

# **E Major Harmony as Dominant or Mediant in Chopin's Opus 10/1: Schenker's Graphs from *Free Composition* Reconsidered**

**Howard Cinnamon**

At some point in every undergraduate music theory curriculum it becomes necessary to select pieces from the repertoire to illustrate the relationship between the principles of chorale-style voice leading, upon which the teaching of harmony is commonly based, and those of free composition. A frequent first step in this direction is the selection of a piece based upon straightforward arpeggiations in which the figuration pattern can be easily represented as a series of four- or five-voice chords that manifest basic chorale-style voice leading and harmonic progression. This practice is particularly true in courses focusing on, or incorporating some, elements of Schenkerian analytical methods, for which the unfolding of harmonies<sup>1</sup> is a basic concept. But it can also be a useful first step for approaches using other methodologies as well.

One piece commonly chosen for this purpose is Chopin's Étude in C Major, Opus 10/1. Two factors often contribute to this selection: the structural parallelisms between this piece and J. S. Bach's Prelude in C Major from Book I of *The Well-Tempered Clavier* (an equally

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<sup>1</sup>Unfolding of harmonies is defined as the transformation of harmonies that function as simultaneities on one level into melodic patterns (e.g., arpeggiations) on a more foreground level.

popular choice to fulfill this function)<sup>2</sup> and, for those wishing to incorporate Schenkerian methodologies, the fact that two of Schenker's own voice-leading graphs of this piece are readily available in *Free Composition*.<sup>3</sup> The parallelisms with the Bach prelude allow for a discussion of the nature of style in general and stylistic differences between these pieces in particular, while the availability of Schenkerian graphs provides models that can be used as a guide (both for the student and the teacher) and allow for relevant references to Schenker's own writings.

If one is not careful, however, these factors can become negative elements by unduly influencing both instructor and students in their interpretation of these pieces, sometimes leading to an overemphasis on the similarities between them and/or promoting the acceptance of Schenker's analyses without the healthy degree of skepticism so necessary to the development of the critical analytical skills that are the ultimate goal. One factor that mitigates against the selection of the Chopin étude is the questions prompted by seeming inconsistencies that appear when Schenker's voice-leading graphs are closely compared with the piece and the interference with the learning process that may result. This study re-examines the piece from a perspective prompted by some of these questions and offers an alternative view of its tonal structure. While this discussion employs Schenkerian methodology and thus will be of direct relevance to those who employ similar methods in their approach, the reconsideration of tonal orientation within the middle section of the étude will be of interest to all analysts and may cause even non-Schenkerians to re-examine their perspective on the

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<sup>2</sup>Several Schenkerian analyses of this Bach prelude are available and relevant here: Heinrich Schenker, *Five Graphic Musical Analyses*, ed. Felix Salzer (New York: Dover, 1969), 36-37; Allen Forte and Steven E. Gilbert, *Introduction to Schenkerian Analysis* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1982), 188-190 and 202; David Neumeier and Susan Tepping, *A Guide to Schenkerian Analysis* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1992), 68-70; and William Drabkin, "A Lesson in Analysis from Heinrich Schenker," *Music Analysis* 4 (1985): 241-258.

<sup>3</sup>Heinrich Schenker, *Free Composition*, trans. and ed. by Ernst Oster (New York: Longman, 1979), Supplement, Figures 130,4 and 153,2.

controlling harmony (i.e., key orientation) of the middle section of this piece.

In considering the voice-leading graphs in *Free Composition*, one essential point must be kept in mind. Unlike the graphs in *Der Tonwille*, *Das Meisterwerk in der Musik* and some of Schenker's specifically analytical writings, the voice-leading graphs in *Free Composition* are intended as illustrations of specific theoretical points made in the text, not complete analyses of the pieces discussed. As a result they focus on the point being made and include only as much information about the entire piece as is necessary to provide context. In cases where a more detailed analysis exists elsewhere, it often provides essential information neither included nor suggested in the illustration in *Free Composition*. In cases where no other source exists (like that of this Chopin étude), we have nothing to guide our interpretation of the analysis or our understanding of Schenker's view of the piece other than the information specifically represented in the illustration. While these graphs are almost certainly based on comprehensive analyses, the only way to arrive at those analyses is through extrapolation from the information provided, based upon an understanding of the principles employed. This necessarily involves a considerable amount of speculation and analytical input by the interpreter and can often be a matter of considerable debate among advocates of Schenker's theories. The discussion can be simplified considerably when there is more than one voice-leading graph to consider and compare, as is the case here, but its difficulties can be compounded by apparent inconsistencies between these graphs as well.

