Rotational compositional process in selections from


A new analytical approach to two late Schumann works

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Introduction – Rotational compositional process: A new analytical paradigm

Traditional analytical strategies in Western art music have relied on categorization by style and genre to situate specific works within generic types. Strong analyses that enlist such strategies have drawn attention to unique elements of specific works as examples of difference or departure from the expectations of more normative examples. The analytical process, thus defined, approximates the experience of a both ideal and ideally informed listener. The ideal listener is one with a complete retention of a work’s key features in the order experienced, to be possibly reinterpreted over the course of a hearing depending on how the work fulfills or frustrates its own expectations. The ideally informed listener is additionally equipped with a set of prior expectations of a work’s harmonic or formal behaviors derived from a wider familiarity with genres and styles exemplified by the work.

Yet such an approach can be limiting insofar as it overlooks characteristics of a given work that may be less easily described in such terms. Every analysis of a sonata form movement, for instance, begins by assuming that the events of the movement will be more or less mappable to an established narrative of what a sonata may be. One possible narrative casts the sonata as a binary form described mainly in terms of tonal arrivals and an overall harmonic journey to and from the key of the dominant or relative major. A narrative from a later historical period might be more character-driven, a thematic drama played out over the familiar, tripartite form of exposition, development, and recapitulation. Having a variety of narrative types from which to choose is essential to the fruitful application of a genre-centric approach and can greatly improve its refinement and depth of analytical possibilities. Yet even the most nuanced understanding within
such an approach can only hope, at best, to describe the individuality of a work as some unique array of conformation and deformation with respect to a prior mapping of events and behaviors.

James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy’s “Sonata Theory” is the prime example of this kind of analytical process exhaustively systematized for the category of the sonata. Conformation and deformation within their system do not compose a simple binary, but are expressed as various behavioral probabilities. The enacting of events over the course of a sonata form – the degree of prominence of a “medial caesura,” for instance, and how it is arrived at and departed from – are given a statistical likelihood relative to possible alternatives, resulting in an intensely nuanced exploration of the relative, contextual possibilities of musical meaning.1 The corollary to this approach is the de-emphasis of expectations established by the movement or work itself. Deformation is actively sought after and appreciated within an accepted formal framework, but larger ambiguities that challenge the framework and perhaps seem more apparent on the musical surface are downplayed simply for the lack of appropriate formal categorization. Structures that hybridize types, and particularly those that possess insufficient similarities to other cases to be considered types of their own, are often described only as hybrids, rather than as unique narrative plans suggesting a true originality of compositional process.

My approach to the selections I will present from Schumann’s Gesänge der Frühe, Op. 133 and Märchenerzählungen, Op. 132, two late works composed in October of 1853, stems from the further belief that certain works, even when they can be easily described as belonging to a given formal category, lend themselves more naturally and fruitfully to an alternative mode of analysis. The four selections I will present consist of the first three movements of Gesänge der Frühe and the opening A

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section of the fourth movement of *Märchenerzählungen*. Within these selections, I hope to convincingly demonstrate that the movements that are most easily described by an established form, such as a ternary or a recurrent episodic structure, in fact gain the most from a new analytical perspective.

In choosing to focus on *Gesänge der Frühe*, I am approaching the work both as an emblem of compositional uniqueness and as an inspiration for an alternative and compelling method of analysis. To the extent that we can regard the work as something entirely individual and unclassifiable, then we must also recognize its susceptibility to weaker interpretations that proceed without an attention to its most original elements. Yet once we recognize and accept the invitation of such a unique work to an equally unique form of analysis, we find that it both teaches its listener how to listen to it and its performer how to interpret it. This particular quality of composition is a criterion we tend to set for listening to contemporary works, perhaps on account of the lack, in most cases, of an immediate stylistic context; that a work composed in 1853 would demand from us, require from us, even, that we still meet it on these original terms is already something extraordinary.

**A note on *Gesänge der Frühe* as a late work**

Like many musicians, certainly like many pianists, I first became acquainted with Schumann through a familiarity with his early works. By the time I came to know the late ones, I had already entered that unique and wonderful state of mind immortalized by Roland Barthes in his essay, “loving Schumann.”2 My personal discovery of late Schumann aside, in most cases a love of late Schumann presupposes a love of the early works. This statement may seem unremarkable, but we

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should note that the same is not necessarily true of every composer to whose creative output we assign such categories as “early,” “middle,” and “late.” For most composers, in fact, we assume a teleological narrative of development that describes the late works as a kind of stylistic culmination and thus more perfect art, even if we tend also to ascribe to these works, sometimes before coming to know them, an associated profundity, an expected weight of years. In many cases, these qualities are rightly ascribed on the basis of the quality of the works themselves. Yet more often we tend to take for granted that such late works are positively marked, that their profundity is a sensible and expected outgrowth of the composer’s maturation, and that even their attendant inaccessibility is a hardship to be endured in the hope of achieving enlightened comprehension.

Unfortunately, this romantic view of a composer’s life and creative output can generate equally negative preconceptions of late works as well. The issue of belatedness in early twentieth-century composers of tonal music comes to mind: Rachmaninov, Elgar, Sibelius. With Schumann we have an even more egregious popular narrative with which to contend, namely, the sensationalist version of the “madness” of his later years and the readings of this mental illness onto the compositions of his Düsseldorf years. Admittedly, recent defenders of Schumann’s late works have sought to repair some of the damage already done. John Daverio argues convincingly that, given what we know of Schumann’s immense productivity during this time of the fall of 1853 (a period that also saw the composition of the Violin Concerto, the Third Violin Sonata, and the Romanzen for cello and piano), we would be irresponsible not to treat these pieces as the works of a composer at the height of his powers. Indeed, Daverio’s essay on Gësange der Frühe provides one of the most eloquent and extensive advocacies for the cycle; he addresses “four interrelated enigmas” involving the question of its “individual tone” as described by Clara, its reflection of the influence of the

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young Brahms, its status as a cycle, and the implications of its title. Yet, while he offers some intriguing insights, his observations are self-professedly “tentative” and “speculative” and mostly concerning the work’s historical relevance.

Perhaps Daverio’s most valuable point is in diverting the biographical criticisms of Schumann’s late years by drawing attention to the ways in which Gesänge der Frühe incorporates a structural model for and thereby aestheticizes madness as an affective state in his work – namely, through fragmentation. And so we do in fact find that the easiest way to approach this late style of Schumann is through the works with which we are familiar. That same, fragmentary quality for which early Schumann is so loved – of being able to shift from the sanguine to the poetic, from an ecstatic dance to a melancholic musing, all in a breath – is still present in the late works, if differently expressed. We attribute a breathless agility to the early works – the mercurial leaps from one sharply characterized movement to the next in the Carnaval or Davidsbündlertänze. On a kinetic level this mercuriality finds expression in the technical challenges posed – the dangerous yet seemingly improvisatory leaps of the second movement of the Fantasie, for instance. In Schumann’s late works, the fascination with the fragmentary gesture remains but no longer achieves the same lightness of attitude. Where the early piano cycles present us with the fragmented display of a kaleidoscope – the eye of the observer embedded at the center of a glittering universe of revolving parts, Gesänge der Frühe expresses a softer quality of reflection, a muted opal examined under a light. Each rotation yields a series of new discoveries, but each discovery is an insight into the same object seen from a different angle. Both models – the kaleidoscope and the stone – involve a process of rotational

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4 Ibid., 189-190.
5 Ibid., 190.
6 Ibid., 189.
transformation, but the kaleidoscope possesses a quality of effortless motion from one world to the
next, while the stone suggests a sense of detached observation, a renewal through reflection.⁷

Description of method

The method with which I wish to make sense of Gesänge der Frühe, then, stems directly from
this rotational metaphor. I have already mentioned the work of Hepokoski and Darcy as a model for
what this method of analysis is not, and I would like to clarify my use of “rotational” as related to
their definition but at the same time referring to an entirely opposite process of composition. Our
usage is similar insofar as both definitions refer to a prescribed ordering of events. A “rotational
development” in Hepokoski’s terminology is a development section that reprises the themes of the
exposition in the original order in which they appear, thus casting the exposition, development and
recapitulations as three large cycles iterated over the course of a sonata movement. My usage of
rotation refers equally to a process of cyclic reprise, but to a process that is itself formally generative.
Rather than ordering elements within an existing formal category, Schumann’s rotational process
gradually arrives at its own form through an obsessive revisiting of those elements.

In my analyses of the first and second movements of Gesänge der Frühe (hereafter referred to
as G1 and G2), we will see examples of a phrase period and a harmonic progression, respectively,
taken as the primary object of rotation. Later, in the fourth movement of Märchenerzählungen and the
third movement of Gesänge der Frühe (M4 and G3), we will see rhythmic, metric, and hypermetric
organization of motives being taken as the cyclic focus. These metric considerations are particularly
appropriate and idiosyncratic to Schumann, whose output saw a tremendous level of

⁷ Daverio describes this as Schumann’s sense of “epic distance” in the late works. Daverio, “Schumann’s Ossianic Manner,” 271.
experimentation with kinds of rhythmic dissonance (displacements, syncopations, compound subdivisions).  

**Definition of terms**

Finally, Schumann creates a place for development as a secondary process within his rotational model through techniques of internal expansion within given cycles. Here I will briefly introduce definitions of two of the most important techniques mentioned, to be qualified in later chapters: “Parenthesis” and “retake.” Parenthetical phrases comprise structurally non-essential passages of music that change neither the overall number nor ordering of phrases within a given movement, nor where the phrases begin or end. More specifically, parenthetical phrases operate exclusively within other phrases and generally are felt as expansions, digressions, or interruptions. Parenthetical phrases must be clearly demarcated from the surrounding musical texture and should be set apart by clear parameters such as articulation, texture, and at least one of either dynamics or register, if not both. In some cases the musical topic itself demarcates the parenthesis.

