COMPOSITION AND ANALYSIS: "CONSTITUTIVE-THEORETICAL FABULATION" IN THE MUSIC OF BRAHMS, SCHOENBERG AND ERNST WIDMER

Paulo Costa Lima

Universidade Federal da Bahia
pclima@ufba.br
Orcid 0000-0001-9010-2777X

1. You are responsible, Discourse, for everything that will be said here. I have always had a very intense interest in the challenging relationship between Music Analysis and Composition, and through this perspective, an interest in the analytic impulse or motivation – but, will I be able to trust your ability to deal with such matters? Please, do register, that the pleasure (or, better, *jouissance*) of analysis inhabits a very particular transitional space, a kind of in-betweenness:[1] the pleasure of Art, and Music, and the pleasure of Science, two distinct modalities of sublimation, according to Psychoanalytic Theory. These are two different kinds of relationship with the empty space that constitutes us. The empty space of Science, to be fulfilled by deciphering the order of the universe, the empty space of Art, that space around which the work of art wraps itself, thus allowing the subject to inhabit and to symbolize it, in spite of its untranslatability (the ineffable). Well then: Music Analysis as a challenging paradox of articulation between these two vectors or drives (*Trieb*). And that, always recognizing that the epistemological conditions depend in large measure on the human interests involved, the roles played by ideology and libido.[2] For instance, the huge theme of Colonization/Decolonization and its reflection on the compositional analytical processes.

2. Say it, Discourse, right at the outset, that you recognize yourself as constituted of words — sounds that articulate themselves in a linear sequence (if you could only become polyphonic!), some algorhythm, slips —, and only in this way could face such huge challenges. Being language, you are also an object of composition. [3] You should not speak as an 'outsider'. You exist, up to a point, as an extension of the experience *music*.

3. And, what about you? Asks the Discourse back. Why don't you speak for yourself, instead of requiring this kind of dialogue? As a matter of fact, I am the one that made it possible for you, to formulate this ironic reaction, giving voice to me. One cannot demonstrate that a composer is different

1 This concept, which is widely used today, appeared for the first time in 1978. See Silviano Santiago, *O entrelugar do discurso latino-americano*.

2 "As commonly practiced, analytic discourse sets up an impermeable barrier between its cultural or ideological sources and its cognitive claims", Cf. Lawrence Kramer (2011, p. 149).

3 Cf. Charles Seeger (1977) in his *Studies in Musicology*.

from that which he is composing – Lewin (2006, p. 94). That means, the construction of identity or identities. But what are the limits between us? Good question.

4. Music Analysis should not try to conceal (using neutrality as its mask) that it involves authorship, that it has been created, composed so to speak, that it emerges from specific human interests, that is not just a description of something declared to be reality, musical facts. "We cannot conceive of anything like uninterpreted facts", says Habermas (1968, pp. 97-98).[4] And Adorno (2002, p. 169) complements: "Analysis is more than merely the facts (...) and beyond the factual level is the truth content, and naturally it is only critique that can discover the truth content".[5]

By the same token, one should not imagine the compositional process as something other than a dialogic activity, as if there were no dialogues permeating the choices made. I have, elsewhere, proposed the use of this category, the Other, as part of the creative activity (Lima, 2004), in an attempt to draw a link, and at the same time a distinction, between Composition and Ethnomusicology.

5. Well, it is certainly necessary to ask about the Other of Music Analysis. It is a complex question leading to several possible answers.[6] But, in each case, what we face is the dialogic condition. Dialogic and reflexive. The analytic impulse, or *unrest* — to evoke Schoenberg's motivic terminology (1995, p. 103)[7] —, generating questions, that impact and transform previous and future states of listening – and vice-versa. Many possible partners in dialogue: the musical experience (represented by whatever responds for it), traces left by previous analytical traditions and approaches, the informal conversation etc...[8]

6. I ask my students about the relationship between the gesture offered by Brahms at m. 61 of his *Sextet* op. 18/I, and the initial gesture of the piece (Figures 2 and 1, respectively[9]). This question relates to the experience of listening to the piece, when one wants to emphasize the notions (and perhaps also affects) of coherence, deepness, and motivic shrewdness — all these traditionally quite important for the education and trajectory of composers. Well, this single gesture is relevant for several reasons: a) there is a kind of lightness that distinguishes it from the rest (but how it is constructed?); b) the *cantabile* lyricism of its thirds and sixths; c) the interruption of the previous environment of conflict and intensification; d) and the ambiguity that it projects — stable as a point of arrival, and at the same time

4 And he continues: "Yet the facts cannot be exhaustively reduced to our interpretations. On the one hand, every empirical basis on which we can conceivably rely is mediated by implicit inferential interpretations. These inferences, no matter how rudimentary, are tied to interpretations".

5 Adorno (2002, p. 168): "There is a kind of convergence between the analytical process and the compositional process".

6 See Carl Dahlhaus (1970), *Analysis and Value Judgement*: "a piece of theory, explicitly or tacitly, provides the starting point for each analysis". This is already the domain of a theory of analysis.

7 "Through the connection of tones of different pitch, duration and stress (intensity???), an unrest comes into being: a state of rest is placed in question through a contrast (…) From this unrest a motion proceeds", *The Musical Idea* (1995, p. 103). One could probably write a motivic analysis of an analysis.

8 Important attempts to present a synthesis of the analytical field include: Dahlhaus (1970), Lerdahl and Jackendoff (1983), Cone (1989), and Nattiez (1990).

9 I would like to thank Dr. Natan Ourives for the careful collaboration in the edition of the examples.

unstable as a modulatory section. What thread of choices leads to these characteristics?

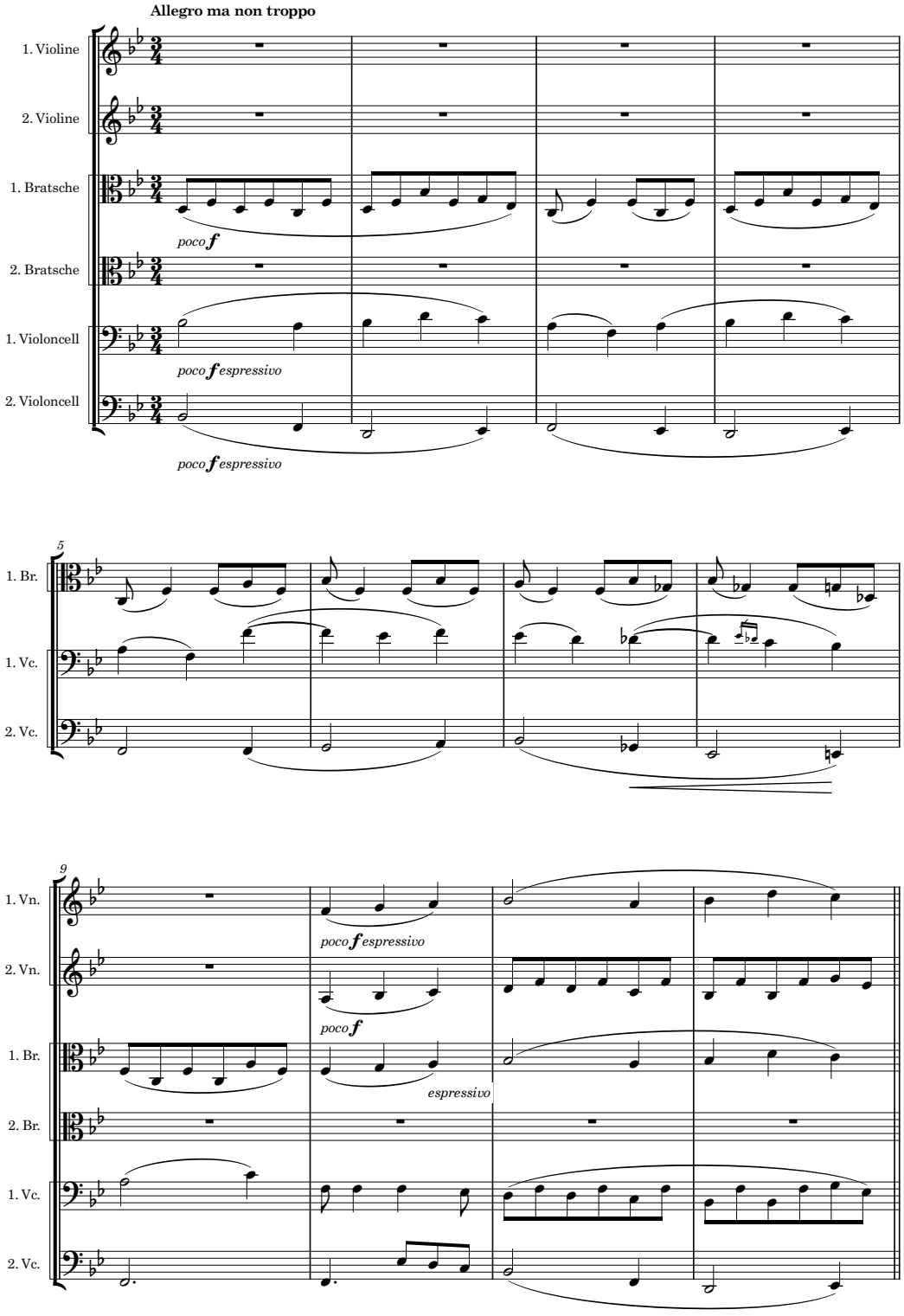


Figure 1 – Brahms, *Sextett Nr. 1, für 2 Violinen, 2 Bratschen und 2 Violoncelle* op. 18, *Allegro ma non troppo*, mm. 1-12.

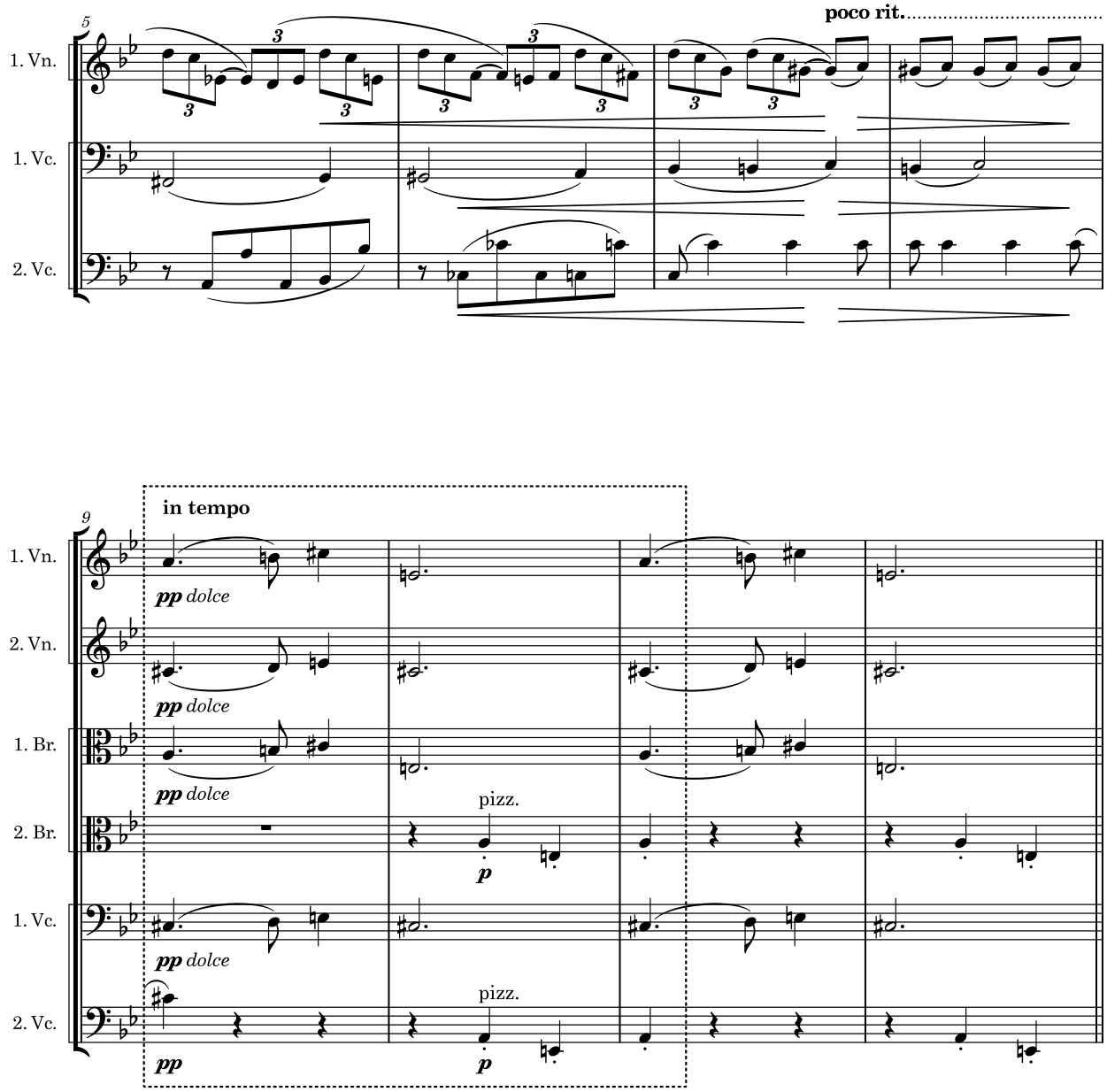


Figure 2 – Brahms, *Sextett Nr. 1, für 2 Violinen, 2 Bratschen und 2 Violoncelle* op. 18, *Allegro ma non troppo*, mm. 57-64.

