 131-140 could be part of the attempts to convey the uncertain feeling. In bars 140-141, the change of the harmony to its parallel major key (C-sharp minor to C-sharp major) with *piano* might provide a clue for a performer to apply a noticeable flexibility in the pulse.

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<sup>41</sup> See 75.

The return of the main theme from bar 159 onwards might suggest to remain in the same character as the previous stable section, with attention to the duet between the upper lines in the right-hand part. Finally, in the Coda section, the musical expression provided by the sudden shift in pitch in bars 189-196 might suggest to a performer to adopt more space of time in order to fully express this musical gesture.

### 3.2.5 Musical Plot and Dramatic Properties in the Third Movement

At first glance, it seems that there is a connection between the end of the second movement and the beginning of the third movement: the arpeggiated opening chord is presented in the high register, as if continuing the arpeggiation of the low register chords from the end (bars 196-200) of the previous movement. The general spirit of most of the material in the third movement seems lively, with a reflective character presented in the trio section. In the dance-like *Scherzo* (the form is outlined in Table 3.5), the phrasing tends to be simple and uncomplicated, despite a moment of recollecting the musical materials presented in the second movement.

Table 3.5: Musical Plot in Schubert's Sonata in A Major, D959, third movement

Section	Plot Condition	Harmony	Musical Material	Dynamic Markings	Bar(s)
A (Scherzo)	Stable, with clear phrase structure and cadential point	I	Principal Theme (PT)	<i>p</i>	1-16
		♯ III		<i>f-p-decresc.</i>	17-33
	Sudden shift into remote key and a momentary reminder of the dramatic central section of second movement	♯ iii	Adopts from bars 107-108 of second movement	<i>ff</i> $\rightarrow$ <i>p-cresc.-pp</i>	34-47
		I	Principal Theme (PT)	<i>pp-cresc.</i>	47-57 58-65
				<i>p-f</i>	66-79
B (Trio)	Simple phrase and harmonic progression	IV		<i>pp</i>	1-8 <sup>42</sup>
	Another moment of recollecting the rhythmic motif of PT in the first movement	iv		<i>mf-f</i>	9-13
		♯ VI		<i>f</i>	13-19
		IV		<i>ffz-decresc.-pp-dim.</i>	20-31
	Preparing to go back to the previous A section	V <sub>5</sub> <sup>6</sup>		<i>dim.</i>	32-34

The sudden shift into C major in bar 17, with *forte* sign, could be observed as the first dramatic point used by Schubert. Bars 22-33 give an illusion that the music seems to be secure in terms of harmonic stability, in particular the tonicisation on C major and the consistent pedal note of G adopted in the bass line. However, the sudden intrusion into the C-sharp minor passage in bar 34 (Example 3.28) is considered as the most significant

<sup>42</sup> In the musical examples provided in this dissertation, which adopted from the *Neue Schubert Ausgabe* (New Complete Edition of Schubert Works) published by Bärenreiter-Verlag (Kassel), instead of continuing the number from previous bar, the bars numbering from the beginning of *trio* section are started from number one.

dramatic point in the third movement. It recalls the ‘shocking disruptions’ which appear in the middle section of the second movement (Example 3.29).

Example 3.28: Schubert, Sonata in A Major, D959, third movement, bars 24-36

Example 3.28 shows a musical score for Schubert's Sonata in A Major, D959, third movement, bars 24-36. The score is in treble and bass clefs with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). It shows a piano accompaniment with a steady eighth-note bass line and a treble line with various rhythmic patterns. Bar 31 includes the instruction 'decresc.' and 'ff'. Bar 36 includes the instruction 'fz'.

Example 3.29: Schubert, Sonata in A Major, D959, second movement, bars 107-110

Example 3.29 shows a musical score for Schubert's Sonata in A Major, D959, second movement, bars 107-110. The score is in treble and bass clefs with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). It shows a piano accompaniment with a steady eighth-note bass line and a treble line with various rhythmic patterns. Bar 107 includes the instruction 'ffz' and '3'. Bar 109 includes the instruction 'fz' and '6'.

