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FORMAL FUNCTIONS AND RETROSPECTIVE REINTERPRETATION IN THE FIRST MOVEMENT OF SCHUBERT'S STRING QUINTET

In an influential 1995 article on Beethoven's 'Tempest' Sonata, and again in her recent book on early nineteenth-century form, Janet Schmalfeldt suggests that Romantic formal processes unfold in a state of perpetual becoming.¹ The idea was adumbrated by Carl Dahlhaus, also with reference to the 'Tempest' Sonata: the movement's celebrated opening, in Dahlhaus's pregnant phrase, 'is not yet a theme', while the ostensibly thematic gesture at bar 21 'is one no longer'.² In Schmalfeldt's Schenker- and Caplin-inflected reimagining of Dahlhaus, the trope that formal spans 'become' rather than 'are' comes to mean that listeners engage in a process of constant form-functional reorientation across large portions of a movement. In her analysis, the annotation 'INTRO.⇒MAIN THEME (MT)' above bars 1–20 of Beethoven's exposition thus signifies that an idealised listener initially hears that span as introductory but at some later point reinterprets it as the exposition's main theme; similarly, her label 'MT⇒TRANSITION' above bar 21 asserts that this same listener interprets the music there first as the main theme, but later as the transition.³

In her book Schmalfeldt expands this model from the 'Tempest' Sonata to early nineteenth-century music more generally, with examples drawn from Schubert, Mendelssohn, Chopin and the Schumanns. One work she does not cite in this context, but that strikes us as exemplifying something very like the formal processes she describes, is the first movement of Schubert's C major String Quintet, D. 956.⁴ In what follows we take Schmalfeldt's work as a springboard for our analysis of that movement's exposition.⁵ We begin with a brief synoptic overview and then home in on three sections that pose particular analytical challenges: the introduction/main-theme/transition complex (bars 1–59), the transition/subordinate-theme complex (bars 60–100) and the closing group/subordinate theme complex (bars 100–138). We conclude by proposing certain ways in which Schmalfeldt's idea of retrospective reinterpretation may be further refined.

Fig. 1 provides a highly under-interpreted bass-line sketch of the movement's exposition, with the principal cadences marked below the staff. As the form-functional annotations above the staff indicate, the exposition's governing principle is the conflation of distinct and typically consecutive formal functions: each

Fig. 1 Schubert, String Quintet in C Major, D. 956, Allegro ma non troppo: overview of the exposition

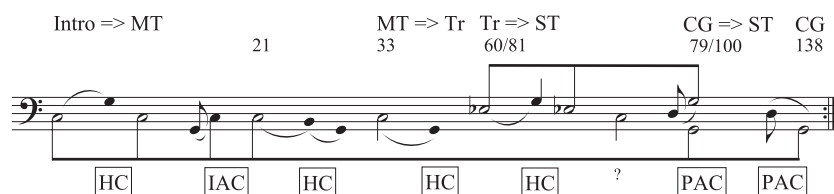


Fig. 2 Hexatonic systems with tonic and dominant function in the Quintet



of its large-scale units combines salient features of functions that are normally adjacent. The opening, bars 1–32, combines introduction with main-theme function; its conclusion is marked by a half cadence (HC) to VII (understood as a dominant substitute) at bar 24, which is then quickly corrected to V in the post-cadential standing on the dominant that follows. The second major segment, bars 33–59, joins main-theme with transition function and leads to an HC on V at bar 49, the dominant once again prolonged by a lengthy post-cadential expansion. Taken together, these two units form a structure that we dub the ‘small ternary with dissolving reprise’. Bars 60–80 express both transition and subordinate-theme function and are repeated – with different instrumentation and, as we will see, different form-functional implications – in bars 81–99. Our fourth main division, bars 100–137, combines elements of subordinate-theme and closing function. A functionally unambiguous closing group rounds out the exposition in bars 138–158.

As the key areas and cadence points depicted in Fig. 1 suggest, the exposition is built around an expanded tonic-dominant polarity in which tonic and dominant functions can be represented by a series of chromatic substitutes: chords belonging to the same hexatonic system can stand in for one another as representatives of the same harmonic function. Dominant function, for instance, can be expressed not only by G major, but also by B or E $\flat$; and tonic function not only by C major, but also by E or A $\flat$ (see Fig. 2).⁶ In suggesting this we are following Richard Cohn, who, in his analysis of the opening movement of Schubert’s Piano Sonata in B $\flat$, D. 960, shows how several otherwise puzzling harmonic events can be explained by invoking just such functionally charged

Ex. 1 Allegro ma non troppo, bars 1–33

A (compound period)
 antecedent (hybrid 3)
 c.b.i.
 b.i. (expanded) continuation
 c.i.

Allegro ma non troppo

C: I ————— (ct^{o7}) ————— V₅⁶ I ii⁶ V₆⁶ V HC

11 consequent (sequential beginning)

ii ————— (ct^{o7}) ————— V₃⁴ I⁶ ii⁶ V₇⁷ I IAC

hexatonic systems.⁷ Our construal of both long-range and local key relationships in the Quintet is analogous and, as we will show, has important implications for our form-functional interpretation of the exposition.

The Quintet begins with a pregnant stasis: a closed-position C major triad held for two full bars in the upper quartet before giving way to a common-tone diminished-seventh chord in bar 3 (Ex. 1). No first-time listener is likely to discern the tempo immediately, not at least until the crescendo starts to swell or the first violinist cues the change in harmony. Only in the more regular continuation phrase that begins in bar 7 does a tactus become clear.⁸ Yet, even there,

Ex. 1 Continued

B (contrasting middle) (standing on the dominant) fragmentation

21

#5 (vi) Ger ⁺⁶ VII V 7 7 7

HC

A' (dissolving)

28

(iii) 7 6/4 (ct°7) 7 I

the music seems to move in cut time rather than in the notated common time, and the regular pulse, after briefly coalescing, dissipates again after a tonic HC at bar 9. The concluding dominant triad is echoed ethereally in bar 10, and the opening gesture is then reiterated, sequenced to D minor, in the richer strains of the lower quartet. A second continuation phrase in bars 17–20 brings the music to rest with an imperfect authentic cadence (IAC) on the tonic.