7. It is easy to notice the contour relationship that connects the two gestures (+4, -9): an ascending major third and a descending major sixth. The internal configurations are more difficult to explain, and they lead to basically, two problems: a) the elements are reordered in the second situation — [B♭ – D – C (+4, -2)] in the initial gesture (Figure 1), and [A, B, C♯ (+2, +2)] in m. 61 (Figure 2); b) the neighbor-note motive (B♭ – A – B♭), which characterizes the initial gesture and that is also so pervasive along the piece, is absent in this last gesture.

8. The first problem requires the observation of details in the initial gesture, particularly the

accompanying figure presented by the first viola. And after that, what becomes clear is that one is touching an all-embracing question — the relationship between motives and voice leading in the initial gesture and in the whole piece, as a matter of fact.

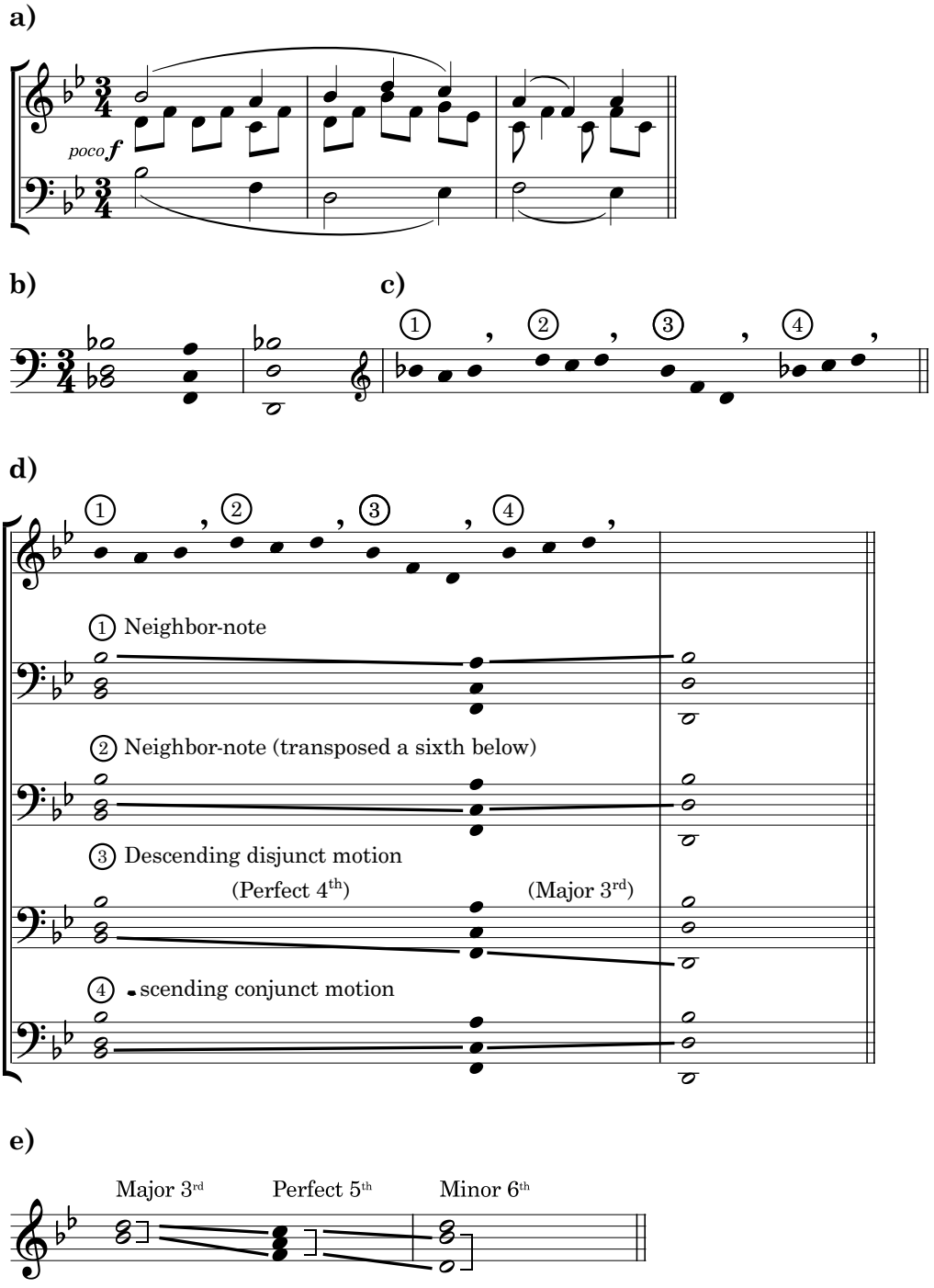


Figure 3 – Brahms, *Sextett Nr. 1, für 2 Violinen, 2 Bratschen und 2 Violoncelle* op. 18, mm. 1-3: a) reduction of the excerpt; b) *Grundgestalt* (mm. 1-2); c) four motivic formats; d) *Grundgestalt* vs. Four motive-forms; and e) the Horn-Fifths figure.

The voice leading choices of the initial gesture betray the presence of a traditional figure as a background motivic structure — *horn fifths* —, in other words, a *Grundgestalt* (Figures 4a and 4b). This will certainly lead to a decisive question: is the presence of this figure right at the outset of the piece something specific of its beginning, or is this structure used in reproducing motivic relationships all over the work? The discovery that this figure is associated to every important thematic statement of the piece — sometimes quite openly, and others in intricate disguises, will give the measure to the composer's passion for the construction of derivations, and will support the notion of *Grundgestalt*, proposed by Schoenberg some decades later.

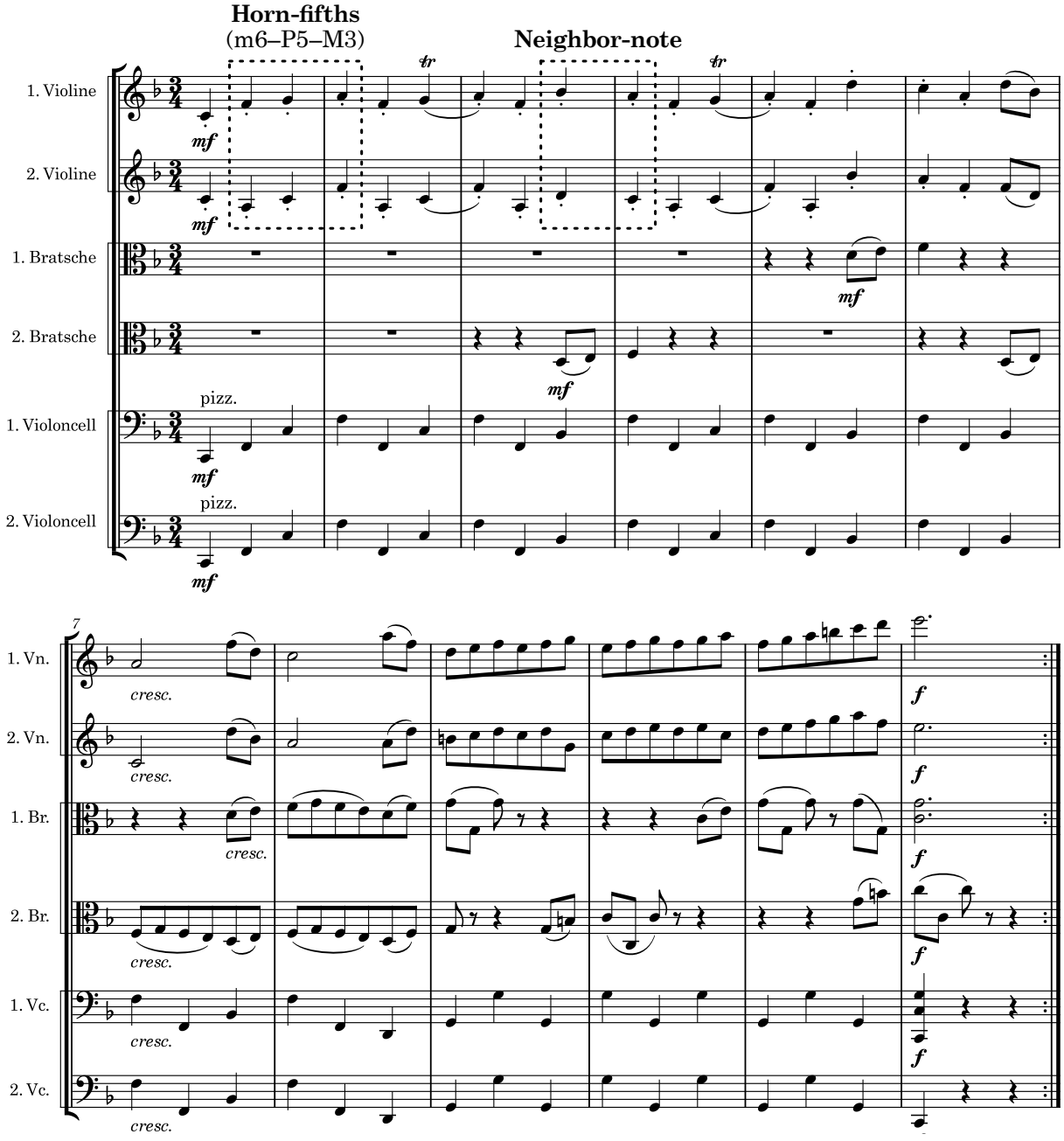


Figure 4a – Brahms, *Sextett Nr. 1, für 2 Violinen, 2 Bratschen und 2 Violoncelle* op. 18, *Scherzo* (3rd movement, mm. 1-12): *horn-fifths* and *neighbor-note* figures.

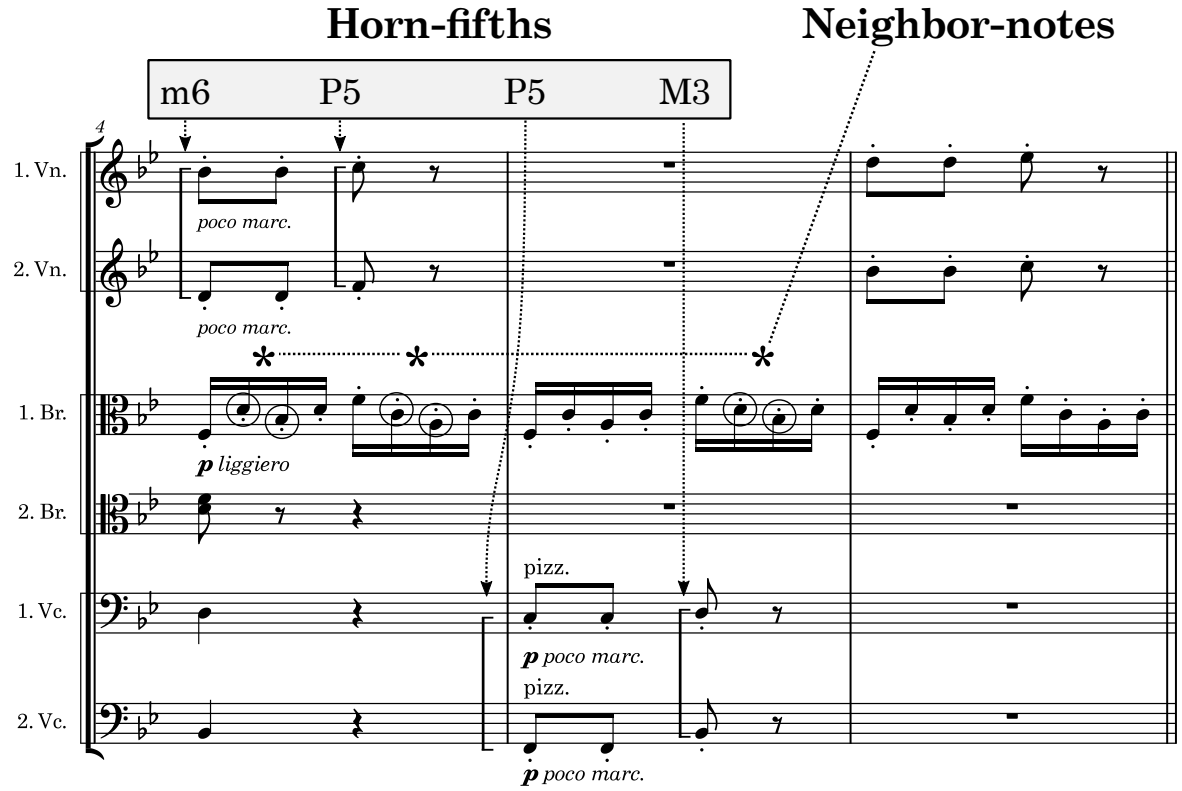


Figure 4b – Brahms, *Sextett Nr. 1, für 2 Violinen, 2 Bratschen und 2 Violoncelle* op. 18, Animato. (4th movement, mm. 468-470): *horn-fifths* and *neighbor-note* figures.

These processes of motivic derivation will lead to other questions: what are the reasons for valuing so much this kind of coherence construction? How does this structural dimension intertwine with the expressive, cultural, and ideological dimensions? Is it possible to establish a dialogue between structure and narrative — for instance through the notion of *topoi*? [10] In the first audition of the piece, Hanslick will say: "We believed ourselves suddenly transported into a pure world of beauty, it seemed like a dream", Swafford (1999).

9. The second problem: the absence of the neighbor-note motive (B♭ – A – B♭). Here, the solution is amazing: well, in principle the motive is really absent in the gesture that begins at m. 61 (Figures 5a-c and 5d-e). But, why should one believe that the construction of the gesture begins at this point? This is only a formal boundary; there is a process that precedes it. The last part of the transition that leads to m. 61 presents a chromatic ascending line that prepares for the arrival, and thus helps to define the characteristics we have noted before, for instance, the lightness, that comes in part from the elimination of the chromatic environment. But how is the connection made? Precisely through a link that presents and at the same time disguises the neighbor-note motive (A – G♯ – A). And thus, so we are faced with a kind of paradox, the case of a theme that begins before its actual, formal beginning.

