Course of form movement – a new perspective in the theoretical and interpretative approach of the musical text

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Abstract: *Presentation: by means of the present work, we intend to exhibit a performing-theoretical approach of the musical composition, especially useful to the person that performs it at the sonorous level, that is, the instrumental performer. Starting from the musical score, the possibility of an elaborate performance involves the implementing and consequently, the work on an image that represents the same graphical content (already noted) in a new distribution, meant to recall the form of the musical movement as a fact. This interface is both a guiding support similar to a map of the estimated path, and an instrument of implementing a state of mind/a mood through which the shape of the movement comes to life as a matter of fact. Both functions corroborate in a mental characteristic of the form as movement, illustrating a stage of theoretical nature within the laborious performing process.*

Key-words: *formal unity, rhyme, a-rhyme, significant accent, course of movement at the level of form*

1. Introduction

The endeavor of our suggested approach when it comes to the theoretical interpretation consists of considering the musical work as a given-*to be*-travelled. At first hand, this implies the idea of movement-*during*-travelling, having as subject (doer) the interpretation at the mental level and as an object of performance-*during*-travelling one takes into account the process of certain sonorous transformations. We hereby understand that the doer (the mover) and the given-to be travelled (the sonorous process) are definitely reunited in the musical fact of *sonorous performance/work*. Without the participation of the interpretation, the work/musical performance can be viewed only as the trace of an object that lacks the present features (graphically scored). Also, without the formal (representative) given status of the respective work, the interpretation cannot be performed as an identity that is both workable and can be modelled through (value). In order to capture the given-to be-travelled in the form of a musical text, in order to acquire it as a basis of

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interpretation and implementing (a way of mental movement in time), we therefore suggest a theoretical approach of the form, at the level of two dimensions – *depth and surface* – consisting of layout out different segments (cells, motives and so on) on the basis of similarity criteria – *rhyme* – and dissimilarity – *a-rhyme*. We get thus an illustration of the formal performance related to two simultaneous aspects: a fixed one (basic) through the means of repetition - *rhyme columns*; a chained one (linking) by means of what follows on the line of succession – *a-rhyme lines*. While the rhyme columns are meant to help the movement, in order for it to be determined at the mental level as a way of *driving ability-during-performance*, by indicating a wave of formal pulsation/beat (harmony/rhythm), the a-rhyme lines help to repeatedly link the *profile-of the-performance*, by orienting the interpretation towards a more dynamic enterprise (melody/intensity). As a proof of the aforementioned facts, this method of theoretical interpretation is applied to the formal segment from Theme I in the first part - *Allegro* - of the *Piano Sonata Op. 2 No. 1 in F minor*, by L. v. Beethoven.

2. Special terminology

Formal unity – a state in time that is specific to a formal segment taken as its whole. For consistency reasons, the formal unity can be traced by means of the most representative metrical values - measures, times, divisions.

    H field – an organizing system of musical heights - tonality, modality, suite and so on, pertaining to a formal segment or to a formal ensemble.

    D field – a system or organizing the musical periods – as a rule, it refers to divisions, in a metric convention (times and groups/beats) or in a number of minutes/seconds.

    Sound quality – a particular aspect of color/metric tonality derived from the timely structure of form. For instance, a form of the type a, < b, > a, has a ternary sound quality of *short-long-short*.

    Formal-agogical profile – referring to the expression of time ratios that occur when certain segments succeed from a formal level. For instance, in the prior mentioned example, the agogical character of the form has two profile expressions: *deceleration* (long after short) - *acceleration* (short after long).

    Course of movement – through concatenation of various successive formal-agogical profiles on the same level.

    Formal level – a platform of musical structure including at least an aspect of invariance, under different organization criteria: melodically, rhythmically, tunefully, of register and/or of color, of intensity. Quite to the extreme, one can speak about a formal *general* level, specific to the entire musical performance (for example, *Sonata* – as a form – *for piano* – as a sound quality) and about an *elementary* formal level (without an expression in itself) – traceable on different

music coordinates, either under the aspect of minimal, material *structures* (intervals, divisions registers), or under the aspect of *elements* (actual articulations) - intensities, sounds, heights, durations.