The entire construction, with parallel openings and rhyming cadences, invokes the compound period, with bars 1–10 as antecedent and bars 11–20 as consequent.⁹ Both phrases are cast as hybrids of the compound-basic-idea-plus-continuation type. Each, however, is expanded beyond its normative eight bars, the basic idea having been stretched from two bars to four. Reducing the

Ex. 2 Allegro ma non troppo: recomposition of the opening phrase (bars 1–10)



beginning to its normative proportions is not hard, as our pedestrian recomposition in Ex. 2 shows.¹⁰ By internally expanding the opening idea, Schubert heightens the effect of motionlessness, the illusion that time has stopped – or rather, has not yet begun.

In other words, the first twenty bars sound very much like a slow introduction, an effect reinforced by what happens next. At bar 24, the music arrives via a preceding German sixth at an emphatic unison B. The implied chord is a B major triad with an undeniable dominant charge – not, however, V of E, but rather B major, standing in for its hexatonic compatriot G as an alternate dominant (VII) of C. Immediately afterwards the chromatic substitute is replaced by its diatonic parent.¹¹ The entire gesture – a rhetorically reinforced HC followed by a post-cadential standing on the dominant – evokes the conventional ending of a slow introduction, and the gradual accumulation of momentum over the dominant pedal prepares the way in turn for the grand re-entry of the opening theme at bar 33. Although the restatement retains the inflated proportions of the basic idea, Schubert compensates with a propulsive new scoring: the melody migrates to the bass, and the upper three parts sound frenetically moving arpeggiated quavers. For the first time in the movement, the notated common time is made aurally unmistakable, and the undeniable impression is that only now is the exposition truly under way.¹²

And yet the impression is only that. For the new beginning soon proves, to adopt Dahlhaus's phrase once more, to be a theme 'no longer'. As Ex. 3 illustrates, the restatement transforms the opening antecedent-consequent structure into a compound presentation and thus replaces the staid periodicity of the opening with a more dynamic, sentential initiation.¹³ The sequential move to D minor is retained, but its centrifugal potential is heightened by a stronger tonicisation through an applied dominant (V/ii) at the end of the compound basic idea (c.b.i.), emphasised by the interpolated bar 39. The result, at least on the surface, is a more serious undermining of tonal stability.¹⁴ The presentation is duly followed by a continuation that moves through rapidly rising parallel tenths, grouped into ever shortening fragments, to arrive at a tonic HC on the downbeat of bar 49. Dominant harmony is then held all the way through to bar 58, with bars 58–59 marking the medial caesura.¹⁵ By the end of the passage, there can be little doubt that we have just heard a non-modulating transition.

Ex. 3 Allegro ma non troppo, bars 33–58

presentation
c.b.i.
b.i. (expanded)

c.i.

33

ff

fz

ff

ff

I

ff

ct⁰⁷

(P₃⁶)

V/ii

interpolation

39

fz

fz

fz

ff

ff

ii

c.b.i. (sequential repetition)
b.i. (expanded)

c.i.

43

fz

fz

fz

ff

(P₄⁶)

V₅⁶

continuation

end of initial tonic prolongation

Does all this mean that now, from the vantage point of the medial caesura, the function of the movement's opening should be reconsidered, and that, once bars 33–59 turn out to be the transition, bars 1–32 are retrospectively reinterpreted as the main theme? We believe that a nuanced answer is in order. In favour of a retrospective reinterpretation is the close resemblance of bars 1–59 to William Caplin's 'small ternary': an expository A section cast as a relatively loose compound period (bars 1–20) is followed by a contrasting middle emphasising dominant harmony (bars 21–32), which in turn gives way to a varied reprise of the opening (bars 33 ff.). This reprise, however, is so thoroughly transformed as to end up dissolving into the transition – hence our label 'small ternary with dissolving reprise', coined in homage to A.B. Marx's *Periode mit aufgelöstem Nachsatz*.¹⁶ Schubert seems to have had a particular predilection for this gambit in his later works, such as the Piano Sonatas in B $\flat$ major (D. 960/i), A minor (D. 784/i), G major (D. 894/i) and C minor (D. 958/iv); the String Quartet in D minor (D. 810/i); and the Piano Trio in B $\flat$ major (D. 898/i).¹⁷ In each of these instances the small ternary's A section unambiguously inaugurates the movement's main theme, and so, by analogy, perhaps bars 1–32 of the Quintet do so as well.

An alternative is to hear bar 21 as the beginning of the transition. In real time, a listener might well take the IAC at bar 19 as the conclusion of a periodic main theme and the HC at bar 24 as the end of an abrupt modulating transition.¹⁸ The modulation, however, turns out to be premature (perhaps because the Quintet's expanded tonic-dominant polarity precludes the function of E – major or minor – as the subordinate key), and the music is pulled back into the tonic. With the entry of the varied reprise of the beginning at bars 33 ff., the potential transition is then reinterpreted as the middle of a small ternary.¹⁹

It might be thought that the form-functional ambiguity of the Quintet's beginning is resolved when the exposition is repeated: the mere fact that the opening is included in the exposition repeat counts strongly in favour of its interpretation as a main theme. However, in the exposition's repeat, bars 1–32 still retain their introductory quality: the apparent slow tempo at the beginning, the enormous emphasis on the HC at bar 24 (which entirely outweighs the more restrained cadences at bars 9 and 19), and the subsequent energy gain from the rising voice-leading over the standing on the dominant leading up to the tutti restatement at bar 33 will always reassert themselves emphatically as markers of introduction function.

