Tonal Design and Narrative In Film Music: Bernard Herrmann's A Portrait Of Hitch and The Trouble With Harry

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Writing in this journal ten years ago, I proposed that "it is nearly impossible to study a film score purely in terms of the structuralist/formalist descriptions of design that most of us are used to as the primary activity of music analysis."[1] Among the obstacles are questions of music's place in the implied physical space of the film ("diegetic"/"nondiegetic"), music's narrative functions, its relation to other elements of the soundtrack, its (typical or perceived) lack of continuity and development, authorship, the integrity of the text, and the necessity of adaptation for analytic methods designed primarily for concert music.

In the past decade, the literature on film music has expanded considerably, and a number of these issues have been addressed in serious (if not necessarily conclusive) ways from different disciplinary perspectives. But my original challenge remains largely open, perhaps because of priorities among film-music scholars: those issues named above are at the heart of the theoretical and historical problems of film music, and, in comparison, pitch design and similar matters examined "for their own sake" are little more than curiosities. Another way to put this is that issues and techniques related more directly and obviously to reading—interpreting—a film, such as leitmotivic networks, instrumental color, affect or style topics, diegetic or nondiegetic status, and place in the soundtrack, all take priority over traditional musical-structural devices such as harmony, voice leading, or form categories.[2] As Ronald Rodman demonstrates clearly, however, one

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[1]David Neumeyer, "Film Music Analysis and Pedagogy," *Indiana Theory Review* 11 (1990): 16.

[2]For a survey of these matters, see James Buhler and David Neumeyer, "Analytical Approaches to Film Music," in *Film Music: An Anthology of Critical Essays*, ed. Kevin J. Donnelly (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press), forthcoming.

major figure in Hollywood film music, Herbert Stothart, working early in the sound-film era, counteracted the disparate, potentially incoherent elements of pastiche score for film musicals such as *Maytime* (1937) by creating an underlying design based on key symbolism in narrative.[3] Rodman also points out that these schemes are tools of the composer-arranger, used to organize his work on a large scale, or, one might say, deployed for his own private aesthetic satisfaction—but, in either instance, not for the audience to hear.

So far as I can tell now—with very little indeed of the sound-film repertoire studied for this property—the sorts of teleological tonal plans tied to narrative that Rodman finds in Stothart are relatively rare. On the other hand, an unusual circumstance of film production schedules could actually encourage the sort of planning that is realized in such devices. The composer (usually) stands in a privileged position: often the last person between production and audience, he or she is in a position to imprint with the musical score a private interpretation or reading permanently on the film itself.[4] Granted, this status is frequently compromised in one way or another: by source music already embedded in the film, by script references that oblige the composer to use certain themes, styles, or quotations, by directorial prescriptions for placement of music ("spotting"), by the sound designer's final mix, or by last-minute alterations made by others. (For example, the main-title theme was replaced in Copland's [Oscar-winning] score for *The Heiress* [1949]; cues were added or rewritten in Franz Waxman's *The Spirit of St. Louis* [1957]; etc.—the stories are legion.) Nevertheless, and within the constraints imposed by a director or producer's final veto, a composer has substantial freedom to develop the musical materials as he or she chooses.

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[3]Ronald Rodman, "Tonal Design and the Aesthetic of Pastiche in Herbert Stothart's *Maytime*," in *Music and Cinema*, ed. James Buhler, Caryl Flinn, and David Neumeyer (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2000), 187–206; also see Rodman's article in this issue of *Indiana Theory Review*. In "Film Music Analysis and Pedagogy," I discuss tonal design in Hayasaka's music for *Rashomon* and Steiner's music for *Mildred Pierce*. Alfred Cochran has written about large-scale tonal organization in documentary film scores by Aaron Copland: see Alfred W. Cochran, "Style, Structure, and Tonal Organization in the Early Film Scores of Aaron Copland," Ph.D. diss., Catholic University of America, 1986.

[4]Robynn Stilwell, "'I just put a drone under him...': Collage and Subversion in the Score of *Die Hard*," *Music and Letters* 78, no. 4 (1997): 552.

In this essay, I explore further the issues involved with analysis of tonal design in sound film. The work proceeds in several stages. First, I discuss a traditional harmonic/tonal analysis of Bernard Herrmann's orchestral scherzo *A Portrait of Hitch* (1968), which is derived from his music for Alfred Hitchcock's film *The Trouble With Harry* (1954, released in 1955). Then, I summarize briefly some elements of a traditional thematic reading of film music, to include Claudia Gorbman's "seven rules" for music's narrative functions in film. This is followed by a survey of the problem of tonality in film from a theoretical perspective, which survey will enable us to look more closely at Hitchcock's film and to locate and articulate a niche for tonality in the activity of reading films and their music.[5]

Tonal Design in Bernard Herrmann's "A Portrait of Hitch" (1968)

In December 1968, Herrmann recorded a volume called *Music from the Great Movie Thrillers*, for which he assembled music from five of the seven scores he composed during his famous collaboration with Alfred Hitchcock (*Psycho*, *Marnie*, *North by Northwest*, *Vertigo*, and *The Trouble With Harry*).[6] A few cues from the latter film were pulled together into a concise and musically effective scherzo, which Herrmann titled *A Portrait of Hitch*.[7] Reputedly one of Hitchcock's personal favorites, *The Trouble With Harry*, in Herrmann's words, "is in many ways the most personal and most humorous of Hitchcock's entire output. It is gay, funny, macabre, tender and with an abundance of his sardonic wit."[8] These are the qualities reflected in *A Portrait of Hitch*.

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[5]I grant that the analytic methods employed here do ignore potentially fruitful investigations using cognition/perception-based theories, Robert Hatten's "expressivist" semiotics, or the metaphor-based theories of Marion Guck, to name only the more obvious; but—for the present occasion—my point is exactly to look at a new repertoire in a cautious way, the better to make links to questions traditional in the literature.

[6]Re-released in 1992 as *Psycho: Great Hitchcock Movie Thrillers*, London 436 797-2. The films not represented are *The Man Who Knew Too Much* and *The Wrong Man* (both 1956). Herrmann also served as a consultant for the soundtrack of *The Birds* (1963).

[7]In fact, a number of the cues for the film had an earlier source: in music Herrmann wrote in 1952 for a CBS Radio series called *Crime Classics*. Steven C. Smith, *A Heart at Fire's Center: The Life and Music of Bernard Herrmann* (Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991), 193n.

[8]Bernard Herrmann, Preface to *A Portrait of Hitch* (Borough Green, Sevenoaks, Kent: Fairfield Music Co., 1969), [iii]. In his turn, Hitchcock is said to have been very

Figure 1 maps the formal design of the piece. In two specific senses, the piece is a microcosm of the film: (1) section A is the music for the main titles (the first music we hear after a nondescript grandioso for the Paramount studio logo), sections B–E use themes from within the film, and the latter part of section F uses themes of the opening, which are also recapitulated in the film's final scene and end title (to create a familiar "frame" device for the entire film); (2) the tonal levels of each of the themes—as well as the beginning and ending—are consistent with each theme's initial statement in the film. Likewise, the themes that Herrmann pulls out of the film to use in *A Portrait of Hitch* represent the different situations of the narrative well: the exaggeratedly dramatic introduction and the scherzando themes of black humor and irony predominate, but two themes used for romantic situations (*e* and *f* in figure 1) also appear here.

Figure 1. Bernard Herrmann, *A Portrait of Hitch* (1968), formal design

section:	A introduction	B waltz 1	C pastorale	D scherzando	E waltz 2	F (=D+A) scherzando
begin: (mm.)	1	51	133	157	192	232 (end: 294)
themes:	*a, b, c*	*d, e, d*	*f*	*g, c*	*h*	*g, c; a, b, c*
keys:	e♭/G♭	G, E, G	G	D	D	D; F♯, G

A Portrait of Hitch works quite well as a concert scherzo, despite its obvious origins as a typical suite of cues. The unifying effect of the recapitulating frame is augmented by the close relation of affect (and key) for many of the themes and by the regular recurrence of theme (motive) *a* at the joints of the formal scheme.[9]

Tonal design also has appropriate affective qualities, which one must grant are more likely to prompt a listener than a symbolic key scheme; that

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pleased with Herrmann's work for this film: "The director was delighted that the music never intruded upon the sound of the body being dragged over dry ground, the 'little noiseless noise among the leaves' that recalled Keats and, now, Hitchcock." Donald Spoto, *The Dark Side of Genius: The Life of Alfred Hitchcock* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1984), 381.

[9]I should also add that Herrmann has substantially rewritten some of the source cues, not simply strung them together with more-or-less rough transitions, as one finds a bit too often with film-score arrangements, even today.

is to say, double-tonic complexes with unmistakable tonal shifts keep the listener just a bit unsettled, in a way that aids the humor of the work overall. Section A is clearly divided into two parts. The first has all the earmarks of a slow introduction—declamatory rather than lyrical, motivic rather than thematic, resting on (or moving about) the dominant of E-flat minor. With an abrupt change of tempo comes theme *b*—a sharply punctuated rhythmic figure rather than a theme, really—over which the more clearly shaped melody of theme *c* is gradually introduced: all this still sits on a dominant of E-flat minor, though that function is expressed as an augmented triad (B♭-D-G♭). A full statement of theme *c* coincides with a tonal resolution—but to G-flat major, not E-flat minor. Because the contexts that follow return to the dominant of E-flat minor, the result is a relatively simple instance of a double-tonic complex: E-flat minor and G-flat major have equal status as primary tonics.

A very similar situation obtains in section B, the main difference being that G major first appears to be a tonic: it is presented with a tune (theme *d*—called "waltz macabre" in the film) above a cleanly defined G major triad in the lower parts. There are no other harmonies, however, so that the stability of G as a functional tonic is never made clear. By contrast, the support for theme *e* is as clear an E major as one could want, with a relatively long-spun lyrical melody—essentially a slow waltz—over diatonic harmonies. The section ends with theme *d*, however, and the overall result is another double-tonic complex, this time composed of mediant-related major keys, G and E.

