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Large-Scale Structure, Performance and Brahms's Op. 119 No. 2

What has the last decade or so of work in the field of musical performance studies contributed to our understanding of large-scale structure in music? While there has been a slow evolution of ideas, unsurprisingly no single, easily abridged answer has emerged. One of the many questions raised concerns the extent to which large-scale structure is relevant either to what performers do or to what listeners perceive. It was not long before a certain amount of scepticism – very healthy scepticism, I think – began to surround this issue.[1] Three years after the establishment of the AHRC Research Centre for the History and Analysis of Recorded Music (CHARM), Nicholas Cook commented:

> While the developing analytical literature on performance tends to focus on issues of structural interpretation, often on a relatively large scale, there is a strong argument that large-scale structure is to a high degree hard-wired into music as composed, and that the performer's ability to generate musical meaning depends much more on the handling of details. (Cook 2007, p. 189)

Cook's fear was that analysts interested in performance could miss the point by focusing on large-scale structure. This is something which Daniel Leech-Wilkinson (2009, Ch. 8.1, Par. 16) refers to when he writes that 'for the listener most of what counts happens in the present, at the "now" moment; and that deserves more of our attention, I'd suggest, than our music-analytical training, with its emphasis on long-term patterns, leads us to expect'.[2]

Such thinking is reflected in the avenues that CHARM researchers pursued: the focuses on phrase arching (Cook 2007 and 2013), performance motives (Rink, Spiro and Gold 2011) and musical 'gestures' (Leech-Wilkinson 2009 and 2010) demonstrated a move towards the more surface-level concerns that matter to performers and listeners alike. Cook consolidated his argument for this shift in attention by questioning the relevance of music-theoretical structuralist approaches to performance in general; one of the central points of this critique is that 'most theorist's analysis does not construe music as intrinsically temporal, in the way that performance is, but treats it as some kind of non-temporal structure that is unfolded through time' (2013, p. 45). And – drawing on Susan Melrose's distinction between 'page and stage' – Cook argues that recordings 'provide an opportunity to make the same mistakes all over again'; he notes that, 'given the embeddedness in the discipline of the page-to-stage or

analysis-to-performance approach, it is all too easy to fall into its mirror image: a stage-to-page or performance-to-analysis approach in which "analysis" is still conceived as theorist's analysis' (p. 50).

The complicated relationship between musical performance and large-scale structure is the focus of this article. The latter has been and continues to be conventionally understood in predominantly score-based terms, in what Daphne Leong (2019, p. 8) calls the 'commonly accepted (but usually undefined)' version of musical structure.[3] However, some recent research has begun to recast musical performance as structurally meaningful instead of relying on the sole basis of the musical score for such purposes. I take stock of this research in the first half of this article, and in the second half I explore its implications by using three recordings of Johannes Brahms's Intermezzo in E minor, Op. 119 No. 2, as a case study.

Aspects of the foregoing are tantamount to a departure from some of the most established principles of music analysis. When Cook and Leech-Wilkinson push back on large-scale structure, they have in mind the kind of exclusively score-based understanding that Leong describes; but many scholars have maintained an interest in how musical structure might be reconceptualised in terms that more explicitly take the activity of musical performance into account. This includes allusions to large-scale musical design: Mine Doğantan-Dack, an artistic researcher who maintains an active professional performance career alongside her research, has opposed Cook's suggestion that large-scale structure might be determined by composition rather than encompassing performance:

> The idea that the large-scale structure, or form, is hard-wired into music is difficult to hold: if this were the case, the large-scale form of a piece of music would always be identified in the same way by different analysts, and different performers would always work from one and the same formal understanding of it. While certain pieces of music may indeed display clear large-scale structural relationships, which can be identified, say, as sonata-form, some other pieces might inhere multiple analyses in this respect: the important point is that, in either case, the way a performer handles local details is very much related to her conception of large-scale relationships – or her lack thereof. (Doğantan-Dack 2008, p. 305)

Doğantan-Dack's point is that local details – over which the performer indisputably has control – have implications for overall structure, and she demonstrates this with the second movement of Beethoven's Piano Sonata No. 8 in C minor, Op. 13 (*Pathétique*). With five occurrences of the main theme to interpret, she asks: Should the performer 'treat all of the occurrences of the theme as repetitions (as in Rondo form)? Or does the fourth occurrence involve a sense of return as in ABA?' (p. 306). In turn, the broader question raised by Doğantan-Dack is where the line might be drawn between the performer's agency and the composition's large-scale affordances.

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Certainly, the baggage that the term 'structure' carries does nothing to resolve the tension between performer agency and compositional affordance. One alternative is to invoke the notion of musical 'shape' to make sense of long-term musical patterns, and instead hold the term 'structure' at a distance. This is what John Rink, Neta Spiro and Nicolas Gold allude to in their study of Chopin's Mazurka Op. 24 No. 2, while simultaneously defending the potential relevance of large-scale shape to performance:

> One problem has to do with a reductivist tendency to regard musical structure as a single, seemingly static entity rather than as a range of potential, inferred relationships between the various parameters active within a work. Not only is it more accurate to refer to music's structure**s**, but the origin and dynamic nature of those structures must also be acknowledged. In this respect performers have a seminal role to play, creating musical structures or their counterpart – musical 'shapes' – in each and every performance. These go well beyond the surface-level expressive microstructure upon which much of the literature has focussed to date. (Rink, Spiro and Gold 2011, p. 268; emphasis in original)

Rink (1990 and 2002) has suggested the usefulness of shape as a term in the past, and he has since fleshed this out by proposing four principles concerning musical structure which are much more accommodating of performance:[4]

1. Musical materials do not in themselves constitute structure(s): they *afford* the inference of structural relationships.
2. Inference of this kind will be individually and uniquely carried out whenever it is attempted, even if shared criteria result in commonalities between discrete structural representations.
3. Musical structure should therefore be seen as constructed, not immanent; as pluralistic, not singular.
4. Furthermore, because of music's time-dependency, musical structure should be understood first and foremost as a process, not as 'architecture' – especially in relation to performance. (Rink 2015, p. 129)

Rink's desire here is to 'reflect the fundamental role of the performer in defining musical structure', and he goes on to make the point that the 'analysis of music need not and indeed should not be undertaken exclusively or even primarily with regard to its notational representation – i.e. the score – but on the basis of how music is enacted and effected over time' (2015, p. 130). In that sense, his principles are strikingly inclusive – of scores, performances and anything else that could conceivably constitute 'musical materials' – but together they constitute a Pandora's box of sorts with respect to analysis (of Western art music, at least): allowing both scores and performances to be of structural relevance requires analysts to make decisions about which materials to prioritise, and why. In other words, it foregrounds the challenge of negotiating the relationship between structure as it might be afforded by the score and how it might be represented on the basis of performances. Rink in this respect has much in common with

Leong's second, broader understanding of structure: that it is 'created in the process of making music – by composers, performers, listeners, and analysts' (Leong 2019, p. 8). Leong includes in this understanding '*traditional elements of music analysis* – pitch, rhythm, motive, phrase, twelve-tone rows, and so forth; *perceived elements* – pulses to which one entrains, felt durations, surprising moments, and so on; and *performed elements* – temporal and dynamic shaping, tone color and voicing, physical actions, etc.', all of which leads her to the disarmingly concise definition of structure as 'a means of making sense of music' (2019, pp. 9–10; emphasis in original).

I focus on large-scale aspects not because of their innate importance, but because they remain, for many, securely within the domain of score-based structure. To a degree this is the position that Michael Spitzer (2017) takes in his analysis of Bach's Violin Sonata No. 1 in G minor, BWV 1001.[5] Spitzer is sympathetic and attentive to performers' contributions to the emotional impact of Bach's sonata, but he commits performance quite closely to notation: '[W]hat is being performed is not just a score, but also a performance shape inscribed within the score'; the former 'mirrors' the latter (p. 108).[6] This may not pose any major problems when the performer's interpretation seems to align quite closely with what we find in the score, as is the case with the three performances that Spitzer considers. Similarly unproblematic is Rink, Spiro and Gold's (2011) analysis of Arthur Rubinstein's 1939 performance of Chopin's Mazurka Op. 24 No. 2. They go further than Spitzer in recognising the structural significance of the performer's playing – seeing Rubinstein's handling of tempo and dynamics as creating 'large-scale directionality and continuity' (p. 285) – and argue that his performance exhibits a 'higher-order rhythmic articulation' in accordance with the hypermeasures of each of the mazurka's formal sections (p. 288). In other words, the overall shape that the analysts discern in Rubinstein's performance can be explained neatly with reference to the piece's major sections as they locate them within the score.