The “retake” is similar to parenthesis in its being set apart from the preceding material (though not from the material that follows). Here we have an expansion through a seeming backtracking in a phrase’s harmonic syntax, a momentary stutter. The idea of retaking a phrase presents a compelling temporal-spatial analogy for expansion. Specifically, the act of rebeginning one harmony earlier in a given cycle and then proceeding again back along the cycle creates a neighboring motion in pitch space, while also creating a sensation of temporal neighboring by “rewinding” the progression by a step before moving on. This backtracking refers not so much to a

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literal, temporary reversal of the cycle, but specifically to a rebeginning or re-enfolding of an upbeat gesture.

Altogether, the rotational model presupposes an overall quality of reflection or rumination in the music it governs. Even in music of a less reflective tone or topic, the process of cyclic return forces us to consider the music anew with each reinitiation, and, in doing so, to consider the process of reconsidering. The total effect is one of cyclic inevitability but also, paradoxically, of structural freedom. Precisely because we are granted the assurance of return, the creative possibilities of musical digression and parenthesis grow enormously with each subsequent rotation.

In the course of my analysis, I hope to elaborate on the structure of G1 as a model for instances of rotational development in other movements. Many of the developmental processes I have described occur perhaps once or twice in G1 but return as the primary generative feature of later movements. In this way, G1 acts as a unifying motto for Gesänge der Frühe that introduces and synthesizes various rotational elements. While the elements undergoing rotational change and development are different across each of these movements, I hope to reach a broader conclusion to my argument based on the unifying premise of rotation and the possibilities it offers for meta-musical observation.
Chapter 1 – Rotational structure in G1 as a motto for the work at large

Before embarking on an analysis of G1, we should note the unique and intimate topic of the movement that provides an aesthetic parallel to our rotational formal argument. Already from the initial, periodic phrase of G1, Schumann presents us with a phrase structure whose antecedent half features a pair of contrasting ideas embodying two of the most basic and opposite textural configurations – a simple horn call doubled at the octave and a more thickly voiced chorale texture. The simplicity of the incipit horn call and its _pianissimo_ dynamic suggest a peaceful intonation rather than a vigorous call to assembly, while the assembled response is more of a quiet confirmation than a full-bodied rejoinder. The combined effect describes ritual, congregational interaction between a leading voice (octave unison) and an assembled following (chorale), while the prevailing atmosphere is reverent, reflective, and prayerful. The opening of G1, thus depicted, sets not only the overall tone and affect of the movement and of the cycle, but also an expectation of congruity between topic and structure throughout the various movements. Within G1, this immediate sense of the deeply inward or spiritually profound attunes us to the kind of hearing that complements the movement’s ruminative, rotational form.

With respect to G1, we can reprise our more abstract idea of interplay between sameness and difference as a concept equally relevant to rotational structures. In a rotational form, we attend not to departures from a prior generic model, but to differences between cyclic iterations, which stand in relief against a backdrop of seeming repetition. In G1, we are particularly aware of the element of sameness upon first listening; the entire movement spins out from an initial presentation statement of a modulating period, with the movement’s form being realized in three subsequent variations on that opening structure. The prevailing pantheistic topic of the movement prepares us...
to accept the seeming repetition, if only subconsciously, as a kind of ritual affirmation, underscored by the recurrence of the incipit horn call at the head of each phrase. Absent are the latent hints at conflict that are so often the starting point of analyses of Classical and Romantic repertoire, either within the theme itself or in its spinning out over the course of the movement. Rather, this idea of conflict and contrast as generative of musical narrative has been supplanted, in structural terms, by a curious equanimity; in a topical sense, by a state of grace.

Impressed by this sameness, we linger more reflectively, perhaps more meditatively, over the differences as they unfold. Certain asymmetries suggest themselves already in the opening phrase, albeit partially hidden from view. Laurence Dreyfus writes of a similar tendency in Bach’s music, wherein the compositional process is a working out of possibilities latent in the basic material rather than a process of development and synthesis. By this definition, G1 has much more to do compositionally with a Bach invention than it does with typical Romantic work; its developmental process is exhaustive rather than selective.

Our first departure from what we might call the “essential structure” of the repeated period occurs in the one-bar expansion built into the otherwise normative structure of the opening statement (4 + 4 bars). The extent to which the asymmetry of this period is at least “partially hidden” has precisely to do with our initial inability to identify exactly which bar comprises the expansion. This uncertainty stems from the various ways in which the textural and melodic content of the basic and contrasting ideas exchange and shift over the course of the phrase. The two-bar basic idea is characterized, texturally, by its unison octaves and melodically by its two-part melodic construction consisting of the ascending fifth horn call set off with marcato carets, followed by a

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9 Dreyfus, Bach and the Patterns of Invention, 2.
slurred, inverted response of a descending fifth (↑5: D-A; ↓5: B-E). Both fifths of the basic idea are anacrustic and possess the same underlying durational pattern of a quarter followed by a dotted half (the E being embellished), further helping to organize the idea as a two-part complement. The two-bar contrasting idea (mm. 3-4) shares a similar, initial quarter note anacrusis but is heard more as a cohesive unit on account of the even half note durations that follow. Texturally, the third and fourth bars are further set apart by the introduction of a chorale-style harmonization. Altogether, the basic and contrasting ideas form a familiar antecedent phrase.

The ambiguity of the one-bar expansion emerges, then, at some point in the five-bar (normally four-bar) consequent of m. 5. The consequent begins by continuing with the chorale texture and even half note rhythms from the contrasting idea, even as it reprises the melodic content of the basic idea.\(^{10}\) This departure from an exact reprise initially disguises the D entrance on the upbeat of 4.4 as a true rebeginning – a rebeginning we are not made aware of until m. 6, when the more individual contour of the descending fifth with its embellishing G-F# returns. Instead, we accept the recombination of melodic and rhythmic / textural elements as a normative strategy for varying parallelism within a periodic structure. The sudden falling away of the chorale texture, then, in m. 6, leaving exposed the even quarter note motive (B-E-G-F#), represents a reversal of expectations, as we are forced to rehear the B of 5.3 as in fact part of the theme. Together, these two measures yield the start of a consequent that has elements of both rebeginning and pure response. A true response, hinted at by the opening of the consequent in m. 5, might result in something resembling Figure 1.1, shown below. Instead, Schumann writes something more

\(^{10}\) Although the two phrases act as an antecedent-consequent pair, we should note the way in which the weaker half cadence in a new key at the end of the consequent seems to recast it as a second antecedent. In rotational terms, we could then understand even the periodic structure at a pair of attempts at a single cycle, the second of which modulates, rather than as a unified period.
complicated yet, with the literal return of the quarter note motive serving to interrupt the simple formula of motivic recombination we have had thus far.

Figure 1.1: Recomposition 1 of mm. 5-9

Even more striking is the way in which the quarter note motive continues on in a downward sequence (B-E-G-F#, E-D-F#-E; etc.) We would much more expect this kind of sequential treatment from the continuation phrase of a sentential structure. Instead, the periodic structure does nothing to set up the kind of developmental space necessary in which such a sequence might occur, and yet the meandering motive repeats itself at a pace seemingly unconcerned with either the goal or direction of the phrase. The sequential digression seems further out of place on account of its harmonization with a chain of suspensions moving parallel to but out of phase with the melodic line. Curiously, the parallel seconds that result do not strike us as tremendously dissonant sonorities. Rather, they seem simply to be completing or filling out the already unusually diatonic pitch space established by the opening phrase as a whole. Daverio mentions this unique use of texture and dissonance through diatonic saturation as evoking the physical space of a cathedral and the blended wash of sound one would expect from such an environment, an image that further gains from the affective connotations of chorale writing as a style more idiomatic in organ music.¹¹

While these various affective and harmonic considerations help us to understand the sequence within an overall ruminative topic, the strangeness of the unexpected return to the quarter note fragment from m. 2 remains, and the sense of becoming lost melodically in mm. 6-8 contributes to the difficulty of identifying precisely which bar comprises the one-bar extension. In fact, the final bar of the phrase (m. 9), which presents a variation in contour over the same quarter note motive, now a descending $^3-^2-^1-^#7$ tetrachord in B minor, strikes us as our most obvious candidate, yet such an understanding would do little to account for our lack of harmonic closure were we to omit this ninth bar. Another recompositional possibility thus emerges as outlined in Figure 1.2, that is, a consequent that retains the $^3-^2-^1-^#7$ tetrachord, but now in D Major, by omitting the third bar of the melodic sequence – the bar that takes us seemingly one step further than we need to go and that brings us to B minor in the first place.

Both recompositions are definite possibilities (and one might imagine additional recompositions), but neither is entirely satisfactory. Furthermore, the consequent presents altogether four distinct deformational hearings, even assuming that we do not account for m. 5 as a deviation via motivic recombination. To summarize: M. 6 brings an unexpected reprise of our basic idea at pitch in its original form; m. 7 presents an unusual sequential continuation of that reprise; m. 8 seems to take that sequence one step too far, precisely where we would expect our closing idea to occur but still only hinting at the approaching B minor half cadence; and m. 9 is now our closing idea, perhaps the most normative of the four bars, but also the one we are most likely to hear, in terms of phrasing, as an extension, not least of all because of the sudden accent in contour and register that brings us out of our otherwise hypnotic continuation and reiteration of the sequence.
Having analyzed the cycle’s basic material for some of its inherent asymmetries, we can return to the issue of sameness and difference within the movement, specifically in light of how these asymmetries develop. The second, B minor cycle (mm. 10-18), which comprises an almost exact repetition of the initial phrase transposed down a third, does indeed strike us as an act of confirmation through repetition, but already this gesture is complicated by its confirmation of a phrase that is inherently problematic. Indeed, if our analysis of G1 thus far has seemed hardly different from a more traditional phrase structure analysis based on our sense of what a “normative” period might be, then we realize with the second, B minor cycle that this initial invitation to a hearing based on \textit{a priori} expectations of phrase structure only highlights the individuality of the movement’s treatment of such a non-normative type in this attitude of simple reflection. Curiously, then, the transposition and repetition of material in the second phrase expresses something similar to what the sequence of mm. 6-8 achieves in microcosm, namely, a contentment in simply lingering over or restating the remarkable, rather than feeling a need to draw attention to it.