The onset of the recapitulation, finally, adds yet another complication. There, the opening period returns essentially verbatim (though, significantly, with a new metronomic accompanying figure). The contrasting middle begins as before, but the HC to VII that marked its end in the exposition is now overshoot: the wedge motion initiated by the progression from German sixth to dominant is continued over the next four bars with the result that the music veers into the subdominant for the reprise of the small ternary's A' section (Ex. 4). From the perspective of the form as a whole, the situation can, as James Webster has argued, be under-

Ex. 4 Allegro ma non troppo, bars 289–295

stood as an ingenious variant of the so-called ‘subdominant recapitulation’.²⁰ Schubert has it both ways: a complete double return on the one hand and, on the other, an exact transposition of the entire exposition from the beginning of the transition onward.²¹ But rather than resolving the form-functional tensions embodied in the exposition’s opening moments, the recapitulation heightens their Janus-faced aspect. The sheer fact that bars 1–32 are recapitulated strengthens their interpretation as the movement’s main theme: slow introductions are not, in general, reprised. Yet because of the new modulation to the subdominant, the small ternary’s exposition and contrasting middle become detached from its reprise and perhaps, at a larger level, from the recapitulation as a whole: looking back from the vantage point of F major, the C major music of bars 267–294 appears almost as dominant preparation, the implication being that the recapitulation only truly gets underway at bar 295.

Rather, therefore, than saying that bars 1–32 look like an introduction but function as a main theme – an interpretation that emphasises their position in the exposition’s overall scheme but marginalises their introductory rhetoric – we prefer to hear bars 1–32 as combining introduction and main-theme functions in a single unit. Likewise, bars 33–59 are not an apparent main theme that then turns out to be a transition; rather, they simultaneously express both main-theme and transition function. What precisely the theoretical implications of this claim are, is a subject to which we turn at the end of this article.

Following the lengthy standing on the dominant that concludes the transition, dominant harmony is distilled down to a unison g^1 in the cellos at bar 58. In the next bar the second cello peels away chromatically, and we land, on the following downbeat, in E_b major (Ex. 5).²² All at once we are in that Schubertian specialty: an interior theme (in all that term’s senses), or what Susan McClary has called the musical subjunctive.²³ Once there, we are treated to a lyric outpouring, a winding duet that promises never to stop for breath. But first impressions are

Ex. 5 Allegro ma non troppo, bars 57–79

57 antecedent b.i. (extended) c.i.

65 consequent (abandoned) b.i. (extended) fragmentation new consequent b.i.

72 continuation (?) cadential

HC

PAC

deceiving: on closer inspection, the theme does fall into conventional articulations, for all that its outlines are impressionistically blurred. There is the hint of a comma, for instance, at bar 62, once the cellos' first double-neighbouring motion has run its course – a slight pause that suggests the break between a basic

and a contrasting idea. The arrival on a G major triad in bar 64, moreover – III within the local tonal context – marks an HC.²⁴

Thus, in terms of their phrase structure, bars 60–65 form an antecedent that is only slightly disguised and that duly calls forth the beginnings of a consequent in bars 66–68, where the opening basic idea is repeated. In bar 69, however, the music seems to pause, lose its bearings, reconsider – and we pass back (or is it onward?) through a chromatic seam to C major in bar 71. From there to bar 73, the harmony is cadential – I–IV–V⁷–I – but the voice leading is not, with the upper third e¹–g¹ being notionally sustained in the cellos throughout. Indeed, the upper-voice motions that elaborate that third are all but identical to those that sustained e¹–g¹ in bars 60–62 and 66–68; the harmony is nearly identical too, the sole difference being that in the earlier passages, the chords all appeared above a tonic pedal. What these details suggest is that, rather than being cadential in their form-functional implications, bars 71–73 are in fact a hidden repetition, in chromatic transfiguration, of the original basic idea and thus initiate a second attempt at a consequent phrase. But this consequent too seems to lose its way: the C major triad reached in bar 73 moves first to an inverted A minor triad and then on to a common-tone diminished seventh chord; but that harmony, reinterpreted as an applied chord, leads onward to a first-inversion G major triad on the downbeat of bar 76, which in turn becomes the initial tonic of the cadential progression that concludes the theme with a PAC in G major in bar 79. In sum, despite the impression of unbounded lyric flow, the entire passage is a parallel period: a tight-knit antecedent in E $\flat$ that is answered by a looser – and modulating – consequent.

If, on reflection, the section's intra-thematic functions seem clear, what of its inter-thematic one? In its rhetoric, the music has all the markers of a subordinate theme. Yet its harmonic function has been to carry out the exposition's principal modulation. David Beach, elaborating a laconic analysis of Charles Rosen's, takes the return of C major in bars 71–73 to close a sweeping tonic prolongation that stretches back to the movement's opening chord.²⁵ Beach's graph shows the apparent E $\flat$ major of bars 60–70 as representing in macrocosm what the common-tone diminished seventh chord of bars 3–4 did in microcosm: it is a subordinate harmony propping up the middle pitch of the chromatic wobble E $\flat$ –E $\flat$ –E $\flat$.²⁶ In Beach's reading, the structural modulation thus takes place only after the return of C major in bars 71–73.

An additional point in favour of Beach's reading is the ease with which the E $\flat$ melody can be re-harmonised in C. Schubert himself demonstrates this when he brings back the basic idea in C major garb at bars 71–73. But one could equally imagine the antecedent in bars 60–65 as having been harmonised in C minor. Ex. 6 presents a hypothetical recomposition of that phrase showing just how little adjustment is required.

An earlier, and more background, voice-leading graph by James Webster, reproduced in Fig. 3, ostensibly presents the same interpretation as Beach's, with E $\flat$ being analysed as $\flat$ III in C major in the upper row of roman numerals.²⁷

Ex. 6 Allegro ma non troppo: reharmonisation of bars 60–64 in C minor



Fig. 3 Allegro ma non troppo, bars 1–100: voice-leading sketch by James Webster

1st Group	Lyrical transition						2nd Group
	81	85	87	92	94	97	98
	60	64	66	71	73	76	77
	(5)–(5)		(5)			(5)	
3	2	b3	2	b3	h3	3	2

Harmonic progression: I V bIII (iv⁶) V bIII I (iv⁶) V I ii⁶ v²/V V G: I IV V I V

There is, however, an intriguing slip in Webster's analysis: the first-inversion A minor triad in bar 74 is labelled not as vi⁶, but as ii⁶ in C major. What the mistake suggests is that Webster is already hearing that sonority as a pre-dominant in G. But if that chord is a pre-dominant in G, then might not the same be true of its predecessor? Perhaps, that is to say, the C major of bar 73 is already IV of G, as indeed Webster's beaming suggests. But if so, is it entirely satisfying to give the C major harmony of bars 71–73 the kind of structural weight that Beach's analysis suggests?

