Melodic and Harmonic and Symmetry
Combine: Chromatic Sequences

WEB 29.1 Analysis Project

SCHUBERT, “MEERES STILLE” (“STILL SEA,” OP. 3, NO. 2)

This Lied contains part of an omnibus that expands (that is, moves outward in a contrary motion) and a chromatic third relation that usurps a structural dominant. Both of these harmonic techniques project the poetry. Listen to the piece and study the translation.

Tiefe stille herrscht im Wasser, ohne Regung ruht das Meer, und bekümmerst der Schiff der glatte Fläche.

In all the vast expanse not a single wave stirs.
In der ungeheurem Weite regt sich keine Welle.

15 rings around him. No breeze from any direction! Fearful, deadly calm!

8 Deep calm rules the water without movement, the sea rests,
Und bekümmert der Schiffer die glatte Fläche.

Meer, and the sailor anxiously looks at the smooth flatness.

1. No wind = no movement = no food or water in sight = death: “no breeze from any direction! Fearful deadly calm! In all the vast expanse not a single wave stirs.”

2. The slowly rolled chords and very slow harmonic rhythm shows a sea at rest. The sailor does not land safely. He is destined to die.

The key areas can be interpreted in two different ways:

   interpretation #1: I---III# (E)---vi---IV (as bII/E?)---iii and III---I--V--I (overall tonic-mediant (IV as bII of the mediant)---V-I (V is very weak, perfunctory, so I-iii-I)

   interpretation #2: I--E is V/vi---vi--IV----------------------iii and III---I--V--I (overall tonic-submediant-IV--vi-iii--V--I (more harmonic motion)

3. See above.

4. Either interpretation reveals little tonal motion, especially given the weak V-I at the end, especially after the long extensions of E minor and F major. the weak tonal motion subtly reinforces the lack of motion, about which the sailor is terrified.

5. In spite of the clear cadences, how might the tonal structure reflect the uncertainty of the sailor becalmed at sea?

6. There are two possible spots where the dominant is expected: the first is after m. 16 where it would follow the pre-dominant IV. The second spot is in measure 20, following the V7/V harmony.

7. However, the dominant does not appear at either point. Rather, in m. 17 a digression begins, precisely when the text ominously states: “no breeze from any direction, fearful deadly calm.” And, following the arrival at the end of this cry of fear, the return to the opening motive is not in the expected C, but rather E minor.

8. The chromaticism following the IV chord in m. 16 and which leads to the B major chord (V7/iii in m. 24) is crucial, and Schubert provides an answer to the question regarding
the fate of the sailor. An omnibus progression begins, with the bass F and right hand D♯ are part of a voice exchange that set off “no breeze...from any direction”, completing the exchange with D in the bass and F♯ in the right hand. Crucially, and precisely on the word “Todes” (“deathly”) an F♯ minor chord appears, a point of furthest remove from C major: a tritone, often considered the interval of death. It is immediately before the appearance of the F♯ minor chord that G major, V in C, is expected. That Schubert moves instead to the distant F♯ minor, and avoids the G chord that would take the sailor safely back to the safety of the home key, C major, might very well support the interpretation that the wind never does appear and the sailor is lost at sea, never to be found.

**WEB 29.2 Composition**

Write two consequents to the given antecedent to create a parallel interrupted period and a contrasting progressive period. Label your periods and analyze the harmonies.
WEB 29.3 Nonsequential Symmetrical Progressions

Analyze the following passages. Mark the keys using the letters of the alphabet; then summarize the interval used to subdivide the octave evenly.

Donna Anna. (quieter, repressing her emotions)

G: vii\(^{7}/g\) (G)       g      V\(^{4}/3\) (Eb)

Don Octavio. (agitated)  Donna Anna.
I was mis-taken. Quickly! Continue!

He tried to s'ap-pare!