

THE INTEGRATION OF A WORK:
FROM MINIATURE TO LARGE-SCALE

Edited by Zofia Chechlińska and Jim Samson



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Magdalena Oliferko-Storck (*Between Brillante Style and Exalted di Bravura Virtuosity: The Integration of Musical Form in the Output of Composers from Chopin's Circle*) skupia się na konstruktywnych opracowaniach wariacyjnych kompozytorów z kręgu Chopina – zwłaszcza tych, którzy znaleźli się pod jego artystycznym wpływem – z zamiarem prześledzenia metod, zastosowanych do osiągnięcia integracji strukturalnej dzieła w ramach stylu *brilliant*.

Recepcją twórczości Chopina zajmuje się Inja Stanović (*Brilliant but not Difficult: Amateur Playing of Chopin in Nineteenth-Century Britain*), kierując swoje zainteresowanie na Chopinowską muzykę w kontekście amatorskich wykonań w wiktoriańskiej Anglii i stawiając sobie za cel odkrycie pewnych podtekstów leżących u podstaw zwyczajów wykonawców amatorów oraz wydawców i wspierających je.

Kenneth Hamilton na konferencji wystąpił z wykładem-recitalem *The Architecture of Chopin in Performance: Tempo, Integration and Affect*, prezentując rozmaite historyczne i współczesne podejścia do wykonawstwa Chopina, od strukturalnego po narracyjne, akcentując historycznie zmienne poglądy na integrację tempa i dynamiki w wielkich formach (m.in. sonatach i polonezach). Na potrzeby niniejszej publikacji skupił się na skomplikowanych relacjach pomiędzy dorobkiem Franciszka Liszta i Fryderyka Chopina – jako przykłady wybierając *Polonaise* op. 53 i *Funérailles*. Przyjrzał się z uwagą złożonym zagadnieniom wykonawstwa i odbioru (*Chopin–Liszt: Paradoxes of Composition, Reception and Performance in the Polonaise Op., 53 and Funérailles*).

Konferencja *The integration of a work: from miniature to large scale* stanowiła trzecie ogniwo cyklu realizowanego w latach 2016–2019, zaprojektowanego z zamiarem pozyskania materiału porównawczego dla badań chopinowskich poprzez podjęcie zagadnień, które są ważne w twórczości Chopina, i zbadanie, czy, w jaki sposób i na ile funkcjonują one także w twórczości innych współczesnych mu kompozytorów. Zwieńczeniem serii konferencji stał się zorganizowany w grudniu 2021 roku Międzynarodowy Kongres Chopinologiczny *Through the Prism of Chopin: Reimagining the 19th Century*.

Kamila Stępień-Kutera

JAMES HEPOKOSKI

ASPECTS OF STRUCTURE IN CHOPIN'S NOCTURNES

Chopin's nocturnes are so familiar to us today that one might wonder whether there is anything new to say about them. From the point of view of formal structure, most of them conform readily enough to our generalised expectation of many of the piano miniatures of the era: principal thematic statement (here in lyrical, 'nocturne style') followed by contrasting digression (perhaps eruptive), reprise of all or part of the original statement and optional coda. Upon closer inspection, though, this generalisation can strike us as insufficient. When we zoom in for a closer look at the internal details of the nocturnes – one of the genres that Chopin set into dialogue with this schema of idea/departure/return/coda – what we find is a variety of ways in which he realises that pattern. Chopin's compositional challenge was not only that of individualising the musical/topical content of his thematic/harmonic material and manner of virtuosic embellishment, but also that of personalising his approach to what we might initially regard as the 'default' ABA + coda schema. Within each work, Chopin's idiosyncratic realisations of a potentially formulaic pattern complement his idiosyncratic, moment-to-moment deliveries of pianistic performance.

It was with those assumptions that I began the task of looking at the twenty nocturnes – the eighteen published during his lifetime, along with the two posthumously published ones (E minor, Op. 72 No. 1 and C sharp minor, Op. posth.) – and trying to come to terms with how they seem to have been put together.¹ What I hope to bring to the conversation

¹ I have not included the Nocturne in C minor, Op. posth. in this study. While the piece's history had been a mystery for some time, most recently its authenticity has been called into question in a study by Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger, *Chopin and Baroness Nathaniel de Rothschild* (Warsaw: NIFC, 2015). Eigeldinger includes a facsimile edition of the first print of the nocturne,

about the nocturnes – and potentially, by extension, to that about other short-form pieces by Chopin and others of the period – is similar to what Wittgenstein called ‘noticing an aspect’. Answering the question ‘What do you see there?’, one reply is ‘I see this I observe a face, and then suddenly notice its likeness to another. I see that it has not changed; and yet I see it differently. I call this experience “noticing an aspect”.’² At stake is a matter of perception, the way that we filter and organise our experience of this music. What do we ‘see’ (hear) when we listen to a nocturne? Is it possible to observe the nocturnes under a frame of reference that, while perhaps not truly new, is given an unaccustomed emphasis? And if so, what analytical and hermeneutic implications might that bring to them? This essay concerns how the nocturnes’ structures can look when certain aspects of them are called forth for attention.

TERNARIES AND BINARIES: LARGER AND SMALLER STRUCTURES

Each nocturne is an individualised statement inviting consideration on its own terms, to the point where as a group they elude easy generalisation. Even while affirming this, the general consensus about their formal organisations has been to regard most of them as grounded in ‘large ternary’ structure, or ‘compound ternary’ form, as it is sometimes called (ABA’).³ As noted above, this ‘top-down’ view normally locates: (A) a clearly delineated, harmonically closed opening melodic section in ‘nocturne texture’ but of variable length; (B) an often sharply contrasting middle section or interior theme of substantial length; and (A’) a full or partial reprise of the opening melody, perhaps significantly embellished – usually followed by a post-structural coda.

