A Classic Turn of Phrase: Music and the Psychology of Convention

by Robert O. Gjerdingen

Reviewed by Gregory Proctor

Analysis is carried out against a background of theory, both in the form of theoretical categories and of relational systems generally understood in the culture. These theories are partly learned and partly intuited, which is to say that the most powerful theories of musical coherence have probably not been articulated, and certainly not completely so. Milton Babbitt put it in analytic terms: "The hearing of music is always organized perceptually according to some analytic conception, be it verbalized or not."[1] When we study a score, we are *looking* for something. Normally what we are looking for is small and specific, and when we are satisfied that we have found what we were seeking, we have the confidence to invoke ever more complex systems. (To object that some theory predicts the outcome too strongly is to object to the kinds of structures sought. There is no *niveau neutre*.)

In *A Classic Turn of Phrase*, Robert O. Gjerdingen has attempted nothing less than to deal with these fundamentals of analytic reasoning, to study what it means to know and to use what we know, and he has done so through the mechanism of a single

[1] Milton Babbitt, review of Felix Salzer's *Structural Hearing*, *Journal of the American Musicological Society* V/d (1952):260-265.

analytic construct.[2] He uses this construct to make perceptive observations about the Classical style--to set out a theory of how this construct, and others like it develop, flourish, and decline--and to make an analytic realization of his theory.

Gjerdingen is in the theoretical tradition of Leonard Meyer and Eugene Narmour. His debt to them is evident throughout.[3] He reflects the philosophical sophistication of that tradition in the clarity of his definitions, the rigor with which his case is developed, and his appeal to sense-making apparatus closely linked with human perception. Also following that tradition, he finds it necessary to disavow, if not attack, the hierarchal-reductionist techniques most typically associated with the name of Schenker.

Gjerdingen begins with the maxim that "when your only tool is a hammer, all your problems look like nails."[4] The hammer in

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[2]A summary of the principal issues of this book appeared in Robert O. Gjerdingen, "The Formation and Deformation of Classic/Romantic Phrase Schemata: A Theoretical Model and Historical Study," *Music Theory Spectrum* 8 (1986):25-43. An earlier version of this paper was read in 1985 at the annual meeting of the Society for Music Theory in Vancouver.

[3]See especially, Leonard Meyer. *Explaining Music: Essays and Explorations* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973); and the article "Exploiting Limits: Creation, Archetypes, and Style Change," *Daedalus* 109/2 (1980):177-205. Also, Eugene Narmour, *Beyond Schenkerism: The Need for Alternatives in Music Analysis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977). Gjerdingen acknowledges as further influences Charles Cudworth and Leonard Ratner and gives recognition to James R. Meehan who saw the possibilities of such a path of investigation for both musicological and compositional reasons (see Meehan's "An Artificial Intelligence Approach to Tonal Music Theory," *Computer Music Journal* 4/2 (1980):60-65).

[4]Robert Gjerdingen, *A Classic Turn of Phrase: Music and the Psychology of Convention* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988, p.ix). I would

this case refers to reductive analysis; the nail turns out to be an "understanding of how knowledgeable listeners perceive many of the sublimely beautiful musical phrases of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (page x)." Although Gjerdingen disclaims grand goals, this reads as sufficiently grand to overcome his assertions of a mere modest proposal.

The book is in two parts: the first lays the theoretical foundation, the second presents a model schema and traces it through the history of tonal music. Part one begins with schema theory in non-musical fields, then draws upon Meyer and Narmour for musical applications. Part two divides the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries into five blocks of years, discussing the chief characteristics of appearances of the schema in question or of schemata closely related to it.

Schemata. Moving from the general to the specific, Part 1 begins with the field of perception. Gjerdingen reminds us that schemata provide interpretive contexts for input. The input data are "features," with the ability to distinguish features innate for some schemata and learned for others. The critical aspects of schemata are that 1) schemata simultaneously differentiate peculiarities and invariants, 2) schemata form both the individual and the category, 3) these first two functions interact, and 4) a schema is alterable on the fly.[5]

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appreciate any information as to the source of this maxim. I first heard it from William Poland in 1978.

[5]As Gjerdingen says on page 6, "Features serve as cues in the selection of schemata, and schemata serve as guides in the detection of features."

Following Meyer, Gjerdingen uses the term "archetype" for an "innate or universally valid" schema. This assertion of universality is suspicious, since a test for two such archetypes by Rosner and Meyer had subjects who were raised in the Western tradition with an experiment using classical Western music as content. Gjerdingen believes that Rosner and Meyer have demonstrated the psychological reality of complex musical schemata, and that he can proceed without worrying over it further.[6]

Following Schank and Abelson, Gjerdingen distinguishes between *plans* and *scripts*, where plans are general and scripts specific. He offers the interesting assertion that eighteenth-century scripts become nineteenth-century plans, and follows up this line of discussion in the historical survey of Part 2. This characterization is quite convincing.

