THE PERFORMER, SEMIOTICS, AND INTERPRETATION:

HOW SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS AND INTENTION SHAPE MUSICAL MEANING AND PERFORMER IDENTITY

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ABSTRACT

Studies in music semiotics often overlook a critical part of the music-making process: the performer. Despite this, the field of music semiotics provides logical and theoretical ways to examine processes that performers often consider intuitive. This study establishes a background of Peircean semiotics, then presents an original theory of intention inspired by Peirce's modes of being to integrate the performer into semiotic musical analysis and the possibilities it provides. Two pieces—*Sonata quasi una fantasia* in E-flat major, Op. 27, No. 1, by Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) and *Leave a Comment* by Phillip Sink (b. 1982)—are presented as case studies to illustrate how semiotic processes can be adapted to various musical styles in order to aid the performer in forming plausible interpretations by using logical theory to support creative expressive decisions.

RÉSUMÉ

Les études en sémiotique musicale négligent souvent une partie essentielle du processus de la création musicale: l'interprète. Malgré cela, le domaine de la sémiotique musicale fournit des moyens logiques et théoriques d'examiner les processus que les interprètes considèrent souvent comme intuitifs. Cette étude établit un portrait de la sémiotique Peircéenne, puis présente une théorie originale de l'intention inspirée par les modes d'être de Peirce afin d'intégrer l'artiste dans l'analyse musicale sémiotique et les possibilités qu'elle offre. Deux pièces – *Sonata quasi una fantasia* en mi bémol majeur, opus 27, n° 1, de Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) et *Leave a Comment* de Phillip Sink (né en 1982) – sont présentées comme des études de cas pour illustrer la façon dont les processus sémiotiques peuvent être adaptés à divers styles musicaux dans le but d'aider l'interprète à former des interprétations plausibles en utilisant la théorie logique pour soutenir les décisions expressives créatives.

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INTRODUCTION

Music semiotics provides an abundant body of philosophical schemata to understand how music takes meaning. The sheer volume of ideas and theorists makes this field of study daunting to survey, particularly for the performer. Perhaps because of this, most of the books, articles, and other publications written in music semiotics disregard the performer and center their study on the part of music which remains the most constant: the score. The musical score is a vital part of any music theory, but a focus solely on the score, and the often logic-heavy theories that address it, loses sight of the fact that music is a performance art. In order to be manifested in sound reality, music requires a performer, or performers. Music is a creative process and requires not only logic but also interpretation.

After noticing a lack of consideration for the performer in my initial literature review, I decided to create a project that would explore the implications for the performer in music semiotics. To do so, this project presents a background on music semiotics, as well as brief highlights from my literature review. Then, I explore an original semiotic theory of intention as it pertains to the performer. Finally, I present analyses of two pieces for solo piano as a case study of possible ways that these theories can be integrated into practice.

A strength of using a semiotic foundation for analysis is the ability to consider the objective and the subjective, as well as context at each level of the process. Therefore, the goal of this project is not to present an incredible, "new" way of thinking or analysis; rather, it is to present a possible framework of intention and semiotic analysis—which allow for exploration of the abstract and creative elements of music, in addition to the empirical and the logical—to provide the performer with ways in which they can more fully philosophically and theoretically unpack and understand their intuitive musical decisions.

Note for the reader:

For those not familiar with semiotic or philosophic discourse, some of the abstract ideas and language used in Chapters 1 and 2 of this study may seem a bit dense and require patience. I have done my best to introduce the basic theoretical framework for you, the reader, to use as reference or explore in further detail on your own. I have also included explanations and examples to illustrate these foundational concepts. Within the analyses, many of these concepts are reworded in a more musical way as much as possible, in order to highlight the viability of these theories.

CHAPTER 1

SEMIOTICS:
A CRASH COURSE

1.a. *"What is semiotics?", "Who is Peirce?", and lots of threes*

A sign system is a system of communication that uses, for lack of better words, things (a sign) to stand for or mean something, sometimes other things. The most common example is language: the word *piano* is not literally a piano, but it is easily understandable in any language which *piano* is spelled with Latin letters in that order. Semiosis is the process by which meaning is conveyed. Semiotics, then, is the field that studies how meaning is conveyed in a sign system. The important word here is *how*. Semiotics does not try to explain *what* meaning is conveyed; hypothesizing about the potential meaning of the sign, sometimes through support of a semiotic methodology, is the field of hermeneutics, which will come into play later in this study.

Two of the pioneers of semiotics were Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) and American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914). Saussure's work is more commonly studied and used, especially in linguistics. Peirce, however, is the father of pragmatics, which opens up many possibilities to the world of music semiotics; in oversimplified terms, pragmatics explore the way context contributes to meaning.

Before getting to musical examples and applications, a rather dense, schematic background must first be covered on the basic principles of Peirce's theory. Peirce was somewhat obsessed with triads: nearly all of his concepts are broken into parts of three.[1] The first, and perhaps the most important concept, are Peirce's modes of being, which are very broad categories of how humans perceive and understand every experience: *firstness*, *secondness*, and *thirdness*:

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[1] Semioticians from many fields have remarked upon this and its implications for different fields of study, from architecture (e.g. Richard Coyne) to zoosemiotics (e.g. Dario Martinelli). Many others have criticized this paradigm and found rather convincing alternative logic. However, this chapter primarily addresses the semiotics that are most influential to this project.

- Firstness is without reference to any other entity, completely independent of other factors. Firstness can be associated with immediacy—it occurs in the present and is timeless, since it is not referential or indicative of anything but itself. Firstness is affiliated with pure potentiality or possibility, a pure quality, or pure emotional experience, and therefore relates to sensory perception.
- Secondness is the mode of being that involves relation of firstness to practical experience by the intervention of thought. It includes action-reaction, an event, and factuality: a realization of what the sensory experience is. The past comes into play for secondness because of its relation to events or elements before firstness for comparison and interaction.
- Thirdness is the mode of being through which firstness and secondness find relation. It is oriented to the future, because it includes the intellectual experience of situating the event into representation, convention, rationalisation, or rules.

It is important to note that firstness is the only pure mode of being; secondness contains its own firstness; likewise, thirdness contains its own secondness and firstness. This is also a vital property in creating chains of semiosis. In addition, the context of signs must be considered and not just rendered arbitrary—signs can exist in multiple modes of being. For now, remember smoke: it will be revisited after addressing some of Peirce's other triadic relationships.

Whereas Saussure considers the sign as the smallest unit of signification, Peirce allows for signs to be simple or more inclusive and complex. Any event, thing, or phenomenon conveying any meaning, and therefore able to be subject to semiosis, can be a sign. The semiotic process involves a three-way relationship between elements of the event/thing/phenomenon:

- The *representamen*, or sign, is the thing that represents, indicates, or refers to another thing (the object). This immediate element is pure possibility, can correspond to any of the senses, and is therefore indicative of firstness before it enters the process of semiosis. For example: a color, pain, a sound, all before interpreting what these mean in comparison to other elements.
- The *object* is what the sign represents. For example, a car horn is honked. The initial sound of the horn is the sign. The object is the car, more specifically, the presence of the car. Because the object requires prior knowledge and experience, it corresponds to secondness.
- The *interpretant* is what connects the representamen and the object. The car horn could be a signal to another driver to move their car. This interpretant not only ties the sign and the object together, but also brings about other novel interpretants (the other driver is not paying attention; the driver honking their horn is impatient). This cycle is infinite. However, a *final logical interpretant* can be reached based on the context of convention, culture, and communication.

In Peirce's theory, three further trichotomies emerge from these three parts of the semiotic process: each part of the process bears a subcategory that corresponds to the three modes of being (Figure 1.1). Naomi Cumming (1960-1999) was a violinist and musicologist who found brilliant ways to re-word Peirce's opaque syntax. Regarding semiotic process, she proposed the helpful questions included in Figure 1.1 that help aid a more intuitive understanding of this densely delineative process.

Figure 1.1. *Peirce's semiotic process.*
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	FIRSTNESS	*SECONDNESS*	*THIRDNESS*	Naomi Cumming:[2]
REPRESENTAMEN	QUALISIGN	SINSIGN	LEGISIGN	*What kind of sign?*
OBJECT	ICON	INDEX	SYMBOL	*How does the sign relate to the object?*
INTERPRETANT	RHEME	DICENT	ARGUMENT	*How is the sign to be taken?*

The representamen is the sign, and can be fit into three categories:

- A qualisign corresponds to firstness. It is a quality that functions like a sign, such as a color or a timbre of sound. Because these signs emerge as qualities, they are often referred to in terms of adjective or metaphor.
- A sinsign corresponds to secondness. It is a particular, singular thing or event that functions as a sign. It can be a token of a type.
- A legisign corresponds to thirdness. It is a conventional representation that emerges as a sign. It can be a type.

A type is an ideal, conceptual, or conventional category "defined by features or a range of qualities that are essential to its identity."[3] Because of this, its qualities are important to identify it as a type. A token is a specific entity that bears the features or qualities of a type. As an example, consider a shopping mall. Every mall has slightly different features—some have food courts, some have only clothing stores, some are indoor, some outdoor—but are easily identifiable as a mall. Thus, a shopping mall would be a type, while Carrefour Laval would be a specific token of that type.

The object is signified by the sign in the following ways:

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[2] *The Sonic Self: Musical Subjectivity and Signification* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 83, 86, 96.

[3] Robert S. Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven: Markedness, Correlation, and Interpretation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 44.

- An iconic relationship possesses firstness because of the possibility it bears. There is much debate on what Peirce means when defining iconicity, but in most interpretations of his ideas, consensus is reached that the sign bears likeness to and/or characterizes the object. An icon can occur as qualisign (the feeling of one's stomach "dropping"), sinsign (a still life painting), or legisign (a picture of a deer on a street sign: the picture of the deer itself is only a sinsign, but in the context of traffic laws and symbols, it becomes a warning to watch for deer in the road, not merely a picture of a deer).
- In an indexical relationship, the sign is affected by the object is a direct or causal way, thus representing secondness. An index cannot have a qualisign as representamen, because firstness bears only reference to itself. An index can be a sinsign (the telephone ringing is the index of someone calling) or a legisign (indexical, pointing words: "you," "there," "this," etc., that require knowledge of context and rules).
- A symbolic relationship between sign and object relies on knowledge of convention to be understood, as the relation is purely through stipulation. Because of this element of thirdness, symbols can only exist as legisigns. Refer to the example given at the very beginning of this chapter: the word *piano*. The word piano is not a piano. It bears very little likeness to a piano. However, in English (and other languages), it is easily understood that the user of the word is referring to the keyboard instrument. Nearly all common nouns are examples of symbolic legisigns.

The third trichotomy deals with how the sign appears according to the interpretant:

- A rheme is a sign interpreted by firstness, of a quality, of possibility. The interpretant therefore unites the sign and object by only referring to the quality of the sign. Because of their firstness, rhematic signs can relate iconic, indexical, or symbolic objects to qualisigns, sinsigns, and legisigns.

- A dicent is the sign interpreted at the level of secondness, of factuality or actual occurrence. Because of its secondness, dicent signs can relate indices and symbols with sinsigns and legisigns, but not icons and qualisigns.
- An argument is the sign interpreted in thirdness, by a series of laws, logical relationships, or convention. Because of its thirdness, an argument relates only a symbol and legisign. There are three types of arguments that connect a legisign to a symbol, and all three types are syllogisms (conclusions drawn from two or more statements that share terms with the conclusion). *Abduction* is the process that appeals to firstness, using the most likely possibility to infer (also known as a hypothesis). In other words, it is a conclusion that is probable based on what is known. *Induction* appeals to secondness, based on facts or observation of the event. It is a generalization based on particular evidentiary support. *Deduction* is based on thirdness, derived from systematic general-to-specific reasoning to reach a conclusion that is logically certain.

Everything covered until now contributes to Peirce's ten classes of sign functioning, laid out much more succinctly in Figure 1.2, with even more examples than the text above.

Figure 1.2. *Peirce's categories of signs.*
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	QUALISIGN	**SINSIGN**	**LEGISIGN**	
ICON	1. quality independent of time, unable to take other form (*color*)	2. singular event or model, token (*photograph*)	5. exemplifying model, type: (*map, musical score, "meow"*)	**RHEME**
INDEX		3. event directing attention (*car honk, bullet holes*)	6. law or event that requires further observation for definite cause (*doppler effect, demonstrative pronouns*)	**RHEME**
		4. event implying properties through definite indication (*weathervane, ripples in water*)	7. law or event with definite indication (true or false) (*smoke*)	**DICENT**
SYMBOL			8. law established by convention, independent of context, refers outside itself (*nouns*)	**RHEME**
			9. points to fact or actually existing law/thing (*factual propositions, e.g. "I'm telling a lie."*)	**DICENT**
			10. a syllogism by • firstness: abduction *A cashier gives you two loonies in change instead of a toonie. They must be out of toonies.* • secondness: induction *"Every raven I have seen is black. All ravens are black."* • thirdness: deduction *"All trees are made of wood. Wooden furniture is made of wood.* *All wooden furniture is made from trees."*	**ARGUMENT**

Signs can simultaneously occupy more than one signifying class. Think back to smoke (p. 4). Smoke can indicate the direction of the wind (a dicent indexical sinsign). It could also indicate that something is burning or has burned, but not indicate what it is that is burning (a dicent indexical legisign). The law-based statement of, "Where there's smoke, there's fire," relies on convention and previous knowledge to associate the causal relationship of smoke and fire and a generalization of this relationship as a rule (an argument symbolic legisign; more specifically, induction). Peirce's distinction between the object and the interpretant in relation to the sign allows for this situational flexibility, where the sign's signifying class depends on the context of occurrence.

In reality, a lack of awareness of semiotic theories does not prevent someone from understanding or creating meaning within a sign system. In fact, most of these theories are extremely logic-heavy, often have inconsistencies, and are not intuitive ways of considering the way humans perceive meaningful signs. For example, when confronted with the word *piano*, very few people will ever think about the fact that this word bears a completely symbolic relationship to the piano as an object, that the only reason it is *piano* and not any other combination of letters (e.g. *dotsy*) is cultural stipulation. Even less common is the person who will think about that word in speech, for example the iconic firstness of the sound of each letter, the secondness of recognition of those sounds as a word, and the thirdness of situating the word to the culture, language, and situation at hand. No, indeed, these are processes that are often perceptually attached and considered together automatically.[4]

Just because certain theories seem counterintuitive does not mitigate their usefulness. Consider, for a moment, grammar. Grammar is essentially semiotic: it acknowledges both formal and functional aspects of language. A person does not need to know rules of grammar in order to effectively communicate in a language. Children are a great example of this, and when they are introduced to this analytical system of language in their education, these abstract ideas are difficult to grasp. However, understanding of grammar can prove extraordinarily useful to a person learning a new language as an adult in order to create a network of correlations to the language(s) they may already know, and new rule-based competencies unique to the language they are learning. Similarly, music semiotics has the potential to open new patterns of realization for the musician and performer, creating reliable networks of correlations for deeper consideration of how music works.

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[4] More on this automatic phenomenon of meaning and intent perception in Chapter 2.

Musical signs present unique challenges, especially when directly compared to linguistic semiotics, a pitfall into which many musical semiotic theories fall. Linguistic objects are temporally unrestricted, meaning they stay relatively stable over a period of time in every use, whereas musical objects are presented uniquely in a given moment of time and acoustic space. Therefore, the object of a musical sign is specific to its presentational form, which makes pragmatics so important to music semiotics.[5] Once again, Peirce's interpretant allows for the connection between sound and object, thus allowing for a distinction between the meaning of the sign in that moment and the preconditions of its being understood. Peirce also points out that signs are not limited to the physical or empirical and can be related to intentionality,[6] while Naomi Cumming elaborates that "shared habits of description give evidence of shared understanding," regardless of the physical tangibility of the sign.[7]

Another reason music does not fit well into theories based on linguistic templates is because of the most obvious difference between the two sign systems: language is, in most common usage, made up of discrete units with stable use and ordering; music is not. Again, Naomi Cumming points out that while common nouns are a wonderful and accessible example of a rhematic symbol, this sort of stipulated term as a semiotic exemplification of symbol does not hold much promise for musical adoption.[8] However, when taken through Peirce's broader definition of symbol—units that require instantiation but maintain some stability of conventional stipulation in different contexts—symbolic meaning opens up to music as a sign system.[9]

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[5] Cumming, *The Sonic Self*, 74-75.
[6] Ibid., 79; see also Ahti-Veikko Pietarinen, "Two papers on existential graphs by Charles Peirce," *Synthese* (July 2014).
[7] Cumming, *The Sonic Self*, 79.

1.b. *Journey through music semiotics: a very brief summary of a literature review*

Now that a Peircean background is established, the following are some of the main music semioticians that were part of my literature review for this project, with a brief summation of some of the strongest and most influential points of their theories as well as elements that made certain theories less viable for a project relevant to the music performer.[10]

Philip Tagg (b. 1944) is a British musicologist known primarily for his studies in popular music. His book, *Music's Meanings* (2012) is an extraordinary survey of many, many ways to understand music as a sign system. Though written for "non-musos" (people without formal training or academic background in music), nearly every "muso" can also learn quite a bit from it. Tagg presents a commendable amount of different ideas and theories in an accessible thoughtful way—from basic tenets like musical absolutism to more complicated issues of semiotics, ethnographic intersubjectivity, vocal persona and timbre, sign typologies, and even a course in the analysis of film music—all the while using analogies of everything from sex to snowstorms and musical examples from the standard Western classical canon to *Abba* to traditional sub-Saharan African drumming patterns. It was this book that actually jumpstarted my interest in music semiotics, particularly his acknowledgment that in a survey of 88 articles in music semiotics, very few discussed semantics or pragmatics.[11] This book was also particularly influential in that it presents relatively complex theories and ideas in a very concise, accessible way.

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[8] Ibid., 94.

[9] Ibid. Cumming goes on to use the example of the tonal cadence, which, even through different periods and styles, from Classical to Romantic to Post-modern, maintains stability in its syntactical implications but is used for different effects in different contexts.

[10] The eight listed here (including Hatten) are but a very small representative sample and are included here instead of the many influential others included in the reference list because each marks a distinct turning or guiding point in my project.

Raymond Monelle (1937-2010) was a renowned music semiotician. His earlier works were heavily influenced by Derrida's deconstructionist approach, and later works extensively engage with topic theory (elements of which will be explored in Chapter 3), specifically the indexicality embedded in topical icons. Of particular influence in Monelle's later work is the belief that the meaning, or "sense" of the work is related to the culture, history, and other factors contemporary to the work's creation, as well as to the time of the performance.

Eero Tarasti (b. 1948) is a Finnish musicologist, highly renowned for his work in music semiotics, and the president and director of several societies of music semiotics throughout the past few decades. Tarasti follows in the footsteps of Algirdas Julien Greimas, a Saussurean linguistic semiotician who never wrote about music. Despite the limiting factors that come from a semiotics leaning so heavily on a linguistic model, Tarasti also made countless important contributions to music semiotics. He is particularly well known for his use of Greimas's semiotic square, a principle that meaning is created as the offspring of two signs in positive-negative opposition. For example, *hot* and *cold* in opposition create *not-hot* and *not-cold*, which also creates *neither hot nor cold*, and *both hot and cold*. We will revisit different manifestations of opposition and its importance in other theories. In regards to the performer, Tarasti points out that we understand music even when our verbalization does it no justice, since *parole* (action) supersedes *langue* (rules). Other strengths of Tarasti's methods include acknowledgement that music happens in a larger semiosphere (that is, music is interwoven with the culture in which it is made), the supposition of a competency in order to communicate musically, as well as a theory based on the precept that a larger semiotic understanding is informed by particularities.

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[11] Philip Tagg, *Music's Meanings: A Modern Musicology for Non-Musos* (New York: The Mass Media Music Scholars' Press, Inc., 2013), 146. He defines semantics as the relation of signs and what they "stand for" and pragmatics as the cultural and social activity of producing or interpreting meaning.

Kofi Agawu (b. 1956) is an ethnomusicologist and semiotician who has proven his adeptness at marrying topics with harmonic structure: his creative and clear work is a beautiful synthesis of topic theory with Schenkerian-influenced analysis. Despite his admirable knowledge of topics, style, and facets of music semiotics, Agawu often leaves the expressive interpretation of topics open and unasserted, making it unclear that they are tied to any meaning, or how they contribute to a larger expressive meaning of a work in performance.

Some of the first articles and books I encountered in music semiotics were by **Jean-Jacques Nattiez** (b. 1945). Nattiez follows Nicholas Ruwet's paradigmatic, distributional style of analysis, and created his own tripartition. Nattiez wanted to evade the codal, communicative model of semiotics (Figure 1.3), and instead, assigns the musical score as the "neutral level" to be analyzed from the poietic (the creation of the work) and esthesic (the interpretation of the work) perspectives in order to facilitate a practically scientific methodology (Figure 1.4). At first glance, this method is very appealing: it is reproducible, and it is satisfying in a mathematical, objective way. However, it is also very limiting: it does not explore expressive meanings in sound or performance, and by creating a score-centric method, some results of the analysis are actually grammatical genera that cannot be heard in musical performance. A sign without assigned "neutrality" avoids these limitations: it can be subject to semiotic correlations and processes outside the work itself, by the creator, interpreter, performer, and listener, therefore inviting more cyclical chains of interpretation, similar to other theories which this study more closely follows in analytical methodology (Figure 1.5).

Figure 1.3. *Codal communication process.*

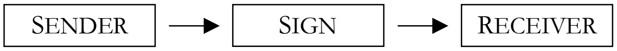

SENDER
SIGN
RECEIVER

Figure 1.4. *Nattiez's process of neutralizing the sign*. Copyright Jean-Jacques Nattiez, 1990.

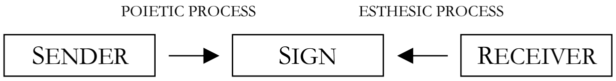
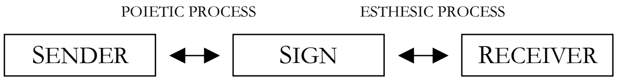
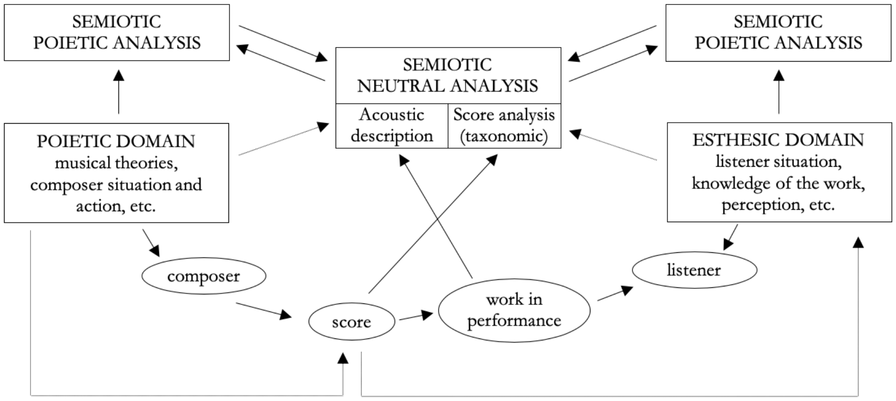

POIETIC PROCESS
ESTHESIC PROCESS
SENDER
SIGN
RECEIVER

Figure 1.5. *A more pragmatic process.* Author's own copyright, 2020.


POIETIC PROCESS
ESTHESIC PROCESS
SENDER
SIGN
RECEIVER

Later work by Nattiez attempted to move beyond this by taking into account the "work in performance" and a semiotic analysis of the "acoustic description" of the neutral level (Figure 1.6).[12] Even as I tried to manipulate these methods to address the variability and creativity of performance, very little room is given for interpretation, as if the work is duplicated in each performance. Eventually, it was necessary to explore other theories.

Figure 1.6. *Nattiez's more integrated semiotic process.*
Copyright Jean-Jacques Nattiez, 1990. Reformatted by author, 2018.


SEMIOTIC POIETIC ANALYSIS
SEMIOTIC NEUTRAL ANALYSIS
Acoustic description
Score analysis (taxonomic)
SEMIOTIC POIETIC ANALYSIS
POIETIC DOMAIN
musical theories, composer situation and action, etc.
ESTHESIC DOMAIN
listener situation, knowledge of the work, perception, etc.
composer
score
work in performance
listener

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[12] Jean-Jacques Nattiez, *Fondements d'une sémiologie de la musique* (Paris: Union Générale d'Éditions, 1975), 60; Jean-Jacques Nattiez, *Music and Discourse: Toward a Semiology of Music*, trans. Carolyn Abbate (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 76; see also Jean-Jacques Nattiez, *Tétralogies (Wagner, Boulez, Chéreau), essai sur l'infidélité* (Paris: C. Bourgois, 1983).

David Lidov (b. 1941) asks what semiotics can do for the understanding of music as a system for conveying meaning. He addresses continuity, the three Peircean elements of the semiotic process (sign, object, interpretant) as they unfold in musical time. He has also recently delved into neo-structuralism, highlighting the value that structuralism has brought to music semiotics and that it should not be discarded lightly.[13] Lidov and Robert S. Hatten share a great deal in common in their semiotic philosophies despite some differences between their methods.

Naomi Cumming, who was mentioned before, was a musicologist who was equally at home in the worlds of music, philosophy, and psychology. Her groundbreaking approach to musical meaning directly addresses the performer in both mind and body, as well as other elements like metaphor in evaluation, vocality, and identity. Her semiotic approach was distinctly Peircean, and she offered insightful, new interpretations of his writings, particularly in her rebuttal against a movement viewing subjectivity in academic discourse as a loss of intelligibility. Specifically, in semiotics, she points out the direct link between subjectivity and meaning. After all, semiotics is a field concerned with humans, not physical law, since music is made by humans, for humans, in a cultural, temporal context.[14]

1.c. *A theory of markedness and expressive genre: Robert S. Hatten and the hermeneutic-semiotic balance*

Robert S. Hatten created a semiotic theory based on stylistic competency through two goals:

- to establish an expressive interpretation as highly plausible (since it can never be empirically factual) based on evidence from inside and outside the work;

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[13] In semiotics, structuralism is a style of analysis that focuses heavily on the underlying *structures* of a sign system. In most systems, this involves heavy dependence on the document or text (writings or a musical score) rather than on pragmatics (spoken sound or a musical performance). For further, see: David Lidov, *Elements of Semiotics* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 129.

[14] Following Peirce, Adorno, Tarasti, Hatten, Lidov, and others also share this sentiment.

- to explain the consistency of musical structures as they correlate with expressive meanings.[15]

The word *correlate* is key to Hatten's theory. Unlike most semiotic theories, which have signs "represent" the object, Hatten uses correlation, a term borrowed from the semiotics of Umberto Eco. The origins of correlation are actually in Peirce's *hypoicon*, where the iconism is not based on resemblance or similarity, but instead on analogous structure that allow for one to be mapped onto the other.[16] Correlation suggests "an association of oppositions in the music-structural and the expressive planes," an association which can but does not need to be referential, representational, or exemplified (i.e. the sign possessing a feature or quality).[17] Correlations correspond to *cultural units*, which are oppositional expressive states or semantic associations dictated by the culture in which they occur.[18]

Markedness is the term for the valuation given to these oppositions.[19] The marked term has a narrower range of use and meaning than the unmarked. These oppositions can happen in nearly every musical element: melody, harmony, meter or time, and even structure. Perhaps the easiest example in Classical style tonal music—and the one that Hatten uses to illustrate this concept in most of his written work—is that of major and minor. Major is unmarked: it occurs more often in the repertoire, and also has a much wider range of mood and meaning, associated with the cultural unit *non-tragic*. Minor, however, occurs less often, and the implied mood is generally in a much narrower spectrum than the major mode, correlating with the cultural unit *tragic*.

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[15] Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven*, 10.

[16] Robert S. Hatten, "Markedness and a theory of musical expressive meaning," *Contemporary Music Review* 16:4 (1997), 53-54.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven*, 30.

[19] Ibid., 34-44. The major/minor example used here is also Hatten's.

Markedness is not merely the identification of distinctive feature differences between two things; rather, it occurs with the oppositional positioning of the event in a larger paradigm of types.[20] Types, as a whole, are generally unmarked. Tokens of a type can be marked based on features in which they differ from the requirements of belonging to the type. Even still, considering markedness in broader terms of types and tokens is still not enough to create a semiotically-founded hermeneutic method of analysis: other evidence must be given to justify the relevance (or irrelevance), expressiveness, or meaning of an opposition.[21] These marked oppositions do not only define types and tokens, iconic or indexical associations, but also more complex levels of musical syntax, or style, which allow for the possibility of symbolic signification.[22] Identifying marked elements and inferring how they contribute to the larger work and style requires stylistic competency.

Stylistic competency is not simply the knowledge of a lexicon of types; rather, style surpasses the expectations of strictly rule-based grammar in that it provides flexibility by balancing constraints with violations of expectation based on those constraints.[23] In other words, qualities that do not fit into stylistic expectations within a competency can contribute to a richer comprehension of the style itself. This interwoven network of asymmetrical oppositions therefore emerges as providing stable coherence of a style.[24] Familiarity with constraints, oppositions, and the use of musical syntax within these networks is a stylistic competency.