Continuing along in this second perspective, one could note that if C here figures as a pre-dominant, the E^b of bars 60–70 might do so as well. If, that is, the bass note C is a neighbour to D, then perhaps so too is the initial E^b. On this reading, the entire span (bars 60–79) forms an auxiliary cadence in the dominant, as shown in Fig. 4.²⁸

Yet another way of conceptualising the role of E^b in the exposition stems from Cohn's analysis of the B^b major Sonata. In light of his functionally charged hexatonic systems, Cohn asserts that the F[#] minor passage in bars 48–57 of that sonata's opening movement represents tonic (that is, B^b) harmony.²⁹ Since that F[#] minor passage represents an apparent second theme within the exposition's larger design, and since that second theme is book-ended by the opening tonic on the one side, and by a section that lapses back to B^b on the other, Cohn's analysis of the B^b major Sonata ends up being comparable, in its formal implications, to Rosen's and Beach's reading of the parallel passage in the Quintet.³⁰

Viewing the Quintet through Cohn's hexatonic lens, however, yields a different prolongational structure: for E^b major does not belong to the hexatonic system about C, but rather to the one around G. E^b would thus represent not the

Fig. 4 Allegro ma non troppo, bars 60–79: voice-leading sketch

60 N

64 IV III# HC

66 N I

71 N

76 4 3 2 1

79 1 PAC

$$V \begin{pmatrix} 8 \\ 6 \end{pmatrix} - 7 - 6 - 5 - 4 - 3$$

Eb: I G: bVI IV I PAC

Ex. 7 Triadic harmonisations of G



continuation of tonic harmony by other means, but rather an initial assertion the dominant. Here, we are close to a further strain in the Quintet's analytical reception. For Suzannah Clark, the cello duet is not so much *in* any key as it is *around* g¹.³¹ Indeed, as she, Scott Burnham, John Gingerich, and Diether de la Motte have all pointed out, the passage sounds in succession each of the major, and one of the minor, triads that contain that pitch (Ex. 7).³² (As Burnham writes, when G major emerges from 'this absorbing play of colours', the effect 'is rather like returning to daylight'.³³)

Of the three interpretations just sketched – E^b embellishes C, or is really E^b (but as a pre-dominant to G), or is a substitute for G – no single one, in our view, does full justice to the role of E^b in the exposition's tonal scheme; rather, its meaning changes progressively in such a way that all three interpretations become moments in a larger, overarching process. When it first emerges at bar 60, E^b sounds like floating, tonal never-never land – the locus of a lyrical interpolation that stands outside the exposition's larger dominant-seeking trajectory. As we gain our tonal bearings, however, we are likely to begin taking E^b as a dominant substitute (in part because of the accumulated weight of generic expectations, in part, perhaps, because of the prevalence of major-third substitutions in this movement). With the HC to G major at bar 64, which links associatively back to the HC and standing-on-the-dominant at the end of the transition (bars 49–58), and then again when C major fully re-emerges in bar 71, we reinterpret the preceding E^b as a subordinate inflection within the presiding tonic.³⁴ But the process does not end there: when the music proceeds onward to G in bars 72–73, C takes on an increasingly subdominant charge, and that shading comes retrospectively to colour E^b as well, which now manifests itself as a pre-dominant harmony in relation to the projected goal of G. E^b major begins, in sum, as a tonal interpolation, then becomes a dominant substitute, then a subordinate harmony within the tonic, and eventually a pre-dominant sonority in G. And as the tonal function of E^b oscillates, so too does the formal function of bars 60–79: what begins as a subordinate theme is reinterpreted as a transition, and then as a subordinate theme again. As with bars 1–33, the entire section is held in a state of constant flux; it stands poised undecidably between conflicting formal functions, which it holds in dynamic tension, now one asserting itself, now the other.³⁵

And the process continues with the repetition of bars 60–79 in bars 80–99. A significant detail in both Webster's and Beach's readings, as Peter H. Smith has pointed out, is that they collapse these two passages into a single analytical representation (as does our Fig. 1).³⁶ But repetition here is not mere repetition: the second time round, with the cellos ceding their melody to the violins and the second cello resuming its 'natural' role as the bass, the texture feels more

LARGE-SCALE B.I. (mm. 100-106)
presentation
b.i.

presentation
b.i.

c.i.

100

p

pp

simile

p

pp

1 3 4 4 8)

continuation

LARGE-SCALE B.I. REPEATED (bars 106-112)

presentation
b.i.

104

decresc.

simile

decresc.

decresc.

decresc.

decresc.

decresc.

V₃⁴ V₃⁶ III⁵₃ 6 4

HC? (lower level)

After the halting interiority of the previous section, the music blossoms in bar 100 into a new, exultant lyricism (Ex. 8). The first violin reaches upwards for d^3 and beyond (a register not heard since bars 33–53), and the viola follows in nearly strict canon at two bars; the accompanying parts add to the rhythmic momentum, each holding obstinately to its individual figuration. This is Schubert's 'heavenly

The musical score is divided into two sections: 'c.i.' (measures 108-111) and 'continuation' (measures 112-115). The 'c.i.' section features a vocal melody in the Soprano and Alto staves, with piano accompaniment in the Right Hand, Left Hand, and Bass staves. The 'continuation' section continues the vocal melody and piano accompaniment. The score includes dynamic markings like 'decresc.' and 'cresc.' and articulation marks like 'acc.' and 'stacc.'

112

cresc.

cresc.

cresc.

cresc.

cresc.