So far as it goes, this generalisation accurately describes some of the nocturnes. Yet a complementary approach emerges if one looks at them

which indicated Charlotte de Rothschild as the composer. I am grateful to Jeffrey Kallberg for calling this to my attention.

² Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, rev. 4th edn, tr. G. E. M. Anscombe, P. M. S. Hacker and Joachim Schulte, ed. P. M. S. Hacker and Joachim Schulte (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), ‘Part 2’ or ‘Philosophy of Psychology’, section xi, nos. 111 and 113.

³ William E. Caplin, *Classical Form: A Theory of Formal Functions for the Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 211–216.

from the ‘bottom up’, that is, as variants, expansions or compoundings of a smaller-scale, quasi-standardised short format, the *rounded binary* form – sometimes also called the *small ternary* form – whose prototypical schema (that is, its characteristic arrangement of melodic sub-parts) is *aa’ba’’*, though the ‘non-rounded’ *aa’bc*, less common in Chopin, is a closely related family member. More specifically, I want to suggest that several of the nocturnes might also be thought of as playing off and expanding a textural and lyrical-melodic subtype of the long-established rounded binary/small ternary schema, one common to that era’s Italian operatic song that I call the *lyric binary* arrangement (prototypically *aa’ba’’ + coda*).⁴

I use small letters and italics (*aa’ba’’*) to indicate the lyric binary connotation as distinct from the more generic, non-italicised designation for the rounded binary/small ternary (*aa’ba’’*) and from the capital letters that I use for the larger-block sections of a compounded ABA’ structure. This means that in such an ABA’ structure the initial section A can itself be organised as a smaller-scale lyric binary or variant thereof (*aa’ba’’*, followed by a contrasting B, a reprise of all or part of the original *aa’ba’’* and a coda). In fact, this happens in eight of the twenty nocturnes. For the limited purposes of this study, I will consider that feature, *a complete presentation of a small-form lyric binary before the onset of B*, to be the defining trait of an unequivocal compound ternary structure (ABA’). In other words, if any contrasting B section is not preceded by the full small form (if it is preceded, for instance, only by *aa’* or *aa’b*, and not the full *aa’ba’’*), I will not group that nocturne with the eight others in the compound ternary group.

What I propose instead is that the structures of nine of the other nocturnes may, from this ‘bottom up’ perspective, be understood not as large ternary, ABA’ forms *tout court* but rather as variants or expansions of smaller-dimension single lyric binaries (small-letter, italicised *aa’ba’’ + coda*). My larger point is not dependent on the degree to which any reader might or might not be persuaded by the ‘lyric binary’ connotation

⁴ As will emerge, a concluding coda is the strong norm in Italian operatic song, though n. 9 below cites some exceptions. Chopin typically concludes his nocturnes with a coda, sometimes quite extended. Within a large or compound ternary form, however, an initial lyric binary, preceding a large, contrasting B, typically suppresses the coda, including it only at the end of the final full or partial reprise, A’.

that I shall be suggesting. If one prefers a less connotatively inflected terminology, substituting the more generalised term 'rounded binary' or 'small ternary' (aa'ba", often, here, with added coda) would do as well. Regardless of the term under which the schema is characterised, my argument about the integrity of the small-scale format is the same.

More than that, I will also propose that most of the nocturnes – including the eight large ternary ones (ABA') – can be profitably reconstrued by starting from the smaller, lyric binary perspective. This first entails a closer look at the 'lyric binary' proper as a generically and culturally particularised format, introduced here via its Italian bel canto prototype and problematised in its possible transfer from vocal into virtuosic instrumental practice (not all aa'ba"-based, song-oriented forms of the period need be claimed as *lyric binaries*, particularly if by the term we mean only those that are historically relatable to Italianate song practices),⁵ that then proceeds into its larger family of extensions and elaborations as found in most of Chopin's nocturnes. I will conclude by singling out the three remaining nocturnes, in which neither the lyric binary/rounded binary/small ternary nor the large ternary arrangement are in evidence.

THE LYRIC BINARY SONG FORMAT: CONNOTATIONS AND CHARACTERISTIC DESIGN

While it might seem that such a straightforward, song-appropriate schema, aa'ba" (and 'family-related' small-form schemata), would present few conceptual challenges for the analyst, that is not the case. The initial problem is definitional, intertwined with the terminological, since even a simple letter scheme buttressed with an identificatory form label carries more conceptual and historical baggage that one might initially think. On the one hand, there is no current *Formenlehre* consensus about even the most basic aspects of the form (binary or ternary?),

⁵ What is at issue here is the degree of flexibility with which one wishes to regard the term 'lyric binary', if we wish to regard it as applicable at all to instrumentally conceived analogues to the schema. Do we want it to be limited only to the Italian-specific variant of this era or might it be usefully applicable more widely to various types of lyrical, songlike aa'ba" or aa'bc structures? One might decide this question either way. Nn. 10, 12, 17, 19 and 25 below pursue some aspects of this question.

much less on the term that we should use to designate it. On the other hand, in compositional practice, not least within the many creative singularities found in Romantic and post-Romantic piano miniatures, where the general backdrop of the schema is often in play, its treatment can be so varied, so given to individualised, ad hoc adaptations and expansions, that it becomes unwise to insist upon inelastic guidelines about what 'must happen' within such a format. Under these circumstances, it is prudent to consider the aa'ba" model not as a rule-bound template that must be rigidly followed to be regarded as such, but rather as a longstanding conceptual/gestural norm, a regulative idea, or a prototype with which any individual realisation is set into an imaginative dialogue, one that the current analyst can try to recreate in his or her reading of the work.⁶