After a full bar rest in bar 37, the music seems to stay within the C-sharp minor region and continues the exploration with the musical materials which have been presented in the second movement. In particular, the melodic contour of the right-hand part in bars 38, 40, 44 and 46 seems to reflect the similar shape in bar 3 of the second movement

(Example 3.30). The separate slurs in bar 42 are a reminder of the similar articulation markings found in bar 7 of the second movement (Example 3.31).

Example 3.30: Schubert, Sonata in A Major, D959, third movement, bars 36-49

The image shows a musical score for the third movement of Schubert's Sonata in A Major, D959, specifically bars 36 to 49. The score is written for piano in treble and bass clefs. It features various dynamic markings including *fz*, *p*, *cresc.*, and *pp*. There are also articulation markings such as slurs and accents. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 3/4.

Example 3.31: Schubert, Sonata in A Major, D959, second movement, bars 1-7

The image shows a musical score for the second movement of Schubert's Sonata in A Major, D959, specifically bars 1 to 7. The score is written for piano in treble and bass clefs. It features a tempo marking of *Andantino* and a dynamic marking of *p*. There is a *simile* marking in the bass line. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 3/8.

To guide the music back into the home key of A major, bar 47 serves as the link where the Neapolitan chord in C-sharp minor is also conceived of as the subdominant key in A major. Although there is another short moment of tonicisation on C major in bars 58-64, the music comes straight back to A major in bar 66 and concludes with the arpeggiation on the tonic triad of A major.

The hymn-like chords of the *trio* section suggest a reflective character, and such a quality is implied by the dynamic marking of *pp* as well as the tempo indication of *Un poco più lento*. The move into its parallel minor key from D major in bar 9 provides the link to arrive at the more exuberant F major passage in bars 14-19, which is enhanced by the

*staccatissimo* as well as *fz* markings. The sudden half step shift from the right-hand C in bar 19 to C-sharp in bar 20 provides another dramatic point where it brings back the music to D major. Finally, the sudden intrusion of G-sharp in bar 34 is the last dramatic point: it shifts the harmony to the dominant key of A Major and thus leads the music back to the previous *Scherzo* section.

### 3.2.6 Performance Considerations

The musical analysis in the third movement has so far tried to elucidate Schubert's expressive devices in constructing this work. The analysis included the thematic materials, harmonic progression, dynamic markings as well as the identification of certain significant musical gestures or dramatic points in the music's shaping. Although the intrusive passage in C-sharp minor (bars 34-36) might be played with sudden loudness, the general range of dynamics in the whole third movement might be considered to move within *piano*, so that a sense of lightness could be achieved. A performer might also consider a steady pulse, in particular in the trio section in order to portray the reflective character.

In addition, the musical materials presented in the third movement open up the cyclical feature<sup>43</sup> of Schubert's Piano Sonata in A Major, D959, which offers another point of view for a performer in interpreting and performing the third movement within the whole sonata. For example, the beginning of the *Scherzo* adopts the motif of the downward leap of two crotchet notes in the left-hand from the beginning of the first movement (Example 3.32):

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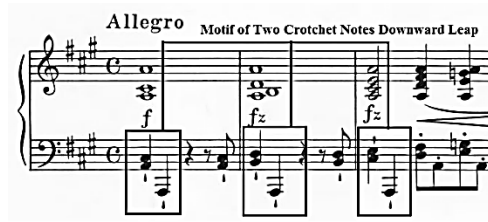
<sup>43</sup> Fisk, *Returning Cycles*, 204-236.



Example 3.32: Schubert, Sonata in A Major, D959, third movement, bars 1-8



Example 3.32: Schubert, Sonata in A Major, D959, first movement, bars 1-3



This motivic idea is presented by Schubert in many places within the third movement itself, especially in the *trio* section. These places include bars 9-14 and bars 15-21. The inverted version of the motivic idea also appear in bars 1-8 as well as bars 23-34 (Example 3.33).

Example 3.33: Schubert, Sonata in A Major, D959, third movement, *trio* section



### 3.2.7 Musical Plot and Dramatic Properties in the Fourth Movement

The fourth movement might seem to be constructed in sonata form, with an extensive development section. The musical material, animated throughout, seems active rather than reflective. The movement consists of perpetual motion in very nearly uninterrupted quaver notes. Table 3.4 illustrates an overview of the design of musical plot in the fourth movement.