Drawing on the work of George Mandler, Gjerdingen then describes three types of structures: *coordinate*, where each element is directly related to each of the others; *subordinate*, where some elements are related by subordination to those above them without determining any relationship among the subordinate elements; and *proordinate* or *serial*, where the elements must proceed in order. He asserts that musicians tend to prefer subordinate structures.

Having discussed mental structures, the author moves to the matter of *representing* these structures, pointing out that there is a problem in that all representations distort reality; we are advised to select the ones that distort the least. While there are three types of

[6]Since the issue of the psychological naturalness or universality of the particular schema of this book is to be developed no further, there seems little need to introduce it at all.

structures, he cites Michael Friendly in providing four modes of representation of structures: taxonomy, dimensional representation, tree structure, and network. Music is commonly viewed in terms of the kind of hierarchy that prefers tree-structure representation. Gjerdingen argues against tree structures through an attack on reduction:

> Low-level 'surface tones' are transformed into higher-level 'structural tones.' But what exactly is a structural tone? Is it a new description of other structures or a summary of lower-level events? (page 20)

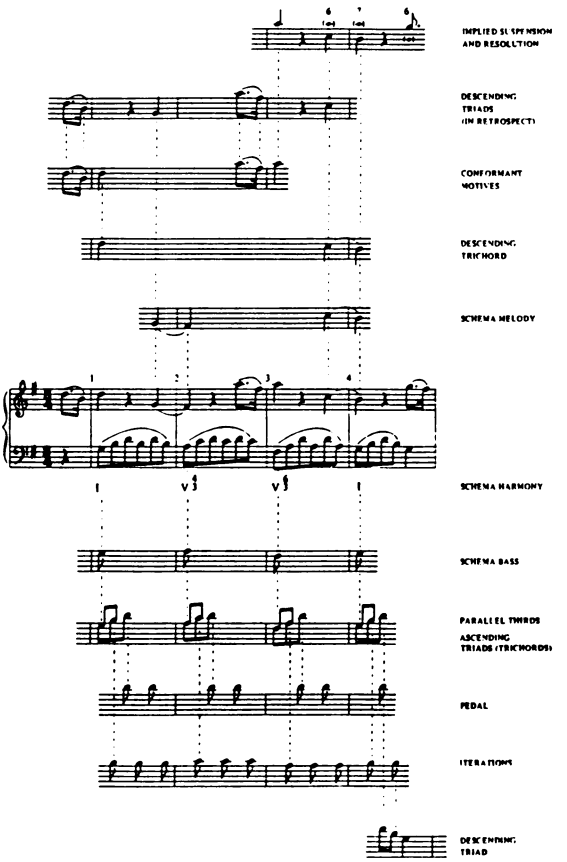
His answer seems to be that it is neither, that the analysis has no outcome. The tree structure always requires that fewer elements are derived as the tree ascends, a fact that eliminates other hierarchic information. Despite my own resistance to tree structures, the argument ought to be made that Gjerdingen's case is overstated in implying that only the top of the tree is observed, rather than the entire complex. It is understood in all tree structures that the content becomes general toward the top of the tree and differentiated at the bottom, and that it is a falsification of the process to observe only part of the structure. The tree structure representation of relations is a residue of the theory used to generate it; the real theory lies in the rules that lead from one level to the next.

Of the four modes of representation, then, Gjerdingen chooses *network* as the only one adequately to represent all three of Mandel's mental structures. Example 1 is an example of a network representation.

Narmour. Gjerdingen's next approximation toward his musical application introduces Narmour's categories of *style form, style structure,* and *idiostructure*. (A *style form* is a musical component sufficiently self-contained and abstracted to be recognized outside the context provided it by a particular composition. A *style-structure* is most simply the reification of a style form--or several style forms in combination--through provision of rhythmic context. An *idiostructure* is the binding of musical components, including style structures, to contexts. Different idiostructures containing the same style forms will have different interpretations.) For this study, Gjerdingen uses *style form* to "signify the relatively abstract, context-free constituents of schemata" (page 45). He compares style forms to psychology's "distinctive features" but finds the connection tenuous. Similarly, he finds style structures "very close to cognitive schemata." In this he goes beyond Narmour's view of style structure, allowing for ideal versions.

Meyer. Finally there are Meyer's concepts of archetype and schemata as applied to music. (The distinction between them is that archetypes are innate while schemata are learned, but the distinction is not maintained as a strong one.) Also operative are *form* and *process*, where form is closed, differentiated, and discontinuous, and process is open and continuous. Form is defined by repetition and contrast; process by musical inertia and good continuation. Symmetrical patterns, not easily adapted into either of those categories, are also introduced from Meyer. The archetypes are among these "form-process amalgams." Gjerdingen finds Meyer's analysis in terms of archetypes partially inexplicit, in that

Example 1. Gjerdingen's Example 2-11



EXAMPLE 2-11. A network representation of the first four measures of Mozart's Keyboard Sonata in G Major, KV 283 (189h)

features such as rhythm are referred to but not incorporated into the model; he develops this further later in the book.