[10] Ratner (1980), Agawu (1991), Hatten (1994), Caplin (2005).

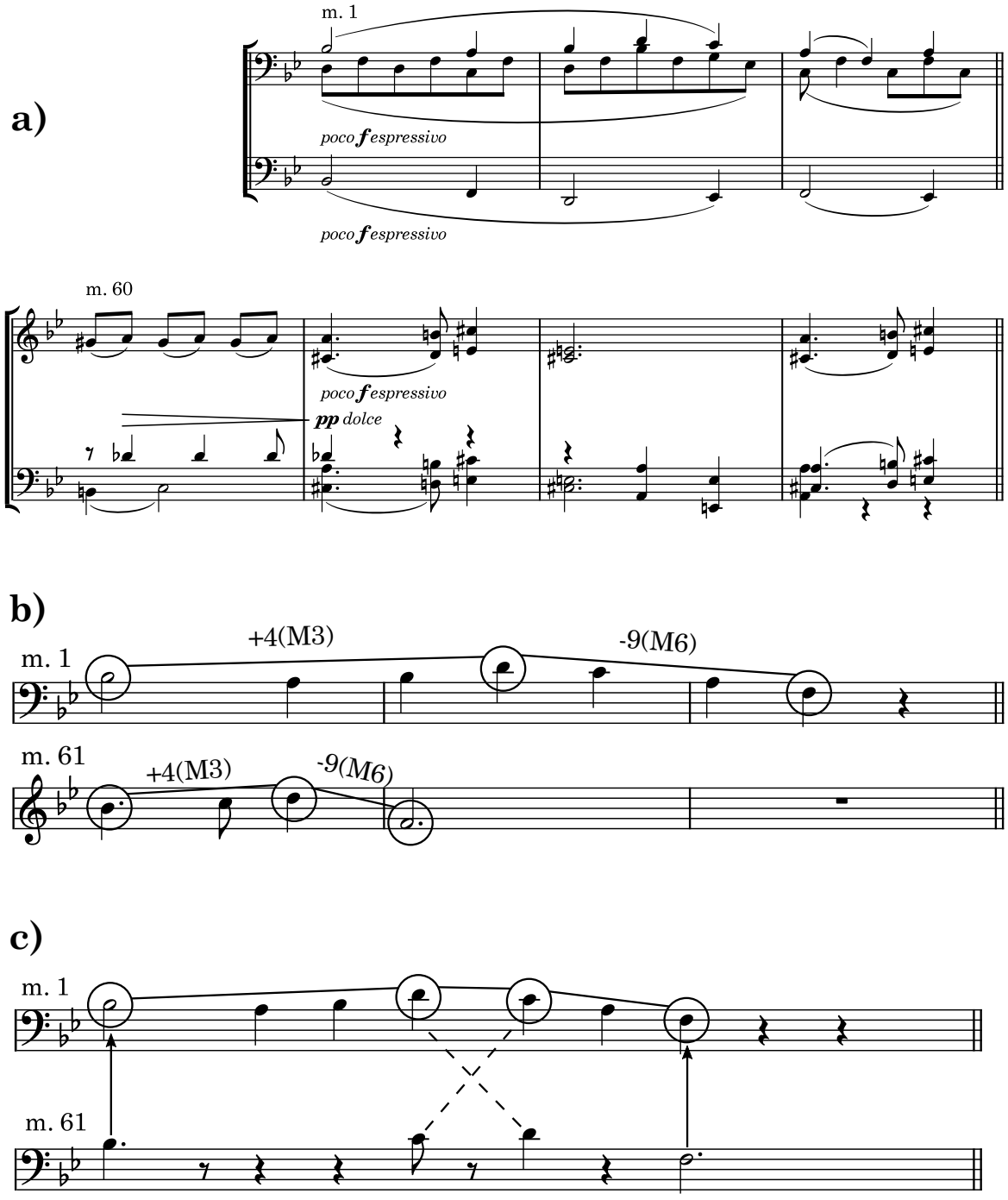


Figure 5a-c – Brahms, *Sextett Nr. 1, für 2 Violinen, 2 Bratschen und 2 Violoncelle* op. 18, first movement: a comparison between the initial gesture and m. 61. a) Reductions of two excerpts (mm. 1-2 and mm. 60-63); b) musical contours; c) rearrangement of notes (i).

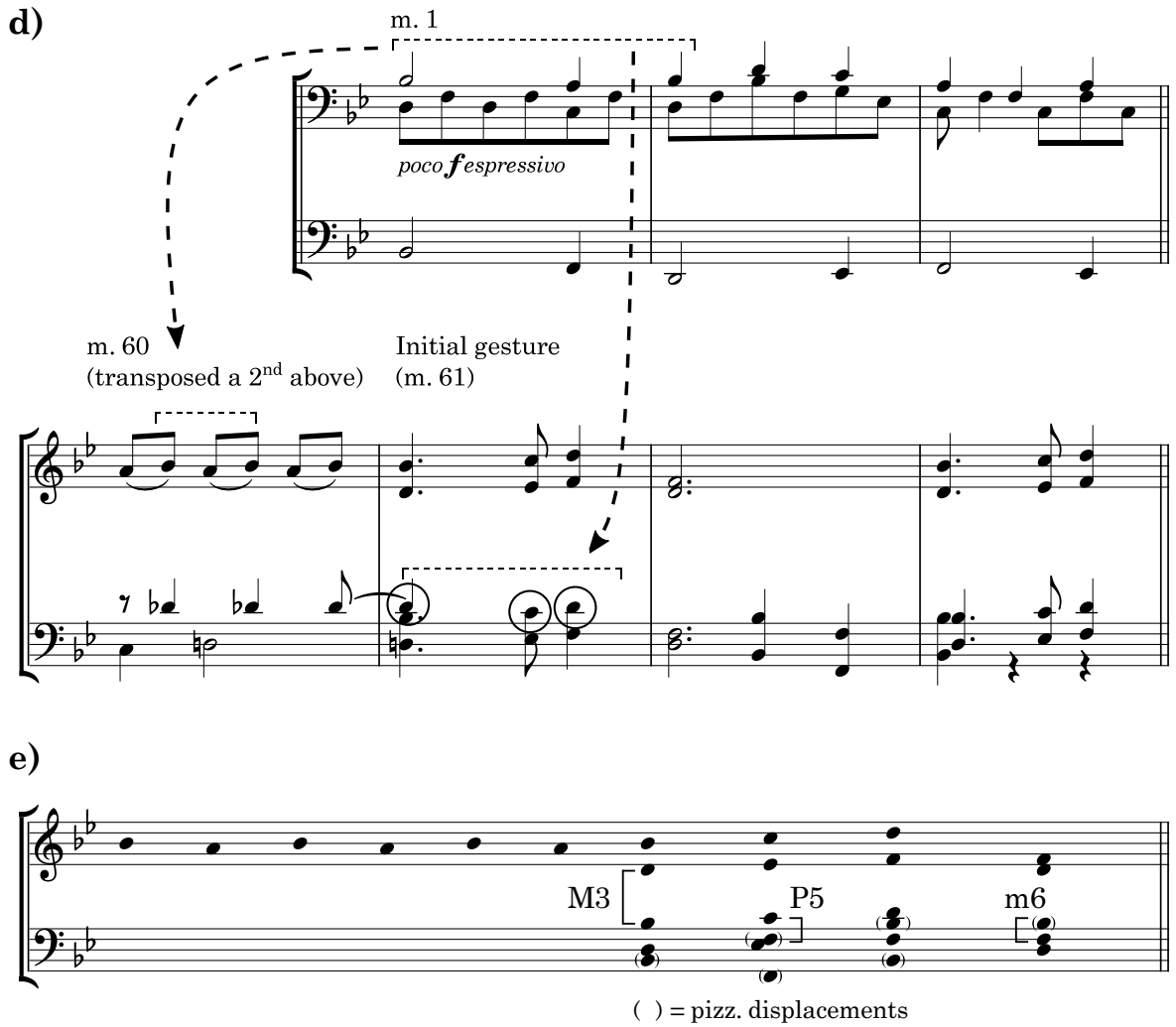


Figure 5d-e – Brahms, *Sextett Nr. 1, für 2 Violinen, 2 Bratschen und 2 Violoncelle* op. 18, first movement: a comparison between the initial gesture and m. 61 (cont.). d) A half-step neighbor-note preceding a whole-step one (initial gesture) (ii); e) reduction (mm. 60-62): horn-fifths.

10. It should not be necessary here to highlight the role played by dissimulation — or disguising, to use a term coined by Schoenberg (1995, p. 97) as part of the motivic process; and, in this particular case, one has to admit the mastery of this subtle resolution, the ironic touch that comes from the paradox of both presenting and disguising at the same time, something that even seems to be addressed to us, future analysts. This situation also reminds us that there is no incompatibility between structure and irony, background and narrative. These categories could be involved in better dialogues than is usually the case.

11. The tension between structure and narrative led me at some point to the notion of the "compositional protagonist" – Lima (2005). The spark came from the interpretation that Beethoven, in his *Eroica*, makes it seem that the protagonist is inventing itself, along with the succession of narrative events — McClary (1993, p. 136). Such a notion imports from literature the idea of a pole that guides the narrative, and thus organizes the relationship with those who read (in our case, with those who

listen). It also emphasizes the *clivage* between discourse and the author. A famous Brazilian novel, by Machado de Assis, is built around these strategies (*Memórias Póstumas de Brás Cubas*).

When I connect myself to a musical experience, when it enchants me, I notice then that something that could be described as a process of identification is happening. It amounts to imagine an instance that acquires the function of the lacanian category of the *Supposed to know*[11] – knows what is going to happen with the work, with its chain of events, and, as a consequence, knows what happens to me, the listener. This instance becomes responsible for the invention of events, their segmentation and association, and therefore, becomes the core of the transferential relationship, in the psychoanalytic sense, to the work.[12]

12. Well, at this point it seems necessary to reflect critically upon a traditional formulation about Analysis, proposed by Bent (1981), and revisited by Pople (1994, p. 108), according to which Analysis has played three major roles: "a pragmatic adjunct to composition, an informal source of learning for concert-goers, and a rigorous academic discipline for the study of scores and sketches". There is a blatant contrast between the first and the last alternatives — Analysis as a pragmatic adjunct or as a rigorous academic discipline —, and it betrays the tension between a scientific based ideology of neutrality and academic rigour, versus the challenge of describing that which happens in the creative area (composition). To label this creative experience as merely pragmatic, in other words, to be blind in relation to the rich intertwining of theories and practices, impoverishes the analytic field.

13. How would we explain to the compositional protagonist of Brahms's *Sextet* that his exhausting concatenation of motivic derivations, the subtle construction of strict logical connections that sound natural and are recognizably expressive, are not to be considered rigorous, or academic? Simply pragmatic and adjunct? On the other hand, the study of the score, that would be considered indeed rigorous and academic — its invention and construction not at all. It makes no sense. The nature of the work that articulates motivic transformations and derivations in this music is by all means analytic. The construction of situations through disguise, generating irony and ambiguity, as it is the case of m. 61, seems to me rigorous enough, even being the result of great flexibility, or precisely because of that.[13]

14. In the collection of text fragments published as *The Musical Idea*, Schoenberg (1995, p. 97) gives special attention to the notion of coherence (*Zusammenhänge*), and right beside that, which he called working-out (*Herausarbeitung des Zussamenhangs*) one is able to see the creation of a category specifically designed in order to deal with the strategies of disguising (or dissimulation, *Verschleierung*). It is widely known the high consideration Schoenberg dedicated to Brahms' music.

15. That which we are treating as irony, in its several forms, is always directly related to the construction of double meaning: in the case just seen, that of m. 61, we are dealing with a strong feeling that the music is moving away from its starting point, and this feeling is really materialized through the character of the

11 See Alain Didier-Weill (1997, pp. 197-198), *Os três tempos da lei*.

12 "No matter how much you classify and comment on music, historically, sociologically, aesthetically, technically, there will always be a remainder, a supplement, a lapse, something non-spoken which designates itself: the voice", Roland Barthes, in *Music, Voice, Language*, *apud* Julia Johnson (2009), *Mahler Voices*.

13 About this excess of flexibility in the domain of motivic analysis see Dunsby (2002, p. 914): "If there is a flaw, the consensus seems to find it in the very resistance of diversity, of variation itself, to codification, posing a question which must end by asking what are the limits of music theory."

cantabile gesture, but in fact, what is happening, what is being arrived at, is a derivation of the starting point. The dissimulation and double meaning depend on the structural work devised (invented) by Brahms, but also entails a playful intertwining of ideas from the surface of the music, moments in which the figure of the *horn fifths* appear with almost no disguise, or just a little.

16. For Cornelius Castoriadis (1982, p. 162), the relationship between the work of art and the real, by all means a complex one, is not one based on simple verification. For him, art does not discover, but constitutes (the Etymology of the word points to decision, to decide).[14] Well, what happens with the *Sextet* is something that constitutes it, this work of art constitutes an experience, stipulates universes of sense and meaning — nothing less adequate than to talk of something like an adjunct tool, as if the work was something, and the means of its invention, the **theoretical-constitutive fabulation** that engenders it, something else. In order to constitute an experience, one must decide for such experience, which is no doubt a synthesis of all the created processes. The motivic transformations and derivations point to a whole, and carry with them the seeds and the steps of future analyses. It seems that our discussion brings us to the curious and rich relationship between analysis and synthesis — this last one usually made invisible.