Primarily concerned with Classical-era instrumental formats (minuet-trio forms, themes of variation sets, rondo themes, and so on), recent form-functional theory regards the familiar small-form schema and its hybrid variants as the three-part, *small ternary form*: an 'exposition' (often, aa', ending in either the tonic or in a closely related key); a 'contrasting middle' (b, typically with a harmonic interruption on V at the end of b); and a 'recapitulation' (a or aa", ending in the tonic).⁷ And again, other analysts, noting all this, have considered it to be a two-part *rounded binary form*, where aa' comprises the first part and ba" the second, an artifact of its structural heritage in earlier binary form, and one in which this feature is often explicitly demarcated by repeat signs (||: aa': ||: ba": ||). We can consider all of the above as varied, Classical-era 'topical' ways of deploying the more generalised aa'ba" melodic principle.

⁶ This is what I have called the principle of *dialogic form*, the grounding axiom of my own analytical practice. See e.g. James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory: Norms, Types, and Deformations in the Late-Eighteenth-Century Sonata* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), especially 605–610; James Hepokoski, 'Sonata Theory and Dialogic Form', in James Hepokoski, William E. Caplin and James Webster, *Musical Form, Form & Formenlehre: Three Methodological Reflections*, ed. Pieter Bergé (Leuven: University Press Leuven, 2009), 71–89; James Hepokoski, *A Sonata Theory Handbook* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020).

⁷ Caplin, *Classical Form*, 71–86. Caplin (p. 73) describes the form as ABA', noting that the 'exposition', the opening A portion, 'most often [...] consists of an eight-measure period or an eight-measure hybrid with periodic characteristics' (antecedent + continuation or compound basic idea + consequent). Thus Caplin's A normally subdivides into two 4+4 units, paired modules, that can also be designated, as I prefer in the present circumstances, as aa' or *ax*.

Also in play by the late 1820s and early 1830s was the Italianate, songlike *aa'ba*" + *coda* variant of the format – what I have called the *lyric binary*, a historically specific subtype of the more extensive rounded binary/small ternary family. Thus while the various castings of the *aa'ba*" schema have a long history in European instrumental and vocal practice, *primo ottocento* operatic composers adopted and slightly refashioned a commonly shared, small-scale schema for their own ends. This lyrical subtype, *aa'ba*" + *coda* (along with its common alternative, *aa'bc* + *coda*), is well known, common coin, to analysts of *ottocento* operatic song and aria formats from about 1825 onward. In the later twentieth century, a number of Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti and Verdi scholars were identifying that schema and calling it 'lyric form', the 'lyric prototype' or the 'lyric binary', a common formal arrangement that came to be increasingly regularised in the 1830s and into the Verdian 1840s.⁸ Within this repertory of formalised song, it is worth noting that in standard practice it never features notated repeat signs: any literal or near-literal repetitions (for instance, in occasional expansions of the form) are written out in full.

By about 1830, then, around the time Chopin was beginning to emerge as a composer in Western Europe, the lyric binary schema, *aa'ba*" + *coda* (and related *aa'bc* + *coda*) was one of the common formats for Italian opera cantables and cabalettas (internal solo songs within arias and many other melodic structures) and also for salon-appropriate Italian *canzone*.⁹ To

⁸ For discussions of the frequency and variants of this structure in Italian opera, see especially Scott L. Balthazar, 'Rossini and the Development of the Mid-Century Lyric Form', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 41/1, 102–125; Steven Huebner, 'Lyric Form in *Ottocento* Opera', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 117/1 (1992), 123–147; James Hepokoski, 'Ottocento Opera as Cultural Drama: Generic Mixtures in *Il Trovatore*', in Martin Chusid (ed.), *Verdi's Middle Period (1849–59): Source Studies, Analysis, and Performance Practice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 147–196. Background literature for each of these three studies includes Friedrich Lippman, 'Verdi e Bellini', *Atti del 1° congresso internazionale di 1966* (Parma: Istituto di Studi Verdiani, 1969), 184–196; Julian Budden, *The Operas of Verdi*, 3 vols (London, 1973–1981); Joseph Kerman, 'Lyric Form and Flexibility in *Simon Boccanegra*', *Studi Verdiani*, 1 (1982), 47–62. For form-functional theory and the small ternary, see Caplin, *Classical Form*, 13–15, 71–86.

⁹ On some occasions, the 'extra' termination provided by a coda is omitted, especially where the melody is either responded to immediately with another one (as often happens with a duet *proposta* – the initial melody sung ('proposed') by the first of the two performers, preceding a lyric binary *risposta* from the second) or is only the first statement of a melody that will be repeated (as often in the first statement of a cabaletta melody).

what extent might the operatic 'lyric binary' subtype also be applicable to most of Chopin's nocturnes, since the more abstract term 'rounded binary' or 'small ternary' would do as well? ('Lyric binary,' one might suggest, can be more narrowly construed as inflecting the still applicable, more neutralised formal term in a historically connotational, Italianate direction.¹⁰) One point of relevance is that Chopin's nocturnes, with their often dreamlike, gauzy principal themes, are not infrequently taken to be in dialogue with the melodic and textural features of the Bellinian or Donizettian bel canto style, or perhaps even more tellingly, with the bel canto, embellished delivery of those melodies by the celebrated sopranos of the 1830s – Giuditta Pasta, Maria Malibran, Laure Cinti-Damoreau and others.¹¹ This is not to reduce the structure of several of Chopin's nocturnes to a common prototype of bel canto song form: there were doubtless a number of piano-solo-miniature influences on his imaginative formal designs, and, as we will see, his dialogic recastings and compoundings of the *aa'ba*" format – not least the disturbances that he sometimes integrates into it – are among the nocturnes' most compelling features.

