

## **Performer as Narrator: The Second Movement of Franz Schubert's Piano Sonata in A Major D959**

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### **Abstract**

This paper investigates how a performer might engage with the construction of narrative experiences in and through the performance of the Second Movement of Schubert's Piano Sonata in A Major, D959. The investigation is based on the understanding of the role of the performer as narrator in the performance of early nineteenth-century piano music in general and Schubert's Piano Sonata in A Major, D959, in particular. In addition to considering aspects of the musical context in Schubert's own time, this article will shed light on a 'paradigm shift' between what Lawrence Zbikowski termed 'static form' and 'dynamic form'. The traditional large-scale form, such as sonata-form, represents the 'static form' which consists of balanced structure built from regular sub-units with clear harmonic connections between each other. The 'dynamic form' was conceived as 'form as process' where the emphasis was given to a performer in defining the musical structure throughout a piece. This creative role of a performer in giving shape to music suggests the idea of narration and the Second Movement of Schubert's Piano Sonata in A Major, D959, presents an interesting example for musical narration in early Romantic music. There appears to be no consensus as to a 'stylistically correct' rendition of Schubert's Piano Sonata in A Major, D959, and it possesses some unique musical features, which invite performers and researchers to conduct an investigation of the sonata.

**Keywords** dynamic form, interpretation, musical plot, performer as narrator, Piano Sonata D959, Schubert

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the construction of performance guidelines applicable to Franz Schubert's music, "source data relating directly to Schubert performance in the composer's lifetime is relatively scarce; much has thus been made of wider contemporary treatises" (Pace, 2012, pp 646-648). Montgomery (1997) also explained that other possible reasons such as fewer public appearances by Schubert himself and the invention of new approaches to performance by Liszt as well as his contemporaries (p.104) contributed to the further ignorance of Schubert's instrumental music in both the

early nineteenth-century performance manuals (p. 270) and in Viennese concert life. Their emphasis on musical virtuosity successfully attracted huge attention from the public in Vienna (Hanson, 1985, p.188). Consequently, Schubert's works, in particular his piano sonatas, were frequently treated somewhat indifferently (compared, for example, with Beethoven's piano sonatas). This is suggested by William Kinderman in his article on Schubert's piano music:

Several factors contributed to their neglect: the fact that much of this music remained unpublished during Schubert's lifetime; the dominance, in these works, of musical expression over technical virtuosity; and the overpowering influence of Beethoven, whose works set standards that are not directly applicable to Schubert. (Kinderman, 1997, p.155)

Particularly in some earlier literature, Schubert's piano sonatas have been criticised for using forms and structures that were constructed in an unusual way (for example, see Kinderman, 1997, p.155). Despite the fact that "the efficiency and success of Beethoven's forms provided an inescapable critical model for more than a century to come" (Rosen, 2003, p.15), it is clear that taking Beethoven's works as models for Schubert's works can lead to a misconception of the uniqueness of Schubert's music (Brendel, 2007, pp.45-46). The innovative approach of Schubert in the construction of musical structure was discussed by Robert Schumann (1810-1856) in his article on Schubert's Symphony No. 9:

Let me state at the outset: he who doesn't know this symphony knows little of Schubert. In view of what the world has already received from him this may seem hardly credible praise. It is so often said, and to the considerable annoyance of composers, that "after Beethoven one should forgo symphonic ambitions", and it is true that most of those who have disregarded this advice have produced only lifeless mirrorings of Beethovenesque idioms, not to mention those sorry, dull symphonists who have managed a tolerable suggestion of the powdered wigs of Haydn and Mozart but not their heads. One may make an exception for single important orchestral works, but they have been more interesting for the light they have had on the development of their composers than for any influence they have had on the public or on the evolution of the symphony ... I had suspected and hoped – and probably many others, too – that Schubert, who had shown such a sure sense of structure, such invention and such versatility in so many other forms, would also tackle the symphony from the flank and find the spot from which he could get at both it and the public. (Pleasants, 1964, p.164)

Schumann's article was considered as one of the earliest attempts in recognising the uniqueness of Schubert's instrumental works (Gibbs, 1997, p.247). While Beethoven concentrated more on the unity of the whole work, for example, by utilising a tiny motif in his Fifth Symphony, Schubert was more concerned with presenting ideas as spacious continuous lines. As one of the leading interpreters of Schubert's piano works, Alfred Brendel has written that "in his larger forms, Schubert is a wanderer. He likes to move at the edge of the precipice, and does so with the assurance of a sleep-walker. To wander is the Romantic condition"