17. When traditional definitions of Analysis present it as being "the resolution of the whole in its parts", they end up omitting perhaps what is the most interesting aspect — because the resolution of the whole in its parts its only the preamble of something else, precisely a synthesis, the reconstruction of the whole made possible through that specific resolution. It is impossible not to see the proximity between the compositional process, i. e. the musical experience that it endeavors, and this direction of synthesis, making it possible to assemble a whole, step by step, moment to moment.[15]

18. The notion of theoretic-constitutive fabulation refuses to understand Analysis as predominantly explanatory and reverberates the so-called radical relativist position that was put forward by Milton Babbitt and some of his students in the late sixties. Analysis refuses to be predominantly explanatory because it has an ontological responsibility, something that Dora Hanninen (2012) expresses as: "music must be constituted from sounding events and analytical interpretations". In other words, there is no way of making music without a subject (a mind/body) that constitutes it. According to Boretz: "The very being of music is created by cognitive attributions made by individuals perceiving or conceiving listeners".

In the case of the *Sonate for violoncello e piano*, op. 38, by Brahms (Figures 6a and 6b-c), I have memories as an interpreter — what was really that performance of 1976 all about? It was about my voice as a cellist, my voice as a subject of performance. But what about the brahmsian subject in this work? What are the structural and expressive means of its emergence?

14 Castoriadis (1998, p. 32): "When we speak of history, who is speaking? It is someone of a given period, class and society — in short, someone who is himself an historical being, and this very fact, which founds the possibility of an historical knowledge (for only an historical being can have an experience of history and can talk about it) prevents this knowledge from ever acquiring the status of complete and transparent knowledge…" By the same token, when we speak of composition, who is speaking?

15 Reynolds (2002, p. 4): "Rather than being suddenly revealed, whole, a musical work is achieved gradually over time in a manner that doubtless varies for each composer: part discovery, part construction, even, admittedly, part contrivance (…) and also sheer undirected bumbling. But, in most cases there is a necessary staging involved in the process of completing a musical composition."

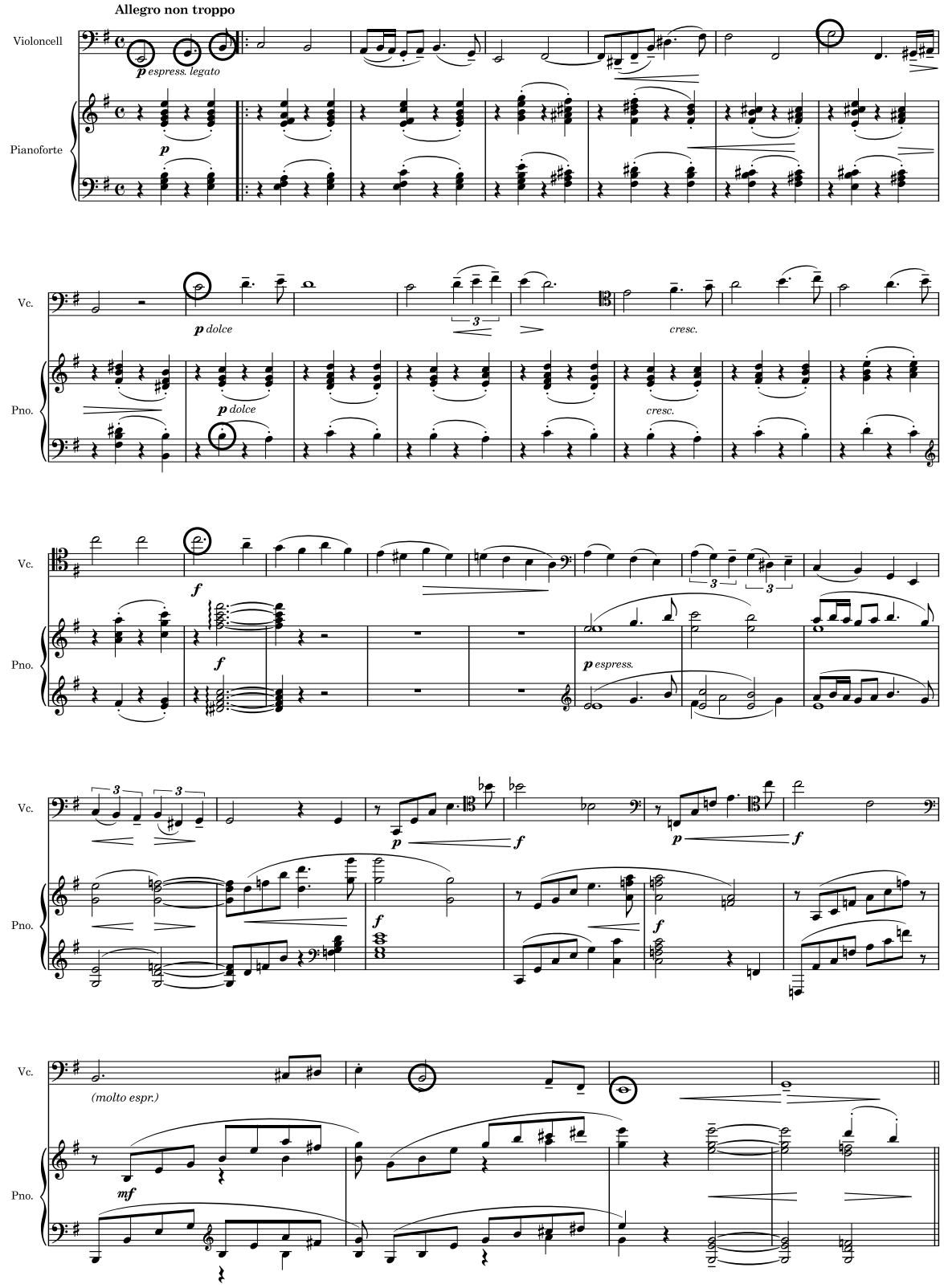
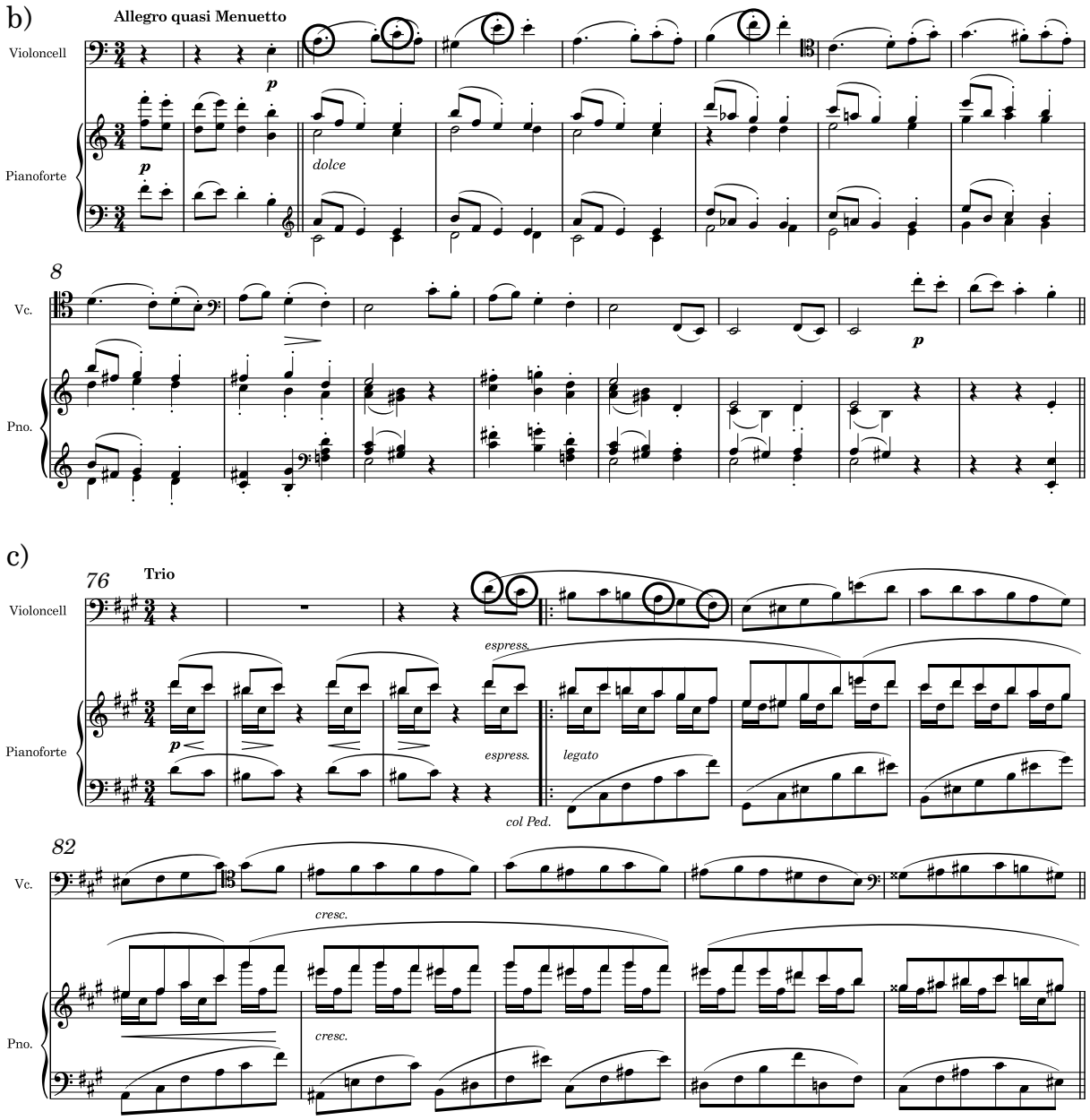


Figure 6a – Brahms, *Sonate for Violoncello and Piano op. 38, Allegro non troppo* (First movement, mm. 1-33).



Figures 6b-c – Brahms, *Sonate for Violoncello and Piano* op. 38, *Allegro quasi Menuetto* (3rd movement, mm. 1-15) and *Trio* (ibidem, mm. 76-86).

19. The notion of **theoretical-constitutive fabulation**, formulated as a response to the challenge of approaching the relationship between Analysis and Composition, rejects the vision projected by Bent's definition of Analysis — in fact, it highlights the constructive dimension of Analysis, the synthesis that implicitly inhabits every analytical text and also the compositional process, and thus aims at a theory of the activity of composing, something directly related to the **field of choices** and the **inseparability of theories and practices** in the acts of composition. These two dimensions (or vectors) were the starting point for the formulation of the notion of **compositionality** — the mode of being proper to

composition, the quality of composed objects or lapses of time (*when is* composition, instead of *what is it?* – see Lima, 2012).

Three other dimensions (or vectors) complete this distinguishing description: when a composer creates a work, a world in which this work exists, or perhaps a world made possible by the very existence of this work, is also created (**invention of worlds**). Relationships are thus established: between the work and the world in which it exists, and also between the work and all other existing worlds. The act of composition is an act of interpretation, the activity of musical invention requires the construction of interpretation and **critique** and this leads to an active interaction between designer and design, a kind of reciprocity that involves itself in the playing with identities. All this is not in contradiction with the notion of the compositional protagonist (**the subject of composition**), as the instance that invents and runs the dialogic and reflexive field.

20. A theory of the compositional process (the activity of composing), which is something necessarily committed to radical openness almost to the point of being an impossibility, illustrates at every point the importance and subtlety of the challenge of giving names to things (events, relations, strategies, processes *etc.*). First of all, creative processes do not have a simple and straightforward relationship with the discursive mode. The naming of things pertaining to the compositional process is thus an interpretive effort.

21. Daniel Chua (1999, p. 153) wrote a remarkable book on the subject of absolute music. In the chapter dedicated to the figure of the hero, its presence in music, an important point is made:

> The Eroica spurs history on with a revolutionary momentum. Time is propelled with such an ineluctable force of tonal and rhythmic dissonance that the structural crises must resolve along the vast linear trajectories that Heinrich Schenker has mapped out like some battle plan.

The imaginary components of the theoretical-constitutive fabulation cross the limits in the direction of the analytic fabulation! And thus, we have analysis as invention of worlds reacting to the imaginary proposed by the work. In other words, the hero figure is projected to the analytic scene – in this case, it is projected in the Schenkerian *Ursatz* — and, as a consequence, in the protagonist that responds for its invention.

In a recent exchange of messages with Daniel Chua, talking about the relationship between Composition and Analysis, he tells me that he has always been impressed by a motto constantly used by composer Alexander Goehr: "analysis is composing backwards". Well, this perception of two opposed directions appears in several authors. It does interests me, though, the perception that Composition is "forwards", and we could observe that the challenge of naming things in this domain, responds to difficulties related to this forwardness, so to speak, its fluidity.

22. Once again, talking about *The Musical Idea*, Schoenberg (1995, p. 97), one must emphasize the huge

investment made in order to give names to processes, strategies, relations etc. that inhabit the activity of composing. Besides that, one should also note that the idea of "forwards" is represented in several of these denominations, such as *Durchführung* (realization), *Widerspruch* (contradiction), *Konsequenzen* (consequences), *Schiksale* (destinies), *Ableitungen* (derivations), *Umgestaltungen* (transformations), *Erreichung des Höhepunkts* (achiving the climax), *Inselbindung* ("island" formation), to name just a few.[16]

These expressions look forwards usually point to the horizon of a process. It is quite possible that the notion of *Inselbildung* ("island" formation) could be applied to describe what happens at m. 61 of the *Sextet* by Brahms. It is important to notice that motivic-thematic thinking intertwines with narratives. And naturally, the challenge involves mapping the role of imagination in the creative process, exposing a wide web of connectivity, thus trying to capture the vicissitudes and even the logic of imagination. According to Nogueira (2019, p. 20) we are dealing with "the emergence of the urge to understand music as a flux that responds to the sonorous configurations presented and at the same time to the imaginative dimensions that constitute the identity of whoever experiments it". Well, we have to admit that the logic of imagination is often quite heterodox.[17]

23. Some of the most important ideas proposed by Reynolds (2002, pp. 8-15), also focus on this forwards movement. For instance, the concept of *Impetus* — "the concentrated, radiant essence out of which the whole can spring" —, but also the notions of "plausibility of succession", "sheer undirected bumbling", "the degree of tolerable transformation", or the "network of connectivity between the chosen material and its designated form", among others.