I

IAC (lower level)

[illegible]

Ex. 8 Continued

CADENTIAL (REPEATED) NEW CONTINUATION (model)

p *cresc.* *f* *decresc.* *p* *decresc.* *p* *decresc.* *p* *decresc.* *p* *decresc.*

$I \ I^6$ bII^6 V_4 $vii^{\circ 7}$

evaded

(seq.) NEW CADENTIAL

p *decresc.* *p* *decresc.* *p* *decresc.* *p* *decresc.*

V 4 $vii^{\circ 7}$ I ii^6 $V(4)$

evaded

NEW CONTINUATION (REPEATED)

p *decresc.* *p* *decresc.* *p* *decresc.* *p* *decresc.*

$-5/3$ $evaded$ tr

evaded

Ex. 8 Continued

NEW CADENTIAL (EXPANDED)

length' at its most compelling – a kind of revolving sonic mobile that offers, in its repeated spirals, a moving image of eternity. And yet the passage is remarkably static: despite the swoops and swirls of their melodic lines, the first violin and viola effectively sustain, between them, the third b^2-d^3 , while the second cello holds stubbornly to a pedal G. The concomitant form-functional impression is post-cadential, suggesting the beginning of a closing group.

Only in the lead-up to bar 106 does the harmony begin to move. The goal is B major, the third member of the dominant-functioning hexatonic system (after G and E_b); but once that key is effectively attained (bars 106–110), we hardly seem to have moved at all: the accompaniment's figurations are undisturbed, the groupings unaltered, the melodic lines oddly familiar. It is as if bars 106–110 were the refracted image of bars 100–104. To be sure, there are hints of an HC to III in bars 105–106 (perhaps echoing the HCs at bars 64 and 85) and of an IAC in bars 110–112, where III (replaced at the last moment by I^6) seems in retrospect to have been the initiating 'tonic' of an authentic cadential progression. But neither passage has any marked cadential function. Significantly, cadential descents are lacking in the upper voices: the third b^2-d^3 (with d^3 inflected to $d^{\sharp 3}$ in bars 106–110) is retained throughout, and the entire passage has thus merely circled about in a kind of transfixing stasis.³⁸

More tonic prolongation follows in bars 112–116, with an only slightly varied return of the music first heard in bars 100–104. At the end of bar 116, however, fragmentation sets in abruptly and the music builds up towards the Neapolitan sixth chord at bar 118. From there, the harmony is unequivocally cadential, but it still fails to reach a point of full repose: the first violin finds g in bar 121, with a root-position tonic chord below it, but the second violin covers with a b that is swapped immediately with the second cello's downbeat G to regain I^6 . In spirit, if not in letter, this is an evaded cadence, and the cadential progression is accordingly repeated (bars 121–125). This second time its goal is sidestepped

more dramatically, with deceptive (or are they evaded?) cadences at bars 125 and 131, each followed by a renewal of continuation function.³⁹ Only at bar 138 does the passage conclude with a PAC to the tonic.

Bars 100–138 thus form a single enormous sentence: bars 100–105 are a large basic idea – itself a ‘nested sentence’ – and are repeated sequentially in bars 106–111.⁴⁰ The incomplete third statement of the same basic idea at bar 112 then marks the beginning of a continuation of the ‘dissolving third statement’ type.⁴¹ The sentence’s function in the larger context of the exposition is that of a closing group that becomes a subordinate theme (CG⇒ST). The process of retrospective reinterpretation here is both less complex and more unidirectional than in the sections we considered above: here the form-functional ambiguities inhabiting the core of the exposition are gradually dissolved so as to give, unequivocally, the sense of an ending. Following the PAC in bar 138, the exposition concludes with a short closing group (bars 138–153). This is the first form-functionally unequivocal span in the movement, and it both integrates the preceding section’s B major into an unambiguously cadential gesture and replays, as its fading act, a wistful echo of the E♭ cello duet.

To recapitulate: a remarkable chain of retrospective reinterpretations extends through the first-movement exposition of Schubert’s String Quintet. The slow introduction ‘becomes’ the main theme ‘becomes’ a transition; the subordinate theme ‘becomes’ a transition ‘becomes’ a subordinate theme again; and a closing group is retrospectively reinterpreted as yet another subordinate theme. In our initial overview in Fig. 1, we uniformly used Schmalfeldt’s rightwards double arrow, e.g. ‘X⇒Y’, to label each instance of retrospective reinterpretation. Upon reflection – in retrospect, so to speak – that notation has begun to feel somewhat imprecise. In concluding, therefore, we would like to propose a way in which Schmalfeldt’s concept of becoming might be further refined.

For Schmalfeldt, ‘the concept of [form-functional] becoming’ designates ‘*the special case whereby the formal function initially suggested by a musical idea, phrase, or section, invites retrospective reinterpretation within the larger formal context*’.⁴² It would be wrong, however, to infer from this formulation that the second formal function ultimately overwrites the first. As Schmalfeldt elsewhere insists:

Once the moment of becoming has been grasped, neither the concept nor its opposite can remain one-sided, in the sense of fixed and separate; rather, [for example,] main theme can no longer be imagined outside the context of introduction. This, then, is how I wish to use the expression ‘introduction becomes main theme’: rather than favoring the notion of a main theme as the final verdict, *the expression suggests that what has become preserves our memory of the original conflict*.⁴³

While we emphatically agree with Schmalfeldt’s characterisation, her formulation does not quite allow for the distinction we wish to draw between two fundamentally different kinds of form-functional becoming, each of which

appears in Schubert's Quintet. In the first, a formal unit initially seems to fulfil a certain function, which is then, as the unit proceeds, gradually superseded by another. For this situation, $X \Rightarrow Y$ is indeed the appropriate formula: each function comes to the fore at a different moment in the unit, one at the beginning and one at the end; while both functions might in retrospect be said to overlap at the beginning, the end expresses only the second function. Although the initial impression is not forgotten, the second function ultimately prevails without any residual ambiguity.⁴⁴ The rightwards double arrow thus stands for the unidirectional conversion that takes place over time from one function to the other. In Schubert's exposition, this is what happens in bars 33–59 and 100–138. In the former instance, the main theme $\Rightarrow$ transition, the initial impression is that this unit will function as the exposition's main theme; by its end, however, its structural function has been clarified as transitional. Similarly, bars 100–138 begin as a closing group but end as a subordinate theme – thus, closing group $\Rightarrow$ subordinate theme (or, perhaps better, subordinate theme $\leftarrow$ closing group).