(Brendel, 2007, pp.164-165). Sonata D959 is a very good example of that ‘wanderer condition’, and ultimately highlights Schubert’s unconventional approach in composing the sonata by constructing the musical themes which seem to move beyond the verge of a conventional sonata form. Such innovative procedures – mainly derived from Schubert’s achievement in song – would ultimately be of great importance for the next generation of composers. In recent years, there has been a re-appraisal of Schubert’s instrumental works such as piano sonatas because of a new understanding of how Schubert’s forms hold these works together (Hatten, 2004, p.121). Some of this new understanding does not directly grow out of a traditional classical conception, but rather tries to elucidate how musical narration can be used to highlight Schubert’s innovative procedures in expanding the sonata form as well as loosening the harmonic and structural elements of traditional form. The central concern of this article is to show how a performer might engage with the construction of narrative experiences in and through the performance of the Second Movement of Schubert’s Piano Sonata in A Major, D959.

## **MUSICAL NARRATIVE CONCEPT – A GUIDE TO INTERPRETATION**

The reason of choosing the Second Movement of D959 is the various problems in which a performer need to solve: the complexity of musical material presented in the middle section of the Second Movement such as the variety in the expressive markings, articulations, rhythmic contrasts as well as harmonic progressions. The problem solving is implied by thematic relations, tensions and developments that supply some of the necessary ingredients for the construction of a plan, that is, of a performance strategy by which situations and events are linked together to form a plot (Hatten, 2004, p. 226). Based on those ingredients, ambiguity in structure, in expression, and thus in performance interpretations, provide circumstances by which a performer experiences critical practice and creative performance so as to evoke musical narratives through performative approaches (Rink, 1994; 1999, 2015; Rothstein, 1995; Hatten, 2004). John Rink stated:

Whereas the prevailing model for musical performance in the eighteenth century was oratory, in the nineteenth it was drama: indeed, a particular nineteenth-century performance rhetoric can be defined not according to the Classical tradition adapted, say, by Mattheson, but with regard to explicitly dramatic properties exploiting familiar rhetorical devices – structure, gestures, figures, inflections, emphases, pauses – to new and different ends. (Rink, 2001, p.220)

Rink observed the shift of the role of performer from an orator during the eighteenth century to a narrator during the nineteenth century. In the eighteenth century, the main linguistic counterpart of music had been rhetoric. The focus of rhetoric is on the form of oration and on the devices which the orator could utilise to affect the listener. However, during the early nineteenth century, the idea of telling a story and narration became a crucial linguistic counterpart for music. The emphasis was given to the temporal quality of music and how the performer can make the

music cohere in time. The idea of the application of narration in music has attracted much attention in musicology during the past few years (Cone, 1975; McClary, 2007; Almén, 2008; Agawu, 2009; Seaton, 2009). Some of the findings suggest that there are parallels between the construction of a piece of music and a work of literature, for example, a novel. Seaton stated:

For this reason, it is necessary to define narrativity in positive terms. To say that a piece of music is a narrative means that it has two essential features: plot and voice. In other words, a musical work possesses the quality of narrativity in the same way that a work of literature does so. (Seaton, 2009, p.274)

Although there is still a difference in terms of the application of the narrativity for music and literature respectively (Seaton, 2009, p.274), the idea of a musical plot which is referred to in this article is “musically constituted: a time-dependent unfolding of successive musical events, palpably linked to produce a coherent ‘statement’ embodied in sound alone, which is of course the principal expressive medium available to the instrumentalist” (Rink, 2001, p.218). That is to say, a musical plot was understood not only as a temporal sequence in which one event follows the other, but also as a causal sequence where the former event makes the latter happen. In other words, a musical plot should consist of a temporal trajectory which was usually started from stability through rising conflict or problems to final resolution. Hepokoski and Darcy observed that the genre of the sonata can be viewed as a metaphor of human action and it invites an interpretation as a musically narrative genre (Hepokoski & Darcy, 2006, pp.251-252). A similar observation was made by Seaton that sonata-form was recognised as a good example of a musical plot where the structural organisation resembles the different conditions of a plot:

On the other hand, the paradigmatic instance of plot – or drama – for music (and, one might argue, for all art) is the so-called sonata form. In principle, a sonata first movement has a clear beginning and end, establishing its material and its position of stability (the tonic key) at the outset and ultimately returning to stability at the close. (Seaton, 2009, p.275)

In the exposition, the establishment of its material in the beginning such as the principal theme in the home key gives a sense of stability. Gradually, the forward motion of the theme towards a different key creates a tension that demands resolution. However, the modulatory character in the development section suspends the tonal identity and thus increases the tension or problem. Eventually, the recapitulation functioned as a section where the previous conflicts of the principal theme resolve back into its home key and re-establish its harmonic stability.