24. The notion of theoretic-constitutive fabulation also responds to this kind of orientation (forwards). As fabulation, it depends on the proximity to imagination and narratives. On the other hand, as a theoretical effort, it aims at abstraction and systematization. The constitutive dimension tries to speak of a "hands on" process, the exercise of choice, or that which was described by Reynolds (2002, p. 4) as "staging", trying to capture the very construction of the compositional object (in fact, a lapse of time). All these are broad questions and horizons that inhabit the *interregnum* connecting Analysis and Composition.

25. Brahms' *Third Symphony* is also a complex field of motivic derivations, a real challenge for the analyst, besides being also a monument that congregates intense affects and sweeping gestures. Right at the outset of the work (Figure 7a), three motivic formats are presented (Figure 7b).

16

Gedanke (Idea)	Durchführung	Widerspruch	Konsequenzen	Schicksale
Entwicklung	Weiterbildungen	Ableitungen	Umgestaltungen	
Zusammenhänge	Herausarbeitung	Verschleierung	Abrundung	Prägung
Mannigfaltigkeit	Tiefe	Neubildungen	Inselbildung	Kombinationen
Fernliegendes	Anordnung	Aufbau	Liquidierung	

17 A verse by Chilean poet Neruda illustrates the case: "What is the name of that bird that flies from flower to flower?".

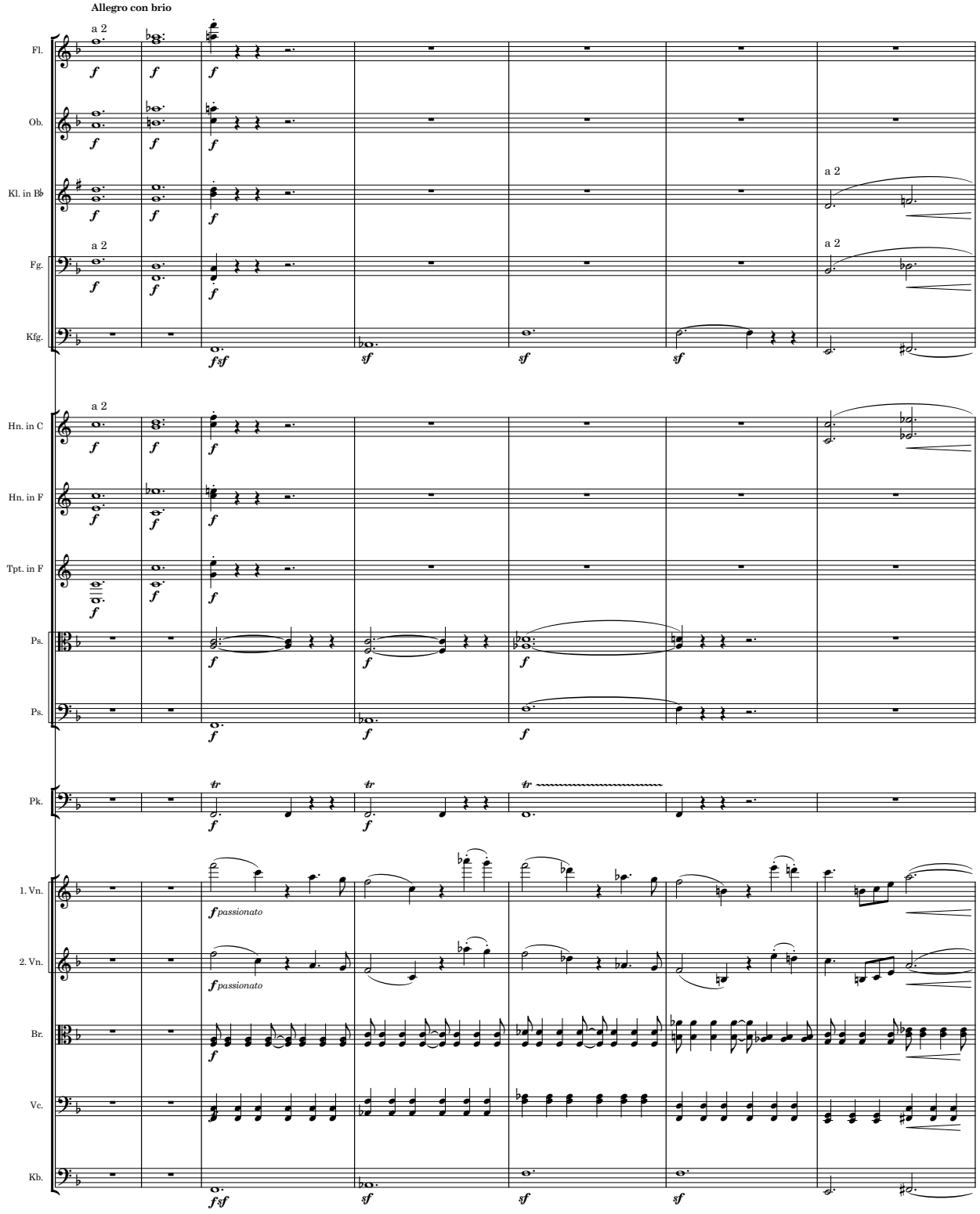


Figure 7a – Brahms, *3rd Symphony*, op. 90, 1st Movement (mm. 1-7).

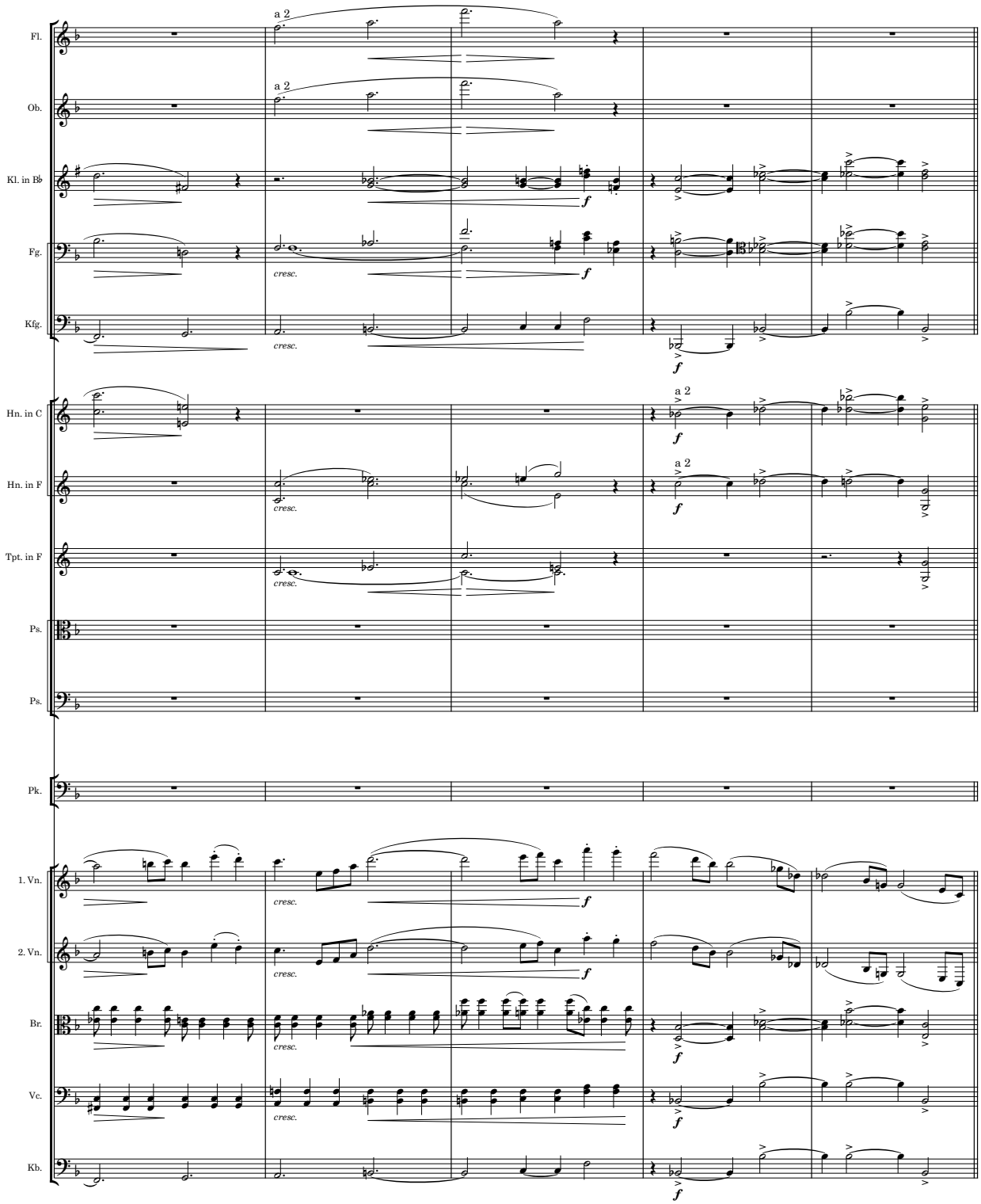


Figure 7a (cont.) – Brahms, *3rd Symphony*, op. 90, 1st Movement (mm. 8-12).

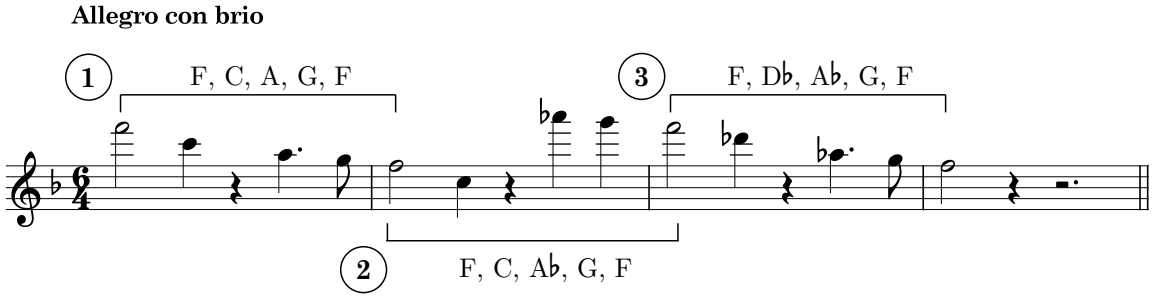


Figure 7b – Brahms, *3rd Symphony*, op. 90, 1st Movement (mm. 1-12): three motivic formats.

26. A comparison with the beginning of the second movement, the pastoral melody of the *Andante*, will reveal that this melody is a transformation of the first motivic format, as if Brahms was inventing linear analysis himself – in other words, elaborating a melody around structural points (Figure 8). The ironic touch here comes from the melodic cadence (D – C), which in contrast with the motivic format is projected one octave higher, achieved through an ascending movement, thus disguising its origin.

27. The case of the famous third movement is certainly remarkable. The movement is in c minor and presents the second motivic format in its retrograde (ascending) form. It is quite easy to notice the presence of the motive (C, D, E♭, G…), but the last note *C* is harder to find, since the melody takes us up only till the pitch *B*♭ (Figure 9a). A careful inspection will show this last note as the *C* that belongs to the accompanying figure of the violins (m. 4). And then, we perceive that the *G* also appeared in a delicious clash with the *A*♭ (Figure 9b). So, the clash has become a pattern: *A*♭ *and G* and *C and B*♭. The *A*♭ – *G* clash is clearly a consequence of the use of two simultaneous motive formats, 2 and 3: ⟨C, D, E♭, G, C⟩ and ⟨C, D, E♭, A♭, C⟩, minor and major, and their combination becomes a landmark of the nostalgic identity of the movement (Figure 9c). The second clash expands the same logic (Figure 9d).