In the beginning A section, the lyrical character of the principal theme is constructed in a clear phrase structure (mostly 4-bar phrases) and simple harmonic progression. In bars 17-34 the principal theme is switched into the left-hand part. The right-hand part is constructed with a counter melodic line, which is built on continuous triplet figures. However, the appearance of the A-sharp in bar 40 seems to signal a turning point in the musical process. The music moves away from the home key of A major and arrives in the dominant key of E major in bar 46.

Table 3.6: Musical Plot in Schubert's Sonata in A Major, D959, fourth movement

Section as in sonata form	Section as in rondo form	Plot Condition	Harmony	Dynamic Markings	Bars
Principal Theme (PT)	A	Stable, with clear phrase structure and cadential point	I	<i>p-cresc.</i>	1-34
Transition (Trans)		Preparation to the new material	Modulation	<i>f</i>	35-45
Secondary Theme (ST)	B	Modulatory passage	V	<i>p-pp-mf-f-decresc.-pp</i>	46-91
			♯ III	<i>pp-cresc.</i>	92-102
			V	<i>f-p-cresc.-f-decresc.-p-pp</i>	102-116
		Preparing to go back to the previous lyrical section	Return modulation	<i>pp</i>	117-125
	A		I	<i>pp</i>	126-141
Development		Increasing tension and forward motion to the climax in C-sharp minor	i	<i>mf</i>	142-146
	C		Unstable	<i>f</i>	146-167
	A?		♯ iii	<i>fp-<math>\llcorner</math></i>	168-178
	New material?			<i><math>\llcorner</math></i>	179-199
		♯ III	<i>fp-decresc.-pp-dim.</i>	200-211	
False Recapitulation (PT)	A		♯ VI	<i>pp</i>	212-217
PT			I	<i>cresc.</i>	218-246
Trans			Modulation	<i>f</i>	247-257
ST	B		I	<i>p-pp-mf-f-decresc.-pp</i>	258-303
			♯ VI	<i>pp-cresc.</i>	304-314
			I	<i>f-<math>\llcorner</math>-p-cresc.-f-decresc.</i>	314-327
Coda	A	Summary of the whole journey in the sonata		<i>p-pp-p-cresc.-f-ff</i>	328-382

From bar 46 onwards, the secondary theme is introduced. The frequent interchange of the theme between the right-hand and left-hand parts (for instance, bars 46-56 and bars 56-61, bars 67-79 and bars 79-84, and bars 106-112 and bars 112-116), with the continuous modulation on the same musical material, gives an illusion of effect in turning over similar ideas with different angle of views. Within this modulatory passage, the tonicisation on C major in bars 92-102 seems to provide another dramatic point where the music is a reminder of the effect of harmonic stasis in the beginning of the development section of the first movement. The harmonic progression in bars 92-102 moves around tonic and dominant in the key of C major. In addition, the descending lines in the right-hand part (bar 95 as well as bars 99-101) also seem to act as a reminder of the falling triplets gesture in the first movement (bars 7-12). These descending lines seem to be the first attempt in responding to the previous unresolved flattened sixth note in the first movement (bar 8, notice the bass line movement from E to F-natural) and resolve to E several times in this passage (Example 3.34)

Example 3.34: Schubert, Sonata in A Major, D959, fourth movement, bars 95-103

The image shows a musical score for Schubert's Sonata in A Major, D959, fourth movement, bars 95-103. The score is written in treble and bass clefs with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The right-hand part features descending lines and triplets, while the left-hand part has a steady eighth-note bass line. Bar 95 has a boxed triplet in the right hand. Bar 98 has a boxed triplet in the right hand and a 'cresc.' marking. Bar 101 has a boxed triplet in the right hand and an '8' marking above the right hand staff.

As it returns, the main theme retains its lyrical character, with elaboration and embellishment in the left-hand accompaniment figures (for instance, compare bars 126-133 with bars 1-8). The sudden shift into its parallel minor key (A major into A minor) in bar 142 (Example 3.35) provides another dramatic point.