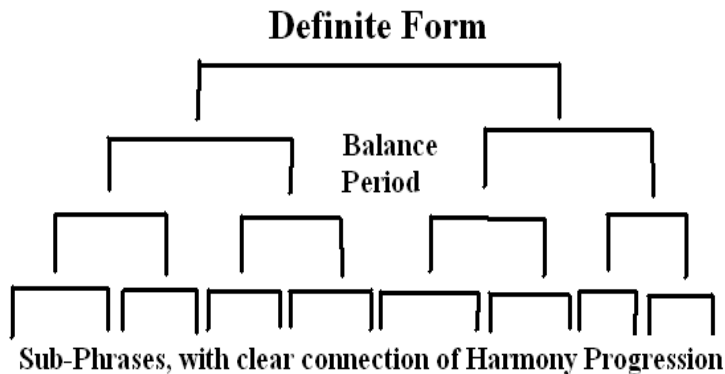
The idea of a musical plot was not only confined to sonata-form, but also applicable to other structural designs which present comparable features of a plot, in particular the element of causal connection where one event makes the latter happen. Considered as one of the most dramatic musical experiences composed by Schubert, the Second Movement of Sonata D959 offers the possibility to be a plot. Constructed in a ternary form, it has the same kind of criteria as in a sonata-form:

there is a departure from stability towards increasing conflict in the middle section, before the music is guided back to its stability.

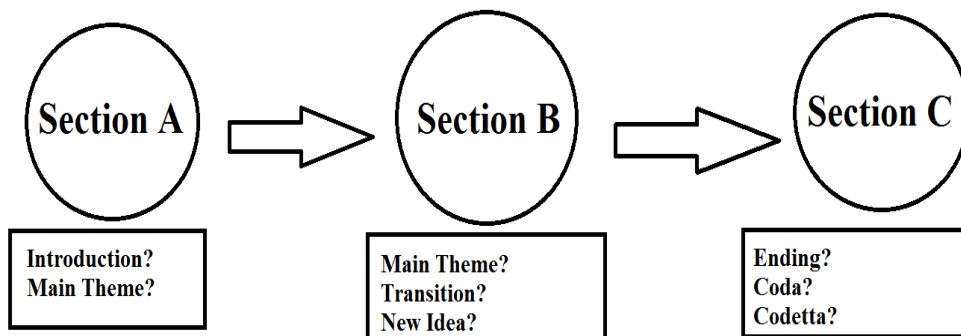
Compared with the traditional sonata-form which was prevalent during the classical period, Schubert’s perception of the sonata-form, including his last three piano sonatas, is evolutionary, and he seems to try to transform the sonata-form into a “means to attaining an expressive purpose” (Irving, 2002, p.199). This is an inventive form which Lawrence Zbikowski termed as a ‘dynamic form’ which he distinguishes from the traditional sonata-form as a ‘static form’:

As the study of form developed and was continued through the nineteenth century, theorists worked with two basic – and seemingly opposed – models of musical form, one static, the other dynamic. Musical form, viewed from a static perspective, is reminiscent of architecture (a parallel all the more ironic, given Friedrich von Schelling’s characterization of architecture as ‘frozen music’) and typically consists of either a framing structure clad with musical material or relatively abstract containers filled with musical events. Musical form from a dynamic viewpoint is processive and a bit unpredictable: the musical work emerges over the course of time, and musical materials are both the substance of and *raison d’être* for this emergence. (Zbikowski, 2002, p.288)

Zbikowski points out the difference between the traditional sonata-form (Figure 1) and the inventive form (Figure 2) where the traditional sonata-form consists of balanced structures built from regular sub-units with clear connections between each other. The inventive form was conceived as a process where the unexpected relationships in the musical materials provides a variety of interpretative possibilities. The emphasis was given to a performer in defining the overall structure throughout the piece:



**Figure 1** Static form (figure developed by author).



**Figure 2** Dynamic form (figure developed by author).

It seems that a similar perception of the difference between ‘static form’ and ‘dynamic form’ was observed by Janet Schmalfeldt:

... toward the end of the eighteenth century and into the next, new compositional approaches to certain, by then well-established conventions of musical forms seemed intent upon shifting our focus away from the perception of forms as the product of successive, functionally discrete sections within a whole. Instead, these new approaches encouraged the idea that the formal process itself becomes ‘the form’. Listeners of this kind of music are being asked to participate within that process, by listening backward as well as in the moment – by remembering what they have heard, while retrospectively reinterpreting formal functions in the light of an awareness of the interplay between conventions and transformations. As perhaps the most active of all listeners, performers themselves are being urged to play a far more authoritative role in articulating such form-defining moments as beginnings, middles, and endings, while projecting the overall shapes that these might define. (Schmalfeldt, 2011, p.116)