It is not to take away from Rink, Spiro and Gold's analysis of Rubinstein to note that this kind of alignment is not always forthcoming. A good example is Leech-Wilkinson's analysis of Alfred Cortot's 1928 recording of Chopin's Prelude in E minor, Op. 28 No. 4. Here, Leech-Wilkinson grapples with Cortot's handling of the Prelude's overall structure, the balance of which Cortot seems to destabilise:

> Cortot is going beyond what's normal for us, and indeed beyond what was normal for most pianists of his or the preceding generation, because he's not just marking up the formal properties of the piece in a manner consistent with period style. He's giving moments expressive properties well beyond those required by the representation of compositional form. The piece's larger AA′ form is marked, certainly, but the A and A′ are contrasted far more than even Cortot's contemporaries might normally have thought was required. (Leech-Wilkinson 2009, Ch. 6, Par. 45)

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What Leech-Wilkinson's analysis suggests is that the degree to which Cortot's performance is best understood in terms of an AA′ form is uncertain or, at the very least, up for debate.[7] As he later commented, it 'remains to be seen' whether or not 'the structural fundamentals' of pieces of music remain consistent irrespective of the performer's contribution (Leech-Wilkinson 2015, pp. 336–7).

Part of the problem is that the idea of an AA′ form does not automatically lend itself to diachronic thinking; as a result, it can become a good example of the 'non-temporal structure' or 'architecture' that Cook and Rink respectively deemed problematic.[8] And the very basic difficulty in this sense is not the notion of large-scale structure itself, but rather the use of synchronic language to describe it. Ana Llorens (2017) has confronted a similar challenge in her analysis of a performance by Pablo Casals and Mieczysław Horszowski of the second movement of Brahms's Cello Sonata in F major, Op. 99. Llorens makes clear that conventional score-based analysis suggests that the A′ section begins with the thematic and harmonic reprise at bar 44. But, focusing especially on asynchrony between the cello and piano parts, she argues that in this performance 'the boundary before bar 40 is reinforced so strongly that it acts as arguably the most important structural division of the movement, and therefore, in [Casals and Horszowski's performance] the A′ section is deemed to start before the full restatement of the initial material' (p. 24). This has led Llorens to seek alternative explanatory tools in theories of narrativity:

> A theoretical reinterpretation of musical structure through the lens of performance – and performers – entails not only a diachronic perspective, but also the acceptance of metaphors of motion, change, energy, tension, resolution, transformation, shape, time, sound, and narrative, among others. Even if the idea of narrative seems fanciful or questionable, it ultimately refers to assimilation of sounds as organised diachronically in terms of a continuously progressing 'discourse' or 'plot'. (Llorens 2018, p. 251)

In the analysis that follows, I draw on the kinds of metaphors described by Llorens and on Rink's ideas of musical shape, working broadly within the spirit of Leong's second definition of musical structure.[9]

There is, then, much agreement on the relevance of performance to how musical structure might best be understood, and my intention here is to harness some of the wider rethinking that I have surveyed and target the more specified and seemingly intractable topic of large-scale structure. If, for instance, performers do have considerable creative control over large-scale musical elements, how might we illustrate this? If it is conceivable that performers project very different large-scale relationships from the same piece of music, how do we re-evaluate our own (score-based) structural preconceptions to accommodate their input, especially in instances where performances seem to go against the grain of those very preconceptions? What would the implications be for score-based forms?

The delicate relationship between score and performance makes the prospect of this task much more daunting than it might initially seem. The simplest solution for performance analysts is often to allow a predetermined, score-based understanding of large-scale structure to define the borders within which performance-based properties are contained and by extension can be explained. Much good work has been done along these lines, but it means that score-based structure is invariably advocated irrespective of how flexibly structure could be conceived of or perceived in performance terms. This is not necessarily problematic, as the analysis by Rink, Spiro and Gold above points out, but the examples raised by Leech-Wilkinson and Llorens suggest that there are cases where such an approach might prove less helpful. It is along such lines that Daniel Barolsky (2007, Par. 15) has argued that 'the analytical implications of individual performances continue to be confined or limited by theorists'. The larger question lurking behind this article, then, is whether it is possible to assess how performers shape music over time without necessarily explaining how the sounding effect corresponds to or deviates from large-scale, score-based structure – however this may be interpreted. In order to entertain this idea, we need to move away from thinking about large-scale analytical concepts such as sonata form as structural mandates or certainties, at least provisionally. There is no shortage of compelling reasons for doing so, given the growing recognition of how reliant our understanding of scores is on what performers do, and also the extent to which performers bear ideas of large-scale shaping in mind when preparing for and engaging in performance (see Leech-Wilkinson 2012 and Prior 2017). In turn, new prospects for formulating and conceptualising large-scale analytical models could emerge – ones which are sensitive to music's composed and performed elements alike.

Brahms's Intermezzo: Notes on the Score and Notes on Performance

I turn now to Brahms's Intermezzo in E minor. The score suggests a simple ternary form – A_1BA_2 – which could be called its macroform: the A_1 and B sections are differentiated by changes in tempo description, tonality and rhythmic character, the last of which is predominantly defined in A_1 by alternating pairs of semiquavers between the left and right hands, and in B by its dance-like texture.[10] The piece's monothematic material has often been commented upon (Epstein 1995, p. 282, and Jones 1998, p. 159): the contour of the opening *agitato* idea recurs throughout the A_1 section and is then transposed into E major and transfigured into a waltz from bar 36. As Kofi Agawu has remarked, '[A]nyone who plays through this intermezzo will be struck by the constant presence of its main idea' (2008, p. 230).

The 35 bars of the A_1 section can be grouped into four broad units containing this material: (1) the opening subject of bars 1–12 establishes E minor as the tonic; (2) this subject is rhythmically reworked in bars 13–17 into triplets and

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in the subdominant key; (3) Brahms revisits this material again in bars 18–22 – transposing it a semitone higher than the tonic before landing on the dominant in bar 23 – and then develops a motive drawn from bars 7–8 in bars 23–28; (4) the tonic key returns in bars 29–35 and the opening material is rephrased for a final time, paving the way for the establishment of the tonic major at bar 36. The material of the waltz-like B section is more straightforward than that of the A_1 section. It can be divided neatly into three large sixteen-bar units (bars 36–51, 52–67 and 68–83), each of which could be further divided into eight-bar phrases or more locally into four-bar units. The section closes with a five-bar codetta at bars 84–88. The A_2 section contains three notable changes to the A_1 section: the opening broad unit is reduced from twelve bars to five, the triplet A minor unit is rhythmically respelled in semiquavers and a coda – reworked from the codetta of section B – resolves the piece in E major.

One issue with analytical summaries of this kind is that they risk reifying the notational properties they illustrate, one example of which occurs when analysts attempt to make the performances under scrutiny fit their own musical parsing of the score. In other words, the danger is one of pigeonholing performance parameters. In reality, these units are intended merely as a starting point for the analyst's understanding, one which emerges through the listening experience and gives greater autonomy to the work of the performer. What is particularly useful about Op. 119 No. 2 is that it has been the subject of several performance-related analyses, a closer look at which will demonstrate this and the more general problem of the performance-score dynamic to which I referred earlier.