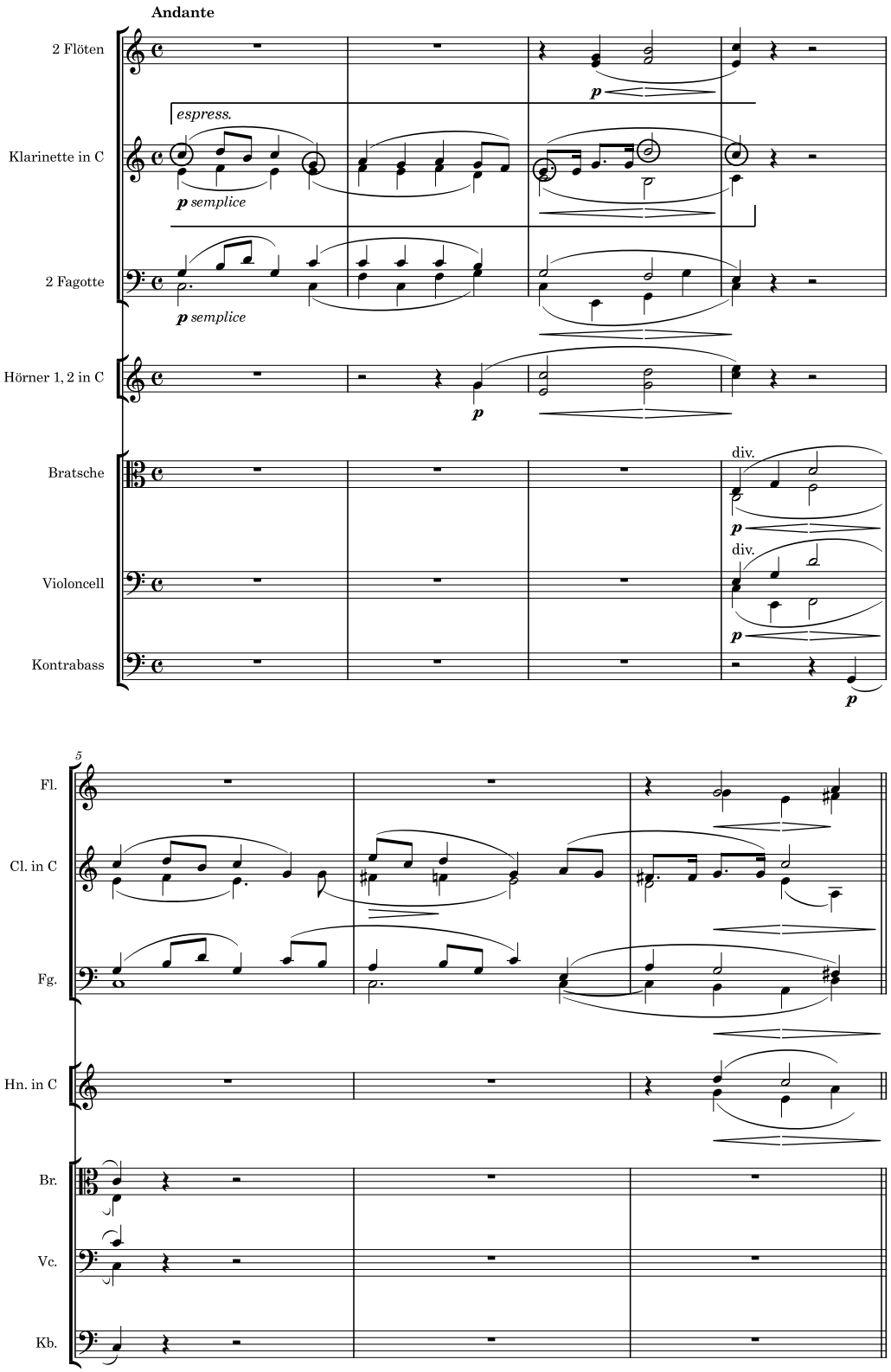


Figure 8 – Brahms, *3rd Symphony,* op. 90, 2nd Movement (mm 1-7).

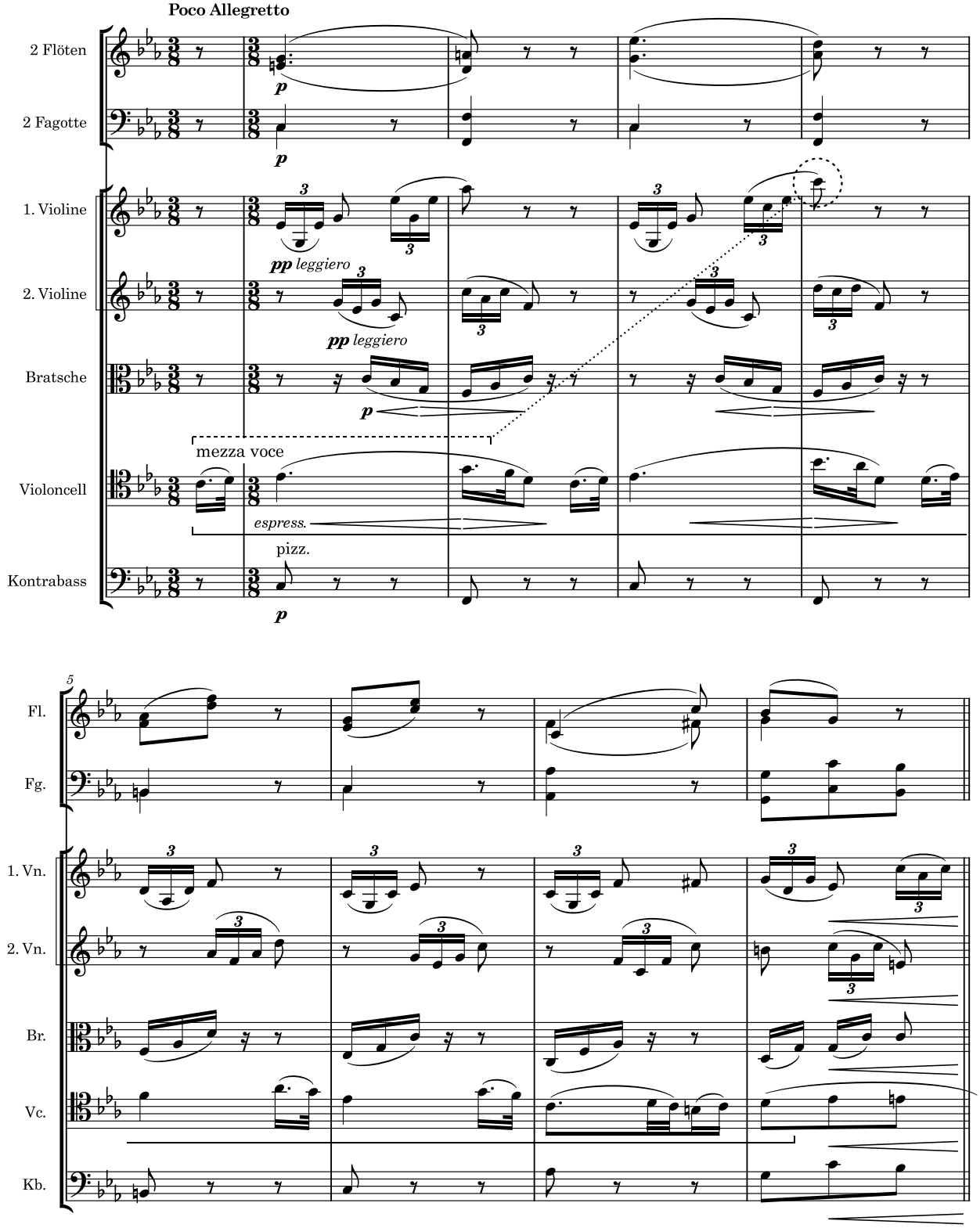


Figure 9a – Brahms, *3rd Symphony*, op. 90, 3rd Movement (mm. 1-8).

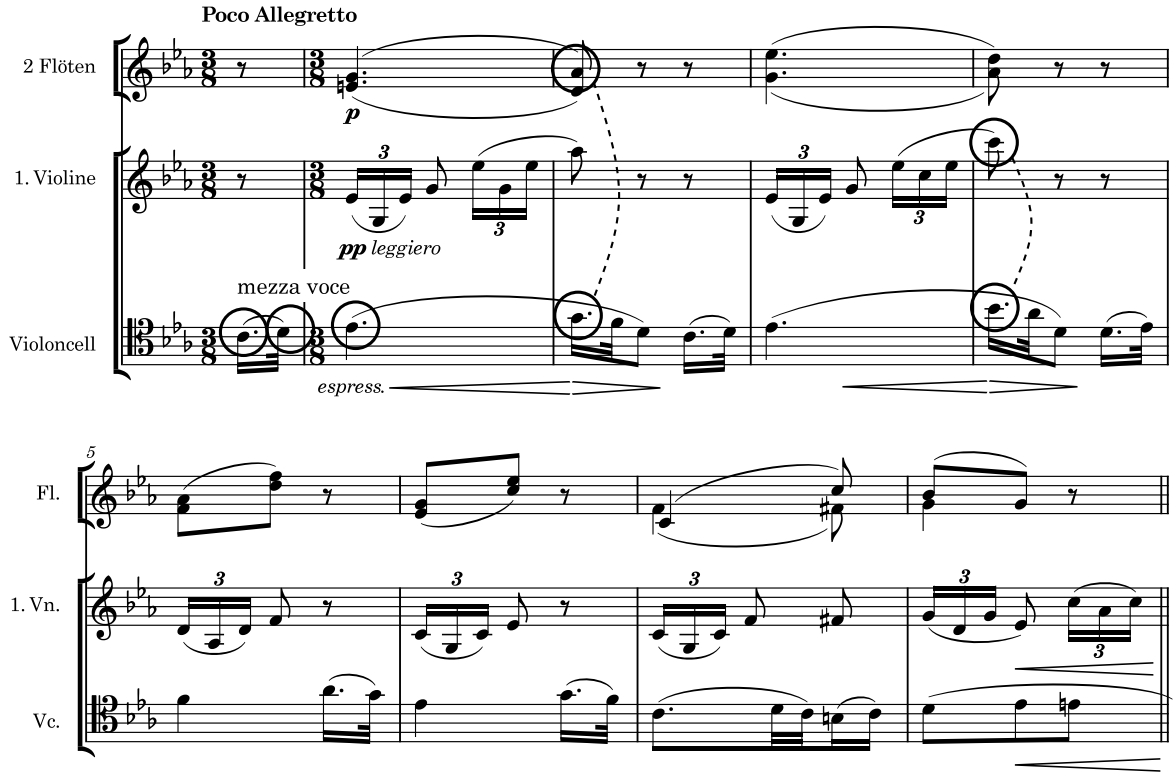


Figure 9b – Brahms, *3rd Symphony*, op. 90, 3rd Movement (mm. 1-8).

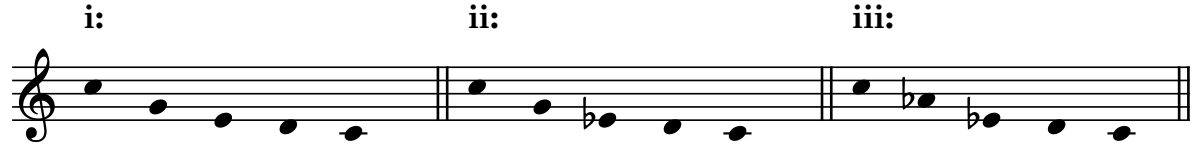


Figure 9c – Brahms, *3rd Symphony*, op. 90, 3rd Movement: initial motive-forms transposed to C.

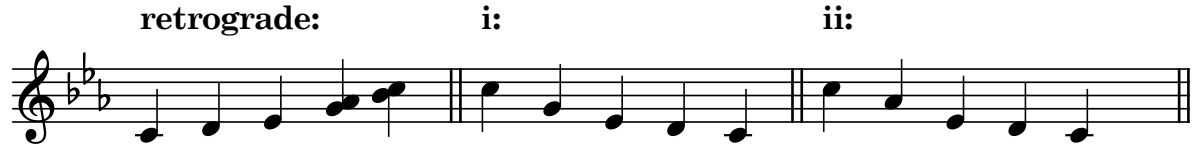


Figure 9d – Brahms, *3rd Symphony*, op. 90, 3rd Movement: motive-forms i and ii (ambiguities).

28. Once those strategies of motivic derivation, which are central to the two internal movements of the Symphony, are established, it would be awkward not to notice that the same procedure is present in the other two. In the case of the first movement, this affects directly the identity of the second theme of the Exposition (Figure 10), referred to as *Delilah* in the well-known essay of Susan McClary (the first being Samson), a relationship that was the focus of an extended discussion about absolute music and the *Third Symphony* of Brahms. She describes at length the relationship between masculine and feminine

in this movement but ends up concluding that the main tension in this movement comes from the dissonance in relation to the convention that supports its narrative procedures. The fight for power happens between father and son. There is no dispute between man and woman.

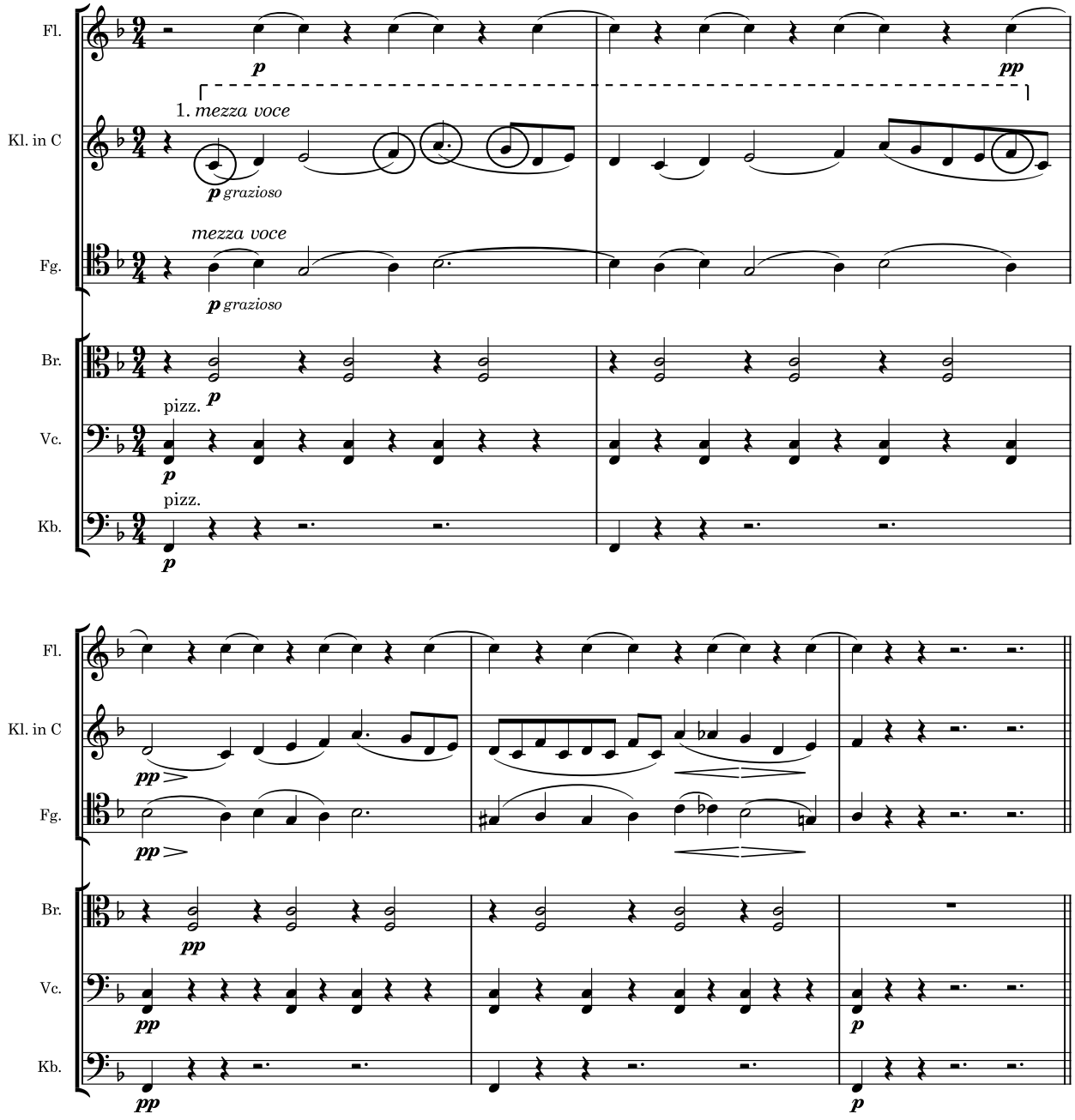


Figure 10 – Brahms, *3rd Symphony*, op. 90, 1st Movement: 2nd theme (mm. 36-40).