As Schmalfeldt highlights the role of performer as a co-creator in performing early nineteenth-century instrumental works, especially “in articulating such form-defining moments as beginnings, middles, and endings”, this implies variable structural readings in the early nineteenth-century instrumental works and it could be argued that Schubert’s last three piano sonatas, including the Piano Sonata in A Major, D959, have such potential to be interpreted in many unique ways, and to evolve continuously. Possibly constructed in a ‘dynamic form’, Schubert’s D959 gives room to a performer in interpreting the musical materials such as the large-scale harmonic constructions, the interplay and transformation of themes, the variety in the phrasing and the expressive musical markings such as articulation and rhythmic contrasts, as well as the understanding of meter and pulsation. Taking this a step further, the variety of possibilities in interpreting the musical materials of Schubert’s D959 extends into a variety of performance approaches, that is, the performer’s interpretative considerations while formulating performances, as the subsequent discussion will help to elucidate.

It should be noted that the performance approach shown in this article was influenced by John Rink's idea of "structural potentialities within musical materials and then realising them as they see fit within the broader musical narrative of their performance" (Rink, 2015, p.129), which entails possibly four principles:

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)

In turn, the discussion that follows took the above mentioned principles into consideration as part of an attempt to articulate and to document what was happening in the music and how a performer reacted to it. The first section focused on how a performer might construct a musical plot in the Second Movement of Schubert's D959, which includes what connections to imply or emphasise at what point and why. The second section moved a step forward on how the connections between the musical events evoked narrative interpretations in relation to the musical plot.

### **Musical plot and dramatic properties in the second movement**

The Second Movement of Schubert's D959 could be regarded as one of the examples that resembles comparable narrative schemas. The structural organisation in the Second Movement involves different temporal phases in the musical narration. These include the contour of stability, tension, conflict, resolution and dénouement. An overview of the design of musical plot in the whole second movement is illustrated in Table 1.

In the beginning, the phrase structure was constructed in a simple and regular way, with stable harmonic progression which moves around the tonic and subdominant as well as the dominant of F-sharp minor in the first eighteen bars. Frequent stepwise motions in the melody and a gently alternating, repetitive accompaniment figure contribute to the generally static quality of this passage (Figure 3).

**Table 1** Musical Plot in Schubert’s Sonata in A Major, D959, Second Movement

Section	Bar(s)	Musical Material	Harmony	Plot Condition	Dynamic Markings
A	1-32	Principal Theme (PT)	i	Stable, with clear phrase structure and cadential point	<i>p-pp-fp-pp</i>
	33-68	Repeated with an octave			<i>pp-fp-pp-dim.</i>
B	69-84	Improvisational	Modulator	Unstable, immediately increasing tension to climax	$\langle \rangle$
	85-122		y		<i>mf-cresc.-ff</i>
	123-146		v		<i>ffz-p-pp</i>
	147-158	Transitional passage	V	Preparing to go back to the previous lyrical section	<i>pp</i>
A	159-188	PT	i	Resolution	<i>pp-f-decresc.-</i>
	189-end			Dénouement	<i>ppp</i>

Andantino  $\text{♩}$  [♯]

*p*

*simile*

F#m: i V<sup>6</sup>iV<sup>6</sup> i<sup>6</sup> vii<sup>o</sup><sub>4</sub><sup>6</sup> i<sup>6</sup> vii<sup>o6</sup> iV

*fp*

F#m: I V<sup>6</sup>iV<sup>6</sup> iv<sub>4</sub><sup>6</sup> i V i V i

**Figure 3** Schubert, Sonata in A Major, D959, Second Movement, bars 1-18.

In bars 19-26, the melodic line appears in a similar way to its first statement in the first eight bars, but slightly decorated. A surprising effect is achieved here where a whole tone down on the bass line from F-sharp to E momentarily shifts the tonality from minor to its relative major key. In bars 25-32, the music is guided back into the home key of F-sharp minor (Figure 4).





**Figure 4** Schubert, Sonata in A Major, D959, Second Movement, bars 19-32.

A sense of stability is maintained from bar 32 onwards, using similar materials from the beginning, but an octave higher in the right hand part. In summary, the general spirit in this section seems to be lyrical and the music seems to be secure in terms of phrasing and harmonic stability. However, the improvisatory gesture in bars 69-72, with silence in the left-hand part, seems to serve as a clue that the music starts to move away from the home key (Figure 5).