The two graphs of Opus 10/1 included in *Free Composition*, found in Example 1, are intended to illustrate distinct theoretical concepts, but they appear, for the most part, to reflect a consistent view of overall form and harmonic organization in the piece. Schenker considers this piece to be an example of three-part form in which the middle section is articulated by a prolongation of VI (A minor); in fact, the second graph of Example 1 (his Figure 153,2) is used specifically as an illustration of a category of three-part form in which a neighbor

Example 1. Schenker's voice-leading graphs of Opus 10/1;  
 Figures 130,4 and 153,2 from *Free Composition*

Fig. 130,4

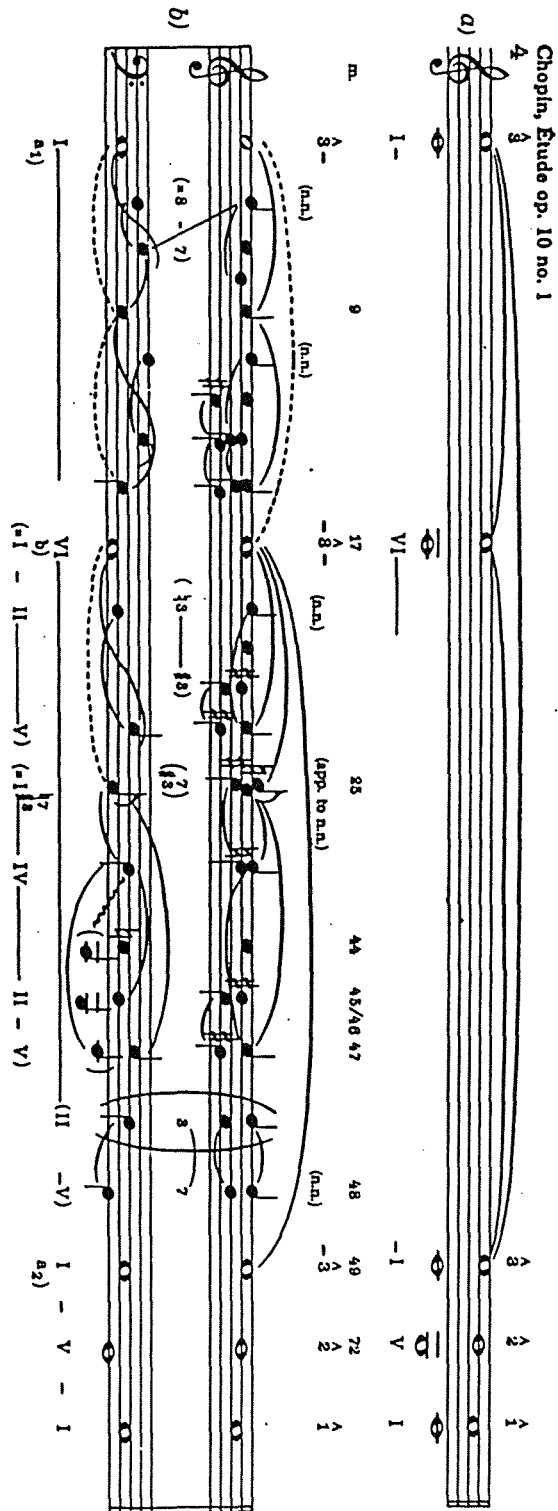
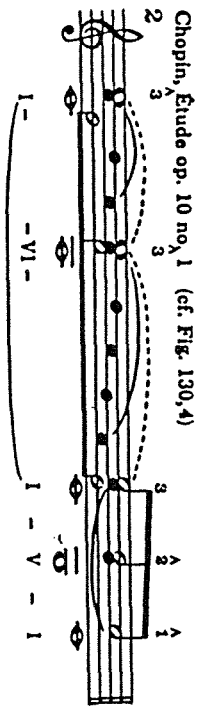