The remainder of the piece works out another layer of a double-tonic complex, now between the G-flat major of the first group and the G major of the second. Retrospectively, the latter is the primary tonic: the pastorale of section C is plainly and firmly in G major, and sections D and E are equally strongly in D major. And, of course, the piece ends in G—but that's the catch: the movement from D major to G-flat (F-sharp) major in the final section has all the qualities of return from a mediant to a primary tonic (the more so as it supports theme *c*, the only theme developed much in the opening section). The turn to G in the final, brightly orchestrated tutti flourish of a cadence is a surprise: an internal key usurping the role of "true" tonic, as it were. Again, the net result is a double-tonic complex, but now of a very unusual sort based on a half-step relation: G-flat (F-sharp)/G. Tonality and position in the formal hierarchies here balance one another (if precariously): G major is strongly defined in the pastorale of section C, and, in the subsequent sections (D, E, and the beginning of F), D major relates

comfortably to G major as its dominant. We might, then, reasonably expect a return to G for a reprise—in fact, a fairly conventional way to end the piece might have been to transpose theme *b* up a half-step (from F-sharp to G major). Herrmann's refusal to take this obvious path permits a sharper upsetting of conventions at a later point: the very end, whose abrupt shift to G major makes a satisfyingly ironic conclusion to the whole business. Thus, the untransposed theme *b* as recapitulated in section F elevates F-sharp major to the role of tonic in a double-tonic complex, even as—on a traditionally tonal plane—we can still relate F-sharp to the long-established D as its mediant. (The logical consequences of the latter are explored in a Schenkerian graph below.)

All of the above is summarized in the sketch of figure 2, which also includes primary melodic tones for the several themes (in the upper staff) and a more detailed paraphrase of the chordal mechanics of the final cadence. Two other details are worthy of mention; both are marked with asterisks in figure 2. The involved relationships of D, F-sharp, and G major in the latter half of the piece are presaged in miniature in the joint between sections A and B. G-flat major and G major are not related directly at this point: statements and variants of themes *a* and *c* separate and disconnect these key regions for more than twenty measures. (See the details in figure 3.) At (w), a variant of theme *c* embeds the E♭-D "frame" (first note-last note) of theme *a*; then follows the augmented triad of theme *c* with the bass displaced from its original B♭ to C. This version is not new: it already occurred midway through section A. At (x), theme *a* reappears in exact reprise with its accompanying B-flat bass, which again defines E-flat minor for us. But the music almost immediately dissolves into tentative fragments of notes and motives, from which emerges a variant of theme *a* [at (y) in figure 3]. This variant pulls the theme apart into its two falling intervallic motives, inflates the major third to a tritone and the distance separating the two motives from a fourth to a major sixth; the result is a simple diminished seventh chord built from the pairs C♭-F and A♭-D. Into this drops an "extraneous" E3 which gives the vague impression that the whole is an oddly distorted E^{Mm9} chord. None of this turns out to be relevant, in a tonal sense at least: the final D receives a fermata and thereby acts as a (none-too-stable) dominant for the subsequent (none-too-stable) G major that underlies theme *d*.

Figure 2. Bernard Herrmann, *A Portrait of Hitch* (1968), summary of tonal design

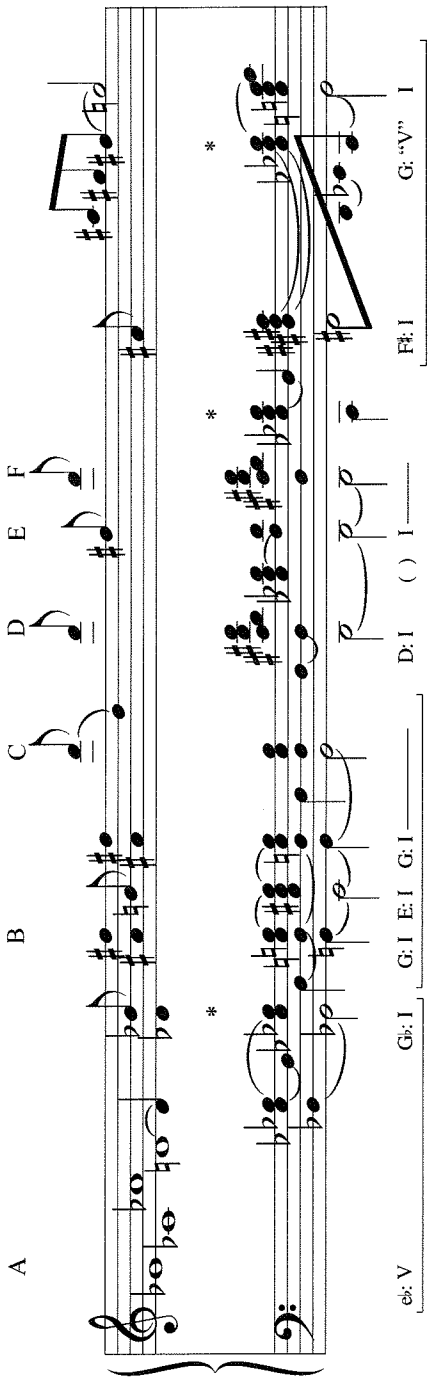
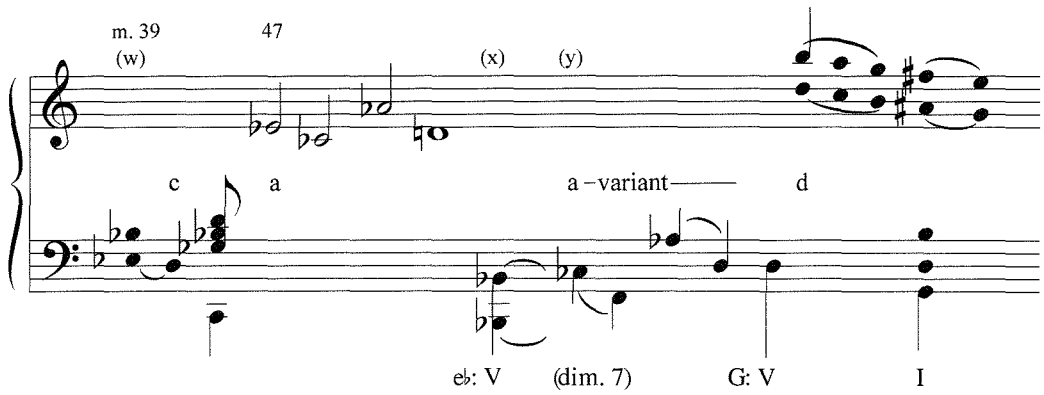


Figure 3. Bernard Herrmann, *A Portrait of Hitch* (1968), joint between sections A and B, details

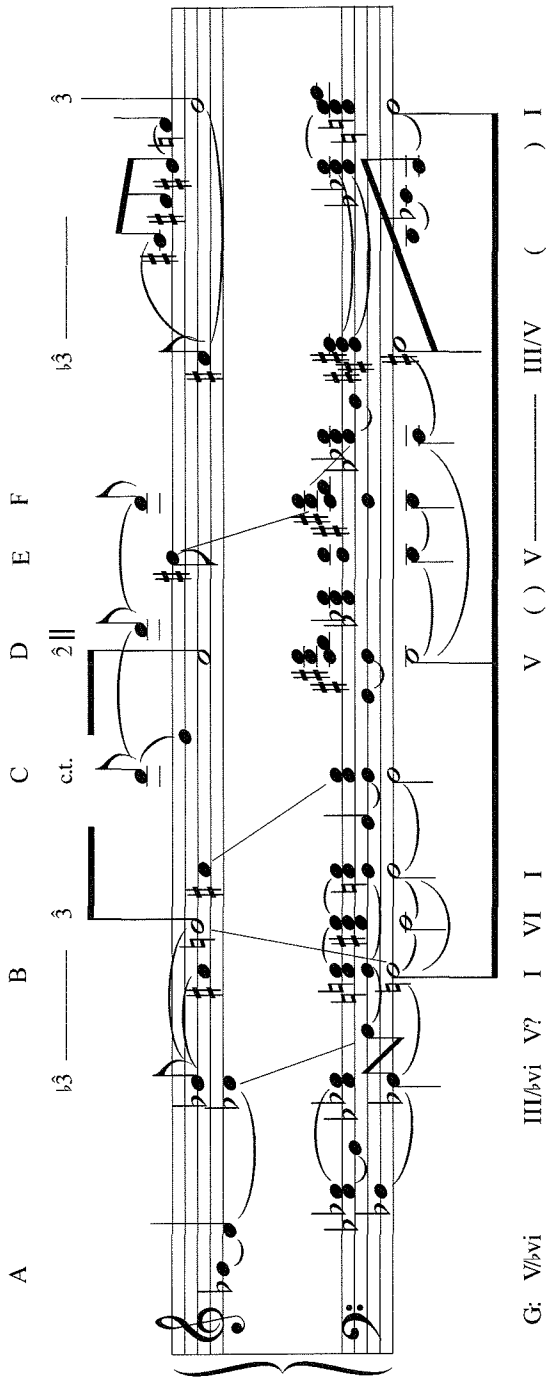


The other detail noted in figure 2 is the parallelism in the approaches to F-sharp major and G major in the final section. Again, theme *c* interrupts the proceedings, cutting off the reprise of the scherzando theme *g*. The augmented-triad-based figures are set over a bass C2, even as the inner-voice G♭3 moves to F3 to create the same B-flat triad—as dominant of E-flat minor—that set up the turn to G-flat in section A. (See the first bass-clef pitches of figure 2.) The same tonal shift occurs here—to G-flat major for the reprise of theme *b*—but the bass motion is now C-F♯. This last expands to C-G in the final cadence—C again supports the augmented triad, but now there is no slippage from G♭3 to F3; instead, G♭ is F♯, the leading tone to the tonic of G major. Disjunctions, double-tonics, and ironies aside, this tonal gambit is neatly pulled off.

A Schenkerian-style reading (that is, one that tries to organize the upper parts of figure 2 into hierarchical linear patterns) adds one or two minor points of interest: see figure 4. Insofar as possible, I have observed the orthodox canons of the method, and therefore the double-tonic complexes have receded into the middleground (open-note G-E-G in section B) or foreground (E-flat minor/G-flat major at the beginning, all of which in turn has receded into a prefix to a middleground dominant: the solitary D that leads into the [apparently] unstable G major at the beginning of section B).