Nonetheless, because of the nocturnes' songlike connotations and bel-canto-alluding embellishments, it can be instructive to begin a study of their formal plans with an awareness of that Italian vocal variant, especially since these pieces might have been fashioned by a composer at least mindful of the 'lyric binary' procedures of currently fashionable Italian operatic song. (Applying that variant to the several *aa'ba*" melodic structures found in Chopin's other genres, particularly when they are joined with songlike, lyrical melodies, might be provocative, and perhaps occasionally apt, though the nocturnes would appear to be the prime candidates in any such inquiry.¹²) And in any event, when imagining responses

¹⁰ The idea of construing the 'lyric binary' schema in this more limited way was suggested to me by John Lawrence, who is pursuing his own, 'topical' study of that structure when it is adapted in certain kinds of songlike instrumental pieces. I am grateful to him for his incisive comments on an earlier draft of this essay, comments that have affected the lyric binary discussions that follow here.

¹¹ See e.g. Will Crutchfield, 'Chopin, the Day after the Opera', *The New York Times*, 20 June 1999, Section 2, Page 21 (online at <https://www.nytimes.com/1999/06/20/arts/music-chopin-the-day-after-the-opera.html>)

¹² As suggested in n. 5 above, the 'labelling' question boils down to this: under which circumstances is it reasonable to provide a self-evident rounded binary/small ternary (*aa'ba*"'), 'song-

to them by many of Chopin's Parisian-salon listeners – to the extent that they might have been concerned with registering 'formal questions' at all, however subliminally (melody–digression–return, melodic completion, appended close) – it seems reasonable to suspect that the larger shapes, textures, moods and aims of many of Chopin's nocturnes could have been generally grasped as virtuosic keyboard 'translations' or adaptations of bel canto song for both sensitively intimate and spectacular displays of virtuosity. This is a different, more historical question from that generally posed by our own academically abstract form categories.

The *aa'ba*" structure, and certainly its Italianate, 'lyric binary' adaptation, which typically included a coda as well, was by no means a merely schematic, neutralised arrangement or serviceable container. On the contrary, by the 1830s, and even earlier, it carried implicit, social connotations. First among them was that of spontaneous, genuine and even 'artless' song – heartfelt, Mediterranean Romantic song. Some years ago, I pursued some of the historically accrued cultural implications of the *aa'ba*" + *coda* schema (and related schemata) in an essay on Verdi and nineteenth-century Italian opera form. With regard to what would become its increasingly ubiquitous usage in Italian opera (and elsewhere, for the structure has a long history), among my conclusions were that by the decades surrounding 1800, the *aa'ba*" lyrical type

seems to have been particularly appropriate either for simpler, lighter tunes or for melodies that were intended to impress with their straightforwardness, unaffected sincerity, or popular/folklike spontaneity [...] [implicitly calling up] a 'natural' (nonaristocratic/non-old-world) sentiment [as if wrung forth directly from the heart] [...]. One of the core features of Primo Ottocento opera would be the elevation of this supposedly 'natural' design within arias, duets, and ensembles to the position of high elegance, prestige, and formality.¹³

like' melodic structure with the overlay of an additional qualifier, 'lyric binary', especially if we elect to restrict its meaning to apply solely – or even largely – to its mid-century Italian (or, more broadly, Mediterranean) operatic song models? While a 'lyric binary' orientation seems plausible with regard to the often bel-canto-oriented nocturnes, it is far from clear that that additional qualifier applies so readily to other *aa'ba*" 'songlike' melodies or their creative variants found in other works of Chopin – or, for that matter, in the instrumental works of other composers, not least those written before 1830 (before the true bel canto vogue). The present essay is an exercise in applying the 'lyric binary' label and connotation only to the extended form found in the nocturnes. N.25 below elaborates on this terminological question.

¹³ Hepokoski, 'Ottocento Opera as Cultural Drama', p. 159.

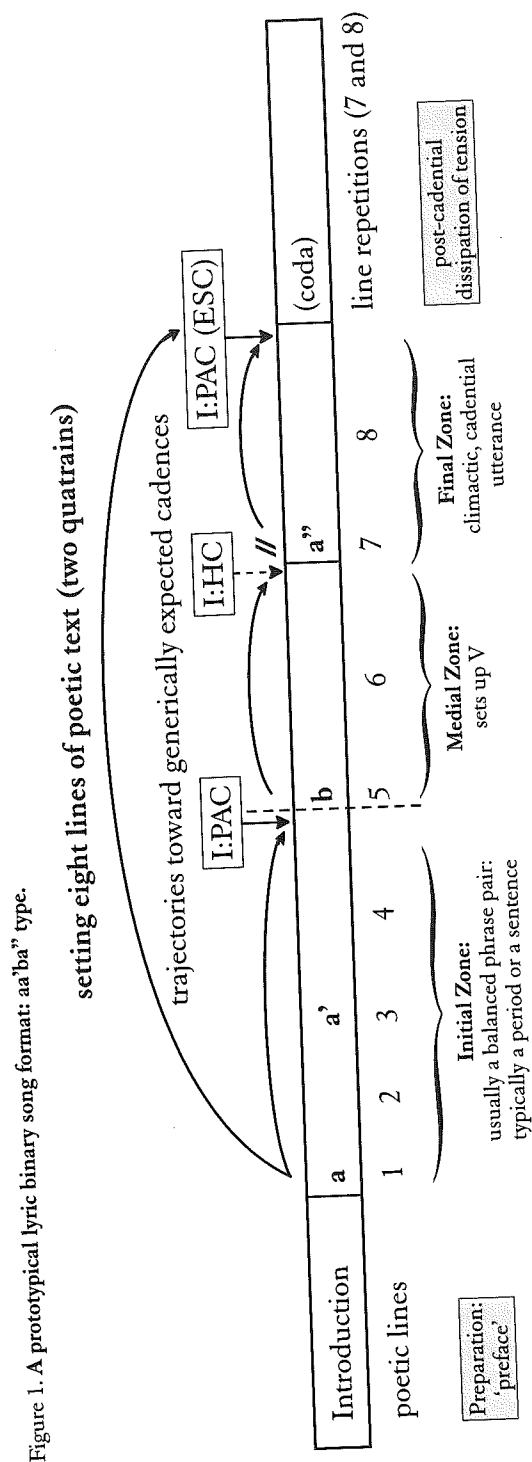
As an unassuming vehicle for the staging of what was to be perceived as immediate emotion, the lyric binary – like the small ternary of which this Italianate schema was a stylised subset – was an ideal carrier for burgeoning Romantic song.