The 1-7 4-3 schema. In justifying his choice for this study, Gjerdingen says that the schema have to be common, simple enough for thorough consideration, concrete enough to be clearly defined, and familiar as an archetype but not thoroughly studied. He chooses Meyer's "changing-note archetype," selecting the particular version with the 1-7 4-3 melody because of its stylistic range: the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. He thus has a schema for demonstrating his definition and his application of archetypes, as well as a tool for style study based on frequency and typicality of occurrence. The schema is shown in Figure 1. It is an interestingly complex analytic artifact.

The notation of the schema is precise, and rigorously reflected in each of the approximately 200 subsequent analytic examples.[7] The entire schema is in square brackets when it is set apart from a larger context; if the schema essentially dominates the excerpt, the square brackets are omitted. It contains two "events" in canted brackets; each event contains two linear dyads in the outer voices notated as scale-degree numbers in circles and is joined by an arrow. Each dyad, a descending melodic step progression, is

[7]The author relates David Rumelhart's six characteristics of a schema to his particular schema, with indifferent success. According to Rumelhart, schema 1) have variables, 2) can embed, 3) represent knowledge at all levels of abstraction, 4) represent knowledge rather than definitions, 5) are active processes, and 6) are recognition devices for evaluation of goodness of fit. It is difficult to visit all of these characteristics upon music, especially numbers (3) and (4), which logically seem to be different qualities from the others and to reside on muliple levels.

Figure 1. Gjerdingen's Figure 4-4

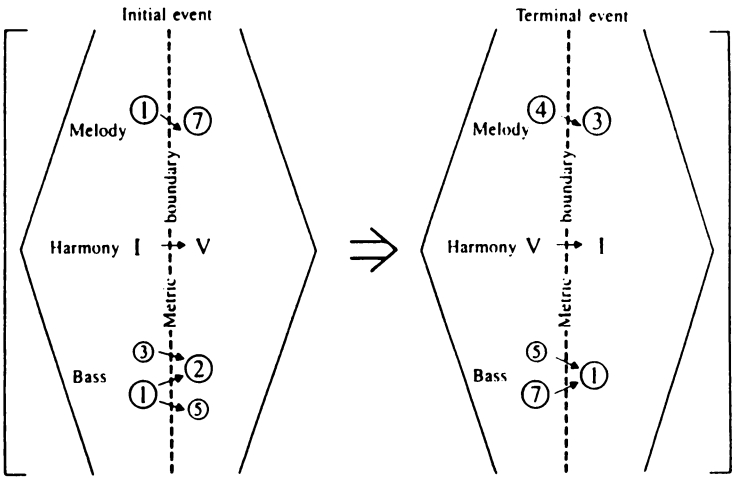


FIGURE 4-4. The 1–7...4–3 schema

accompanied by a limited set of bass notes, contained within a tonic or dominant (or dominant 7th) harmony. When the harmonic progression is notated, the Roman numerals within each event are also connected by arrows. Each event must also cross a metric boundary, which is to say that the event will occur between beats at least; and Gjerdingen's most typical instances include a bar line as the metric boundary.

The schema is more abstract in some particulars than in others. For example, the density of harmonies is not an issue, nor is the register in which any component pitches lie, nor the degree of melodic ornamentation. Yet, the melody and bass must be true outer voices whose model pitches are actually present rather than implied, which eliminates examples in which the second event's descending dyad is in an inner voice. Thus, a changing-note figure, 1-7 2-1, that contains 4-3 in an inner voice would be ascribed to a separate, though closely related schema.[8]

It is critical for Gjerdingen's approach that the schema be taken as a complete network of features. It is quite easy to think of the melody as the primary fact and consider the other features to be optional, an attitude that instantly weakens the approach. Nevertheless, it seems clear that one can apply to these schemata the same status discrimination that one is advised to apply to Schenkerian levels, where some component, such as a leading melodic voice, is understood to be responsible for some other component, such as an accompanying transferred bass form, without

[8]When variations of the schema are discussed in Chapter 5, each departure from the model is explicitly discussed and a judgment is made as to the degree to which this schema may be said to operate or to yield to an affiliated schema.

relegating the secondary item to a later level of structure. Similarly for Gjerdingen, while the melodic dyads seem to lead, they alone are not sufficient evidence of the schema.