Example 3.35: Schubert, Sonata in A Major, D959, fourth movement, bars 141-144

The momentum is built up gradually from bar 146 onwards, with *forte* indication, unstable harmonic progression and the complexity in the texture; in particular, the combination of triplet and duplet figurations from bar 162 onwards, are a reminder of the similar materials in bars 105-107 from the first movement (Example 3.36).

Example 3.36: Schubert, Sonata in A Major, D959, first movement, bars 104-115

In bars 180-200 the key seems to stay within C-sharp minor. The frequent big leaps in the right-hand part and the continuously vibrating triplets movement in the left-hand part keeps the musical tension throughout. The return of the main theme in F-sharp major in the ‘false recapitulation’ (bars 212-217) creates the impression of a ritornello form, while the deferral of the complete return of the main theme until bar 221 brings the movement into the orbit of a rondo, but not sonata-form.

In general, bars 221-326 retain most of the materials from bars 1-114, despite establishing them in the home key of A major. Eventually, the coda section (from bar 328 onwards) is an essential point as it gives several attempts in recalling and responding to the dramatic properties which were found in the musical plot of the first two movements. The occurrence of several pauses between the phrases illustrates the technique of what Robert Hatten called ‘rhetorical gestures’<sup>44</sup> which may have been utilised by Schubert in his compositional approach. He used the pause as a rhetorical gesture in order to redirect the attention to the abrupt change of harmonic progression (Example 3.37).

Example 3.37: Schubert, Sonata in A Major, D959, fourth movement, bars 328-346

The musical score for Example 3.37 shows bars 328-346. The key signature is A major (two sharps). The score is in piano (p) and includes a first pause (pp) marked 'a tempo'. The harmonic progression is indicated below the staff:

A: I I<sup>6</sup> V<sub>3</sub><sup>4</sup> I<sup>6</sup> ii<sub>5</sub><sup>6</sup> vii<sup>07</sup>/V V ( <sup>6</sup><sub>4</sub> <sup>5</sup><sub>3</sub> ) a: i i<sup>6</sup>

<sup>44</sup> ‘Rhetorical gestures, marked with respect to an otherwise unmarked musical discourse or flow ... include sudden or unpredicted pauses, changes, or shifts.’ Robert S. Hatten, *Interpreting Musical Gestures, Topics, and Tropes: Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 136.

334

dim.

Second Pause

a:  $V^4_3$   $i^6$   $N^6$

340

Third Pause

pp dim.

Fourth Pause

a tempo

F:  $I^6$   $I$   $V^7/IV$   $F: IV^6$   $V \left( \begin{smallmatrix} 6 \\ 4 \end{smallmatrix} \right) \left( \begin{smallmatrix} 5 \\ 3 \end{smallmatrix} \right)$   $I^6$   $V^6/ii$   $II$   $IV^6$   $V^6$

A:  $Ger^{+6}$   $I^6$   $I$   $ii^6_5$   $V^7$   $I$   $I^6$

The change of the tonic key into its parallel minor in bar 333 leads the subsequent passage into the key of F major and this recalls a similar approach to the recapitulation of the first movement (bars 219-224). In returning to the tonic key of A major, Schubert intelligently treated the F major key as a German augmented sixth in order to be resolved to the cadential six-four of the tonic key. However, instead of the usual arrival of the second inversion from its previous augmented chord, Schubert used the first inversion (Example 3.38). Hatten stated ‘here rhetorical or poetic resolution takes priority over normative voice-leading resolution. Not only is this an instance of style growth in Schubert, but it offers more evidence that expressive motivations, as opposed to formalist ones, are generating that growth’.<sup>45</sup>

Example 3.38: Schubert, Sonata in A Major, D959, fourth movement, bars 340-344

340

pp dim.

a tempo

A:  $Ger^{+6}$   $I^6$

<sup>45</sup> Robert S. Hatten, *Interpreting Musical Gestures, Topics, and Tropes: Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 26-28.

The presto section (bars 349-366) summarises the tonal journey of the whole sonata (Example 3.39).