The prominent melodic tone D (last note of theme/motive *a*) is a middleground inner voice that eventually—in sections C through F—reaches over the primary melodic register to act as a prominent cover tone. The true register of the upper voice is first defined by the scherzando theme *b*, then

Figure 4. Bernard Herrmann, *A Portrait of Hitch* (1968), tonal design interpreted as a Schenkerian analysis



repetition that the graph reveals, although it could be said that this figure, confirmed by the first waltz. The motive created in this way—♭3–♮3—is repeated at the end of the composition; this is the one significant hidden abstracted from these specific pitches to the half-step relation, appears repeatedly in levels of the middleground, beginning with the E♭4-D4 frame of theme/motive *a* (see the beginning of figure 4) and including the subsequent slide to D♭4, the G♭3-F3 in the "tenor," the G to G♯ in the inner voice(s) of the harmonic change from G major to E major, etc.

Because a diatonic descent is impossible with any more-or-less literal reading of the harmonies and voice leading of the final section, I have read the background/first-middleground as an interrupted line from $\hat{3}$ with the $\hat{3}$ recovered at the end (but without a descent). The whole has very much the character of a vast neighbor-note figure—especially with A♯4 to mediate as a chromatic passing tone between A4 and the final B4 (but of course Schenker expressly forbids the lower neighbor of $\hat{3}$ in the first middleground).

If we borrow the notion of tonal displacement as Richard Bass develops it for the music of Prokofiev, a complete Ursatz structure becomes plausible (see figure 5).[10] Here I exploit the mediant relation of D major and F-sharp major to assume that all the music connected with the latter—boxed in figure 5—has been displaced from its proper position on D: hence the "true" V and its $\hat{2}$ immediately after the box, and the simple diatonic descent to a closing G (the G5 of the closing cadence here removed to its obligatory register an octave lower).

Both Schenkerian readings coordinate well with some formal and thematic elements and poorly with others, but where conflicts arise—for example, in the "demoting" of the opening and "elevation" of the secondary theme *d* in figure 4 and the "demoting" of the section-F reprise to an elaborate displacement in figure 5—I follow the usual dictum that tonal structure has priority.

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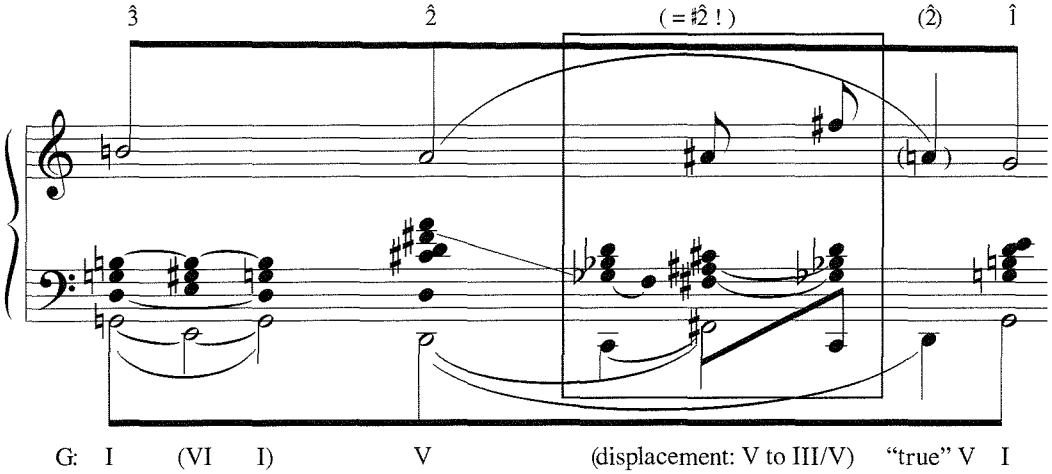
[10]Richard Bass, "Prokofiev's Technique of Chromatic Displacement," *Music Analysis* 7, no. 2 (1988): 197–214. Bass's notion of displacement is quite different from Neil Minturn's "wrong-note" model, which bears some kinship to Edward T. Cone's idea of the "promissory note": a note, striking but out of place, gradually becomes integrated into—"explained" by—the work through subsequent development of the musical materials. See Neil Minturn, *The Music of Sergei Prokofiev* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 58 and 61.

Figure 5. Bernard Herrmann, *A Portrait of Hitch* (1968), Schenkerian analysis with a conventional *Urlinie* (based on a "wrong-note" reading of F-sharp major in section F)



Thus, the aural impression of *A Portrait of Hitch* as an integrated composition is supported by interpretations of its small- and large-scale pitch design. One might claim, then, that its technical success—on the terms by which I have read it—contributes to its aesthetic success. The next step is to look at how Herrmann's priorities in the design of this orchestral scherzo reflect back on the priorities and functions of the music for *The Trouble With Harry*. But first we need to consider more generally music's place in film narrative.

Music in Film Narrative

Film music poses two basic problems for analysis: it is tied to a narrative to which it is subordinate, and it is one element of a larger film component, the soundtrack. For the project at hand, we can confine our attention to the first of these. I will not attempt to outline a theoretical model for music in film narrative here—the general question of narrative is a complex one in both literature and film (and increasingly in music as well, as scholars pay attention to its problems). I will simply assume a traditional thematic reading of a film and adopt the idea, commonly accepted by both practitioners and scholars, that "music serves the screen," as Aaron Copland puts it. Copland expands upon this statement to say that music accomplishes this goal "[by] creating a more convincing atmosphere of time and place, . . . underlining psychological refinements—the unspoken thoughts of a character or the

unseen implications of a situation— . . . serving as a kind of neutral background filler, . . . building a sense of continuity, . . . [or] underpinning the theatrical build-up of a scene, and rounding it off with a sense of finality."[11] These are headings from an essay that originated as a newspaper article offering a composer's hints for moviegoers; in it, Copland constructs a list of functions that amounts to an informal analytic heuristic.

Those functions are also embedded in the system outlined by Claudia Gorbman in *Unheard Melodies*, the defining text in film-music narrative studies.[12] Gorbman sketches a semiotic model for music's narrative functions in classical cinema; this model includes three classes of elements that make up what one might call its analytic "technology." The first of these, a set of codes, establishes broad categories for music in film: *pure* musical codes refer to music's performance values (which can be approached in a film if attention turns away from narrative to a performance), *cultural* musical codes are affective and referential values generally acknowledged and recognized by society (whether or not those are appropriate or authentic: "Indian" music in westerns, for instance); and *cinematic* musical codes are those which are developed within and for an individual film (such as a theme associated with a particular character, place, or situation). Interacting with these three codes are the opposed narrative functions, diegetic and nondiegetic, which correspond to the traditional industry distinction between source music and background music. Finally, an integrated set of functions, the "seven rules" for music in classical cinema, focuses more narrowly on how music functions in film narrative (see figure 6).

To demonstrate the treatment of one of these seven rules, unity, Gorbman uses *Mildred Pierce* (1945), which stars Joan Crawford and whose background score was composed by Max Steiner. Some of the more prominent devices that support narrative unity are music used as a frame (that is, under opening and end titles), other recurrent music (such as cues literally replayed or developed, or new music in the same style or genre—a military march or nightclub dance band), and melodic-motivic networks, which Gorbman calls a "thematic score," which "provides a built-in unity of statement and variation, as well as a semiotic subsystem," by which she

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[11]Aaron Copland, *What to Listen For in Music*, 2d. ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1957), 256–58.

[12]Claudia Gorbman, *Unheard Melodies: Narrative Film Music* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987).

Figure 6. Gorbman's seven "rules" for music's functions in narrative film

1	Invisibility	Instruments, performers, for background music must not be seen
2	"Inaudibility"	Music should not put itself forward in the viewer/listener's attention
3	Emotion	Music signifies emotion (polarities are established on this basis: reason/emotion, reality/fantasy, male/female, etc.)
4	Narrative cueing	Characterization of time, place, groups; illustration (mickey-mousing); subjectivity (point-of-view); establishment of mood ("overall" scoring)
5	Formal and rhythmic continuity	Defines or supports shape and time articulation by frame (main-, end-title cues), or by sounding coincident with a scene, or by bridging over gaps between scenes
6	Unity	Music supports narrative unity, especially through thematic relationships
7	"Breaking the rules"	Any of the previous rules may be broken in the service of one of the others

means the interplay of motives connected to characters or (sometimes) situations as signifiers, somewhat in the manner of the leitmotif (90–91). She also makes the stylistic generalization that classic Hollywood sound films are usually unified through thematic scores (90). Although this is probably an overstatement, it does reflect the importance of this particular unifying device in a canonical repertoire.[13]

[13]Graham Bruce uses a Schoenberg-like "basic cell" approach to generalize the leitmotif idea into materials for musical development, which may include thematic fragments, chords, brief ostinato-like figures, etc. See Graham Bruce, *Bernard Herrmann: Film Music and Narrative* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1985), especially 35–73. Bruce calls these "cellular musical units" and uses them as the basis for analysis of some of Herrmann's best-known film scores. I have not adopted his method here because it is less appropriate for a complicated, varied score like *The Trouble With Harry*, but in principle there is nothing to prevent one from integrating harmonic/tonal information into his readings.

Gorbman asks of Steiner's score, "How is the function of music for melodrama served out in specifically cinematic terms?" (93) Her answer is that the careful deployment of thematic variants with respect to dramatic situation gives Steiner's score a "hyperexplicit" character that makes the music function analogously to a close-up (98). In other words, when musical pertinence coincides with cinematic pertinence, the image is often marked as significant. Thus, it is not just the image that marks music as significant, but also the musical theme that marks visual objects as especially significant (29).

Both James Buhler and Scott Paulin criticize the very common use of the term *leitmotif* to refer to this kind of thematic design because, despite any number of claims in the early film literature, Wagner's use of referential motives is quite different, neither so concrete nor so explicitly tied to characters or details of plot situation.[14] Justin London proposes a theoretical model to pin down a specifically cinematic use of the term leitmotif as "naming"—that is, he works out a parallel between the use of names in languages and the character and function of the leitmotif in film music.[15] But he also defines a quality unique to the leitmotif:

> Musical leitmotifs, unlike proper names in language, do more than simply designate; they also contain an expressive content that is entwined with its musical structure. Music has the capacity for signifying or expressing emotion; we routinely characterize musical passages as "heroic," "longing," "tender," "melancholy," and so forth, even in contexts of absolute music (for example, the opening of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony is "tempestuous"). Leitmotifs, as musical shapes embedded in larger musical contexts, are similarly expressive. They, thus, couple a capacity to refer with a sense of emotional expression. This is a powerful combination which allows the soundtrack to "comment" on the dramatic action of a film.[16]

In this sense, then, the leitmotif becomes a "glue" by which music's emotive capacities can be tied concretely to the imagetrack and to narrative

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[14]James Buhler, "Star Wars, Music and Myth," in Buhler et al., *Music and Cinema*, 33–57; Scott Paulin, "Richard Wagner and the Fantasy of Cinematic Unity: The Idea of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* in the History and Theory of Film Music," in Buhler et al., *Music and Cinema*, 58–84.