Figure 1 takes a closer look at the internal processes of the prototypical *aa'ba*" + *coda* lyric binary format. It illustrates the prototypical Italian solo-song situation, that in which the ready-to-hand musical schema set eight lines of text shown in the diagram by the numbers under the letters. In Bellini's well-known song for voice and piano 'Vaga luna', from c.1830, for instance – a useful touchstone of the lyric binary format – the composer treats the standard eight poetic lines musically in the most normative fashion. This song (readily available for listening on internet streaming services) unfurls two musically identical stanzas, each of which is set to the same lyric binary melody. This is the first stanza of its text:

Vaga luna, che inargenti
queste rive e questi fiori
ed ispiri agli elementi
il linguaggio dell'amor;
testimonio or sei tu sola
del mio fervido desir,
ed a lei che m'innamora
conta i palpiti e i sospir.

The text's eight lines are divisible poetically and syntactically into (2+2) + (2+2), two quatrains, each of which subdivides into two symmetrical halves. Bellini's melody sets the text in square-cut, symmetrical fashion: two lines each for *a*, *a'*, *b* and *a''*. Since each line of poetry fills two bars of music, the eight-line poetic stanza requires sixteen bars of music to complete: *aa'ba*" = (4+4) + (4+4) bars. Once the final cadence is attained, closing off the structure proper, each stanza, as shown in Figure 1, is rounded off with an 'after-the-end' coda that repeats the text of lines 7 and 8 and confirms the tonic closure attained at the end of the first statement of line 8. The role of the coda is to provide a sense of 'full termination', an add-on enhancement of the melody proper's closure to signal that the song as a whole is being brought to a polished conclusion.¹⁴ (Such a coda can also incorporate a cadenza before its final

¹⁴ For the occasional exceptions to the presence of such a coda, see n. 9 above.

Figure 1. A prototypical lyric binary song format: $aa'ba''$ type.

cadence.) Like most lyric binary Italian melodies of the era, 'Vaga luna' begins with a short introduction in the piano, which we can construe as a 'before-the-beginning' preface to the song proper.¹⁵

While the sixteen-bar musical prototype that we find in 'Vaga luna' is frequently found in Italian song, in that and other repertoires we sometimes find its proportions doubled (or 'compounded') in length: $(8+8) + (8+8)$. Perhaps resulting from a longer text or a desire for a more expansive setting of each poetic line, this thirty-two bar prototype can be called a *compound lyric binary*, while the sixteen-bar prototype can be regarded as the *simple lyric binary*. Both simple and compound types can be found in Chopin's nocturnes. In many instances, we might imagine an implicit poetic text behind the purely instrumental music.

As Figure 1 shows, I subdivide the core of this format into three *action zones*, and accordingly from this point onward I will represent that pattern as $aa' - b // a''$ (or as the $aa' - b // c$ variant, though that non-rounded variant is not found in Chopin's nocturnes), each of which drives toward and articulates a generically expected cadence or terminal equivalent. The first is the *initial zone*, aa' , almost always a complete thematic statement ('the main melody') that advances toward a perfect authentic cadence (at the end of the a' or 'line-4' moment) in either the tonic – as in the Bellini example – or a closely related key, as can happen in other instances. The dash at the end of aa' represents that PAC. For the structural types of eight-bar- or sixteen-bar-based themes that can fill the initial zone, I adopt the now-standard terminology of form-functional theory.¹⁶ Most typically (and retaining here the prototypical eight-bar model), the initial zone's thematic statement is shaped as a balanced phrase pair (4+4), most typically as a *period*, antecedent + consequent, as here, producing the familiar aa' symmetry for setting lines 1–2 and 3–4, though in other cases we might find a similar balanced phrase pair that in one respect or another fails to meet the strict criteria for a period – as in form-functional theory's Hybrids 1, 2 and 4.

For the sake of completeness, one should also note that within Italian song practice the initial zone might also be shaped as a *sentence*: presentation + continuation, $(2+2) + 4$. In the latter case, line 3 does

¹⁵ 'Before-the-beginning' and 'after-the-end' are two standard framing functions laid out in Caplin, *Classical Form*, 15–16.