An early example is David Epstein's (1995, p. 101) analysis-to-performance approach, which is driven by his principle of proportional tempo relationships – the belief that 'in works of multiple movements, or in single-movement works with different tempos […] all tempos are intrinsically related via a common pulse'. Epstein – who was an orchestra conductor as well as a musicologist – was not alone in his appropriation of this technique for the performance of Brahms's music, but he was certainly its strongest proponent.[11] On the macro A_1BA_2 form of Op. 119 No. 2, Epstein notes the shared thematic material of the A and B sections and concludes that 'the tempo indications – "Andantino un poco agitato" and "Andantino grazioso" – accurately convey a sense of character variance worked upon the same fundamental beat'; based on this, he advocates a proportional tempo of 1:1 between sections A_1 and B. His final suggestion for performance is to value the crotchet pulse at around 90 beats per minute (bpm), one which would facilitate the waltz style of the B section and the *agitato* of A_1 and A_2 (pp. 282–5). Epstein's motivation – a desire to find ways of making the music in question cohere – is one with which I think many musicians would sympathise, but it is worth noting some of the features of his approach: the formal sections are understood as cleanly separable and self-contained entities, tempo is approximated as an average overall figure in a way that neglects moment-to-moment ebb and flow and no actual performances are consulted.

This last point is particularly important because the natural corollary of page-to-stage thinking like this is that we can also evaluate performances through it. One such case is Michael Musgrave's discussion of Ilona Eibenschütz's idiosyncratic 1952 recording of Op. 119 No. 2. Musgrave's interest here lies not in proportional tempi but rather in historical approaches to Brahms piano performance: Eibenschütz was a pupil of Clara Schumann and gave the premières of most of Brahms's Opp. 118 and 119 in London, imbuing her recordings with an air of historical significance (see Musgrave 2019). But a disappointed Musgrave dismisses Eibenschütz's interpretation quite comprehensively:

> One senses that Brahms would have produced more character in the opening figure through a fuller tone and more shaping. Her playing lacks this feature as well as any real contrast in the B section, which he marks *molto p e dolce*. And she hugely varies the tempo, which never settles at any point and is very impetuous, though Brahms's only marking is the *sostenuto* at the two most extended cadences.
>
> […]
>
> The impression arises in op. 119 no. 2 that the sense of a 'structurally shaped' performance has become caricatured, as when she cuts time from the extended cadence at bar 22 and rushes headlong to the conclusion of the section, taking the final rhythmic variant entirely for granted as though it were obvious and worthy of no attention, then, to compensate, making a large *rit*. in the concluding three bars of the section, not marked. The B section is very fleet and improvisatory, accelerating where the figuration becomes more complex, rather than letting the more intricate part-writing unfold with sense. (Musgrave 2003, p. 313)

These comments tell us more than that Eibenschütz's performance is not to Musgrave's taste: the interesting point is that Eibenschütz's deep individuality is not compatible with an approach which processes the performance through conventional score-based analytical apparatus (here refracted through the lens of Brahms's intentions, as Musgrave understands them). Put simply, this apparatus begins to malfunction once performers do things that we do not expect, but the brunt of the fallout is taken by the performer. It would be more charitable to propose that Eibenschütz's performance generates its own formal properties; this being a possibility, it is a performance to which I will return.

Since CHARM, analysts have tended to be more favourable towards performances like Eibenschütz's. A good example of such an analysis of Op. 119 No. 2 is that by Anna Scott (2014, pp. 176–86). It is fascinating that Scott analyses the same recording of Eibenschütz in her comprehensive account of the performance style of Brahms's circle, but to the opposite end: the embodiment of Eibenschütz's playing style in modern-day performance. In her analysis, Scott fits Eibenschütz's performance into a predetermined set of phrases and structural boundaries as a means of breaking down and making sense of her playing: working her way through the surface level of Eibenschütz's performance,

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Scott divides the piece into phrases based on the score, averaging Eibenschütz's tempo for each phrase. Moving upwards towards the overall A_1BA_2 form, Scott identifies a 1:2 tempo ratio between sections A_1 and B: 'If you average her tempi during the A section's main subjects at [bars] 1.1, 9.1 and 88.1, you arrive at a value of 89MM [bpm] which, when doubled, is 178MM. Remarkably, her tempo over the entire B section averages at about 181MM' (2014, pp. 235–8).

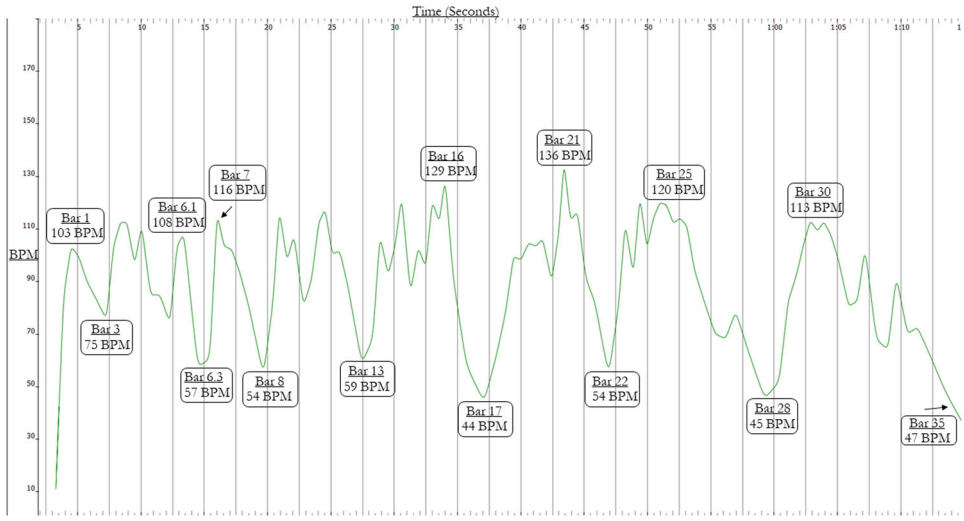
Scott's analysis defers to the performance to an admirable extent, but it is notable that Eibenschütz's manipulation of tempo is fitted around score-based formal properties. Indeed, it is this that leads Scott to discover the 1:2:1 ratio in Eibenschütz's performance, and I wonder how meaningfully the overall shape of a performance this volatile can be explained by so simple a formula. Having said this, it must be reiterated that Scott's aim is to recreate older performance styles, and in this sense she uses performance analysis for a very specific purpose; that it works very well for her practice-led research is evidenced by her wonderful recordings.[12]

Performance studies as a discipline has fostered much greater inclusion and appreciation of the performer's input than the examples of Epstein and Musgrave above. But it remains to be seen how an approach to Eibenschütz's performance – and indeed other performances – might go even further in *prioritising* the performer's manipulation of expressive parameters in the shaping of large-scale musical structure, as well as showing how very different large-scale structures can be inferred on this basis. That is what concerns the rest of this article.

Large-Scale Structures in Performance

How might we derive and represent distinct large-scale structures in performances? In this section I probe three remarkably different recorded performances by Wilhelm Backhaus, Maria Yudina and Eibenschütz.[13] I first analyse Backhaus's 1936 performance and demonstrate that his interpretation can be explained in a relatively straightforward way on the basis of the structural preconceptions outlined above. I then examine Yudina's 1968 recording and return to Eibenschütz's 1952 recording, attempting to elucidate their structurally more complex interpretations. I focus on tempo because it is sufficient for my argument here; no doubt a more thorough study would consider other parameters – not only, for example, the likes of dynamics, articulation and timbre, but also physical gesture and the body.[14] On the importance of tempo and timing in relation to musical structure, I follow Cook's (2013, p. 126) differentiation between structuralist and rhetorical models, the first of which sees music as 'an ideal object that is not inherently temporal but, in performance, is presented through time'. The rhetorical model, he writes, 'is understood to be inherently temporal', and 'this gives rise to timing that is a function of sectional design, musical material […] and expression'. More recently, Mariusz Kozak

Fig. 1 Wilhelm Backhaus, section A_1 [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]



has noted that 'understanding the nature of time is especially urgent for anyone interested in the analysis and interpretation of music'. His claim is that musical time emerges from 'the interaction between musical sounds and a situated, embodied listener', but a subsidiary point is that 'both spatial and temporal structure' rely upon this reciprocal relationship: '[S]tructure is not given prior to the event's unfolding' (2020, pp. 2–6). To think of music in this way – to see it as *of* time instead of *in* time (in Cook's words) – is to conceive of timing and tempo as potentially structural.