[15]Justin London, "Leitmotifs in Cinema and Proper Names in Language: Structural and Functional Parallels," in Buhler et al., *Music and Cinema*, 85–96.

[16]Ibid., 89–90.

situations. (The same might be said of musical styles acting as "affect categories" [an instance of Gorbman's "narrative cueing": "Chinese" music, "Irish" jigs and pentatonic ballads, but also the "neutral" music, "grazioso," and "hurry" of silent film], but these are decidedly less specific—that is, themes embedded in such cues might act as leitmotifs, but the style of the cue itself may be used in any number of films.)

Thus, Gorbman assumes that thematic/motivic association, affect and style topics, and a handful of form conventions specific to film are the means by which music supports and articulates narrative unity—not tonal design. Given that analytic process (and its results) can never be detached from narrative considerations,[17] the implications for music analysis are simple and clear. Corroboration can be found easily in the literature for the hierarchy that places melody first (in the form of themes and leitmotifs), then timbre (orchestration), and may or may not include tonality. For example, Frank Skinner, a staff composer at Universal for thirty years, wrote a film-music composition manual midway through his career (and before he wrote music for several films directed by Douglas Sirk, the credits for which Skinner is best known). *Underscore* is a unique document, in that the author takes an entire film score and goes through his composition of it in great detail.[18] His first step, after gleaning general information about the film, was to create a cluster of themes (36–40). These are:

1. Principal theme, in F; then in B-flat
   (second example—a rhythmic variant of the first)
2. Love theme, in G
3. Menace theme, in C minor
4. Comedy theme, in F
5. [Secondary love theme], in D
6. [French countess's theme], in G

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[17]Two caveats: (1) we are talking only about narrative film, of course; and (2) it is possible to have "abstract" or non-narrative elements within a narrative film, so that one might in fact analyze a scene as a non-narrative "parenthesis" within a larger narrative context: it is often possible to treat production numbers in musicals this way, for example.

[18]Frank Skinner, *Underscore* (Los Angeles: Skinner Music Company, 1950). He calls the film *The Irishman*, but the actual release title is *The Fighting O'Flynn* (1949).

Skinner does not explain the key choices for these themes, and never does he discuss key centers in terms of large-scale design, whether driven by narrative or tonal teleology. His references to keys are very rare (a move from one cue to another is easy because B-flat and F are closely related; E-flat is preferred to C in another place because the brass are in a better register [55, 249]). Instead, for each cue in the film, he gives a brief synopsis of the action, followed by the timing sheet, his decision on how to play the scene, his sketch, and his analysis of the sketch. Cue 4-A, for a scene in which the two leads are ambushed by thugs and a fight begins, is typical: "I decided to open the scene with the menace theme. . . . At . . . 0.27 . . . I would use a mood of suspense. . . . [Beginning] at . . . 0.50½ . . . were three cuts between the thugs and O'Toole, each of which I would punctuate. At . . . 1.00½ the action began, so I planned to start some music that would build into the following scene [the actual fight]" (112). The menace theme is in C minor; a shift to E minor at 0.27 inaugurates a rising chromatic sequence which reaches an E major triad, as V of A minor; the resolution occurs at 1.00½. Another chromatic sequence follows and the scene ends on a $C\sharp^{\sharp\varnothing 7}$ chord; this is treated as a subdominant function in F minor—the first chord of the next (immediately following) cue is an F minor second-inversion triad acting as a cadential dominant. (F minor is clearly defined as the tonic of this subsequent cue, which—after considerable small-scale sequenced-based modulation—moves to A-flat, also clearly defined, as the key of the following cue.)

Tonality and Narrative on the Scale of an Entire Film

In Schenkerian analysis, thematic elements are assumed to be subordinate or even irrelevant unless they can be tied into the deeper matters of tonal unfolding and prolongation. The conventional view of the sonata form emphasizes the "tonal drama" of contrasting keys. Given the priorities of a film scholar (Gorbman) and an industry professional (Skinner), is it therefore impossible to integrate some of the music theorist's tools for reading tonal design into our ways of reading film music?

Consider the problems posed by *His Girl Friday* (1940), a classic comedy with a sparkling script by Ben Hecht and outstanding performances by Rosalind Russell and Cary Grant. This film's very active soundtrack is all talk, frequently at a frantic pace and often polyphonic (including several "duets" and a virtuoso trio performed by Russell, Grant, and one of the other

newspaper reporters). Music enters with the studio logo, continues through the main-title sequence and a prologue (a single title card with no narration), and then goes out under the voices of telephone operators in the first shot. The music consists of an introduction (over the logo), which stops on B-flat, as the dominant of E-flat; a tune in a bright foxtrot tempo, which meanders quite a bit but is clearly in E-flat; and a melodically somewhat amorphous music for the prologue title, which starts with a modulation (conventional for prologues) to D and stays in D until a close on A^7, as the dominant of D. All this requires just over sixty seconds. Roughly ninety minutes later, music enters again under the final romantic reconciliation of the Russell and Grant characters, then continues through the end title and cast list. The music under their conversation is mixed so low that I am unable to tell what key it is in; apparently this (nondescript) music was introduced "early" in order to make a smoother transition into the prominent music of the end credits, a reprise of the foxtrot from the opening, firmly in E-flat as before. The duration of this final cue is also a bit more than a minute.

Is *His Girl Friday* "in" E-flat? Yes, obviously. The force of this affirmation, however, is entirely different than, say, the statement that Prokofiev's Piano Sonata no. 8 is in B-flat. For the latter we assume an overarching, hierarchical, and teleological tonal plan. In *His Girl Friday*, such an assumption is impossible: we have no way to account for the ninety-minute gap; that is, we have no way to draw into our analysis the fact that the sonic artifact here is the soundtrack, of which music is only one, rather insignificant, element. The music in this film follows some formal patterns of narration: by historical convention going back beyond film into nineteenth-century theater, a film opens and closes with "framing" titles, which not only provide information but also "ease" the listener/viewer into and out of the film-performance experience; also by convention, music accompanies these framing elements. Thus, there is narrative motivation for music in the opening and closing credits and for the repetition of the opening music as the end-credits cue.[19] Furthermore, it was conventional to include music under prologues. The choice of E-flat as the main key, however, is entirely random—at least, it has no narrative motivation of any kind (for all we know, Columbia staff arranger/composer Sidney Cutner chose it because

[19]Another convention is that the music tells us something about the genre or "mood" of the film. In this case, the bright tempo, popular-style tune, and upscale orchestration suggest a sophisticated but fast-paced comedy.

it is an easy key for saxophones). The only "planned" tonal elements are the key change moving into the prologue and the firm, final cadence at the end of the film.

A more complex example is *Impromptu* (1990). Jeffrey Kallberg has praised this impressive period comedy/romance for "offer[ing] one of the most plausible accounts that I have seen (and in this assessment I am including all the standard biographies) of how the seemingly unlikely pairing of Chopin and Sand could ever have happened."[20] Twenty-six music cues quote (though often in arranged versions) from Chopin, Beethoven, and Liszt; all works, even as arranged, appear in their original keys. Some of the cues are motivated by convention: main- and end-title music, music for the procession of carriages arriving at the home of the Duke and Duchess D'Antan, music accompanying two prominent montage sequences, and music behind the (awkwardly) developing romantic relationship of Sand and Chopin. Many cues have direct motivation from dialogue and narrative situation: Chopin and Liszt play in a baroness's salon; they demonstrate pieces for each other; they entertain the Duke and Duchess; Liszt finds the newly published Opus 25 and tries out the first etude; a minimally competent student plays during a lesson; or Chopin practices.

Is the tonal scenario of this film weakly "narrative" or merely "irrelevant"? The main-title sequence is a slightly truncated version of the Impromptu op. 29. The end-title sequence is the Fantasie-Impromptu op. 66, middle section and reprise. We have, thus, a progressive tonal frame: A-flat to D-flat/C-sharp. However, this sequence comes about because of the titles of the compositions (and secondarily because of their affects), not because their keys can be understood to create the focus points of an associative network or tonal pair: it is unclear indeed just how these relate to primary or secondary key centers of the Ballade op. 23, which, as Kallberg points out, is the only composition to appear more than once or twice. It appears six times, and to Kallberg it is the one piece crucial to the narrative, as it seems to be the composition through which Sand falls in love (the premise of the film being that the novelist fell in love with Chopin through hearing his music).[21]

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[20]Jeffrey Kallberg, "Nocturnal Thoughts on *Impromptu*," *Musical Quarterly* 81, no. 2 (1997): 200.

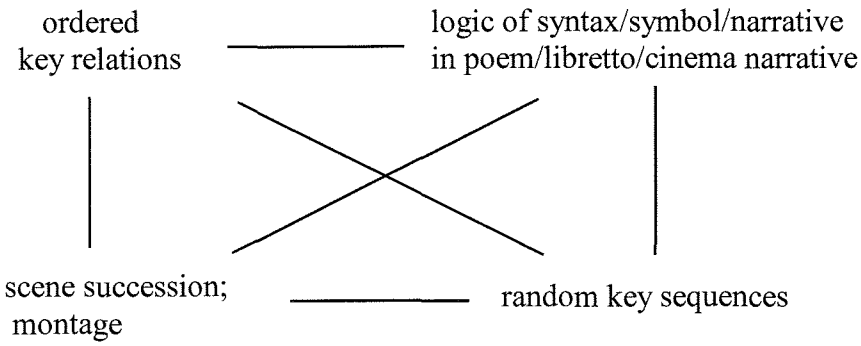
[21]Strictly speaking, Kallberg's calculations are incorrect: the Fantasie-Impromptu appears three times, if one chooses to count a few seconds during which the Duchess D'Antan hums the lyrical theme of the middle section.