Fig. 153,2



motion occurs in an inner voice rather than the soprano.<sup>4</sup> In his discussion of the first graph of Example 1 (his Figure 130,4), Schenker elaborates somewhat on the nature of form, and the harmonic-contrapuntal process that generates it in this piece:

Here is another remarkable use of the divider. Only by means of the two dividers in measures 24 and 47 was it possible to continue the fundamental tone A (VI) from measure 17 to measure 47.<sup>5</sup>

Example 2. Forte and Gilbert's representation of tonal structure in Opus 10/1

Allen Forte and Steven E. Gilbert, in the chapter on form in their text on Schenkerian analysis, support this view with their voice-leading graph (Example 2, their Example 177), summarizing Schenker's main elements, and discussing them in somewhat more explicit detail. In contrasting the form of this piece to that of a two-part form resulting from an interruption they state:

The opening sixteen measures conclude on I rather than V, and with a reassertion of scale degree  $\hat{3}$  in the melody.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 133.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 113.

Measures 17-48 continue to prolong  $\hat{3}$  (now over VI), and the inverted dominant at the end of m. 48 (harmonizing the upper neighbor to  $\hat{3}$ , not  $\hat{2}$ ) is clearly felt as a transition rather than a point of rest.<sup>6</sup>

While Schenker considers the harmonic organization among the sections of this piece to be based on a familiar I-VI-I harmonic organization, he apparently views the prolongation of VI as somewhat unusual in that some of its main elements consist of dominant harmonies that prolong their tonic, but do not resolve to it: what he calls “fifth dividers” (sometimes also called “back-relating dominants”). This is, in fact, the specific point that the first graph in Example 1 is intended to illustrate. Such “fifth dividers” function as offshoots of a tonic harmony that precedes them, but serve to close off a musical idea rather than resolve to I.<sup>7</sup> In Schenker’s view, the E major harmonies that occur within the prolongation of VI, at m. 24 and m. 47, are extensions of tonic (i.e., A minor [or major]) harmonies that precede them in m. 17 and m. 25 respectively. For this to be the case, the tonic harmonies must be clearly established as such by other contextual elements. While these two E major harmonies seem clearly to be the goal of the harmonic-contrapuntal motion, the tonic nature of the harmonies they are supposed to be prolonging is not nearly as clear.

The most serious question involves the harmony in m. 17, which Schenker identifies as I of A minor (VI of C major). While this harmony does employ A as its bass and two of the upper voices do contain C and E, its highest voice adds an F to this harmony, resulting in a 6/5 chord that begins a sequence which ultimately arrives on the E major harmony in mm. 23-24 (see Example 3). One way of reconciling this fact with Schenker’s interpretation would be to view the F as a non-harmonic embellishing tone, but, to be persuasive as a tonic in A minor, such a harmony would require the establishment of an A

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<sup>6</sup>Forte and Gilbert, *Introduction to Schenkerian Analysis*, 202-203.

<sup>7</sup>For a clear, concise discussion of “back-relating dominants” see Edward Aldwell and Carl Schachter, *Harmony and Voice Leading*, 2nd ed. (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1989), 145-47.

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Example 3. Mm. 15-24; sequence leading from I to V/VI

The musical score consists of four systems, each with a treble and bass staff. Measure numbers 15, 18, 21, and 24 are indicated at the start of their respective systems. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5 above notes. The bass staff contains chord symbols:  $\text{I}^{\text{a}}$ ,  $\text{I}^{\text{b}}$ ,  $\text{II}^{\text{a}}$ ,  $\text{II}^{\text{b}}$ ,  $\text{III}^{\text{a}}$ ,  $\text{III}^{\text{b}}$ ,  $\text{IV}^{\text{a}}$ ,  $\text{IV}^{\text{b}}$ ,  $\text{V}^{\text{a}}$ ,  $\text{V}^{\text{b}}$ ,  $\text{VI}^{\text{a}}$ , and  $\text{VI}^{\text{b}}$ . Asterisks (\*) are placed below the bass staff in measures 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, and 24. The sequence of chords is:  $\text{I}^{\text{a}}$  (m. 15),  $\text{I}^{\text{b}}$  (m. 16),  $\text{II}^{\text{a}}$  (m. 17),  $\text{II}^{\text{b}}$  (m. 18),  $\text{III}^{\text{a}}$  (m. 19),  $\text{III}^{\text{b}}$  (m. 20),  $\text{IV}^{\text{a}}$  (m. 21),  $\text{IV}^{\text{b}}$  (m. 22),  $\text{V}^{\text{a}}$  (m. 23), and  $\text{V}^{\text{b}}$  (m. 24). The treble staff features a melodic line with eighth-note patterns and slurs, often marked with an '8' above the staff. The bass staff provides harmonic support with chords and some moving lines.