Example 3.39: Schubert, Sonata in A Major, D959, fourth movement, bars 347-366

A: I V<sub>2</sub><sup>4</sup> I<sup>6</sup> V<sub>2</sub><sup>4</sup>  
IV

A: I<sup>6</sup> V<sub>2</sub><sup>4</sup> Dm: i<sup>6</sup> b VI  
IV (D Major) }

Dm: i<sup>6</sup> b VI Am: vii<sub>5</sub><sup>06</sup> i<sup>6</sup> VI

Am: VI i<sup>6</sup> VI (vi?)  
Fm: i<sup>6</sup>

Fm: i<sup>6</sup> A: iii<sub>4</sub><sup>6</sup> V<sub>5</sub><sup>6</sup> (v/iii?)

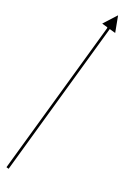
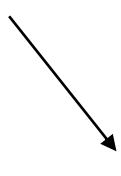
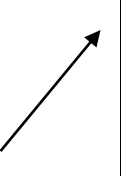
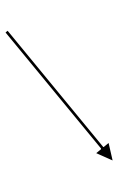
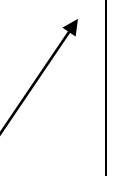
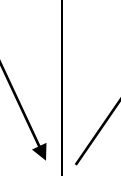
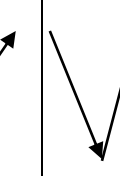
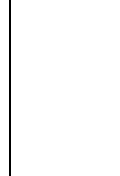

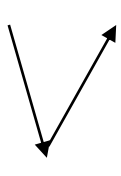
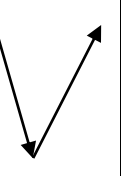


364

A: (v/iii?) V<sub>5</sub><sup>6</sup> vii<sup>o7</sup>/vi vi IV V (<sub>4</sub><sup>6</sup> <sub>3</sub><sup>5</sup>)

From bar 353 onwards, the continuity of the chord progression is constructed in an unclear direction, and Schubert departs from the home key with chromatic modulation. Although D minor is still related to its parallel major key (D major in bar 352), the sudden shifts into the B-flat major chord in bars 353-354, the F minor chord in bar 361 and the C-sharp minor chord in bar 362, together with the continuously running triplets in the right-hand part increase the musical tension and thus intensify the dramatic action in this particular passage. In other words, a momentary tonicisation of both B-flat major and F major in bars 353-356 echoes the last dramatic point in the first movement in bars 351-352 and bars 357-360. The final allusion to C-sharp minor which appeared in the middle section of the second movement and the intrusion in the third movement also appears in bars 361-362. However, Schubert uses a similar solution to highlight his adventurous harmonic journey by expressing the musical gestures of ascending and descending lines (Table 3.7):

Table 3.7: The order of Ascending and Descending lines in Schubert's Sonata in A Major, D959, fourth movement, bars 353-363

Bar(s)	353	354	355	356	357	358	359	360
Line								
Bar(s)	361	362	363					
Line								

In addition, the appearance of the flattened sixth note (F-natural) in the tenor line (bars 371-374) is now resolved properly (Example 3.40). In other words, the problematic character of the flattened sixth note, especially in the first movement (bar 8, notice the bass line movement from E to F-natural and unresolved, Example 3.41), transforms here as a simple chromatic upper neighbour note.

Example 3.40: Schubert, Sonata in A Major, D959, fourth movement, bars 370-375



Example 3.41: Schubert, Sonata in A Major, D959, first movement, bars 7-11



However, the most significant musical event in this section is the ascending arpeggio of A major in bars 375-376, where it seems to answer the uncertainty of the falling triplets (bars 7-8) in the first movement and subsequently gives a sense of completeness to the cadential point,<sup>46</sup> where a variant of perfect cadence in the home key of A major is established (Example 3.42).

Example 3.42: Schubert, Sonata in A Major, D959, first movement, bars 7-8, and fourth movement, bars 375-376

The image displays two musical excerpts from Schubert's Sonata in A Major, D959. The left excerpt, labeled 'First Movement', shows bars 7-8. It features a piano (p) dynamic and a falling triplet in the right hand. The right hand ends with a half note chord, and the left hand has a half note chord. A bracket below the right hand chord is labeled 'V<sup>7</sup>'. The right excerpt, labeled 'Fourth Movement', shows bars 375-376. It features a fortissimo (ff) dynamic and an ascending arpeggio in the right hand. The right hand ends with a half note chord, and the left hand has a half note chord. A bracket below the right hand chord is labeled 'I'. A large bracket below both excerpts is labeled 'Perfect Cadence'.