In the second situation, the initial function is not superseded by the later one, but remains in force until the very end of the unit. In this scenario, the *entire* unit has a double function. This is what happens in bars 1–32 and 60–79. In the former, both the introduction and main-theme functions extend across the complete span: each is there from the very beginning, and neither has eclipsed the other by the end, so that the entire section simultaneously expresses two conflicting functions. The listener, as a result, oscillates perpetually between hearing the unit as a theme and hearing it as an introduction. This back-and-forth motion is even more prominent in bars 60–79, where what initially appears as a subordinate theme becomes a transition and then a subordinate theme again. As a symbol for this form-functional situation, we propose the left-right double arrow ($\Leftrightarrow$), which we use in representing introduction $\Leftrightarrow$ main theme and subordinate theme $\Leftrightarrow$ transition. What this notation expresses is a form-functional situation that is internally dynamic – one that bounces back and forth between conflicting form-functional profiles – but that in the larger scheme is entirely static. It affords a kind of becoming that has no goal – a process that, paradoxically, freezes form-functional time.

Our reservation concerning Schmalfeldt's formulation, therefore, is that in holding together these two heterogeneous cases under a single overarching rubric, it ends up doing justice to neither. Her analytical symbol $\Rightarrow$ captures, in our view, the first of our two scenarios, in which the original formal function is eclipsed by the later one. Her verbal formulation, however, is in this case too strong: it is not that the two functions 'can no longer be imagined' outside of one another; on the contrary, the one gives way to the other, which by the end of the section in question has displaced it wholly. In the second case, conversely, it is her notation that falls short. Here the first function does not yield to its successor in any single, unidirectional process, as the rightwards double arrow would imply; instead, it remains co-present throughout. Indeed, for this second case Schmalfeldt's verbal formulation is not radical enough: the initial function is not

merely preserved in memory – a disembodied ghost that haunts the margins of our aural perception – but rather is embodied fully across the entirety of the relevant span. It is only that this same span also and at the same time carries a conflicting function that is no less constantly present. The conflict is not resolved or subsumed into some larger context: instead, it generates a tension that can only be endured.

NOTES

1. Janet Schmalfeldt, 'Form as the Process of Becoming: the Beethoven-Hegelian Tradition and the "Tempest" Sonata', *Beethoven Forum* 4 (1995), pp. 37–71; and Schmalfeldt, *In the Process of Becoming: Analytical and Philosophical Perspectives on Form in Early Nineteenth-Century Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).
2. 'Der Anfang des Satzes ist *noch nicht* Thema, der Evolutionsteil ist es *nicht mehr*'. Carl Dahlhaus, *Ludwig van Beethoven und seine Zeit* (Laaber: Laaber Verlag, 1987), p. 212 (translated into English by Mary Whittall as *Ludwig van Beethoven: Approaches to His Music* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991], p. 170).
3. Schmalfeldt, 'Form as the Process of Becoming', pp. 58–9 (Ex. 1); see also Schmalfeldt, *In the Process of Becoming*, pp. 38–9 (Ex. 2.1).
4. Schmalfeldt includes the Quintet in her list of '“inward-turning” instrumental works by Schubert' (Schmalfeldt, *In the Process of Becoming*, p. 156).
5. The grain of our reading of the Quintet's exposition may be found in William E. Caplin, 'Beethoven's *Tempest* Exposition: a Springboard for Form-Functional Considerations', in *Beethoven's "Tempest" Sonata: Perspectives of Analysis and Performance*, ed. Pieter Bergé, Jeroen D'hoë, and William E. Caplin (Leuven: Peeters, 2009), p. 95.
6. By 'hexatonic system', we mean the constellation of six major and minor triads that can be constructed from the pitches of a hexatonic scale (e.g. E♭–E–G–G♯/A♭–B/C♭–C gives the triads of C, C minor, E♭, E♭ minor, A♭ and A♭ minor). See Richard Cohn, 'Maximally Smooth Cycles, Hexatonic Systems, and the Analysis of Late-Romantic Triadic Progressions', *Music Analysis*, 15/i (1996), pp. 9–40. A third hexatonic system, F major/minor, A major/minor and D♭ major/minor, with subdominant function, plays a role only later in the movement. The use of functionally charged hexatonic systems in the Quintet is not confined to its first movement. A particularly striking instance comes in the third movement, in bars 56–130, where the G major reached at the end of the A section is elaborated first by E♭ major (bars 57–82) and then by B major (bars 83–106) before B is transformed into V⁶ of C (bars 106–107) and led down to the root-position dominant

(bar 122, with this last repeated in bars 122–130) for the return of the main theme in the tonic at the pick-up to bar 131.