¹⁶ Caplin, *Classical Form*, 35–70.

not begin by returning to the head motif of line 1. The result is no longer *aa'*, but rather what might be designated as *ax* (again, encompassing presentation [*a*] + continuation [*x*], concluding with a cadence) – in order to preserve the letter *b* for the next zone. This results in a format not of the *aa' – b // a''* type, but rather of the sentential variants *ax – b // a'*, *ax – b // a'x* or, more typically, *ax – b // c*. As the *presentation* of a sentence, lines 1 and 2, the letter-*a* portion, are typically built as a brief musical idea (line 1) and its immediate repetition or embellished variant (line 2). This subdivides the letter-*a* material into two similar parts, which – for sentences – I designate with Greek letters. The letter-*a* portion (lines 1 and 2) can therefore also be described as $\alpha\alpha'$, the presentation, while what follows (the *x* portion, lines 3–4) can be described as β , the continuation, including the cadence. In short, for a lyric binary whose initial zone is built as a sentence (instead of the more common period), the whole schema could also be described as $\alpha\alpha'\beta – b // reprise$ of some aspect of the complete sentence, $\alpha\alpha'\beta$ or, alternatively (as is more likely to be found in Italian operatic song), a differing '*c*' phrase instead of the melodic reprise.¹⁷

As expected, here and there, one finds deviations from the four- and eight-bar norms: internal expansions or compressions, short-range extensions and the like or, as noted above, their magnifications into *compounded*, double-sized phrases (8+8). Nonetheless, isolating the initial zone of even a much-nuanced lyric binary normally presents us with no serious difficulties.

The pivotal claim in what follows is this: whether it is a period or a sentence, *the initial zone of a lyric binary is only the first portion*

¹⁷ Leonora's 'D'amor sull'ali rosee' from the final act of Verdi's *Il trovatore* provides an example of an expansive '*c*' phrase instead of a sentential reprise. Melodies with spotlighted '*c*' phrases of this sort may also be regarded as being in dialogue with (though not identical to) those in verse-refrain structure. For that structure, see Hepokoski, 'Ottocento Opera'. However, a full sentential reprise may be found – albeit not in Italian opera (and in its hymnic texture not directly relatable to the Mediterranean-song connotations of the 'lyric binary') – in the Pilgrim's Chorus, 'Beglückt darf nun dich', in Act 3 of Wagner's *Tannhäuser* – a melody, of course, that is also well known as the *Andante maestoso* introduction to the *Tannhäuser* Overture. Among its curiosities is that it features a 'tonicised dominant' conclusion of both the $\alpha\alpha'\beta$ thematic block and its reprise, thereby leaving the structure open-ended into what follows, as if the hymnic chanting were devoted to an endless loop of repetition. In the Overture, the essential rounded-binary structure is followed by a 'one more time' repetition of the much-expanded '*b*' and the sentential thematic block, fading out before its completion.

of a more elaborate small form, a three-zone structure, with two more zones to follow. Even if harmonically complete and ending with a I:PAC (as in this case), the initial zone, from the perspective of the lyric binary structure as a whole, is only a starting point, an initial stage or proposal. (This is all the clearer for initial-zone balanced phrase pairs that end with a non-tonic PAC.) Instead, within the convention of the 'lyric binary', such a two-phrase opening – such as an antecedent and a consequent – implies more to come: a digression (medial zone) and a reprise (final zone) down the road. The whole lyric structure is vectored toward the I:PAC structural close in the final zone, the full completion of the integral melodic schema, *aa' – b // a''*. The tonic or non-tonic PAC that concludes the initial zone is only a pit stop or breathing space before we proceed into the next zone. This point will prove important when we consider the layouts of Chopin's nocturnes.

The second zone is the *medial zone* (the letter-*b* portion, setting lines 5 and 6 in a normative, short, eight-bar theme). Its task is to digress briefly from the I:PAC that precedes it in order, normally, to set up an active but interrupted dominant at its end, though on occasion the sense of interruption – and implicit break – can be provided by some other harmonic means. I represent that interruption (again, usually on V) with diagonal lines: *//*.¹⁸ While the melodic 'digression' from *aa'* is normally self-evident, it is also the case that it nearly always retains a sense of textural or topical continuity with that of *aa'* ('the song continues'). It does not present a radically maximal or eruptive contrast from what precedes it.

The medial zone prepares for the launch of the *final zone*, either letter-*a''*, as in 'Vaga luna', or, as in some other Italian vocal instances, a new, climactic idea, letter-*c*, setting lines 7 and 8. The former option – the only one that will concern us with Chopin – brings a reprise of

¹⁸ *Primo ottocento* 'lyric form' also includes a variant of the *aa' – b // c + coda* format, one in which there is no harmonic interruption between the *b* and *c* modules. In this variant – less relevant, as it happens, to Chopin's nocturnes – a (usually brief) *b* proceeds directly into a differing, cadential *c* module. The result is diagrammable as *aa' – bc + coda*. Two examples from the first act of Bellini's *Norma* (in each case the first song, the 'cantabile,' or *primo tempo*, of a double-song cavatina, or entrance-aria) are Pollione's 'Meco all'altar di Venere' and Norma's 'Casta Diva'. It is in such cases that terminological issues again rear their heads. These cases can be regarded as neither 'small ternaries' nor 'rounded binaries'. They are instances, however, of what form-functional theory calls the 'small binary' form (Caplin, *Classical Form*, 87–95), and the term 'lyric binary' (or 'lyric form') may also be applied to them.

some aspect or variant of the initial zone, though within the 'lyric binary' proper, only a single statement of the letter-*a*' material or some variant of it, since it had been letter-*a*' material (that is, the consequent of the initial period, if that had been the initial zone's format) that had produced the I:PAC at the end of the initial zone. Climactic and cadential, the final zone, and particularly its ending, can be expanded in length in order to delay, and thereby highlight, the arrival of its concluding moment of closure, the I:PAC at the end of line 8. I call this decisive cadence the point of the piece's *essential structural closure* (ESC). Because of its role in securing closure for the full three-zone structure, this final zone is characteristically 'spotlighted' or given some kind of enhanced, special treatment on the way to that I:PAC/ESC. (In Italian song, the normative concluding lines, 7 and 8, typically provide the textual point of the poetic double quatrains.)