The preference for contemporary theorists to prefer universal subordinate structures leads to some potential confusion with respect to language and notation. One caution about terminology: Gjerdingen refers to the elements or features of the schema as "low-level" and the schema as a whole as a "high-level" entity with respect to those features. Finally, the schema itself is a "mid-level" pheonomenon. This is at variance with post-Schenkerian analysts who would normally consider the entire schema as on a relatively "low" level of structure. Gjerdingen's schema is actually constricted to small patches of music; the two schema events are expected to lie within two subphrases of a single larger phrase.[9]

Variations. Gjerdingen admits variations of the schema as representing the schema (or interpretable in terms of the schema). With respect to the bass line, there can be omission or attenuation of the first bass note in each event; and, in modulations to the relative minor, the minor tonic can be elided with the tonic of the relative major. (There is also a discussion of "hybrid" bass motions, but this is not a variation proper since all the possibilities discussed are already present in the schema of Figure 1). With respect to variations of harmony, there can be a movement toward the dominant chord of the first event in place of the simple tonic; a

[9]This is not part of the initial definition but emerges when the author surveys variants in Chapter 5.

deceptive cadence in place of the tonic in the second event; and a premature arrival of a passing tonic chord between events.

Specific variation of the melodic dyads may include ornamentation, especially within the second event, so that scale degrees 4 and 3 are not literally adjacent; and weak instantiation of some dyad element, but frequently reinforced by doublets in the vicinity. The melodic variations are easier to deal with than the bass variations since they involve simple ornaments (that usually create a gap that is immediately filled), but they would be still easier to deal with if Schenkerian abstraction were admitted. In such a case, the schema events would comprise middleground pitches, which is to say components representable by themselves or by a couples of pitches *schematically* understood to represent them. A trivial instance is that a note can be represented by a turn figure. If the ornament is written out, it seems to become an issue for discussion, but if it were indicated by some standard sign, it appears it would not be so singled out. The status of features within the schema event may be relevant here. One of the examples includes two cases of scale degree 3 being preceded by its leading tone as a potential obscuring of the schema,[10] but a similar situation holds for another case where bass notes are preceded by their leading tones without the schema being thus called into question.[11]

The degree of variance allowed to the bass as well as the harmony seems to question their validity as components of the schema, but this variance is normally acceptable as representing the schema only when the other features are so strongly represented as

[10]Example 5-14a and c.

[11]Example 5-4b.

virtually to imply the normal version even if no bass were present at all. Such a weighting, in fact, is typical of the examples, where preponderance of conformity is more determinative of schematic identity than degree of variance within one feature. "The widest range of variation is permitted to a single feature when the other features are near their norms" (page 96).

Of all the variable components of the schema, the greatest value for the preservation of the schema is placed on the melodic dyads, since they are allowed the least variance. Gjerdingen even states that they are a necessary but not sufficient condition for the presence of the schema, an attribute of no other feature. This is rather too harsh a constraint for most modern analysts, who have little trouble transferring requisite elements from other registers, or, if they are idealists, deriving the connection from assumed voice-leading, not necessarily present on the surface but indicated by it. Nevertheless, it is inappropriate to object to Gjerdingen's holding to a more literal standard, in that he is not seeking to show how the passage conforms to generalized norms of tonality, but to track the environment and lineaments of a complex of specific surface features in terms of the complex's abstract description.

In connection with the melodic dyads in particular, there appears an interesting discussion of *deformation* of schemata, an issue of importance for the second half of his book, the historical survey. (This discussion includes a call for occasional "fuzzy" characterizations in music theory: "The concept of a *deformed style structure* provides a useful alternative to the contention that a musical structure must either be, or not be, a member of a particular structural category.") Deformation goes together with a discussion of variation between the two schema events and is largely concerned

with the metric parallelism between them. Deviants include the weak metric position of the second dyad element, as well as enlargements of either phrase half or both halves. In general Gjerdingen expects the schema to have conformant subphrases, and to open, close, or lie within them. When the first schema event links the subphrases, the second closes the pair and perhaps links to the next phrase; such an appearance is taken to lie outside the range of this schema and to comprise a separate one. He leaves the consideration of this closely related schema out of his historical evaluation, although it typifies one way in which the schema is deformed in the course of its historical decline.

Historical survey. The nineteenth century was given to understand histories of schemata in organic terms, in terms of its life cycle. To replace such an image, Gjerdingen offers a simple explanation with a more modern ring by means of two hypotheses. First:

"The variation across time in the number of instances of a musical schema approximates a normal, bell-curved statistical distribution" (page 100). With respect to the scaling of the curve, he adds: "The degree of pointedness in the population curve of a musical schema varies directly with the number of constraints specified in the schema's definition" (page 101).