Thus, key centers are privately symbolic (that is, symbolic of the decision to keep quotations at the original key levels); they are tied to narrative only indirectly through this mechanism. A simple test will confirm that the "irrelevant scenario" is appropriate here: If Opus 29 had been in G major and Opus 23 in, say, A minor, would that make a difference (that is, would it disrupt an associational network)? No. Similarly, it is difficult to see how moving the lyrical theme of Opus 23 from its positions in B-flat and E-flat to C and F, respectively, either advances or detracts from associations with A-flat or D-flat. And a tritone relation in the film's tonal "frame" would actually create a new association of some interest, since much of the film is about overcoming a great gap in character and attitudes between the two (eventual) lovers: in tonal tradition, a tritone relation would model that journey far better than one of dominant/tonic or tonic/subdominant.

With *His Girl Friday* and *Impromptu*, I have deliberately invoked extreme examples in order to bring the issues involved into a clear light. Since music is rarely ever continuous in a sound film (what *is* continuous is the soundtrack), the concept of a teleological tonal plan must always be negotiated with a film's temporality, and there is no easy formula for that. Although terms like "wall-to-wall" have been used pejoratively to refer to some film-scoring practices of the later 1930s and 1940s, even the most heavily scored sound films typically do not cover more than 50% of the film's timeline with music. The number of cues in a typical dramatic feature film may range from ten to sixty; some may be as long as five or six minutes, but most will be two minutes or less (though frequently cues are segued to create longer sequences of music). Apart from external evidence of the usual kind (composer statements, clues in sketches), an apparent teleological tonal scheme can only be made more or less "convincing" through accumulation and through one's reading of the narrative. Even if we can be satisfied that the obstacle of time gaps can be overcome, we must still face the perceptual problem: if there are doubts about whether listeners can actually hear or process large-scale tonal schemes in concert music, the doubts must be magnified in music for film, not only because of the time gaps but because of the listener/viewer's divided attention.

Unlike concert music, then, tonal design does not "automatically" occupy a privileged place in our critical readings of a film's music. I will try to model the resulting ambiguities in tonal teleology and association more rigorously by using the framework of a table of oppositions or "semiotic

Figure 7. Diagram of a logical opposition (ordered key relations versus the logic of nonmusical elements) with logical contraries



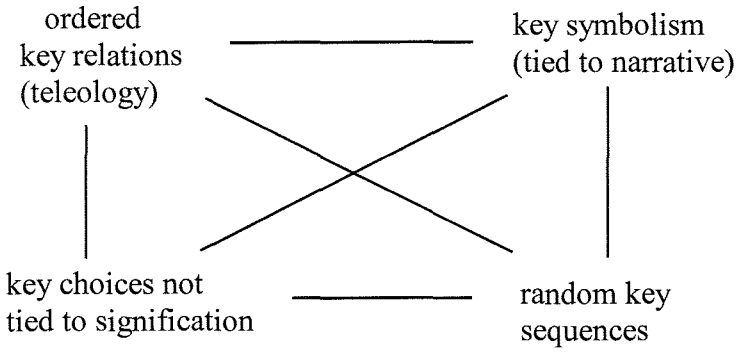
square."[22] Figure 7 reproduces a diagram that I have used elsewhere to model a broader situation of which ours represents an instance. In figure 7, the initial term is "ordered key relations," by which I mean patterns of tonal design distinct from those of tonal structure, in David Beach's sense (that is, the layout of keys in a composition ["design"] as opposed to harmonic-tonal voice-leading structure in a Schenkerian sense ["structure"]).[23] To this we set a second, opposing term: the logic of all "nontonal" elements, whether that be a network of motivic cross-references independent of tonal structure or the design constraints imposed by conventional form schemata, poems, libretti, or film scenes.[24] Once the opposing terms are established, we can

[22]See A. J. Greimas and F. Rastier, "The Interaction of Semiotic Constraints," *Yale French Studies* 41 (1968): 86–105. My specific use of it here, with the combined terms, is indebted to Fredric Jameson; see his *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), 46–49, 82–83, 253–57, 275–77. See also the comparison between the agendas of Greimas and Schenker in Richard Littlefield and David Neumeyer, "Rewriting Schenker: Narrative—History—Ideology," *Music Theory Spectrum* 14, no. 1 (1992): 49. I use the semiotic square to model the relationship of music, film, and melodrama in "Melodrama as a Compositional Resource in Early Hollywood Sound Cinema," *Current Musicology* 57 (1995): 68–69, 92.

[23]David Beach, "Schubert's Experiments with Sonata Form: Formal-Tonal Design versus Underlying Structure," *Music Theory Spectrum* 15, no. 1 (1993): 3.

[24]It is important to recognize that the second term in the square represents a socially constructed opposition, not a logical contrary, which would be represented by the prefix "not-," in this case "not-ordered key relations." By way of example, consider "cat" and "mouse"—this is a socially constructed binary pair, but "mouse" obviously cannot be equivalent to "not-cat." Thus, although the logical contrary of "cat" will always be "not-cat," the opposing term might be "dog," "ferret," "cat owner," etc.

Figure 8. Reconstruction of figure 7 to define terms more narrowly in terms of key relations



define their logical contraries (the bottom row of figure 7). Here, "not-ordered key relations" is defined as "random key sequences"; that is, a chain of key centers without a discernible overall pattern. The logical contrary of musically extrinsic patterning is defined here in terms of two examples: scene succession and montage. The former refers to a chain of scenes without an overriding narrative, as in a revue or variety show, a string of music videos on television, or, for example, the sequences of Ken Russell's *Aria* (1988). In a concert context, a Lieder recital that did not include song cycles would qualify—the fact that the performer planned the program is not enough in itself. The definition does become murky, however, if the performer chose only songs whose subject is lost love. "Montage" refers to sequences in classical sound film where the "normal" logic of clock time, narrative succession, and reality can be upset. At their simplest, montages are convenient devices to move time forward quickly in a way that is transparent to the audience (with successive year markers on the screen, for example), but montages are also used for dream sequences (as in *Spellbound* [1945]) and for situations of strong psychological or emotional confusion.

For our purposes here, the second and fourth terms of figure 7 are defined too broadly: figure 8 corrects this to focus narrowly on key relations. Here, the initial term is still "ordered key relations," but I have added the word "teleology" to emphasize the notion of progression; that is, a scheme that covers the whole of a work (film) and finds a "resolution" in the concluding key center. This definition covers both traditional tonally-closed works as well as those governed by tonal pairing. The second, opposing term is limited now to key symbolism, that is, when most or all key choices have their basis in narrative or other control outside of tonal relations, such as C

major for Nelson Eddy's character in *Maytime* or G major for a stable family life in *Mildred Pierce*. The third term does not change, but the fourth term—the logical contrary of "key symbolism"—is "not-key symbolism," or "key choices not tied to signification." This is distinguished from the third term in that it is not random—choices are made—and from the first term in that the latter requires signification: the system of traditional tonal relations. Two (hypothetical) realizations of the fourth term in figure 8 might be key choices made on the basis of colors that appear on-screen but which have little if any meaning for the narrative, or key changes made arbitrarily every two minutes.

Although we have now defined the terms we need, the table as it stands is not particularly useful for analysis. For the terms themselves are not the loci of compositional maneuvering; it is the opposed pairs that present problems for which composers create solutions. (Terms one and two were presented as opposed terms, but the same is true of all successive pairs as one moves around the outside of the square: if the first two terms set two different systems of design for tonal centers against one another, terms two and three oppose a particular kind of associative system to the lack of a system in the musical pitch domain; terms three and four are the mirror of one and two—the lack of organization in the pitch domain is set against a system of [presumably] private or arbitrary choices in the extrinsic domain; and terms four and one oppose an arbitrary, nonmusic system to a traditional and consequential one in the music domain.) Solutions to the problems posed by these oppositions come in a dialectical process, or the attempt to overcome or erase the oppositions by combining and synthesizing their terms. In "Synthesis and Association," I described the process as follows:

> Following Fredric Jameson, we may use the semiotic square not only to define terms, but also to explore the dialectical process that is set into play by the resulting oppositions. In other words, the ability of the semiotic square "to articulate the workings of binary oppositions" also permits it "to model ideological closure"; "a dialectical reevaluation . . . intervenes, however, at the moment this entire system of ideological closure is taken as the symptomatic projection of something quite different, namely of social contradiction." This "reevaluation" is accomplished by examining the syntheses of adjacent terms in the square.[25]

[25]David Neumeyer, "Synthesis and Association, Structure and Design, in Multi-Movement Compositions," in David Beach, James Baker, and Jonathan Bernard, ed.,

