

Mozart's Delayed Dominants, I:

Long-range Voice Exchanges

Up until the present millennium, the prolongation of the dominant in sonata form has traditionally been associated with the subordinate theme (Example 1).¹ Recent studies, however, suggest that the dominant's arrival and prolongation begins later, most likely at the closing theme or at its gestural equivalent (or even later, at the codetta).² This delay, which reifies the notion that the subordinate theme is in some way—at the very least rhetorically—parenthetical,³ that it anticipates the dominant (see the dotted slurs in Example 2), enables various large-scale progressions to take place in the tonally gray area connecting the receding tonic and the impending, advancing dominant. The intervening progressions may involve an unfolding of several structural and contrapuntal chords (Example 3a), voice exchanges (Example 3b), or both unfoldings and voice exchanges (Example 3c), to name some of the most important intervening progressions. The dotted slurs in the bass lines of Examples 2 and 3 show how the initial tonic prolongation overlaps with the ongoing anticipation of the dominant, creating that tonally gray area, which is signalled by asterisks throughout the two examples.

¹ Rosen [1971-2, 1976] 1997; Rosen [1980] 1988.

² Benjamin 1982, Kimball 1991, Suurpää 1999, Wen 2006 and 2017, Burstein and Nguyen 2017, Willner 2019, and Burstein 2020.

³ See especially Kimball 1991, and Burstein and Nguyen 2017.

In this study, the first of a two-part set, I illustrate just how extensive and subsuming the aforementioned voice exchange can be, and how at the same time its constituent tones can interact with the prolonging bass unfoldings. In the second part of this set, I show how the elements of the design, register above all, help define the boundaries of the tonic and the dominant, and how they also define the intervening progressions and subordinate themes, thereby delaying the confirmation of the dominant all the way to the closing theme, and sometimes beyond.

The first reprise of extended movements in binary form in Baroque dance suites has sometimes been named the precursor of sonata form both generically and specifically. The validity of this notion would seem to be somewhat limited because the all-important medial caesura has no equivalent in Baroque binary form, nor does there seem to be much that resembles a discrete subordinate theme. Only the tonal outlines of binary movements show some connection to the structure of sonata form. (Exceptions do occur: for instance, the implied medial caesura and mock subordinate theme in the Polonaise in G from Handel's E minor Concerto Grosso, Op. 6, No. 3; see Example 4.⁴).

If we want to find *structural* precursors to the tonal *structure* of sonata form (putting aside the medial caesura and the subordinate theme), we should probably focus on the dance suite's allemande. Allemandes are the longest and weightiest movements of Baroque suites, and as such they at least potentially

⁴ Bukofzer 1947, 361. I offer an analysis of this Polonaise in Willner 1989 and Willner 2005, Chapter 3. Wolf 1981 maintains that even in the face of similarities we must keep in mind that Baroque and Classical periodicities (and, by extension, outlines of sonata form) differ from each other (137, fn. 83).

bear some similarity to later sonata-form movements: the structure of their first reprise sometimes resembles that of a sonata-form exposition.⁵

The first reprise of the Allemande from Handel's E major keyboard Suite (Example 5) is occupied almost entirely by a chromaticized voice exchange within the tonic (bars 1-11, the last system in Example 6). Among the many remarkable features of this complex work is the deceptive appearance of both the dominant and the major supertonic on the way to the chromaticized I⁶. An initial descent to the dominant, in bars 1-3, allows the dominant to straddle the barline at bars 3^b-4^a, but the largely sequential voice leading ultimately bypasses the dominant tonicization as it makes its way down to the supertonic in bar 5^b.

The supertonic's bass tone, F# (II⁷-VII⁶), hooks up with the opening tonic, and allows the bass line to turn around and rise towards V (bar 7^a)—only to bypass the dominant's tonicization once again as the bass ascends to VI (bar 7^b). The progression V-VI is not really a deceptive cadence here, though it certainly sounds like one, but it is rather part of the bass unfolding, E-B, C#-F#, that links the tonic of bar 1 with the extended F# of bars 9^b-10 (see the unfolding signs in Example 6). That F#, which lies at a deeper level of structure than the F# of bar 5^b, appears to suggest a major supertonic seventh chord that might begin to establish the dominant's territory in earnest. But the supertonic turns out once again to be only a passing chord, connecting to the opening tonic (at a deeper

⁵ Even though allemandes, again, lack a sustained subordinate theme as well as a medial caesura.

level than before) and to the chromatic sixth chord on G# of bar 11^a—the goal of the first reprise's voice exchange.

The structural major supertonic arrives only at bar 11^b, and the dominant enters in earnest only at bar 12^a, whereupon it proceeds to extend through almost the entirety of bars 12-13.