Hatten's theories strike a critical balance between semiotics and hermeneutics. As a semiotic foundation, Hatten considers style as a structural foundation upon which correlations and markedness can be identified. However, Hatten acknowledges:

> The hermeneutic, Peircean interpretive process is still crucial at both ends of this dynamic/structural model — to bring evidence to bear that supports the attribution of

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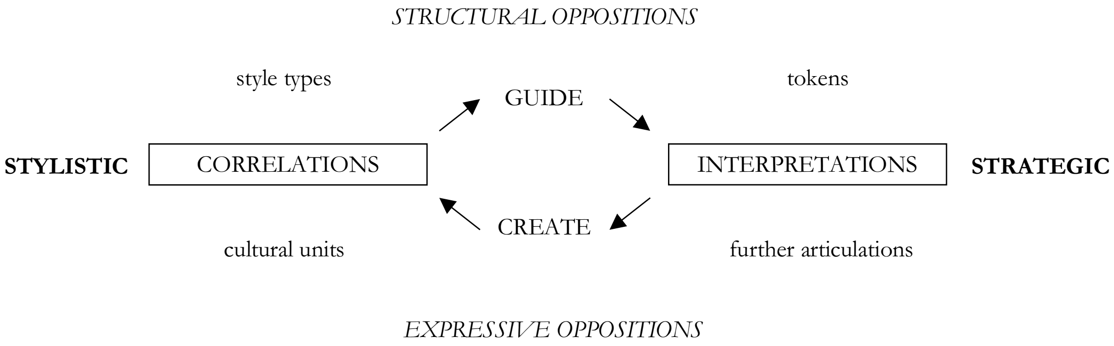
[20] Ibid., 46.
[21] Hatten, "Markedness and a theory of musical expressive meaning," 57.
[22] Ibid., 53-54.
[23] The contributions of constraints will be further addressed later.
[24] Hatten, "Markedness and a theory of musical expressive meaning," 56.

> expressive labels, and to interpret those initially general labels still further, based upon the contexts, and the strategic markedness, of individual works. Ultimately, I recognize, interpretation slips into the unsystematic realm of the subjective. But I also claim a much more extensive common ground of intersubjectively consistent, stylistically guided interpretation. It is this common ground that I have attempted to regain and, perhaps, to explain.[25]

This is the strength of Hatten's theory: that art exceeds methods that are strictly systematic or empirical, and therefore cannot be fully understood that way. However, it is also not purely interpretive, with no constraints. Rather, each interpretive claim requires evidentiary support. As Hatten points out, this way, each interpretation can be a starting point for further interpretations through creative reasoning (Figure 1.7).[26]

Figure 1.7. *Interaction between stylistic correlations and strategic interpretations, with respect to expressive meaning in music.* Copyright Robert Hatten, 1990.



"It is the structure of opposition itself that provides the systematic motivation for more subtle levels of expressive meaning in music."[27] In other words, local events and oppositions contribute to a coherent larger interpretation of the work, what Hatten refers to as *expressive genre*.[28]

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[25] Ibid., 62.

[26] Robert S. Hatten, "On Metaphor and Syntactic Troping in Music," in *Music Semiotics: A Network of Significations: In Honour and Memory of Raymond Monelle*, ed. Esti Sheinberg (New York: Routledge, 2012), 94; see also *Musical Meaning in Beethoven*, 31.

[27] Hatten, "On Metaphor and Syntactic Troping in Music," 54.

[28] Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven*, 67; see also "Four Semiotic Approaches to Musical Meaning: Markedness, Topics, Tropes, and Gesture," *Musicological Annual* 41/1 (2005), 12.

In Peircean terms, expressive genre is actually a type of argument symbolic legisign and occurs from local to general levels. It cannot be deduction, which proceeds from general and makes eliminations to arrive at a logically airtight conclusion; it is also not induction, which involves generalization; rather, it is the process of abduction, which creates a possible inference based on details from a larger context. This larger context, then, contributes to the discovery of further supporting details, in an infinite semiotic and hermeneutic process.

It is this approach, balancing the hermeneutic with the semiotic, subjective interpretation with objective systematic methods, that resonated with me viscerally as a performer. It gives room for the growth, development, and change of an interpretation over time in a systematic but creative way. Gary Shapiro puts it eloquently:

> In semiotic terms, we may say that symbols grow through their interpretation. The work of art is what Peirce calls a "living" symbol, like a constitution or a social practice, which retains its identity through change. Often the meaning of a work of art grows through its interpretation by other works, as well as through critical understanding.[29]

A summation of Hatten's semiotic methods, shown in Figure 1.8, will guide my analyses of Beethoven's Sonata in E-flat major, op. 27, no. 1, and Phillip Sink's *Leave a Comment* in Chapters 3 and 4, respectively. The theory of intention provided in the next chapter will offer considerations for the performer that emerge using these Hatten-inspired analyses.

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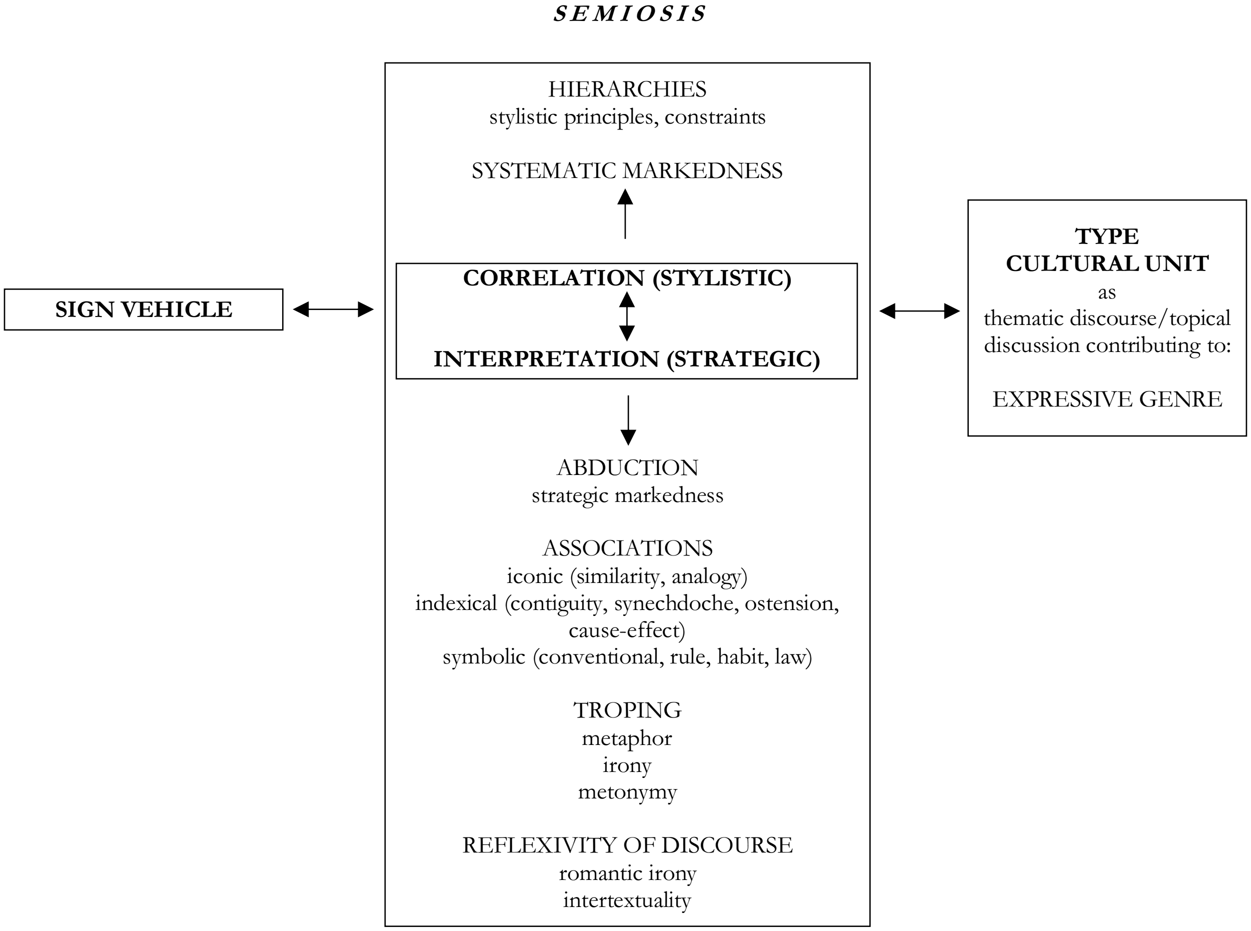
[29] Gary Shapiro, "Intention and Interpretation in Art: A Semiotic Analysis," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 33/1 (Autumn 1974), 39.

Figure 1.8. *Hatten's semiotic process.*
Copyright Robert Hatten, 1994.[30] Reformatted by author, 2020.


SEMIOSIS
SIGN VEHICLE
HIERARCHIES
stylistic principles, constraints
SYSTEMATIC MARKEDNESS
CORRELATION (STYLISTIC)
INTERPRETATION (STRATEGIC)
ABDUCTION
strategic markedness
ASSOCIATIONS
iconic (similarity, analogy)
indexical (contiguity, synechdoche, ostension, cause-effect)
symbolic (conventional, rule, habit, law)
TROPING
metaphor
irony
metonymy
REFLEXIVITY OF DISCOURSE
romantic irony
intertextuality
TYPE
CULTURAL UNIT
as
thematic discourse/topical discussion contributing to:
EXPRESSIVE GENRE

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[30] Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven*, 296.

CHAPTER 2

INTENTION

2.a. *Introduction*

In applied piano lessons with many students, the simple, vague command of "play with intent" yields noticeable differences in their focus, as well as their technical and musical command. When coupled with analysis and planned musical decisions, intentional performance practice helps students achieve improvements that are not only relatively quick, but also consistent, enduring, and unique to each individual.

Literature addressing intention and literature in semiotics share a remarkable amount of common language. The reason for this is quite instinctive: both fields of study deal with the communication of meaning. It stands to reason, then, that a semiotic theory of intention dealing with music performance should be possible. In this chapter, I put forward a skeletal semiotic theory of intention, as well as assert how this is useful to the music performer.

2.b. *Background: What is intention?*

The concept of intention is a slippery fish. The fields of psychology and philosophy search for a source, but intention evades empirical investigation. Reasons for this include multiple kinds of intention (from cognitive predictions, motion initiation, description of neurophysiological preparatory processes to action, and more) as well as the fact that intention is generated privately at first conception.[31]

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[31] Jan Peter de Ruiter et al., "On the origin of intentions," in *Sensorimotor Foundations of Higher Cognition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 601-2; Michael E. Bratman, *Intention, Plans, and Practical Reason* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987).

Promising scholarship on the cognitive and cerebral operations of the generation of communicative action suggests that intention may be able to be understood in a social context.[32] In the generation of communicative actions, actions are designed by a sender to trigger recognition in the receiver; more specifically, the sender can generate a given behavior under the assumption that the receiver can infer the sender's private intentions. [33]

Further, for receivers of the sign, the ability to attribute or designate the intention of the sender (regardless of whether this attribution is the same as the sender's intention) is an automatic phenomenon.[34] There is significant cerebral overlap in the brain structures which support intention recognition with the structures that are involved in first-person intention generation. In other words, we interpret our own intentions using the same mechanisms devoted to evaluating the intentions of others.[35] Intention can be understood, then, in a social context: understanding our own mental states and intentions is related to understanding or bringing about states or intentions in others, and is therefore closely related to a need to account for the consequences of our actions within a social domain.[36]

Many studies on communication processes state that "communication is achieved when a recipient recognizes the intention with which a communicative act is produced."[37] After consulting these sources and others, this statement can be amended in the following way: communication is achieved when a recipient recognizes a communicative act produced with intention. While in some cases, a commonly attributable intention can be reached, in many other cases—particularly in artistic endeavors which lack the discrete stability common in other sign systems—the receiver's interpretation or attribution of the sender's intention can be similar or drastically different, and communication is still achieved. As Michael E. Bratman (b. 1945) points out, intention, though guided by perception, does not depend on success or even the belief of success to still exist.[38] Indeed, success of the intention is dependent on the choice of action brought about by the intention, which, although a related process, is not the same. This is supported by research in fields of psychology and philosophy alike. As early as 1874, Franz Brentano hypothesized the separate but relational nature of "mental intention" and "physical intention."[39] The actions related to intention are instead the physical manifestation of choices endeavored as a result of the intention. This important distinction is a significant factor of the theory to be laid out here: the relation but difference between the mental state of intentions and the perception of them via physical manifestation creates the opportunity for semiotic chains.

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[32] Jan Peter de Ruiter et al., "On the origins of intention."

[33] Ibid., 601, 605.

[34] Ibid., 613.

[35] Christopher Frith and Uta Frith, "How we predict what other people are going to do," *Brain Research* 1079/1 (March 2006), 36-46; Wolfgang Prinz, "Free will as a social institution," in *Does Consciousness Cause Behavior?*, eds. S. Pockett, W. P. Banks, and S. Gallagher (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006), 257-276.

[36] Jan Peter de Ruiter et al., "On the origins of intention," 612-613; Andreas Roepstorff and Christopher Frith, "What's at the top in the top-down control of action? Script-sharing and 'top-top' control of action in cognitive experiments," *Psychological Research* 68/3 (April 2004), 189-198; Eliot R. Smith and Gün R. Semin, "Socially situated cognition: cognition in its social context," *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* 36 (December 2004), 53-117; Günther Knoblich and Natalie Sebanz, "The social nature of perception and action," *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 15/3 (June 2006), 99-104.

[37] Jan Peter de Ruiter et al., "On the origins of intention," 603; Herbert Paul Grice, "Meaning," *Philosophical Review* 66/3 (July 1957), 377-388; Stephen C. Levinson, "Interactional biases in human thinking," *Social Intelligence and Interaction*, ed. E. Goody (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 221-260.

Bratman establishes some very convincing ideas about intention to be used as a philosophical foundation in this chapter. First is that intentions are a distinctive state of mind, on par with beliefs, desires, and knowledge, and often related to any or all of these elements.[40] Secondly, intention itself can originate in two different facets, centered either in volition or reasoning.[41] Finally, intention itself has three roles:

- it poses questions and problems for further reasoning;
- it creates constraints or possibility for further intentions;

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[38] Bratman, *Intention, Plans, and Practical Reason*, 113-114.

[39] Linda L. McAlister, "Chisholm and Brentano on Intentionality," *The Review of Metaphysics* 28/2 (December 1974), 336-337.

[40] Bratman, *Intention, Plans, and Practical Reason*, 20-22.

[41] Ibid., 20.

- it can issue in a corresponding endeavor.[42]

In Bratman's theory, "endeavoring" is the active process which reflects or brings about the intention.[43] This differentiation between intention and endeavoring means that what is intended and what is done depend on different factors: intention is grounded by coordination and planning, whereas endeavoring can be based on reflexes or desires that have not given way to critical thought or reasoning. An endeavoring action is not necessarily borne of intention, though often it is. Additionally, an intentional action differing from original intention does not negate the intention itself.[44]

As an example, intentional decisions made about the music before a performance are dependent on many circumstances in order to take shape in a venue. A pianist may intend to use the damper pedal to connect a harmonically stable, legato passage as appropriate, but find that, in the hall, there is already enough reverberation to achieve the desired effect without much use of the pedal at all, and that with it, other important details are obscured. The pianist then intentionally uses less pedal, although they had the intention to use more, and the intentional action of using less does not negate their original intention to use more, especially since, in this case, the desired effect is still achieved. This demonstrates the motivational potential of intention when serving a communicative action. Likewise, in a different part of the piece that requires a much clearer sound and texture, the pianist may face difficulties and reflexively hold the pedal to try to disguise the difficulties they are having at a point in the music where they did not intend to use any pedal. In this scenario, the performer has not intended to use the pedal, because it does not serve the communicative action that would bring about their intention; however, they have still endeavored and acted to use pedal independently of their previous intention.

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[42] Ibid., 141.
[43] Ibid., 133-138.
[44] Ibid., 119.

The independence of intention and endeavor in Bratman's theory allows him to form an original hypothesis that breaks down intentional endeavoring into "by-chains". These chains of action are the process of achieving intention. One achieves intended *E* by *B*-ing, and achieves *B*-ing by *A*-ing, creating the by-chain *E*-*B*-*A*. Bratman elaborates for his hypothesis that:

- by choosing scenario *S* in pursuit of intended *E*, then a by-chain happens;
- by choosing scenario *S* in pursuit of intended *E*, then one also intends the resulting by-chain;
- one will not choose a scenario or by-chain incompatible with the by-chain, and, by transitive relation, their intended *E*.[45]

Rephrased, these three principles assert that intention takes planning and reason, no matter how brief, since manifesting intention in its chosen medium requires a by-chain process; by using a certain by-chain process to achieve an intention, one also intends that by-chain process; and finally, one will not intentionally choose a by-chain process unrelated to or that will not achieve their intention.

Intuitively, Bratman's by-chain formula seems a bit backwards, since *E* is the achieved intention, and the processes by which it is achieved come after in the formula. More accurate, perhaps, could be *A*-*B*-(etc.)-*E*, since *E* is the result of active processes *A* and *B*. For the purposes of this study, *E* will be changed to abbreviation *Ei*, for executed intention. This by-chain is still missing its impetus, however, the mental intention, abbreviated *Mi*. It should also be noted that by-chain processes can be both mental considerations as well as the physical means by which these decisions are carried out. Thus, a new formula is reached: *Mi* — [*A* - *B* - etc.] — *Ei*.

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[45] Ibid., 155-164.

Returning to the example of a pianist, consider the two-note slur topic in Classical style. The emphasis pattern is stressed-unstressed, with many implications in time (longer-shorter), volume (louder-softer), and connection (legato). With this knowledge and mental intention in mind, the pianist would not choose physical actions which they know to produce two notes which, respectively, are short and then long, are quieter then louder, or are purposefully detached. Another common conception of two-note slurs is that of down-up, taking origin in bowing patterns and the use of bow weight in string instruments. In young pianists, creating a motion that lifts the wrist on the second note often creates an accent instead of resolution on the second note: the lifting of the wrist when not choreographed carefully creates more speed on the attack of the second note, thereby creating an accent. These pianists do not negate their knowledge or intention of the two-note slur through this error. Rather, they can be led to discover a more refined, active by-chain process that more accurately reflects their intention in sound reality.

2.c. *A semiotic theory*

When applied to intention which uses sign systems for communication (language, gesture, art, etc.), by-chains are essentially semiotic in nature: they attempt to account for the process by which intention is achieved without assigning unilateral meaning to the intention or by-chain. Still, through these processes, meanings emerge as relational structures in active behavior.[46]

From the foundations of Peirce's semiotic theory laid out in Chapter I, the modes of being—firstness, secondness, and thirdness—offer inspiration for semiotic insight into intention. Critical to this correlation is the acknowledgment of pragmatic context in which these modes of being are not distinctly separate entities or temporal stages in lived experience: when a person hears a car horn, they do not progress systematically through the modes of being to interpret the situation;

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[46] Cumming, *The Sonic Self*, 48.

rather, all modes of the sign work together for interpretation of the situation as a whole (and, in that situation, hopefully very quickly). However, from an analytical standpoint, consideration of these elements separately has the benefit of recognizing the influence of each mode within the given semiotic event for a more detailed account of how meaning emerges from the situation.

Regarding intention, a sensory experience—including emotional sensation, such as the desire to do something—correlates to firstness. The impetus of the intention-forming process is driven by a sensory experience from which a person forms an intention to act. Engagement with that desire or experience can correspond to secondness, which can manifest as decision-making or even physical execution. Finally, thirdness occurs with established, reliable intentions or habits that allow room for further cycles of this process.

2.d. *Problems, solutions, and considering the performer*

Perhaps the most obvious dilemma here is the matter of infinity: how, in a semiotic theory for music, can this indeterminacy be narrowed? Before answering this, two important factors must be taken into account: the interpretant(s) of music, and the relationship between constraints and determinacy.

Musical meaning is nearly always linked to the subjective, even when brought about by an objective observation.[47] Because of this, neither purely sensory data nor purely relational patterns are possible: the two are mixed at every level. In other words, the sign itself does not self-determine its own interpretation, but requires interpretation in order to take meaning. Gary Shapiro states that to ask what *the* interpretant of a sign is, "is to misunderstand both what it is to be a sign, and, more specifically, what it is to be a work of art. A sign is the sort of thing that requires interpretation, but to which no single interpretant is adequate."[48] Indeed, this failure to identify a single interpretant of a musical sign is not a weakness of the semiotic theory, but a strength: meaning and intent are not exclusively cognitive-perceptive, emotive, or active, but an interaction of the three.[49]

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[47] Cumming, *The Sonic Self*, 23.

Regarding constraints on determinacy, when a sign becomes more determinate, it does not lose indeterminacy. Instead, it acquires other aspects of indeterminacy, usually more specific, and sometimes unanticipated. When addressing this, Shapiro uses the example of Rorschach ink blots versus a Rembrandt portrait. The indeterminacy of the inkblot gives way to a greater possibility of interpretation, but because of this, also provides very little ability to create interrelational patterns with other inkblots. Rembrandt, on the other hand, shows a much more highly developed sense of style and iconography, creating more specific expressive and interpretive possibilities through networks of a more constrained style.[50] Complete indeterminacy is trivial and not correlative; systematic constraints provide the opportunity to create semiotic chains of meaning. This assertion is also supported by some cognitive and neurophysiological studies that find communicative intention is designed to be interpretable for an audience, and that a solution among an infinite set of possible meanings relies on heuristic constraints set forward by tradition and style.[51]

Robert S. Hatten's methods fit well with these considerations, making his suggestions for analysis an ideal fit for a semiotic exploration of intention. Hatten's focus on history and style constraints also invites a semiotic consideration: his theory allows for the reflection of style back onto itself to compare and find meaning through difference. As Lidov acknowledges, music's ability to be considered in terms of different styles and conventions, from specific to more general, opens the possibility for semiotic "thirdness."[52] This is not to say that Hatten's ideas and approaches are the only ones; indeed, certainly not. However, in relation to intention, this type of semiotic and hermeneutic understanding of the music influences how the music is performed, since mental intention influences the chosen processes by which the executed intention comes to be.

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[48] Shapiro, "Intention and Interpretation in Art: A Semiotic Analysis," 37.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid., 40
[51] de Ruiter et al., "On the origins of intention," 604-605.
[52] David Lidov via Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven*, ix-xi; see also David Lidov, *Elements of Semiotics*.

This perceptible executed intention is the means by which a performer's character and "personal sound" appears. The performer is attributed their musical identity via the existing sound in a social context (the performance venue).[53] The inner self, where performer identity is often assumed to exist, is instead the agent of mental intent and choice of by-chains, whereas the presentation of these choices takes outer effect as the sound sign. Naomi Cumming notes that the performer's awareness of their outer portrayal gives the inner agent the opportunity to question, decide, and adapt,[54] based on the stylistic context and performance environment. In my theory, this also involves the reconciliation between mental intention and executed intention via the performer's choices and physical manifestations of those choices. However, the performer's identity is not merely a projection of desires onto the music. Using constraints to specify overwhelming indeterminacy, the performer becomes an explorer of a system in a social context that resists imposing meaning onto it.[55] An audience can investigate the music when a performer interacts with it (and can even investigate the performer's interaction with the music), but cannot reveal the purely inner states of the performer without any sign that manifests in reality.[56] Therefore, only through performance can the performer individuate themselves as a performer with an intentional identity, and therefore act to form sounds as bearing signification and meaning.[57] In other words, the performer cannot be revealed by imperceptible inner states; rather, their interaction with the music in reality, within a culture, defines how the performer is identified.

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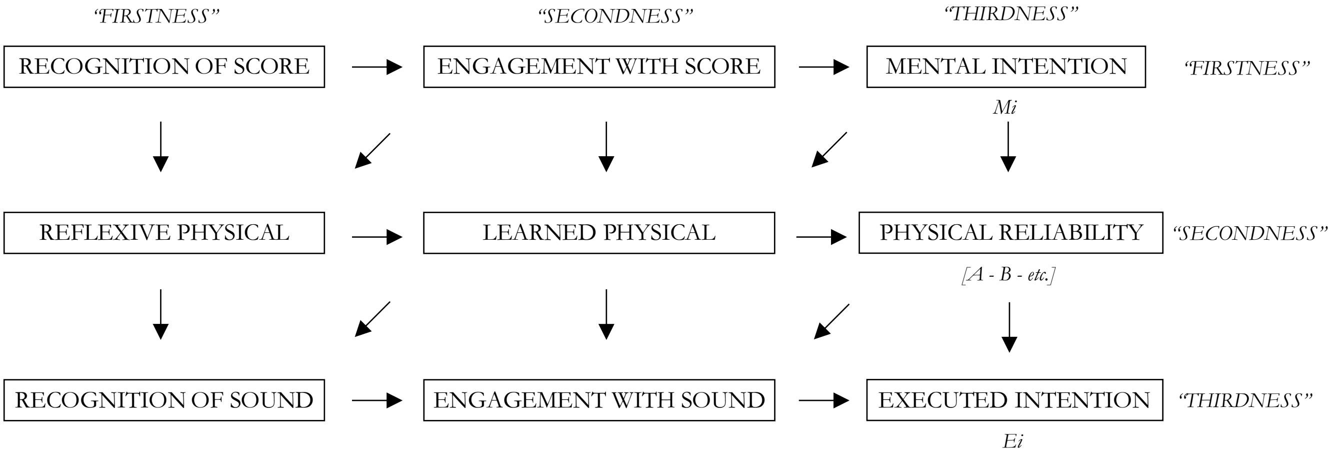
[53] Cumming, *The Sonic Self*, 10.
[54] Ibid., 9-13; André Helbo, "Semiotics and performing art: contemporary issues," *Social Semiotics* 26/4 (2016), 346.
[55] Cumming, *The Sonic Self*, 57-58.
[56] Ibid., 59.
[57] Ibid., 43.

2.e. *A process for the performer*

Intention relies upon planning.[58] That planning is then accomplished via decisions and active processes. Two types of intention emerge as relevant for the performer: future-directed and present-directed.[59]

Future-directed intention is directed to non-present endeavoring and execution, and finds origin in sensory processes of the past. For the performing musician, the process of future-directed intention is generally known as another name: practice. This is not to say that all practice requires or produces new intentions; on the contrary, the musicians themselves are responsible for the growth of this process, and can plateau at any point, from the intention to only play the pitches recognized on the page, to the intention not to practice a piece of music at all. However, the infinite levels of interaction between sensory and thought processes during practice create an environment for semiotic consideration of practice. (Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1. *Hypothetical network of intention processes as influenced by Peirce's modes of being.*
Author's own copyright, 2020.


"FIRSTNESS"
"SECONDNESS"
"THIRDNESS"
RECOGNITION OF SCORE
ENGAGEMENT WITH SCORE
MENTAL INTENTION
"FIRSTNESS"
Mi
REFLEXIVE PHYSICAL
LEARNED PHYSICAL
PHYSICAL RELIABILITY
"SECONDNESS"
[A - B - etc.]
RECOGNITION OF SOUND
ENGAGEMENT WITH SOUND
EXECUTED INTENTION
"THIRDNESS"
Ei

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[58] Bratman, *Intention, Plans, and Practical Reason.*

[59] A quick clarification about these terms: I am using Bratman's syntax here. In the most literal sense, all intention is future-directed, since intention will manifest before the actions which realize it, even by the most infinitesimal margin. These terms clarify instead the temporal window of the planning period.

Just as with the Peircean modes of being, for experienced musicians with a range of stylistic competencies, these processes rarely happen in isolated stages like the ones listed in Figure 2.1; rather, they interact and occur to produce a signifying experience. For example, rarely would a pianist have to consider whether or not the piece of music is actually a rhematic iconic sinsign token of the larger type *musical score*.[60] Instead, the recognition of the score interacts with a musician's knowledge of context and allows them to address another semiotic process that builds upon the interpretation of the previous process.

Put another way, a level of "thirdness" in each part of the process depends on a reliability or consistency in knowledge and/or action that allow the performer to be aware of the sign's relationship to certain aspects of convention, not merely the appearance of the sign itself. This process requires more time and practice in some circumstances than others, and for each individual musician, the process, ideas, and intentions will differ slightly. Because of the pitch-dominant nature of tonal music (when considering both harmony and melody), playing correct notes as a level of reliable convention may come quite a bit sooner in the practicing process than physical execution of other elements in the score, such as fine motor skills required for articulation. Here, the reliability is the endeavored physicality of pressing the correct key. Knowledge of convention is present in recognizing the sounding pitch as the sound which corresponds to the symbol in the score (e.g. knowing that the pitch that sounds at approximately 440 Hz is an A, and which A on the keyboard it is). Both are levels of "thirdness," but again, are intuitive and rarely separated phenomena until an opposition or error occurs.

For humans, the level of consistency of an achievable task is always in flux: no one executes an action exactly the same way twice, even with the most reliable and consistent future-directed intention and execution. Present-directed intention, then, provides the opportunity to adapt intention as motivated by sensory stimuli to the immediate past, the present as just-percceived.

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[60] An exception here, of course, is if the performer is confronted with non-standard, unfamiliar styles of notation, like the first time a pianist sees scores composed for David Tudor by Earle Brown, Morton Feldman, Karlheinz Stockhausen, etc.

Present directed intention, then, is a semiotic response circuit:

- perception of the sound created (the *Ei*);
- comparison of *Mi* to *Ei*;
- active engagement (present-directed intention, or *pMi*) to make changes or not to by-chain processes based on the interaction between *Mi* and *Ei* (i.e. the success of *Ei* as conveying the meaningful intention of *Mi*).

The present-directed intention by-chain formula would therefore look something like:

Ei perception — [*Mi* - *Ei* comparison] — *pMi* — [*A* - *B* - etc.] — *Ei*

This response circuit is influenced by planned, future-directed intention, but also considers the present elements that unfold in time with the musical experience (see Figure 2.2). As an example, think back to the pianist earlier in this chapter who decided to use less pedal than they originally intended because of the acoustics of the hall (p. 25). Based on the environmental constraints that influence their *Ei* in acoustic reality, the pianist creates an altered, present-directed *Mi* and enacts it through by-chain processes, thereby creating a new *Ei* that conveys the influence of the original *Mi* while conforming to the environmental and temporal elements unfolding with the performance.