Well, this kind of analysis could certainly benefit from the identification of motivic strategies: a) the question of "masculine versus feminine" would have to be rephrased, taking into account that both themes come from the same material; b) as far as the Oedipian interpretation goes — i. e. the struggle

against the big Other of convention in the domain of tonal narrative —, it should be recognized that the logic presented by motivic strategies is, in fact, the catalyst that amplifies the limits of the tonal narrative, something that will connect with the Schoenberguian vision of the series as a macro-motivic construction, as noted by Epstein (1979). That which happens in the Symphony, points to the more radical transformations of the beginning of the XX Century.

Brahms´s music assumes this paradoxical function of maintaining the classical past as a foundation, and, at the same time, connecting to the modernist project (through the music of Schoenberg). For the historian Michael Steinberg, Brahms' listeners end up face to face with the feeling of reconciliation, as a kind of essence of what they hear. But one should not forget the frictions and oppositions that it develops: absolute music versus theatre music, for instance, and, naturally, the colors of a late period (Notley, 2007).

29. The relation between Brahms and Schoenberg may very well be exemplified through the work of theoretical-constitutive fabulation developed with the piano piece op. 11/1 (Figure 11).

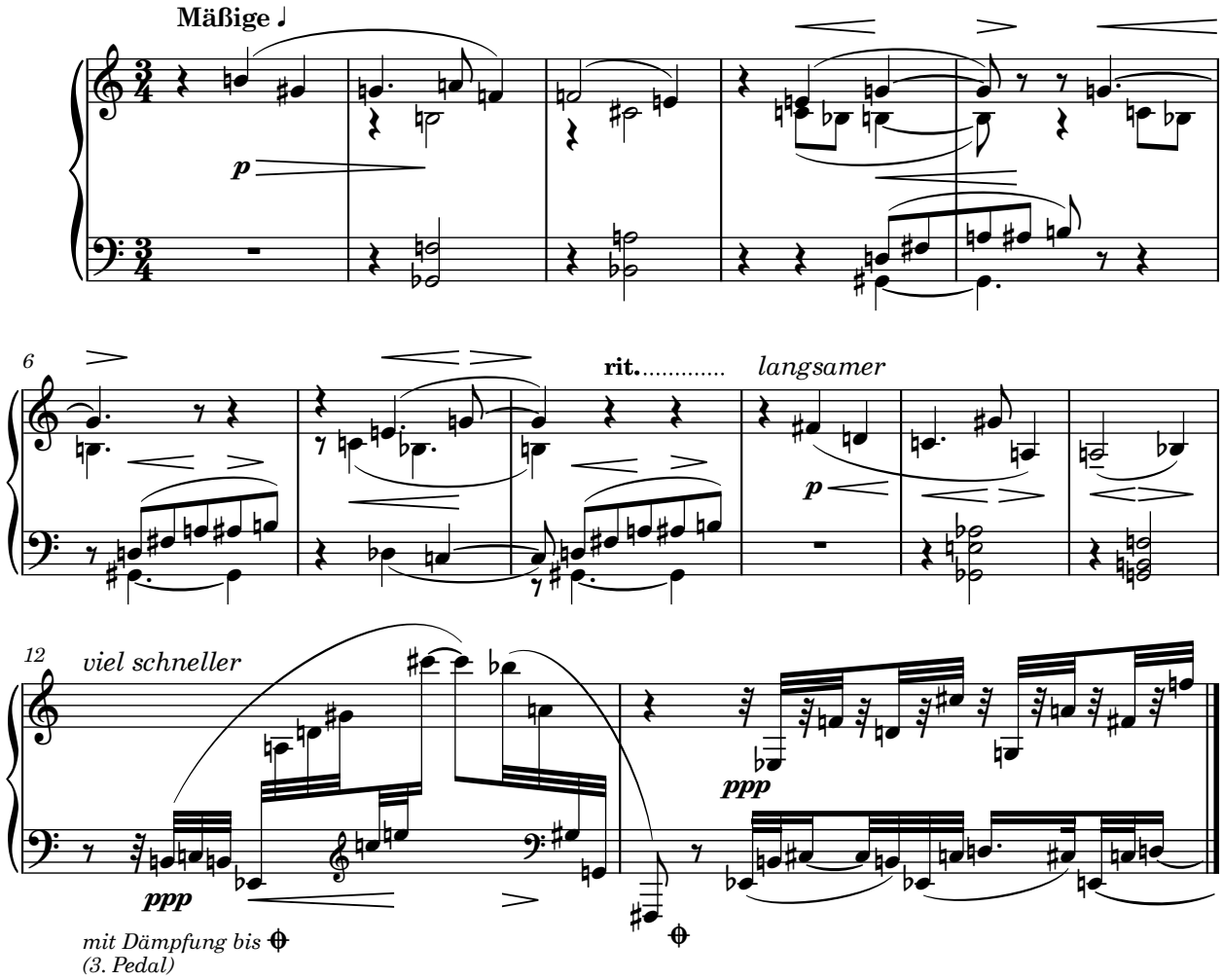


Figure 11 – Schoenberg, *Three Piano Pieces*, Op. 11 (mm. 1-13).

In the beginning of the 1990´s, after reading some analyses available of this work — George Perle (1962), Gary Wittlich (1974), Allen Forte (1981), and others mentioned by these authors — it became clear to me that the rhythmic organization of the piece was almost never commented upon (Figure 12).

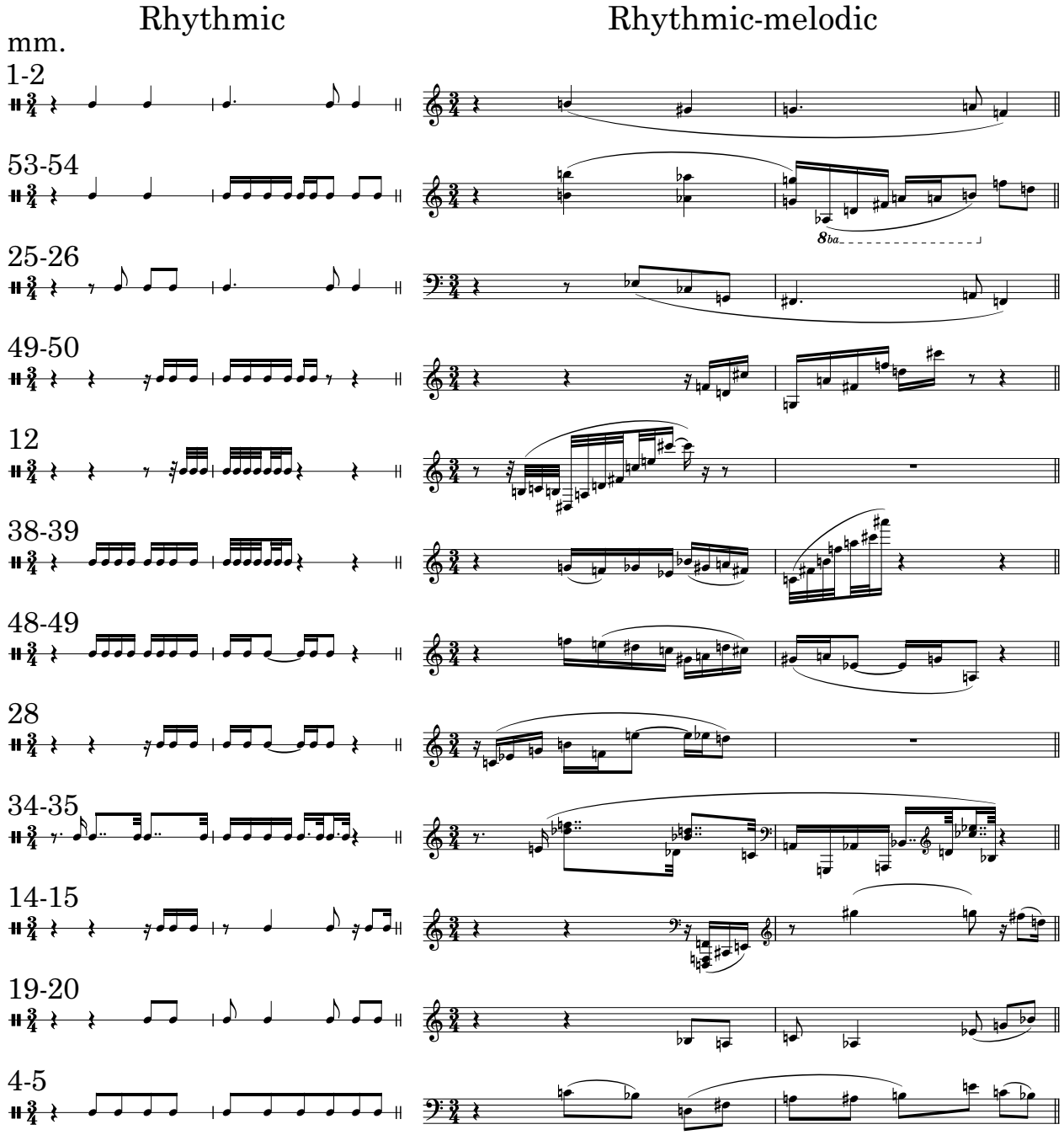


Figure 12 – Schoenberg, *Three Piano Pieces*, Op. 11/1: a chart of rhythmic derivations.

These rhythmic derivations make it possible to draw a parallel between mm 1-3 and mm 4-6. Well, if there is a considerable rhythmic similarity between these two gestures, it seems highly possible that

the same happens with the pitch choices. Would a composer such as Schoenberg, so involved with the construction of coherence, take a different path? An attractive solution comes from the perception that the theme and its inversion provide a good explanation for every pitch choice. This will lead to a renewed consideration of the initial gesture mm 1-3, conceiving it as already a construction that combines the original melody and an inversion (the one that has as its first note the final E – see Figure 13).

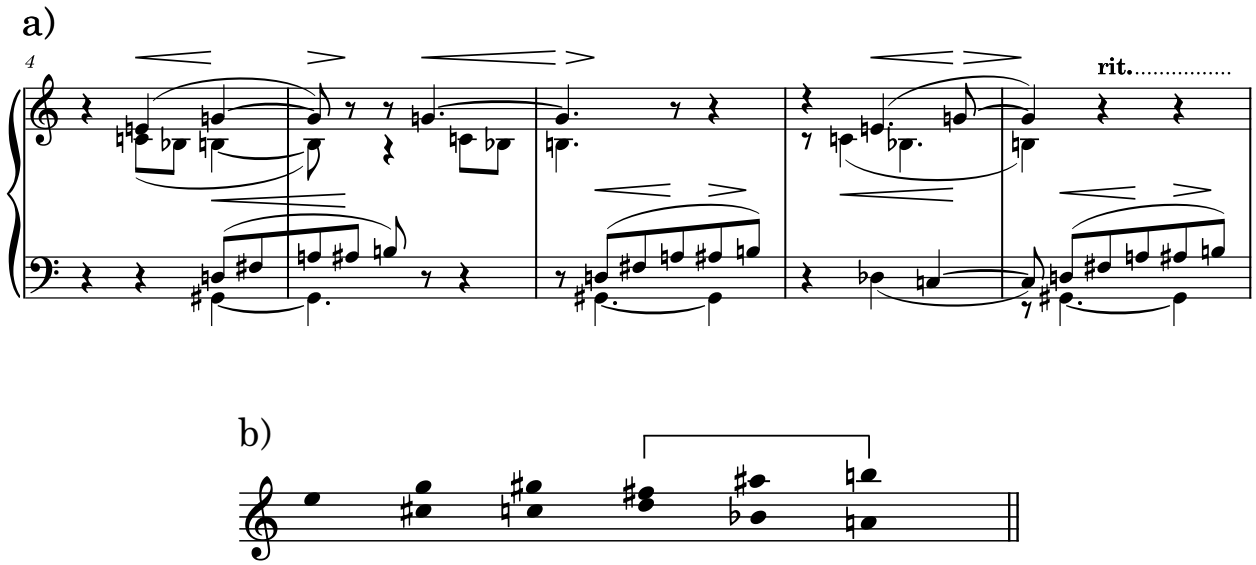


Figure 13 – a) Schoenberg, *Three Piano Pieces*, Op. 11/1 (mm. 4-8); b) Reduction of the excerpt.