And second: "A musical schema will exhibit a curve of typicality similar to its population curve" (page 103). This is

intended to describe the qualitative differences traditionally associated with the organic metaphor.[12]

With respect to the actual historical survey, Gjerdingen asserts that all of the early examples were complicated structures from which the archetype is (historically) abstracted and simplified. Although there is no clear increase in the use of the schema over this first thirty-five year segment, there is an increase in the typicality of its appearances. This failure to accommodate hypothesis two is attributed to the relative rarity of instances among such a large population of pieces. Early examples are often blurred by admixture with other schemata. When the schema is especially focused upon by composers, its binary implications lead them to treat the characteristic features in parallel antecedent-consequent gestures, whereas the nontypical treatments, rather, introduce the schema's features as details within a complex whole, with other emphases. A strong characteristic of the schema, then, is its relative autonomy from its context.[13]

Gjerdingen finds a precipitous decline from the 1770s, to the early 1780s, and through the nineteenth century, as more

[12]Gjerdingen goes on to deal subtly with issues of typicality and its effect on both the composer and the musicologist, and also considers the likely effect of memory on the shape of the curve. This explanation of *how* such a shape is made is one of the most original, and responsible, features of the book.

[13]There follows a theoretically important discussion of typicality and ideality, a subject that gets to the core of the nature of analytic constructs in terms of specific instances of such constructs. The schema is considered in conjunction with affiliated schemata (the linear-descent complex, the "high 2" complex, and the descending triads complex as an extension of the high 2 schema), expansion of the material separating the two schema events, and the enrichment of the perception of non-schematic examples by reference to the schema.

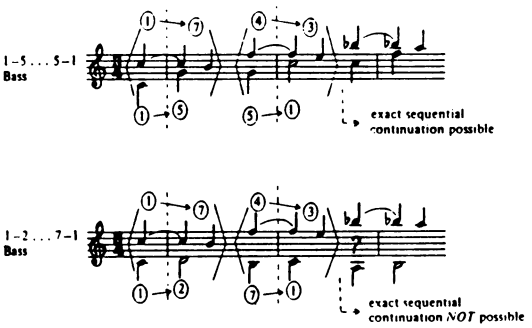
subsidiary patterns are incorporated, such as the tendency toward extension by adding 6-5 in sequence, either before or after the schema. Further devices include the descending triads becoming descending scales, and the schema boundaries being blurred by overlapping processes, a procedure similar to the Baroque practice of attenuating, eliding, or overlapping the boundaries of the events. Affinities between Baroque and Romantic practice have been asserted before, but rarely with such a precise mechanism for demonstrating them. Among the Romantic composers using the schema, Schumann figures prominently while Wagner figures little, but Romantic music overtly using the schema tends to be non-Germanic.[14]

There are many aspects of Gjerdingen's analytic discussion worthy of notice, aspects that almost glide by. One example is the differentiation between more and less typical bass patterns for the schema so that closely allied schemata can be signaled as different. Example 2 shows that the leap upward of a perfect fifth in the bass is more indicative of the continuation of the sequence than indicative of the schema, while bass movement 1-2 7-1 is more indicative of the schema.

[14]Here the issue of scripts and plans comes into play. For the nineteenth century, the schema is a script from the past, and flows against the notion of high artistic endeavor. Since the *idée fixe* of Berlioz' *Symphonie fantastique* embeds a grand version of the schema, there is merit in considering its apparent banality in those Romantic terms of rejection of scripts in favor of processive plans. Later references to the schema are either overtly neo-classical or nostalgic evocations, or are part of the basic vocabulary of "light" genres such as dance, operetta, and marches.

Example 2. Gjerdingen's Example 7-15

EXAMPLE 7-15. The 1–5...5–1 and 1–2...7–1 basses contrasted with respect to sequential continuation



At this point I would like to address several aspects of this fine book that I find problematic.

Sample population. Figure 2 is a compound of three curves: the normal distribution, the population results of his study plotted by frequency of occurrence against groups of years, and a similar plot of a subset of the sample population. Aside from the minor matter of the curve of normal distribution more typically showing up in studies in which findings are plotted against pure chance, I have serious questions concerning the sample population in this work. The first is that the number of compositions surveyed, although large for such a study, is still miniscule for the literature of tonal music. By my count, 366 pieces are listed in the Appendix, of which 30 pieces are cited in the book as not having the schema. The remaining 336 pieces are either examples in the book or are used for the calculation of the curve. Nowhere in this book does Gjerdingen indicate the number of compositions examined, although I am sure it is massive, if only because of the number of monuments and anthologies indicated in the appendix. Even if every example in such collections were studied, there is no way of knowing if that number forms a statistically significant percentage of extant compositions. Similarly, there is no description of the mechanisms employed to plot the curve. This might not be critical, but I would like to be told in the interests of scientific clarity. It would help me to know precisely what is at issue when he says:

> Because of the particular averaging and graphing techniques adopted, the peak of population appears midway between 1770 and 1775. A closer examination of all the examples within this interval revealed that the actual peak of population occurs between 1771 and 1773 (page 159).