Figure 2.2. *Process of present-directed intention.*
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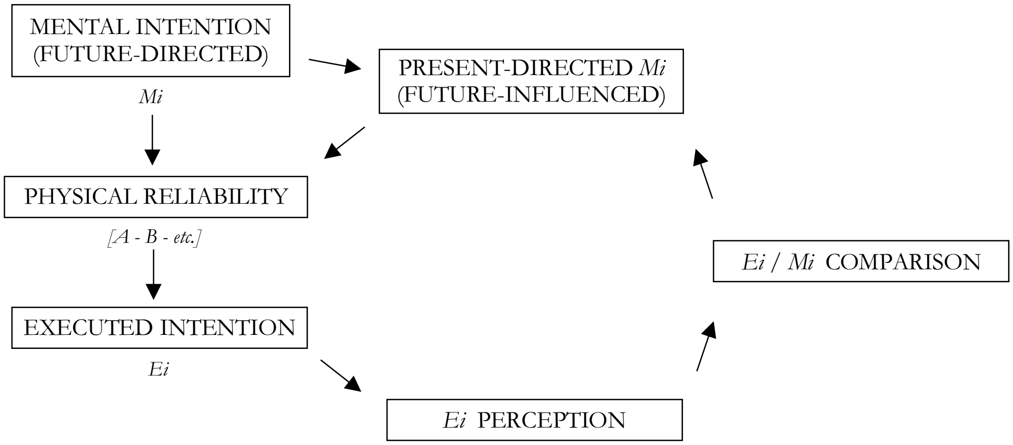
MENTAL INTENTION (FUTURE-DIRECTED)
Mi
PRESENT-DIRECTED Mi (FUTURE-INFLUENCED)
PHYSICAL RELIABILITY
[A - B - etc.]
EXECUTED INTENTION
Ei
Ei / Mi COMPARISON
Ei PERCEPTION

2.f. *How is this useful?*

Semiotic theories offer very organized systems of studying how meaning emerges in music, though the methods often differ among them. In Hatten's method, basic sensory observations are recognized and grouped into types, tokens, styles, correlations, oppositions, and so on. Based on this, the performer uses empirical observations in conjunction with cultural convention to develop plausible creative interpretations, from small details to larger trajectories like expressive genre. These interpretations are, in their most basic form, intentions.

Although some semiotic considerations break down intuitive processes that, in reality, occur seemingly as bound entities (for example, the three modes of being), these counter-intuitive, more detailed analyses can be useful, particularly when considering an important part of the music-making experience: human variability. If a performer intends for a certain passage to correlate to a particular expressive state or semantic association, their execution will fall on a spectrum between successful and unsuccessful, depending on the context. From there, the success or lack thereof can be attributed to the formation of the interpretation itself, or to the process of carrying out the intention. By breaking both of those processes down into less intuitive, less "chunked" states, it allows the possibility for the performer—and the listener—to conjecture which part(s) of each semiotic process contribute most to the success or failure, and thereby allow continuous improvement.

Intention and semiotic analysis of the music also allow for an ongoing process of interpretation that can, theoretically, infinitely develop more aspects of meaning. Particularities analyzed within a piece contribute to larger expressive trajectories; likewise, overall expressive scope then reinforces the discovery of more particularities which contribute. Considering intention and execution in an analogous way provides the opportunity for executed intention to contribute to future-directed intention, as well as considerations and alterations to the by-chain execution process. This "living" nature of interpretation also allows for the consideration of context at every level of each process. For example, in music that is not contemporary to the culture or time in which it is being performed, this allows for historical context to influence the analysis (like the Classical era topics that will be explored in the next chapter). It also allows for reflection and adaptation to immediate circumstances at every point within the process, from observation and recognition to intention and execution.

Finally, this style of analysis allows for—and even encourages—individuation of the performer. By creating plausibility through multiple facets of evidentiary support, performers have a constrained starting point that enables a refined and detailed interpretation and execution atop a blanket of correlations and competencies that are understood, rather like the Rembrandt portraits mentioned earlier in this chapter. However, even through mutual understanding of cultural and stylistic constraints, each performer's lived experience is different, and therefore their observations, interpretations, and intentions will differ. Not only that, but when considering the execution of intention, this allows for the variability of human form. Considering pianists, no two people have the same hands, and therefore, the physical means by which a performer creates a sound will vary.

Therefore, processes which consider the performer require contextual flexibility, rather than empiricism, in order to understand how to account for these variables which can still achieve a similarly understood meaning within a culture. This is the strength of a semiotic theory in music.

Intention affects the way music is performed. Mental intention requires planning, future- or -present-directed, which directly affects the by-chain processes through which the music is achieved. This is one possible explanation for the phenomenon stated at the very beginning of this chapter: even when students lack a plausible musical interpretation, intention provides focused attention on creating and responding to the sound occurring in reality. When coupled with semiotic and hermeneutic processes to find possible realms of meaning in the music, as well as reinforcement through practice to achieve relative consistency, future-directed intention has the potential to change the way the performer conceives and delivers music, which thereby affects the musical communication between performer and listener. In addition, present-directed intention offers the opportunity for the performer to refine their awareness of the sign that the audience members perceive. This is critical to the performer's ability to reconcile the inner conception of their own performance identity with how it occurs in outer reality.

The following chapters of analysis will address the role of intention by the performer in musical contexts. By demonstrating plausible interpretations and relation to future-directed and present-directed intention chains, intuitive practice procedures applied by performers can be considered in a more detailed context, leading to further interpretive chains of meaning.

CHAPTER 3

BEETHOVEN'S SONATA IN E-FLAT MAJOR, OP. 27, NO. 1

3.a. *A bit of background*

The two Sonatas, Op. 27, were both given the title *Sonata quasi una fantasia* by Beethoven and were published at the same time (though not together) in 1802, most likely composed in 1801. Other than their titles, the commonalities between these two sonatas are relatively few: the first is definitively non-tragic and pastoral; the second is tragic and fiery (though with a dash of the pastoral in the middle). The titles, however, are noteworthy.

In the 17th and 18th centuries, sonatas were instrumental works with multiple movements. When uniting fantasy and sonata, a tradition of integrating binary form dance elements was typical: dance elements shaped rhythmic groupings, particularly at the beginning of phrases and at cadences, while the middle of phrases were extended under the influence of fantasy.[61] However, the evolution of form and harmony into a type—known as Classical sonata form—did not occur until Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (1714-1788). C. P. E. Bach established what we now know as the continuous exposition, characterized by the *Fortspinnung* of an initial theme (rather than an easily identifiable first and second theme separated by medial caesura).[62] As the popularity of this type became widely accepted and practiced in Western European compositional culture, and further promulgated by, perhaps most notably, Joseph Haydn (1732-1809) and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791), fantasy forms were defined by their rejection of sonata type expectations.[63]

Fantasies were often affiliated with the otherworldly (ghosts, gods, morals) thanks in large part to 18th-century opera.[64] On the keyboard, the fantasy portrayed a style influenced by improvisation, elaborate figuration, shifting harmonies, chromatic bass movement, and sudden contrasts between gestures and sections.[65] The fantasy is dramatic, a sign of creative originality manifesting itself in transitions, developments, and codas, which is of particular importance to Op. 27, No. 1. In addition, fantasies were a way for each composer to showcase their unique signatures, and Beethoven's often were unpredictable, especially with regard to formal structure.[66]

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[61] Leonard G. Ratner, *Classic Music: Expression, Form, and Style* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1980), 233.
[62] James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 54.
[63] Charles Rosen, *The Classical Style: Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1998), 91.
[64] Ratner, *Classic Music*, 24-25.

A sonata-fantasy in 1802 would have been a novel combination of styles: the two typically existed side-by-side (à la C. P. E. Bach, and later, Mozart's famous C minor pair, K. 457 and 475, which are often performed back-to-back). The implication, then, is of an emergent type, a piece for piano that implies a four-movement sonata form but with temporal and structural influences of a fantasy.

Hatten refers to the juxtaposition of opposing types as *troping*. Through the opposition of these correlations, a unique meaning is produced.[67] Hatten provides four axes to consider in the analysis of a trope:

- the compatibility among correlations (from complementarity to contradiction);
- the degree of dominance among correlations;
- the creativity among the interaction of correlations;
- the ongoing productivity over the course of the section/movement/piece.[68]

Because, at the time, the interaction between fantasy and sonata form would have been novel, there is a high level of creativity here, which implies a high level of emergent meaning and influence throughout the piece, as well. Compatibility, dominance, and productivity of sonata form versus fantasy will be a focal point in the analysis of the sonata to follow, as well as an influencing factor when considering the expressive genre—the larger expressive trajectory—of this sonata.

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[65] Ever the father of Classical keyboard writing, C. P. E. Bach's fantasies exemplify these qualities.
[66] Ibid., 314.
[67] Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven*, 166.
[68] Robert S. Hatten, "The Troping of Topics in Mozart's Instrumental Works," in *The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory* ed. Danuta Mirka (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 515.

A style correlation that interacts with the fantasy-sonata trope throughout this sonata, and will therefore also be useful in analysis and when determining an expressive genre, is that of the pastoral. Beethoven was particularly fond of nature: it was often a source of inspiration for him and was also a significant part of his spirituality.[69] Because of this, its manifestations in his music often imply a deeper symbolism relating to the spiritual.[70] The pastoral was accepted as stable, not a medium for the dramatic—the exception being the embedded storm topic, as in many of the pastoral works of Haydn and Schubert. Often it was private, a medium through which to express introverted rather than extroverted meaning.

Major mode and quiet dynamics are two features typical of the pastoral, though these are so general that they do not distinguish the pastoral from other topics or genres. However, there are several other traits of the pastoral which can be telling, including pedal points, simple melodies, rocking motion, wedge-shaped contrary motion, parallel thirds and sixths, and compound meter. All of these features are found throughout Op. 27, No. 1, and nearly all of them in the first movement itself.

Finally, topics must be mentioned briefly. In the most basic sense, topics are musical figures or procedures that are associated with a conventional meaning in a culture.[71] Topics can be smaller gestural styles, such as a motif or phrase, or larger types that span entire pieces (a march or minuet, for example), but regardless, they preserve stability in expressive or semantic correlations. The pastoral style, addressed above, is a topic; in this case, it is a large-scale type that exerts influence over the entirety of this sonata.

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[69] John Crabbe, *Beethoven's Empire of the Mind*, (Newbury: L. Baines, 1982), 105-107.
[70] Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven*, 83.
[71] Ratner, *Classic Music*; Hatten *Musical Meaning in Beethoven*; Mirka, *The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory.*

3.b. *Analysis*

I. Andante

The first movement of Beethoven's Op. 27, No. 1 (Example 3.1) is a striking departure from a more prototypical Classical keyboard sonata, which would usually begin in a much more declamatory and faster manner. Even in sonata movements with slow introductions, the introduction tends to be rather brief and moves harmonically in a way that leads the listener to the impending quickened tempo. Here, unmarked stability of harmony and repetition brings attention to the marked departure from the expected sonata form.

From the first impression, this movement is peaceful and innocent, with a relatively stable harmonic structure that rocks gently back and forth between the tonic and dominant, yet always returning to the tonic. Other pastoral elements include parallel thirds and sixths, quiet dynamics, arpeggiation of the dominant seventh (e.g. m. 4, also implied in m. 2), a simple melody that also lilts tenderly with the harmony. Even V^4_2 chords are not resolved to their standard first inversion tonic but are evaded by means of a musette-like counterpoint to resolve to the root position, as in mm. 2-3 and analogous locations. Similar is the treatment of the V^4_3 not as passing, but as stable and resolving to the root position of itself, rather than I^6 (m. 11-12). This breaking of standard resolution practice also contributes to a feeling of naïveté. With the pastoral, the naïve and the sentimental are particularly common traits. Paul Alpers even states that it is the "essence of the pastoral to apprehend the naïve in a sophisticated way,"[72] but also that naïveté within the pastoral always maintains simplicity.[73]

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[72] Paul Alpers, "Convening and Convention in Pastoral Poetry," *New Literary History* 14/2 (Winter 1983), 278.

[73] Paul Alpers, "Schiller's *Naïve and Sentimental Poetry* and the Modern Idea of Pastoral," in *Cabinet of the Muses: essays on classical and comparatie literature in honor of Thomas G. Rosenmeyer*, ed. Mark Griffith and Donald J. Mastronarde (Atlanta: Scholars' Press, 1990), 320.

Example 3.1. *Beethoven, Sonata in E-flat major, Op. 27, No. 1: I. Andante*
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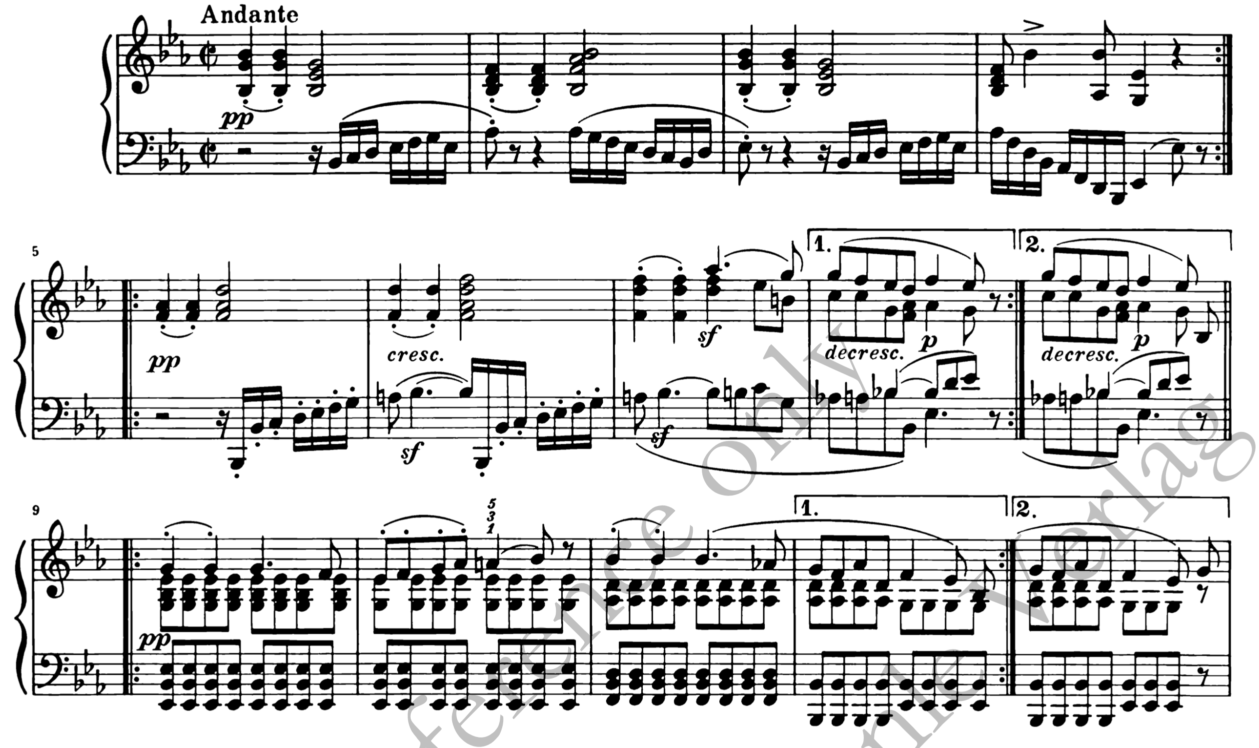
Andante
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5
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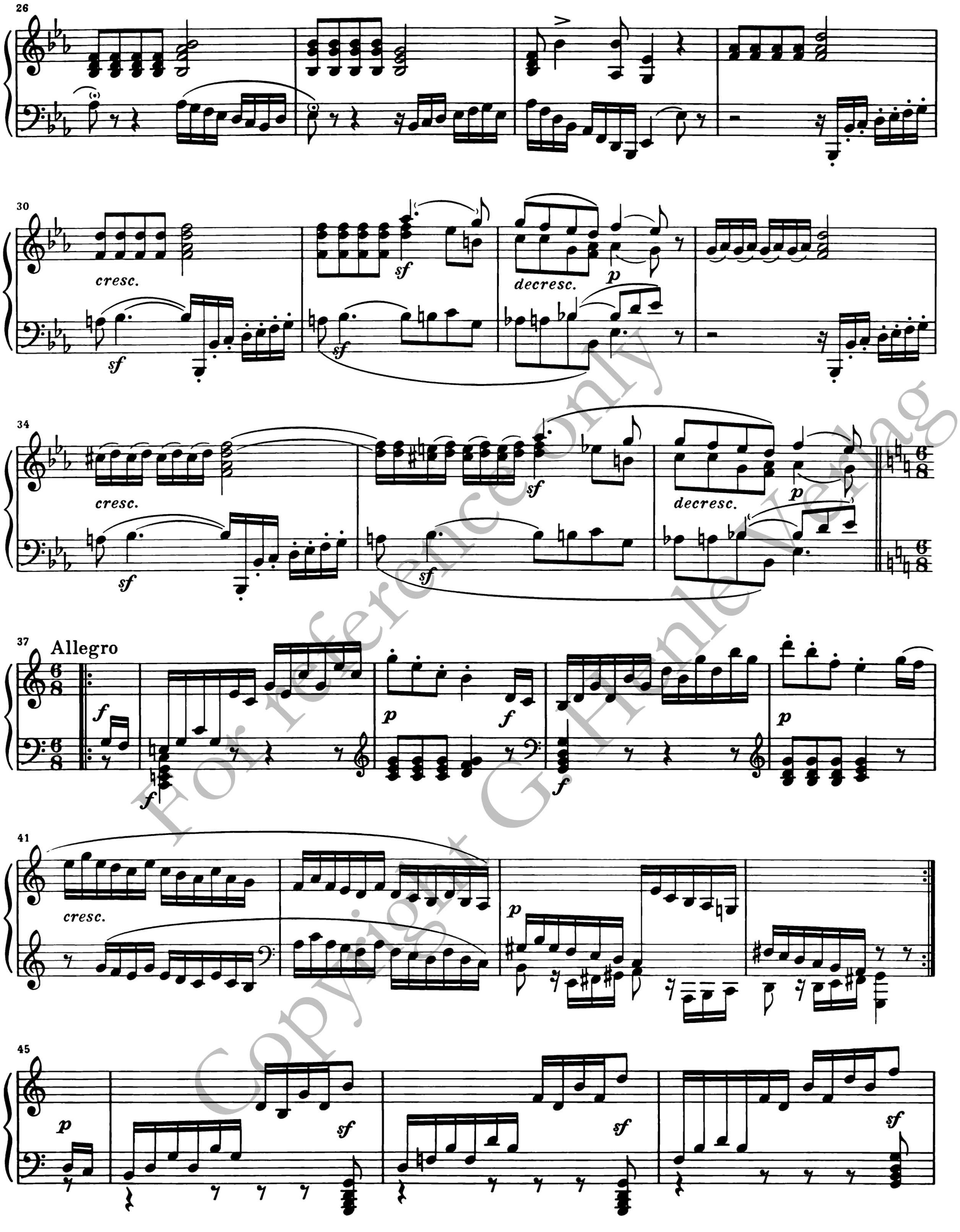
26
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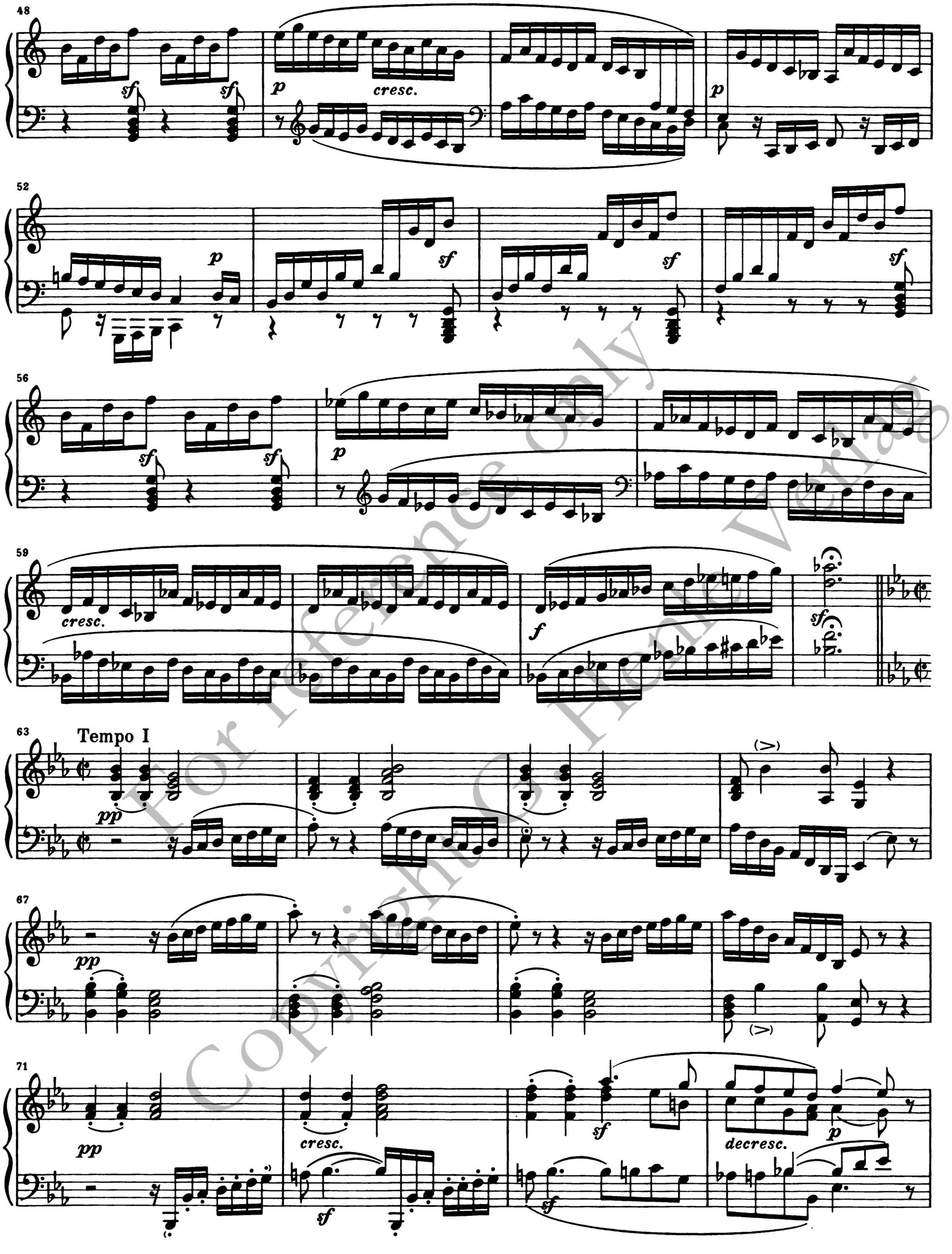
48
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Tempo I
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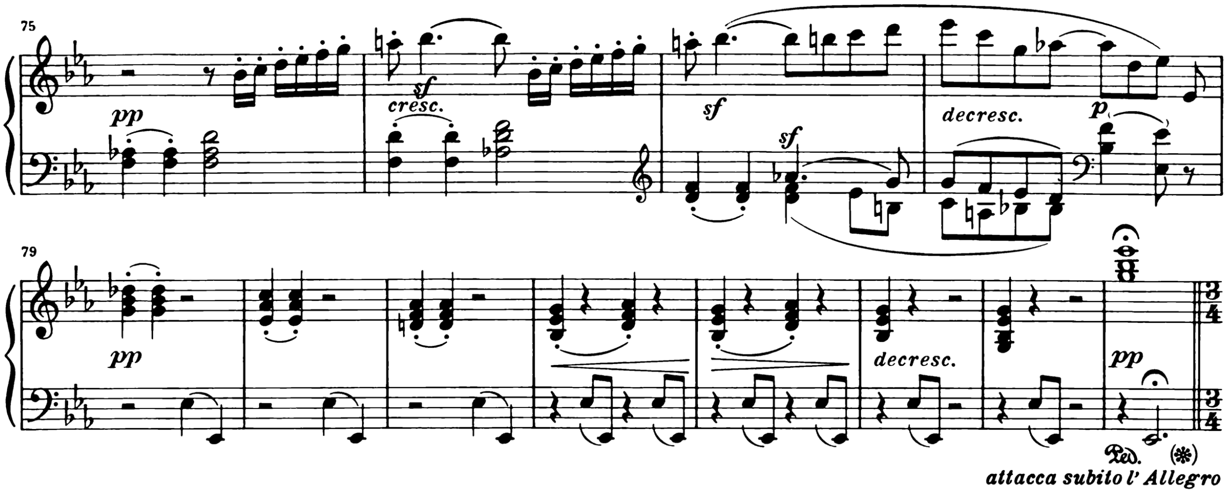

Op. 27, No. 1 opens with a movement that has unmarked simplicity, including a sparse melody, basic harmony, and predictable periodicity, but also marked sophistication, like the *alla breve* time signature.[74] The pianist Edwin Fischer even apparently noted that the simplicity of this movement had baffled him, and that he only understood it when played very naturally by a young girl.[75] This allusion to childlike innocence and the pastoral is also borne out in literature, no less by one of Beethoven's favorite poets: Friedrich Schiller.[76] Schiller, in *On Naïve and Sentimental Poetry*, lays out how both these elements manifest in the pastoral, the naïve as more direct and simple, and the sentimental as reflective and personal.[77] For the naïve pastoral, Schiller's model is that of a child and the child's maturation.[78] It is reasonable to assume that Beethoven would have been familiar with this text and this idea.

Amidst the pastoral stasis and innocence, though, begin marked musical events more evocative of the fantasy: syncopated *sforzandi* (m. 6), an offbeat crux (m. 7), and cadential extensions via deceptive chromatic resolutions (mm. 7-8), particularly when considered with the chromatic bass line that furnishes the ability for these extensions. There are also two elements that, throughout the movement and the piece, will become associatively significant. The first is the rhythm introduced with a new melody at m. 9, which is carried through to m. 13 though the melody and harmony are not. The other, a marked, non-sequitur change to C major, nods to the pastoral by moving harmonically "backwards," implying stability, but correlates to the influence of fantasy due to its unexpected appearance and the thematic continuation of rhythm and melodic contour from the section before.[79] A wedge-shaped expansion, a pastoral quality, at mm. 13-14 reverses the implied stability of C major into the more-expected dominant of F minor, the supertonic, where harmony is suspended over a barline and resolves by falling nearly two octaves. This expansion and release does not come across as yearning and resignation, as in the pastoral first movement of Op. 101;[80] instead, its recurrence only twice out of an abruptly-changed key area as an ornamented repeat of itself implies that it is something that should be noticed, but is dismissed and vanishes as suddenly as it came.

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[74] Ratner, *Classic Music*, 68-69, 364. Alla breve was generally reserved for the serious, the sacred, and the tragic-sacred.
[75] Angela Hewitt, Notes to *Beethoven Piano Sonatas* (2018), Hyperion Records, CDA68199.
[76] Ludwig van Beethoven, *Beethoven's Letters*, trans. John S. Shedlock, ed. Alfred C. Kalischer (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1972). Beethoven even accounted Schiller as one of the "immortal poets" in a letter to the directors of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in 1824 (*Beethoven's Letters*, 321). Beethoven often read Schiller's work, and felt a very close bond to the other artist (*Beethoven's Letters*, 11, 41, 92, 111-112, 161).
[77] Alpers, "Schiller's *Naïve and Sentimental Poetry* and the Modern Idea of Pastoral."
[78] Ibid., 322; Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven*, 308.

The return of the original theme innocently occurs as if this inflection had never happened, again, asserting the dominance of the pastoral in this movement. Indeed, nothing like those bars occurs again within this movement of the sonata. Instead, variations of the first theme greet the listener, and the use of variation technique in the thematic exposition of a sonata highlights the serene quality of the pastoral.[81]

A sudden interruption after a weak cadence brings the return of C major (m. 37). Once again, C major is a marked surprise, though this time, multiple marked oppositions emphasize its expressive potential: a change of meter (from simple cut time to compound $\frac{6}{8}$), tempo (Allegro), dynamic (forte), and topic. The calm, innocent pastoral is interrupted by the brilliant style, characterized by virtuosic passages, sudden articulation and dynamic changes, and evocations of mechanism, here exemplified by the ascending broken chords and descending scalar patterns. In addition, this change confirms the absence of Classical sonata form within the first movement of this piece.

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[79] Hatten points out that closely- and distantly-related keys correlate to normalcy and extremity, respectively (*Musical Meaning in Beethoven*, 11-13).
[80] Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven*, 92-104.
[81] Ibid., 88-89.

This section itself is a form within a form. Composite forms—a form within a form—are particularly evocative of the fantasy genre, especially when each section has a high degree of autonomy while occurring within a piece where movements are *attacca* or run together, which is the case in Op. 27, No. 1.[82] The form here is a simple binary, save the two-bar extension at the end (mm. 61-62). This extension is the result of the stall in register in mm. 59-60: whereas in mm. 41-44 and 49-52, the canon continues cascading downwards, the emergence of V^7 in the movement's home key of E-flat major stalls in the middle register, then scales upward before coming to a halt, once again recalling the A-flat from the phrase cruxes in the opening section (mm. 7, 14, 18).

Again, the main theme returns, offering more variations and a coda that models itself on a simple rocking gesture (mm. 79-86). The complete juxtaposition between the two sections offers such stark contrast that it invites metaphor: the consistent return to the opening theme between fantasy-evocative episodes lends the sense that the pastoral is omnipresent, and the lack of integration of the dizzying, frantic ups and downs and boisterousness of mm. 37-62 (as well as its foreshadowing in mm. 13-20) offers a sense of resistance against an intruding thematic world. When considering the sense of naïveté in this movement, this resistance is likely not willful but instead the inability to reconcile the emergence of something unexpected.

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[82] Ratner, *Classic Music*, 325-326.

Every event addressed here can have implications for the performer and the process of creating and executing intention, and to delve into each in detail would go beyond the confines of this study. However, one important opportunity for intention and interpretation using correlations, stylistic competency, and creativity is at the very beginning, and affects the trajectory of the entire movement: the tempo.

