



Schubert's Mature Instrumental Music: A Theorist's Perspective. By David Beach. Eastman Studies in Music. Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2017. 212 pages. ISBN 9781580465922.

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David Beach's *Schubert's Mature Instrumental Music: A Theorist's Perspective* is the latest contribution to Schubert analytical studies from an important scholar who has distinguished himself above all in the field of Schenkerian analysis and has been engaged in a close study of Schubert's music since the 1980s. The monograph focuses on selected works, especially chamber music, from the last six to seven years of Schubert's life—roughly from the “Unfinished” Symphony in B minor, D. 759, of 1822, to the String Quintet in C major, D. 956, of 1828, the one exception being the Piano Quintet in A major, “Trout,” D. 667, which dates from 1819.

The book is divided into two parts with a concluding Epilogue, “Thoughts on Schubert's Mature Style.” The first part deals with four major topics related to Schubert's instrumental works: harmony, phrase rhythm, motive, and sonata form. Each is given a full chapter for discussion including a good selection of examples. The second part, also consisting of four chapters, presents a series of formal and Schenkerian analyses of selected movements exhibiting a variety of formal types—a slow movement, a finale, three scherzos, and four first-movement sonata forms.

Some of the most important observations are found in the first section of the book. In the chapter on harmony, for instance, Beach addresses a number of the characteristic elements of Schubert's harmonic language, including modal mixture, the composer's unusual means of modulation, and his employment of chains of descending thirds. His discussion of Schubert's use of the progression I-vi-IV on the local level and more broadly across sections is particularly revealing in its presentation of the wide scope this harmonic pattern can assume in the composer's music. Beach's treatment of the projection of surface details onto the music's deeper structure in chapter three, “Motive,” is another highpoint of the book.



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The second part involves a more detailed look at individual movements. In each case, Beach deals first with the formal design of the movement, then its underlying structure as presented in a Schenkerian foreground and a middle-ground voice-leading graph, which he discusses in great detail. For those interested in Schenkerian analysis, the graphs and their discussions by one of the leading theorists in this field will be of great importance. What is more, the movements Beach analyses include a number that have not received much analytical attention, such as the Scherzo of the String Quartet in A minor, D. 804, and the slow movement of the Piano Sonata in B-flat major, D. 960.

In general, the book is aimed at a wide audience, in the author's words "all musicians interested in Schubert's music." The discussions of part one are fairly easy to follow and clearly laid out. The analyses of part two are also clear, although the discussions of the Schenkerian graphs require close attention with an accurate edition of the music near at hand. Here only the graphs are supplied as well as a table summarising the formal outline with referential bar numbers.

In some respects, however, the book is disappointing. The treatment of formal design is often rudimentary and makes little reference to recent work in the field of formal criticism, especially the treatment of sonata form found in William E. Caplin's theory of formal functions or James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy's *Elements of Sonata Theory*.¹ Expressive or interpretive issues related to form in Schubert, such as those raised by Charles Fisk and Scott Burnham, receive little attention in the book.² When they are addressed, they are treated superficially. For instance, in his only substantial comments on the character of the slow movement of the Piano Sonata in B-flat major, D. 960, Beach points out that the A sections are "very calm" while the B section "exhibits greater rhythmic activity."

To be fair, such an interpretive engagement is not the main point of the book, but unfortunately the overall impression that emerges, at least in the analyses of the second part, is that of a series of largely descriptive treatments of the works—detailed explications of foreground and middle-ground graphs along Schenkerian lines with little attempt to find a broader meaning or significance to the observations. Furthermore, the analyses seem to exist in a contextual vacuum with respect to contemporary scholarship, very little of which is even mentioned. This situation is particularly glaring in the discussions of music that has attracted much analytical attention over the last three decades, such as the first movement of the Piano Sonata in B-flat major, D. 960.

Schubert's Mature Instrumental Music: A Theorist's Perspective is an important contribution to Schubert scholarship in its valuable observations of some of the later style traits and its Schenkerian analyses of specific movements. However, it does have a serious limitation in its lack of engagement with other scholarly work on the subject from different analytical perspectives.

1. See William E. Caplin, *Classical Form: A Theory of Formal Functions for the Music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998) and James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory: Norms, Types, and Deformations in the Late-Eighteenth-Century Sonata* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

2. See Charles Fisk, *Returning Cycles: Contexts for the Interpretation of Schubert's Impromptus and Late Sonatas* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001) and Scott Burnham, "Schubert and the Sound of Memory," *The Musical Quarterly* 84, no. 4 (Winter 2000): 655-663.