7. Richard Cohn, 'As Wonderful as Star Clusters: Instruments for Gazing at Tonality in Schubert', *19th-Century Music*, 22 (1999), pp. 213–32. For comment on Cohn's analysis, see Charles Fisk, 'Comment & Chronicle', *19th-Century Music*, 23 (2000), pp. 301–3; and Suzannah Clark, *Analyzing Schubert* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 152–61. Cohn qualifies his position in *Audacious Euphony: Chromaticism and the Triad's Second Nature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 125–8 and 169–75.
8. Compare Peter Gülke, 'In What Respect a Quintet? On the Disposition of Instruments in the String Quintet D. 956', in *Schubert Studies: Problems of Style and Chronology*, ed. Eva Badura-Skoda and Peter Branscombe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 174.
9. Although sequential restatements of the basic idea at the beginning of a consequent are less common than exact restatements, they were an option even in the Classical style. Examples include the main themes of Haydn, Piano Trio in D major, Hob. XV:24/i; Mozart, Piano Sonata in D major, K. 576/i; and Beethoven, String Quartet in B $\flat$ major, Op. 18, No. 6/iii and Piano Sonata in D major ('Pastoral'), Op. 28/ii. In all those cases the sequence appears over the supertonic. Compare William E. Caplin, *Classical Form: a Theory of Formal Functions for the Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 53.
10. We owe this point to David E. Cohen, who raised it when we first presented our analysis at Columbia University in February 2010.
11. The progression is described at length in David Damschroder, *Harmony in Schubert* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 11–14 (the implied B major triad at bar 24 acts as what Damschroder calls the dominant's 'upper third chord'). See also Xavier Hascher, *Schubert: la forme sonate et son évolution* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1996), p. 356.
12. Compare Peter Gülke, 'Zum Bilde des späten Schuberts: Vorwiegend analytische Bemerkungen zum Streichquintett op. 163', *Deutsches Jahrbuch der Musikwissenschaft*, 7 (1973), p. 9: 'The beginning of the Quintet poses as an introduction ... ; when Schubert creates the impression of a tempo giusto, moves from the "Hésitant" of the groping beginning to the "Direct" and articulates music with the affirmative gesture of a first theme (bar 33), this introduction, technologically speaking, has "merely" received a super-structural overlay' (Der Beginn des Quintettes geriert sich als Introduction ... ; wo Schubert einen Tempo-giusto-Eindruck schafft, vom 'Hésitant' des tastenden Beginns zum 'Direct' übergeht und Musik mit dem affirmativen

Gestus eines ersten Themas artikuliert (Takt 33), hat diese Introduction technologisch ‘nur’ einen Überbau erhalten).

13. The tradition of viewing the sentence as more dynamic than the period dates back at least to Erwin Ratz, *Einführung in die musikalische Formenlehre: Über Formprinzipien in den Inventionen und Fugen J.S. Bachs und ihre Bedeutung für die Kompositionstechnik Beethovens*, 3rd edn (1951; Vienna: Universal Edition, 1973), p. 24.
14. David Beach also notes that the harmonisation of bars 33 ff. is ‘altered to direct the motion more strongly to the supertonic’, but he does not draw any form-functional conclusions from this. In his view, bars 1–32 are an introduction and bars 33–59 the ‘first theme’. See Beach, ‘Schubert’s Experiments with Sonata Form: Formal-Tonal Design versus Underlying Structure’, *Music Theory Spectrum*, 15 (1993), pp. 13–14. On our reading, the root-position tonic is in fact prolonged from bar 33 to bar 46. Bars 33–38 present a 5–6 expansion of the tonic, with the 6-phase unfurled as an A⁷ chord (locally V/ii) in bar 38 (in bar 37, on its way to A, the bass passes down through B_b, which supports a first-inversion G minor triad and then an Italian sixth chord). This pattern is then repeated on the supertonic in bars 40–45, except that the descending third D–C–B in the bass (bars 43, 44 and 45) brings a V⁶ chord in bar 45, which pulls the harmony back to I on the downbeat of bar 46. The basic voice-leading skeleton across bars 33–46 is thus $\hat{3}-\hat{4}-\hat{3}$ supported by I–ii–V⁶–I.
15. On this concept, see James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy, ‘The Medial Caesura and Its Role in the Eighteenth-Century Sonata Exposition’, *Music Theory Spectrum*, 19 (1997), pp. 115–54; and Hepokoski and Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory: Norms, Types, and Deformations in the Late Eighteenth-Century Sonata* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 23–50.
16. Adolf Bernhard Marx, *Die Lehre von der musikalischen Komposition, praktisch-theoretisch*, 4 vols., vol. 3, pp. 260–2 (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1845). This structure is familiar from a number of classical works (e.g. the openings of the first movements of Mozart’s String Quartet in D minor, K. 421, and of the String Quartet in B_b major, K. 458, as well as the finale of Beethoven’s Piano Sonata in C major, Op. 2/iii). It has been described, in differing terms, both by Caplin and by Hepokoski and Darcy. For Caplin, ‘beginning like an A’ section’ is one of three types of ‘unusual beginnings’ of a transition that nonetheless ‘occur frequently enough to warrant illustration’ (*Classical Form*, 131). In their book on sonata form, Hepokoski and Darcy offer two separate discussions of the phenomenon, first under the heading ‘Structure’ in the chapter entitled ‘The Primary Theme (P)’ and then again under the heading ‘larger,

rounded structure with dissolving reprise' in the chapter 'The Transition (TR)', both times referring to Schubert's Quintet (*Elements of Sonata Theory*, pp. 70 and 108–11).

17. The first to single out Schubert's more general tendency to write sonata-form themes in small ternary form (with or without dissolving reprise) was Felix Salzer. See Salzer, 'Die Sonatenform bei Franz Schubert', *Studien zur Musikwissenschaft*, 15 (1928), pp. 98–101.
18. As, for instance, in Beethoven's Piano Sonata in F major, Op. 10, No. 2/i, bars 13–18.
19. Still another interpretation would emphasise the latent 'sententiality' of bars 1–32. Against the background of their recomposition in bars 33–45, the two phrases of the opening period (bars 1–10 and 11–20) can be heard as a large basic idea and its repetition, constituting a presentation phrase in relation to the continuation that begins at bar 21. Such 'large-scale sentences with periodic presentations', as they may be dubbed, occur not infrequently in Schubert's music, and one of their typical features is that the consequent ends on an IAC, the full closure provided by a perfect authentic cadence (PAC) being postponed until the end of the continuation. What speaks against this interpretation in this particular case is, of course, the absence of that PAC from the continuation, as well as the return of the opening at bar 33, which urges the listener to reinterpret the apparent continuation as the middle of a small ternary. (For further consideration of the 'large-scale sentence with periodic presentation', see Steven Vande Moortele, 'In Search of Romantic Form', *Music Analysis*, 32/iii (2013), pp. 404–31.
20. James Webster, 'Schubert's Sonata Form and Brahms's First Maturity', *19th-Century Music*, 2 (1978), pp. 33–4.
21. Note that this strategy allows Schubert to recapitulate the first apparent subordinate theme in A^b major and thus activate a member of the tonic-functioning axis that he has not used up to this point.
22. Susan Wollenberg cites this moment as a prime example of what she calls 'Schubert's "magical" transitions'. See Wollenberg, 'Schubert's Transitions', in *Schubert Studies*, ed. Brian Newbould (London: Scholar Press, 1998), pp. 116–18.
23. See Susan McClary, *Desire and Pleasure in Seventeenth-Century Music* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2012), 201. McClary credits Stuart de Ocampo with having coined the term (p. 323 n. 15). For the senses of 'interior', see Schmalfeldt, *In the Process of Becoming*, pp. 133–57.