Expressive composite – formal segment including two complementary components on the same musical coordinate. For example:

a. on the height coordinate: profiles *ascending - descending*;

b. on the duration coordinate: *short – long* measures;

c. on the coordinate of functional tonality: *tonic - dominant*;

d. on the ethos coordinate (harmony or melodious intervals) - *major - minor*;

e. on the dynamic coordinate: *increase-decrease*.

Formal unity – a formal segment, assigned on a formal level, under the aspect of expressive compound, pertaining to various extents:

a. *minimum* – a complementarity of two articulations/sounds, detected on a single level of musical organization: (height: *do-sol*; duration: *fourth-eighth*; intensity *forte-piano* and so on);

b. *minimum-sufficient* - a complementarity of two articulations/sounds, simultaneously traced on at least to levels (at the level of melody and of the rhythm: *do-fourth - sol-eighth*);

c. *sufficient* – a complementarity of at least three articulations/sounds, traceable on as many levels as possible, out of which, on a least one level, one must be able to identify an expressive accent.

Expressive accent – actual point in a sufficient formal unity, towards which the complementary components or profiles are reunited (oriented). For instance: from the interpretation point of view, the melodic segment *do-re-mi-re* relates to the expressive accent on *mi*.

Mind you: differentiating the expressive accent is a fact of interpretation. We do not always have an interface of strict coherence (synchronization) between the expressive accents at various levels. If we establish an association between the height level from the prior example and a duration level, with the longest duration on the last height, we encounter a case of two expressive accents, situated in different places: *do - re - **mi*** (melodic peak) - *re-**long***. The option of tracing the most adequate expressive accent occurs on the basis of a *reflected interpretation*, into which the reunited aspects form all the sonorous plans are included, that is, both structurally (at specific intervals) and tangibly (elementary). This reflection inevitably implies the intonation (vocal or instrumental), performed by the interpreter/instrumentalist/vocalist. Functionally speaking, the expressive accent sets out (emphasizes) the interpretation at its most significant level, more precisely, *the musical meaning*. Extremely important is the fact that, at a certain formal level, a single main expressive accent (of the outmost adequacy needs to be interpreted (identified).

Expressive coherence – an intertwined connection through which two or more formal-musical levels of the same sort coincide in a certain point along the form.

More precisely, a melodic peak with a long duration or also with an amplified intensity.

Depth – a theoretical dimension of interpretation, by means of which the formal segments are analyzed from the point of view of invariance, consistency or equality.

Rhyme – a connection between two or more successive formal segments, related to the similarity aspect coming from the left (beginning).

Anchor – a succession of segments/formal elements with a rhyme or under a strict repetition, generating a sense of formal beat/pulsation.

Column – assignment, on a vertical level, of an anchor of dominant similar formal segments (reunited under the generic frame of a primary or synthetic pattern).

Mind you: in order to precisely differentiate between an anchor and a column, we establish a convention to designate as anchors the sub-segments/the elements that become repetitive within a segment. Thus, several segments can be traced in a column, each of them having (or not) various anchor aspects. To exemplify, the melodic segments [*do - re - (mi -mi -mi) -re*] and [*do - (re -re) - mi - re*] are in a rhyme, generically reunited in a synthetic relation [*do-re-mi-re*], but having different inner anchors (on *mi* x 3 and on *re* x 2).

Surface/Area – a certain dimension of theoretical interpretation, by means of which the formal segments/elements are analyzed from the perspective of variability, inconsistency or diversity.

A-rhyme – a connection between two or more successive formal segments/elements, referable to the aspect of *di*ssimilarity coming from the left (beginning).

Link – a succession of different formal segments/elements or that can be identified as pertaining to an a-rhyme ratio, inflected on the same level or profile orientation.

Line – horizontal assignment (coordinate), within a musical plan, of several links of formal segments/elements that are dominantly different and reunited at the same formal level.