Small changes do occur between the first and second cycle. Most notably, the saturated diatonic wash of D Major from the opening somehow persists or seeps through into a now modally colored rendition of B minor, resulting in an arresting F# minor sonority on 13.1, but beginning as
early as 11.4. This introduction of the natural minor color benefits particularly from the melodic construction of Schumann’s theme. A quick analysis reveals an even filling out of diatonic pitch space treated as a kind of tone row: Specifically, the theme begins by presenting the scale degrees \(^1-^5-^6-^2-^4-^3\), starkly and in that order, without any intermediary repetitions of pitch. In the D Major phrase, then, the entrance of the chorale texture is further emphasized by its simultaneous introduction of \(C#\), the missing \(^#7\) leading tone that has until then been withheld, and a pitch that we would normally have expected to have heard much earlier in the phrase, at least given a more normal harmonic underpinning. If the absence of the \(C#\) is not immediately felt in the first two bars, its appearance nonetheless abets the cathartic effect of the chorale entrance, reinforcing the association between textural and pitch parameters. This same withholding of \(^#7\) makes the analogous entrance of \(A\)-natural in the B minor repetition, now as \(^\flat-7\), even more noticeable. We can see this pitch alteration as a powerful example of the rotational process at work, a latent potential of the initial material that becomes evident by a working through of different combinatorial possibilities. In this case Schumann simply holds the pitch material invariant while rotating the phrase through a transposition, an almost trivial process, but all that is necessary to arrive at the beauty of a natural, rather than a harmonic, minor rendition of the cycle.

Following the B minor cycle, m. 19 now initiates a third cycle, again transposed down a third and once more in a major mode, but brighter for its placement up an octave and the registral tripling of the incipit horn call. Confirming this brighter affect is the added crescendo marking over the quarter-note motive of 19.4-20.3. The expanded registration combined with the first dynamic venture of the movement outside pianissimo leads us to imagine the final verse to a hymn, from which we might expect a fuller organ registration and a rallying from the congregation to match. Less expected is the diminuendo of m. 21. If the crescendo over the incipit has the effect of summoning
a greater effort for this third rendition of the cycle, the diminuendo over the chorale, by contrast, arrives as if to quickly usher us away from the materiality of the moment, opening space between us and the implied chorus and drawing our attention elsewhere. Almost as if in response, that new object of our attention materializes on 23.3 – a bass A octave, or more specifically on the tied-over downbeat of 24.1, where the bass line fails to move on to support the melody. The result is an altogether unexpected measure imbued with a sense of wonderment, in which the right hand proceeds initially as expected but quickly finds itself influenced and uplifted by the underlying bass, rising to a C# rather than the expected C-natural on 24.2. The resulting sonority prefigures the dominant seventh built on 25.2, yet during that one bar of m. 24, precisely because we have so come to expect a C-natural, we cannot quite hear it yet functioning as a dominant, but rather it strikes us as an otherworldly, major-colored II sonority. Only in m. 25 do we finally understand the chord as a dominant sonority, and only then when the seventh of the chord (G) enters as part of the musing E-G-F# motive, suddenly reprised at pitch when the right-hand leaps up a fifth from the A of 24.4 as if to adjust to this new sonority suggested by the bass.

A beautiful paradox thus emerges from this third cycle; just as we arrive at a phrase that seems finally to be achieving some sort of development beyond mere cyclic repetition, we realize that it does so, counterintuitively, only by an intensification of that same rotational process. Structurally, the alteration to the consequent of the third cycle introduces a large dominant pedal that ushers in the final, fourth cycle, now a climactic forte in the tonic key, but this pedal point appears hardly as an expected formal event. Rather, it is almost chanced upon by a kind of rotational augmentation. We can imagine here an expanding cycle, a spiral instead of a circle, in which the

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12 NB: The diminuendo is ambiguous insofar as to where it ends, but a particularly effective interpretation might be not to treat the marcato downbeat at the start of the consequent of m. 23 as a dynamic reinitiation but rather as a hushed version of its former self, with the entire pedal point occurring as if in a slightly submerged, dreamlike, other world. The subito forte upbeat of m. 26.4, then, would have, by contrast, an even more pronounced, grandiose, annunciatory quality.
slight distortions or phasal displacements of the initial cycle are projected outwards and rendered more displaced, more dissonant with each repetition (see Figure 1.3). By this logic, the bass A octave of 23.3, so prominently held over into the next bar, is simply an intensification of the kind of dissonance created initially by the unresolved chain of suspensions underlying the material of mm. 6-8. By holding onto the A, the bass now, too, moves out of phase by one harmony. The right hand, by contrast, continues as before, lost in its ruminative sequence and moving even further ahead while the bass remains firmly rooted on its dominant pedal. Yet by correcting itself on 25.1, retaking the sequential phrase up a fifth to adjust for the low A, the right hand, too, ultimately finds itself reprising the our initial sequence at pitch, but out of phase with respect to the overall phrase structure. We might expect the lateness of this proper sequence, then, to affect the ending of the consequent phrase as well. Yet the resulting change to the consequent phrase, when it does come, still surprises us by manifesting, not as a different end point to the phrase, but as an interruptive, forte climax on 26.6.13

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13 Performance suggestion: In making the interruptive quality of 26.6 clear, a performer might wish to mark with a slight agogic accent the retake of m. 25 so that we might hear mm. 25-26, not as a rounding out of an eight-bar phrase, but specifically as the material of mm. 6-7, but displaced up an octave and a bar late in the phrase structure. Such an interpretation would almost certainly be balanced with a continuation of direction in terms of phrasing and motion through the end of m. 26, rather than any sort of rallentando, so that 26.6 (also possibly set off agogically) truly comes as an interruption to the sequence.
The climax of 26.6 now commences a greatly expanded fourth cycle that seems to completely abandon the periodic structure’s basic form, instead initiating a number of processes previously unexplored in the movement, among them development of material through fragmentation and liquidation. Yet the status of 26.6 as a true, fourth cyclic initiation enjoys a greater structural ambiguity than its prominent surface characteristics would seem to allow. While the rhetorical effect of such a strongly marked, \textit{subito forte} dynamic in conjunction with the double return of the principal theme in the home key area is difficult to ignore, it is also the only statement of the incipit phrase that abandons – and abandons entirely – the pristinely annunciatory quality of the horn call, instead allowing itself to be carried away in the prevailing chorale texture of the movement. This retexturing of the theme, combined with the interruptive start to the phrase that cuts off the previous statement prematurely, would seem to lend to the phrase more the qualities of a phrase \textit{in process}, despite the apparent articulative and dynamic accents of a rebeginning. Most importantly, the entire phrase occurs while standing harmonically on a dominant pedal initiated at
the end of the third phrase and continuing through this apparent climax, resulting in the return of the theme over a $V^{6/4}$ sonority.\(^{14}\)

Assuming, then, that we do hear the fourth statement as part of a potential continuation, our overall hearing of the movement’s structure could be better described as sentential rather than as four discrete repetitions. By this argument, we could hear the opening period as a basic idea, its transposition to B minor as a sequential answer, and the G Major statement as initiating a continuation of the sort that appears first as a seeming third basic idea but unravels through a series of expansions or extensions before reaching a proper completion. What results from such a hearing is that the seeming climax of the music in fact comes to inhabit a structurally parenthetical space. That said, its entrance is undeniably heroic and threatens to eclipse the prayerful, ruminative mood of m. 26, at least at its outset. Ultimately, though, we understand the *subito forte* phrase as a failed effort that dissipates back into a *piano* dynamic by m. 30. Indeed, the piece might well have reached its final cadence in m. 31, were the dynamic thrust of mm. 27-30 not so incongruous and irreconcilable within the movement’s overarching narrative. A perfect authentic cadence in a *forte* dynamic moving into m. 31, taking mm. 27-30 as a typical “closing out” of the continuation of 19-30, would make perfect sense harmonically and motivically, were it not unbearably trite.

To account for this incongruity, Schumann returns instead to a *piano* dynamic on 30.3 that overlaps the $^3$-$^2$-$^1$ contour of the expected *forte* cadence with the beginning of the $^2$-$^1$-$^3$-$^2$ figure from the second leg of our familiar sequence (with $^2$-$^1$ eliding on 30.4-31.1). Schumann thus reframes the entire climax as a brief interruption, an effort to redeem the main melodic

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\(^{14}\) This moment of re-arrival over a dominant is a prime example of a Romantic device of hearing *through* the moment of recapitulation, first appearing in Beethoven’s Piano Sonata Op. 57 ’*Appassionata*’ (the first movement recapitulation of the primary theme occurs over a 6/4 sonority) and later utilized by Schumann and Brahms.
character from its uncompromisingly inward posture, but to no avail. Indeed, the subito piano that enters even before the proper elision of the \(^2\cdot^1\cdot^3\cdot^2\) motive, in conjunction with the registral and textural return to the deeper, more somber world of m. 7, gives the effect of a melodic figure unmoved by the interruption from its principal topic of reflection. Crucially, the overlap introduces the motive in its \(^2\cdot^1\cdot^3\cdot^2\) melodic shape, as opposed to the \(^6\cdot^2\cdot^4\cdot^3\) contour that has characteristically begun each sequence, lending mm. 27-30 even more the quality of an interruption by seeming to return to the sequence at the exact point at which it left off (\(E-D-F^\#-E\) from m. 26 now brought down an octave in m. 31).