redirected to an E major harmony (made to sound like V of A minor) by the augmented-sixth chord of m. 22, resulting from motion to an inner voice from F to D# (a chromaticized version of a motive that first appears in mm. 3-7; see the first graph in Example 1). The first real indication of A minor as a tonic, therefore, occurs only with the arrival on its dominant in mm. 23-24, six measures after Schenker asserts a controlling tonic in that key.

With nothing to clearly establish A minor as tonic but a  $V^{6/5}$  chord that appears in m. 19 as part of the sequence (a chord that could easily be considered an applied dominant), an interpretation that perceives C major as continuing through this passage seems quite plausible. A similar problem plagues the harmony that occurs in m. 25, which Schenker identifies as the second appearance of I in A, the harmony that is prolonged throughout the remainder of the middle section of the piece. While there is no ambiguity as to the root of this chord, the inclusion of G $\sharp$  in the major (rather than minor) harmony transforms it into a dominant-seventh chord that leads onward into a circle of dominant-seventh chords, arriving ultimately back on an A major harmony in m. 35. Interestingly, Schenker does not even include the A major harmony of m. 35 in his graph, apparently considering it to be part of a continuing sequence that leads to the dividing dominant of m. 47. Schenker interprets the G $\sharp$  of m. 25 as a foreground phenomenon and refers the reader to C.P. E. Bach's *Versuch uber die Art, das Klavier zu spielen (Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments)* for further clarification. He states:

When A is sounded for the second time in measure 25, it is in conjunction with g<sup>2</sup>, which as  $\sharp 7$  constitutes an appoggiatura to the neighboring f<sup>2</sup>. The expression of this appoggiatura is very moving, if one understands it correctly: the configuration e<sup>2</sup>-g<sup>2</sup>-f<sup>2</sup> has the effect of an *Anschlag*, or a compound appoggiatura (see C.P.E. Bach's *Versuch*, part 1, chapter 2, section 6).<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>*Free Composition*, 113.

While it is certainly possible for a harmony to function as a dominant in the foreground while serving as a structural I in the middleground (or even background), this harmony, like that of m. 17, seems to initiate a transitional process rather than serve as a point of structural repose. This process, a circle of dominant-seventh chords, leads first to a brief resting point on the dominant of C major (mm. 27-28) and then on to an A major harmony in mm. 35-36 (the only harmony in the passage that does not contain a seventh, making it the most stable harmony within it). The transitional process then continues further, again through a circle of fifths that is (this time) mostly diatonic in A minor, to the V/VI of mm. 47-48. The assertion that the dominant-seventh harmony of m. 25 be considered structural, while the only consonant potential tonic in the passage, that in mm. 35-36, is considered merely transitional, seems troubling.

An equally troublesome segment of Schenker's graph is the representation of the brief retransition to I in mm. 47-49. The harmonies represented in Figure 130,4 of *Free Composition* (see Example 1), along with the analysis of scale-steps (*Stufen*) presented below the graph, indicates that Schenker considers this transition to be based upon a succession of fifth-related harmonies in which the prolonged VI of mm. 17-47 leads first to II and then to  $V^7$ , which in turn continues to I and the beginning of the reprise at m. 49. The meaning of the parentheses around the II chord is unclear. It probably suggests that II is implied though not explicitly stated (or perhaps omitted entirely), but no indication is given of any modification, substitution, or alteration to the V chord. On the basis of this graph one would expect to find a root-position  $V^7$  chord in m. 48 that leads directly to I, but no such chord exists in the music. The actual transition is achieved rather subtly and suddenly through a second-inversion  $V^7$  chord that occurs at the last possible moment, on the last quarter of m. 48.