Figure 9. Diagram of figure 8, with syntheses of adjacent pairs added

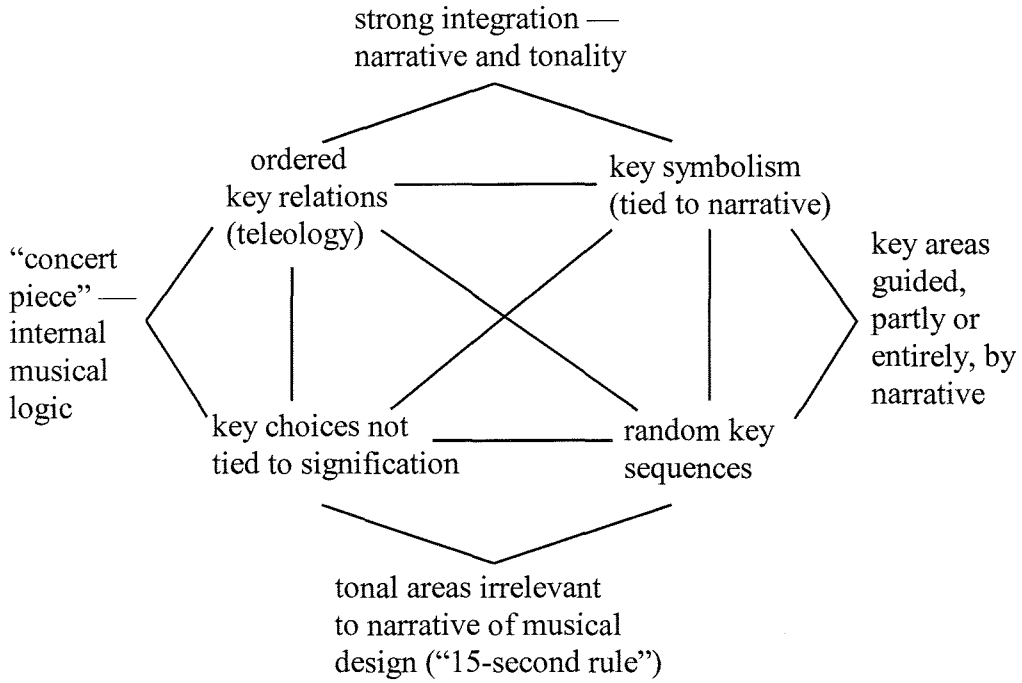


Figure 9 offers definitions for these syntheses. The traditional priorities of musical analysis are best served by the synthesis of the first pair: systems of key relations are tied to narrative through association, and the result is strong integration of narrative and music. However, this is also the point at which the logic of the system breaks down, for the synthesis of the second and third terms is impossible to distinguish from the first unless one invokes traditional designs derived from relatively small, closed instrumental forms. In the synthesis of the second and third terms, the invocation of key areas is guided, in part or *in toto*, by association tied to narrative. (I will refer to this below as the "narration scenario.") Thus, a key could be tied to a character and introduced whenever a situation significantly involving that character arose, independent of any large-scale tonal plan. (This might be due to something as simple as convenience for the composer and orchestrator—one could reuse most or all of a cue without transposition.) I used "partly or entirely" to indicate the range of conditions satisfied by this synthesis of

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Music Theory in Concept and Practice (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 1997), 208.

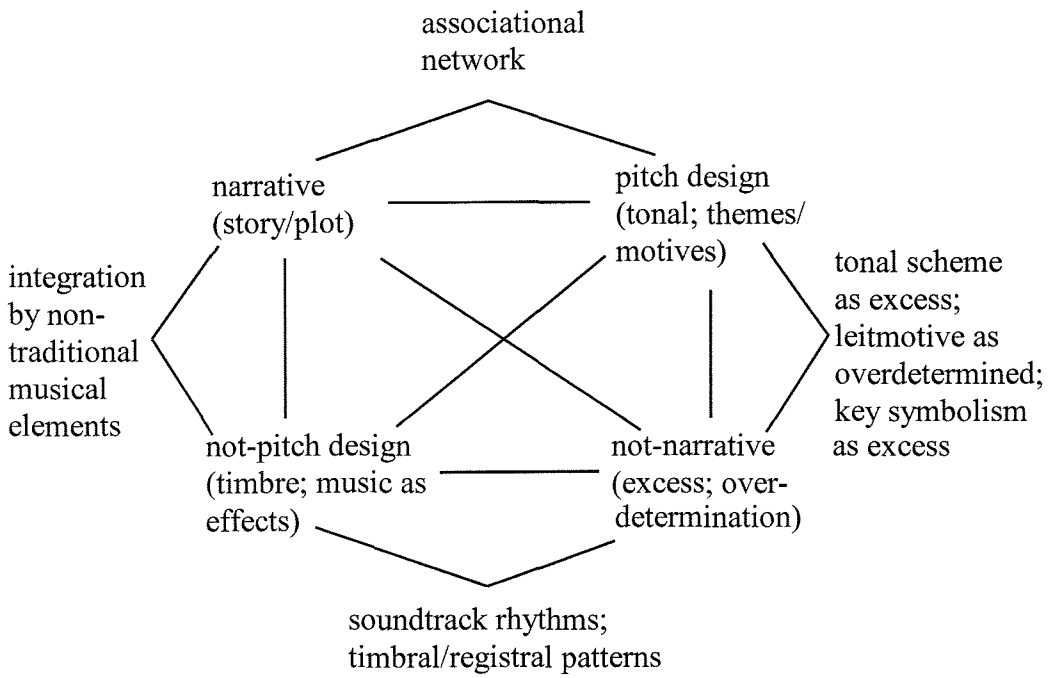
terms. At the extreme ("entirely"), key choices are strongly symbolic in the narrative but really have nothing to do with any sort of tonal teleology at any level (other than perhaps the most local—getting from one cue to the next if they are immediately adjacent). By "partly," I mean (among other possibilities) a network of key associations that may run across an entire work, but only intermittently—that is, it may tie together some scenes but not others. In this situation, a film will have a foreground with isolated functional and (to some extent) symbolic networks of key relations, and a background of symbolic relations, but no middleground to tie the two together.

What we have modeled, however, is not the terms of an analytic heuristic for opera and film but our own resistance to the demotion of teleological tonal schemes (derived from instrumental music) to a status no greater than affect or narrative. The grouping of terms in figures 8 and 9 is not appropriate; their syntheses are chimerae. If abstractions of function and abstractions of association are no longer distinguishable, then we should situate narrative, in the usual sense of story and plot, as the initial term in the square and oppose to it pitch design, which enfolds tonal design (functional and associational) and organization by thematic/motivic patterning. Figure 10 shows this new binary pair, along with their contraries and definitions of the syntheses of terms. Here, the third term, or "not-narrative," is taken to be everything not specifically required for presentation of story by means of the plot. Classical cinema is often said to be "overdetermined" (and music often implicated); that is, plot elements are reinforced by redundancy (the hero wears a white hat, the villain black; a look of surprise is accentuated by a cut to a close-up; lovers kiss to soaring violins; etc.). I take the fourth term, "not-pitch design," to be musical elements other than pitch design: timbre, music as sound effect, etc.

Synthesis of the initial terms, then, proposes that narrative and pitch design interact in an associational network that may use tonal patterns that are functional, symbolic, or both; thematic/motivic networks; or a combination of tonal patterns and motivic networks. But what are the mechanics of such tonal associational networks? Some answers may be had by looking at issues taken up recently by William Kinderman and others in a volume called—rather ambitiously but not without justification—*The Second Practice of Nineteenth-Century Tonality*.[26] Basing their work

[26]William Kinderman and Harald Krebs, ed., *The Second Practice of Nineteenth-Century Tonality* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996).

Figure 10. Diagram of a logical opposition (narrative versus pitch design) with logical contraries and syntheses of the terms



significantly on that of Wagner scholar Robert Bailey, Kinderman and his colleagues conflate (or embroil) the opposed terms *tonal teleology/associational network* with another binary: *monotonality/tonal pairing* (also, *double-tonic complex*, *directional tonality*). *Tonal pairing* is synonymous with *double-tonic complex*: two tonics (not one) occupy the highest position in the tonal hierarchy, a relationship with the potential to create productive tonal and dramatic tension. *Directional tonality* may be taken to refer simply to beginning and ending in different keys, which is a common explicit result of a process of tonal pairing but is not necessary to that process. In all cases, a considerable amount of interpretation is needed to uncover instances of tonal pairing, and Kinderman notes that "the risk of an overly abstract treatment of tonal relations can be avoided only through careful attention to the context of the music and the manner in which keys are connected to one another."[27] In other words, tonal pairing, like an associational network, does not represent an easily verifiable "fact" of a

[27]Kinderman, "Introduction," in Kinderman and Krebs, *The Second Practice*, 9.

composition on the order of, say, the hierarchical tonic/dominant relationship of a classical sonata movement.[28] Instead, close attention is needed to juxtapositions of segments in different keys (and their relationships to formal and thematic matters), to details that emerge from their local contexts to take on a significant role as tonal center, and to relationships of topical depiction, text imagery, and narrative (especially in opera).

The ingenuity and musical sensitivity of Kinderman and his colleagues in demonstrating the nature and effects of tonal pairing in music by Schubert, Wagner, Mahler, and others notwithstanding, there remains a theoretical problem. The second binary pair above—monotonality/tonal pairing—ought to be absorbed in the first: tonal teleology [monotonality/tonal pairing]/associational network. But readings of tonal pairing often depend on associations, as suggested above, and therefore there is substantial "bleeding" from one side of the binary pair to the other. This introduces a certain murkiness to the dynamics of these terms, perhaps an unavoidable reflection of the ambiguities and fissures in the European tonal system in the second half of the nineteenth century. If formal hierarchies are unclear or so broadly conceived as to be abstract, if extended tonal relationships (thirds or seconds) are used, and if networks are not complete (that is, if some details of harmony are not integrated), then the difference between tonal teleology and an associational network that operates linearly has been substantially obscured.

As an example, we may consider Scott Balthazar's reading of *Il Trovatore*.[29] He summarizes earlier approaches to the study of tonality in opera, which argue for long-range prolongations of a cadential progression, systems of tonal double cycles and short-range symmetries, or networks of associations of keys and characters; but then he argues that it may be more productive to think in terms of a network of tonal associations linked to plot, not to personae: "we [should] view the libretto as a primary rationale for tonal design . . . [thus, arguments should be based on] (1) connections between related scenes, sections of scenes, or events, and (2) distinctions among and convergences of separate subplots or arenas of actions." Nor is

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[28]This may be true even if the tonality is directional: see examples from Schubert interpreted by Harald Krebs, "Alternatives to Monotonality in Early Nineteenth-Century Music," *Journal of Music Theory* 25, no. 1 (1981): 1–16.

[29]Scott Balthazar, "Plot and Tonal Design as Compositional Constraints in *Il trovatore*," *Current Musicology* 60 & 61 (1996): 51–78.

Balthazar concerned about audibility: "Like other composers, [Verdi] faced compositional problems and made decisions that would not have directly affected the aesthetic experiences of his listeners."[30] The designs, in other words, are abstract, compositional constraints very much on the order of those Rodman finds in Stothart's pastiche scores for the MacDonald-Eddy musicals.

Over the course of *Il Trovatore*, Balthazar finds two stages of tonal design: in acts 1 and 2, where the libretto is dominated by separate subplots, two complexes of keys are associated with lead female characters: Azucena (E minor, A minor, C major, and G minor/major) and Leonora (A-flat major, E-flat minor/major, D-flat minor/major, and B-flat major). In acts 3 and 4, as the plot focuses on one thread, F minor/major dominates, with the earlier subplot keys juxtaposed to it.[31] Thus, the large-scale tonal scheme is both teleological (linear) and associational; it is (apparently) prevented from being a tonally functional scheme only by the complexity of the clusters of keys, which cannot be reduced to a single hierarchical relationship to a tonic F. Finally, Balthazar's reading convinces because of the hierarchical simplicity of the associations: with a series of examples, he shows that the same key/plot linkages that exist on the large scale also operate in local contexts.