**Figure 5** Schubert, Sonata in A Major, D959, Second Movement, bars 69-72.

The tension of the music is gradually built up, in particular the appearance of the first dramatic point in bars 73-75 where the sudden shift of G-sharp into G-natural in the left-hand part expands the harmonic journey throughout the middle section. The expectation of resolving the diminished chord in bars 73-74 into the home key of F-sharp minor is suspended and such tension provides alternative ways of exploring more distant keys in the tonal landscape, especially the abrupt shift from G-sharp to G-natural that prepares the dominant harmony at the end of bar 84 leading to a decisive arrival of the remote key of C minor on the first beat of bar 85 (Figure 6).

73

F#m: vii<sup>o</sup><sub>5</sub><sup>6</sup> (?)

(F natural = E sharp) Cm: V<sup>7</sup>

77

Cm: vii<sup>o7</sup>/ii vii<sup>o7</sup>/V

81

Cm: V<sup>b9</sup> V<sup>7</sup>

85

Cm: i

**Figure 6** Schubert, Sonata in A Major, D959, Second Movement, bars 73-89.

Character and action here are striking and unusual, and the theme from bar 85 is bold and decisive. Yet its assertiveness, by which it nails down each harmony in a quick gesture, allows it to take off suddenly for a new region. For instance, the gesture of the trill on G in bar 89 as well as on B in bar 98 provides another dramatic point where both trills create the unstable quality, and leads the music into chromatic transition from bar 90 to D-flat minor in bar 91 as well as bar 99 leading to F minor in bar 100 (Figure 7).

The adventurous harmonic progression from bar 85 onwards contributes to the increase in the tension of the musical plot and the half-step shift from F minor (bars 100-102) into F-sharp minor (bar 103) prepares for the dramatic high point of the whole movement, which lasts from bar 107 until bar 122 in C-sharp minor (Figure 8). During this dramatic high point, the continuously running notes, the addition of syncopation and the registral shifts maintain the level of intensity in the musical plot.

**Figure 7** Schubert, Sonata in A Major, D959, Second Movement, bars 85-100.

The design of the musical plot to this point is particularly unexpected; it has harmonic twists and does not suggest any specific resolution of the conflicts from the beginning of the middle section, in particular with the abrupt shift of the harmony in bars 73-75. Consequently, a listener may wonder how the plot can arrive at a well-defined resolution after such intense climax. To guide the situation back into stability, Schubert intelligently provides a recitative-like passage (bars 123-146) to serve as a bridge between the different sections. In other words, this recitative-like passage has an essential function in a listener's experience of the musical plot. At the moment when some attempts to resolve the tensions of the plot seemingly must arrive, this passage seems to be a response to the frustrated expectation of a resolution. It represents a completely different level of discourse from the action that a listener has been following to this point, and it interrupts the action at exactly the point when the listener's expectation of a solution peaks. As it turns out, this recitative passage simply prolongs the resolution, at least on the level at which a listener would anticipate one.

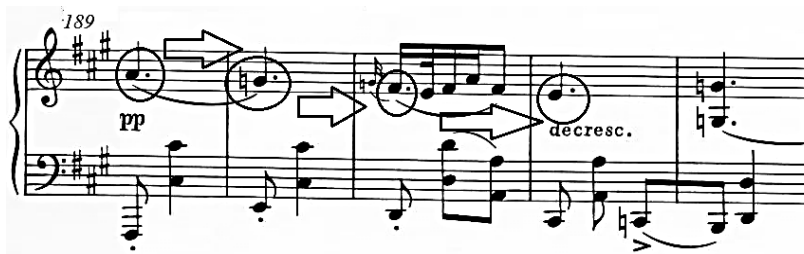
The resolution, as it turns out, is starting from bar 147 where there is an attempt to stay firmly in the dominant in order to lead back to the previous stable section. In bar 159, the music of the entire opening section returns, with a string-quartet-like texture where there is a dialogue between the upper lines in the right hand part. Before the ending of the movement's plot, the coda section in bar 189 presents a last dramatic point where the music seems to keep wandering through several sudden shifts in the pitch (for example, the A-G natural-F-sharp-E in bars 189-192, Figure 9).