30. And all that can be considered as an introduction to a much more challenging situation, the relation between the theme (mm. 1-3) and m. 12 — a traditional question that several analyses have tried to solve (Figure 14).

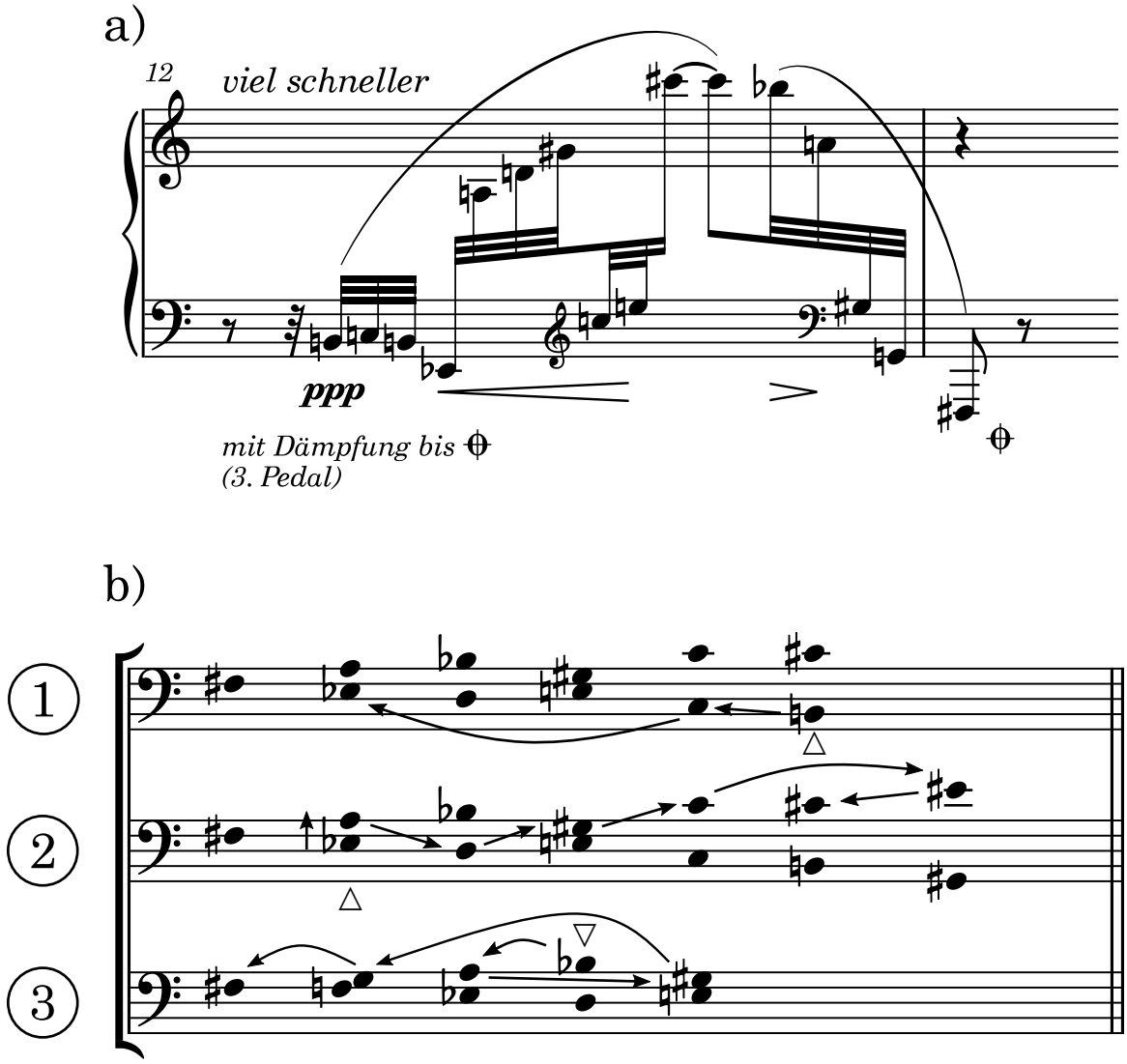


Figure 14 – a) Schoenberg, Three Piano Pieces, Op. 11/1 (mm. 12-13); b) Reductions of the excerpt.

31. Imagining a possible crossing of the oceans in the direction of Brazil, Ernst Widmer created in his *Sonata Monte Pascoal*, op. 122 (Figure 15), a process of intensification that begins with a flowing octatonic melody (m. 3) and leads to a second thematic area (m. 24) with a climax built around huge arpeggios (m. 27), as if the ocean was offering its traditional resistance to bold adventurers. Each thematic area presents a distinct format of the octatonic scale, but in the climax section (mm. 27-29), both are connected, forming a larger structure of reference, and this is the only way to explain so many distinct thirds used in this passage (Figure 16).

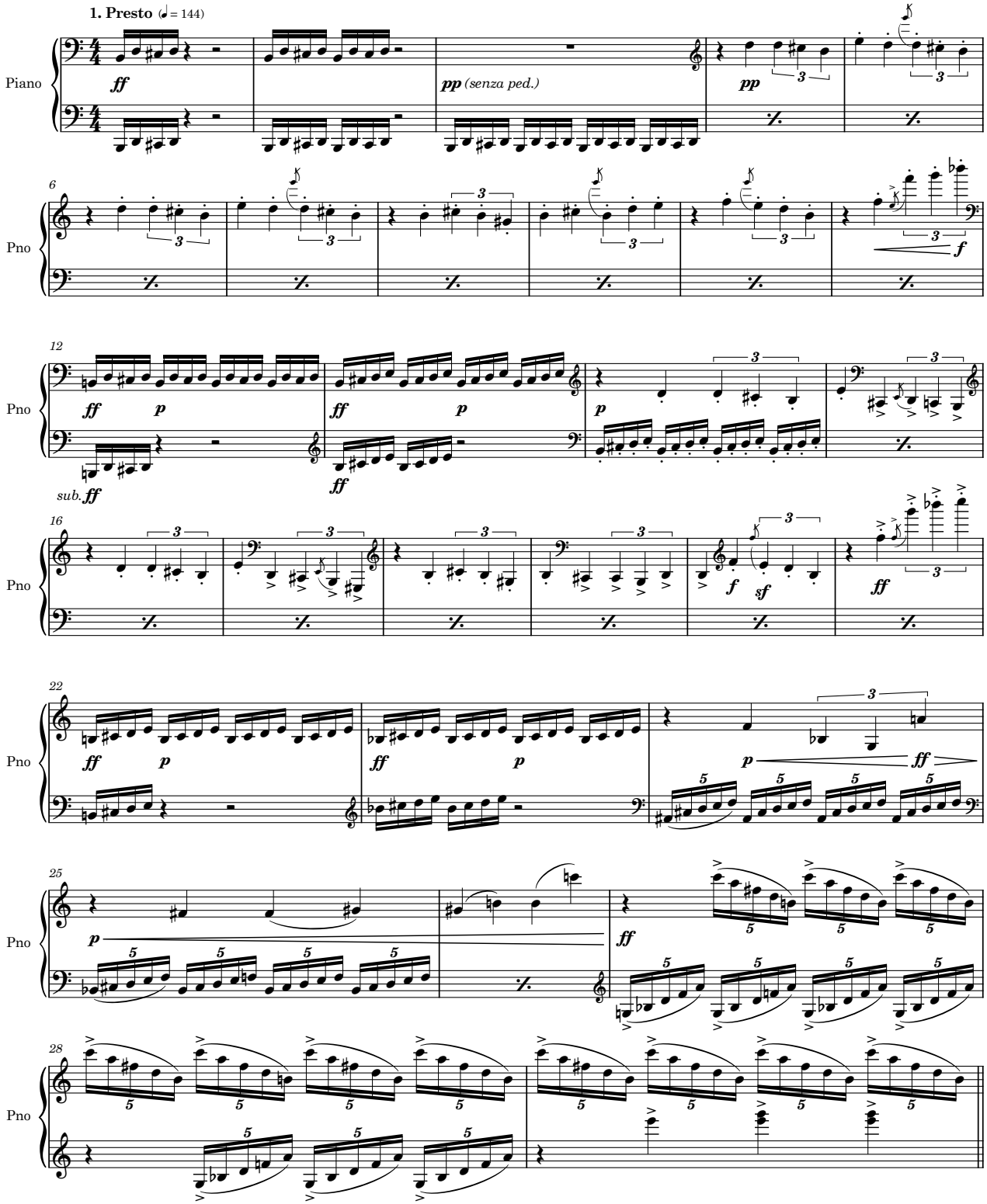


Figure 15 – Ernst Widmer, *Sonata Monte Pascoal*, Op. 122, excerpt (mm. 1-29).

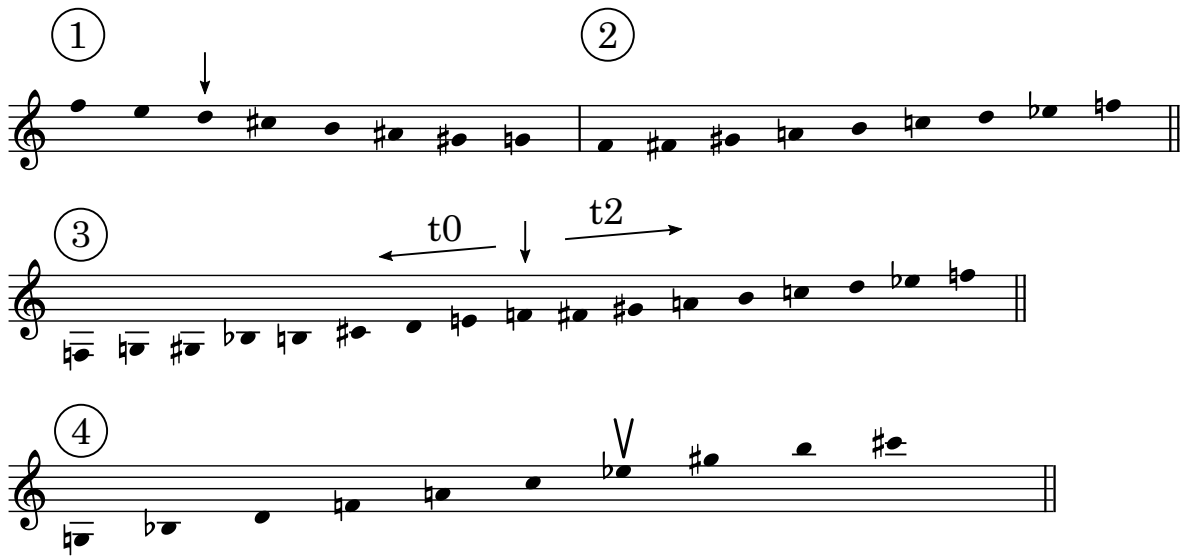


Figure 16 – Ernst Widmer, *Sonata Monte Pascoal*, Op. 122: octatonic structural references.

The octatonic logic is thus amplified, permitting new possibilities. The initial motive seems to germinate leading to a presentation of the octatonic scale. The second octatonic format connects with the first, making the colorful play possible with the total chromatic.

Recapitulation and Concluding Remarks

32. The complex relationship between Composition and Analysis is no doubt a necessary field of inquiry — in spite of the attempts to make it seem that the second is just a pragmatic adjunct to the first. This requires an awareness of the importance of approaching the efforts of producing both a theory of the compositional process (the activity of composing), and a theory of analysis (meta-analysis). In other words, it requires an awareness of the dialogic nature of composing and analyzing.

33. Taking as a starting point the idea of a "compositional protagonist" — and recognizing the existence of a protagonist of Analysis — we have proposed the notion of theoretic-constitutive fabulation as a name for the role of analysis within the compositional process, amidst the intense movement that connects choices (practices) and the reasons to make them (principles, theories). This requires recognizing the centrality of the role of imagination (which is always forwards) and the need to better understand and interpret it in this context.

34. What is the destiny of the hero figure, this kind of archetype that has represented the construction of coherence and structural control in music for so long, in these present times of tectonic post-modernist changes and diversification of analytical discourses and approaches? If the notion of absolute music dies with the growing awareness of the intertwining of discourses and music, well, then the usual exaltation of analysis as the infallible armor of this secular tradition also dies.

35. Analytic situations involving motivic analysis were used here as a way of drawing all this web of

relationships, leading to new questions and interpretations. The sonority of the 'Horn-Fifths' figure, that pervades the whole musical fabric of the *Sextet* op. 18, ends up modulating a bundle of narratives that inhabit it. The wave gesture that characterizes the *Sonate* op. 38 gets involved in the construction of a voice which becomes available for the vicissitudes of the subject. The radical ups and downs of the *Third Symphony*, the powerful gestures it constructs, making it sound both titanic and nostalgic. Schoenberg's kaleidoscope and Ernst Widmer's crossing over the Atlantic Ocean.

36. Dissimulation and disguise as a corollary of the principle of "economy of means". The construction of coherence in music should also be seen in a cultural perspective, through the actions of a hero that controls structure and form, responding to the evolving process of subjectivity in recent times. All that invokes a perspective of a possible politics around the idea that music may affirm itself as a way of resisting meaning, retarding its decay (Brun, 1986). The close relationship between the construction of coherence and strategies designed to produce disguise and dissimulation (irony and ambiguity) leads us to the principle of "economy of means" mentioned by Adorno (1969). The music of Brahms being a kind of link between Beethoven and Schoenberg. The cultural meaning of coherence in music and the role of the hero as a symbol of the control that must be exerted over structure and form, all these reflecting the vicissitudes of subjectivity from XIX Century till today.

37. All these are broad horizons with multiple relations and processes, challenges and interpretations. I ask the discourse to close itself and return to silence, praising this prestigious Association for the decision to foster the discussion about the active interface between creation and theory.

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