(A closer look at Example 6 reveals an interesting and by no means unusual discrepancy between the movements of the upper voice and the bass. The upper voice in bars 6-8 outlines the subdominant, while the bass is engaged in articulating the aforementioned unfolding, E-B, C#-F#. Such discrepancies are quite common in the Baroque repertoire. They may not look right in a voice-leading reduction of a canonic work, but it would be a stylistic mistake to deny their existence. They result from the fact that the bass leads and the upper voice follows—but not necessarily in a way that promotes a strict coordination between the two; see the asterisk in Example 6.)

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The opening Allegro of Mozart's keyboard Sonata in D, K. 284 (Example 7), contains a similarly long, chromaticized voice exchange (see the last system in Example 8). This exchange differs from most of the Mozartean and Beethovenian chromaticized voice exchanges previously identified in the literature in that it encompasses the subordinate theme; many of the the voice

exchanges identified earlier include the bridge theme, but they conclude just short of the subordinate theme, before the medial caesura.⁶

In their recent SMT-V video, Poundie Burstein and Quynh Nguyen have already demonstrated quite vividly how the structural dominant in K. 284 enters very late in the exposition.⁷ In the present study, I trace the path to that dominant.⁸

Though it is not obvious at first, both the opening theme and the ensuing transition to the subordinate theme outline a three-part sentence—a compact eight-measure sentence in the opening theme (bars 1-8, closing into bar 9), and a more extensive 13-measure sentence in the transition (bars 9-21; see the annotations throughout Example 7). By way of an added complexity, the transition contains its own, smaller chromaticized voice exchange, over the subdominant, in bars 12-15 (see both reductions in Example 8). This voice exchange is not related to the larger voice exchange under discussion.

The subordinate theme (bars 22ff.), like the transition, encompasses an expanded sentence, one that extends all the way to the end of the large-scale voice exchange (bars 22-34^a). The unfolding sign in Example 8 shows how the principal bass tone of the subordinate theme turns out to be C#, not A: the bass

⁶ Kamien and Wagner 1997; Cutler 2009; with further references. See Suurpää 1999, Wen 2006, and Schachter 1983 for discussions of more extended and more inclusive voice exchanges in Haydn, Mozart, and Brahms.

⁷ Burstein and Nguyen 2017.

⁸ Mozart composed an earlier version of the first movement of K. 284 whose foreground—but not middleground or background—is quite different from that of the second version, which is the one familiar to us. The differences between the two versions are discussed at length in Somfai 1991 and in Kinderman 2012, 21-31, and they need not detain us here.

descent on which the theme's Presentation is based (bars 23-25^b and 27-29^b) settles, as it were, into C#, a lower neighbor of the tonic D. The bass A, implicit in bar 22, turns out to be the upper sixth of that imminent C# (see again the unfolding sign in Example 8).

The subordinate theme's Continuation (bars 30-32) now picks up the tonic's bass tone, D (with a sixth, in place of a fifth, on top), in the manner of a long-range bass suspension, and helps bring the underlying bass line up to F# (bar 32; consult yet again Example 8). The Cadential group of this sentence (bars 33-34a) articulates the last step of the voice exchange, d#² in the upper voice arriving atop f¹ in the bass (bar 33).⁹

What follows our voice exchange and the arrival of the major supertonic (in bar 34^a) is not, as one might expect, a closing theme, but rather a free variation of the subordinate theme, what one might call a *complementary subordinate theme* (bars 34^b-36^a and 36^b-38^a; see the annotation in Example 7). Mozartean expositions often present more than one subordinate theme, and the

⁹ An alternative reading is possible: since the subordinate theme's apparent dominant, A, though implicit in bar 22, does not serve in a structural capacity, it could be heard and read as an upper neighbor to the G# that follows right in bar 23. The G# dissonates against the Allegro's opening D, implicitly sustained, and the two tones resolve to A over C#, a V⁶ (bars 25^b and 29^b). The last named, (after the repetition of bars 22-25 in bars 26-29) continues to the aforementioned sixth chord over the tonic's D in bar 30.

relation between these themes is a topic which the second part of this set will address.¹⁰

An expansive sentence appears to link the complementary subordinate theme's major supertonic, E (bars 34-37), with the closing theme's A in bar 44 (see again the annotations atop Example 7), this in the manner of an auxiliary cadence. Quite often, especially in Mozart's concertos, the arrival of the closing theme signals the entrance of the structural dominant. Here, however, the thin and lean unison textures of the closing theme's opening (bar 44) defer the final confirmation of the dominant and the conclusion of the auxiliary cadence E-A to the codetta, at bar 50.¹¹

The closing theme (bars 44-50), like the earlier themes, presents a sentence template, if a truncated one.¹²

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Even more extensive, more unusual, and more instructive than the voice exchange in K. 284 is the long-range voice exchange in the opening Allegro from Mozart's keyboard Concerto in G, K. 453 (Examples 9 and 10). Here the voice exchange spans almost the entirety of the exposition, incorporating both an enlarged, *elevated bridge theme* (which Mozart treats initially as if it were the

¹⁰ The complementary subordinate theme's (or themes') relation to the subordinate theme is not usually as explicit or literal as it is here; see Part II of this study.