Because the lyric binary traces out a broader trajectory that concludes only with its final PAC, it is an end-accented form. It pushes ever-forward toward its spotlighted, melodic closure at the end of its final zone. Normally confirming that close and bringing the entire song structure to an unequivocal end – rounding it off – is an add-on coda ('after the end' of the melody proper), which on occasion can be quite extended and include a cadenza or other special-effect elements of technical display. When present, any prefatory initial gesture or introduction and coda serves a framing function – prefatory entrance and final exit – with the coda grounding the now-secured tonic.

THREE COMMON EXPANSIONS OF THE LYRIC BINARY PROTOTYPE AND CHOPIN'S OP. 9 NO. 2

While the simple or compound *aa' – b // a'' + coda* format (or its most obvious variants, *aa' – b // c + coda* or *ax – b // c [or ax] + coda*) represents the most compact version of the lyric binary schema, in practice it can be lengthened in a number of ways, and particularly so in instrumental adaptations of the schema. In one, the medial zone – the *b* section – might be enlarged considerably beyond its prototypical length, thereby disrupting the more normative symmetry of the three action zones, as could be the case for solo song texts that have more lines to set. In another, the final zone can be broadened to delay and enhance the eventual arrival

of the final I:PAC. In a third, we are given a repetition of the medial and final zones, not only providing a return of that music but, by the mere fact of that repetition, adding a new emphasis to it (*aa' – b // a'' – b // a'' + coda*). This last is of course a common 'rounded binary' repetition that we could also notate with repeat signs (*aa' ||: b // a'': ||*), though, again, it is worth remarking that Italianate lyric forms proper do not have notated repeat signs.¹⁹ None of these modifications complicate the task of recognising the grounding lyric binary arrangement.

This last-mentioned method of expansion, the 'one more time' repetition of *b // a''*, is the arrangement that we find in the simplest and most easily parsed of Chopin's nocturnes, that in E flat, Op. 9 No. 2: *aa' – b // a'' – b // a'' + coda*. Because of its lyric binary orthodoxy, indeed, its schematic simplicity, this piece is the ideal place to start in any consideration of the nocturnes as a group.

- Bars 1–8: *initial zone (aa')*. Dispensing with an introductory preface, the nocturne begins directly with the initial zone, *piano, espressivo* and *dolce*, in bel canto singing-style, *aa'* (4+4), bars 1–4, 5–8 – the onset of a simple lyric binary. As is characteristic of Chopin's treatment of nocturne themes, the second phrase, *a'*, begins the process of embellishment of the first. The thematic curiosity here, though, is that both four-bar *a*-phrases end with a tonic-key PAC: bar 4 and bar 8. Instead of the more typical *aa'* antecedent–consequent pair, we have a single phrase ending with a I:PAC (insistently attained with a *crescendo* to *forte*) and its decoratively enhanced repetition, with the first of them (bars 1–4) 'in antecedent position' – that is, in the place typically occupied by an antecedent, though harmonically it is not one – and the second 'in consequent

¹⁹ See e.g. Verdi's famous chorus 'Va, pensiero' from *Nabucco*, whose repetition of *ba''* is prompted by the presence of additional textual lines. In any event, the idea of repeating the final *ba''* of a rounded binary/small ternary seems to have been a familiar option within pan-European song, perhaps due to its generally 'binary' heritage, which often called for a literal, notated repetition of its second part. A touchstone (one without notated repeat signs) can be found in the finale of Beethoven's 'Ode to Joy', in which the choral repetition of *ba''* serves as a group affirmation of the song proper. With its melody stemming from a different, non-Italianate melodic tradition (Austro-Germanic communal/fraternal song), though, one might hesitate before casually overlaying its rounded binary/small ternary format with the 'lyric binary' connotation. (Once again, the profusion of formal designations and their historical connotations complicates the discussion of small-scale song forms.) Cf. nn. 5, 12 and 17 above and n. 25 below.

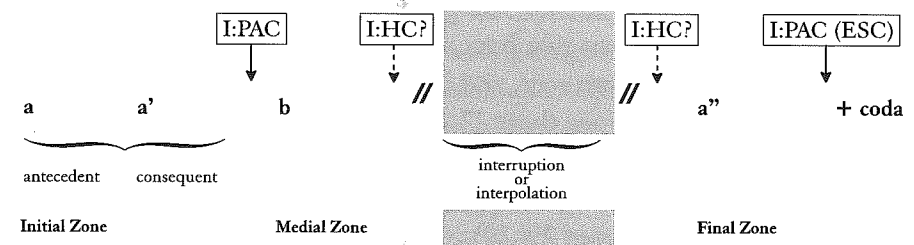
position'. Restated, we have two consequent-style phrases, with the first slotted into antecedent position and thereby, despite its *forte* I:PAC ending, probably heard as the first of the more generally normative antecedent-consequent pair.