If the graph is skewed because of data transformation, then we are owed a description of the transformation.[15] A volume with room for leisurely dissection of 200 excerpts surely has room for apparatus.

Gjerdingen is aware of this issue in a number of examples and deals with it by showing in Figure 2 (dotted line) that an earlier, smaller sample using only symphonies by Mozart and Haydn produced a similar curve but with exaggerated properties. He supposes that a larger sample would approximate the normal distribution curve (dashed line) more precisely, but it is equally plausible that a sufficiently large sample might just as well demonstrate that this schema is so peculiar in the history of tonal music as to be virtually unique to the styles of Haydn and Mozart.

A subsidiary plotting issue concerns the number of examples studies for each five-year span. We do not know how the number of instances of the schema is related to the number of examples consulted for each period. It is highly likely that there is a discrepancy between the number of pieces studied for different time-

[15] Although I am sure that this information is in the dissertation upon which this book is based, it should be included in the book. See Robert O. Gjerdingen, *A Musical Schema: Structure and Style Change, 1720-1900* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1984).

spans, and I suspect that the adjustment for this discrepancy is one of the averaging and graphing techniques.

Finally, there is the problem of disparity of genre. The early samples are from a variety of genres but from 1755 through the rest of the eighteenth century, the lion's share of the examples are drawn from concerted orchestral music, mostly symphonies. If the sample population had been symphonies alone--and the "earlier sample" of Figure 2 seems to indicate that as the original starting point--then the curve would closely approximate the normal distribution curve, *apart from any schema at all.* The curve seems to match closely the population of *symphonies* over the period of the eighteenth through nineteenth centuries. All we can then safely assume is that the schema is part of the symphonic literature, not of the Classical style. This could easily have been corrected by limiting the population to a genre that nearly alone has significant representation throughout the period of tonal composition--opera. This study would make its point far more convincingly if all the compositions studied were operas, with an equal number of representatives studied for each five-year time-span.

Despite my quarrel with the incompleteness of the impressive and scientific-looking statistical component, I accept Gjerdingen's theory of why there should be such a curve and why it should be distorted in a certain way, and I accept that his results are an accurate reflection of reality. Less satisfactory is his treatment of reduction, tree structures, and Schenker.

Schenker. Whenever pitch structure is considered, especially in subordinate hierarchical terms, it is difficult to avoid mention of Schenker. Of all the revisions visited upon Schenker, the

Figure 2. Gjerdingen's Figure 12-1

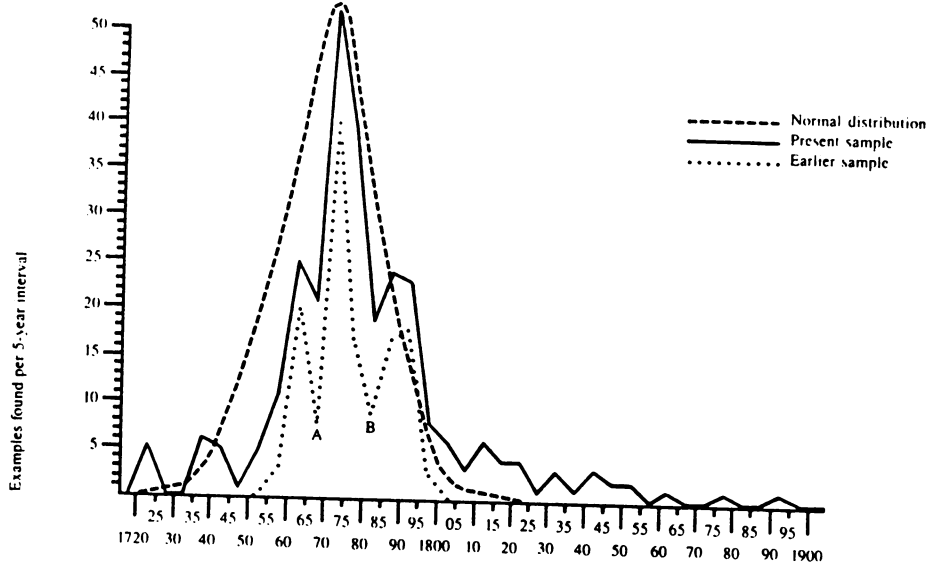


FIGURE 12-1. Population of 1-7..4-3 style structures, 1720-1900

most destructive is the notion that his theories embody a device for the reductive analysis of music. Under this position, as stated in its most hostile form, the notes of the composition are sorted into more and less structural notes or (in Salzer's language) notes of structure and notes of prolongation. Structural notes are then reevaluated for the same kind of sorting, with the process continuing until no more sorting and sifting can be done and the harmony of the spheres is reached.