The sequence is interrupted in turn, however, by a final rebeginning on 32.4, now treated imitatively and reharmonized with a IV-V\(^6/4\) progression that echoes the climax of m. 27. The supporting harmonies imbue this final statement with a comforting aura that mediates between the grandeur of the forte climax and the reserved quality of the incipit motive’s other appearances, offering a quiet peace after the raveling inwardness of the sequence. Notably, the final statement continues, not with the expected contrasting idea in m. 35, but with a varied basic idea that provides, finally, the kind of melodic development we have been awaiting throughout the movement. A closing variation on the quarter note motive in m. 38-39 appears as a benediction, displaced rhythmically here so that the four quarter notes articulate, more conclusively, a three quarter note anacrusis to a final downbeat. (Altogether, we have \(^6\cdot^2\cdot^4\cdot^3\) in mm. 33.4-34.3; \(^2\cdot^6\cdot^5\cdot^4\) in mm. 35.4-36.3; and \(^5\cdot^1\cdot^2\cdot^3\) in mm. 38.2-39.1).

The sprawling third cycle, then, spanning mm. 19-39 and exceeding in length the first two cycles combined, presents the paradox at the heart of this music – the notion that what is most narratively descriptive or musically meaningful is often the most structurally parenthetical. Given the
reprise in m. 31, for instance, of the sequence in m. 26, we could imagine a recomposition of this final section that completely excises the triumphant climax (see Figure 1.4). Yet we can hardly hear the music of mm. 27-30 in relation to its surrounding musical context as a pure parenthesis. Instead, we understand from this moment that an idea can be at once bracketed in our comprehension while simultaneously referring to events in the main narrative thread. The fact that the incipit motive, for instance, achieves its crowning presentation in these four bars, does seem essential to the musical meaning.

Finally, what do we make of the closing “benediction,” the zurückhaltend fragment, whose \(^5^-^1^-^2^-^3\) melodic contour is so quintessentially Schumannian that we attribute it more to a stylistic tic of the composer than to an internal outcome of the composition. Yet the fragment does fulfill a very logical function with respect to the subito forte climax of mm. 27-30, by supplying that elusive ninth-bar that would at least attempt to close off the parenthesis. In other words, we can hear the climax as parenthetical, not just in terms of the topical and thematic content as demonstrated in Figure 1.4, but also in terms of the periodic phrase structure. Specifically, we have grown so accustomed to hearing the cycle as a nine-bar phrase that the climactic entrance after only eight bars strikes us as off-kilter.

The ambiguity of the climax’s parenthetical role, reflected topically in its comprising an essential high point in the musical narrative, is matched structurally by the parallelism of 32.4-33.1, an inversion of the 26.4-27.1 climactic entrance that seems to offer the final six bars of the movement as a consequent phrase. The assuredness of this piano response of 32.4 momentarily underscores our hearing of 26.4 as a kind of frame-breaking open parenthesis, an insertion that has simply taken the narrative in a new direction and that does not necessarily demand a closing bracket.
Yet, precisely as the movement settles into its piano cadence, this extension returns as the final four zurückhaltend quarters, now given even greater finality by the half-bar displacement that allows them to arrive on the final downbeat as the goal of the phrase. Such an analysis is understandably a very intimate and personal hearing, and by far the more direct argument would be that the forte does successfully achieve a climax, with the subsequent liquidation as a falling away from that high point, rather than a return to a vaguely expected bookend (the elusive 9th bar). But in fact we can have both; the function of the zurückhaltend is not so much to fulfill an expected need for closure, but rather to throw into question what we have just heard. That this question is embedded in a fundamentally confirmatory gesture of post-cadential extension renders the hearing all the more subtle. To this I can only respond that this is the sort of piece that invites subtlety. At any point it
would be possible to take the more direct analytical route, but since we’ve come this far… Is it not in the spirit of the ruminative, reflective topic to make that final leap?
Chapter 2 – Rotation as obsession and the expansion of parenthetical space: Explication of M3, analysis of G2

Comparison of rotational strategies in M3 and G2

The second movement of Gösange der Frühe (G2) begins with an unmistakable surface correspondence to the third movement of Märchenerzählungen (M3). Both movements begin with a right hand pattern of chromatically embellished, downward triadic arpeggiation, with an exact correspondence between the first three pitches and opening harmony of both movements. A notable difference emerges in that we understand the implied G Major sonority that begins G2 almost immediately as a subdominant, in contrast to the tonic prolongation that begins M3, while the initial G# bass entrance of G2 also lends the movement a searching quality absent in M3. Yet the two movements suggest variations on a shared topic or atmosphere, a sense of cloudiness that in M3 exudes a comforting glow, while in G2 we are more aware of the clouds’ obscuring whatever light we can detect behind them.

Beyond this mere surface correspondence, both movements project a unified topic of “closing,” which, again, they achieve quite differently. M3 is organized structurally by a recurrent V⁷/IV sonority, the hallmark initiator of coda sections in a classical style, while G2 is organized around large scale V⁶/⁴ hyperdownbeats, a continual return to a gesture of cadence. In M3, the V⁷/IV sonority appears first in m. 27, and the distinctive sonority returns throughout the movement as a structural marker that serves to initiate a series of three distinctive closing schema over the 44 measures that remain. The proportion of presentational to closing material is inverted from what we would expect in a more normative formal plan, privileging valediction over exposition as the essential project of the movement. The meaning of the movement, similarly, might be said to lie in
how the attitude toward closing develops in these last 44 bars. As in G1, the developmental process is exhaustive rather than selective, and the sense of exhaustive repetition through variation in M3 prefigures the cyclic, ruminative quality so strongly characterized in *Gösange der Frühe*.

G2 obsesses similarly over *its* particular harmonic locus – the $V_{6/4}$ sonority, and specifically the $V_{6/4}$ as the focus of a distinct cadential progression, $IV \rightarrow V_{6/5}/V \rightarrow V_{6/4} \rightarrow V_{7}$, outlined in Figure 2.1 as our “cadential module.” Rather than establishing the D Major tonic from the outset, Schumann instead begins the movement with the cadential module – a particularly Schumannian technique of opening with a closing, but in this case without reaching a tonic resolution. By choosing to focus on a cadential module as his basic cycle, Schumann arrives at a particularly virtuosic expression for his rotational technique. The sheer brevity of the module allows G2 to proceed through a total of eight cycles over the course of a shorter movement span than either G1 or M3. More importantly, the essentially fragmented structure of the movement and the frequency of rotation allow Schumann to address the issue of rotation as the *subject* of the music as well as its technique.

![Figure 2.1: Cadential Module of G2](image)

**DM:** \( IV \rightarrow V_{6/5}/V \rightarrow V_{6/4} \rightarrow IV \rightarrow V \)
The unifying topic of G2, then, is quite the opposite of valediction; the idea of closing is still inherent to each phrase, but it is present – or we are aware of it – only in its absence. The constancy of our expectation of closure in G2, in spite of its only being reached very late in the work, is based on the relentlessness of motion toward tonic expressed in its basic cyclic module, a motion that is often frustrated and never truly fulfilled. This process of repeated frustration draws attention to a particular axiom of nearly all Classical and Romantic tonal music, namely, the presence of an underlying harmonic motor rhythm that cycles incessantly through a series of predominants, dominants and tonics. Yet without the tonic sonorities as punctuation, the effect is somehow akin to reading a prose paragraph without punctuation. Moreover, the absence of those familiar markers draws our attention to the inexorably cyclic nature of syntactic structures in general.

G2 main analysis

We can begin our analysis of G2 by first recalling our definition of “retake” from our techniques of expansion listed earlier in the main introduction (pp. 8-9). Both retake and parenthesis figure prominently in G2, but, as we will see, the sense of retake is essential to the movement’s basic material and thus provides a useful starting point. The retake is a technique we see first used, in fact, in G1, when, in the midst of the climactic dominant pedal introduced on 24.1, the harmony regresses momentarily to a predominant sonority with a bass $G$ octave on 26.1. The extremely unusual gesture occurs only at this one point in the movement and is locally motivated by the right hand sequential digression.

Yet, in accordance with G1’s function as a prelude or introduction to the rest of the cycle, the moment strongly prefigures what follows in G2. Indeed, because G2, like the third cycle of G1, takes place almost entirely in a predominant / dominant area of D Major, we hear this same retake
figure from 26.1 of G1 recollected almost immediately in the bass of G2’s 2.4, with the neighboring G octave occurring in exactly the same registration as in the G1 example. In G2, the retake has the additional effect of softening the otherwise tightening quality of the G passing up chromatically through G# to reach the dominant A. While the 3.1 downbeat clearly provides the 5/3 resolution of the 2.1 downbeat V6/4, the 2.4 upbeat G calls into question that initial chromatic approach to the A, weakening or casting a sense of uncertainty over the cadential drive. Through this gesture of hesitancy, Schumann achieves a local analogy in the harmonic syntax for the inability of the movement as a whole to reach a proper cadence.

We should further note the element of retake inherent in G2’s particular expression of the rotational process. Namely, through its repetition of a basic harmonic module that always begins on an upbeat predominant while ending on a suspended dominant (only occasionally adding a tonic sonority before a new cycle), the movement evokes by definition a quality of retake each time that a new cycle is initiated. We hear this most clearly in the rebeginning of mm. 4-6, three bars that both comprise the second cycle of the movement while simultaneously striking us as an attempt to begin the movement anew. Thus, the quality of retake is embodied both in the very specific retake of 2.4, as well as in the entire rotational process in the act of rebeginning each module.