Wilhelm Backhaus

I begin with Backhaus because his playing exhibits what could be thought of as the 'typical' conception of this ternary form. Here, a balanced B section is preceded by a more unpredictable rendition of A_1 – in keeping with Brahms's indications of *grazioso* and *agitato* respectively. Fig. 1 highlights how Backhaus gradually stretches the boundaries of phrase arching that he establishes at the beginning.[15] The opening two bars reach a height of 103 bpm and then drop to 75 bpm in accordance with Brahms's *sosten.* marking. Each of Backhaus's subsequent phrases expands on this: bars 6^1, 7^2 and 9^3 all reach new heights, with the biggest drop – of 85 bpm – saved for bars 16–17. The subtle increases in volatility through this first half are continued at bars 21^1–22^3 (82 bpm) and then 25^1–28^3 (75 bpm), the last of which clocks in as the longest *rit.* to this point, covering four bars. Backhaus then employs a final acceleration which catapults the tempo back up to 113 bpm at bar 30^2 and marks the E major suspension at

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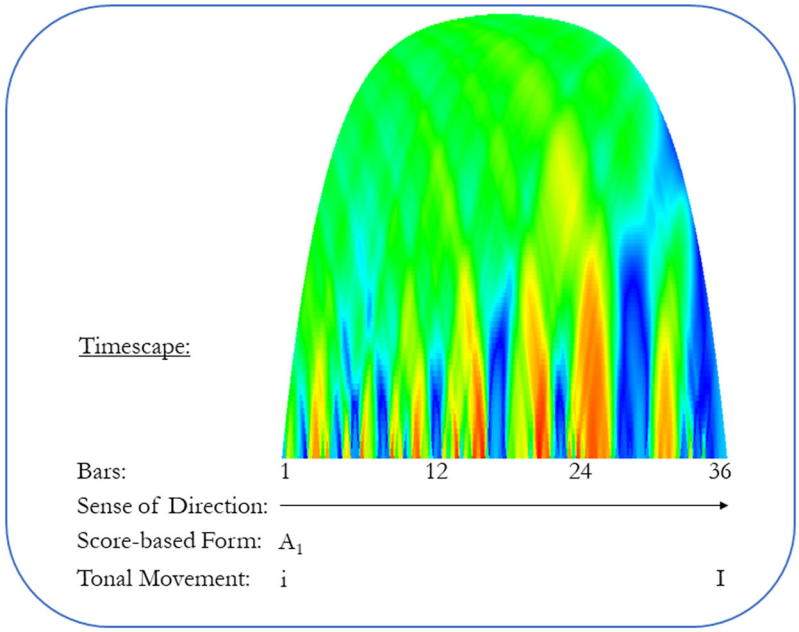
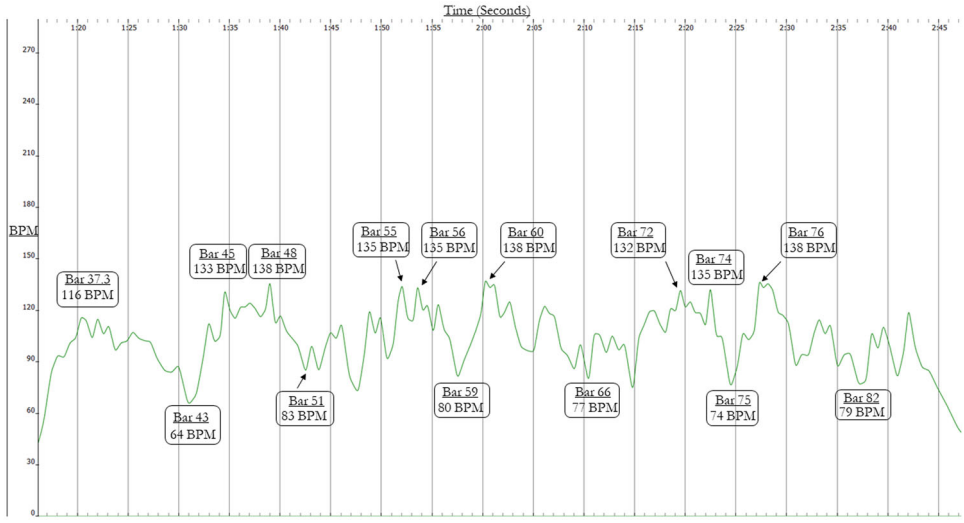
Fig. 2 Backhaus, timescape for section A_1 (bars 1–36) [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]



bar 33 as the point of arrival, bringing out the ascending chromatic tenor line in bar 32 to underline the urgency.

All of this is to say that, in the A_1 section, Backhaus subtly develops the sense of *agitato* through gradually increasing fluctuations of tempo, something which the timescape in Fig. 2 clarifies. Timescapes – a graphing technique developed by Craig Sapp – display changes in tempo in a performance over time: green indicates the calculated average speed during performance, while blue and red streaks indicate where Backhaus plays much slower or faster than this global average respectively. In the same way, light blue and yellow streaks indicate less extreme deviations from the global average. (For graphs in greyscale, darker shades indicate slower and lighter ones faster speeds).[16] Time is represented on the *x*-axis (i.e. the graph is to be read from left to right) and the *y*-axis displays trends in tempo change at different levels: the bottom of the axis displays local tempo changes, while broader trends are made visible the higher up one reads the graph. The timescapes I employ in this article are underlain by several musical parameters – bars, sense of direction, score-based form and tonal movement – that are similarly to be read along the *x*-axis.[17] As Fig. 2 demonstrates, the increasingly dominant shades of red and blue (in greyscale: black and white) over time indicate the manner in which both extremities of speed become more and more pronounced as Backhaus plays. There is thus a

Fig. 3 Backhaus, section B [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]



progressively increasing *agitato* effect in this performance: Backhaus renders the musical material increasingly frantic before a dramatic push to E major at bar 33.

It was noted that the material of the B section – organised into symmetrical eight-bar phrases – is less complex than that of the A_1 section (in line with Brahms's opposing tempo characters of *agitato* and *grazioso*). Backhaus's playing capitalises on this feature (Fig. 3), noticeably parsing the B section into eight-bar phrases. The timid tempo of the first phrase – bars 36–44 – is quickened slightly at bar 44, from which point each phrase falls within what might be called a consistent temporal register. The point can be made with reference to the peaks and troughs of each of Backhaus's phrases, the former of which have a range of 132–138 bpm, versus the latter's 74–83 bpm. Although Backhaus does linger at bars 52–53 and 68–69 to bring out the imitative part writing, he does nothing to rupture the sense of flow and continuity that his handling of the B section establishes. The result is a calm and contained B section which achieves the kind of contrast suggested above – one which Fig. 4 attempts to clarify.[18] As we saw, Backhaus subtly develops the sense of *agitato* in the A_1 section through gradually increasing fluctuations of tempo and creates a sense of forward direction that culminates in the need for resolution at bar 35; from bar 36 onwards, not only are the fluctuations normalised, but they are also regularised in length, occurring every eight bars. *Grazioso* is achieved, and the entire B section becomes a cleanly separable and stand-alone entity which offers respite from the *agitato* of the A_1 section.