### 3.2.8 Performance Considerations

From the point of view of a performer, the fourth movement calls for constant restless energy and this may express itself in rhythmic excitement, clean and clear articulations, as well as sharply defined dynamics. During the coda section, bars 328-348 present the prolongation of suspense, and thus a performer might wish to emphasise the improvisatory effect by differentiating the duration of each pause. For instance, the difference in the chord progression of each phrase may indicate a different character for each pause as well as a certain amount of space between these phrases. A performer

<sup>46</sup> 'For example, the opening downward dominant arpeggio is answered not just by the same thing in reverse but by a transposition that cadentially resolves it.' Roy Howat, 'Architecture as drama in late Schubert', in Brian Newbould (ed.), *Schubert Studies* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 1998), 181.

could choose to slow down before the first pause and keep the pulse strict during the first pause so that the *a tempo* in bar 333 could be achieved effectively in the next phrase. Subsequently, a consistent tempo could be adopted from bar 333 onwards, including the second and third pauses, in order to convey a stronger sense of settling down in a foreign key. In bar 342, the augmented-sixth chord as well as the *pianissimo* marking imply retardation for the pulse, and the fourth pause could be suspended slightly longer to enhance the effect of the unusual resolution to the first inversion of the tonic key in bar 344.

The tension and character of the *Presto* section may imply an agitated and frantic atmosphere. Although bar 353 includes the dynamic marking of *forte*, it is still essential to shape the motif clearly by controlling the volume throughout the section. Hence, the beginning of the rising line should not be too loud in order to give room to the crescendo (bars 353-354, 355-356, 357-358 and 359-360) as well as the decrescendo effect (bars 354, 356, 358 and 360). The *fz* sign on the last beat of bar 356 should be given more prominence due to its dissonant quality (which was implied by its diminished chord); it thus serves as a point of change of direction in the harmonic progression where, instead of going back to the home key, it moves into its parallel minor key. From bar 360 onwards, a performer could choose to gradually increase the volume, together with a slight *accelerando*, which might help to enhance the sense of the arrival of the strong cadential point in bars 365-366. The epilogue concludes with the ascending arpeggio line in *fortissimo*, followed by a succession of block chords which Fisk described as ‘a

unifying gesture’ that became ‘one of the most manifestly cyclic moments in all of Schubert’s instrumental music’.<sup>47</sup> This epilogue might deserve great emphasis.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

As one of his last three piano sonatas, Schubert’s Piano Sonata in A Major, D959 evokes a succession of intense emotional atmospheres by incorporating some compositional techniques such as the ‘rhetorical gesture’<sup>48</sup> and the inventive musical structure (‘dynamic form’) utilised in this sonata. It reveals Schubert’s aesthetic approach to how music can imply the different regions of a narrative. The choices a performer makes in order to construct a performance that is supported by a narrative understanding is based on how he or she realises the piece as a whole, on how he or she identifies the narrative elements based on musical means, and on his or her ability to build an uninterrupted momentum that can be carried through the different sections comprising a complete work. The ways a performer chooses to achieve this is also based on his or her aesthetic understanding of how to form a coherent musical idea based on considerations that include a notion of timing and momentum. The specific indications of dynamics, articulations, phrasing and all other expressive markings provided by Schubert in this particular sonata give some clues for a performer to emphasise a special kind of goal-directed activity in performance. It involves not only tension and release (which may be varied, but fairly abstract), but also identifiable character-type features that can act as narrational agents, and events that cohere in such a way as to suggest a ‘plot’ – that is to

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<sup>47</sup> Charles Fisk, *Returning Cycles: Contexts for the Interpretation of Schubert’s Impromptus and Last Sonatas* (California: University of California Press, 2001), 204.

<sup>48</sup> ‘Rhetorical gestures, marked with respect to an otherwise unmarked musical discourse or flow ... include sudden or unpredicted pauses, changes, or shifts.’ Robert S. Hatten, *Interpreting Musical Gestures, Topics, and Tropes: Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 136.

provide some continuous, reasoned sequence of musical events that raises ‘questions’ and provides ‘answer’, or at least resolutions or reflective states of mind.