One might say that it is precisely this appearance of  $V^{4/3}$ , with D in its bass, which prompted Schenker's suggestion of a II chord: that, in some way, the  $V^{4/3}$  represents a merging of II and V in such a way as to produce smoother voice leading. While such an elision might be conceivable in some circumstances, this explanation represents a view

of the piece that seems needlessly convoluted, especially considering the familiarity of the actual progression and voice leading that occurs in mm. 47-49. This view does offer some rationale to justify Schenker's analysis, but his representation simply cannot be taken literally in light of a more viable alternative.

Example 5. Mm. 47-50, the retransition to I

Example 5 presents mm. 47-50 of the piece while Example 6 illustrates the foreground voice leading operating within them. The  $V^{4/3}$  seems to be a straightforward passing chord. In fact, this entire progression seems quite familiar. In this context the E major harmony (viewed up to now as  $V/VI$ , a dividing dominant) is considered  $III\#$  of C major (exhibiting secondary mixture as  $III$  often does). It functions as a substitute for  $I^6$  and returns to  $I^{5/3}$  through a passing chord with no root position dominant present or needed.<sup>9</sup> (Note that Forte and Gilbert

<sup>9</sup>For a discussion of  $III$  (and  $III\#$ ) as a substitute for  $I^6$  and its operation in passages like this, see Aldwell and Schachter, 216-217, 218-219, and 363-364.

Example 6. Voice leading of return to I in mm. 47-49, employing  $V^4/3$  as a passing chord

mm. 47 48 49

(V/VI=)  $\frac{4}{3}$   
III# (V) I

support this view of the return to I through a passing  $V^4/3$ , both in their graph [Example 2] and in their discussion of the piece cited earlier.) If this view is accepted, it calls into question Schenker's interpretation not only of this transition, but of tonal structure and tonal hierarchy within the entire middle section of the piece.  $V^4/3$ , after all, represents a perfectly reasonable transition from III# to I, but an interpretation that views it as a link between VI and I requires one to consider both the E major harmony and the  $V^4/3$  to be voice-leading chords, with V of VI reinterpreted as III# only in the foreground as part of this transition. Employing this E major harmony in such a direct voice-leading relationship to I, however, suggests that it might have a more structural role as III# throughout the section. As the earlier discussion indicated, a similar E major harmony was the goal of harmonic-contrapuntal motion following the cadence on I in m. 16. Might there be a connection between this first stable harmony of the middle section (mm. 23-24) and the last one (mm. 47-48)? Might there be some way to consider the middle section of the piece to be based upon a prolongation of this harmony rather than VI?

Examples 7a-c present a view of voice leading and harmonic

structure in the entire piece that incorporates a prolongation of III# rather than VI within the middle section; Example 7a illustrates mm. 1-23, the opening section of the piece and the transition to III#; Example 7b illustrates mm. 20-49, the end of the transitional sequence leading to III#, the middle section of the piece and the retransition to I; and Example 7c illustrates mm. 49-77, the closing section of the piece. Tonal structure between mm. 23 and 47 (Example 7b) can more clearly (and more consistently) be viewed as a prolongation of E major (III#) in which the potential ambiguity of function inherent in this harmony that allows it to be interpreted as V/VI is exploited for expressive purposes. When viewed in this way, III# is seen to be prolonged, in a very conventional way, with a middleground harmonic progression, I-IV-V-I. Though the E major harmonies are approached each time as if they were V of A minor (or major), this is only a foreground element.

After its arrival in m. 23, III# proceeds towards its own IV through a normative descending-thirds progression that arrives at ♯VI (of E) in m. 29 and then proceeds on to IV (m. 35). This ♯VI is marked off as a midpoint in this progression through the durational accent given its own dominant (mm. 27-28), by the emphasis given the resolution of this dominant as a result, and by a change in the sequential pattern that follows it. The ♯VI chord is approached through a succession of dominant-seventh harmonies. The circle of dominant-seventh chords continues after m. 29, but with intervening passing chords that produce half-step melodic motions in the bass, anticipating the arrival on IV (of E) through a dominant-seventh chord on B♭ that is slightly altered and reinterpreted as a French augmented-sixth chord.