Andante is always a rather ambiguous tempo marking. In addition, Beethoven's other movements or pieces in an *alla breve Andante* have a wide range of tempi. Czerny and Moscheles, two of the biggest promoters and pupils of Beethoven's music, mark the performance practice tempo quite slow, less than half the speed of other cut-time *Andantes*, like the Variations, WoO 73. Many, including Schenker, suspect that this time signature is a misprint,[83] and since the autograph score is lost, there is no way to confirm. Although most of Beethoven's cut-time movements are quite fast, there are two notable *Andantes* that share an *alla breve* time signature and slow tempo in performance practice, and are also marked as pastoral by the composer himself: they both occur in the piano autograph score of *Die Geschöpfe des Prometheus*, Op. 43.[84] Misprint or not, in this sonata, the time signature creates expressive necessity: not only is the tempo marked in *alla breve* context, but the first movement of a keyboard sonata in this somewhat static, pastoral style is also marked. Thus, the performer should not regard the *alla breve* as an indication of double time, but instead must intend for a broader hierarchy of two beats to generate a sense of rocking, again promoting the gentle grace of the pastoral. This creates the ability for a distinct contrast in tempo at m. 37, as well as highlighting the harmonic stasis, articulation changes (like the left hand, measures 1-2 versus 5-6), and innocence in the character.

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[83] Heinrich Schenker, ed., *Beethoven: Complete Piano Sonatas* (Vienna: Universal, 1918).
[84] One occurs in the tenth movement, the other in the twelfth.

II. Allegro molto e vivace

Within the expectations of a four-movement Classical sonata, a shift to the relative minor for the second movement is not unprecedented. Less common, however, is a fast second movement, particularly after an unpredictably leisurely first movement. Aside from providing articulatory variety to the *moto perpetuo* implications of this movement, the three-note slurs highlight the harmony: a classic chromatic lament bass, characteristic of the keyboard fantasy style while also emphasizing the tragic correlation of C minor. However, octave displacement every two bars is opposed by the harmony, which also changes every two measures but is "ahead" by one measure, creating the metric effect of harmonic suspension. This registral shift and feeling of suspension correlate to searching and circularity, and culminate in cadential gestures, which are staccato, forte, and feature octaves on each downbeat to highlight the adamancy of the closure (Example 3.2, mm. 13-16, 37-40).

Two-measure interspersions of a unison, C minor triad (mm. 1-2, 25-26, etc.) are the only gestures within the movement in parallel motion between the hands—everything else is contrary motion. These gestures are not only marked because of parallel motion, but also by the upward trajectory of the line: every other phrase descends, but these two-measure rising gestures lift phrases. Registral climb in pastoral context often represents a searching for resolution from the inner self, especially in musical contexts of struggle.[85] In this musical case, it is doubly marked, and therefore stands out that much more. If the tragic minor cadences are frustration at some sort of tragedy or failure, then the two-bar ascents are rising to meet the challenge anew.

Amidst the tragedy comes a whiff of gusto, nearly heroism, displayed in a contrasting middle section (m. 42). A conspicuous lack of horn intervals aids this section in evading a hunt topic, but the iambic rhythmic distribution (a direct anacrusis leading to a strong downbeat), creating a duple hypermeter indicative of the pastoral *horse gallop* topic.[86] The melody is peppered in on the second beat of each measure, rising to a suspended trill above a fully diminished seventh, then falling with the expected resolution to a cadential $^{6}_{4}$. After a repeat, the melody continues in two note gestures, falling and rising, still maintaining the wandering, searching quality from the first section, but in the context of a major mode bravura that succumbs to its breathlessness before giving in to the tragic once more.

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[85] Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven*, 100-101; Ratner, *Classic Music.*

This breathless metric displacement, however, carries through to our first theme. From m. 89 to the end, the right hand maintains the legato line, but is delayed by an eighth rest, while the left hand notes fall on each beat and change to staccato. This textural shift, a Classical topic of notated rubato, is distinct and profound, and contributes to the sense of urgency. The network of oppositions here—articulation via marked staccato and unmarked legato, rhythm by marked syncopation of the right hand—creates a unique musical effect: the searching affect from before becomes an expressive loss of control, thanks to the loss of synchronicity, which infiltrates the cadential gestures in the coda (mm. 128-140). The upward C minor gestures that once gave lift to the music come cascading down the keyboard, perhaps a gesture of resignation, particularly when examined with the Picardy third before a unison end. Certainly, this is not a peaceful resignation, but with the shift in mode, neither is it as violent as could have been predicted.

Like the first movement, the form of the second movement is definitively ternary, and contains a binary form in the middle, a composite form reminiscent of fantasy influence. As stated earlier in this chapter, this representation of the fantasy genre often makes itself most well-known in contrasting sections and in transitionary moments.[87] In the middle section, instead of sub-sections divisible by eight bars, the first "half" is 14 measures, and the final half 18 measures, creating asymmetry between the sections while maintaining a larger symmetry. In addition, the coda features a phrase elision: m. 128 is simultaneously the cadence of the preceding measures, as well as the launching point for the coda, creating an asymmetrical transition that reinforces the instability already occurring in other facets of the music.

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[86] Other pieces to use the horse gallop as a pastoral topic include the last movement of the Beethoven's Symphony No. 3, Mozart's Quartet in B-flat major, K. 458, and even Haydn's Symphony in D major, Hob. I:73, but most also make use of the horn call topic, as well.

[87] In the first movement, note the broken symmetry of eight-bar phrases at only one point: mm. 61-62, the reversal in contour and upward search for the V^7 cadence.

Example 3.2. *Beethoven, Sonata in E-flat major, Op. 27, No. 1: II. Allegro molto e vivace*
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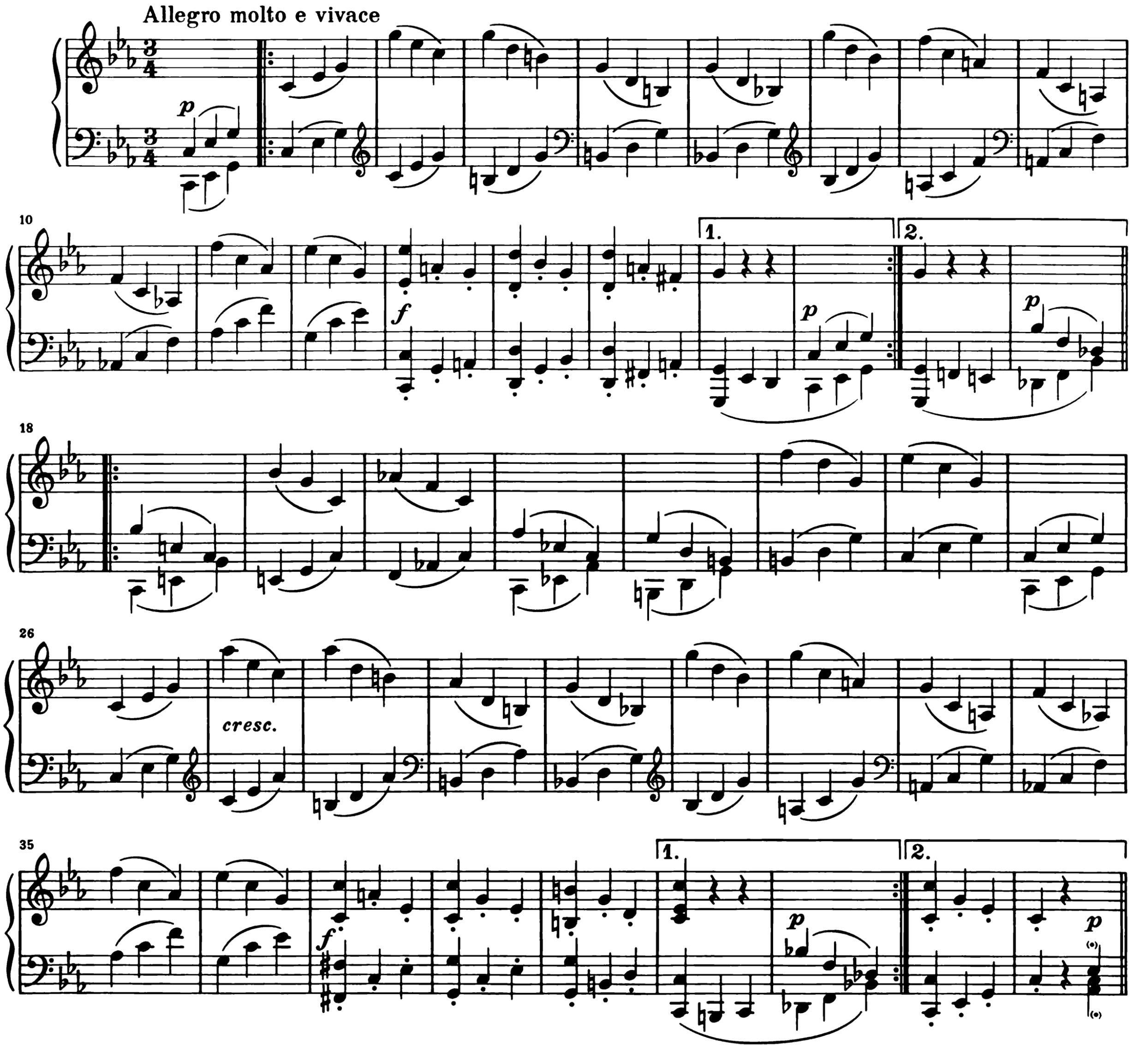

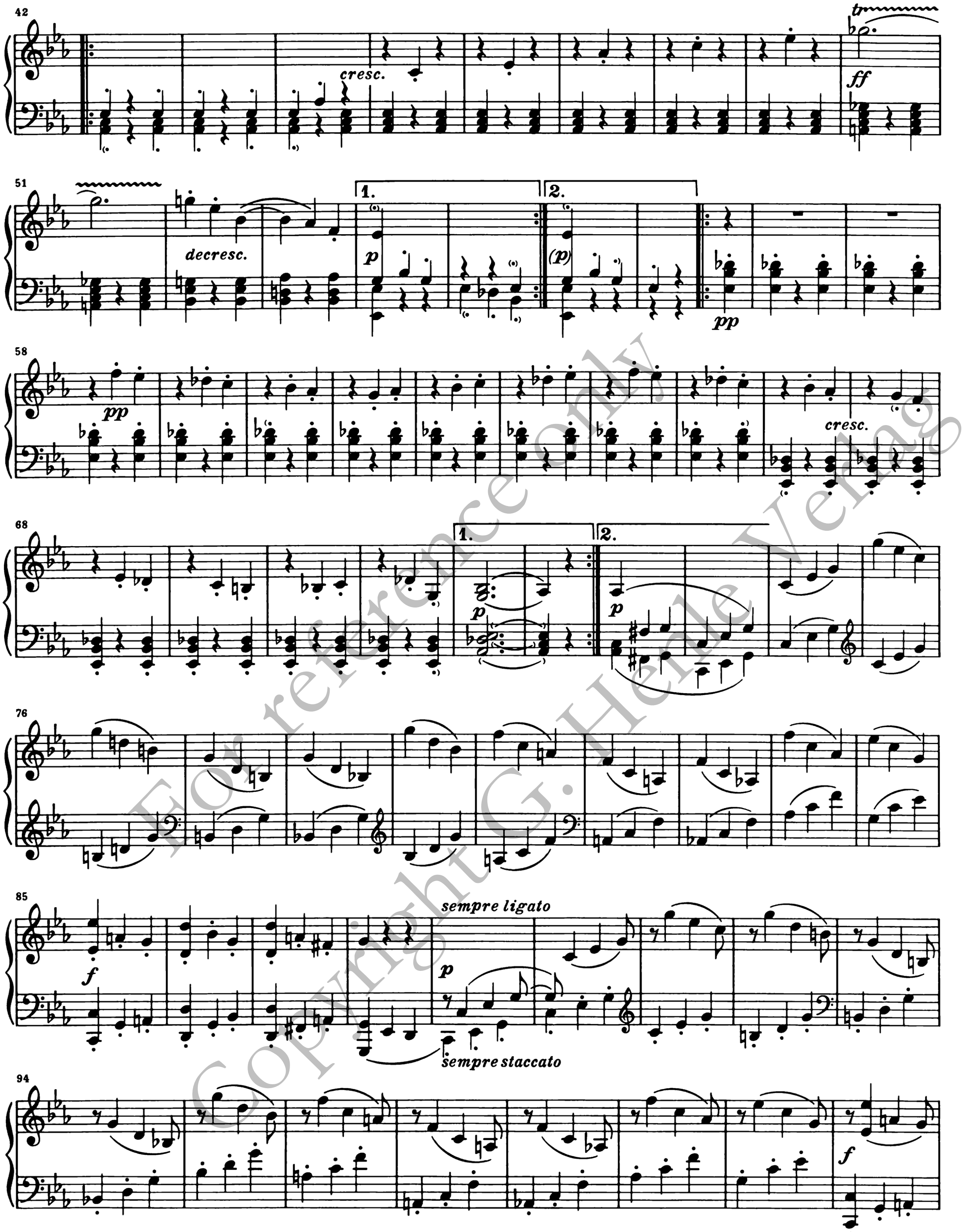
42
tr
cresc.
ff
51
decresc.
1.
2.
p
(p)
pp
58
pp
cresc.
68
1.
2.
p
p
76
85
f
sempre ligato
p
sempre staccato
94
f

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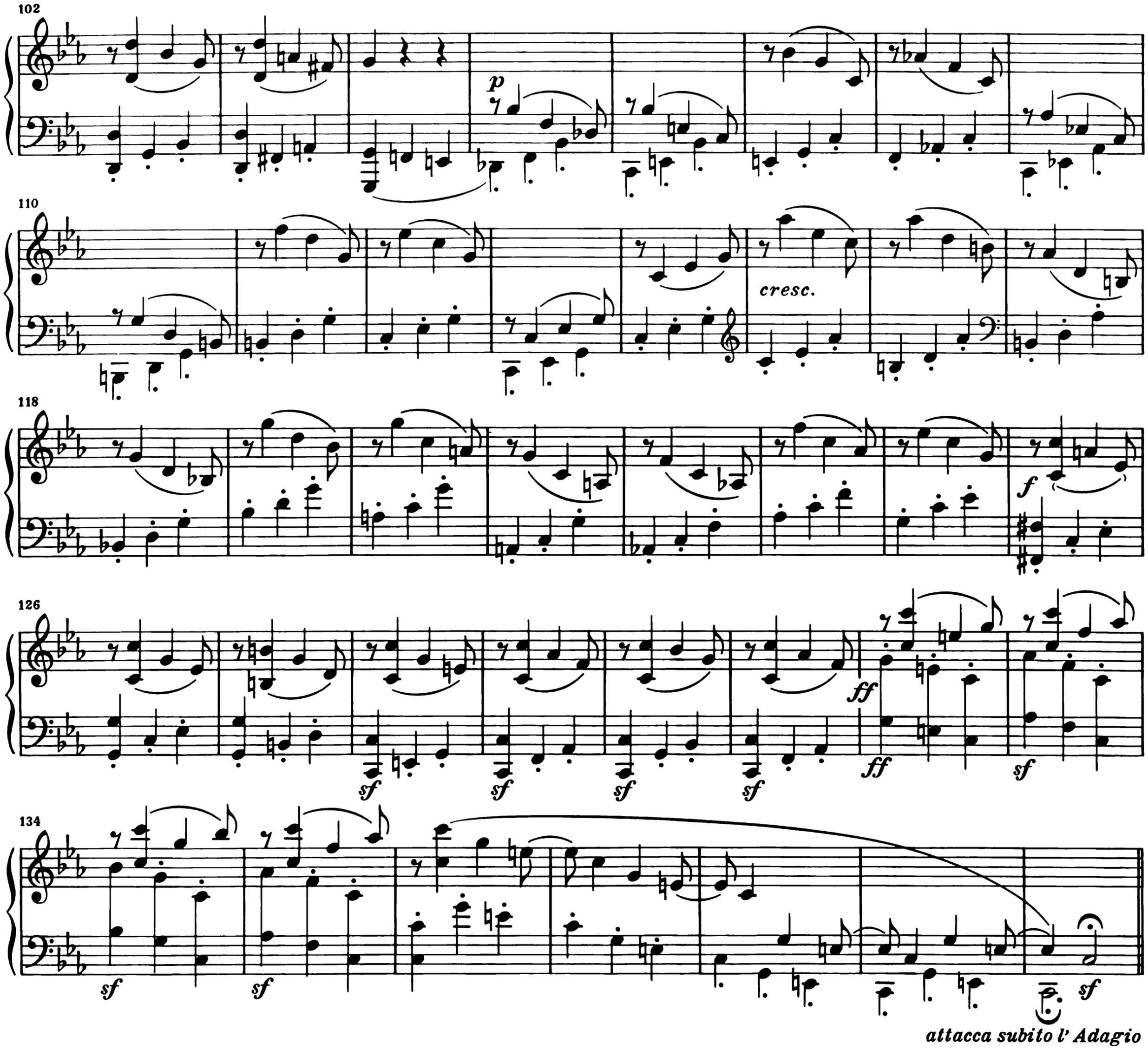
102
p
110
cresc.
118
f
126
sf
sf
sf
sf
ff
ff
sf
134
sf
sf
sf
attacca subito l' Adagio

Many performers often fall into a particular pitfall within this movement: too much pedal. With too much pedal, finer articulation details, such as three note slurs, cannot be heard, and the distance of registral jumps in the same harmony seems lessened. This is particularly true in m. 89 until the end, when the marked tempo is also a concern. By overusing the pedal in an *allegro molto* tempo, the eighth note syncopation will sound nearly unison, or, worse, sloppy, as a technical deficiency, rather than as a written-out rubato highlighted by contrasting articulatory textures between the hands. In such a case, it is not clear to the audience why, or if, these marked oppositions have emerged: has the performer lost control? By considering a semiotic analysis that considers these topics, oppositions, and marked correlations, the performer can then better inform and physically execute their intentions to bring out this musical meaning in performance.

III. Adagio con espressione

The third movement returns to the tranquility of the pastoral, but in contrast to the naïveté of the first movement. The *monumental* topic in music is a species characterized by primary diatonic triads, a slow tempo, and relatively slow harmonic rhythm.[88] Here, that profundity is coupled harmonically with a nod to the plagal (m. 3, Example 3.3), a stable harmonic move. This could imply a hymn topic, but the melody (as well as its harmonic accompaniment and occasional counterpoint) is far too ornamented for this. Romances of the time, though possibly indicative of the pastoral, were usually gavotte-inspired, and not of slow tempo, but even slow Romances lacked the profundity of the monumental correlation and were typically quicker-paced than an *Adagio* (the second movement of *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*, for example).[89] So what is it?

Here, pedal points on pulsing eighth notes give harmonic stability to a singing melody line, an ornate affair evocative of romantic *empfindsamkeit*. However, the melody is joined by other voices that are inseparable from it, often providing harmony, at other times singing in unison, and even providing counterpoint, particularly at cadences. This texture insinuates an aria, one in which the textures of vocal melody and orchestral accompaniments are achieved on one keyboard.

Once again, Beethoven may have been engaging creatively with existing styles and genres. Hatten points out that most of Beethoven's slow movements fall into four categories:

- tragedy;

---

[88] Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven*, 14.
[89] Ratner, *Classic Music*, 14.

- tragic awareness toward transcendence;
- assurance;
- serene sanctity.[90]

The first two are easy to eliminate—this movement is not tragic. The sudden dynamic and expressive markings subvert a mood of assurance, as well. For example, after a delayed cadence on a weak beat (a common trait of the galant) in m. 12, the following bar begins with a surprise *fortepiano* on an inverted F minor chord (once again, a turn to plagal stability, though unexpected). Disruptions like this, and other expressive markings, do not follow in Beethoven's usual writing style for assurance, like, famously, the slow movement of the Sonata in C minor, Op. 13 ("Pathétique"). These reasons, along with the active melodic line, and periods of quicker harmonic motion, also do not mesh with the sustained, long-tone writing of Beethoven's slow movements of serene sanctity.

This movement does share some commonalities with other movements of assurance and serene sanctity, however: periods of stasis, oscillating gestures (accompanimental and harmonic), and others. Here, though, these beautiful ideals are mixed with relatively extreme and undercut expressive markings (e.g. mm. 2-3), which in opposition to the other more static qualities, seem to bring an element of human reality to the more stable pastoral ideal. In literature, the mix of idealistic nature with elements of reality was another pastoral topic: the idyll. Returning to Schiller, he viewed the idyllic not as wishful thinking, but as an "individual's desire for harmony within himself and with his environment."[91]

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[90] Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven*, 207.
[91] Alpers, "Schiller's *Naïve and Sentimental Poetry* and the Modern Idea of Pastoral," 323.

Example 3.3. *Beethoven, Sonata in E-flat major, Op. 27, No. 1: III. Adagio con espressione*
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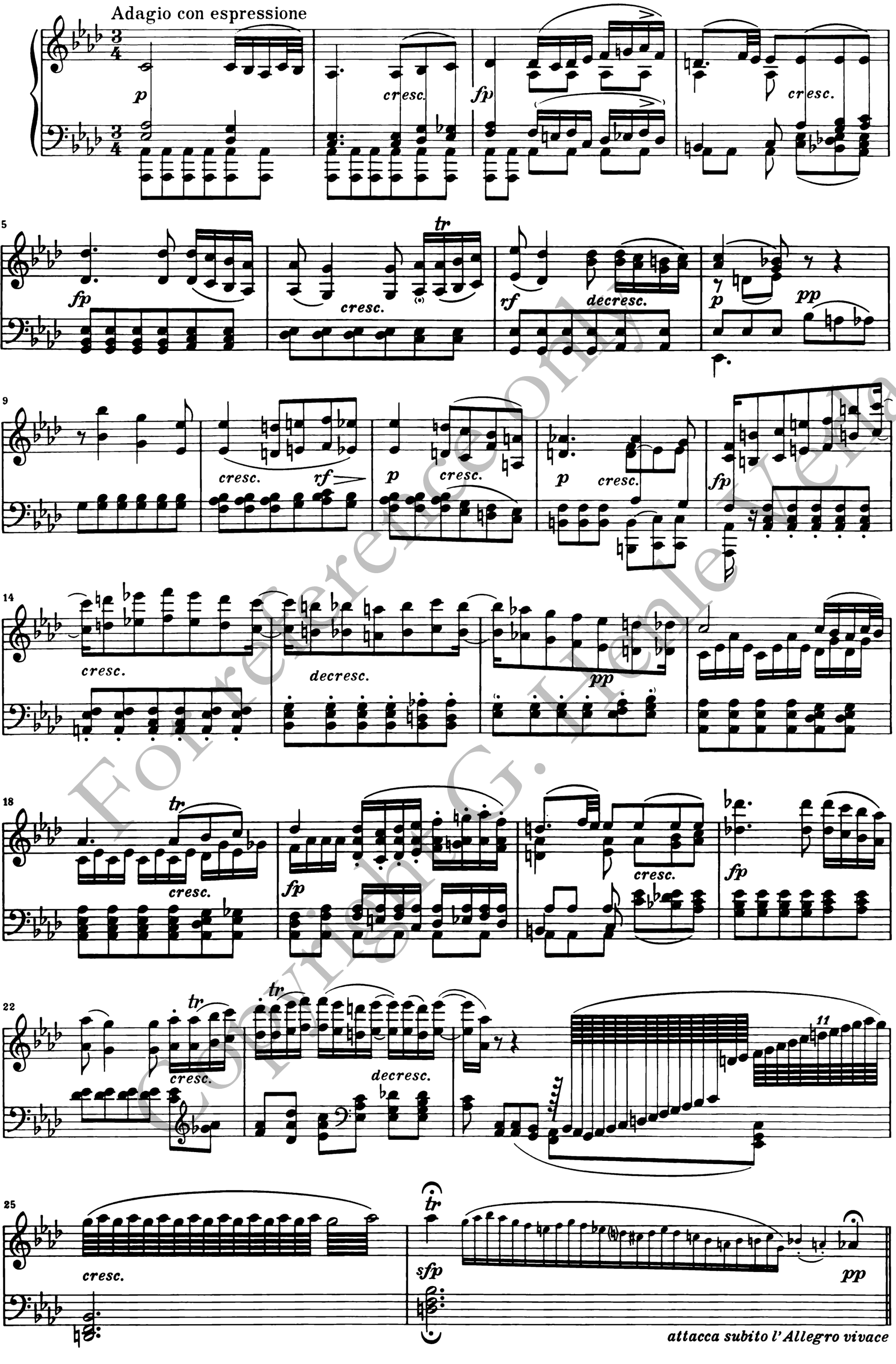
Adagio con espressione
p
cresc.
fp
cresc.
5
fp
tr
cresc.
rf
decresc.
p
pp
9
cresc.
rf
p
cresc.
p
cresc.
fp
14
cresc.
decresc.
pp
18
tr
cresc.
fp
cresc.
fp
22
tr
cresc.
tr
decresc.
11
25
cresc.
tr
sfp
pp
attacca subito l'Allegro vivace

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This manifests in the music not only through elements of realism in the tranquility of the ideal, as mentioned before, but also through other well-known pastoral topics. Throughout the movement, the melody rises—each phrase attempts a peak higher than the last, indicative of seeking resolution. The symmetry of four-bar phrases is cut short at the end, when the return of the theme is abridged and climbs to an early cadence (mm. 22-24). Because of this truncation, as well as the suspension and cadential resolution on a syncopation, this cadence, which should be strong, is instead non-closural, and therefore marked.

From it, the music falls into a closing coda indicative of fantasy. An improvisatory scale rockets up the piano to a suspenseful trill, which resolves to another trill on the dominant seventh (mm. 24-26). From this point of uncertainty, the melody floats gently back down in a free, soloistic *eingang*. The contour of this descent is gentle, balancing downward motion with upward, the buoyancy creating a distinct contrast with the directness of the ascent. In one way very graceful, this gesture also offers no resolution: even through the descent, it is uncertain where the melody will ultimately land until the final chromatic *portato*. This willful resignation to uncertainty marks a culmination of the pastoral idyllic in this movement: the melody finds balance with the harmony after much seeking, wandering, and uncertainty, even though the harmony it finds—a tritone between bass and soprano—is still uncertain.

This is the point at which the performer's intentional agency has particular power in this movement. Because of the improvisational nature of fantasy, the steady, pulsing beat from before can be given flexibility at the decision of the performer: in practical terms, they must plan so that the last two eighth notes in the left hand are not *subito fermata*; creatively, the flexibility in timing has ramifications for the entire coda. Pacing decisions must fit individual interpretation here. For example, augmenting the tempo with the scalar pattern up the piano indicates a correlation to struggle, further emphasized by a stall on the G trill in m. 25, with an effortful raising just a half step to the A-flat in m. 26. Thus, the overall expressive path of the coda is that of a labored search for resolution not provided by the inconclusive cadence at the beginning of m. 24. Alternately, maintaining the preceding tempo through mm. 24-25 until the fermata at 26, the searching quality of the rising gesture would be less labored, and instead, more virtuosically intense. Through this intention, the performer can create different creative interpretations, whether similar to the intense emergences that have happened in the previous movements which cuts the desired cadence, signifying the reconciliation between human and nature characteristic of the idyll from reaching full realization, or even something more abstract, such as this coda operating as analogous to a narrator's aside in literature to usher in a new scene in the fourth movement. The options are infinite, and the audience may not abduce the exact detailed creativity behind the performer's intention, but the intention will certainly affect the sound that the audience hears as it occurs in musical time, and will therefore shape the musical meaning each listener perceives and considers.

IV. Allegro vivace

At the very beginning of the fourth movement, the pastoral style is carried through in a folksy, duple meter dance topic (m. 1, Figure 3.4). This dance is troped with two other topics which have been employed in previous movements: the brilliant style and the musette. Though set at a considerably faster tempo than the beginning, the musette topic appears in a very similar way as before: a sixteenth rest on the downbeat followed by scalar patterns during slightly more sustained pitches in the dance-topic melody (m. 1). The brilliant style emerges through the musette in flashes of technical brilliance up the keyboard which find a higher register for the melody to sing out, and later, a cadence point (mm. 3-4, 7-8).

