

## Beethoven's Error? The Modulating Ritornello and the Type-5 Sonata in the Post-Classical Piano Concerto

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### Abstract

In his analysis of the first movement of Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 3, Op. 37, Donald Francis Tovey dismissed Beethoven's decision to modulate for the second theme in the movement's opening tutti as an 'error', which gives the impression of a symphonic exposition rather than a concerto ritornello and thereby undermines the work's generic identity. For Tovey, Beethoven and practitioners falling under his influence misunderstood a fundamental principle of concerto first-movement form, enshrined in Mozart's predominant habit of associating structural modulation with the solo exposition. More recent theories of concerto first-movement form, including James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy's model of the 'type-5' sonata, sustain both Tovey's view of Op. 37 and the normativity of Mozart's example. Drawing on a corpus study of 87 piano concerti by 20 composers written between 1789 and 1848, this paper challenges the centrality of the monotonal ritornello to the theory of the type-5 sonata. It demonstrates the overwhelming generic predominance of modulating ritornelli in this time and discloses a range of practices, which have thus far escaped theoretical attention. I develop a post-canonical theory of concerto first-movement form, which questions the centrality of Mozartian norms on historical and empirical grounds, and advocates for an approach that restricts theory's purview to the evidence of historically and generically bounded corpora.

### Biography

Julian Horton is Professor of Music Theory and Analysis at Durham University. He was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he subsequently held a Research Fellowship, and has also taught at University College Dublin and King's College, London. His research focuses on the theory and analysis of form in nineteenth-century instrumental music. He is author of *Bruckner's Symphonies: Analysis, Reception and Cultural Politics* (Cambridge University Press 2004) and *Brahms' Piano Concerto No. 2, Op. 83: Analytical and Contextual Studies* (Peeters 2017), editor of *The Cambridge Companion to the Symphony* (2013), and co-editor with Lorraine Byrne Bodley of *Schubert's Late Style* (Cambridge University Press 2016) and *Rethinking Schubert* (Oxford University Press 2016). Recent articles include 'On the Musicological Necessity of Musical Analysis', published in the latest issue of *Musical Quarterly* and 'Rethinking Sonata Failure: Mendelssohn's Overture *zum Märchen von der schönen Melusine*', in press with *Music Theory Spectrum*. He is currently writing *The Symphony: A History* for Cambridge University Press. He is a past recipient of the Westrup Prize, has served as President of the Society for Music Analysis and on the councils of the Royal Musical Association and the Society for Musicology in Ireland, of which he is a Foreign Corresponding Member.