IV arrives in m. 35 in the form of an A major harmony: diatonic if considered IV within a prolongation of E major, but representing mixture if considered I in A minor. As noted earlier, this is the only harmony between mm. 24 and 46 that does not contain a seventh. It is thereby distinguished from the surrounding harmonies, all of which are relatively less stable. Earlier it was observed that the apparent stability of this harmony was inconsistent with Schenker's complete omission of it from his analysis. It is, however, totally consistent with the interpretation of its function offered here. This IV is then prolonged by

another sequential passage based on a circle of fifths sequence, this time employing a 10-7-10 soprano-bass voice-leading pattern to descend by step to its third (now minor), which arrives in m. 44. The voice-leading pattern that follows then continues briefly, as a link to what would be II of A minor, which arrives in m. 45. This harmony is immediately altered, however, becoming V of E major and leading to a perfect authentic cadence on III# in m. 47. The sequence between mm. 36 and 44 offers the strongest support yet of an interpretation of this section in terms of A minor. It is completely diatonic within that key, suggesting the middleground unfolding of a tonicized A minor harmony. This interpretation, however, is equally compatible with the view taken here, which also considers the A minor harmony to be unfolded, but on a more foreground level and within a context that interprets it as IV of E (III#) rather than I of A.

While the IV chord of m. 35 is major (in keeping with its function within E major), the use of a sequence that is predominantly diatonic in A minor achieves two effects. First, it perpetuates the suggestion of A minor, begun with the approach to III# as V/VI, to substantial expressive effect. Second, it results in a disproportionate emphasis on the arrival of V (of E) when the B diminished chord, approached as II of A minor, is chromatically altered to become a major triad (V of E), causing it to stand out from the sequence as a structural harmony that functions on a deeper level. This differentiation of the B harmony is further reinforced by a shift of register in the bass, which had until m. 44 continued consistently downward by step from A to C. This octave shift places the bass of the V chord (m. 45) in the same register as that of the IV chord (m. 35), supporting their voice-leading and harmonic associations. Particular notice should be paid to the role of the harmonies that Schenker identifies as tonic within the middle section of the piece. Here, both are considered relatively foreground elements that function within transitional passages, an interpretation that seems more in keeping with their roles as parts of ongoing processes. The apparent 6/5 harmony of m. 17 is seen as the initial chord in a sequence leading from I (in C major) to III#, while the A chord of m. 25 is considered part of a circle of fifths, connecting I (of E) with its  $\flat$ VI.

Example 7a. Voice leading of opening section and transition to III#  
(mm. 1-23)

mm. 9 15 23

I V I # III

I # III

Example 7b. Voice leading of end of transition, middle section, and return to I (mm. 20-49)

mm. 23 29 35 47 49

I # III

I # III (as V/VI) IV V I



Example 7c. Voice leading of closing section (mm. 49-77)

The image displays a musical score for the closing section of a piece, spanning measures 49 to 77. The score is presented in two systems, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The vocal line is written in a soprano clef, and the piano accompaniment is in a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The key signature is E major, and the time signature is 3/4. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, slurs, and dynamic markings. The piano accompaniment features a prominent bass line with triplets and a treble line with chords and moving lines. The vocal line consists of a single melodic line with some slurs and accents. The score is annotated with Roman numerals (I, V, III, #, V) indicating harmonic structure. Measure numbers 49, 57, 65, 69, 72, and 77 are marked on the right side of the score. The piano accompaniment includes a large bracketed section from measure 49 to 77, and a smaller bracketed section from measure 69 to 77. The vocal line includes a large bracketed section from measure 49 to 77, and a smaller bracketed section from measure 69 to 77. The score is annotated with Roman numerals (I, V, III, #, V) indicating harmonic structure. Measure numbers 49, 57, 65, 69, 72, and 77 are marked on the right side of the score.

It is important to realize that this analysis neither ignores nor contradicts the implications of A minor that are undeniably present within the middle section of this piece. It rather puts them in perspective, *as implication*, and draws a distinction between the assertion of a key and the prolongation of its tonic. Bear in mind that the only passage that is unquestionably diatonic in A minor occurs during the prolongation of what is seen here as IV; virtually the entire passage up to that point consists of a succession of chromatic chords (most of them dominants) which could be interpreted in a variety of different keys depending on their context. Even the strongest supporter of Schenker's interpretation would not claim that an A minor tonality is ever actually clearly established by a cadence on that tonic. The view taken here acknowledges the implications of A, but sees them as an expressive element, employed as a foreground device within a prolongation of III# that treats it as if it were V/VI. It draws a crucial and often-overlooked distinction between *prolongation* and *tonicization*: specifically, that to be prolonged a harmony need not be treated as tonic nor even occur in a context where it could be considered the tonic (V or even II, for example, can often be prolonged through the use of contrapuntally derived passing or neighboring I chords without any implication that they are being tonicized).