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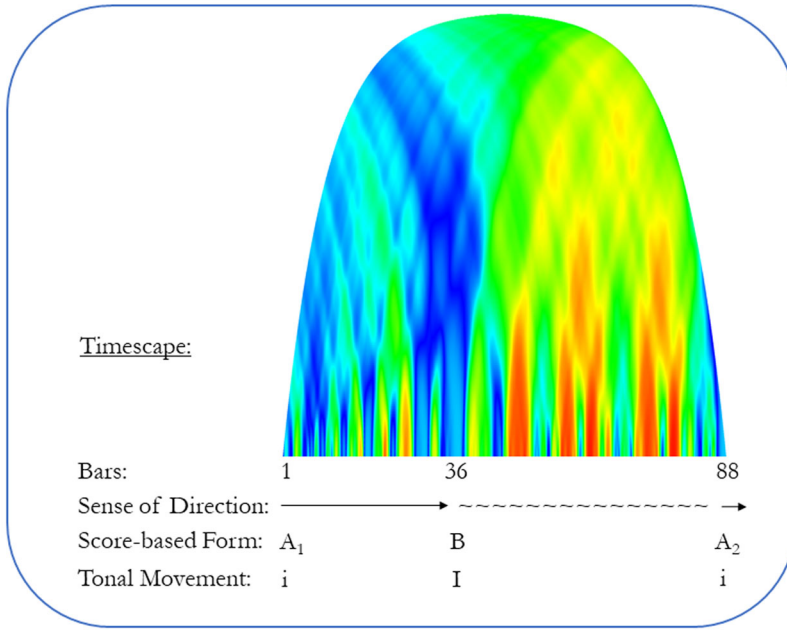
Fig. 4 Backhaus, Timescape for sections A_1 and B (bars 1–88) [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

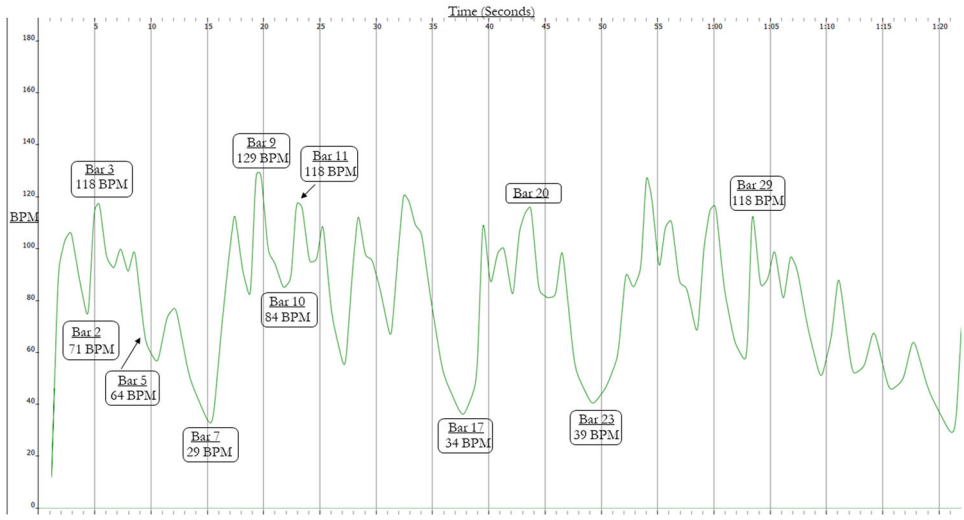


Maria Yudina

The sense of *agitato* that Yudina fashions in her opening 35 bars is considerably different to that conveyed by Backhaus. Her treatment of the opening two-bar unit is startlingly idiosyncratic, but symptomatic of her approach to the first twelve bars and indeed to the entire A_1 section (Fig. 5). She applies Brahms's *sosten.* marking to the second beat of bar 2, prolonging the B major dominant chord before rushing through bar 2^3 and underplaying the resolution to E minor. At bar 5^2 she once again lingers on chord V (down to 64 bpm) and then drops dramatically to 29 bpm to mark the arrival on the dominant at bar 7. Yudina's jump to 129 bpm at bar 9^1 attenuates the return of the tonic almost to the point of inaudibility. To round off the first twelve bars, Yudina recalls her idiosyncratic opening motive at bars 10–11.

Any standard analytical reading of bars 1–12 of Brahms's score would locate its opening and close within the home key of E minor without hesitation; indeed, an analysis suggesting otherwise would be theoretically indefensible. However, Yudina's performance cannot be explained in this way: what she achieves in these first twelve bars is a systematic destabilisation of the tonic key through persistent emphasis on the dominant chord. And this continues throughout bars 18–35: Yudina hammers home the left-hand B octaves in bar 20 in advance of establishing the dominant in bar 23 as a significant point of arrival. She

Fig. 5 Maria Yudina, section A_1 [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]



underplays the final return of E minor, minimising it by reaching 118 bpm in bar 29 and shifting the weight onto the impending arrival of V^7 at bar 35.

All of this emphasis on the dominant creates a heavily dissonant A_1 section: it is not E minor itself that is characterised as *agitato*, but the continuous evasion of E minor in the context of this building dominant dissonance. Yudina's reversal of this tonic-dominant dynamic creates an *agitato* that is charged with a potent tonal narrative, one which is left to the tonic major at bar 36 to resolve. This urge for impending resolution has immediate consequences for the B section, and Yudina initially finds that resolution with the first two phrases. Bars 36–43 for the most part fall between 70 and 80 bpm, dropping to 51 bpm after four bars and 38 bpm after eight, then peaking at 109 bpm at bar 40^3 (see Fig. 6). Her second phrase (bars 44–51) begins at a new peak at bar 44^3 (117 bpm) and then gradually sinks to bar 51^3. This is not, however, the resolution required: seeming to cadence on the dominant in bar 51, Yudina drastically ratchets up the tempo in the ensuing phrase, peaking at 200 bpm and 205 bpm and destroying the sense of *grazioso* that she achieved in the first sixteen bars of the B section.

This is a departure into new territory. Bars 52–67 are performed at a much faster overall speed and with huge fluctuations in tempo, most strikingly in bars 53^2–55^2, 56^3–60^1 and 60^3–64^1. This explosiveness continues through the repeat of these bars (bars 69^3–70^2, 72^3–73^2 and 76^3–80^1) and is then finally calmed somewhat with the arrival of the E major codetta at bar 84, though the extent to which Yudina resolves the turbulence is undermined by her rush up to bar 85^1. At this point, she is only moments away from letting E minor take the reins once more.

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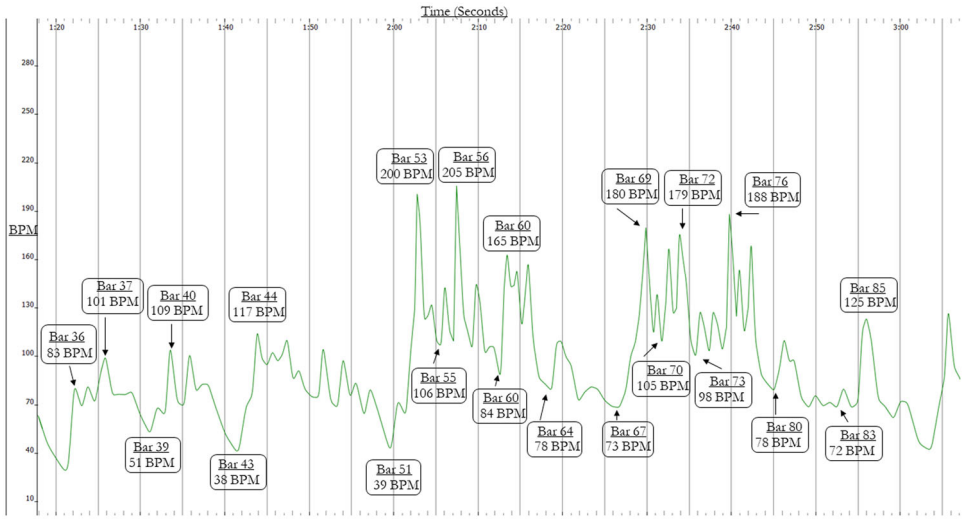
Fig. 6 Yudina, section B [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]



The overall picture of Yudina's B section, then, is more complex than Backhaus's. She still grounds the music in regular units of eight and sixteen bars, and the initial calmness of bars 36–51 seems to resolve the *agitato* of the A_1 section. But this is shattered by the turbulence that propels the section forward in a new direction from bar 52. Fig. 7 points to this rupture: immediately after bar 52, the momentum picks up and overthrows the prior feeling of stasis. This, then, is *grazioso* gone wrong, but not in the sense of error or failure: rather, the B material takes on a new function. The extreme tempo fluctuations in bars 52–67 and 68–83 break the spell of bars 36–51, pushing the music away from *grazioso* and building momentum towards something else: the *agitato* of the forthcoming A_2 section. Yudina's B section does not supply that expected, clean contrast that Backhaus's performance projects, but instead becomes destabilised and foreshadows – indeed, builds towards – the impending return of the *agitato* A material.

