Discourse Not Dualism: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue on Sonata Form in Beethoven's Early Piano Sonatas

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Abstract

1. Introduction: Sonata form

Sonata form: traditional, prototypical model (A.B. Marx, 1837), major keys

Dominant key: +1
Tonic key: 0

Dualism between themes:
- Contrast in theme (melody) – “spirited” vs. „lyrical“
- Contrast in key (tonality) – fifth relationship
- Musicological question: Is this model appropriate for Beethoven’s music?

2. Method: Visualizing Diatonic Scales from Audio Recordings

Visualization of diatonic scale probabilities (Weiss/Habryka, CIM 2014)

Audio-based analysis of Beethoven’s sonata expositions (Barenboim)

3. Results: Tonality & Form in Beethoven’s Early Piano Sonatas

Sonata op. 2 No. 3 in C major
- 1st theme
- 2nd theme
- Codetta

Sonata op. 2 No. 3 in C major
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Sonata op. 10 No. 3 in D major

A sonata model of Beethoven’s time: Francesco Galeazzi 1796

1. Prelude
2. Principal theme
3. Second motive
4. Departure to related keys
5. Characteristic passage / middle passage (= traditional lyrical second theme)
6. Codetta

Musicological question: Is this model appropriate for Beethoven’s music?

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References