As an aid to a pragmatic analytic heuristic, one might conceive function and association as two aspects of the same phenomenon, which is dependent on a pair of variables moving independently and therefore relating to each other in a variety of ways. In figure 11, I have imagined these variables moving on two slidebars. The first shows tonal functions depending on the relative definition of familiar tonal formulae and maps of functional relationships (such as Schoenberg's chart of harmonic functions). As one moves the bar toward the right, there arise more distant tonal relations, progressive key schemes, double-tonic complexes, and, finally, vestigial but mostly attenuated functions. The second slidebar shows conventions of form and time. At the left lies the simplest four-bar phrase or the necessarily predictable phrases and periods of nineteenth-century dances; as one moves the bar toward the right, Haydn's five-bar phrases appear, then Beethoven and Schubert's expansions of the Neapolitan, then "endless melody," etc.

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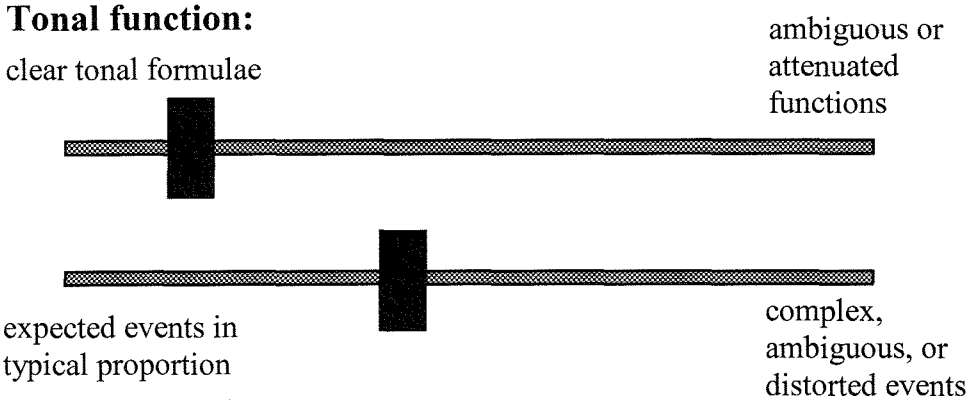
[30]Ibid., 51–52, 59–60.

[31]Ibid., 60–63, 66, 67.

Figure 11. Variables in tonal design conceived as slidebars



With both slidebars at the left, we have the most conventional late eighteenth-century harmonic phrase. Move the first bar to the right a quarter but leave the second at the far left, and we have Beethoven's Opus 53, first movement, which substitutes mediants for the dominant in a conventional sonata design. Reverse the bars (the first stays at the far left, the second moves to the right a quarter) and we have the situation at the beginning of the second movement in Schubert's C-major Quintet, D. 956, as Tovey describes it:

> If the composer, starting from a major tonic, can persuade the listener that II is a key and not a mere dominant [of V], the effect is one of strange exultation; unless, of course, the composer is a mere stringer of borrowed tunes whose key-contrasts mean nothing. That is why this is either the most vulgar of modulations or the most sublime. . . . Schubert in the slow movement of the Quintet produces a mysterious brightness by going from E to F# (II) and refusing to explain it away as the dominant of V.[32]

In fact, Schubert does "explain" (rather than "explain away") this II eventually, as the bass sketch of figure 12 shows, but Tovey's main point still holds: II is given a surprising amount of space—plus the best melody so far—and the effect is to throw the formal/tonal conventions out of whack.

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[32]Donald Francis Tovey, "Tonality in Schubert," in *The Mainstream of Music and Other Essays* (New York: Meridian Books, 1959), 153.

Figure 12: Franz Schubert, String Quintet, D. 956, II, harmonic design of the opening

As Kinderman warned us, then, it is not enough to locate a conventional formula—one has to find the right place for it within one's interpretation of a work. *A Portrait of Hitch*, to be sure, *can* be read in G major, but the formulas behind figure 5 give a rather lopsided and inadequate view of the music's tensions (which are lodged in the double-tonic complex and some ambiguous functions) and its broad affect (the genre of the *scherzo grotesque*). As we shall see, much the same could be said of a claim that "*The Trouble With Harry* is in G major."

Tonality and Narrative in "The Trouble With Harry"

The Trouble With Harry is a comedy-romance that plays throughout, lightheartedly and obviously, with the conventions of the thriller.[33] The film's humor is developed by amiably eccentric characters whose behavior compounds irony on irony at a steady pace. The setting is contemporary—autumn in a small village in Vermont. Four-year-old Arnie Rogers finds a dead man (Harry) in a meadow. The elderly but spry Captain Wiles, who has been rabbit-shooting nearby, believes he has killed Harry and enlists the aid of Sam Marlowe, a painter, to bury the body. As it turns out, the Captain has miscounted his bullets and cannot have killed Harry; in any case, Miss Gravely now enters, believing she has killed Harry as he tried to assault her while in a maddened delirium. As events unfold through the day and evening, Harry is buried and resurrected four times, and two couples gradually fall in love (the Captain and Miss Gravely, and Sam Marlowe and

[33]Spoto characterizes the film as "securely linked to a sense of the grotesque anchored by the typically Hitchcockian association between death and sex." *The Dark Side of Genius*, 379.

Arnie's mother Jennifer).[34] Eventually, we find that Harry died of natural causes, and the four put him back in the meadow, where Arnie, who has trouble with words for time, will say that he found the man "today."

Like many of Herrmann's scores, the music for *The Trouble With Harry* is complex in significant part because it consists of a large number of short, independent cues. This kind of design goes back to the 1930s, when Herrmann wrote music for radio; the cues are often transitional, as well as thematically (and tonally) amorphous. Figure 13 maps out the music in the form of a table.[35] A total of forty-two cues occupy about thirty-six minutes of the film (which runs just under one hundred minutes). Some of the cues segue into one another (the first six, for instance), and there is one bit of diegetic music (Marlowe singing a folk tune), so that the number of musical units, we might call them, is actually twenty-six (as the leftmost column indicates).

Figure 13. Bernard Herrmann, music for *The Trouble With Harry* (1954; released 1955), cue statistics

Notes:

1. Timings in columns 2–4 are based on the current video release print and are approximate.
2. Titles and timings in columns 5–7 are taken from the holograph score, which is in the Bernard Herrmann Collection, University of California, Santa Barbara (the cue titles correspond with those in the recent recording: Bernard Herrmann, *The Trouble with Harry* [Varèse Sarabande VSD-5971]). Because of production changes, timings in columns 4 and 6 sometimes do not correspond. "n.t." = "no timing indicated."
3. Theme labels (by letter) in column 9 correspond to those in figure 1. Additional themes are given the labels I, J, and K.
4. In the rightmost column, lower case letters indicate minor, upper case major; ~~~ = a passage or cue in which a tonal center is not clearly defined.

[34]The actors who take these parts are: Edmund Gwenn (Captain Albert Wiles), Mildred Natwick (Miss Gravely), John Forsythe (Sam Marlowe), and Shirley MacLaine (Jennifer Rogers).

[35]Some of the information in this table comes from documents in the Bernard Herrmann Collection, University of California at Santa Barbara. I am grateful to David Seubert, Director of Special Collections, for his assistance during a research trip in October 1998.

Figure 13 (continued)

No	In	Out	Time	No. in Score	Time in Score	Cue Title	Action/Notes	Theme	Key(s)
1	0:00	6:54	6:54	1AA1 1BB 1CC 1DD 1EE 1FF	6:40 total	Overture Autumn The Murder The Captain The Body Miss Gravely's Test	Main title & opening scene; shot heard at 2:30; Harry's body seen at 3:12; music out with Miss Gravely (The church BELL is first heard at 1:30.)	A, B, C; F as Captain walks; I	e♭/G♭; modal e; e♭/G♭; modal e; G; ~~~ b??; ~~~
2	9:13	9:50	0:37	2AA	n.t.	Jennifer	Jennifer and Arnie with body	A developed	~~~
3	10:40	13:02	2:22	2BB 2CC	n.t. 1:23	The Doctor The Tramp	Dr. walks by; then hobo steals shoes	G, C—as Dr. trips over Harry; G, J	D; ~~~; ends B♭?
4	13:02	14:30	1:28	—	—		fade then Marlowe singing "Flaggin the Train to Tuscaloosa". BELL in middle of this (at 13:50). ("Tuscaloosa" also very briefly at 17:10.)	—	??
5	20:23	21:20	0:57	3BB	:58	The Cup	Miss Gravely buys a coffee cup	K	F
6	23:52	26:15	2:23	3CC 3DD	2:20 total	Autumn The Sketch	Marlowe finds the body	I, B, C (first time since main title)	E f♯
				—	—		BELL at 26:55	—	
7	31:27	33:30	2:03	4BB 4CC 4DD	2:09 total	Doctor's Return The Police The Country Road	music in as Dr. falls over body again; Captain passes deputy Calvin Wiggs and the police car; Marlowe sees Jennifer	A, G (for Dr.), C, H (for Captain), I (for Marlowe and Jennifer)	
				—	—		BELL at 38:10	—	

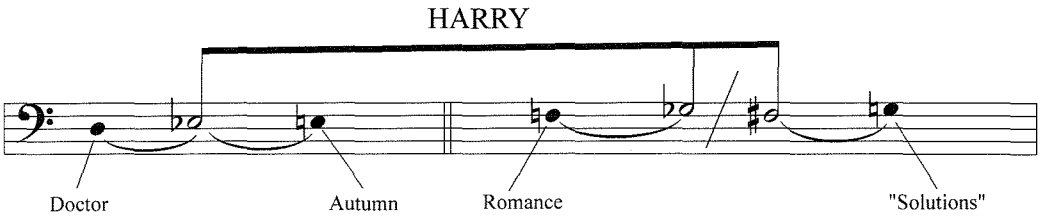
Figure 13 (continued)