Ilona Eibenschütz

Eibenschütz's performance pushes tempo to extremes to which neither of the other performances considered here comes close. Her first two bars are exemplary: she marks this small unit with a drop of almost 60 bpm between bars 1^3 and 2^3 (Fig. 8). She continues in this fashion, characterising the dominant at bar 7 with an almost identical drop and then re-establishing the tonic by lingering for a full bar at the return of the opening idea (bar 9). By doing so, Eibenschütz immediately sets the bar high: what would seem like extreme tempo fluctuations in another context are made the norm. Taking bars 12–13 at blistering speed

Fig. 7 Yudina, timescape for sections A_1 and B (bars 1–88) [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

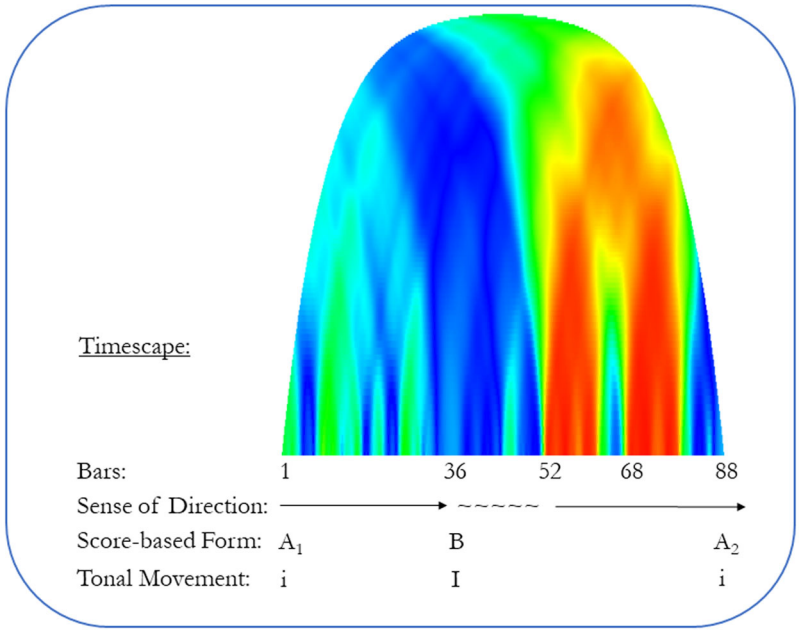


Fig. 8 Ilona Eibenschütz, section A_1 [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

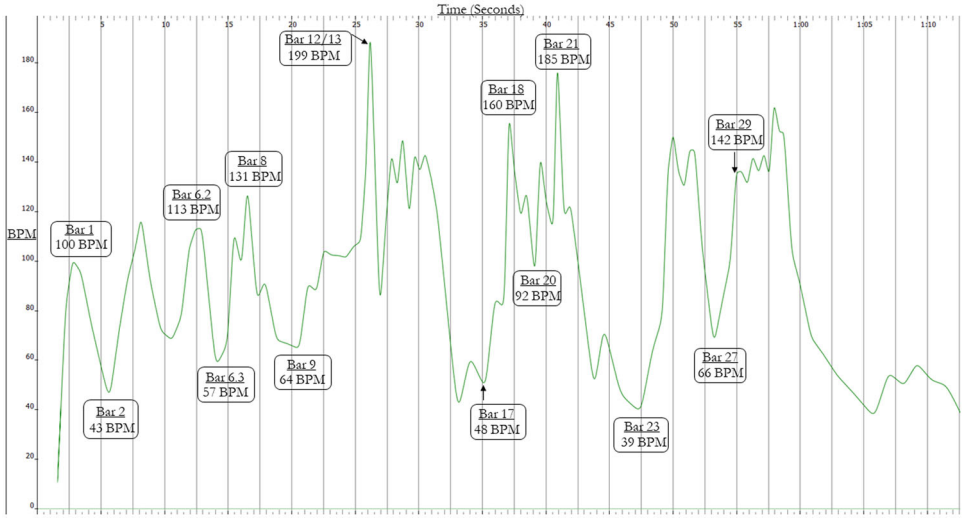
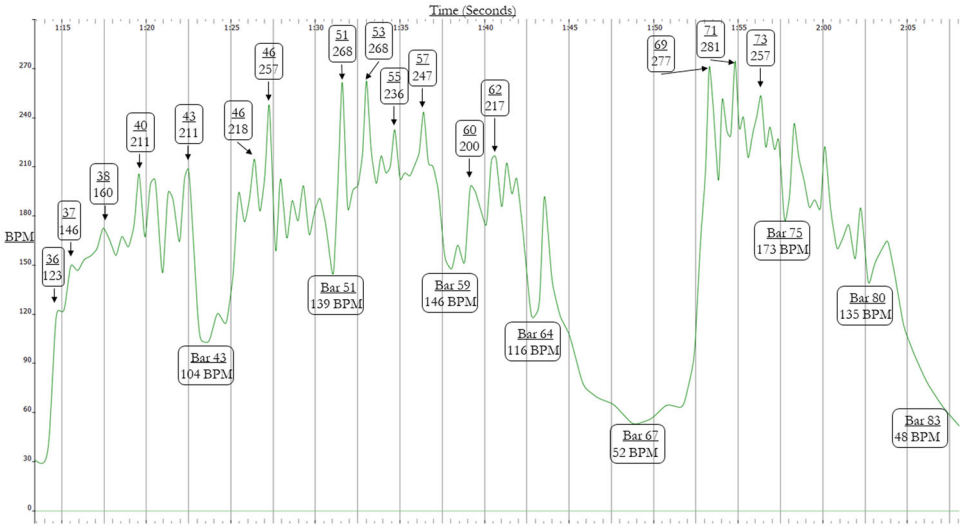


Fig. 9 Eibenschütz, section B [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]



(up to 199 bpm) and eliding the last beat of bar 12 and the first of bar 13, Eibenschütz integrates the A minor phrase within everything that has happened so far. It is not simply an addendum to E minor, but a powerful development in the narrative: she consistently reaches over 140 bpm in bars 13–17 before falling to 48 bpm at bar 17^3. This increase in volatility continues in bars 18–23: Eibenschütz hits two peaks of 160 bpm (bar 18^3) and 185 bpm (bar 21^2) and comes close to a standstill in bar 23. This recalls the lingering on the tonic at bar 9 but in this case throws weight onto the dominant which persists through to the end of the A_1 section. Indeed, the dominant is accentuated once more at the pedal point at bar 27, while the return to E minor is rushed over at bar 29, prolonging the search for tonal resolution. There is a sense in which Eibenschütz's performance of this section assimilates the two narratives that we have already seen: like Backhaus's recording, the tempo fluctuations gradually become more dramatic (though on a much larger scale), and like Yudina's, the dominant is emphasised (but chiefly after bar 17, rather than throughout) and its resolution at the end of the A_1 section avoided. Thus the *agitato* progresses and becomes supercharged with energy from the dominant harmony, awaiting future resolution.

The arrival of E major signals that this resolution may be in sight, but the comfort of this arrival is offset by the disarming speed at which Eibenschütz proceeds from bar 36. Gradually building from 123 bpm at bar 36^1 to 211 bpm at bars 40^2 and 43^2, there is an immediate sense of forward direction in her playing (Fig. 9).[19] The first eight bars are marked with a *rit.* down to 104 bpm at bar 43^3, after which Eibenschütz repeats the E major theme up an octave at

a pace that continues to build, regularly exceeding 200 bpm and peaking at 257 bpm at bar 46^2. She does not come up for air at bar 51 – dropping only to 139 bpm – and uses the momentum to continue the forward direction, peaking at 268 bpm at bars 51^3 and 53^2. Again, Eibenschütz lingers at bar 59^1, but the momentum remains unbroken until the *rit.* beginning at bar 64^1, which signals the upcoming cadence in E major at bar 67^1 (52 bpm).