In summary, the discussion of musical plot and dramatic properties in Schubert’s D959 includes the following interpretative considerations. Firstly, the thematic materials which include how to establish a dynamic grasp of musical structure by governing which musical events need spotlighting, to locate the significant point where it initiates the subsequent event, and to investigate how the musical tensions or problems which appear in the beginning is resolved or unresolved. Secondly, the harmonic progression which a performer needs to understand what do they imply in the characterisation of music. Thirdly, the dynamic marking which a performer needs to know what their precise purpose is given their place within the work.

The interpretative considerations shown above lead to the conclusion that Schubert’s D959 potentially has multiple identities in relation to its conceptualisation and performance interpretation, and that these identities do not necessarily need to be resolved into just one for an effective performance to take place. All these decisions operate in combination to act upon performance-relevant matters, which in turn allow a narrative experience to come forward. Such matters include the shape and timing of a musical event within a phrase, a phrase within a section and a section within the movement, and the momentum with which the musical tension is constructed towards an ultimate point of direction. This is all part of the process of creating an interpretative

ownership of the work that develops from the potential of Schubert's instrumental music to be personalised through a variety of possibilities.

## **Chapter 4: Conclusion**

Schubert's unique approach in constructing the formal and tonal structures in the Piano Sonata in A Major, D959, in particular the improvisatory musical materials, challenge every performer to find out his or her own interpretation based on an understanding of the historical context, styles and performance issues – a genuine collaboration between the composer and performer.

In the first part of this dissertation, the investigation into the piano construction in Schubert's own time, conducted at Finchcocks Musical Museum in Kent, UK, was discussed. The museum has a good collection of Viennese fortepianos and the investigation into the mechanism of the Viennese fortepianos such as the damper system, strike proportion of the hammers, touch resistance, key depth, pedals as well as the keyboard range are discussed and analysed in chapter two. The findings provide an overview of late-eighteenth-century and early-nineteenth-century Viennese fortepianos and the mechanism in these instruments enable a pianist to explore a variety of tone colour. For instance, the construction of the foot pedals on both Fritz and Conrad Graf pianos offers a pianist possibility in projecting different kinds of tone quality. Experience on playing these fortepianos also reveals the fact that slightly different playing techniques are necessary compared with a modern piano, in particular the smaller key size as well as the action. The physical strength required to play on these early Viennese pianos is still considerably less than on a modern grand piano. Both the key depth and the touch resistance relate directly to the amount of physical strength that is needed to depress a key as well as to the approach a performer will adopt to most effectively produce the



desired tone colour. By playing Schubert's works on very well preserved pianos of the period, their characteristic sound that may have inspired and influenced Schubert's compositional approach in piano works can be explored.

In searching for a better understanding of nineteenth-century music's contexts which include social, historical and aesthetic, Carl Dahlhaus's book *Nineteenth-Century Music* offers great insights in the historical context of Schubert's last three piano sonatas. The influence of the virtuoso tradition which took place during the *Biedermeier Period* was deeply present within the realms of Schubert's creative inspiration in composing his large-scale instrumental works, including his last three piano sonatas. Considered as one of the 'virtuoso forms' which was prevalent during the early nineteenth century, the Fantasy-like structure was utilised by Schubert in his last three piano sonatas and the suspended quality in the development section in the first movement, as well as the dramatic middle section in the second movement of D959, are good examples in transforming the sonata tradition by bringing improvisational-like musical materials. It has been established that not only did the genre of sonata constantly evolve during the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century, but its tendency to play with structural ambiguity, and sometimes to be associated with poetic and literary forms, encouraged a special kind of partnership with a performer. The idea of the performance actively contributing to the coherence of the work provides one of the possible approaches to interpreting Schubert from within this fantasy tradition of the early nineteenth century. This interpretive approach outlines a possible solution to the performance difficulties encountered in Schubert's A Major sonata. It can encourage a

performer to consider the idea of presenting the music as narration. This includes the possible ways thematic material might be treated differently given their specific place within the work, how textual differentiation is accomplished and the choices in which a performer needs to decide which elements to be emphasised at what point and why, as well as what the composer's notation and expressive markings mean for today's performer.