No	In	Out	Time	No. in Score	Time in Score	Cue Title	Action/Notes	Theme	Key(s)
8	42:45	44:11	1:26	5BB	1:15	Tea Time	Captain and Miss Gravely at Tea	F	G
9	46:47	48:25	1:38	5CC	n.t.	The Burial	Captain, Marlowe go to bury body; music out with sound of Calvin's car	A, new theme used only here	opens ~~~; to e♭?
10	48:35	49:46	1:11	5D/ 6A	1:13	Waltz Macabre	out with sound of Calvin's car again	D (but only fragments)	G, ends on $B♭^{+}$
				—	—		BELL at 51:30	—	
11	53:45	54:20	0:35	6BB	:36	Waltz Reprise	Captain, Marlowe dig up body again	D	like 10; ends ~~~
12	56:15	58:30	2:15	6CC/ 6DD	2:14	Valse Lent	Captain, Miss Gravely; she says she hit Harry with shovel	E, 1st time (faster than in HITCH)	E
13	62:13	63:54	1:41	7BB 7CC	1:40 total	Miss Gravely Digs; Homebodies	transition; Miss Gravely digs up body; Marlowe & Jennifer at her house, Captain & Miss Gravely appear	bits of D, then I	G; G♭ (ends on D♭)
14	64:38	64:40	0:02	7DD	:09	The Closet	closet door opens		g: V? or D?
				—	—		BELL at 66:40	—	
15	67:07	69:30	2:23	7EE 7FF 7GG	2:06 total	Harvest Eye The Phantom Coach The Walk	evening; the four on their way to bury body again; Wiggie interrupts [car horn mixed in] [grand pause between 7FF & 7GG]	?	starts like 7DD, then modal g or d; 7GG is in G
							BELL at 70:12		
16	70:53	71:17	0:24	8BB	:24	The Wish	Marlowe whispers to the millionaire about Jennifer		G ends A: V^{9}

Figure 13 (continued)

No	In	Out	Time	No. in Score	Time in Score	Cue Title	Action/Notes	Theme	Key(s)
17	71:48	72:00	0:12	8CC	1:12	Proposal	Marlowe says he loves Jennifer	K	F
18	72:45	73:55	1:05	8DD 8EE 8FF	1:02 :59 n.t.	Suspicion Porch Talk Duo	Calvin sees Marlowe's picture of Harry, then [8EE] Jennifer's house (she agrees to marry Marlowe)—outrageous romantic swell in music at the kiss	A; ? 	~~~; G; modal g; F
19	80:44	81:44	1:00	9BB	:57	Ostinato	they dig body up again	tuneless	d
20	82:20	83:00	0:40	9CC	:35	Encore	Dr. again—after they dig body up	G, C as Dr. sees body	
					—		BELL at 84:05		
21	84:00	84:25	0:25	9DD	n.t.	Cortege	Jennifer's house; they clean Harry's clothes	tuneless	b?
22	85:15	85:40	0:25	9EE	n.t.	Slumber	Captain wakes up; closet door opens	tuneless	g: V? or D?
23	86:12	86:45	0:33	9FF	:52	Afterbeats	Calvin shows up	tuneless	~~~
24	90:51	91:22	0:31	10BB	:26	The Bathtub	closet door opens as Calvin leaves; music out as Dr. appears while Calvin is there	A	~~~
25	93:25	94:08	0:43	10CC	:40	Confession	Captain admits he was tugboat captain; Miss Gravely loves him anyway	F	G, ends E♭
26	96:15	98:40	2:25	10DD 10EE	2:29	The Solution Finale	Dr. leaves; cut outside next day; [10EE] Arnie finds body again; the four adults talk	A, B, C, J, A with cut outside, B, C; end is close to HITCH end	
		total:	35:54						

Figure 14. Bernard Herrmann, music for *The Trouble With Harry*, summary of tonal design



As the rightmost column shows, the sequence of tonal centers is complicated and the keys themselves often ambiguous. Nevertheless, thematic and tonally distinct cues clearly do predominate, and it is reasonable to build a view of tonal design based on them. Our task is aided materially by the choices Hermann made when composing *A Portrait of Hitch*.[36] Figure 14 reads the tonal design and its broadest associations.

Royal S. Brown has written that "one thing Herrmann obviously fathomed . . . in Hitchcock and his art was the perfect ambivalency."[37] In his music for *The Trouble With Harry*, Herrmann expresses that "ambivalency" with a double-tonic complex of traditional relative keys, here E-flat minor and G-flat major (F-sharp major). Most broadly, the double-tonic complex itself marks the dramatic situation: the "trouble" which Harry's body represents for the four main characters. For that reason, I have labeled the complex HARRY in figure 14. As we might expect, the minor key is used for more dramatic and threatening situations (the four-note motto from the beginning that shows up each time a new complication arises in disposing of the body, for instance), but the major key is used to represent the whimsical or comedic side of the film's affect.

Half-step relations fan out on either side of the principal centers; these are depicted with closed notes in figure 14. Broadly, the two half-steps about E♭ represent the situation as it is, and those about G♭/F♯ the plot as it progresses. D major is used primarily for the bumbling Doctor, who is given

[36]Eva Reiger overstates the situation wildly when she says of the score "we almost never know what key the music is in." Eva Rieger, *Alfred Hitchcock und die Musik: Eine Untersuchung zum Verhältnis von Film, Musik und Geschlecht* (Bielefeld: Kleine Verlag, 1996), 164.

[37]Royal S. Brown, *Overtones and Undertones* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 151.

one of the most distinctive scherzando themes in the score and whose profession reminds one constantly of the medical—and legal—problems of having a corpse about. The key is also used to accompany the sight gag of a closet door that opens ominously without human aid (Harry is actually ensconced in Jennifer Rogers's bathtub at the time): see cues 22 and 24. E minor (often expressed modally) is used as one of two keys to express the environment and time of year, a gentle pastoral affect.

G major is the other pastoral key, making its first appearance in connection with the Captain as he walks through the woods in the film's opening scene. Subsequently, the key is associated with the Captain himself, with the unfolding romance between him and Miss Gravely (as in cue 8), with Miss Gravely herself (as in cue 13), and—by transposition to the other couple—with the developing romance of Sam and Jennifer (as in cues 16 and the middle section of cue 18 [as Sam proposes marriage and Jennifer agrees]). I have labeled G major the key of "Solutions" in figure 14: in one sense, the pairings of Jennifer with Sam and Miss Gravely with the Captain are the solution to the film's main subplot, which may be summarized as "we have met a group of characters; what will happen to them?; couples among them fall in love." Indeed, one of the film's narrative pleasures is the uncertainty about whether this subplot or "the trouble with Harry" is the primary plot of the film. And, of course, as in *A Portrait of Hitch*, G major rudely supplants F-sharp for the concluding cadence, as the problem of Harry is swept aside and the new romantic attachments can grow. A substantial "presaging" of the "Solutions" key appears in the "waltz macabre" of cue 10 (which also appears in *A Portrait of Hitch*) in G major. This theme actually makes its first appearance in the middle of cue 7; in both instances, it is associated with the Captain. During this segment of the film, both the Captain and Sam believe they have resolved the crisis by deciding to bury the body (the first time). Finally, F major, used sparingly, is associated specifically with romantic feeling, as in cue 5, when Miss Gravely goes to Mrs. Wiggs' general store to buy a coffee cup in advance of the Captain's visit to her house; cue 17, when Sam tells Jennifer he loves her; and the final part of cue 18, when they kiss.

As one might expect of such a complex score, the scheme of tonalities sketched in figure 14 does not align perfectly with every element of every cue. It is not difficult to read B-flat major (?) and B minor as dominants of E-flat minor and E minor, respectively, since neither is securely defined as a tonic (especially B minor, which is the supporting triad for an ostinato figure in a passage whose pitch materials otherwise have nothing to do with the

traditional key of B minor): see cues 1, latter part; 3, end; 10; and 21. On the other hand, it remains unclear why the "valse lent" of cue 12 is in a very plainly defined and secure E major, why the first scene to hint strongly of an impending romance between Sam and Jennifer should be in G-flat major (cue 13), and why the repetition of the Captain's pastoral theme should veer off at the end from G major to E-flat, given that this is the point at which Miss Gravely confirms that she loves him even after he admits that the highblown stories about his career as a sea captain are untrue. (He was a tugboat captain in New York harbor; cue 25.) Still, each of these three anomalies has an explanation that is at least minimally plausible, and I would argue that therefore they do not render the overall scheme indefensible. One might connect cue 12 with the E minor of the opening to suggest that a simple mode change reflects the change in the Captain's circumstances, since his relationship with Miss Gravely is clearly developing; the connection is more reasonable because she is talking about the circumstances of that opening scene. (She hit Harry shortly before the Captain found him.) Similarly, in cue 13, the relationship between Jennifer and Sam develops amidst a conversation about what to do with Harry's body. And, finally, we might read cue 25 like cue 12: a simple mode change alters the "trouble" key of E-flat minor to E-flat major as the plot begins to wind down.

Conclusion

Supported by evidence of the tonal design in *A Portrait of Hitch*, I find figure 14 convincing as an analysis of the composer's reading of Hitchcock's film. And it seems reasonable to think that further research along these lines might help to corroborate Royal Brown's claim about the effect on the composer of the remarkable collaboration that began with *The Trouble With Harry*: "Herrmann's musical translations of raw affect seemed to be waiting for the counterbalancing effect of a Hitchcock-style cinema, with its carefully elaborated visual structures."[38]

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[38]Ibid., 149. Smith makes a very similar point: "But while Hitchcock's art was that of a disengaged observer looking into his own suppressed fears, Herrmann's was that of an outspoken participant whose art could be both passionately romantic and psychologically revealing. His musical idiom was the perfect complement to Hitchcock's often detached images, giving them an emotional center and reinforcing thematic purpose." *A Heart at Fire's Center*, 192.

A caveat is in order. Tonality in film music has links to symbolic or dramatic schemes in nineteenth-century stage and symphony, but, without external evidence, readings lack the security of the assumption that such practices are relevant to any specific film. The film repertoire is large, and its circumstances of production vary widely, as I noted in this essay's opening paragraphs. At its worst, reading tonal design may produce false conclusions about something that isn't there. At its best, however, it can integrate some modes of reading concert music securely into the interpretive practices of cinema scholarship.