Everything up to this point can be conceived as one large dynamic gesture seeking a full cadence on E major, one which gradually builds momentum in the process and culminates with the I–IV–V–I of bars 64–67. Yet the speed at which the tonic is whisked away after bar 67^1 undermines the initial feeling of resolution: Eibenschütz reaches dizzying and unprecedented heights in the following phrase, hitting 277 bpm and 281 bpm only moments after the arrival on E major, a turnaround of over 220 bpm. She hardly lingers at all at bar 75^1, whereas she had previously at bar 59^1, imbuing the repeated material with an even stronger sense of forward direction. By the time this culminates at bars 80–83 – where E major is once again reached – Eibenschütz seems almost to be completely out of breath. As if acknowledging the failure of E major to last throughout bars 64–67, Eibenschütz uses the codetta as a means of anchoring the tonic: she prominently brings out the inner voice at bars 85–88, which outlines a descending E major arpeggio. Yet this attempt to secure E major as the tonic key also fails, a moment Eibenschütz marks with delicate poignancy: she does not allow the codetta to linger before the return of E minor, but plays the right-hand G♮ at bar 87^3 without hesitation. Rather, it is a sense of dread that emerges, as if Eibenschütz were nodding towards the imminent return of the *agitato*.

The mere arrival of the key of E major at bar 36 was not sufficient to allow Eibenschütz to resolve the tension built up in the first 35 bars: instead, she pursues resolution *through* the B section, and so continuously tries to settle in E major (Fig. 10). Yet each attempt is futile, eventually leading back to the minor tonality that her entire B section seems to be working to avoid. In this reading, not only is the idea of a contrasting *grazioso* B section to the *agitato* A_1 section redundant, but the extent to which one can separate the events of one section from the other becomes increasingly difficult: rather, the entire A_1BA_2 form becomes a cogent but ferocious narrative in which an attempted escape from the *agitato* E minor eventually fails.

The Place of Performance in Large-Scale Structural Analysis

A brief summary will be helpful at this point. The symmetry and poise of Backhaus's B section and its relation to his more dynamic preceding A_1 section *seems* to accord with the score's basic macroform (as conventionally understood), given the clear delineation between sections A_1 and B and the relatively coherent tempi in each section. The performances of Yudina and Eibenschütz, however,

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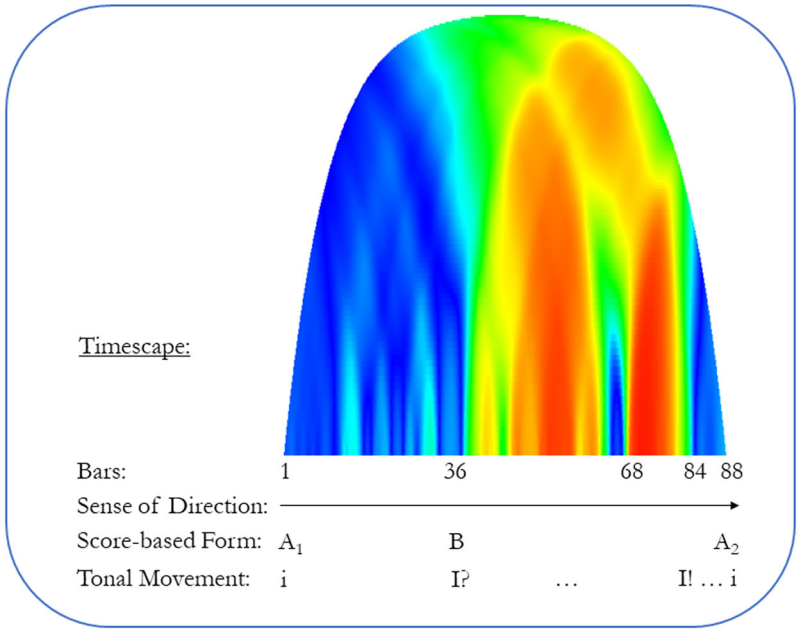
Fig. 10 Eibenschütz, timescape for sections A_1 and B (bars 1–88) [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]



cannot adequately be understood on the same terms; they imply very different overall temporal shapes that I have tried to illustrate in Figs. 7 and 10. The initial sense of resolution that Yudina reaches with the arrival of E major at bar 36 does not correspond with the perhaps expected change of feeling that Backhaus's performance exemplifies: rather, the stasis that Yudina initially evokes with E major is dramatically ruptured at bars 52–67 as she revives the forward motion and accelerates towards the A_2 section. Eibenschütz does change gears at bar 36, but entirely unlike Backhaus she conveys a continuous sense of forward motion that relentlessly searches for the tonic major – each phrase outdoing the last – until the brakes are applied at bar 84 (the E major codetta). Here, resolution seems to be found, only for Eibenschütz to slip back to E minor at bar 89.

For performance analysts, it might seem perfectly reasonable to regard the A_1BA_2 form as an inevitable basis for analysis of any kind, including that of particular performances, given the contrasting affective characterisations of *grazioso* and *agitato* supplied for the A_1 and B sections. The point, however, is not that it is impossible to make sense (or indeed, nonsense) of Yudina's and Eibenschütz's performances in this way, but that in doing so we significantly close down what we can infer from them. And even if the conventional formal conception of this intermezzo seems to explain the structural properties of Backhaus's performance quite neatly, as I suggested in the last paragraph, that

is not to say that it projects an independent structure any less than Yudina's or Eibenschütz's. Cook has warned that 'if your analytical approach is to map score and performance onto one another, and to ascribe significance to what maps, then by definition you are filtering out everything that won't map' (2013, p. 55). This is as relevant to large-scale structure – approaches to which largely rely on scores – as it is to all those musical elements that scores significantly underdetermine (the vast majority of which I have not engaged with here). I am not suggesting that we throw out conventional sonata, ternary, rondo or other forms; we simply need to continue to reassess how they affect the language that we use to describe music, and why we might feel as though we should give them analytical priority. If we find them jarring, then we need to ask how much of them we ought to keep. Nor am I trying to make the case that large-scale performance patterns are necessarily vital in understanding those performances. But they could very well be useful, and instead of genuflecting to the score in those instances – or indeed throwing out structural approaches altogether – we can seek new vocabularies with which to work. The concept of shape is a good start, and ideas of narrative are promising, though they would require a much more thorough examination than was possible here. As I have pointed out throughout this article, the literature on both of these topics is burgeoning.

For music analysts of all stripes, I hope to have provided some food for thought. These performers are embellishing local details, but I have tried to make clear that their expressive work contributes to very different overall musical projections. Indeed, the latter are contingent upon the handling of surface material; the ways performers phrase off certain cadences, emphasise particular chords, or bring out other features are crucial to this. To foreground such details, and make sense of how they add up to more than the sum of their parts, is to draw close attention to the 'process' rather than the 'architecture' of performance – as Rink puts it – and to highlight what Cook (drawing on Jerrold Levinson) has called the 'concatenationist' perspective:

> [W]hether we are talking about motifs, phrases, or formal sections, the observer's or analytical perspective throws the weight of interpretation onto the segments as wholes. Conversely it de-emphasises the transitions between successive segments […]. From the concatenationist perspective, by contrast, a succession of transitions is what music *is*. (Cook 2013, pp. 45–6)

In Op. 119 No. 2, we have seen how very different things can be implied by and inferred from supposedly the same 'succession of transitions', to the point that it no longer seems sensible to maintain that the music in each of these three performances has the same large-scale structure. More provocatively, it might be said that it is dangerous to try to ascertain large-scale musical structure without also consulting performances, at least in a reading that tries to account for the successive, transitive and narrative elements of music as a process. Of course, to do so involves a value judgement about the expressive content of

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performance – that is to say, that it is as musically valuable and structurally significant as those elements on which we have traditionally focused (such as tonal progressions, thematic material and motivic development). One might think, then, that it no longer seems credible for analysts to bypass performance entirely, even in relation to large-scale structure – unless the analysis in question is explicitly unconcerned with the listening experience. This is undoubtedly a point of contention, and a debate in which my position should be more or less clear at this stage. A debate is exactly what I would hope to encourage, however, and more resolutely score-based analytical approaches with other case studies could provide some counterexamples. I look forward to these.