That said, we should also note the various ways in which m. 4 constitutes, not a rebeginning, but a response. Certainly in harmonic terms, the cycle of mm. 4-6 forms a clear tonal answer to mm. 1-3 that helps to stabilize the opening of the movement through a clear phrase structure of two basic ideas. By combining the logic of cyclic repetition with this quality of simple presentation, then, Schumann relies on the familiarity of the sentential structure to initially draw us in, while all the
While accumulating a quality of repetition that we only later recognize as being somehow “stuck” in a cycle (m. 10).

In keeping with this call and response formulation of basic idea and tonal answer, Schumann modifies his cyclic module of the second three bar phrase, driving forward and actually leading to the anticipated bass D octave on 6.1 (one of our few root tonic sonorities). Yet the octave serves not as a true tonic but as the underpinning of a V/IV, almost as if to show that a stable arrival on the tonic is impossible and can only lead back to a new cyclic initiation. The other, more straightforward effect of introducing a new harmony in m. 6 (V/IV) is to establish a structural pacing very different from what we encountered in G1. There we saw a fully articulated period brought through almost three full rotations before only later beginning to develop and spin out into something new. G2, by contrast, cannot even repeat its basic module without modifying it. From this first, imperfect repetition of mm. 4-6, then, we see already an energetic return to our rotational model from the end of G1, rotation not as a circle but as a developing spiral. We can imagine each phrase or module as it returns, evoking not the reassuring familiarity of G1, but rather the dizzying perspective of projective geometry. Our musical landmarks are recognizable but enlarged, projected on a new scale, and we trace their progress as the set of points forming the intersection of the spiral and a line traversing it (recall Figure 1.3).15

The various appearances of our bass G octave “retake” from m. 2, then, forms just such a set of musical landmarks. That said, we might both expect it to point out key moments of rebeginning over the course of the music that follows, as well as to recur, almost by definition, with

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15 NB: My use of a spiral directly analogizes the outward expansion of a circular model, as demonstrated in Figure 1.3. We should distinguish this expansion from the downward transpositions of the G1 cycle, which demonstrates a logic of progression without expansion.
a frequency corresponding to the number of total rotations. In fact, however, we see that the G already disappears from the progression by the time we would expect it to return in m. 5, replaced instead an accelerated motion to the bass D of 6.1. Thus, the two basic modules of mm. 1-3 and 4-6 establish not only a logic of tonal statement and response, but a dichotomy of stasis versus forward motion that comes to govern subsequent treatments of the cadential module throughout the movement.

Looking ahead, we find the pattern of retake from the first module enacted almost obsessively throughout the third cycle of mm. 7-13. Most clearly, the IV sonority of 2.4 returns on 11.4. in the analogous three bar phrase of mm. 9-11. The IV sonority returns even more strikingly, however, when we hear it in augmentation on the *sforzando* 12.3, and of course we find the strongest expression of the predominant in the cycle’s initial expansion of mm. 7.1-9.1. The IV sonority is so emphasized in these bars, in fact, that we hear them momentarily as a downbeat reinitiation of a third cycle in a G Major (subdominant) area. Over the course of mm. 7.1-9.1, however, we experience a feeling of transformation as the motive climbs to its expected D and then through it to the upper G octave on 9.2, thus creating a sense of backwards expansion from 9.2 and recasting mm. 7.1-9.1 as a subdominant prolongation. To summarize, the third cycle enjoys a kind of predominant saturation, both in the expansion of the cycle’s initial predominant, but also in its obsessive return to intermediary predominants through an obsession with the gesture of retake. The gesture of retake itself might be described as a diminution of the movement’s overall expression of the rotational process, insofar as that each new rebeginning of the cycle is already marked, by the definition of our cyclic module, by an upbeat predominant sonority.
The increasing emphasis placed on this upbeat predominant as the movement progresses seems to express, with each successive cycle, a greater gathering of energy as if to finally break through to a cadence. Indeed, in mm. 14-15 we see a similar backwards expansion of the beginning of a cycle in m. 16, again as a two-bar predominant prolongation. We should note that mm. 14-15 enter analogously to mm. 7-8, with our hearing them first as a rebeginning – in this case of new parenthetical material – before only later understanding them as belonging to a greater, expanded upbeat. Curiously, this use of parenthetical space also allows Schumann to explore the forward-moving side of the initial, three bar contrasting idea of mm. 4-6, even in the course of material that is serving a static, prolongational function. Specifically, on 15.3 we hear a brief D Major tonic not unlike our quick and easy arrival on a bass D octave on the earlier 6.1. Where previously the octave was undermined by its harmonization with a V/IV sonority, here its effect is marginalized by its status as a subdominant-prolonging tonic, moreover one that occurs in a prolongation that is itself set within a parenthetical space. We should note, too, that even this parenthetical of mm. 14-15 is set within a larger parenthesis beginning in the material of 11.4-13, characterized by the fanfare-like figure ushered in on the 11.4 dotted bass upbeat and the sixteenth note upbeat entrance in the right hand. Here, though, the sinuous legato triplet accompaniments continue in the background of the brass texture, whereas in the parenthesis of mm. 14-15, the triplet rhythm is subsumed in a lightened chordal texture that introduces a topic of ecstatic dance.
If we divide out our longer phrase of mm. 7-16 according to these parenthetical insertions, then, we can analyze the material as follows. Mm. 7-8 briefly tonicize G Major, but within the project of expanding backwards the predominant upbeat to the next cycle. M. 9-11 bring about a return of our basic module, with mm. 12-13 (with upbeat) comprising a first parenthetical insertion. Harmonically, mm. 12-13 also retake the V\(^6/4\) sonority, seeming to war with or to struggle against the prevailing V\(^7\) sonority that wishes to move forward. Mm. 14-15 then represents a final parenthesis within this parenthetical insertion of 12-13, a parenthesis that retakes the predominant sonority with respect to the V\(^6/4\) prolongation that is itself a retake to the V\(^7\) destination of the module. As for the tonic chord of 13.4, it follows directly from a V\(^6/4\), so we hear this sonority, too, as a retake to the IV chord retake of m. 14. In other words, this process of taking breath after breath to reinitiate our module has succeeded in reaching back to a tonic sonority before arriving forward to it. By this logic of retake, the D Major sonority of m. 13.4 represents, not an achievement of the tonal horizon.
always just ahead of us throughout the movement, but a reaching backwards to a rearward horizon we have already passed.

This achievement of tonic through reaching back is the other reason (in addition to its acting prolongationally) why the brief tonic forward arrival of 15.3 occurs without any of the cathartic power we would expect from the chord. Because the progression has had to reach all the way back to an initiating tonic in order to arrive at a goal cadential tonic, this cadential tonic is only reached after being subsumed wholly in a rotational logic, and a logic, moreover, that, both in looking forward and reaching back, essentially serves to bracket the increasingly central IV sonority that is being prolonged in these measures. Finally, by framing his basic module now with the same tonic sonority on either end (13.4 and 15.3), Schumann makes the inherently repetitive nature of tonal syntax newly obvious to our ears and re-casts it as an essentially futile, repetitive progression of predominants and dominants.

Following the parenthetical construction of mm. 14-15, we finally arrive at a forte reprise of our basic module, closing off the insertion by responding to the music of m. 13. In other words, we could imagine a recomposition without the parenthesis of 14-15 that would lead directly from the last beat of m. 13 to the downbeat of m. 16, substituting for the last sixteenth of the right hand the sixteenth upbeat to m. 16 (see Figure 2.2). Yet this climactic bar is almost immediately cut short by the downbeat of m. 17, still a hypermetric downbeat, but emphasized not as a forte arrival but as registral drop and cutback to piano. These secondary expressive characteristics, in conjunction with the re-introduction of the horn call theme from m. 2, comprise our largest gesture of reinitiation in the movement thus far and a moment of significant structural articulation, neatly dividing the movement into two halves.
Yet in the context of the surrounding fanfares, m. 17 itself is a kind of parenthetical expression, perhaps one akin to the parenthetical climax of G1 that all but bursts its frame. In the case of G2, the frame is unequivocally broken as m. 17 both returns to the non-parenthetical level of the downbeats of mm. 2 and mm. 10, but also can be heard in a kind of virtuosic formal counterpoint as bridging the material of m. 16 and m. 29. Below I have outlined a simplified graphical representation of the movement, a curve that can be traced from left to right following the movement’s unfolding. Intersections with the horizontal axis represent downbeats of phrases, with downward intersections representing the rotational V₆/₄ downbeats and upward intersections representing a cyclic return of the predominant anacrusis. The tonal functions are also assigned colors for the sake of clarity, while dashed lines represent parenthetical statements (the material of mm. 17-28 is of course greatly simplified in this representation).
To elaborate on the span of mm. 17-28, then, Schumann uses the section initially as a space to develop once more the driving, forward motion of the cadential progression. In addition to the canonic treatment of the melodic fragment through mm. 17-22, 19.2 reprises our familiar V₆/₅/IV sonority, used again to create a sense of momentum through the cycle and a facility in swinging back through to the initial predominant sonority. As the predominant returns in m. 20, punning on the idea of rotational initiation, Schumann expands the ascending stepwise segment to fill out an entire octave (mm. 20-22), while the generally accelerated bass motion matches the stretto of the melodic fragment. This dual stretto creates a similar phasal effect to the first movement, where we see the bass becoming temporarily “out of sync” with the right hand. In G2, we are not struck so much by any specific dissonance that results from this displacement, but rather the myriad of combinations of the melodic fragment with various points on the harmonic module.
Just as we seem on the verge of another climactic arrival, Schumann parodies the overeager climbing bass by interjecting with yet another parenthesis that seems to come from a place of having already achieved this expected climax (mm. 23-24). The expected octave A goal in the bass is relegated to an offbeat pedal under the most delicate of falling arabesques in the right hand. Moreover, the sense of having already reached a climactic downbeat results from the module having skipped to a V7 prolongation where we would have expected perhaps the greatest assertion yet of our rotational downbeat V6/4. If m. 17 breaks the model of parenthetical logic, m. 23 now comes as our greatest frustration of cadential logic, even more so for that it does come to rest on a tonic elision in m. 25. In other words, just as we arrive at the cadence we have been expecting, its dramatic effect is completely dissipated by the gentleness of m. 23-24, and both the V7 and I sonorities of 23.1 and 25.1 are reached almost too easily.

