Evolving Metric Conflict in Liszt: A Generalized Intervallic Perspective  
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(About)

In recent years, Franz Liszt has garnered increasing interest among music theorists for his innovations in harmony and form. However, little attention has been given to rhythmic aspects of his compositional style: in particular, he frequently incorporates rich rhythmic structures in which the meter written in the score and the meter perceived by the listener are locked in an evolving conflict. While Harald Krebs (1999) has treated conflict between metrical layers in Robert Schumann’s music, his approach is primarily static, using the metrically consonant or dissonant states themselves as his basic analytical units. David Lewin’s GIS concept, however, provides a dynamic alternative, for Lewin’s focus is not on objects in a musical space, but on the intervals and changes between these objects.

Thus, building upon Lewin’s work, I shall introduce a new direct product GIS, $GIS_{W,P,B}$, that describes metric conflict intervallically through three component GISes: $GIS_W$, which measures the passage of written bars; $GIS_P$, which measures the passage of perceived bars as defined by musical cues; and $GIS_B$, which tracks the shifting perceived downbeat within the written bar. I shall then introduce the concepts of intervallic expansion and contraction, which allow $GIS_{W,P,B}$ intervals to be manifested at multiple metric hierarchical levels. These concepts shall then form the basis for an analysis of the opening section of Liszt’s Wilde Jagd in which I shall highlight the emergence of the interval $(5/6, 1, -1)$ as a characteristic interval for the piece.