But reduction is neither so simple-minded nor so useless. Reduction primarily demonstrates that the rules of tonal counterpoint can be formulated so as to show themselves capable of recursive application. The best situation would seem to be one in which distinctive abstract forms made up each stage of coherence for a composition, and in which some forms might be reapplicable in recursive levels, while others might not be, and where there were criteria of good conformation at each stage and level. And this is precisely Schenker's theory, however little it is the theory of Schenkerians.

What Schenker proposed were compositional procedures that seemed to produce individuals out of the generality of the style and conversely, to demonstrate the commonality of individuals. This commonality was based on procedures thought to reflect distinctly perceptible compositional ploys. Schenker was not addressing individual tones of structure, but the manifold layering of shapes whose members, like the beats of a musical meter, lie solely within the heads of the listeners. At just the first level of the middleground, his procedures are shape-explicit: lines of the first order in the form of initial ascent, descent from privileged members of the fundamental line, motions out of the inner voice, initial arpeggiation;

unfolding, coupling, register transfer, filling of the first bass arpeggiation, double arpeggiation of the bass against a single fundamental line, and interruption. The issue is not which notes on the surface of the composition are to be called "structural," but how the shapes of the surface indicate a nesting of shapes encompassing the entire composition, ultimately contained in a specific way within the harmony denoted as the key of the composition.

Gjerdingen first introduces Schenker as "an early proponent of a type of schema theory" (page 23). Later, he observes that "Schenker's universal *Ursatz* is now frequently rationalized as a high-level schema" (page 265). I propose that schemata are rife in Schenker's work, and are scarcely limited to the fundamental structure; they are what I have been referring to as "procedures." I propose that schemata are the essential characteristic of Schenker's theory.

In the idealist interpretation, Schenkerian theory does not allow notes of the structure to be notes of the surface. He draws a shape in meter-free space, the elements of which shape represent others, a feature of Schenkerian subordination. Gjerdingen has particular scale degrees in a particular metric positioning. Since he avers no subordination, there is no extra level of abstraction and features can be real pitches in a piece. Although Gjerdingen rejects reduction, his theory shares this aspect with reduction, but he has *prima facie* justification for his position, whereas the reductionist notion of generation of explicit surface pitches by others is the position in need of further defense.

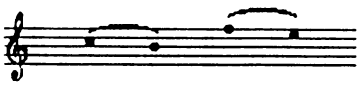
As the sole examples of Schenkerian analysis Gjerdingen selects reductionist analyses by *two other analysts*. (The excerpt is the same as that analyzed by Gjerdingen in the network

representation of Example 1.) Taken together these two other graphs might represent the material that I would expect Schenker to include: melodic progression of a third with accompanying neighbors, voice exchange, and unfolding. But rather than enriching each of these analysis by the other, he simplifies each to slightly different tree structures, and then criticizes the tree-structure analyses, as though these other analysts had made them rather than he, and as though they might have believed those tree-structure analyses he visits upon their work.[16] He contrasts the notion of normative abstractions, Meyer's "archetypal musical schemata," with the notion of "structural-tone reductionism" (page ix). On the basis of these labels alone, which alternative would any caring musician choose? Gjerdingen holds that his schemata were nested: that one set of abstractions controlled another set, just as even a non-Schenkerian notion of harmony controls the surface without there having to be chords. For those opposed to this nesting of abstractions, Schenker's analyses can be read without reference to their "generative" aspect, but just with respect to their schematic insights.

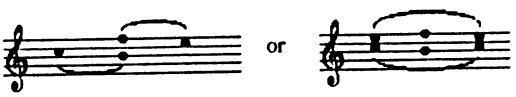
As a simple example of the relation between schema theory and Schenker, let us examine the dyad features of this book's schema. When a well-read Schenkerian is confronted with the 1-7 4-3 pattern, as in Example 3, and asked to name the procedure, the answer will most likely be "unfolding" or "reaching over." These two closely related devices are indicative of the separate articulation of

[16]The author apparently owes this association of Schenker with tree structure to Eugene Narmour. The entire argument can be found in Chapter 8 of *Beyond Schenkerism*, including the rewriting, as a tree-structure, of an analysis not by Schenker in order to highlight Schenker's deficiencies.

Example 3.



Example 4.



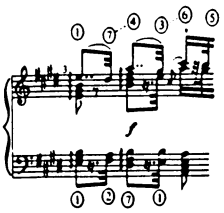
two voices construed as counterpointing one another and thus conceptually overlapped to some degree at a prior stratum. Each voice has linear content--stepwise motion. (There is the specific clarification for this procedure provided by Schenker's additional requirement that the voices be alternated more than once.) For the figure in Example 3, the prior form might be as in Example 4.