In enhancing such an expressive effect, the approach of the sudden shift in pitch appears frequently from bar 192, where the bass line descends from C-sharp to C-natural and subsequently to B in bar 193, which leads the music to a Neapolitan chord. Instead of the expected resolution to the second inversion tonic chord from its previous Neapolitan chord in bar 194, Schubert uses the first inversion, and the same unusual voice-leading also occurs in bar 195, where the bass line descends by

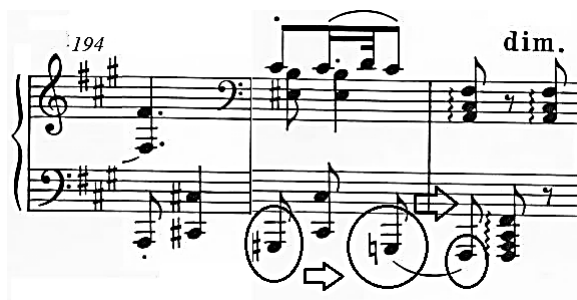
semitone shifts from G-sharp to G-natural and eventually to F-sharp in bar 196 (Figure 10).

The image displays a musical score for Schubert's Sonata in A Major, D959, Second Movement, covering bars 107 to 122. The score is written for piano in treble and bass clefs with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The notation includes various dynamics such as *ffz*, *fz*, *cresc.*, *f*, *p*, and *fffz*. There are also articulation marks like accents and slurs, and fingerings indicated by numbers 3, 6, and 8. The score shows a complex rhythmic and melodic structure with multiple measures of music in both hands.

Figure 8 Schubert, Sonata in A Major, D959, Second Movement, bars 107-122.



**Figure 9** Schubert, Sonata in A Major, D959, Second Movement, bars 189-193.



**Figure 10** Schubert, Sonata in A Major, D959, Second Movement, bars 194-196.

### Performance considerations

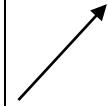
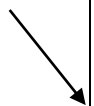


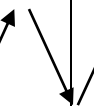
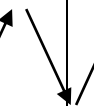
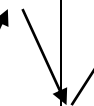

In the first section (bars 1-68), “the minor mode and harmonic stasis, together with prominent melodic sighing motives, create a mood of sorrow” (Hirsch, 2016, p.152). A performer might choose a steady tempo and the dynamics move within the range of *piano*, so that the *crescendo* and *diminuendo* remain modest. Even the *fortepiano* that Schubert indicates to mark the stretched phrasing in the main theme (bar 13, 23, 27, 45 and 59) might be taken subtly. Montgomery suggested “the best one can do [for the dynamic marking *fortepiano*] is to play the second beat of the left hand softly, as well as the first beat of the next measure in the right hand” (Montgomery, 2003, p.144).

The section in bars 69-72, which serves as a link into the middle section, might suggest the atmosphere of a fantasy world for the action (Wollenberg, 2011, p.177). So a performer might choose to emphasise the rhythmic flexibility and allow more space of time. For instance, the articulation marks within bars 69-72 suggest the phrasing, which is irregular in this short passage. The first group has a continuous slur from the E-sharp in bar 69 till the high C-sharp in bar 71, the second group has the dots under a shorter slur (B-A-G-sharp-F-sharp) in bar 71, and the third group in bar 72 has both articulation markings as the first and second. Despite the whole piece being constructed in a time signature of 3/8, it seems that the difference of phrase slurs in bars 69-72 implies certain amount of space between them. In addition, the silence of the left-hand part of this particular passage suggests the improvisational character of the right hand and thus conveys a stronger sense of the expressiveness of the musical gestures. Thus, a performer could choose to slow

down for the first two notes in bar 69 and gradually get faster towards the highest D in bar 71 before slowing down again at the end of this passage. However, some performers might conceive that the first two notes in bar 69 should not be slowed down. This is due to the first announcement of the new idea, and thus a stricter pulse is more suitable in order to keep the smoothness of musical flow.

Almost immediately, however, the plot would need to take off in the direction of increasing tension. In the central section of the second movement, the tonal scheme is constructed in an unclear direction and Schubert moves away from the home key with unusual chord progressions (Example 4): Schubert moves from the home key which is F-sharp minor into the foreign key of C minor, which is considered as the beginning of the dramatic section. The continuity of the chord progression is disjointed in bar 75, where the diminished chord was supposed to resolve to the first inversion chord of F-sharp minor, but the natural sign given to the G-sharp results in a sudden shift into the remote key of C minor. The foreign relationship between the home key (F-sharp minor) and the remote key (C minor) as well as the disjointed chord progression in bar 75 makes the character of this passage mercurial. In order to enhance such a dramatic quality, Schubert also uses the gesture of the ascending and descending lines as a way of musical expression and constructs a balanced order of the gesture in this particular passage (Table 2):

**Table 2** The order of Ascending and Descending Lines in bars 69-84.

Bar(s)	69-70	71-72	73-74	75-76	77-78	79-80	81-82	83-84
Line								

To express this musical gesture clearly in this section, the rising line (bars 69-70 and bars 73-74) implies an increase in the volume and subsequently a decrease in the volume for the descending line (bars 71-72 and bars 75-76). The sudden shift from G-sharp into G-natural in the bass line in bars 73-75 might be stressed. However, from bar 77 onwards, a performer could choose to continue the gradual rising of the volume from bar 77 so that a stronger sense of arrival of the C minor section in bar 85 could be achieved effectively.