From a recompositional standpoint, m. 23 also comes exactly at the point when we could imagine a hypothetical continuation of the fanfare level (imagine m. 29 with sixteenth upbeat following directly the end of m. 22). Although the fanfares only reach a solitary, frustrated bar of climactic material in m. 16, mm. 17-22 still seem an exciting enough re-gathering of momentum to tide over our disbelief until we could imagine a greater sense of closure finally arriving in m. 23. Instead, m. 23 arrives as the absolute lightest material of the piece, and this moment shatters our sense of the fanfare narrative entirely. Having finally lost faith in the possibility of cadence on this level, we are gently brought down to earth, almost failing to notice the elisionary cadence of m. 25. In fact, though, m. 25 re-echoes the reinitiation of m. 17, and helps to articulate an alternative narrative thread outlined by 2.1, 10.1, 17.1, 25.1, and lastly either 30.1 or 32.3. In other words, m.

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16 32.3 would be heard as the contour inversion of the D-A horn call, augmented and rhythmically inverted as a falling gesture of 32.3 into 33.1 30.1’s legitimacy in this thread depends on whether it is interpreted as purely falling away from the material of m. 29 or as a kind of reinitiation.
17 initially creates a sense of parenthetical instability by returning to a more primary level of material in the act of a parenthetical construction, while m. 25 seems to resolve that instability by confirming the primary level as the main thread. Almost impossibility, though, having finally reached a tonic arrival, m. 25 now instigates a new section leading to a reprise of mm. 14-15 in mm. 27-28 and building to a belated close parenthesis in m. 29 that directly responds to m. 16 as a resolution of the fanfare narrative we had dismissed as untenable.

Thus, Schumann once again succeeds in closing out a work over the course of a parenthetical gesture, as in G1, but he exceeds the ambitions of G1 in going so far as to deconstruct the logic of parenthesis itself. On a large scale, we could describe the fanfare narrative as framed by the narrative of the horn call motive, but the two are increasingly interwoven as the movement progresses, so that a better analogy might be to describe the movement as occurring on two planes, occasionally ascending to the brighter, declamatory world of the fanfares, but more often searching for something below the clouds. Still, we are confronted as listeners with the realities of diachronic hearing and are forced to engage the narrative, on some level, not as two parallel lines or planes, but as a single linear thread. Thus, the syntax of parenthesis is ultimately unavoidable, but also ideally lends an ambiguity that can only enrich the music. When condensed to a single line, the two narratives necessarily interrupt each other, and in such a way that the parentheses are not nested [ ( { } ) ] but intersecting [ ( { } ) ] . This overlap between parenthetical levels addresses the idea of fragmentation implicit in the incomplete cadential module and transposes it to the level of the movement’s form, where the entirety of the narrative can only be assembled as a collage of fragments.
Chapter 3 – Rotation of rhythm and meter and the phasal development of metric elements: Analyses of M4 and G3

Some examples of rhythmic issues inherent to Schumann’s “chivalric style”

The third movement of Gesänge der Frühe (G3) begins immediately in a brighter, clearer sphere than the hazy and ruminative G2. Its brass-like fanfare textures, distinctive even in the opening piano dynamic, take up a thread initiated by the climactic arrivals of G1 and hinted at in the parenthetical fanfares of G2, but now with a triumphant clarity and assurance. The noble and dignified dotted rhythms of G2’s fanfares have also transformed in G3 into the relentless dotted rhythm of hoof beats, a true song of the hunt. Jonathan Bellman summarizes this overall set of characteristics (fanfare motives, brass-like chord voicings, persistent dotted rhythms) as embodying a “chivalric style” unique to Schumann and Brahms’ output. Bellman’s focus is on particular examples from the composers’ lieder, and understandably so, as it allows for the listener to draw on extramusical meaning in identifying the chivalric reference. At least in Schumann’s output, however, some of the strongest examples of the style occur not in his lieder or orchestrations, which evoke the style for particular moments of text painting or thematic characterization, but rather in his instrumental works that revisit those same elements in a more singularly obsessive fashion.

Within the instrumental works, the second of the Märchenbilder, Op. 113, as well as the second movement of the Fantasie, Op. 17 leap to mind as examples of particularly rich treatments of a chivalric style within extremely different periods of Schumann’s output. Within the 1853 works Gesänge der Frühe and Märchenerzählungen, G3 is our main representative of the style, but the fourth

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18 Finally, with respect to the scope of Bellman’s argument, we should note the clear influence of Beethoven on this genre, in whose works the same stylistic features occur, equally characteristically, in the Vivace from the first movement of the Symphony No. 7, and in the second movement march of the Piano Sonata Op. 101.
movement of *Märchenerzählungen* (M4) projects a similar sense of grandiose, if somewhat less conventional, heroic gesture in the outer sections. Most importantly, the similarities between all four of these movements are hardly confined to their topical qualities alone. Rather, the rhythmic distinctness of the chivalric style as its most prominent attribute seems to have encouraged Schumann to consider the element of rhythm in these movements, both motivically and hypermetrically, as the primary determiner of form.

![Rhythm as a primary marker of phrase structure in Op. 113](image)

The connection between rhythm and form in these chivalric works extends beyond mere correlation; in fact, their formal plan is often established in dialogue with “chivalric” surface
characteristics. In particular, the pervasive dotted rhythms serve as a fabric of metric stability against which rhythmic displacements, whether within the dotted figures or on a metric or hypermetric level, generate the main activity of the work. In the second movement of Märchenbilder, for instance—a concise form featuring a primary A section alternating with a pair of contrasting trios—the rhythmic play appears mostly within the A section dotted figures themselves, on the level of the dotted subdivision. That is, in the consequent half of his periodic main idea, Schumann consistently shifts his accent pattern from the expected iambic emphasis on the dotted eighth-note strong beats, to a series of staggered, tied-over sixteenth upbeats (see Figure 3.1). This inspired rhythmic play enlivens the otherwise monotonous rhythmic fabric, providing always the necessary contrast in the consequent halves of phrase periods and their extensions.

In the second movement of the Fantasie, we hear a similar kind of rhythmic play enacted over much broader spans. Here the chivalric topic is distilled into two contrasting iterations within the broader initial A section, each featuring a different aspect of the overall topic, the first appearing as a stately victory march “small A section” exemplifying the topic’s timbral and registral aspects, while the second appears as a “small B section” characterized by dotted rhythms and metric play. The dotted rhythms of the small B section, however, project the chivalric style in a quite opposite manner from the heroic, almost combative posturing of the Märchenbilder movement. Instead, the syncopations of the Fantasie are arrayed on three distinct rhythmic levels, with only the most surface level featuring the tied-over dotted rhythms, creating an uninterrupted sense of athletically effortless motion. Sustaining the longer phrase beneath this are syncopations on the second and fourth quarters of every other bar; later, a third level of hypermetric offbeats enters on the bars that lack an internal syncopated rhythm. Altogether, these variously articulated offbeats combine to lend a long-sighted, upbeat attitude to the entire section in anticipation of the return of A. The downbeat arrival
that is finally required to close off the expanding levels of syncopations is the return of the small A section itself (See Figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2: Levels of syncopation in a section of Op. 17.2
While the second movements of both Märchenbilder and the Fantasie typify a quintessentially Schumannian approach to metric play, Schumann’s mastery of this mode of play and his taste for complexity are heightened in his composition of Märchenerzählungen and Gesänge der Frühe. The particular element that I hope to analogize in M4 and G3 is that of literal “play” between instruments or instrumental characters. In this respect, M4 clearly benefits from its construction as a chamber work and its richness of interaction on all levels between the parts, but in G3 equally compelling dialogues develop via the capabilities of the solo piano idiom in portraying greater orchestral textures.

Analysis of M4, initial A section

M4 immediately engages with a sense of metric play by opening with an upbeat gesture in the piano emphasizing offbeats 2 and 4. This lack of an initial downbeat is mirrored by the lack of a right hand chord on the downbeat of m. 2; accordingly, we might label this opening piano idea as a \[ _2 _3 _4 _1 \] anacrusis with the “_” designating silent downbeats and the “_” a barline. While the piano does play a low bass octave on the second of the two downbeats, this left-hand attack enters clearly as a harmonic underpinning to the viola, lending it more the quality of a reinitiation than that of a goal of the first bar’s anacrusis. The viola line, by contrast, begins anacrustically to this second downbeat and continues through to the downbeat of m. 3 as a goal, thus complementing the \[ _2 _3 _4 _1 \] rhythmic motive with the downbeat-oriented \[ 1 _2 _3 _4 _1 \] (here, the bolded “1” designates a hypermetric downbeat). From this point, let us refer to the \[ _2 _3 _4 _1 \] motive as our “anacrustic rhythmic motive” and the \[ 1 _2 _3 _4 _1 \] construction as our “crustic rhythmic motive.”