Example 8 presents a summary of voice leading within this piece that may be directly compared with Forte and Gilbert's (Example 2). While a I-III#-I harmonic pattern is somewhat less conventional than I-VI-I, it is no less viable, and this interpretation appears to overcome the most serious problems pointed out in Schenker's analysis. It also offers several pedagogical advantages, which make this *étude* even more useful as a "teaching piece." Of course, this interpretation still includes the structural similarities with the Bach prelude: the E-F-E neighbor motion that is motivic in both pieces, the employment of parallel tenths (in mm. 35-45) in conjunction with a descending octave transfer of E in the soprano, and the employment of tonic and dominant pedals as a means of emphasizing the prolonged harmonies that form the background close of the piece are all structural features that these

## Example 8. Summary of the tonal structure of the entire piece

mm. 7 15 23 35 46 47 48 49 72 77

I III# 9 (V) I V I

two pieces share.<sup>10</sup> But this reading also promotes discussion of other concepts not typically addressed in analyses guided by Schenker's graphs of this piece.

For example, it points out the importance of noting even slight changes in design and voice-leading patterns as indications of structural features. Within the middle section of this piece, each of the structurally significant harmonies, I (m. 23),  $\flat$ VI (m. 29), and IV (m. 35) is followed by a change in voice-leading and harmonic patterns. While the entire middle section is dominated by circles of fifths of different kinds, the progression from I to  $\flat$ VI (mm. 23-29) is chromatic, consisting of a circle of dominant-seventh chords; the progression from  $\flat$ VI to IV (mm. 29-35) continues the chromatic circle of fifths, but incorporates passing chords; and the prolongation of IV and approach to V (mm. 35-45) employ a sequential circle of fifths that is diatonic within the parallel minor key of the IV harmony being prolonged. Even the chromatic alterations that produce V of E major

<sup>10</sup>See the analyses of the Bach prelude cited above for illustrations of the roles of these features within that piece.

and the return to its tonic are associated with changes in design that call attention to these structural events. In a piece such as this, where a repeated figuration pattern seems to go on indefinitely, even slight changes in design can signal important structural events.

This piece also offers a useful example of how foreground structures, particularly toward the end of a piece, can summarize tonal events that form the basis of the entire piece (an example of what Schenker called “Hidden Repetition”). In this piece, the second phrase of the A’ section (mm. 57-69) is extended through a descent of a sixth to III#, which ultimately continues to V and then to I. The parallelism between tonal structure in this phrase and that which forms the basis of the piece is an excellent example of this common structural practice, a discussion of which might compare the return to I in m. 49 with that in m. 69 and could emphasize the structural significance of the root-position V in determining how, if at all, these passages might be viewed as equivalent. In the course of this discussion a consideration of the role of each augmented-sixth chord as an indication of a structural harmony to follow and as a means of generating harmonic ambiguity by suggesting the next chord as a dominant might be pursued. One could begin by pointing out how both V and III# in the second phrase of A’ are approached through augmented-sixth chords, calling them to one’s attention by suggesting that each is a dominant in a yet to be established key. One could then continue to consider how approaches through augmented-sixth chords affect the perception of III# in m. 23 and IV (of III#) in m. 35.

Most important of all, however, is the lesson this analysis can teach us about the analytical process itself. A comparison with Schenker’s original analyses and those based upon Schenker’s can point out quite clearly (regardless of which the particular student or instructor prefers) the need of every analyst to consider all possibilities and weigh all ambiguities before arriving at a conclusion. Schenker’s analysis is so appealing because it coincides with our perception of the implied A minor tonality on the surface and confirms our suspicions about its role in the piece. If this alternative analysis teaches us nothing else, it shows us the value of considering alternatives for what they can contribute to our overall view of a piece, even if we ultimately reject them.