The closely related device of reaching over is special in that its alternate presentation of voices serves some other ascending procedure, such as (at the first level) initial ascent or initial arpeggiation. In his discussion of variations of the schema, in fact, Gjerdingen provides examples, as in Example 5, which exemplify perfectly these two Schenkerian procedures. The Haydn example represents reaching over in the service of initial arpeggiation, and the Beethoven represents unfolding, matching perfectly the model of the complete neighbors in example E.

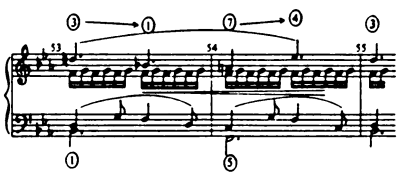
Interestingly, Gjerdingen decides that these two examples represent schemata other than his because of their rhythmic associations. This leads to my central issue: Schenker's procedures can contain Gjerdingen's schema; the latter is more specific in its expectations of conformity. Schenker's unfolding procedure requires only two distinct voices containing linear successions, which must share at least one common harmony. The double-neighbor figure, the simplest form of Meyer's "changing-note archetype," is a limiting case where the two voices share the unison as the boundary of the neighbor figure.

While on the subject of unfolding, I would like to dispense with another issue related to it. Post-Schenkerian theory is by no means original in supplying abstract models of good confirmation, including notes. Where would so many of us be without the ability

Example 5. Gjerdingen's Examples 5-34 and 5-35



EXAMPLE 5-34. Haydn, Keyboard Sonata in E♭ Major, Hob. XVI/52 (1794), ii, Adagio, meas. 3



EXAMPLE 5-35. Beethoven, Piano Sonata in E♭ Major, "Lebewohl," Op. 81a (1809–10), iii, Vivacissimamente, meas. 53–55

to categorize the peculiar seventh chord on the seventh degree as a dominant 9th with a suppressed root? Most such default-value supplying is harmless and some is even helpful, but occasionally some gardening needs to be done and pesticide poured on a sample. In general, Gjerdingen shies away from implication[17] but devotes a little space to the implied suspension common among strong reductionists. In principle, one could unfold a suspension figure, example 6a, to arrive at example 6b.

Although the transformation of 6a into 6b is possible, it hardly seems the best representation of suspension, and in any case unfolding can not be assumed to correspondingly point back to suspension. Gjerdingen does make this assumption, though, and devotes attention to the use of implied suspensions in making links between the schema instantiation and succeeding material.[18] Of all implied figurations in tonal music, implied suspension is the weakest. When used in analysis, it stands in danger of distorting common instrumental figurations into bizarre cross-harmonic networks. Contemplate the horror wrought by the Alberti bass in the most innocent piece if one must assume the persistence of a pitch until its literal displacement. Tonal music requires meter, and meter addresses this point precisely. One of meter's primary purposes is specifically to delimit harmonic change: a pitch persists only if it conforms to the new harmony. If this assumption of displacement -- rather than persistence -- at the beat point is to be overridden, it is *explicitly* overridden by over suspension (page 140-141).

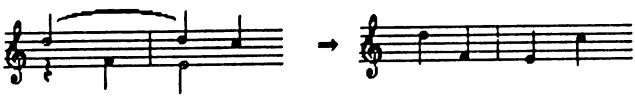
[17] Of pitches. Not, obviously, of good continuation.

[18] Pages 140-141.

Example 6.

a.

b.



Conclusion. This excellent book is not about Schenker, even though I have spent some time on that subject. Indeed, Gjerdingen could have happily avoided mentioning Schenker altogether, and so would have I. Nor would the explicit mentions of Schenker's name--there are three of them--have needed any response, although I would then have succumbed to the temptation to indicate in a couple of sentences that I agreed that Schenker was a schema theorist. What generated--so to speak--all this extra consideration of the issue should by now be evident, the hopelessly outdated misconstruction of what Schenkerian theory is through its association with a distinctly opposed system of theories. Although the author did not serve any positive purpose by making this linkage and then shooting down the entire complex, it seems to have fallen his lot by the tradition from which he derives.

Genuine Schenkerian theory is not in conflict with the work of theorists in the tradition of Meyer. Both attempt to deal with the thick problem of degrees of abstraction with which mental constructs can interpret and organize music. The recent area of narrative in musical analysis seems to have found no difficulty in recognizing Schenkerian theory as complementary rather than confrontational, as filling out another aspect of musical contemplation rather than as negating the aspect of immediate concern.

The stream of music theory reasonably attributable to Leonard Meyer has a tendency to draw genuine philosophers, which is what music theorists should be. They are nobly represented by Robert Gjerdingen. I enjoyed *A Classic Turn of Phrase* immensely. It is a major contribution to the development of the field, and therefore to the further development, we hope, of musical philosophers like him.