The tension and character from the C minor section (bar 85) suggests a strong sense of boldness and increases the tension in the musical plot (Hirsch, 2016, p.156-157). The trills on the G and B in bar 89 and 98 could be made to sound ominous. During the dramatic high point from bar 105 (Figure 11), the agitated character of the C-sharp minor key, together with its frantic rhythm and harmonic progression, deserves emphasis.

The image displays a musical score for Schubert's Sonata in A Major, D959, Second Movement, specifically bars 105 through 123. The score is presented in two staves, treble and bass clef, with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The music is characterized by complex rhythmic patterns and dynamic markings. Key features include:
 

- Bar 105:** Treble clef starts with a forte (*ff*) dynamic and an accent (>). The bass clef features a fortissimo (*ffz*) dynamic and triplet markings (3).
- Bar 108:** Treble clef has a forte (*fz*) dynamic. The bass clef includes sextuplet markings (6).
- Bar 111:** Treble clef shows a crescendo (*cresc.*) and a forte (*fz*) dynamic. The bass clef has a fortissimo (*ffz*) dynamic and sextuplet markings (6).
- Bar 114:** Treble clef features an accent (>) and a forte (*fz*) dynamic. The bass clef has a piano (*p*) dynamic and sextuplet markings (6).
- Bar 117:** Treble clef has a crescendo (*cresc.*) and a forte (*f*) dynamic. The bass clef includes a fortissimo (*ffz*) dynamic and a crescendo (*cresc.*).
- Bar 120:** Treble clef starts with a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic. The bass clef has a fortissimo (*ffz*) dynamic and a piano (*p*) dynamic.

 The score also includes various articulation marks and fingerings, such as the number 8 in the treble clef and 3 and 6 in the bass clef, indicating specific technical challenges for the pianist.

**Figure 11** Schubert, Sonata in A Major, D959, Second Movement, bars 105-123.

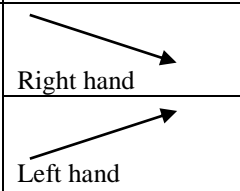
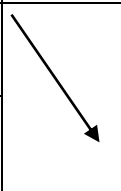
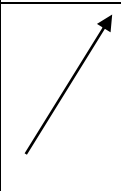
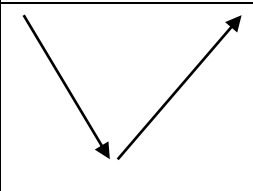
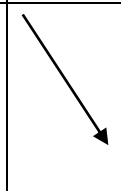
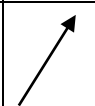
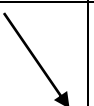
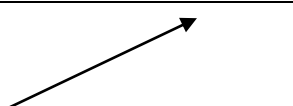
This section (bars 105-122) could be divided into several independent groups based on the musical ideas presented, and these unrelated musical ideas pose another great challenge for pianists to interpret: how to convey a sense of continuity through all these different groups of musical idea in a performance. In Example 10, Schubert seems to be trying to distinguish each group by using different articulation

marks: bars 105-106 and bars 114-115 contain the accent (>), bars 107-108 and 113 have *fz*, bars 109-112 has staccato (•) in the right-hand part, and both staccato and staccatissimo (▼) are indicated in bars 116-122.

However, a different subdivision of each musical idea could be deduced from the harmonic construction: bars 105-106 remains within the F-sharp minor region, but the six-four chord in C-sharp minor unites bars 107-110. Despite the same figuration as the previous bars (109-110 with the staccatissimo), the addition of G-natural in the right-hand part of bar 111 starts a new harmonic unit and the stepwise chromatic ascent in the bass line in bar 112 forms another harmonic unit. The E minor scalar passage in the right hand gives a single harmonic unit and the chromatic lines in the bass line in bars 114-115 form another harmonic unit. Eventually, the long pedal tone on C-sharp in the left hand from bar 116 onwards, which culminates in the climax of bar 122, with the full chords of C-sharp minor in both hands, forms the last harmonic unit.