Hence, the second part of this dissertation highlights and examines two general areas. In the first area, new light has been shed on the 'paradigm shift' in early nineteenth-century performance which leads into new understandings of musical presentation where Lawrence Zbikowski categorised two distinctive musical forms: 'static form' and 'dynamic form'. Compared with the traditional sonata-form which was prevalent during the classical period, Schubert's perception of the sonata-form, including his last three piano sonatas, is innovative and seems to try to transform the sonata-form into a 'means to attaining an expressive purpose'.<sup>1</sup> A similar perception of the difference between 'static form' and 'dynamic form' was observed by Janet Schmalfeldt and such a conception suggests the role of the performer as a co-creator in performing early nineteenth-century instrumental works. Schubert's last three piano sonatas, including the Piano Sonata in A Major, D959, have such potential to be interpreted in many unique ways, and to evolve continuously. Constructed in a 'dynamic form', Schubert's D959 gives room to a performer in interpreting the musical materials such as the large-scale harmonic constructions, the interplay and transformation of themes, the variety in the

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<sup>1</sup> John Irving, 'The Invention of Tradition', in Jim Samson (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 199.

phrasing and the expressive musical markings such as articulation and rhythmic contrasts, as well as the understanding of meter and pulsation.

By adopting John Rink's idea of 'structural potentialities within musical materials and then realising them as they see fit within the broader musical narrative of their performance',<sup>2</sup> this dissertation moves into the second area which discusses the documentation of what was happening in the music and how a performer might react to it. The difficulty with a narrative approach to musical works such as Schubert's piano sonatas, which might have enough narrative import, is not to prove whether a specific story fits the musical narrative or not, but rather to explain how a musical narrative is better achieved and communicated. Certainly, performers do not seek scientific explanations while formulating understandings of musical works or while perceptually engaging with performance processes relating to the experiencing of music. The first section focuses on how a performer might construct a musical plot in each movement of Schubert's D959, which include what connections to imply or emphasise at what point and why. The second section moves a step forward on how the connections between the musical events evoke narrative interpretations in relation to the musical plot.

The issue of the repeat of the exposition section in the first movement plays a crucial role in the performance of Schubert's Piano Sonata in A Major, D959. In the context of the first movement of Schubert's last three sonatas, the issue of repeat signs has been debated continuously, and it was considered as one of the main elements in determining the

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<sup>2</sup> John Rink, 'The (F)utility of Performance Analysis', in Mine Doğantan-Dack (ed.), *Artistic Practice as Research in Music: Theory, Criticism, Practice* (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2015), 129.

overall coherence of the work. In this respect, unlike Brendel who omits the repeat of the exposition of *Allegro*, Schiff's decision to repeat the whole exposition seems much more convincing as the repeat in the first movement's exposition section leads into a stronger sense of the evolving musical momentum throughout the sonata. That is to say, by repeating the whole exposition of the first movement, more attention is given to the musical tension or problems in the first movement such as the unresolved flattened sixth note (F-natural) in bar 8 and thus reinforces the anticipation of the possible resolution in the following movements.

In conclusion, the ways in which a performer has traditionally anchored a view of musical interpretation in a linear model moving from the composer's intentions to the listener's understanding, through the neutral conduit of the performance have greatly ignored the creative and constructive aspect of performance. Moreover, recent developments in musicology have tended to privilege performative meanings in relation to the understanding of performance as an event, or the performer as a unique bodily presence, or the performance as a physiological or phenomenological experience, rather than in relation to its role in the creation and emergence of the specifically musical content. By exploring the distinct musical meanings of narration in a performance, this dissertation invites further nuanced investigations into how musical narrative is felt and constructed in Schubert's two other late sonatas, namely the C minor, D958 and the B-flat major, D960, as well as how it might affect the experience of all three sonatas together in one time. After all, for all human beings musical performance is a type of experience, which is itself time-dependent and usually goal-directed. During such

experiences the narrative impulse will always be strong, and the sonic and somatic aspects of its revelation will always be difficult to keep apart.

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