

Chapter 24: A B A' Form

Mozart String Quartet in B-flat, K.458 “Hunt” – II *Menuetto: Trio*

Although the Trio of the *Menuetto* movement from Mozart’s “Hunt” Quartet is in A B A' form, the two outer parts are not equivalent in length. Instead of lasting ten bars, the A' part is eleven bars long. Furthermore, it leads into a four-bar coda.

Make a graphic analysis of the A section, showing how the dominant key of F major is tonicized.



Template 24.1

In graphing the opening ten bars, it will help to present the modulation from I to V in several stages. Also, it may help to think of regarding the opening B-flat major tonic as the pivot chord in the modulation to the dominant.

Having tonicized the key of F major at the end of the initial A section, the central B part of this theme essentially serves to prolong the dominant. How would you understand the unusual chordal succession in the initial four bars of his central section? In measure 15, a B-flat chord appears, but in minor instead of major. Does this represent a return to the tonic? If not, what is its function?



Template 24.2

With the return of the opening theme in the tonic in bar 19, we reach the final A' section of the Trio. As noted earlier, the final A' section is extended by one measure. What causes the extra measure in the A' part? Does the B-flat tonic chord at the end of measure 24 represent a return to the tonic? If not, what is its function? Finally, how does the structural melodic line (i.e., *Urlinie*) descend from $\hat{5}$ to $\hat{1}$?



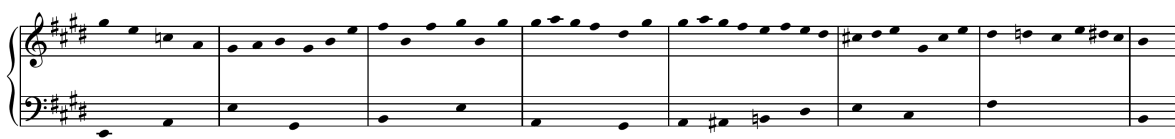
Template 24.3

**Brahms Piano Quartet No. 3 in C minor, op. 60 – III *Andante*
(bars 1-27)**

The opening phrase of the opening theme from the third movement of Brahms's Piano Quartet No.3. is similar to many pieces in A B A' form in which the two outer sections can be understood to form a quasi-antecedent-consequent tonal relationship, with the insertion of a separate B section between them. Although the initial A and central B parts are both eight measures in length, the final A' section is extended by three measures to become an eleven-bar phrase.

Make a graphic analysis of the opening phrase (bars 1-8) that leads from I to V, showing how is the dominant key of B major tonicized. What is the meaning of the G-sharp major chord at the end of bar 4? Is it a harmonic goal or does it have a non-structural function? In answering this, it may be useful to consider the chords preceding and following it. Finally, although it might have been possible for Brahms to return back to the tonic at measure 6, what does he do to avoid a return to I here?

Template 24.4



In graphing the opening phrase of the theme, it will help to present the modulation from I to V in several levels. Also, it may help to think of regarding the opening E-major tonic as a pivot chord in the modulation to the dominant.

The central B part of this theme essentially serves to prolong the dominant reached at the end of bar 8. Having tonicized the dominant in the initial A section with its leading tone A-sharp (#4), the B section must neutralize this altered scale degree back to its diatonic form A-natural. It is clear that the A-major chord in bar 13 serves this purpose, but how does it fit into the tonal structure of this phrase? Furthermore, does the varied statement of the opening theme in bars 11-12 already represent a return to the tonic? If not, what is its purpose?

The chord at the beginning of measure 15 is an augmented-sixth chord that continues to an E-major chord in $\frac{6}{4}$ position. Usually, augmented-sixth chords lead to V, but here it leads to a $\frac{6}{5}$ chord over A. What is the function of the $\frac{6}{4}$ chord that precedes it?



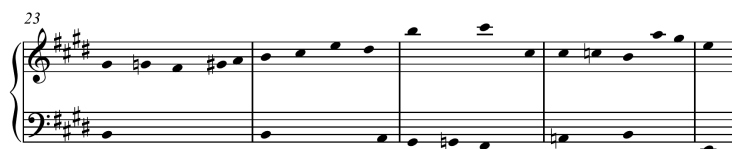
Template 24.5

With the return of the tonic in bar 17, we reach the final A' section of the theme. Unlike the preceding two eight-bar phrases, the third phrase is extended by three measures, but Brahms could have maintained the same eight-bar phrase length by transposing the final cadence over bars 7-8 of the opening phrase down a fifth into the tonic at bars 23-24. Graph the final phrase of the theme with this hypothetical cadence at bar 24. In preparing your analysis, it is important to consider the function of the D-major chords in bars 20 and 21.



Template 24.6

Adding three extra bars to the final phrase gives more weight to the ending, and thereby helps establish it as the conclusion of the theme as a whole. How does Brahms extend the final phrase? Graph the final cadence over bars 23-27, providing further levels as necessary.



Template 24.7

Having analyzed the three separate sections of this opening theme from Brahms's Piano Quartet No.3 in C minor, make a middleground analysis of the entire 27-bar theme.