To return to what I called the question lurking behind this article – whether we can describe large-scale structure in a way that does not automatically privilege score-based properties – readers will be no less aware than I am of the fact that, in describing how performed structures are by no means synonymous with score-based structures, I have relied heavily on the language of the score: keys, bars, tempo descriptions, phrases, and so on. There is a certain resonance here with Audre Lorde's powerful essay 'The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House', in which she condemned the incapability of a racist, homophobic and patriarchal feminist theory to accommodate (among others) the Black, the poor, the lesbian, or the older contemporary woman. For Lorde, that state of feminism ensured 'only the most narrow parameters of change [were] possible' ([1984] 2007, p. 110).

The case of musical performance and structure is undoubtedly more benign, but this comparison highlights the challenge of investigating performed structure in dialogue with the score, for the very reason that approaches to the latter have traditionally occupied a kind of analytical monopoly. Another way of putting it would be to say that theorists can routinely analyse scores without reference to specific performances; but at the moment it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to analyse classical performances without using score-based analytical tools. I have no doubt that to reverse the situation entirely – to develop the means with which to do away with the necessity of scores – would create a host of other problems. It might not even be possible in any worthwhile sense. But my point is that, in terms of repositioning the emphasis and highlighting the importance of different, structurally relevant materials, the hegemonic legacy of score-based analysis poses difficulties for performance analysis. I have no immediate resolution to this dilemma. Whatever directions we take, the key issue will remain how we balance score-based information with information extracted from performances. This is a political decision as much as an analytical one, and we must be careful and upfront about what we choose to prioritise and why. It is a precious dialogue that exists between text and act.

On a final note, it is conceivable that the foregoing thoughts on creative control over structure could be useful to performers who are interested in pushing against or breaking with present-day performance standards, something for which there is a real hunger at least among some performer-scholars and

artist-researchers.[20] We will have to wait and see. More pressingly, however: as suggested by the performances and literature surveyed here, it is clear that performers by definition project all sorts of formal conceptions of scores. It should be the analyst's task to find ways of doing them justice.

NOTES

This article was developed out of a paper originally given at the conference 'New Takes on Recorded Music: Performance, Creativity, Technology', held at the University of Surrey, 5–6 September 2019. I would like to thank those in attendance for their helpful questions and comments at that early stage. I would also like to thank John Rink, Mine Doğantan-Dack and *Music Analysis*'s editor-in-chief, Edward Venn, for their astute feedback on subsequent versions of the manuscript.

1. In the discussion that follows, I purposefully navigate around the well-worn debate over the analysis-to-performance literature that was prevalent in the 1980s and is epitomised in works such as Schmalfeldt (1985), Narmour (1988) and Berry (1989). These have been dealt with elsewhere. See Rink (1990) and Cook (2013, pp. 33–43) .

2. Long before this, Cook had already begun casting doubt on the significance of traditionally valorised aspects of musical structure and form to listeners' perception. See Cook (1987).

3. Leong (2019, p. 8) describes this understanding as one 'in which structure is constructed or interpreted from elements found in a score'.

4. The concept of musical shape has attracted interest recently. See Buck, MacRitchie and Bailey (2013) and Leech-Wilkinson and Prior (2017) for other examples.

5. Another recent example is Swinkin (2016). See Doğantan-Dack (2017) for a critical review and some contrasting perspectives.

6. Spitzer is more concerned here with emotion than with structure per se; the relevance is that his model for understanding 'emotion' is based on commonly invoked structural components including 'mid-level phrasing' and 'large-scale form' – components which are first and foremost based on the score.

7. Cook (2013, p. 150) makes a similar point with respect to a recording of Chopin's Mazurka Op. 68 No. 3 attributed to Cortot. Cook notes that the 'wildly differentiated tempos' that Cortot takes in the A and B sections result in 'a level of formal disparity that it is quite impossible to accommodate within traditional conceptions of structural balance'. The same kind of tension between score and performance is at play here.

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8. Structure and form are by no means interchangeable concepts, but in this article I consider formal templates to be, broadly speaking, 'structural', in Leong's understanding of making sense of music.

9. Rink also draws on theories of musical narrativity in some of his recent performer's analysis (see Rink 2018). Utz has developed similar lines of enquiry on performance and large-scale structure with his three perceptual models of 'spatialised time', 'processual time' and 'narrative time' (2017, pp. 222–3).

10. The edition consulted for this article is that in Brahms ([1926–7] 1978).

11. Others who have demonstrated an interest in proportional tempi in Brahms include Forte (1957), Rink (1995), Norrington (1999) and Govias (2012).

12. To sample some of these recordings, and indeed for a more condensed and easily accessible version of Scott's work, see <https://challengingperformance.com/interviews-recordings/anna-scott/> [accessed 22 May 2020].

13. See the discography for commercially available issues of these recordings. At the time of writing, both Yudina's and Eibenschütz's performances can be accessed on YouTube (Yudina: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ptWziYQWBjU> [accessed 22 May 2020]; Eibenschütz: <https://youtu.be/HzimNuoNwm4?t=196> [accessed 22 May 2020]). Backhaus's recording is available on Spotify: <https://open.spotify.com/track/3U28oxCNz7LSkkY1OU6pof?si=7ItF5a_LTheCPuk-efhc6Q> [accessed 22 May 2020]. The edition of Brahms's score consulted for this article is in the public domain and available online on IMSLP, <https://imslp.org/wiki/Special:ImagefromIndex/84748/vry> [accessed 29 July 2020]. It is recommended that the reader consult this score while reading the performance analyses.

14. An important example of the use of the body in structural interpretation can be found in Buck, MacRitchie and Bailey (2013).

15. This type of graph was generated using Sonic Visualiser, software developed at Queen Mary, University of London to aid the study and analysis of recordings; see <https://www.sonicvisualiser.org/> [accessed 22 May 2020]. It illustrates tempo fluctuations (as denoted by bpm on the *y*-axis) over time (measured on the *x*-axis in seconds). There are six of these overall, depicting the A_1 and B sections of each performance individually. Note that the *y*-axis in Figs. 1, 5 and 8 (and in Figs. 3, 6 and 9) has been aligned to allow comparisons of tempo extremities between performances; for instance, the manner in which Backhaus's B section is visually dwarfed by Eibenschütz's indicates just how much quicker Eibenschütz performs this material.

16. While these timescapes can be read in greyscale, they are far more illustrative of the points being made when observed in colour. I strongly advise the reader to consult the online colourised versions if at all possible.

17. The 'sense of direction' uses either an arrow to indicate forward motion, or '∼∼∼' to indicate stasis. See <http://mazurka.org.uk/software/online/scape/> [accessed 22 May 2020] for the timescape tool, and <http://www.mazurka.org.uk/ana/timescape/> [accessed 22 May 2020] for a more detailed explanation of how it works.

18. This timescape – as with those in Figs. 7 and 10 – was generated using a strong 'smoothing' value of 0.3 to bring out the larger tempo trends.

19. For the sake of clarity, 'bar' and 'bpm' indications have been removed from some labels of Fig. 9; these labels are otherwise consistent with previous graphs.

20. Two websites worth exploring for evidence of this are those of the UK-based *Challenging Performance* project, <https://challengingperformance.com/> [accessed 22 May 2020], and the Orpheus Institute, the centre for artistic research in music based in Ghent, <https://orpheusinstituut.be/en/> [accessed 22 May 2020].

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ABSTRACT

Research in musical performance studies has generated a healthy scepticism of the importance of large-scale structure to performance (in terms of both interpretation and perception): on the one hand, it might well be hardwired into notation; on the other, prioritising it risks simply repeating outworn maxims that neglect the performer's musical contributions. Recently some scholars have begun to rethink the potential structural relevance of performance rather than necessarily determining structure on the basis of the musical score alone. In this article I consolidate some of this thinking and draw out its implications for performers' handling of large-scale structure; in doing so, I suggest that we consider moving away from conventional large-scale score-based forms as structural mandates or certainties. I support this through a case study of Johannes Brahms's Intermezzo in E minor, Op. 119 No. 2, in which I analyse recorded performances by Wilhelm Backhaus, Maria Yudina and Ilona Eibenschütz. I conclude by arguing that the inclusion and prioritisation of any particular musical material – whether the score, performance, or other – requires serious consideration and reflection in any analytical act.