1. Visual and theoretical illustration

Beethoven, L. v. – *Piano Sonata Op.2 nr.1* - P.I *Allegro*, **Performance - THEME I**

➢ **Stage 1**: presenting the segment in the form of a musical score

N.B. (Mind you) According to common knowledge, for the category of classical tonal music, the precise beat that corresponds to the functions of tonal harmony plays a key role in assigning the formal segments. Thereafter, the latter also receives the status of constant parameter in a certain tonality. Furthermore, we also seek to identify the aspects of rhymes/a-rhymes.

Theme I

> **Stage 2**: dividing theme I in segments such as rhymes and a-rhymes

Given α ───────────► a-rhyme β ────► a-rhyme γ ─────►

rhyme ↓   rhyme ↓

Comment

● The tonal field is *fa minor*; syntax of *accompanied monody*; elementary beat of *fourth*.

● The generic pattern (initial given status/α) of the sufficiently expressive formal unity is a *binary structure*: an anchor of fourths on a melodic profile of ascending arpeggio and complex ambitus, followed by a single descending sequence, traced by two successive sounds from the arpeggio and gradually embossed, along with (shorter) durations. The two complementary melorhythmic profiles (*ascending-descending*) precisely reunite in an expressive accent (at the right hand), in a double aspect: melodic peak; long duration.

● The backup pulsates/beats explicitly and in a consistent manner within the second sub-segment   (pertaining to the desinent melodic profile), through fourths and repeated chords.

● According to the graphic assignment of the above segments, at the surface line we have a succession of three a-rhyme moments, that are specifically called: α; β; γ. Each of these moments expresses a status of narrative-formal function: α = *initiation*; β = *advancement*; γ = *finalization*. Moments α and β also have a rhyme, graphically assigned on the depth line.

● At the tonal-functional level, segments α and β are related in the connection of Tonic-Dominant, amplified, the segment γ includes three functional aspects: *Tonic-Subdominant-Dominant*. At the synthetic level, the relationship pattern reveals the beginning on Tonic and the finality on Dominant (open rhythm).

  ➤ **Stage 3**: representation of the movement of the form

By intending to highlight the aspects of form movement we will focus on the level of the succession of durations, for each of the moments through which the form of Theme I is beating. The chart of the movement regarding the respective form is in a direct connection with a generic line of rhythmical synthesis, also having a link of four articulations, whose variations by means of expansion or compression will be indicated via the following symbols: + (plus), - (minus). Please check the chart „A map/diagram of the formal path".

● We notice that the form of Theme I pulsates according to a formula of sufficient expressive unity, that is repeating itself identically or differently in 5 moments. During each of these moments, the expressive unity (revealed at the melo-rhythmical level) has the type of 4 successive articulations, in a linkage of

$$[\theta \text{ - } \theta. \text{ - } {}^{3}\xi \text{ - } \theta],$$

focusing expressively on the second articulation. During the α moments, we notice a complex anchor of the articulation 1: first, one of 5 fourths, then, at the level of the rhyme, one of 4 fourths. On the column of the articulations, beginning with the third moment, the value of the fourth (the first articulation) compresses itself in a single grace-note, practically canceling itself as explicit value. However, implicitly, the position of first articulation still remains, especially since it is also assigned to the sub-segment of ascending melodic profile of the sufficient formal unity. Therefore, the two β moments appear as elliptic in comparison to pattern α (as if the first sub-segment were missing). Instead, in the last moment (γ) we can trace changes due to expansion and in the duration of the articulations 2 and 3. Thus, in the articulation number 2, the fourth-with-a-point becomes a half note and in the articulation number 3, the sixteenth-note-triplet becomes a binary-eighth.