Both subdivisions of the different musical ideas presented in this section suggest there is continuity between bars 107-108 and bars 109-110: the combination of bars 107-108 and 109-110 forms a single group due to the tonal coherence where a similar chord (six-four chord in C-sharp minor) was adopted in bars 107-110. To achieve more continuity between these different musical ideas, Schubert utilises the similar gesture of ascending and descending lines which was initially announced from the beginning of the middle section where the ascending line for the bars 69-70 was counterbalanced by the descending line of the following bars, 71-72 (Table 3):

**Table 3** The order of Ascending and Descending Lines in bars 105-122.

Bar(s)	105-106	107-108	109-110	111-112	113
Line					
Bar(s)	114	115	116-122		
Line					

The appearance of the recitative passage in bars 123-146 suggests a different performative approach. The awkwardness arising from the rests, the irregular phrases, and the fragmentary gestural melody in the right hand implies a sense of uncertainty. Rhythmic flexibility, dynamic declamation, and clear articulation between legato right-hand part and arpeggiated, strongly detached left-hand chordal accompaniment in bars 131-140 could be part of the attempts in enhancing the feeling of uncertainty. In bars 140-141, the change of the harmony to



its parallel major key (C-sharp minor to C-sharp major) with *piano* might provide a clue for a performer to apply a noticeable flexibility in the pulse.

The return of the main theme from bar 159 onwards might suggest that a pianist remains in the same character as the previous stable section, with attention to the duet between the upper lines in the right-hand part. Finally, in the Coda section, the musical expression provided by the sudden shift in pitch in bars 189-196 might suggest to a performer to adopt more space of time to fully express this musical gesture.

## CONCLUSION

In summary, the discussion of musical plot and dramatic properties in the Second Movement of Schubert's D959 includes the following interpretative considerations. Firstly, the thematic materials which include how to establish a dynamic grasp of musical structure by governing which musical events need spotlighting, to locate the significant point where it initiates the subsequent event, and to investigate how the musical tensions or problems which appear in the beginning is resolved or unresolved. Secondly, the harmonic progression which a performer needs to understand what do they imply in the characterisation of music. Thirdly, the dynamic marking which a performer needs to know what their precise purpose is given their place within the work.

It has been established that not only did the genre of sonata constantly evolve during the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century, but its tendency to play with structural ambiguity, and sometimes to be associated with poetic and literary forms, encouraged a special kind of partnership with a performer. Hence, new light has been shed on the 'paradigm shift' in early nineteenth-century performance which leads into new understandings of musical presentation where Lawrence Zbikowski categorised two distinctive musical forms: 'static form' and 'dynamic form'. Compared with the traditional sonata-form which was prevalent during the classical period, Schubert's perception of the sonata-form, including his last three piano sonatas, is innovative and seems to try to transform the sonata-form into a "means to attaining an expressive purpose" (Irving, 2002, p.199). A similar perception of the difference between 'static form' and 'dynamic form' was observed by Janet Schmalfeldt and such a conception suggests the role of the performer as a co-creator in performing early nineteenth-century instrumental works. Schubert's last three piano sonatas, including the Piano Sonata in A Major, D959, have such potential to be interpreted in many unique ways, and to evolve continuously. Constructed in a 'dynamic form', the Second Movement of Schubert's D959 gives room to a performer in interpreting the musical materials such as the large-scale harmonic constructions, the interplay and transformation of themes, the variety in the phrasing and the expressive musical markings such as articulation and rhythmic contrasts, as well as the understanding of meter and pulsation.

By adopting John Rink's idea of "structural potentialities within musical materials and then realising them as they see fit within the broader musical narrative of their performance" (Rink, 2015, p.129), this article moves into the second area

which discusses the documentation of what was happening in the music and how a performer might react to it. The difficulty with a narrative approach to musical works such as Schubert's piano sonatas, which might have enough narrative import, is not to prove whether a specific story fits the musical narrative or not, but rather to explain how a musical narrative is better achieved and communicated. Certainly, performers do not seek scientific explanations while formulating understandings of musical works or while perceptually engaging with performance processes relating to the experiencing of music. The first section focuses on how a performer might construct a musical plot in each movement of Schubert's D959, which include what connections to imply or emphasise at what point and why. The second section moves a step forward on how the connections between the musical events evoke narrative interpretations in relation to the musical plot.

The interpretative considerations shown above led to the conclusion that the Second Movement of Schubert's D959 potentially had multiple identities in relation to its conceptualisation and performance interpretation, and that these identities did not necessarily need to be resolved into just one for an effective performance to take place. All these decisions operated in combination to act upon performance-relevant matters, which in turn allowed a narrative experience to come forward. Such matters included the shape and timing of a musical event within a phrase, a phrase within a section and a section within the movement, and the momentum with which the musical tension is constructed towards an ultimate point of direction. This is all part of the process of creating an interpretative ownership of the work that develops from the potential of Schubert's instrumental music to be personalised through a variety of possibilities.

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