Together, the two motives form a complementary basic idea. We should note that our anacrustic motive is not simply the purely anacrustic beats \[ 2 _3 _4 _1 \] that would serve to fill out the
gaps between crustic motives. Rather, the felt but silent downbeats on either end of the [2 3 4] are equally important to our apprehension of the motive in terms of its fundamental “offness.” The pairing of the motives, then, is not purely complementary, either, but partly elisionary. That is, the entrance of the viola elides with a silent downbeat, essentially interrupting the sense of uncontested “upness” from the piano and serving a corrective rhythmic function by articulating our first clear downbeat and driving toward the hypermetric downbeat as goal. While the viola and clarinet both adopt the marcato syncopations of the piano in their offbeat accents in mm. 2 and 4, they also contextualize these accents between larger downbeats.

We can imagine, then, the opening of M4 as not so much an attempt at a unified narrative amongst three equal partners, but rather a dramatic interaction between opposing roles. Specifically, the piano texture from the very opening is already substantially outsized for its chamber role unless we read a fundamental tension into the dialogue between the piano and its melodic counterparts. Given the motivic and textural similarities, one might even read the opening piano gesture as a reference to Schumann’s Piano Concerto Op. 54 and a satire on the Romantic piano concerto genre at large. Moreover, because of the piano’s almost comically or obliviously overlarge role, we cannot help but to consider its material the prevailing topic, while whatever material appears in the other instruments necessarily exists in some relationship to the piano.

We might take advantage of a particularly Schumannian metaphor, then, in characterizing the piano in M4 as something of a Goliath figure. Given the thickness of the texture as well as Schumann’s quite conservative metronome marking, we can further observe that there is actually nothing particularly “up” about the initial three upbeats, but rather, perhaps, “off,” in the sense of an oversized, lumbering character being caught slightly off balance. The viola part, by contrast, and
later the clarinet in m. 4, is the hero (if not protagonist) in this dichotomy, athletically weaving in and around the piano with its arpeggiated sixteenths and downbeat-centric poise. Ironically, the downbeats of our crustic motive are in fact the lightest material texturally, while the anacrusic upbeats have an all-too-heavy quality about them.

In the continuation phrase of mm. 5-8, this difference in emphasis between the piano (which only emphasizes the syncopations) and the viola and clarinet develops into a more overt antagonism, with the piano’s syncopations gaining the quality of a displaced meter, while the other two instruments struggle to maintain metric order. If mm. 2 and 4 portray the viola and clarinet dancing effortlessly around the lumbering piano part, then m. 5 marks a more dangerous attempt from the piano offbeats to swat away or stomp out these pesky combatants.

We immediately notice this greater intentionality or alertness from the piano in the marcato of 5.2, previously deferred until the tied over fourth beat of each anacrusic motive. Furthermore, we can understand the piano attacks (with upbeats) of 5.2, 5.4, and 6.2 as an augmentation of the anacrusic motive, so that the marcato articulation on each of these beats corresponds to a particularly declamatory statement of an augmented three beat anacrusis. This pre-emptive entry of the aggressive caret markings seems to catch the viola off guard, placing it on the defensive in its responsive main beat jabs. Throughout mm. 5-6, the piano still insists on only offbeats, while the viola interjects in a more fragmentary manner, barely succeeding in articulating each strong beat. From the first marcato of 5.2, then, we can hear the piano phrase as beginning to project the sense of an interruptive, displaced downbeat, and certainly by the time the slurred-in flat-II of m. 6.4 arrives, the piano’s metric alternative seems to win out.
On account of this displacement in the piano, the uncontested return of the anacrustic motive (7.2) that follows now invites us to hear it in an entirely different rhythmic sense. At first, the motive might seem to be reinforcing the written meter after the piano’s departure of the previous two bars, given that we recognize it from its first two realizations as an upbeat gesture. Yet the locally displaced meter of the piano encourages us, in fact, to reinterpret the marcato 7.4 now as a strong beat, emphasized by its elision with a further reprise of the augmented anacrustic motive beginning on that same 7.4. This disagreement between various projected metric levels renders any
attempt at comprehensive analysis extremely complex. A metric analysis properly sensitive to these issues might need to account less for a governing metric organization than for multiple, competing meters. Figure 3.3 attempts to deconstruct the four-bar continuation in terms of one possible interpretation.

As illustrated by Figure 3.3, the result of this sentential liquidation of mm. 5-8 is a contrasting small B section (mm. 9-30.1) that, for all its seeming metric stability, arrives in a contextually unstable fashion by interrupting with its felt and written downbeat the displaced piano meter that has just won out. The small B section, then, both requires a readjustment of heard meter at its very start and simultaneously forces us, somewhat unwillingly, to move on before the small A section material can reach a satisfying metric conclusion. These rhythmic generators of form are harmonically reinforced by the similar lack of closure in the motion toward G minor. Specifically, the implied C minor harmony on the downbeat of m. 9 is still involved in subdominant prolongation within G territory. The ^5^-^1 upbeat figure seems almost enough to constitute a cadence and modulation to C but lacks the filled out harmony of the previous V^6/5/iv that we hear as the governing sonority of 8.4. Moreover, the offbeat of 9.3 quickly and decisively reprises the predominant flat-II^6 of 6.4, reinitiating a (this time successful) cadential gesture to a G Major tonic that we hear as the primary harmonic arrival on m. 10, even if m. 9 constitutes the start of the small B section and our first hyperdownbeat (see Figure 3.4).
The interaction between small A and B sections, then, parallels the formal relationship expressed through rhythmic features of the small A and B sections from the second movement large A section of the *Fantasie*. In M4, though, Schumann builds his sections from an underlying framework of metric consonance or dissonance, rather than relying on surface elements of the music. Moreover, his framework characterizes both the smaller and larger A sections as the primary sites of metric disagreement, playing on the formal conceit of A sections as the typically more stable passages. The B sections, by contrast, are extremely stable in a metric sense. This relationship of a more complex A section to a simplified B section pervades throughout the history of Scherzo and Minuet movements, but often more in the dimension of character. Certain dance movements also explore a dichotomy of metric consonance and dissonance prior to Schumann. Yet Schumann’s sophistication in developing the technique over larger works is both unique and consistent, as we have seen in the *Fantasie* second movement and will see in G3. Indeed, we might relate the approach to Brahms’ late-style treatment of key area in *his* ternary forms, with A sections often characterized by a quality of tonal horizon, and B sections more tonally well-defined. This tonal definition of the B

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19 The Scherzo of Haydn’s Op. 20 No. 4 is an excellent example of such metric experimentation.
sections, however, often occurs in more distant keys, just as Schumann’s small B section of M4 in m. 9 begins in a larger context metric dissonance with the inconclusive, displaced meter of m. 8.

We can extend this analogy between Schumann’s treatment of rhythm and Brahms’ treatment of harmony to the idea of a cadential gesture. Often Brahms defers the moment of a harmonic cadence in the home key to the very last bars of the return of A. Similarly, Schumann’s anacrustic motive that pervades the primary material of the piano throughout the small A sections eschews a metric downbeat arrival. We do hear a downbeat arrival in conjunction with the anacrustic motive, however, within the small B section, specifically on the $V^{6/4}$ arrival on the downbeat of m. 22 (see Figure 3.5). At first, this return to the crustic motive suggests a return of A, but we understand this return, by the time we reach mm. 24-25, to be false. Moreover, the decisiveness of the anacrustic gesture as a triumphant return is complicated by the backwards expansion of the anacrustic motive to a five beat upbeat figure to m. 22 as a hypermetric downbeat. Given our previous hearing of the motive as always beginning with a pickup to the second beat of a bar, the expansion of the figure, then, introduces a weaker level of metric dissonance that suggests a possible alternative metric structure (also shown in Figure 3.5).

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20 The clarinet gesture of m. 22 could be seen as supporting either metric level, given the marcato articulation on the hyperdownbeat, against which we have the early termination of the arpeggiated figure on m. 22, which we are accustomed to hearing as a hyperdownbeat marker.
We should take note of this lower level of metric dissonance, not because it creates a true sense of ambiguity akin to that of mm. 5-8, but for how the dissonance results in a less conclusive version of a rhythmic cadence than that found in the final bars of the return of the small A section (mm. 34-36). Specifically, mm. 34-36 conclude with the same three cadential chords over three quarter note values beginning on m. 36 (hyperdownbeat + two afterbeats), but now in sturdy agreement among the three instruments, fanfare figure omitted. Additionally, mm. 34-36 comprise a continuation phrase analogous to mm. 5-8, but now ending with a proper authentic cadence and early conclusion. More significantly, Schumann creates the space for this early conclusion by omitting the third marcato articulation on the last upbeat of the augmented anacrustic figure (35.2). This one seemingly insignificant omission ultimately alters the course of the entire phrase by diminishing the piano’s combative stance and allowing the corrective strong beat of the viola (35.3) to emerge more strongly than in m.6, further discouraging an interruption from the piano similar to that of the flat-II⁰ sonority of 6.4. Instead, the piano now arrives on 25.4, not with a harmonically accented, combatively displaced downbeat, but with an acquiescent upbeat marked by no accent whatsoever, and in cooperation with the two melodic instruments. Thus, the initially threatening 3/2
metric organization from the piano as suggested by 5.2-6.3 in the first small A section becomes the largest anacrustic figure we have had so far (four syncopated upbeats: 34.2, 34.4, 35.2, and 35.4), to a final, conclusive rhythmic cadence (see Figure 3.6).

Viola:  
\[\begin{array}{cccc}
2\downarrow & 1\downarrow & 2\downarrow & 1\downarrow \\
\end{array}\]

Piano:  
\[\begin{array}{cccc}
(1\downarrow) & (2\downarrow) & (3\downarrow) & (\ldots) \\
\end{array}\]

Overall anacrusis:  
\[\begin{array}{cccc}
+! & +! & +! & +! & 1\downarrow \\
\end{array}\]

Figure 3.6: Final downbeat arrival of augmented anacrustic motive on m. 36 of M4

The harmonic plan of the movement also resonates with these degrees of rhythmic openness or closure. The rhythmically weaker cadence of m. 22 (Figure 3.5) occurs in E-flat, a subdominant area with respect to the overall tonality, while the final cadence of m. 36 occurs in the home key of B-flat. Yet most importantly, the intricacies and range of metric and agreement and disagreement between the parts allows for a formal understanding motivated by rhythm alone, with the harmonic factors providing an important but secondary level of formal articulation.