● Reunited with the melodic level and with the level of tonal function, the four articulations of rhythmical synthesis (surface/interface) of the sufficient formal unity represent just as many configurations of dynamic expression. Hence:

- articulation 1 is associated with the ascending melodic profile and a single function (tonic or dominant);

- articulation 2 is associated with the melodic peak and in the continuity of the same tonal function;

- articulation 3 is associated with the melodic descending profile and keeping the continuity of the same tonal function , except for the corresponding articulation in the moment γ, on the subdominant;

- articulation 4 is associated with the melodic finality and, invariably, with the dominant rhythm.

With respect to the formal value of the assigned positions, we can classify them according to two levels of expression:

   a. *orientation*/transitory or ornamental (rhetorical) – of a Yin nature (feminine, ethos-specific, surrounding/space, esthetic, impressionistic or taking into account the respective aspect);

   b. *fixation*/stop or fundamental (rhythmical) – of a Yang nature (masculine, ritualistic, basis/time, form, idea or rule).

● The rhetorical level corresponds to positions 1 and 3, with a major role in the dynamical interpretation. Thus, position 1 has a function of frequency tune and energetic addition, with an orientation *towards* the expressive accent, form an crusis perspective. Position 3 has a desinent function, meta/post-crusis, *from* the expression accent, as energetic discharge/diminishing (dynamically). Both positions are superfluous, since they have no structural value, playing only a theatrical role, however with a high impact on an emotional scale.

● The rhythmical level can be associated with positions 2 and 4, that can be interpreted in the area of ideas, considering the specific structure of this area. Therefore, position 2 precisely expresses the significant accent, as a reference element of primary nature (the limit beginning with/from the center). Position 4 specifically expresses the goal set up as a location of destination (formal stop), with a role as secondary reference point (a limit beginning with/from the boundary). We notice the fact that the primary reference point is absolutely nomothetic, certain, lawful, deterministic. The secondary reference point is relative, as possibility/probability or peripheral, determined consequence.

Dashboard - Beethoven Lv. - Piano Sonata No.1 op.2 - PI Allegro Exhibition - **THEME I**

CHART OF THE FORMAL COURSE ON A RHYTHMICAL LEVEL
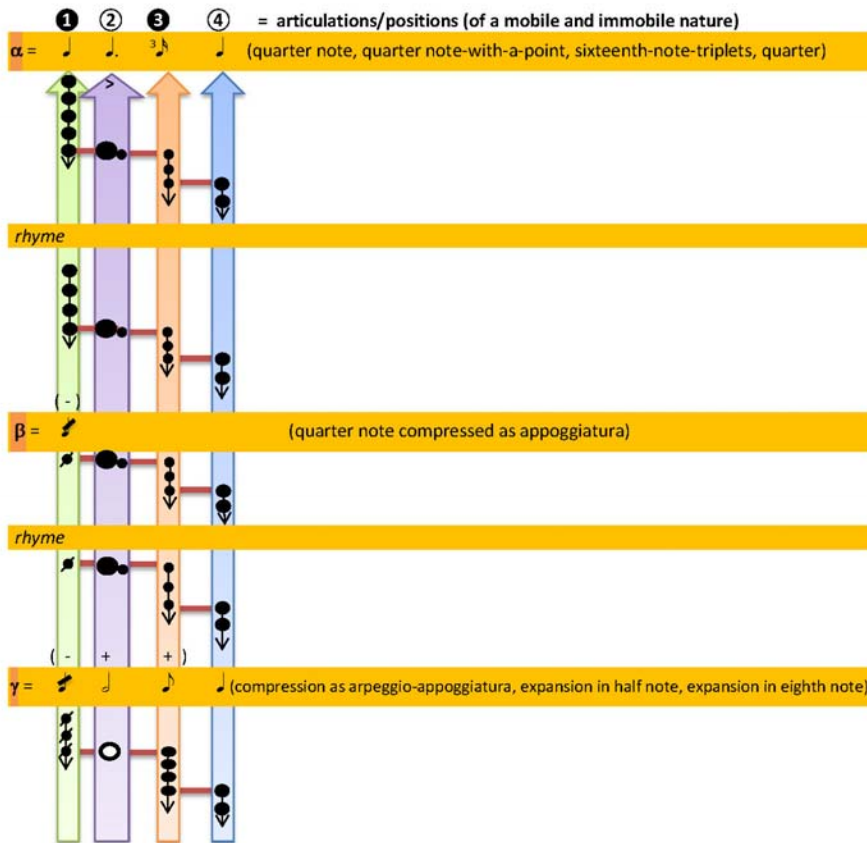
➢ **Stage 4**: course of movement