¹¹ The cadence at bar 46 therefore achieves only an attenuated PAC (Hepakoski and Darcy 2006, 170). The EEC is deferred to bar 50.

¹² In some expositions, a detailed account of sentence structure is helpful in sorting out a surface that may otherwise appear to be disjointed. Elsewhere, it may not be as essential to label every segment, phrase, theme, or transitional passage within the framework of a larger sentential overlay.

self-contained subordinate theme; see Example 9b), and the subordinate theme proper (Example 9c).¹³

The middleground reductions in Example 10 are not so much voice-leading graphs as they are uninterpreted sketches, to use Carl Schachter's felicitous appellation.¹⁴ These sketches show how the elevated bridge theme (bars 110-126), which follows ten transitional measures (bars 100-109), is anchored not on a true dominant but rather on the second part of an unfolding, G-C#, D-F#, that links the exposition's and the opening theme's G with its neighboring F# (see the unfolding signs in Example 10). F# arrives at the end of the elevated bridge theme, which overlaps with the beginning of the transition (bars 124-125; see the reproduction in Example 9c).¹⁵ The sequential transition that follows (bars 126-133, Example 9c) reaches the major supertonic by imitating the aforementioned unfolding with a further unfolded interval, the falling fifth D-G (bars 126-132), and by advancing and completing the neighbor-

¹³ Similar (and particularly prominent) elevated bridge themes can be found in Mozart's keyboard Concerto in D, K. 537, I (bars 128ff.), and keyboard Concerto in C minor, K. 491, I (bars 148ff.). See also the keyboard Sonata in C minor, K. 457, I (bars 23ff.) and Haydn's keyboard Sonata in C minor, Hob. XVI:20, I (bars 15ff.). What is really unusual here is that the orchestra's subordinate theme, introduced in the opening ritornello (bars 35ff.), becomes the solo's; it is not withheld until the recapitulation, Mozart's more common procedure.

¹⁴ Schachter 1983. The circumstances are similar: Schachter uses an uninterpreted sketch to depict the large voice exchange that spans much of the opening exposition of the first movement of Brahms's Second Symphony.

The metrics of Mozart's exposition are in some ways irregular—that is, they seem deceptively to fall outside the quadratic metrical grid, with three-bar phrases mingling with two- and four-bar phrases. I address these in "Parsing Mozart: 1782-84" (in preparation).

¹⁵ See Hepokoski and Darcy 2006, 539-39, for a nuanced interpretation of these passages from a different vantage point.

note motion G-F#-G-G#-A, which was set in motion by the elevated bridge theme (see again Example 10).

The dominant appears once more to enter, however deceptively, as the structural harmony when the principal subordinate theme announces itself (bars 139-153^a). But this, too, is only an illusion. Like most apparent dominants at the center of Mozart's chromaticized voice exchanges, it eventually becomes embedded in the chromatic I⁶ chord that clinches the voice exchange (bars 167-168). In between, a brilliant display episode (bars 153-168) approaches the chromatic I⁶ from below (bars 164ff., Example 9e). The major supertonic finally enters in earnest in bars 169-170, and the structural dominant appears, at long last, in bars 171ff.¹⁶

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Like my analysis of K. 284, but with a different emphasis, my comments on K. 453 entailed a detailed examination of several specific aspects of the design—in this instance, the long-range outlines of the bass and tenor voices rather than those of the outer voices. (The upper part of the unfoldings I describe represented the tenor voice which the bass temporarily occupied, but that distinction, important though it may be, is not a major issue here.) The reason for prioritizing the repeatedly deceptive status of the dominant in K. 453 rests with the clear picture of the design that such prioritization helps to draw. Only with that picture in place can we begin to ask questions about the very

¹⁶ And that is where I would locate Hepokoski and Darcy's EEC.

complex behavior of the upper voice(s) throughout the exposition. I shall address that behavior, and its relation to the bass and tenor lines, in the second part of this study, vis-à-vis the deceptive and the delayed dominants in the "middle period" keyboard sonatas of Mozart, namely K. 330, K. 332, and K. 333.

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