Example 3.4. *Beethoven, Sonata in E-flat major, Op. 27, No. 1: IV. Allegro vivace*
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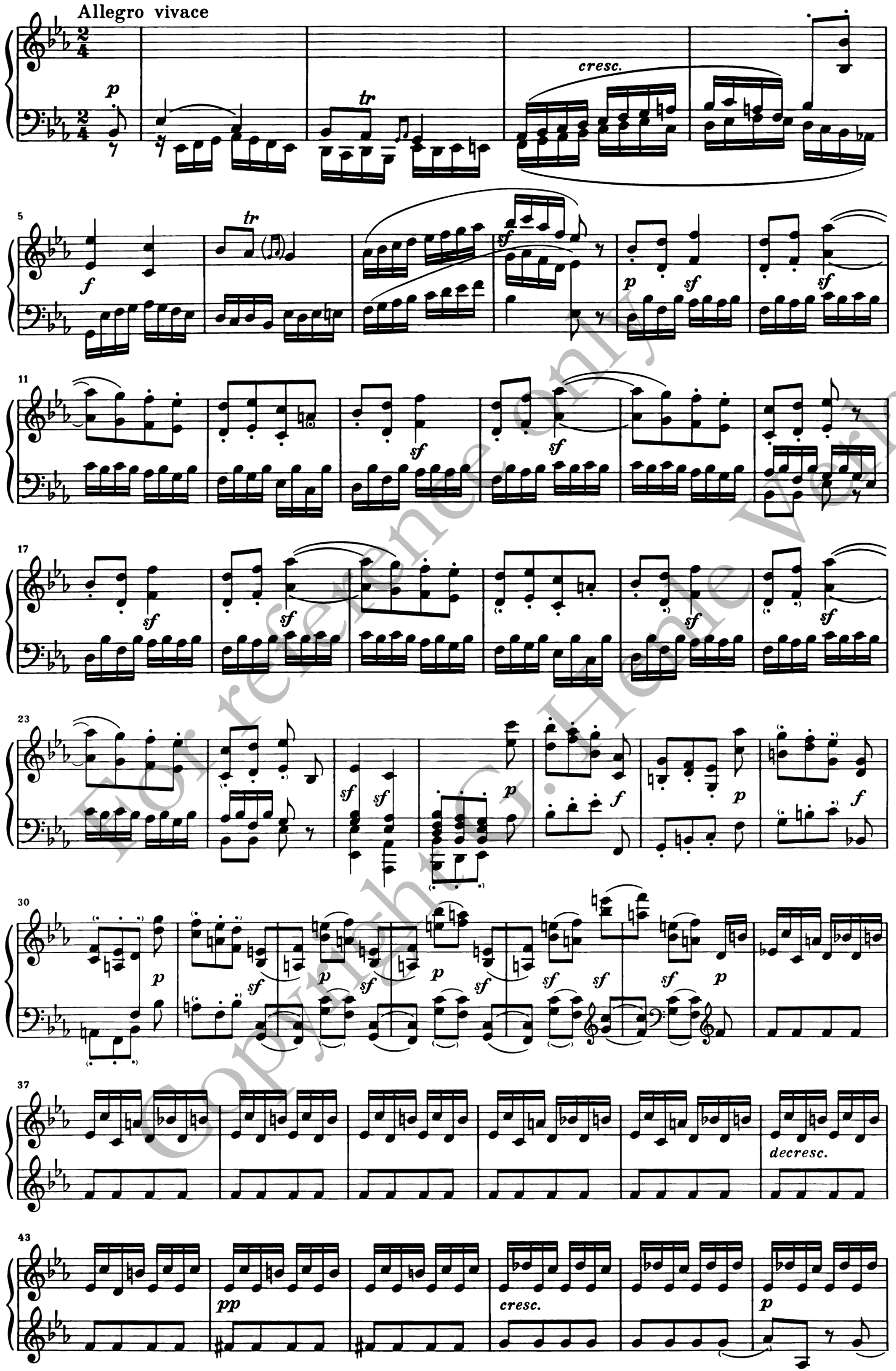
Allegro vivace
p
tr
cresc.
f
sf
decresc.
pp
cresc.
p

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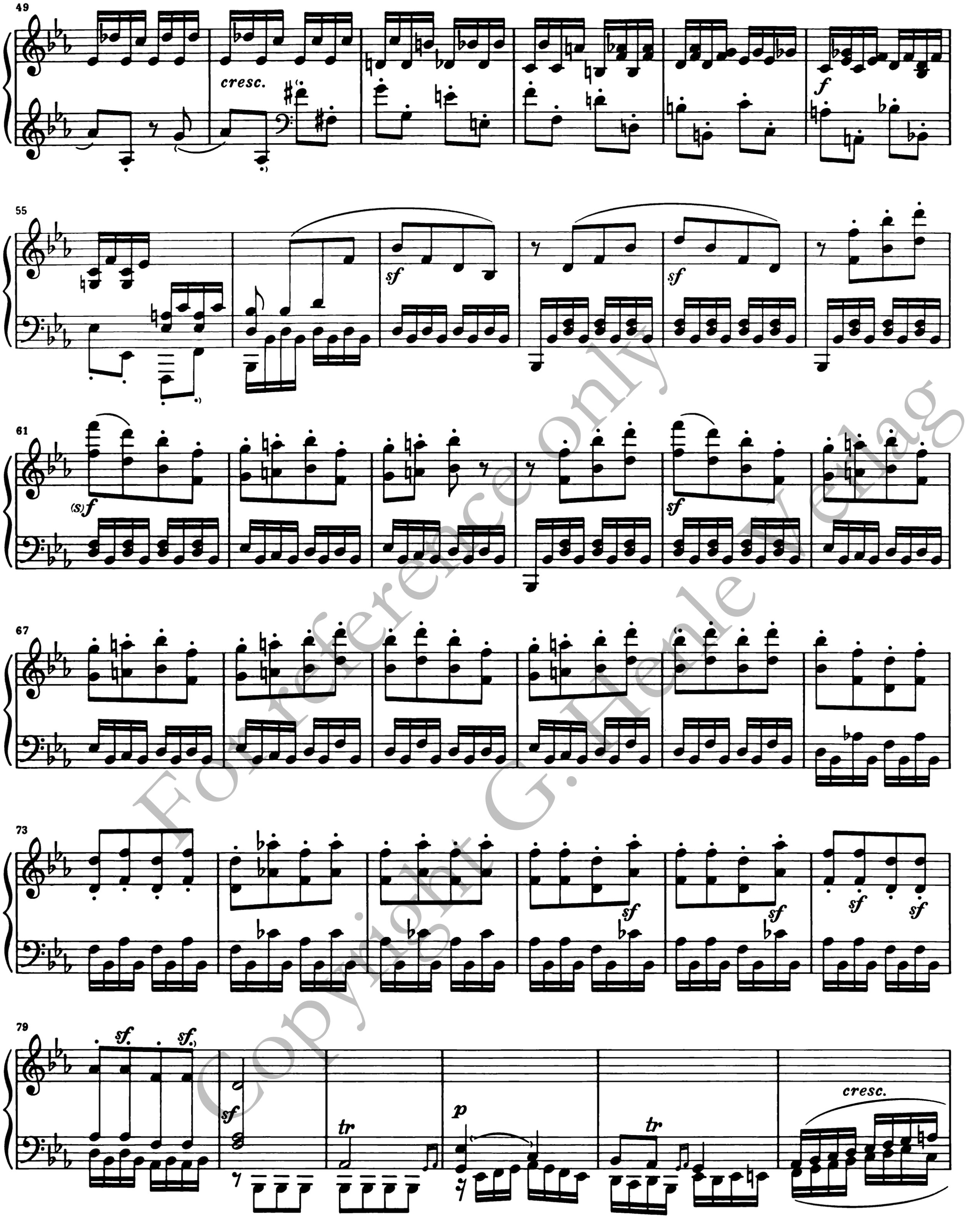
49
cresc.
f
55
sf
sf
61
(s) f
sf
67
73
sf
sf
sf
sf
79
sf.
sf.
sf
tr
p
tr
cresc.

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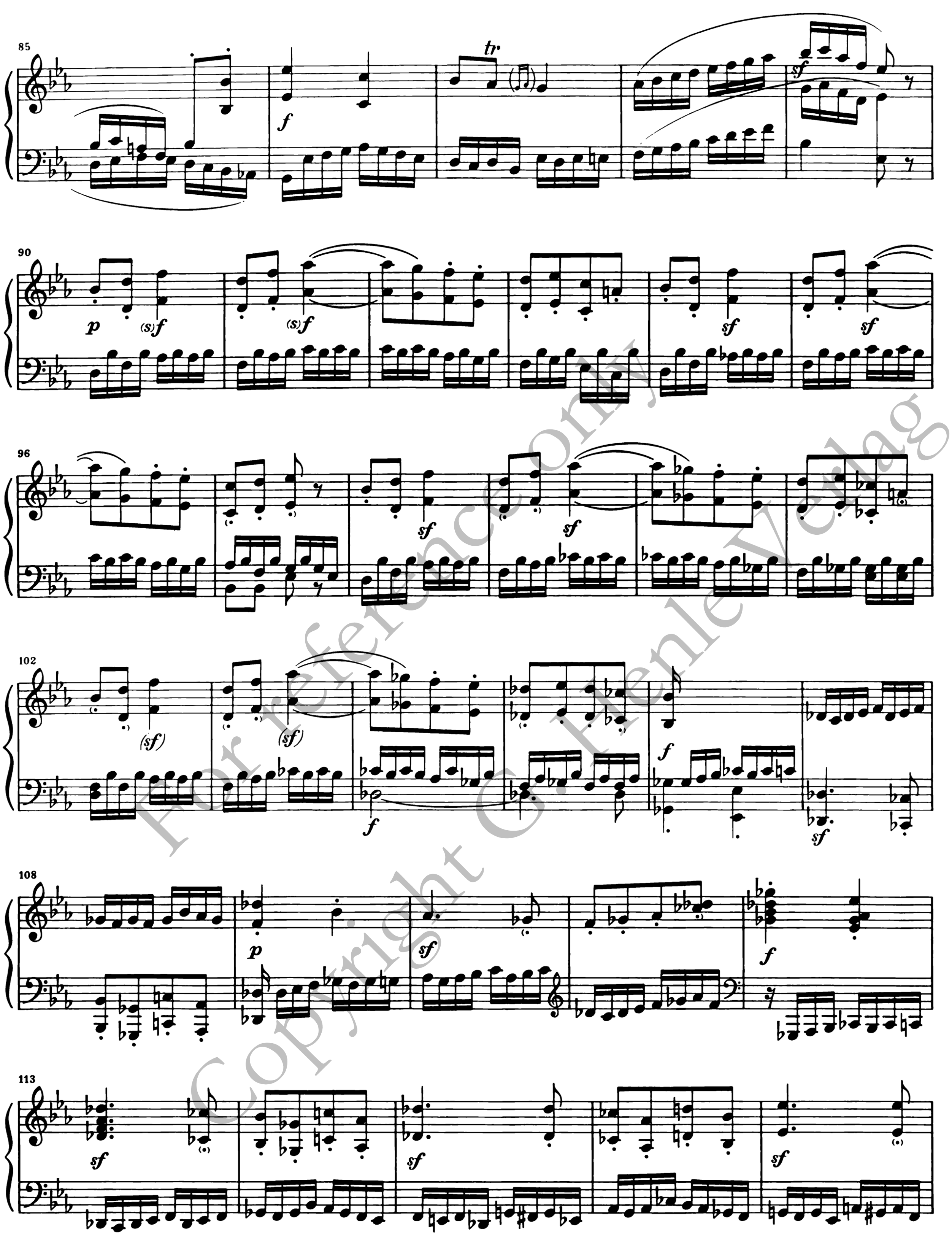
85
f
tr
sf
90
p
(s)f
(s)f
sf
sf
96
sf
sf
102
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f
f
sf
108
p
sf
f
113
sf
sf
sf

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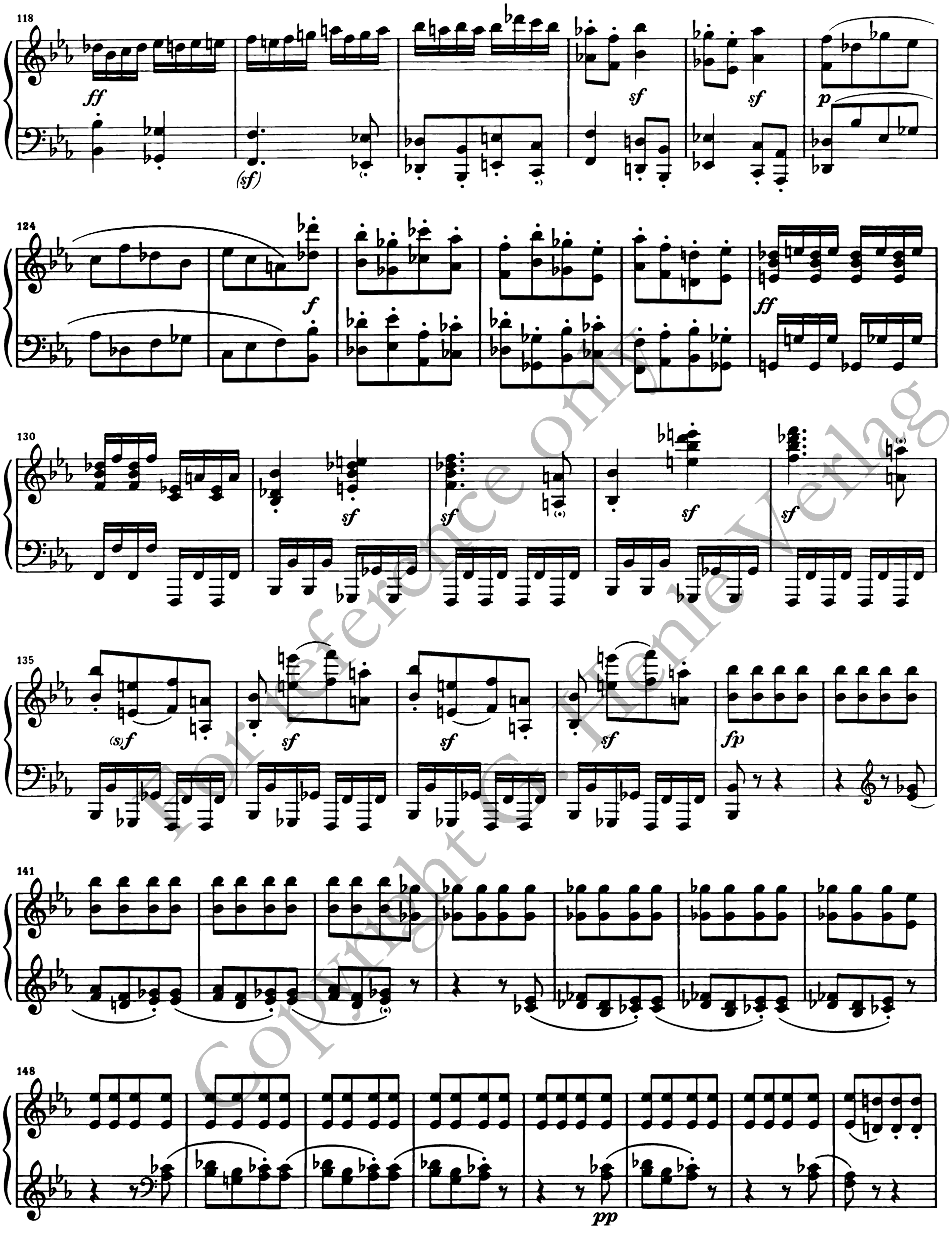
118
ff
(sf)
sf
sf
p
124
f
ff
130
sf
sf
sf
sf
135
(s)f
sf
sf
sf
fp
141
148
pp

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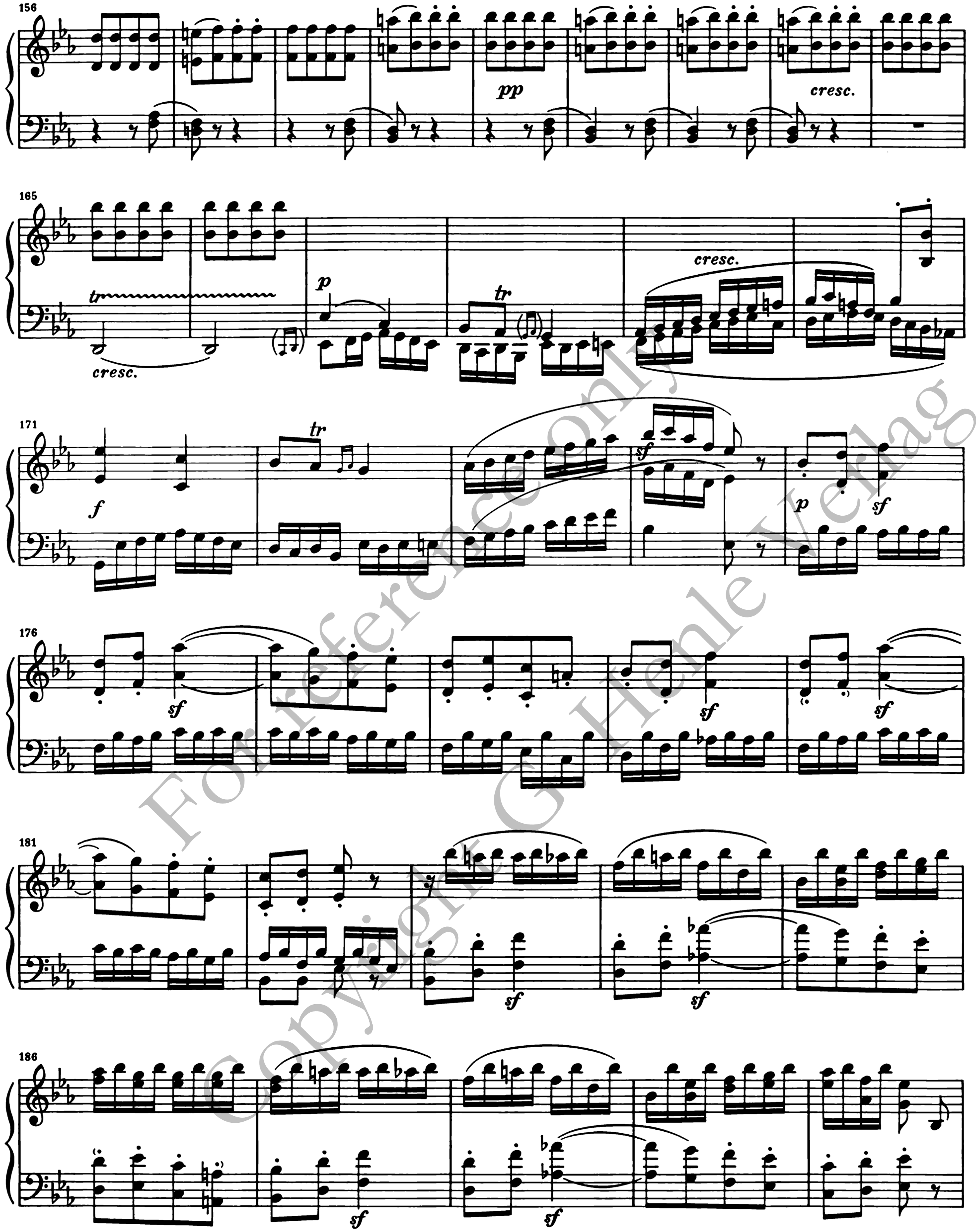
156
pp
cresc.
165
tr
cresc.
p
tr
cresc.
171
f
tr
sf
p
sf
176
sf
sf
sf
181
sf
sf
186
sf
sf

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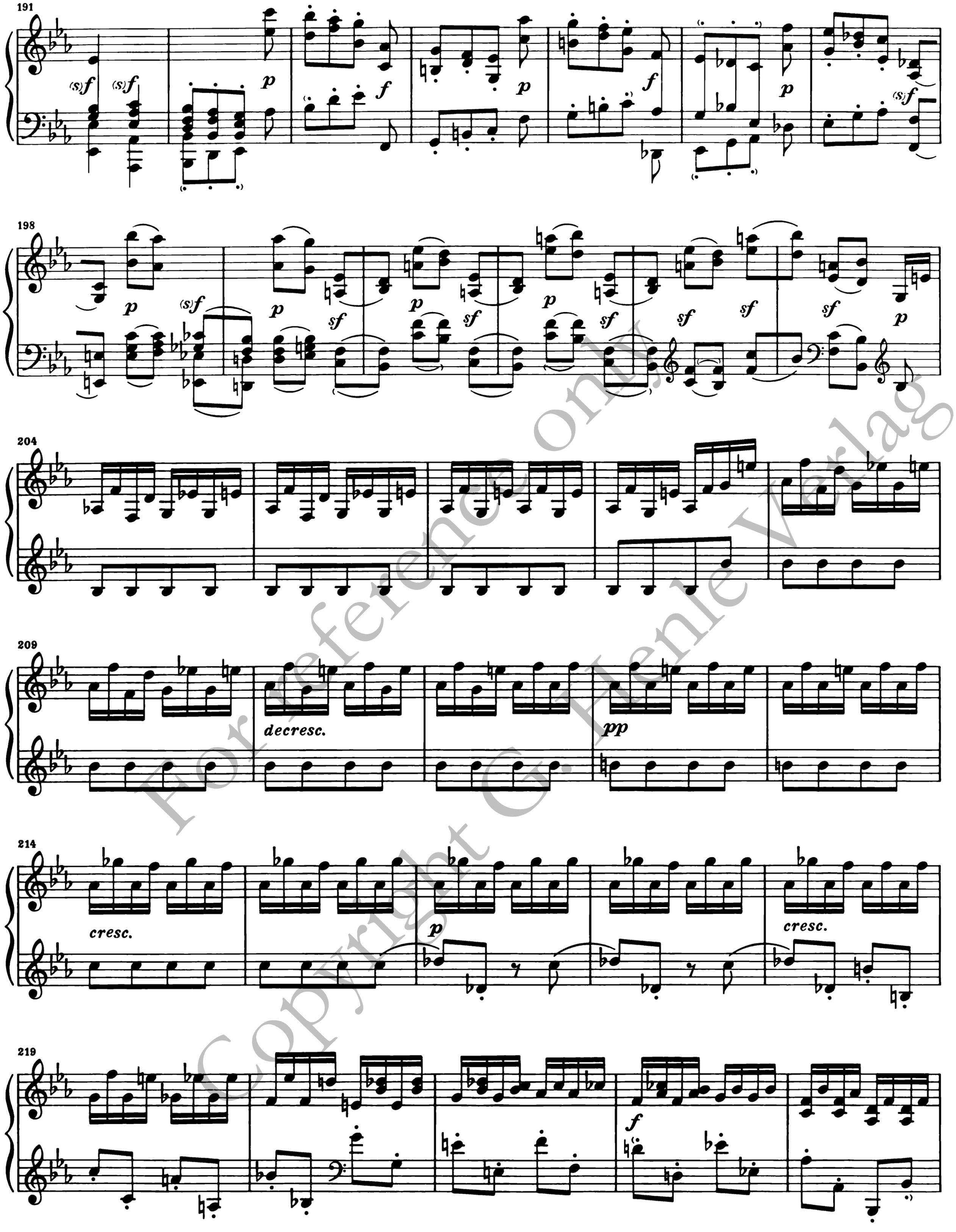
191
(s)f
(s)f
p
f
p
f
p
(s)f
198
p
(s)f
p
sf
p
sf
p
sf
sf
sf
sf
p
204
209
decresc.
pp
214
cresc.
p
cresc.
219
f

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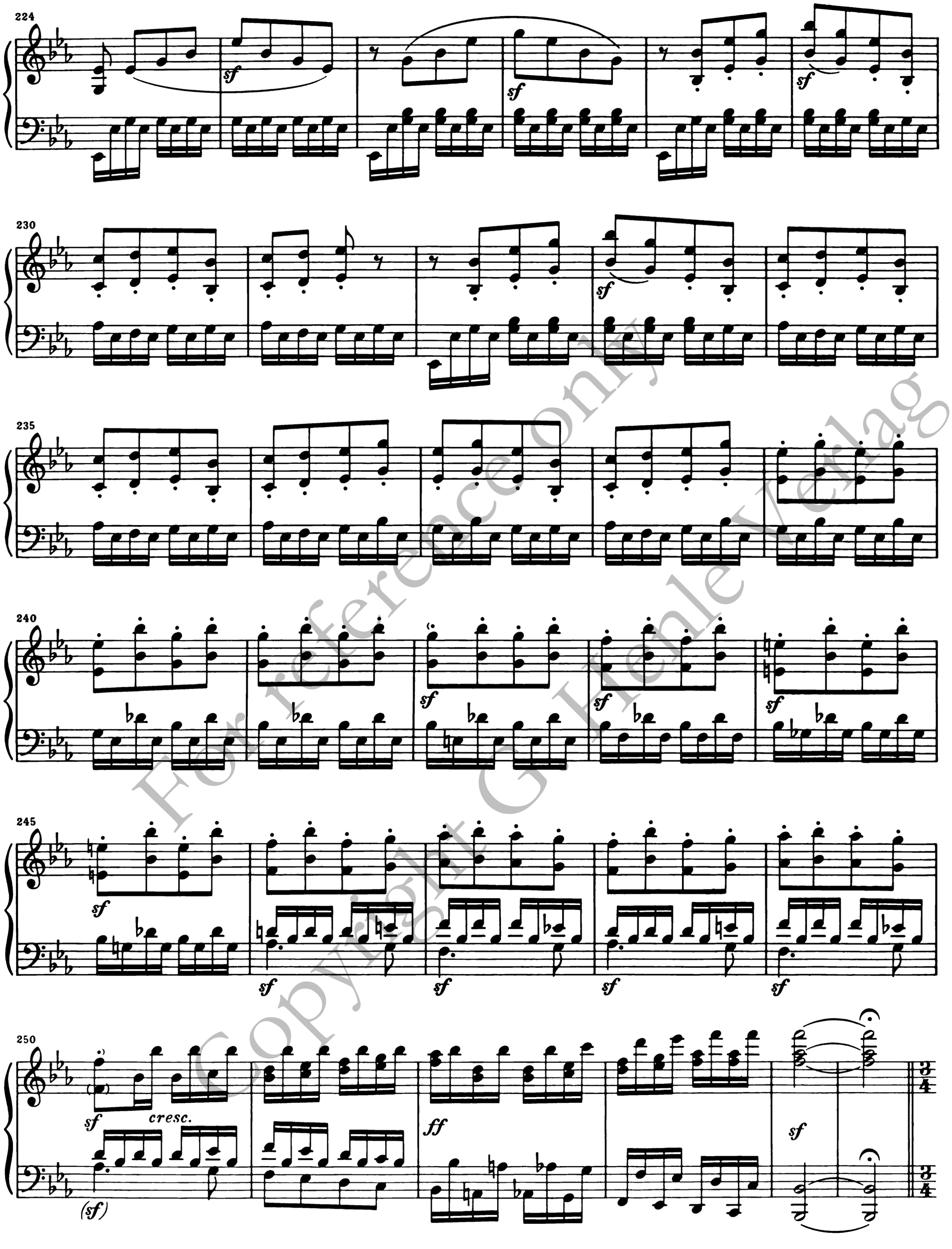
224
sf
sf
sf
230
sf
235
240
sf
sf
sf
245
sf
sf
sf
sf
sf
250
sf
cresc.
(sf)
ff
sf
3/4

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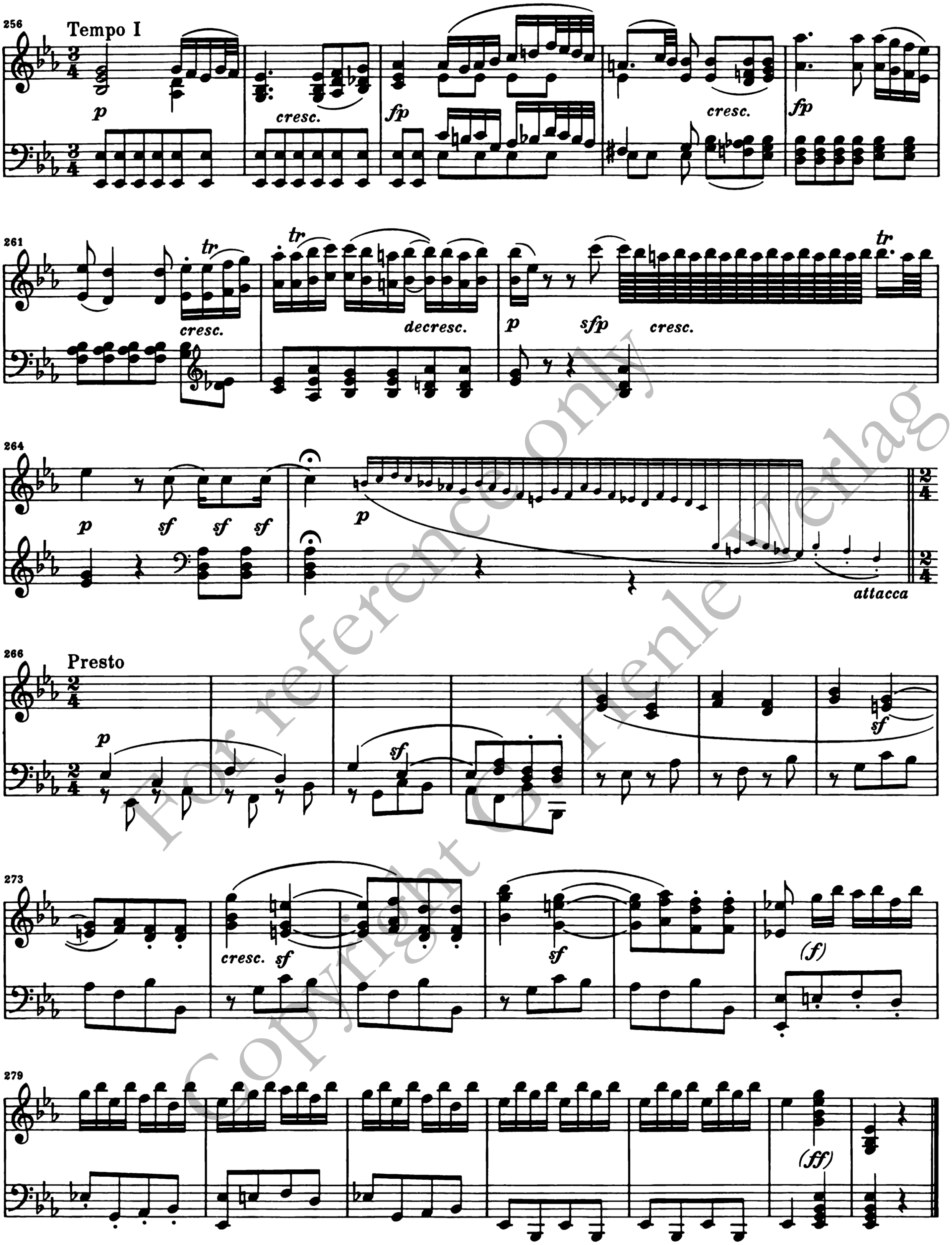
256
Tempo I
p
cresc.
fp
cresc.
fp
261
tr
cresc.
tr
decresc.
p
sfp
cresc.
tr
264
p
sf
sf
sf
p
attacca
266
Presto
p
sf
sf
273
cresc.
sf
sf
(f)
279
(ff)

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This trope at the beginning is telling: not only are elements from earlier in the piece being synthesized, but Beethoven creates novel styles by troping elements of high and low styles: the low style musette which constantly moves under sustained melodic notes; a middle style sense of galant balance and stability through a dance; the high style brilliant topic, which takes over the dance melody and musette at certain points in order to flourish and move the melody to different registers of the piano. The result is an emergence of a pseudo-*moto perpetuo*, creating momentum within the piece that is constant and forward-looking, but without the improvisatory flexibility of tempo more indicative of a fantasy.