Based on the outline path in the form of Theme I, we can interpret various aspects of the *how* in movement, both in the case of moments (Mt), and in between these moments. On the coordinate of the durations, this refers to the comparison between successive values. Thus, an immediately higher value (a quarter note after an eight note) is being interpreted as deceleration or moderation (<). In return, a successively lower value (a quarter note after a half note) is similar to a swift or acceleration (>). We can translate the course of movement by taking into account two aspects: a. the level of ideas (the abstract), going on the path of synthetic articulations; b. the level of the phenomenology (the concrete), following the succession of articulations expressed entirely at the time-quantity level of each of them.

● Course of movement at the level of **sufficient formal unity**
● Synthesis representation (at the level of ideas)
● Mt**.** abstract (comprised of 4 articulations-positions)   θ < θ. > ³ξ < θ
● An impression of movement within the formal unity: *decel.- accel.- decel.*
(deceleration - acceleration - deceleration)
● Real representation (phenomenal) impression of the course of movement between certain moments (Mt)

↓

Mt. 1α   5θ > 1θ. > 3³ξ < 2θ Given
Mt. 2 *rhyme* 4θ > 1θ. > 3³ξ < 2θ Acceleration with -1θ/art.1

Mt. 3 β   ♪ ≮ 1θ. > 3³ξ < 2θ Acceleration with -4θ/art.1
Mt. 4 *rhyme*   ♪ < 1θ. > 3³ξ < 2θ

Mt. 5 γ   ♪↗< 1η > 4ε < 3θ Moderation: +1ε/art.2; +3ε/art.3

Comment

By comparing the three moments with a narrative character (α, β, γ) on the graphic of articulation columns, we notice two important aspects in the sense of impression assigned to the course of movement. Thus, in the first exhibit β, since the duration of transition for an ascending profile is compressed (the number of fourths in a single grace-note), we come across an impression of acceleration. Then,

in the last moment (γ), two more changes also occur: the duration of position number 2, concerning the fixed expression, expands itself – the fourth-with-point becomes a half note -; the specific durations of the articulation number 3, with a mobile and desinent location, expand, as they also increase in number – from three sixteenth note triplets to four binary eighths. This generates an impression of deceleration for the entire segment γ. The backup also plays a role in touching up this impression of deceleration. If during those prior moments, the backup consisted in a pulsation (a series) of fourths harmonies attached to all the sub-segments, comprising from after a fourth from the significant accent (articulation 2) until a fourth after the final articulation form the melo-rhythmic plan (of the monody), at the moment γ, it is formed by fourths inlaid with rest of fourths, in a syncopated manner, actually pulsating/beating in values of desinent half note (sound-rest). The pulsation value of the backup appears to be twice as high (half note) as the prior characters, provided with a rhyme, in a consistency of quarter note values. Hence, by means of the pulsation value pertaining to the backup at the moment γ, an impression of deceleration can also be perceived.

  Concerning the course of movement for the entire Theme I, we can state that, in relation to the given α, it accelerates in the first articulation β - a status that preserves itself on the same articulation column, until its correspondent at the moment γ - and decelerates or slows down along the articulations pertaining to the positions 2 -4 from γ. Actually, the duration of the last position, of a final and fixed expression, stays the same (two fourths) on the column of the first four moments, while at the fifth moment it expands through the rest of fourth with a fermata (thus entering the logic of expanding the values of backup pulsations – fourth sound, subsequently "linked" to a fourth's rest). A significant variation can be encountered at the articulation of position number 1 (compression = acceleration), and then at the articulations of other positions/points (expansion = slowing down), within the final momentum.