Finally, having analyzed the rhythmic elements of M4 as generative of larger formal sections, we can align this process of rhythmic transformation with a rotational model of composition. In the larger A section that occupies mm. 1-36, M4 rotates through three pairs of anacrustic basic idea halves: Mm. 1 and 3 in the small A, mm. 20.4-21.4 and mm. 22.4-23.4 in the false return within the

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small B, and mm. 30 and 32 in the true return of the small A. Mm. 1 and 3 lead to a continuation in m. 5 that emphasizes the “hanging,” purely anacrustic quality of the piano motive by weakening the crustic motives in the melodic instruments; this is the least closed presentation of the material. The rotations of the middle section “false return” do lead to successful, unified hyperdownbeats on mm. 22 and 24 but occur in a weaker, subdominant area in the movement’s overall harmonic plan. Finally, mm. 30 and 32 lead to a successful double cadence of both rhythmic and harmonic elements in the home key.

Analysis of G3

G3 expands on the logic of M4 in providing our most sophisticated example of rhythmically rotational form, further building on the concept that M4 establishes of metric warfare between instruments. In G3 the registrally and texturally disparate voicing of the two hands clearly suggests an orchestration of brass fanfares in the right hand with timpani in the left, representing the two instrument groups that we find more or less opposed over the course of the movement. What is particularly “elegant” or “tight-knit” about G3, however, is the sheer homogeneity of texture across the movement. Thus, degrees of metric consonance and dissonance, along with prevailing hypermetric organization, become the primary site of variation between sections.

G3 opens with a vividly characterized fanfare gesture in the right hand marked with a rather unusual piano dynamic. The softer dynamic conveys a clear effect of spatial distance, but already the motive glitters with a bright certainty that immediately cuts through the haze of G2 and anticipates the motive’s later forte realization. Metrically, G3’s opening fanfare gesture is entirely unambiguous,

21 Here the rolling dotted rhythms of the timpani within the compound meter clearly evoke the tempo character of the aforementioned example from the first movement Vivace of Beethoven’s Symphony No. 7.
with both a marcato articulation and leap in melodic contour that immediately highlight the movement’s initial downbeat. Unlike in M4, the metric interest of the movement derives not from any latent complexities, displacements, or ambiguities of the motives themselves, but from an immediate juxtaposition of registrally and metrically opposed gestures that lend an athleticism to the movement from its start. In the opening measure, Schumann’s delaying of the bass entrance for a root position arrival on the second beat of the bar introduces a pervasive displacement dissonance between right hand and bass that persists throughout the phrase. Because of the piano dynamic marking, this delayed bass entrance is not immediately at cross purposes with the right hand. In fact, the isolation of the first inversion fanfare downbeat in the piano’s middle register imbues the opening gesture with an effortlessness that would be impossible with an encumbering bass below it. The delayed left hand entrance, then, might be heard, not as initially antagonistic, but as quietly supportive or confirmatory, an underlying pulse that keeps pace with and encourages the bold leaps of the right hand.

The brilliance of this juxtaposition, however, lies in how completely the interaction evolves over the course of its various returns. On the initial downbeat of each successive return, Schumann places a different pitch of the A Major triad in the bass, resulting in a different inversion of the opening sonority. Where in 1.1 the bass was noticeably absent, in 23.1 we hear a low octave C# arrival that almost seems to get “stuck,” similar to the bass pedal in G1: 23.3. At the second return, in 43.1, we hear a glorious low octave E, yielding a recapitulatory V6/4 sonority (see Figure 3.7).

According to the rotational logic we have embraced thus far, these varied initiations of G3’s “A” material can be read both harmonically and metrically. As with the suspensions of G1, here the chord inversions and relative metric prevalence of right hand and bass enjoy a relationship expressed
in degrees of displacement across the various cycles. The first cycle of G3 begins with a rest in the bass, technically a first inversion sonority on the downbeat, but really a delayed bass that confirms the harmony as a root position sonority, albeit slightly out of phase. The second cycle begins with a clear first inversion downbeat, now corrected by the root position emphasis on 23.2. The displacement of the left hand makes its strongest statement here as a reassertion of the necessary harmony that threatens to overwhelm the right hand. This added quality of rebeginning renders 23.2 the most out of phase with the downbeat of 23.1 – in terms of metric function – of our three examples, yielding a purely corrective or displaced downbeat. The third cycle, by contrast, still sees the left hand arriving a beat late, but it arrives as a resolution, as an echo or an afterbeat to the 43.1 downbeat arrival and thus an exaggeration of the delayed arrival of 1.2. A final harmonic possibility might be read into the start of the coda in 54.1, not itself a phrase cycle in terms of a reinitiation of material, but a harmonic and rhythmic cadence nonetheless, a coming back into phase, with both right hand and left hand bass arriving on the downbeat in a root position sonority.
Nor does Schumann limit the play of various metric configurations to these initiating moments. Within the opening eight-bar phrase, a new hypermetric ambiguity or reversal of expectations emerges on almost every measure. Schumann achieves this partly by introducing seemingly unambiguous gestures and then undermining them instantly with a gesture that forces us to correct our hearing in retrospect. From the very first bar, we experience 1.1 as a clear downbeat goal of the fanfare motive, but its exact repetition in the second measure (with only the low bass moving up a step) calls into question 1.1 as an uncontested hyperdownbeat. (It might be, but 1.1 might also be the second beat of an upbeat triple hypermeasure leading to a hyperdownbeat on m. 3). 3.1 does arrive with a huge accent – on a secondary dominant no less – seeming to confirm at least its status as a hyperdownbeat. Yet it leads not to the expected E major sonority on 4.1 but an E minor fanfare that, most importantly, reiterates the fanfare motive on the downbeat in conjunction
with a root bass arrival, making it the most stable downbeat we have heard yet. Our hearing of 3.1 then changes as well, retrospectively, into a strong upbeat gesture as indicated in Figure 3.8.

The second half of the phrase divides more evenly into the two ideas of 4.3-6.2 and 6.3-8.1, with the downward cadential contour of 7.3-8.1 answering the open-ended 5.3-6.1. Taken out of context, the phrase of 4.3-8.1 might lend itself to a hearing of hyperdownbeats on 5.1 and 7.1, with 6.1 and 8.1 as offbeats in an overall duple hypermeter. In the context of the large 4.1 hyperdownbeat, however, then at least the first seemingly duple hypermeter joins with the 4.1 hyperdownbeat for a second, triple hypermeasure. Only with the arrive of the second duple hyperdownbeat on 7.1 is the apparent duple confirmed, for an aggregate structure of 3+3+2.
Without engaging in too detailed an analysis of the contrasting sections, we should note simply that these sections of mm. 9-22 and mm. 31-42 serve as a metric foil to the complexity of the initial A material. Thus, the movement engages with an overall alternation in metric organizational
strategies between the first two A sections (hypermetrically complex groupings of 3+2+3) and the more straightforward motion of the two contrasting sections (pure duple hypermeter). The final A section and coda, however, resolves much of the unevenness of the A material that leads to its initial surprises. Specifically, m. 46 of the final A section, corresponding to m. 4 of the opening, relegates the previously significant E minor arrival to the 45.3 upbeat. The sonority that arrives on 46.1 is instead a further secondary dominant (a V/IV, no less, and our typical marker of coda sections), which is also no longer emphasized by a motivic downbeat reinitiation (outlined in Figure 3.9). This extends the pull toward resolution through the fourth bar to 47.1, after which duple hypermeter prevails clearly for the rest of the movement except for in the one-bar expansion of m. 53. Here, however, the expansion comes not from a sudden upsetting of expectations but from a final, emphatic reprise of the V/IV that only then progresses through a V/ in 53.3 and onto our long-awaited cadence of 54.1. Thus, the expansion confirms the normal metric treatment rather than upsetting or questioning it.
Figure 3.9: Hypermetric analysis of G3 mm. 43-48
Concluding remarks

This final exploration of rhythmic rotational elements in G3 and M4 concludes our own rotation through Schumann’s various cyclic compositional structures. As a series of case studies, these analyses do not aspire to a complete articulation of the rotational process, either in Schumann’s works or even within these two sets in particular, yet I hope that their implications may extend to other works and to other composers. At the very least, certain ternary structures in Brahms’ late Intermezzi, cited already in this thesis for their original treatment of harmonic cadence and tonal plan, might respond particularly well to such a rotational analysis. The second Intermezzo of Op. 119, for instance, comes to mind as an example of a work whose structure seems very organically developed as a series of variations, despite fitting very easily and clearly into a ternary structure. A rotational model could thus very easily account for both the variations in the outlying A sections, as well as the B section, which shares the same motivic material, as simply an expanded or digressive inner rotation.

Most importantly, even within the simplest ternary structure, the idea of rotation is appealing insofar as that it reminds us that any true return is impossible; our hearing of the most exact reprise will nonetheless be affected by what has transpired in the meantime. Both Schumann and Brahms’s late miniatures feature ternary forms that exceed exact reprise and instead favor a simultaneously accumulative, linear model of growth, where a returning A section acquires aspects of the contrasting B section (we can find this in Brahms’ Op. 119 No. 1 and Op. 118 No. 4, among other examples, and in the second movement of Märchenerzählungen). This application of looser rotational models in describing a linear or cumulative process of growth within an overall framework of return strikes me as a particularly fruitful area of future study.
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