24. Pace Rosen, *Sonata Forms*, (1980; revised edn, New York: Norton, 1988), p. 258; but following David Beach, 'Harmony and Linear Progression in Schubert's Music', *Journal of Music Theory*, 38 (1994), p. 4; and Hascher, *Schubert: la forme sonate*, p. 198.
25. Beach, 'Schubert's Experiments with Sonata Form', pp. 13–14. See also Rosen, *Sonata Forms*, pp. 256–7.
26. Several authors have emphasised the significance of this wobble as a generative source for all four of the Quintet's movements. For two recent accounts, see William S. Sobaskie, 'The "Problem" of Schubert's String Quintet', *Nineteenth-Century Music Review*, 2 (2005), pp. 57–92; and Brian Black, 'The Functions of Harmonic Motives in Schubert's Sonata Forms', *Intégral*, 23 (2009), pp. 1–63.
27. Webster, 'Schubert's Sonata Form and Brahms's First Maturity', pp. 28–9.
28. Boyd Pomeroy presented an analogous interpretation of these bars as an auxiliary cadential progression in his paper 'Tonicizing the Tonic: Home-Key Insurgencies in Sonata Expositions from Mozart to Brahms', presented at the Society for Music Theory annual meeting, 2011. See also the graph in Xavier Hascher, *Symbole et fantasme dans l'adagio du Quintette à cordes de Schubert* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2005), p. 120.
29. Cohn, 'As Wonderful as Star Clusters', pp. 220–5.
30. Compare the Schenkerian reading in Deborah Kessler, 'Motive and Motivation in Schubert's Three-Key Expositions', in *Structure and Meaning in Tonal Music: Festschrift in Honor of Carl Schachter*, ed. L. Poundie Burstein and David Gagné (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 2005), pp. 269–75.
31. Clark, *Analyzing Schubert*, p. 185.
32. Diether de la Motte, *Harmonielehre* (1976; 16th edn, Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2011), pp. 162–3; John Gingerich, 'Remembrance and Consciousness in Schubert's C major String Quintet, D. 956', *Musical Quarterly*, 84 (2000), p. 620; and Scott Burnham, 'Schubert and the Sound of Memory', *Music Quarterly*, 84 (2000), p. 662.
33. Burnham, 'Schubert and the Sound of Memory', p. 662. This interpretation obviously tends to bind the initial E♭ to the eventual G.
34. On the relationship of the G major chord in bars 64–65 back to the earlier standing on the dominant, see Beach, 'Harmony and Linear Progression', p. 4; and Peter H. Smith, 'Harmonic Cross-Reference and the Dialectic of Articulation and Continuity in Sonata Expositions of Schubert and Brahms', *Journal of Music Theory*, 50 (2006), p. 159.

35. For Caplin, bars 60–80 would likely qualify as a case of transition/subordinate-theme fusion (compare *Classical Form*, p. 203).
36. Smith, 'Harmonic Cross-Reference', pp. 159–62. Smith's interpretation of the structural ambiguities arising from the repetition of bars 58–79 in bars 79–100 is close to ours. However, he tends to hear the G major arrival in bar 79 as more provisional than we do, and so delays hearing any strong confirmation of G major until bar 100.
37. Compare Beach, 'Harmony and Linear Progression', p. 2.
38. Compare the analysis of the corresponding place in the recapitulation in Hascher, *Symbole et fantasme*, pp. 117–19.
39. On this cadential play, characteristic at the end of a subordinate theme group, see Janet Schmalfeldt, 'Cadential Processes: the Evaded Cadence and the "One More Time" Technique', *Journal of Musicological Research*, 12 (1992), pp. 1–52.
40. On nested sentences, see Steven Vande Moortele, 'Sentences, Sentence Chains, and Sentence Replication: Intra- and Interthematic Formal Functions in Liszt's Weimar Symphonic Poems', *Intégral*, 25 (2011), pp. 121–58.
41. On continuations of the dissolving third statement type, see Matthew BaileyShea, 'Beyond the Beethoven Model: Sentence Types and Limits', *Current Musicology*, 77 (2004), pp. 11–12.
42. Schmalfeldt, *In the Process of Becoming*, p. 9; italics in original. See also Steven Vande Moortele, 'In Search of Romantic Form', especially pp. 417–23.
43. Schmalfeldt, *In the Process of Becoming*, p. 50 (italics added); compare Schmalfeldt, 'Form as the Process of Becoming', pp. 70–1.
44. We mean here essentially what Caplin means by 'retrospective reinterpretation'. See *Classical Form*, pp. 47, 122–3, and 256 n. 46.

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ABSTRACT

The first movement of Schubert's String Quintet, D. 956, is among the early nineteenth-century repertoire's clearest examples of what Janet Schmalfeldt has called 'form as the process of becoming'. In this article we show how the governing formal principle of the movement's exposition is the conflation of distinct and typically consecutive formal functions. The result is an extraordinary chain of form-functional overlaps, requiring the analyst to engage in a process of constant retrospective reinterpretation that ends only with the unambiguous closing group. Our aim is not only to revisit some familiar analytical questions about Schubert's Quintet from a form-functional perspective, but also to provide a test case showing the applicability of form-functional thinking to early nineteenth-century music. We begin by presenting a form-functional overview and cadential plan of the exposition and then home in on three passages that pose particular analytical challenges: the introduction/main-theme/transition complex (bars 1–59), the transition/subordinate-theme complex (bars 60–100) and the closing-group/subordinate theme complex (bars 100–138). The article concludes by proposing certain ways in which Schmalfeldt's idea of retrospective reinterpretation may be further refined.