This movement is in sonata-rondo form, shown in Figure 3.1. With a much more predictable overall structure in place, Beethoven returns to one of his compositional signatures: the **A** (or P) theme in this movement takes on a much more developmental role than in the other movements. In fact, the **B** section in rondo form is a fragmented variation on **A** which then spins out (hence the abbreviation for *fortspinnung*, *fs*, on the table) into a transition to a closing theme. This also allows for a greater amount of asymmetry in small-scale phrase structure in transitional sections, a common trait of both sonata and fantasy styles. For example, at m. 36, a more predictable four-bar metric structure takes over, as was established in mm. 1-24. However, in the 11 bars at mm. 25-36, the melodic theme is fragmented and repeated over registral jumps, which are fragmented even more into two note slurs which have been moved completely off the downbeat. Call-and-response *sforzandi* and *piano* markings offer the performer the ability to emphasize these marked qualities, highlighting the correlation to back-and-forth uncertainty before the music moves on to a transition.

Figure 3.1. *Form of Beethoven, Sonata in E-flat major, Op. 27, No. 1: IV. Allegro vivace.*

A	**B**		**A’**	**C**		**A”**	**B’**		**III**	**coda**
m. 1	25	56	82	106	139	167	191	224	256	266
Exposition			**Development**			**Recapitulation**			**III**	**coda**
P	P’ (*fs*)	K	P”	dev. (P/I)	RT	P	P’” (*fs*)	K’	III	coda

The **A** theme also begins the development section, which instead of looping back on itself to cadence, as it does each time before, is interrupted by an unexpected *forte* downbeat in m. 104, which ushers in the determined new section by acting as the dominant to the arrival of G-flat major, and **C**, at m. 106. This thematically-derived development brings about other meaningful oppositions. Metrically, motives change from four measure groupings to three, later disrupted by two-bar interjections (mm. 121-122, 129-130). Significantly, the musette-and-brilliant-style trope used throughout this movement is troped itself with melodic and rhythmic material from the first movement (Example 3.1, mm. 9-10, 13-14, 17-18; Example 3.4, mm. 106). In the first movement, this theme facilitated the first appearance of C major, the first stark subversion of the sense of naïveté in the piece, but was dismissed and returned quickly to the home key. Here, it also appears in a distant key area, but in a much more stable manner: G-flat major is even tonicized before giving way to B-flat. This is not only a trope of material, and topics, but also of simple and learned styles: the rustic simplicity of this rhythm and melody is contrasted by treatment in imitation evocative of a two-part canon.

This section is brought to culmination when the bass and harmonic motion are negated in mm. 128-129, first by the unexpected discontinuation of the sequence in mm. 125-128 by the last eighth note of m. 128, then by the negation of that resolution with the unintuitive parallel motion to vii^{o6}_{5}/V in B-flat minor, and finally prolonging that tension by using chromatic bass descent to employ a German augmented sixth before the cadential $^{6}_{4}$. This progression repeats in a fragment of the associative rhythm that reappears from the first movement, then is syncopated with offbeat *sforzandi* until a final arrival on unison B-flat. Like fallout, a symmetrical transition section with one-measure extensions on each bookend leads the music back to **A**.

The reclaiming of first movement rhythmic material could be coincidental, but likely not when considered with other reappearing elements in this movement. Consider the descending third:

the melodies of both the first and the fourth movement feature this interval. The transition in the fourth movement from **C** to **A** (mm. 139-166) finds its way harmonically back to E-flat major from B-flat minor through the use of a descending thirds sequence. It is the building block of the final movement's coda: descending thirds that rise higher and higher, searching for the cadential closure that is finally granted in root position to close the piece (mm. 266-285).[92] It is also the motion of harmonic progression among the first three movements (E-flat – C minor – A-flat major) as well as within the abrupt key area changes in the first movements (E-flat to C major in the first, C minor to A-flat in the second). Tertiary key relationships would become a known and notable part of Beethoven's compositional language, and their omnipresent, associative significance in this sonata could imply that, though he had used descending third relationships in some of his preceding piano sonatas, here it took on an expressive significance as a way to achieve a circular unity within the context of a sonata form.

However, one of the most significant elements in this final movement is the return of the third movement—not as an embedded associative allusion, as with the first movement, but as a significant restatement (m. 256). This surprising reappearance, instead of the **A** that would be anticipated in a rondo form, is an epiphany of sorts, and perhaps foreshadows how Beethoven would do this on a grander scale in Op. 109. Topically, this recapitulation signals a passing of time, a journey.[93] It interrupts the insistent forward motion of the fourth movement, and calls attention back to the idyll to give perspective to the incessant, determined character of the fourth movement. Important to note is that if the first 255 measures of the fourth movement were left out, the end of the third movement would seamlessly introduce the reappearance of itself in the fourth movement.

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[92] Another interesting reference to the first movement in the coda is voicing with thirds and sixths, as in mm. 274-277.

[93] Hatten, "On Metaphor and Syntactic Troping in Music," 102.

This consideration is not immediately perceptible by listening the first time, but after hearing the piece multiple times, comes to light.

This enlightening reappearance creates room for many possible interpretations from the performer, which are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Two examples that could be considered:

- the fourth movement is an interruption of the contemplative idyll of the third movement, one in which the trajectory of the fourth movement is ultimately guided by the third movement which surrounds it on both temporal sides;
- the third and fourth movement are actually one inclusive movement, a synthesis of fantasy and sonata-rondo forms, supported further by the *Tempo I* marking in the score at the return of the third movement.

3.c. *Expressive genre: particularities, sonata-fantasy productivity, and Beethoven's dedications in context*

An expressive genre is the expressive trajectory of a movement or larger piece of music. This concept was created by Robert Hatten for instrumental music, rather than songs, which, because of the text, project cultural expectations related to language. Expressive genre is informed by, and also informs, small and large local events throughout a movement or piece, including markedness and correlations, topics, and troping.[94] However, it is also important to consider the composer and their style, other pieces, and historical context as well. For example, Beethoven's Fifth Symphony is a prime example of *tragic-to-triumphant* expressive genre, and the final movement of the Sonata in A-flat major, Op. 110 *tragic-to-transcendent*, but here, because of the dominance of the major mode, a progression from *tragic* is not appropriate. This could be overly speculative, but it is possible that a clue about the expressive genres of these two sonatas, Op. 27, lies in the two dedicatees of these works: Princess Josephine (Josepha) of Liechtenstein and Countess Giulietta Guicciardi.

---

[94] Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven*, 11, 67.

At this time, Beethoven was in love with the Countess Giulietta Guicciardi. His letters to her are peppered with references and analogies to nature, as well as the duality of pleasure and pain that love brings.[95] Something particularly striking, in a letter to Franz Wegeler, is that this duality manifests itself alongside his hearing loss, with him blaming his inability to marry the Countess not only on his lower class rank but also on his impending deafness.[96] This despairing link of his deafness with his love of Countess Guicciardi becomes more poignant when considering the dedication of Op. 27, No. 2 to her. Little evidence exists to support that this dedication implies any programmatic or direct reference to her, such as anger or betrayal, but the timing of this dedication serves to reinforce the point that, at the very least, Beethoven thought fondly enough of her to dedicate this overtly desolate, tragic work, at a time when he was accepting the gravity of his hearing loss.[97]

Very little is known about Beethoven's relationship with the Princess of Liechtenstein, to whom Op. 27, No. 1 is dedicated. She took piano lessons from Beethoven and was presumably a gifted keyboardist.[98] The Liechtenstein family line was from Lower Austria bordering Vienna at that time, and Johann I Joseph, Prince of Liechtenstein, was known for his penchant for forestry and new gardening trends. The Prince also kept an orchestra which Beethoven had employed, and he also played concerts at their estate. It is possible that Beethoven associated his relationship to the Liechtenstein family with tranquility and the pastoral. This is further supported by a letter from Beethoven to the Princess in 1805, when he sent his pupil, Ferdinand Ries, to her "recourse" as a source of "benevolence" and peace before Ries had to embark on "a long journey" because of the war and his civilian status as a foreigner.[99]

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[95] E.g. "Canst thou help not being wholly mine, can I, not being wholly thine. Oh! gaze at nature in all its beauty, and calmly accept the inevitable—love demands everything, and rightly so", as well as many references to the skies and the divine (Beethoven, *Beethoven's Letters*, 31-32).
[96] Ibid., 23.
[97] The Heiligenstadt Testament would be written later that same year of the sonatas' publication: 1802.
[98] I could not find any letters or firsthand source material to support this assertion.

Thus, it was a time of realization for Beethoven: his love, though worth every bit of pain, would ultimately not result in his desired marriage; his deafness, despite his palpably dwindling hope and treatment by physicians of the time, would continue to get worse. 1800-1802 were also years of compositional paucity, as he was reviewing and revising many of his works. He would have had the opportunity to try something novel, something new in the midst of his reflection on his work, perhaps a new style in multi-movement fantasy forms, one in the peaceful pastoral, the other in a more tragic genre.

Having proceeded through the entire piece, it is clearer how sonata and fantasy styles interact under a guiding pastoral type. Use of a strict sonata structure at the beginning would have undermined the unanticipated suddenness of fantasy elements, and demanded more development from the repetitive, placid pastoral. This would have also subjugated the sense of naïveté, as the harmonic demands of sonata form would affect the delicate sense of innocence provided by the stasis of the tonic-centric harmony and melody at the beginning.[100] However, each movement succumbs to the dominance of sonata form a bit more: the first movement shows very little, a compound ternary form with no harmonic, transitional, or developmental sonata implications; the second movement has a bit more sonata-evocative harmonic development; the third is a ternary aria form that can be considered as an abbreviated sonata form; the fourth movement not only alludes to the sonata-form tradition of the final movement as a rondo, but is a synthesis of rondo and sonata forms. Surprisingly, this emergence does not diminish the presence of the pastoral and fantasy that were so well-established from the beginning, but instead appears in the presence of both.

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[99] Beethoven, *Beethoven's Letters*, 57.

[100] Sonata form, at the time, largely relied on predictable changes of tonal center and melodic motives to create a coherent sense of narrative. See Tagg, *Music's Meanings*, 409; Ratner, *Classic Music*, 217-247.

This formal narrative shows a transfiguration from the beginning of the piece to the end of the piece. There is also thematic transformation, as well. Themes and topics are much more stable in the earlier movements: even significant contrasts, like the brilliant style in the first movement, are subsumed back into the stable pastoral. However, with the rise of a more defined sonata-evocative structure, these topics become more developmental. In addition, Beethoven's treatment of topics and troping becomes more adventurous, even using piece-specific tropes (like the musette-brilliant style trope) to trope further with other topics.

In many of Beethoven's works, this trajectory would imply a sense of triumph. However, in this piece, any momentum that is built is consistently stopped for pastoral reflection, and certain heroic pastoral topics are avoided, such as the horn call. This trajectory suggests more of an introverted triumph than an outward one. However, this piece lacks the high style spirituality with its roots in the simplest pastoral topics; in addition, a cheeky, optimistic coda tacked on at the end prevents an ending with the transcendence of the pastoral idyll. However, despite a lack of high transcendence, the music is no less sincere. When considering musical facets as well as Beethoven's circumstances at the time—he was grappling with emerging issues that eventually demanded acceptance—I propose an expressive genre of *naïveté-to-enlightenment*. This expressive genre is supported by, and also helped guide, my analyses of this piece, and also informed my intention-making process before—and during—performances. It also provides the ability for further analysis, be it a support of my expressive interpretation or a rebuttal against it. This is, after all, the purpose of this semiotically-founded, hermeneutically-executed analytical method: to provide, by means of correlations, starting points and inspiration for further reasoning and analyses.[101]

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[101] Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven*, 31; "On Metaphor and Syntactic Troping in Music," 2012, 93-94.

3.d. *Semiotic consideration and language used*

The language in this analysis largely departs from the sometimes opaque technical terminology of the first chapters. This should not be taken as a departure from semiotics. In fact, this shift is intentional, in order to illustrate the accessibility and usefulness of semiotic consideration.

For example, when speaking of topics, the pastoral is a sign that is, at first, a rhematic iconic legisign, an overarching type that can be further analyzed by considering more specifically how it occurs via tokens in the piece of music at hand. These tokens (which often occur as specific instances of topics throughout the piece) can be iconic and indexical sinsigns, which, as events that bear specific qualities that direct attention and indicate the qualities of the type, direct the analyst to consider these sinsigns in a larger network of convention and culture. These symbolic legisigns considered via cultural norms, then, allow for the creative experience of abduction, a syllogistic conclusion based on plausibility by support of the network of existing signs (for example, the expressive genre of *naïveté-to-enlightenment*). By considering these systems of semiotic connection, the musician creates a web of competencies, as well as support for an expressive interpretation that can never be fully exhausted, and continues to create new networks of meaning for as long as the performer is willing to continue the process.

CHAPTER 4

BEYOND BEETHOVEN: PHILLIP SINK'S *LEAVE A COMMENT*

4.a. *Expressive genre,* Leave a Comment, *and differing cultural units*

Leave a Comment is a set of eight miniatures that create a commentary about modern electronic media sources. Online comment forums, social media, cell phones, news shows, blogs, and even movies are referenced in this work, from implications to explicit allusions. The work is deliberately—and quite obviously—satirical. Phillip Sink (b. 1982) himself acknowledges its conception and execution as a satire, complete with programmatic titles.[102] A given expressive genre as a constraint does not, however, restrict the ability to find other expressive meaning in the piece: rather, it provides a focused lens through which to gaze.

The cultural units found in Phillip Sink's music must be considered differently than what was explored in the Classical correlations of the Beethoven in the previous chapter. Considering topics is a useful entry into the piece, thanks to movements that use topics with wide cultural implications, such as "Butt-dialed" (telephone ringing) and "17 Likes" (fanfare). From there, more constrained topics emerge, using direct quotation of external musical themes, imitation of non-musical sound, and even piece-specific correlations created by the composer specifically for *Leave a Comment.* The result is a tapestry of semantic and expressive possibility for the performer to consider. The analysis to follow will address some of these considerations, and also implications of intent for the performer, all to support and emphasize the overall expressive genre of the piece: satire.

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[102] Conversation with the composer, 2016; Phillip Sink, Program note to *Leave a Comment* (2014).

4.b. *Satire, opportunity, and the performer: an analysis of* Leave a Comment *by Phillip Sink*

Comment and 17 Replies

This title sets up expectations, and indeed, they are met, with an initial musical statement followed by 17 responsory fragments. Each of these fragments is assigned a character by the composer, a built-in topic specific to *Leave a Comment* (Example 4.1). Each of these characters correlate to iconic (immediate, sensory) differences from the others, which in temporal context of the piece, renders these fragments as indexical: they point not only to their difference from the others (rhematic), but also through defining properties of each character (dicent).

For example, *bellicose* (m. 15) is an emotional state with connotations of aggression and violence. The music therefore is marked at a *fortississimo* dynamic, occurs in a low register, and bears heavy articulation (accents and staccato). The sound itself, then, is more percussively violent than the sounds before; additionally, for the performer, this dynamic range and articulation literally requires an observable, aggressive physical response to the keyboard, doubling down on the indexical properties of each correlation.

As such, the dramatized contrast among these gestures in the context of this movement serves well for dialogic metaphor, but it creates a unique challenge for the performer, one that requires a well-established, reliable "map" of future-directed mental intention (*Mi*). Each character (e.g. "bewildered", "pedantic", etc.) must be planned and practiced for reliable execution each time. Then, in order for each character to create dramatic contrast within the context of the movement, the map of *Mi* becomes influenced by present-directed intention (*pMi*) (Figure 2.2, p. 34). This creates a network of temporally related characters, where each one is not only defined by its individual iconic and indexical properties, but also its placement in relation to the others (Figure 4.1).

Example 4.1. *Sink, Leave a Comment: "Comment and 17 Replies"*
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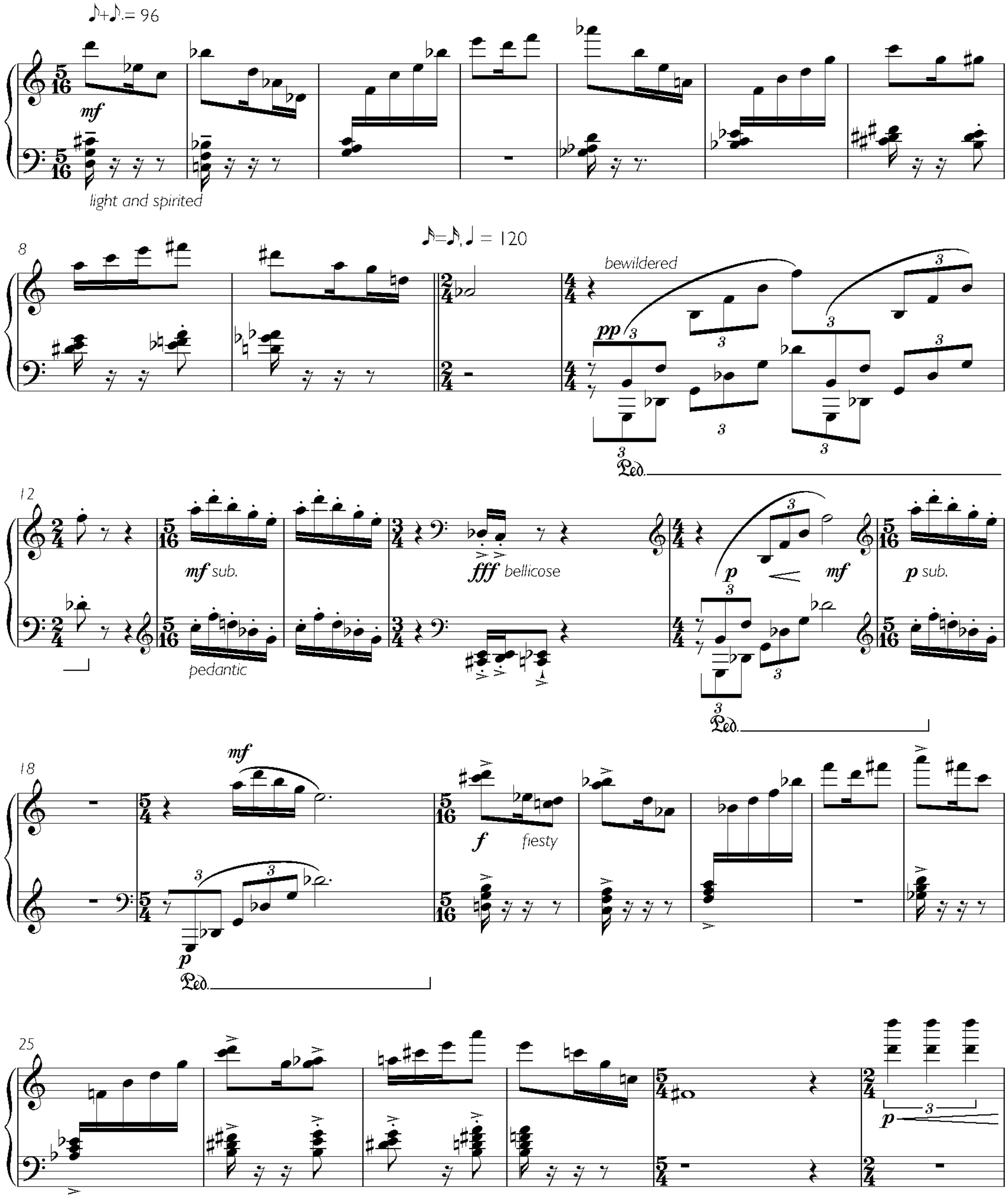
♪+♪.= 96
mf
light and spirited
8
♪=♪. ♩ = 120
bewildered
pp
Ped.
12
mf sub.
pedantic
fff bellicose
p
mf
p sub.
Ped.
18
mf
p
Ped.
f
fiesty
25
p

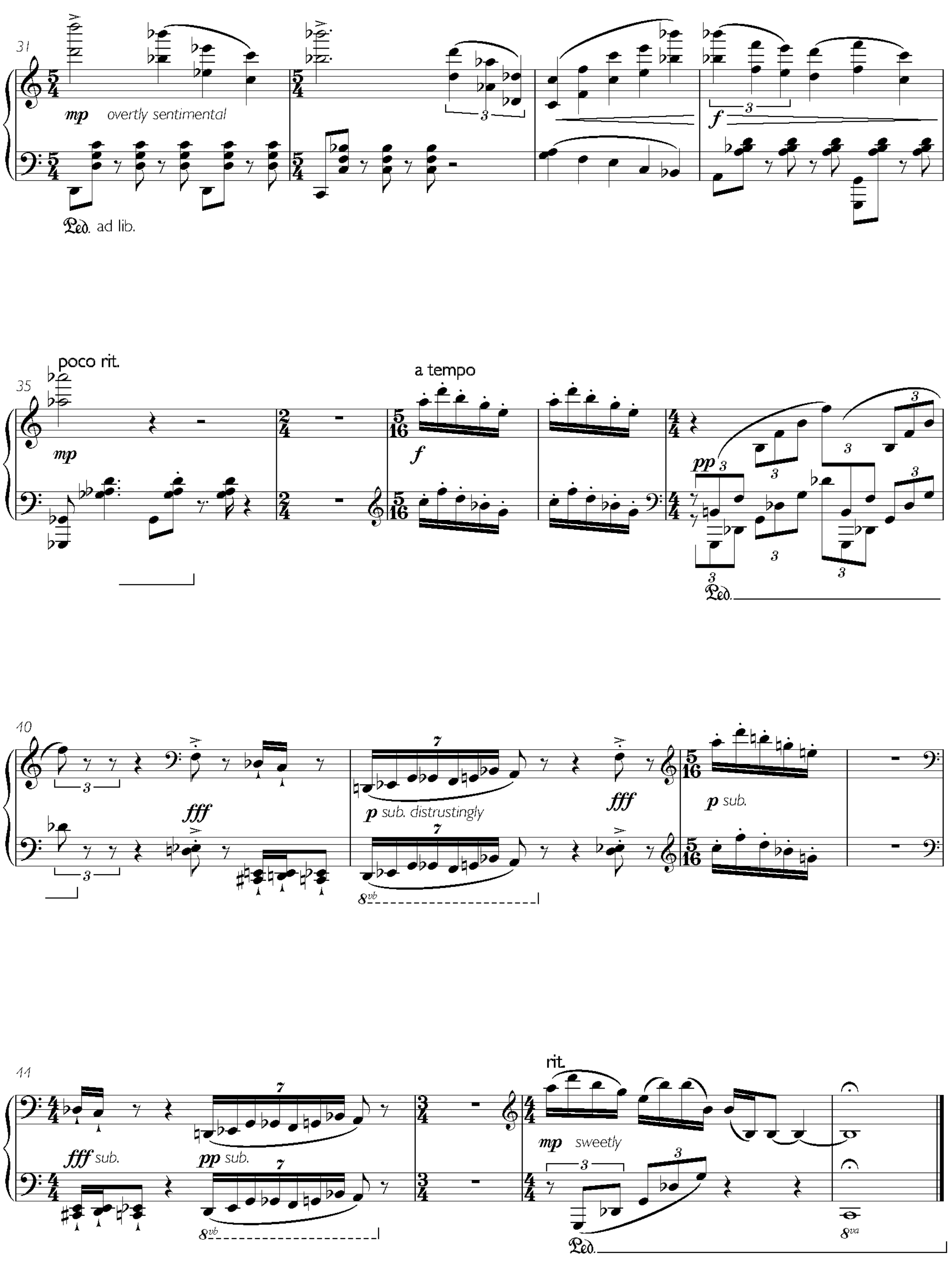
31
mp overtly sentimental
Ped. ad lib.
f
35
poco rit.
mp
a tempo
f
pp
Ped.
40
fff
p sub. distrustingly
fff
p sub.
8vb
44
fff sub.
pp sub.
8vb
rit.
mp sweetly
Ped.
8va

Figure 4.1. *Intention map of character relationships in "Comment and 17 Replies".*
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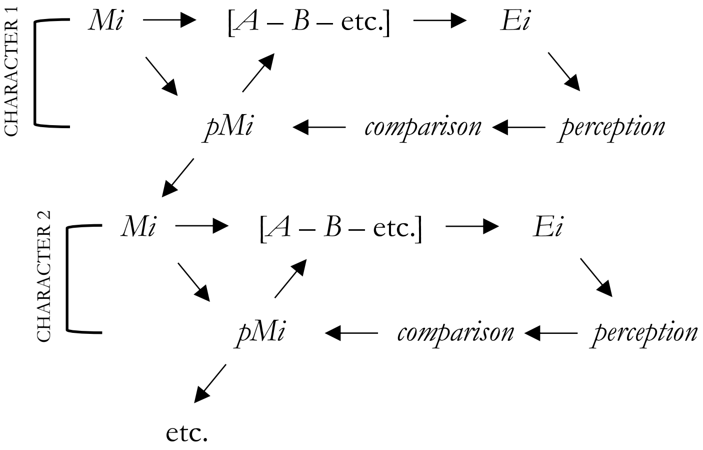

Creative and emergent meaning can also be found by the performer within the tropes in "Comment and 17 Replies." Hatten acknowledges that tropes are often difficult to precisely put into language,[103] but luckily for the performer, this is not required of them. Each character here can be seen as a type; its musical gesture as it takes presence is the token of that type. The combination of tokens actually leads to a novel type and meaning depending on which token assumes dominance in the trope.[104]

In m. 19, the token of type "pedantic" is troped with the token of type "bewildered." In Hatten's Classically-based theory, generally, the dominance between the two marked figures is determined by stylistic competency and interpretation; however, here, each token is a novel representation of each type, and therefore, dominance is a more creative pursuit. It is the performer's responsibility to consider the possibilities of dominance in order to create an emergent meaning. Here are two interpretive possibilities for this trope:

---

[103] Hatten, "On Metaphor and Syntactic Troping in Music," 93-94. Hatten points out that this is a "blessing for composers, who can explore, and elaborate, new and seemingly ineffable realms of meaning."

[104] As a reminder, there are four axes to consider when analyzing tropes: (1) the compatibility among correlations; (2) the degree of dominance among correlations; (3) the creativity among the interaction of correlations; (4) the ongoing productivity over the course of the section/movement/piece (Hatten, "The Troping of Topics in Mozart's Instrumental Works," 515).

- the higher register, louder dynamic, and unexpected entrance of “pedantic” assumes dominance over the lower register and quieter dynamic of “bewildered”;
- the earlier entrance and articulatory dominance (pedal and legato slurs) of “bewildered” are dominant to “pedantic” as a pronounced echo effect.

Both of these tropological options can lead to a metaphoric combination of “pedantic” and “bewildered”, but the interpretive decision of the performer will influence the intention, physical means, and therefore the sound sign that manifests. Further, the performer is not mandated to commit to one or the other but can explore the validity in each depending on certain constraints, especially as it relates to present-directed intention in the throes of a performance. Also important to consider is the return of this trope in mm. 47-48. It has developed from the appearance before: “pedantic” enters before “bewildered”, the dynamic markings are not juxtaposed anymore, and a new word is directed to add to the emergent meaning of the trope (“sweetly”).

When considering that this music correlates to a “Comment and 17 Replies” in an online posting forum, be it blog, social media, or news site, this interpretive ambiguity provides for an abundance of expressive possibility. Since tropes and their development are difficult to put into words at the best of times, the metaphors used here will be extended into small narratives, for the sake of clarity. Assuming “pedantic” dominance, this trope could be interpreted as “pedantic” deridingly answering or dismissing “bewildered’s” questions in mm 13-14, 17, and especially 19, where it interrupts “bewildered” in a louder dynamic, repeating its pitch content, with the inflection of certainty in the falling line adapted to the articulation of “bewildered.” After the unfolding of a restatement by the original commenter and more replies (mm. 20-45), “pedantic” could realize that “bewildered’s” question actually was appropriate, transforming to a sheepish “sweetly” in an apologetic twist at the end to which “bewildered” supplies the final word. If “bewildered” is given dominance, “pedantic” could be seen as having been ignored by the other characters, despite its chirpy repetition, but is assuaged in the acknowledgment by "bewildered", thus culminating in the "sweet" end, where a major seventh can be heard as a harmonious resolution. These are but two options among a host of other possibilities.

Finally, each of the different "replying" characters from "Comment and 17 Replies" returns elsewhere in the piece, further solidifying their presence as piece-specific topics. Some are more obvious than others, but upon first hearing of the piece, the ability to notice every single one is extremely difficult, likely impossible for anyone without the keenest ears, eidetic memory, and the expectation that each of these short morsels will return. Perhaps, then, it is an element of the piece embedded by the composer for the performer's enjoyment, to add to the unity and trajectory of the piece, as well as for the subtle creative potential regarding interpretation by the performer, since the satire genre is so obvious from the start. For example, while the physical demands and intention implications for "bellicose" were addressed earlier, this character is interjectory only in isolated incidents in the first movement. However, upon its return in "Talking Points Memo", it is a violent crux in a debate metaphor, and its isolated significance becomes integrated as a significant part of the piece. A table below lists each character's first appearance in "Comment and 17 Replies", where it is integrated later in the piece, and gives a possible expressive interpretation based on its situation and correlations (Figure 4.2).

Figure 4.2. *Thematic integration of characters from "Comment and 17 Replies" in Leave a Comment.*
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FIRST APPEARANCE	**INTEGRATION**	**INTERPRETATION**
bewildered "Comment and 17 Replies" (m. 11)	"Butt-Dialed" (m. 29)	This is the intercept message tone. The upward inflection gives it the proper questioning tone for the first movement to suit the character *bewildered*, but its tropological integration into "Butt-Dialed" creates the possibility for development of the other topic: telephone ringing.
pedantic "Comment and 17 Replies" (mm. 12-13)	"Echo Chamber" (m. 20)	A variation on NPR's "All Things Considered" theme, the characteristic *pedantic* therefore bleeds into the interpretation of this theme, and could be considered a creative remark by the composer on his opinion of "All Things Considered."
bellicose "Comment and 17 Replies" (m. 15)	"Talking Points Memo" (m. 28)	*Bellicose* enters the increasingly tense debate in "Talking Points Memo" just before the outburst of *Immature Rhetoric* breaks the tension with comedic irony. Belonging to *Smug, Lazy Rhetoric*, the performer can conclude—as insinuated by the abrupt, impulsive changes in articulation between blurred pedal and staccato—that this character is also quite volatile.
overtly sentimental "Comment and 17 Replies" (mm. 30-35)	N/A	This is the only character that lacks later integration of the piece. I will address two possibilities, which are not mutually exclusive: • this theme is a melodic derivation of the original "comment" and could be seen as a reflexive device that brings attention to "Comment and 17 Replies" itself, rather than a later movement; • the omission of including overt sentimentality later is a satirical remark on its lack of appropriateness in electronic media forums.
distrustingly "Comment and 17 Replies" (m. 41)	"Liberal Agenda" (mm. 1-3)	*Distrustingly* appears soonest after "Comment and 17 Replies" in comparison with others, and is therefore perhaps the most likely to be recognized. Its embodiment in "Liberal Agenda" can exert influence over how it appears in the first movement, namely, slightly swinging the sixteenth notes, an iconic similarity to emphasize this indexical figure.

17 Likes

Example 4.2. *Sink, Leave a Comment: "17 Likes"*
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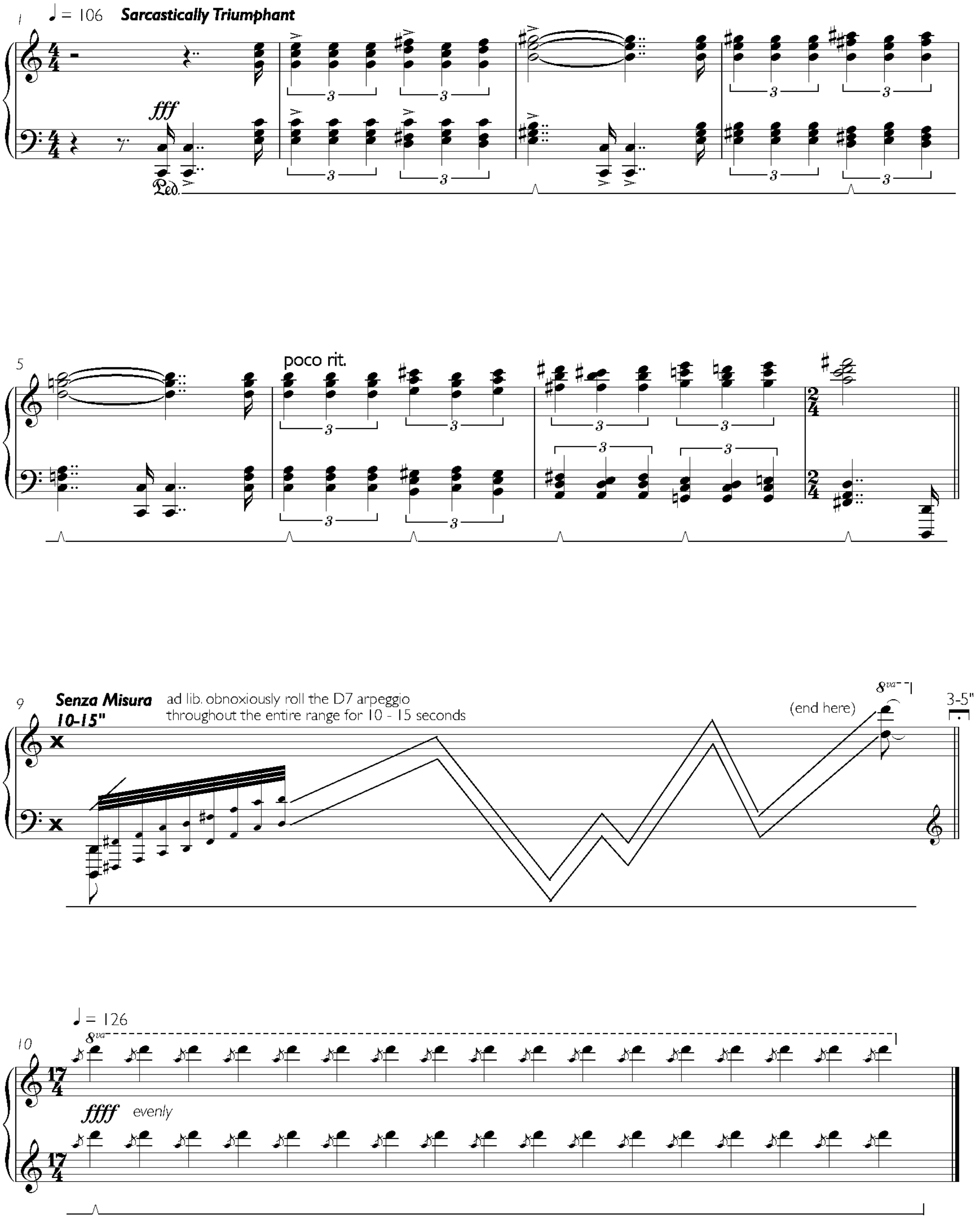
♩ = 106
Sarcastically Triumphant
fff
Ped.
poco rit.
Senza Misura
10-15"
ad lib. obnoxiously roll the D7 arpeggio
throughout the entire range for 10 - 15 seconds
(end here)
8va
3-5"
♩ = 126
8va
ffff
evenly

The second vignette deals with another category of satire: irony. More specifically, irony occurs here via the negation of an emergent tropological metaphor. Negation of expectations can, of course, occur without tropes or metaphor, such as simple dramatic contrast, but Hatten points out that in order for irony to be considered, a musical metaphor must be "unpacked" first. He suggests an explanatory formula for irony as - $(A + B)$, where A and B are troped tokens that must be "unpacked" as a metaphor before the negation can occur.[105] This requires two steps of interpretation. Therefore, I offer the following amendment: - (m) where m is the creative metaphoric result of $(A + B)$, not just the combination of two tokens.

"17 Likes" begins with an obvious introductory fanfare topic, seen in Example 4.2, mm. 1-8. As such, it sets up the expectation for a few scenarios: the arrival of another theme, a closural cadence, or Her Majesty the Queen. None of these is borne out; instead, it repeats and expands for seven bars until finally settling on a D^7 sonority. The dominant seventh itself has implications of introduction, too, though more firmly rooted in tonal harmonic expectation than topical implications. Therefore, with the combination of fanfare, F, and dominant seventh, D, a trope is reached: $(F + D)$. These two tokens, however, carry very similar correlations: both are introductory and lead to expected resolution. Instead of an emergent meaning, this trope creates an augmented meaning: introduction turns into expectation as it is expanded, and expectation becomes heightened through a long emphasis of a dominant seventh in every register of the piano. Thus, m as the unpacked metaphor is an expectation for something grand, profound, or generally significant.

Instead, we are granted one measure of 17 steady, repetitive quarter notes with no harmonic or thematic resolution. This semantic association occurs as a valueless monotone, 17 notes signifying 17 trivial button-taps of a vague affective state ("like") dictated by a social media platform. Further, once recognized, this grimly cheeky—and slightly annoying—irony gives the performer space to consider a few elements: the relationship between *F* and *D*, and how the sparing expressive markings in the score (the *poco ritardando* in m. 6-8, the *ad lib.* registral play in m. 9) can be emphasized, or even additional nuance created. The comic timing before m. 10 is also an interpretive possibility, dependent once again not only on planning and future-directed mental intention, but also the timing and effect of m. 9 in each discrete performance.

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[105] Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven*, 173.

Liberal Agenda

The potential for creative interpretation in "Liberal Agenda" largely lies in the relationship of the music to the performer. The music is rather straight-forward: aside from some sevenths and ninths at punctuative moments, both hands play in parallel unison. Impulsive switches among hexatonic scales, slightly swung rhythm, and the positioning of most of the piece in the lower half register of the piano give the essence of shiftiness, especially when the tempo and expressive directions by the composer are noticed: "With an Ulterior Motive" (Example 4.3). These musical qualities also relate to the cliché of the title: they are predictably reliable to convey sneaky and suspicious correlations, just as the term "liberal agenda" is thrown around by people on media sources to insinuate secretive, dubious plans by those associated with liberal politics.

Example 4.3. Sink, *Leave a Comment: "Liberal Agenda"*
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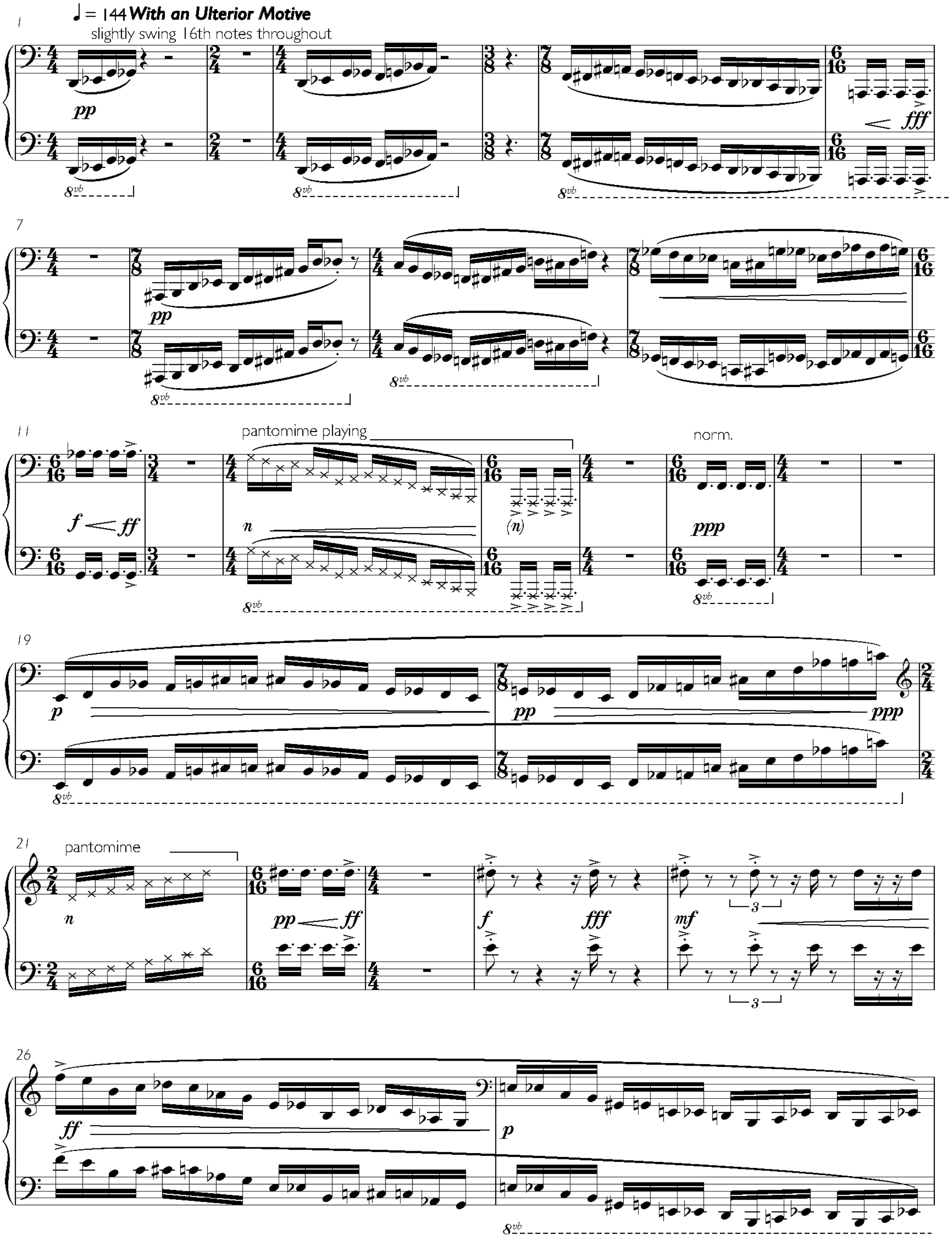
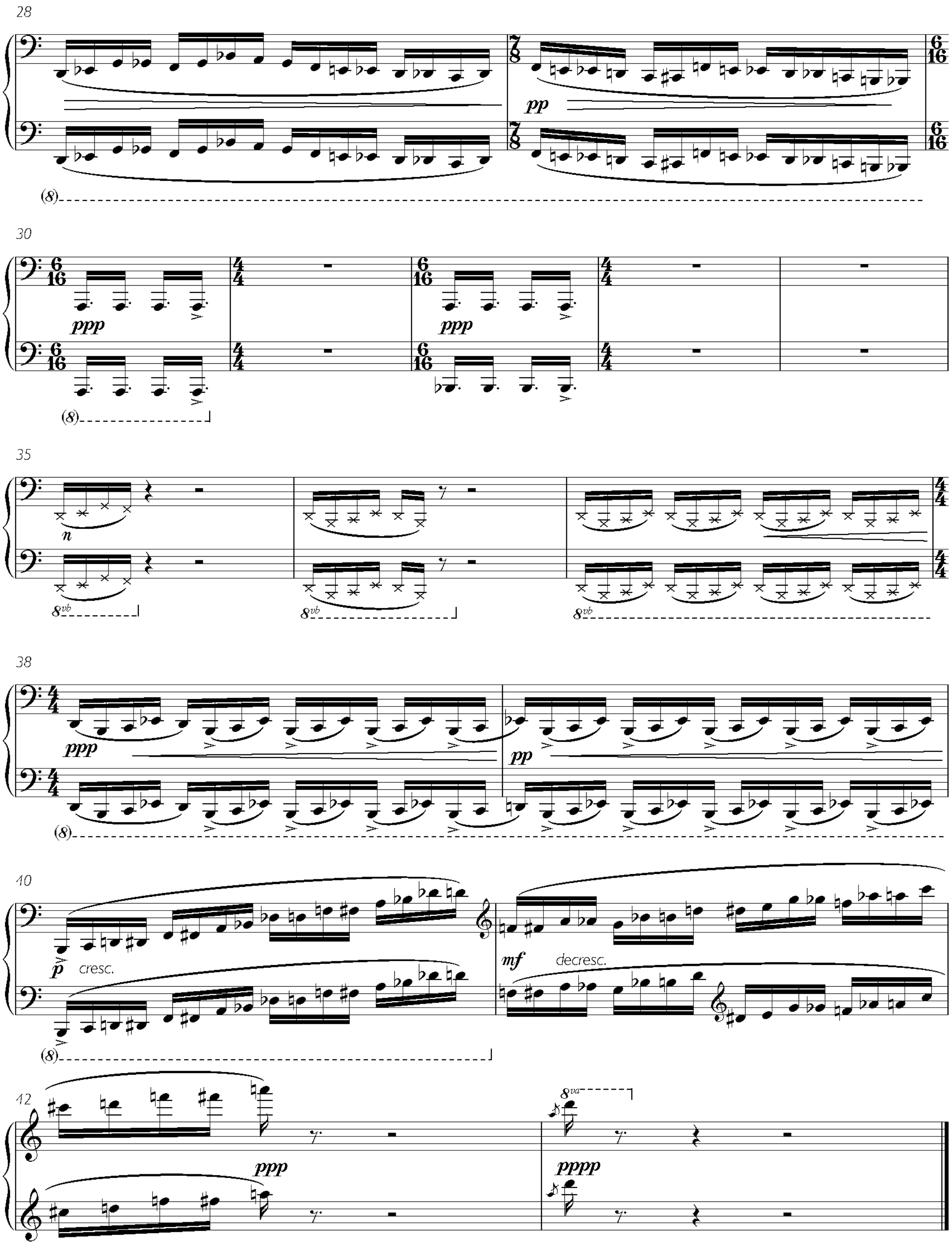

♩ = 144 With an Ulterior Motive
slightly swing 16th notes throughout
pp
fff
8vb
pantomime playing
norm.
n
(n)
f
ff
ppp
p
pantomime
pp
mf
3


28
pp
(8)
30
ppp
ppp
(8)
35
n
8vb
8vb
8vb
38
ppp
pp
(8)
40
p
cresc.
mf
decresc.
(8)
42
ppp
8va
pppp

Perhaps the largest impact of this movement lies in the power of pitchlessness. The performer is directed to pantomime (mm. 13-14 and 35-37), demanding a performer-as-actor consideration within this movement. Easy to translate are the noteheads: they are written on specific pitches but should not sound, indicating that the performer's fingers should indeed be "playing" the keys that correspond to the written notes. Composer Phillip Sink writes: "This is a purely theatrical element that is essential to the concept of the movement. … The fingers may tap the keys to add to the dramatic element, but no pitch should result."[106] An analyst could interpret this as irony, one in which the absence of sound brings attention to the deliberately contrary meaning of the passage. Another possibility would be that of Romantic irony, in which the methods of composition are themselves self-consciously satirical, which highlights the satirical nature of the piece. While Sink never discretely lays out what is meant by this theatrical device, he acknowledges his manipulation and parody of standard conventions in order to further comment on the insinuations of the title "Liberal Agenda."

Interestingly, certain measures of pantomiming contain expressive markings: slurs, accents, and even crescendi. This opens possibilities in the performer's future-directed intention by-chain process. When considering the performer-as-actor in pantomimed measures, these expressive markings could inform motion. For example, a performer could interpret the slur in m. 13 as related to the smoothness of the descending motion of the line and therefore endeavor in practice how best to physically portray this fluidity. Likewise, the accents in m. 14 can be brought out by the performer to break that continuous motion with four quick motions in rapid succession, similar to how this motif is executed three measures earlier when there is pitch.

However, these dynamic and articulation markings can also be taken more literally: just because there is no pitch does not mean there is no sound. The sounds of the fingers on the keys can be nuanced to reflect the expressive markings in the score, charging the irony (the subversion of the expectation for pitched sound) by replacing pitched sound with the percussive. In addition, this performance technique also creates suspense. In one possibility, metaphor arises through a prolonged interaction between or among variables without knowing which one will be negated. In another possibility, like the one here, the unexpected negation of a previously unrecognized variable creates the possibility for metaphor through the interaction of the new variable with the previous variable.[107]

---

[106] Phillip Sink, Performance note to *Leave a Comment*, 2014.

In the two movements prior and the beginning of this one, the composer and performer have created an expectation or convention for the piece, a sense of "thirdness" for the audience: when a pianist is on stage, there is a definitive expectation that when the pianist's hands are moving on the keyboard, there will be pitch, particularly when the movement begins with the juxtaposition of pitched sound versus silence notated as rests.[108] In discretely semiotic terms, by suddenly subverting this expectation, the moment of perception yanks the listener back to the possibility-laden world of firstness. Eventually, the pantomiming can be considered as a dicent indexical legisign, but symbolic thirdness only comes after negotiating the interaction of the new correlation with previous expectations. Put more intuitively, the listener is surprised by the lack of sound and connects the previously established correlations of shiftiness and uncertainty to a more humorously villainous metaphor. In my interpretation, the satire and commentary on the existence of a "Liberal Agenda" is treated here like a silent film villain, twirling his moustache and creating expressive meaning by sneaking around in expected and unexpected ways. However, all things considered, it is very difficult to take seriously, especially with the cheeky wink of allusion to the previous movement at the end (m. 43), when this particular figure finally finds its place as a resolution.

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[107] Narratives in books and film provide very accessible examples of these two possibilities. Consider for the former every big-budget romantic comedy in which the female protagonist must choose from multiple male love interests. Suspense is created by the uncertainty of which lover(s) she will choose, and the eventual negation resolves the suspense. For the latter, perhaps our female protagonist is being pursued by multiple male love interests, but in a shocking revelation, the viewer learns she is also romantically interested in and being pursued by non-male people. Thus, the negation of a variable that had been taken for granted (assumed heterosexuality) opens up new realms of suspense in the plot.

[108] In my own interpretation, this relationship actually informs my movement as a performer: I attempt to stay as still as I can during rests in order to emphasize motion as part of the performance in "played" phrases, pantomimed or not.

Echo Chamber

Peircean semiotics acknowledge the significance of a sign system's meaning within a given culture at a given time, and the benefits are exemplified in "Echo Chamber" (Example 4.4). An echo chamber is a closed environment in which certain beliefs are emphasized and reinforced, so that alternate beliefs or ways of thinking are not considered. Within current American culture, this phrase is generally used to describe news media outlets, where partisanship leads to the amplification of certain events and dismissal of others in order to prescriptively fit the agenda of the network.

"Echo Chamber" accepts and highlights this connotation from the beginning, starting with the musical theme of the NBC network. This theme recurs throughout (mm. 6-8, 8-9, 17-18) and is fragmented at the end (mm. 27-29) as an echo of the beginning: same harmonies, but no resolution. This melody is troped with several other musical themes from various news shows and networks, including Fox News (mm. 24-26), NPR's "All Things Considered" (mm. 4-5), the "Colbert Report" (mm. 10-11), and others.

Example 4.4. *Sink, Leave a Comment: "Echo Chamber"*
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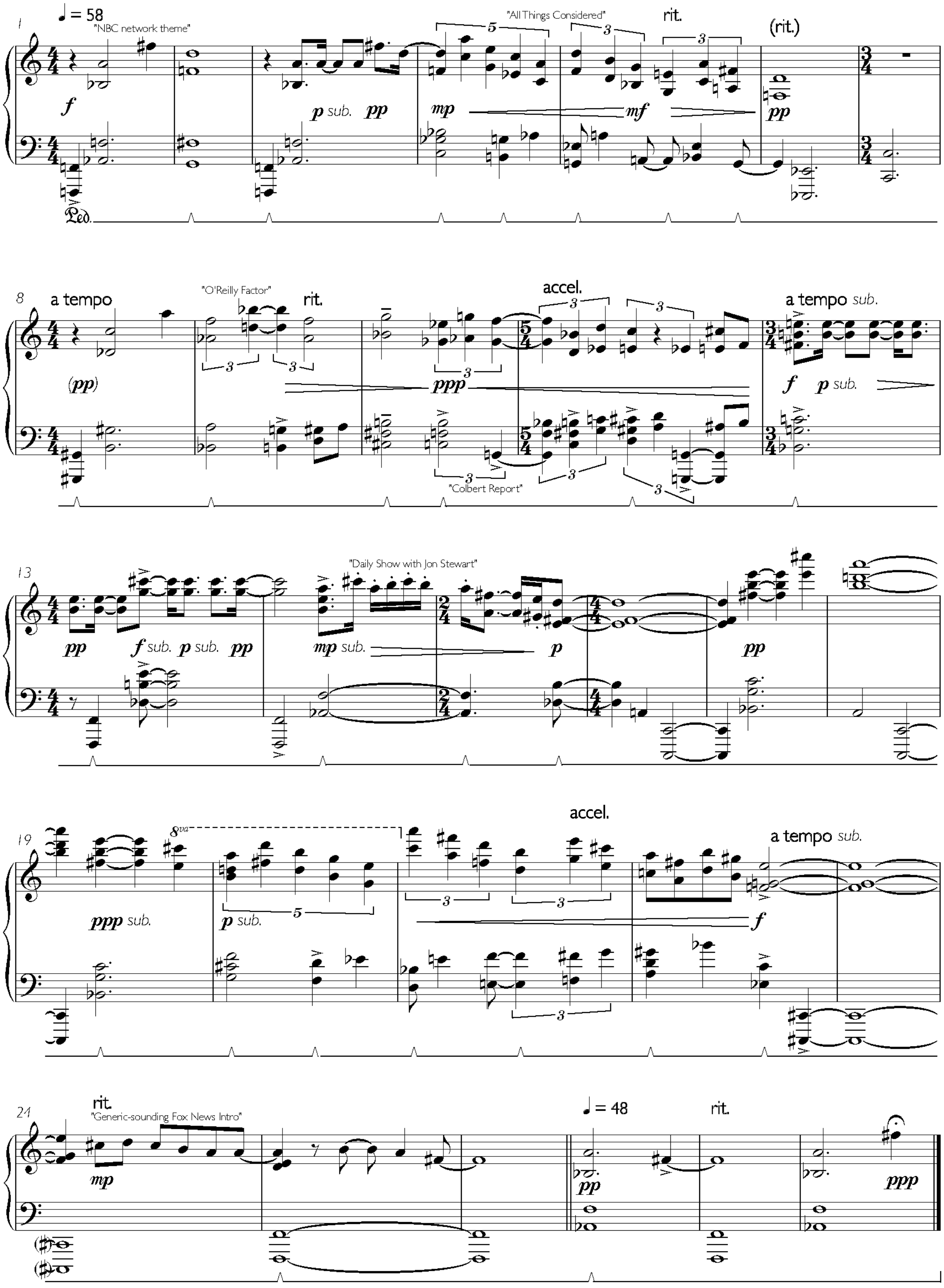
♩ = 58
"NBC network theme"
"All Things Considered"
rit.
(rit.)
a tempo
"O'Reilly Factor"
rit.
accel.
a tempo sub.
"Colbert Report"
"Daily Show with Jon Stewart"
accel.
a tempo sub.
rit.
"Generic-sounding Fox News Intro"
♩ = 48
rit.
Ped.

Here, the different themes and connotations of those themes, from progressive to conservative, from news show to late-night show, amalgamate together. This intertextuality, under the umbrella of the title, creates a novel interpretation that each echo chamber, while remaining its own closed system, exists in a larger echo chamber doing the same thing, creating a meta echo chamber. That is to say that each echo chamber exists as a role in a larger echo chamber, such as "The O'Reilly Factor" existing in the echo chamber of Fox News, which exists in the larger "conservative media" type. In this piece, quotations from conservative, presumably neutral, and liberal media sources are quoted, creating an even more expansive metaphor, one that questions whether it is possible for any news outlet to exist outside of an echo chamber. In this case, it is not.

Pedaling and voicing decisions are two general factors that can greatly affect the way the performer manifests this interpretation. The effect of the constant pedal throughout creates a nearly literal manifestation of echo sustain, and the depth and duration of each pedal, as well as each pedal clearance, can be considered by the performer when establishing interpretation and intention. Clarity of voicing for each thematic melody fragment can also contribute to this effect, as the melody notes will be that which ring in the sustain of the pedal for longest, above the foundation of harmonic underpinning.

Not only are elements of the piece like an echo chamber, and a meta echo chamber, but the performer can interpretively consider themselves analogous to the news network. Certain themes or voices can be hidden by the harmonic "noise" and reverberation of the pedal, just as certain points of view or events are hidden under more obviously displayed elements in modern news echo chambers.

Talking Points Memo

Within a debate, each person will usually have a talking points memo: a short list of statements designed to support or refute the topic of debate based on the position of the person holding the list. Appropriately following from the previous movement, it is also the name of an online news organization which hosts a podcast where the guests debate topics and, presumably, often have a talking points memo of their own to reference.

The structure of "Talking Points Memo" is analogous to that of a debate. Four characters listed in Figure 4.3 offer responses to a moderator, which mimics the rising inflection of speech when asking a question (Example 4.5, mm. 1, 9, 16, 23, 25). For the performer, a map of intention for the characters—similar to "Comment and 17 Replies"—can aid the extremely fast switches.

Figure 4.3. *Qualities of speech for each character in "Talking Points Memo".*
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CHARACTER	MUSICAL CORRELATES TO SPEECH
Bitter Rhetoric	brief but repetitive, wide inflection (melodic and dynamic), high register
Smug, Lazy Rhetoric	low register, slower tempo, use of staccato (smug) and pedal blurring in legato (lazy)
Pointed Rhetoric	accented, loud, succinct, middle register
Immature Rhetoric	completely disjointed, implications of *Team America* humor

At first, these responses start in a very orderly fashion, but as the movement progresses, responses become shorter and louder, while the moderator's inflection rises higher and higher in a desperate attempt to gain control (mm. 26-29). The "bellicose" character from the first movement returns at this culmination (m. 28-29), embedded in the *Smug, Lazy Rhetoric* character, reinforcing the idea of heightened tension and near violence.

Example 4.5. Sink, *Leave a Comment: "Talking Points Memo"*
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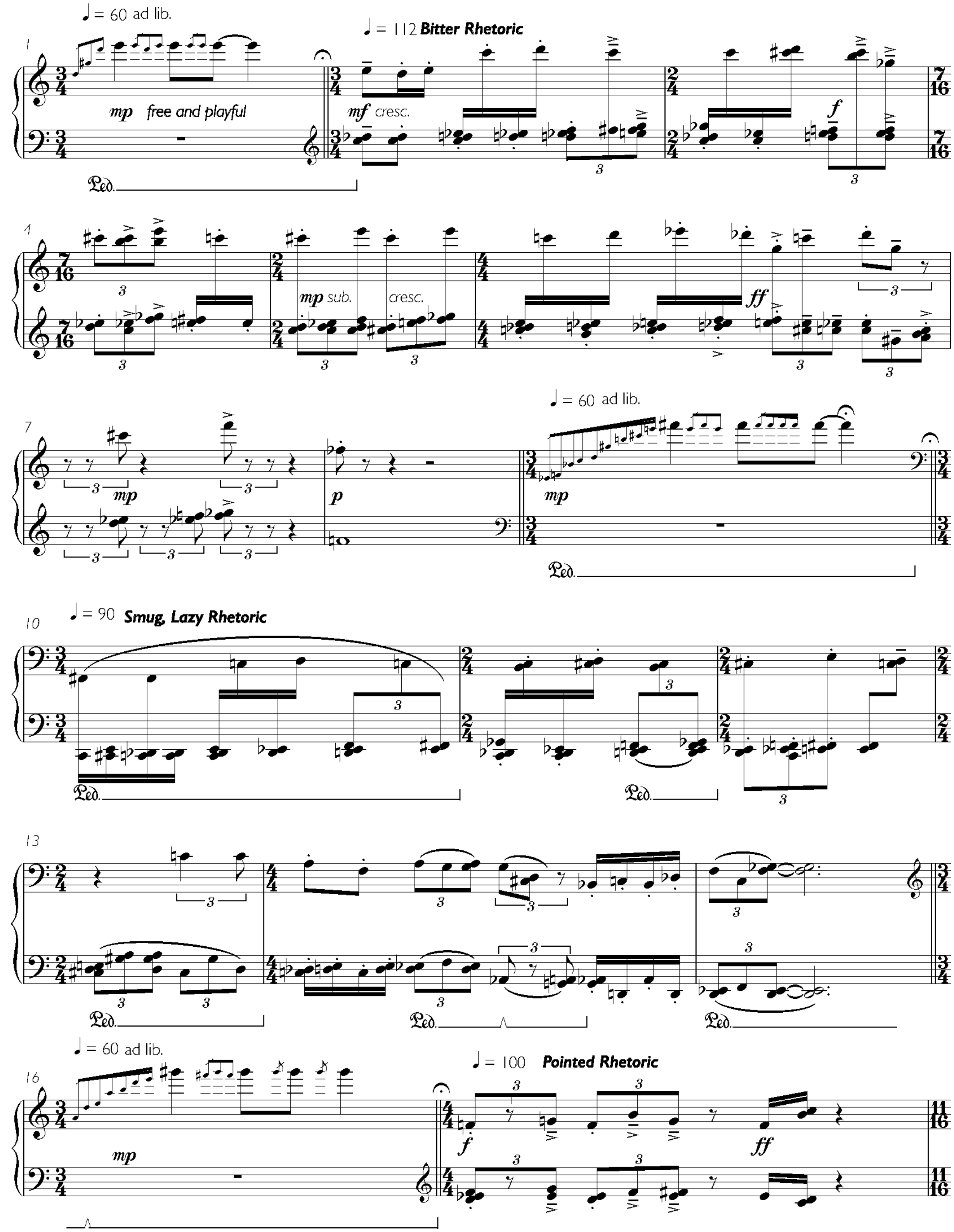
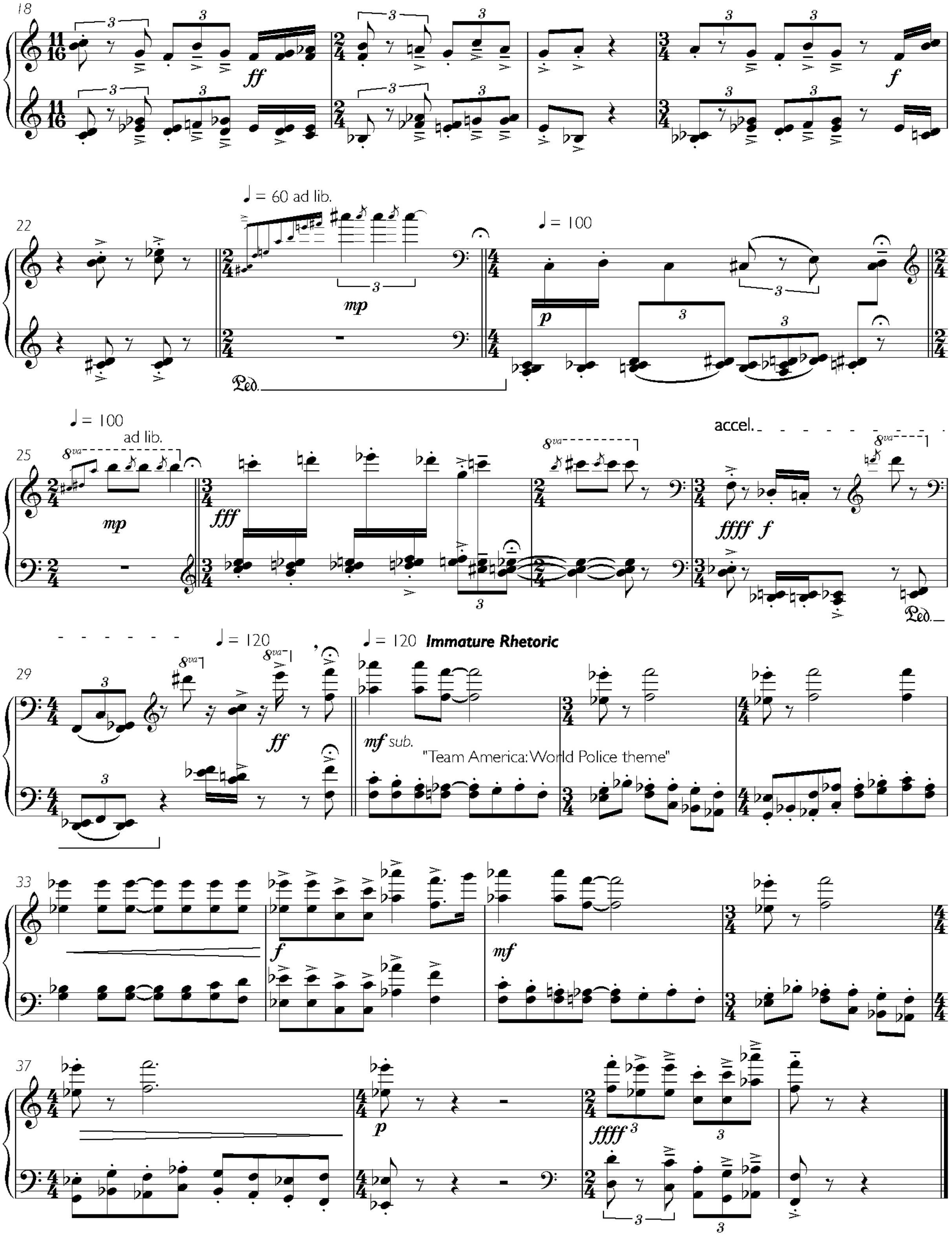


♩ = 60 ad lib.
mp free and playful
♩ = 112 Bitter Rhetoric
mf cresc.
f
mp sub.
cresc.
ff
mp
p
♩ = 60 ad lib.
mp
♩ = 90 Smug, Lazy Rhetoric
♩ = 60 ad lib.
mp
♩ = 100 Pointed Rhetoric
f
ff


18
3
ff
f
22
♩ = 60 ad lib.
mp
Ped.
♩ = 100
p
25
♩ = 100
ad lib.
8va
mp
fff
accel.
ffff
f
29
♩ = 120
♩ = 120
Immature Rhetoric
ff
mf sub.
"Team America: World Police theme"
33
f
mf
37
p
ffff

At the moment of crux, after a rather ominous brief silence in m. 29, a long pick-up note is the musical correlate to a collective breath, of the debaters and the audience. This anacrusis also introduces “Immature Rhetoric.” Indeed, with the disintegration of order, and lack of control by the moderating character, “Immature Rhetoric” breaks the built tension in the previous, more serious music by non-sequitur, as is wont to happen in a debate setting where tensions have risen.[109] This character is a quotation of the theme song from the film *Team America: World Police*, by Trey Parker, Matt Stone, and Pam Brady, the creators of the popular television series, *South Park*, who carry their particular brand of humor into this film to satirize politics in the United States, as well as Hollywood action movies. The theme breaks from the dissonant, speech imitation of the preceding characters’ musical syntax by jumping into a tonal, pop-rock-musical realm. In addition, those who know the words of this theme song, the source, or the creators can find further expressive richness in the implications of the inappropriately juvenile humor.

As in a debate, two of the most important elements for the performer to address in planned, future-directed intention are small-scale timing and larger scope pacing. Not only can each character have its own set of intentional, executable qualities, but particularly regarding the moderator, there is room for temporal flexibility: within the bars, the melismatic pick-ups, ornaments, and grace notes can all be considered; between the bars, the fermatas between each question and character response can influence the overall effect of the piece as well. For example, in my interpretation, each of the five fermatas in mm. 1, 9, 16, 23, and 25 can be systematically curtailed. This serves to set up the built-in diminution that occurs in mm. 27-29, contributing to the correlation of rising tension by systematically reducing the time between each question and response. In another method, a performer can achieve the same results by working backwards from each question-response unit from mm. 29 to the beginning to create consistently executable intentions that relate the duration of each fermata systematically. Although the performer has agency over the pacing of tension in this way, this semiotic consideration of plausible interpretation does not impose the performer's agency onto the music; rather, the observable qualities of the music contribute to the performer's discovery of an interpretation that will emphasize the meaning created by them.

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[109] This, too, can be analyzed using the formula for expectation-based irony, where the emergence of something so different overturns listener expectation set up by troping before.

Butt-Dialed

The final piece in the set is built on two easily recognizable topics: the ringing of a telephone (m. 1, Example 4.6) and the intercept message tone.[110] The piece begins with the ringing topic, which is repeated to an annoying degree. In m. 29, the intercept message tone interrupts the ringing, then again in mm. 31, 34, and 36. The two are then troped together (mm. 41-51), parallel thirds alternated with semitone dissonances evoking the ringing topic, and the octave displacement of the intercept tone filling in between. This tropological relief from the incessant repetition of the ringing topic is profound, and rather than the stasis of the ringing tone itself, allows for a journey in different registers of the keyboard, high (mm. 47-51), middle (mm. 41-45), and low (mm. 56-61). In my personal expressive interpretation, this exaggeration of registers, dynamics, and troping of themes is a symbolic statement of the absurdity of the ceaseless sounds of cell phones in every public place, these digitally-inspired tones stretched to the ends of the keyboard and dynamic spectrum in an expansion akin to augmentation and distortion in caricature visual art.

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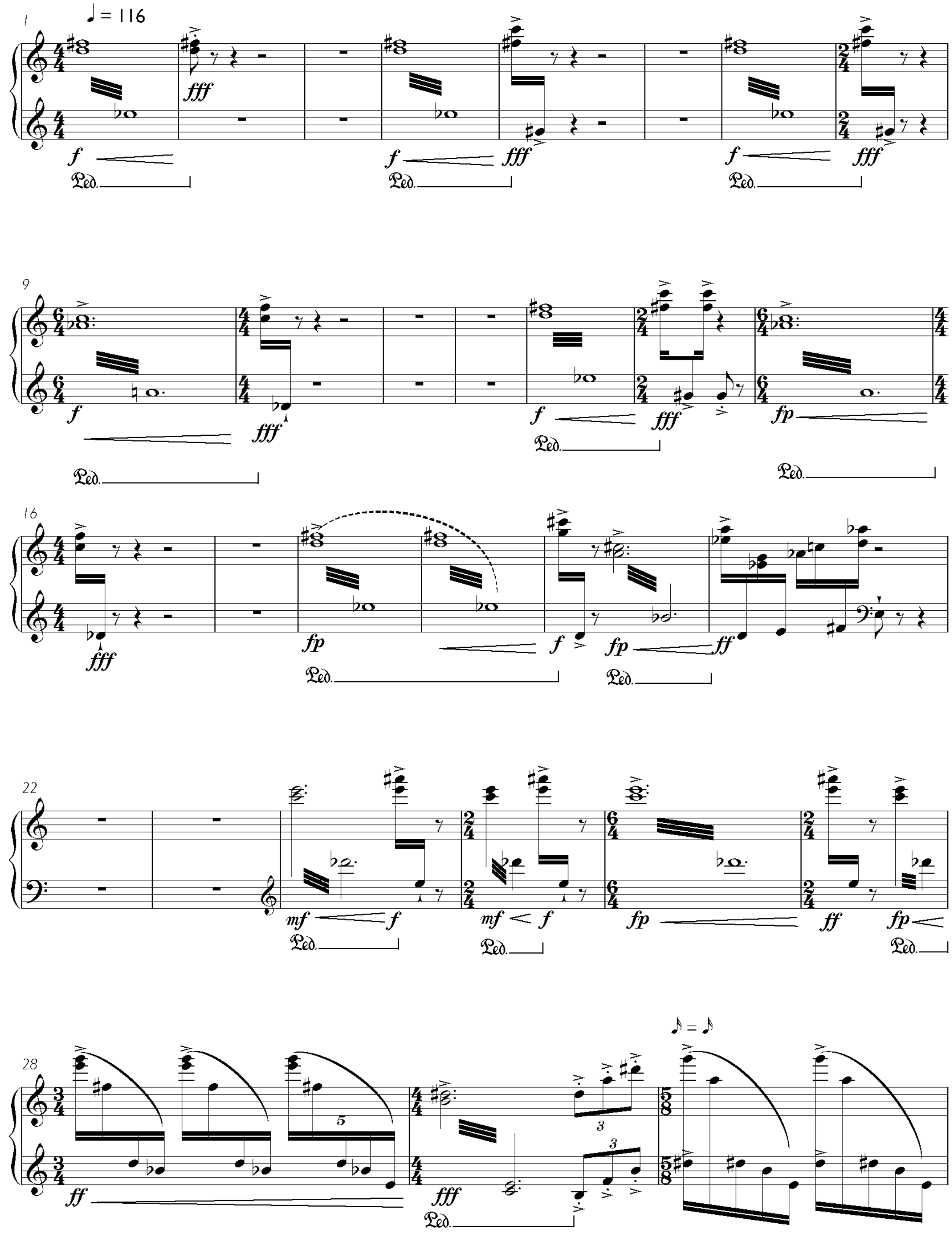
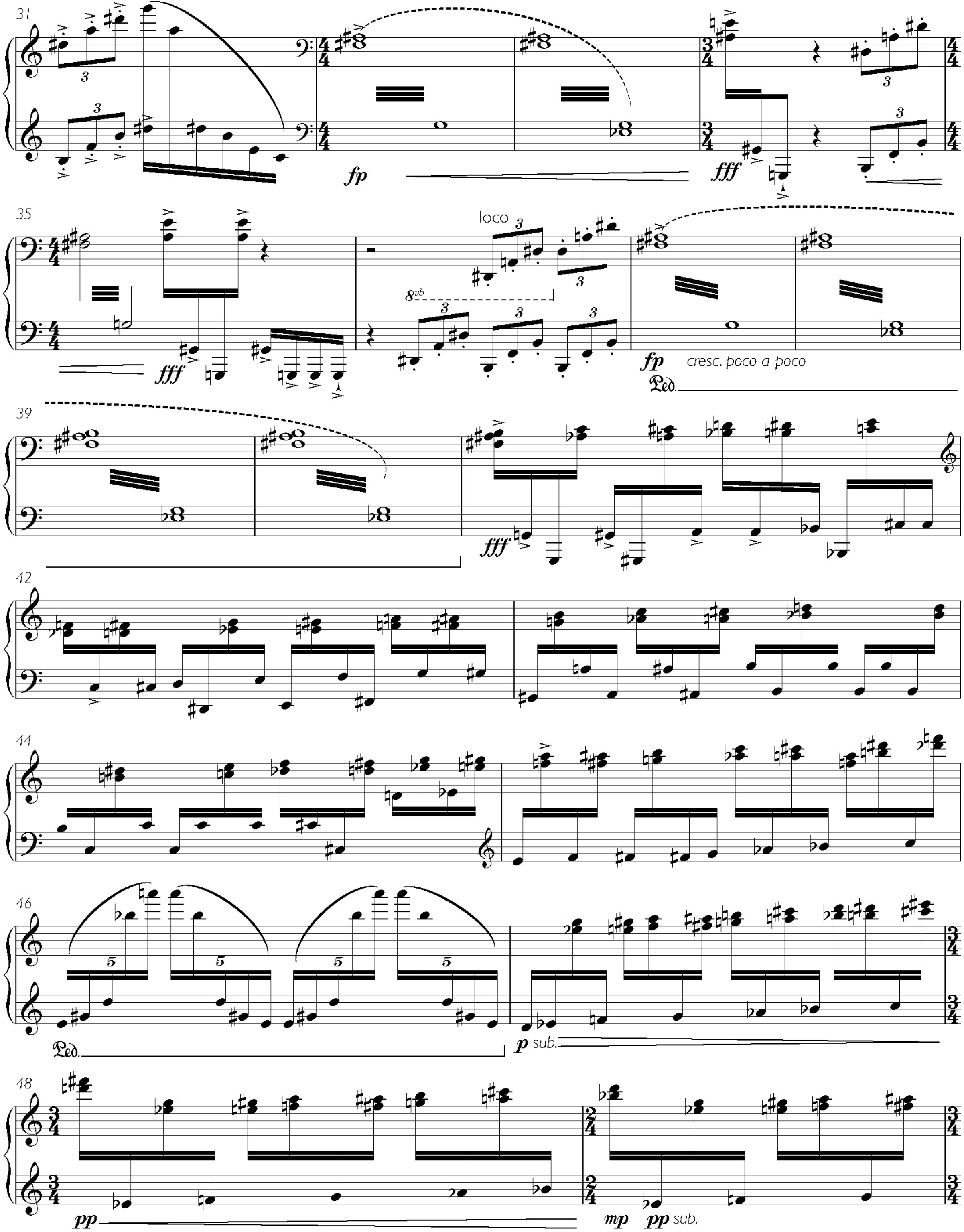
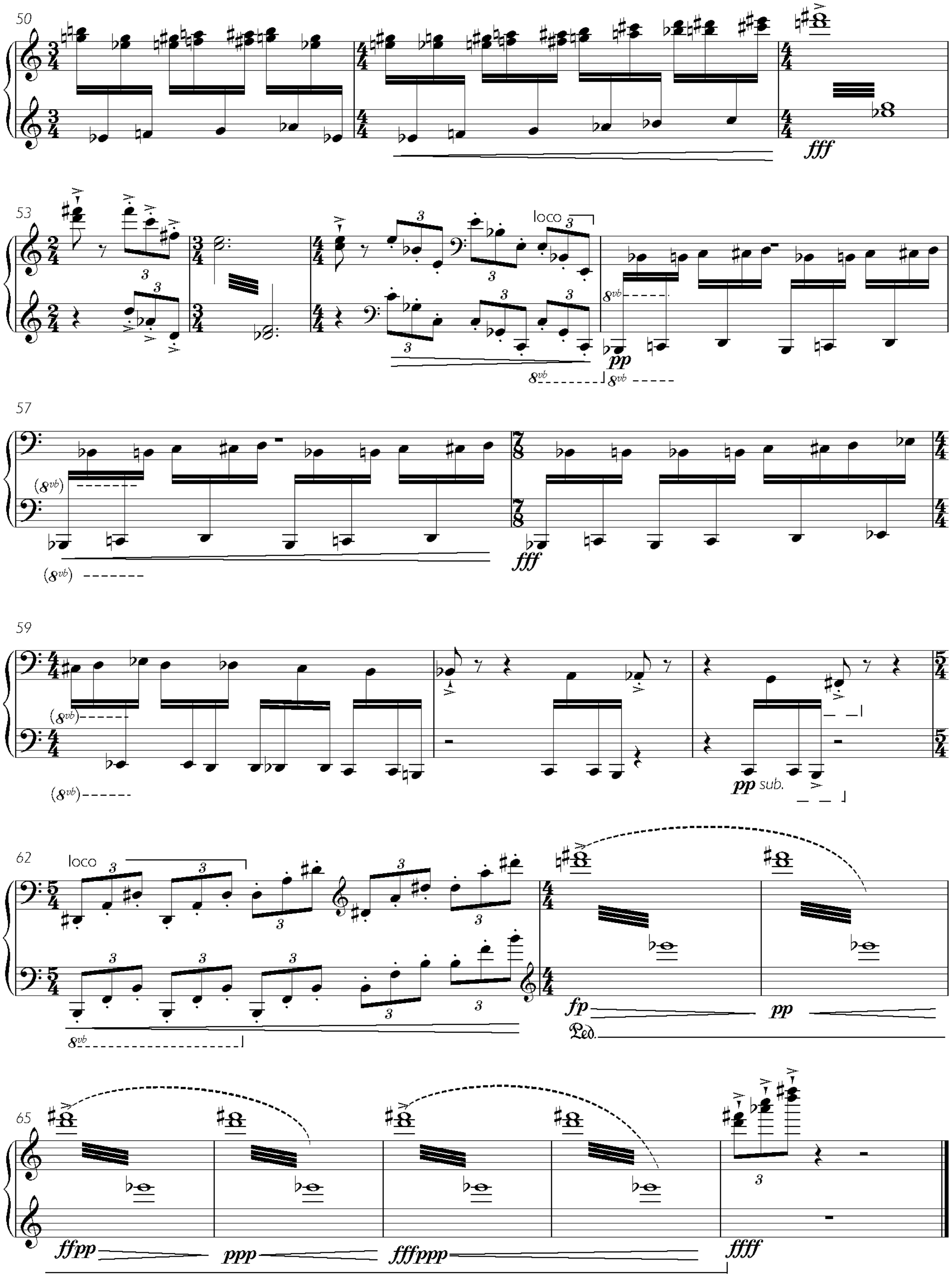
[110] The intercept message tone is the harmonics-based set of three ascending pitches that precede the automatic "We're sorry," message when calling a number that has been disconnected.

Example 4.6. *Sink, Leave a Comment: "Butt-Dialed"*
Copyright Phillip Sink, 2014. Used by permission.



♩= 116
f
fff
fp
mf
ff
Ped.
5
3
♪ = ♪


31
3
3
fp
fff
3
35
loco
3
3
8vb
3
3
3
fff
fp
cresc. poco a poco
Ped.
39
fff
42
44
46
5
5
5
5
Ped.
p sub.
48
pp
mp
pp sub.


50
fff
53
loco
8vb
pp
8vb
8vb
57
(8vb)
(8vb)
fff
59
(8vb)
(8vb)
pp sub.
62
loco
8vb
fp
pp
Ped.
65
ffpp
ppp
fffppp
ffff

As an additional invitation to further metaphor, "butt-dialing" is an accidental form of non-communication, one in which someone's telephone is called from another telephone without the dialer's knowledge, usually from a pocket or bag. These devices, which give us the greatest ease of direct and instant communication are also a source for non-communication, and even missed communication. When examined with this movement's musical commentary on the omnipresence of cell phones, a conundrum arises: the instant accessibility to these devices theoretically improves communication, but with that accessibility comes a reduction of communication to thoughtless notifications, button pushing, and screen taps.

#toccata and **Retweet**

The fourth and seventh pieces are exactly the same, shown in Example 4.7. When this piece was written, hashtags had already permeated media and society, so the correlation of "#toccata" with Twitter may not be immediately recognized until its identical restatement, titled "Retweet." From there, more correlations present themselves: both movements have exactly 140 notes, reflecting the 140-character limit on Twitter posts.[111] Each articulation of a note or cluster correlates one of the 140 characters, and thus, the metaphor of typing at a keyboard is created.

The self-reflexive nature of these two movements can also become a vehicle for further extra-musical metaphor guided by the satirical expressive genre. Is it a way to create unity within the piece, as retweets create solidarity among Twitter (and other social media platform) users? Or is it a pointed glance at the tendency of people on social media to recycle and reclaim other thoughts as their own in thoughtless, reflexive repetition?

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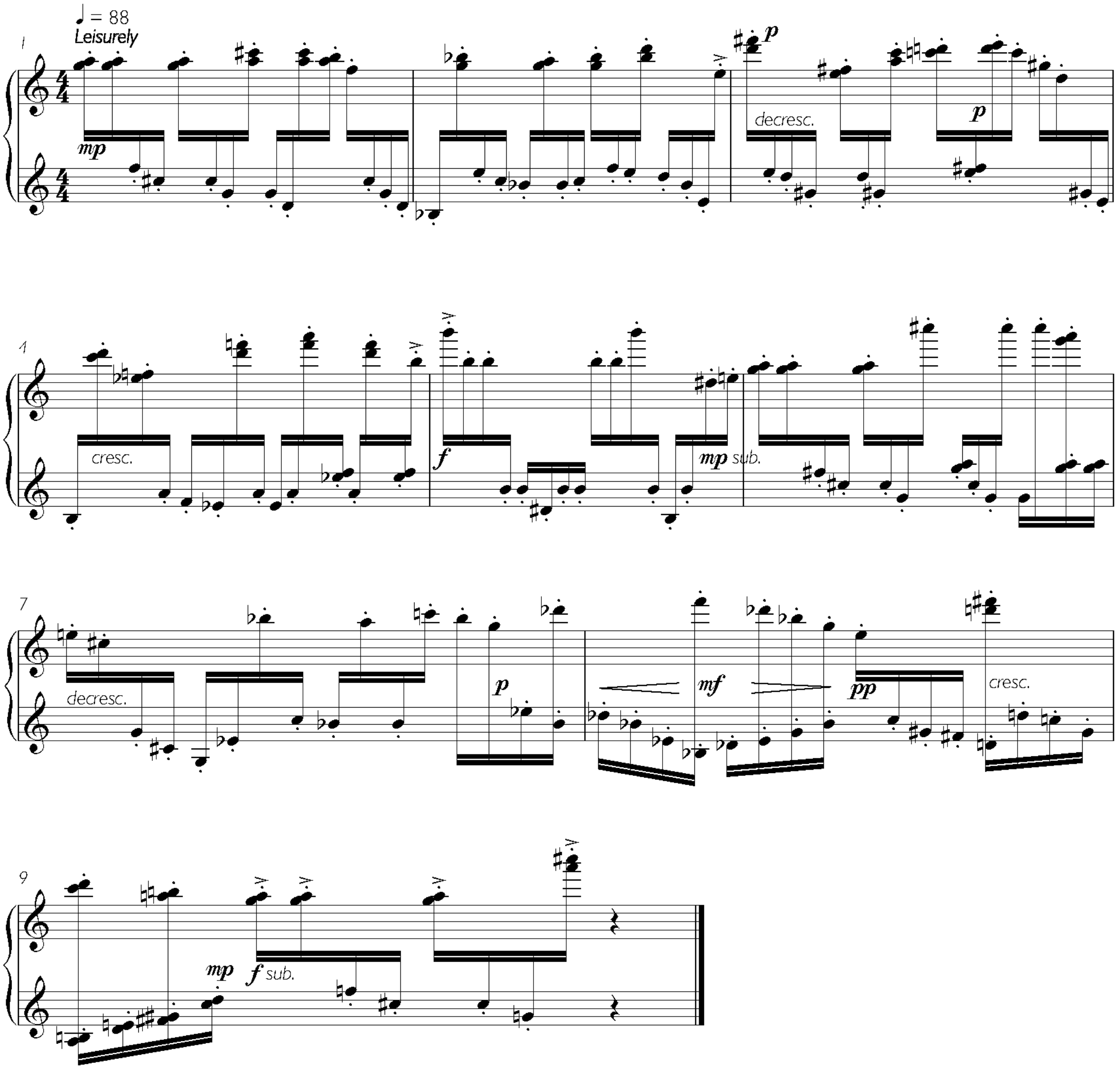
[111] Twitter doubled this limit in late 2017 and early 2018, but 140 characters was the limit at the time of composition.

Example 4.7. Sink, *Leave a Comment: "#toccata" and "Retweet"*
Copyright Phillip Sink, 2014. Used by permission.


♩ = 88
Leisurely
mp
decresc.
p
cresc.
f
mp sub.
decresc.
p
mf
pp
cresc.
mp
f sub.

4.c. *Summary: different constraints, meaningful correlations*

Contemporary music can often seem daunting to listen to and to perform. However, by using a flexible, semiotic process, listeners and performers alike can use the knowledge they already have to create connections and correlations to new stylistic competencies. Here, Phillip Sink's *Leave a Comment* serves as a very accessible example of adapting elements of certain methodologies to discover how they can be useful in scenarios with different constraints. For example, where there is a loss of shared topics and instead piece-specific protocols and private codes arise, Sink provides other ways to orient the performer and listener, including written clues (titles, performance directives), quotation from commonplace musical themes, and even mimicry of recognizable sounds, such as speech. Considering these methods offers the performer the opportunity continuously engage in further interpretation. This is the essence of a semiotic consideration in music, and what makes it so useful: rather than imposing rigorous empiricism on a sign system that intentionally defies absolute determination, it invites further, and varying, perception and analysis of meaning.

CONCLUSION

Semiotic consideration of music allows for the performer to more deeply consider how they process and interpret music. By breaking apart procedures of learning music and practicing into a semiotically-inspired model—sensory perception, recognition and categorization, situation within culture and convention—the performer can more carefully consider their intuitive processes. They can also explore plausible expressive interpretations that fit their observations while observing cultural contexts and conventions that allow the listener to perceive a meaningful musical experience, as well.

This is achievable through future-directed and present-directed intention. Both types of intent shape the way the music is perceived. It is, of course, impossible for specific mental intentions to translate directly to each member of the audience. However, because intention execution is observable in a social context, and can shape the way the performer creates, executes, and achieves their interpretation, it will then also affect how the audience hears the music, regardless of the alignment of exact details. Even if there is a disparity between the competencies of audience members and the performer, still, observable intent can be perceived, and thus shapes the way the sound and musical event unfold.[112]

The skeletal framework of intent outlined in this project promises possibility for future study, as well, providing a foundation for theories that develop from it or even oppose it. From pedagogical perspectives, such as how intention creation can be carried into applied lessons, to more in-depth semiotic implications, or even ramifications in perception and cognition studies, I hope that it provides inspiration for future consideration.

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[112] For a less abstract example, consider a parent calling, "No!" to a child. The child, obviously, does not know or observe that which the parent does, perhaps a hidden danger, an experience that the child has not had before, or a future consequence the child cannot foresee. Therefore, the child does not know the exact mental intention of the parent calling, "No!" but can still perceive the intention based on the way it is executed, such as duration of the word, tone of voice, and other elements. Based on the execution of intent, the child still understands something meaningful from that word and responds to it accordingly.

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