- Bars 9–12: *medial zone* (*b* //): Perfectly normative, this begins in bars 9–10 with a quietly murmured, chromatically enhanced descending 5–6 sequence and extends, with resolute *forte* conviction, to the tonicised half cadence (V:PAC, immediately reinterpreted as a I:HC) on the third beat of bar 12. Chromaticised caesura-fill at the end of bar 12, a mildly expanded anacrusis, leads us into the final zone.
- Bars 13–16: *final zone* (*a''*). With some additional enhancements, this replicates the decorative bars 5–8 (*a'*) and leads to a I:PAC on bar 16, beat 3. What we have up to this point is a nearly model, square-cut lyric binary, and the I:PAC in bar 16 could have served as the conclusion of the melody proper. But Chopin now chooses to extend the structure.
- Bars 17–24: *repeat of the medial and final zones* (*b* // *a''*). Here Chopin backs the music up to repeat the medial and final zones (bars 17–20, 21–24). As a result, the I:PAC in bar 24, beat 3, becomes the point of essential structural closure (ESC) for the fully unfurled *aa' – b // a'' – b // a''* arrangement. By bar 24, then, the lyric binary portion of this nocturne, its essential melodic structure, has been brought to a close.
- Bars 25–34: *coda*. What follows is a ten-bar coda that confirms and grounds the tonic E flat (bars 25–34). Beginning with minor-mode plagal tinges (bars 25–26), its first phrase floats dreamily into a confirming I:PAC in bar 28. Bars 29–32 recast the coda's first phrase more urgently, *con forza* and *stretto*, driving to a fermata-sustained dominant seventh/ninth (bars 32) and cadenza – obviously alluding to the cadenza-capped codas often found in Italian song – and finally cadencing, *smorzando*, on the downbeat of bar 33. The *a tempo* bars 33–34 bring this nocturne's fantasy-world to an end with a fade-out coda-to-the-coda sustaining the tonic E flat. In sum, in Op. 9 No. 2, Chopin extends a simple lyric binary, Andante, through 34 bars that yield about four minutes of bel-canto-oriented music.

INTERPOLATIONS INTO THE LYRIC BINARY PROTOTYPE:
OP. POSTH. AND OP. 15 NO. 2

Now let us take the *aa' – b // a'' + coda* prototype (Figure 1) and introduce an insertion into one of its most vulnerable points: the harmonic interruption at the end of the medial zone. Imagine that we start with the prototypical model and delay the final-zone reprise, *a''*, by pulling it rightward. This opens a gap between the medial and final zones, *aa' – b // [gap] a''*, and into that gap let us put some free or new material. This introduces something extraneous into the heart of the lyric binary schema: a delay, an interpolation, a diversion. Additionally, this compositional move might have been invited by a non-normative choice of chord at the end of the medial zone (something other than the lyric binary's customary I:HC). This situation, a lyric binary interrupted by an interpolation, is illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Disrupting the lyric binary.



Something along these lines happens, albeit mildly, in one of Chopin's earliest nocturnes, that in C sharp minor, opus posthumous, *Lento con gran espressione*, from c.1830 – the nocturne whose medial zone and 'episodic' interpolation share thematic and figurational resonances with the concurrently conceived first movement and finale of the Second Piano Concerto. Apart from the interpolated passage between the medial and final zones, the structural frame of the piece is unmistakably shaped as a compound lyric binary, *aa' – b // a''* ('compound', again, because the initial zone's *aa'* fills the larger proportions of 8+8 bars, not the briefer 4+4, as in Op. 9 No. 2).

- Bars 1–4: *Introductory preface*. Here we have a single, two-bar half-cadential gesture, setting up the dominant of C sharp minor, *piano*, followed by its echo. Its narrative role is preparatory (before-the-beginning), and with its silent gaps and echo repetition, its additional purpose is to activate, and yet to settle, the acoustic space while also attuning the listener to what is to follow ('Get ready!').
- Bars 5–12, 13–20: *initial zone (aa')*. Chopin shapes the melancholy bel canto song's first zone as a compound period. Its antecedent ends i:HC, bars 11–12, while its embellished consequent, touching along the way on a chillingly spectral Neapolitan chord (bar 17), terminates i:PAC, bar 20.
- Bars 21–33: *medial zone (b //)*. Shifting to A major (VI) for four bars (bars 21–24) and setting off with a contrasting theme over the new tonic pedal, we have two bars of resonance with the opening theme of the Second Concerto's finale (there sounded as a vigorous triple-time dance, not as the subdued, common-time version that we find here) and two bars alluding to a figure from the first movement's secondary theme. Chopin then recasts this 2+2 'thematic fusion' with its first two bars on F sharp minor (iv, bars 25–26), now whispered *sotto voce*, and its second two bars returning to the tonic, C sharp minor (bars 27–28). Together, the 4+4 pair might be heard as the (compound) presentation of a larger sentential idea, whose continuation (bars 29–33) first twice touches on V of C sharp minor (bars 29–30), then tonicises that dominant with a V:PAC (G sharp major) at bar 33. This brings the medial zone proper to a close. Chopin's choice of a V:PAC diverges from the more usual I:HC (or i:HC) medial-zone close shown in Figure 2. That is to say, the interruptive caesura (//) is made even more emphatic – punctuationally, a PAC full stop rather than an HC 'semicolon'. The conceptual break at this point is made even clearer by the change of time signature into 2/4 + 3/4 at bars 32–33, with the 3/4 bar elided to the interpolation that follows.²⁰
- Bars 33–46: *triple-time, G sharp major interpolation*. Sharing figurational material with the energetic *scherzando* episode of the Second

²⁰ The 2/4 + 3/4 time signatures for bars 32–33 are those of the Paderewski edition. The Cortot edition prints the two bars as a single 5/4 bar. Thus from this point onward the two editions have differing bar numbers.

Concerto's finale, this consists of neighbouring-augmented-sixth and tonic-dominant oscillations in G sharp major, essentially prolonging the full-stop, tonicised V at the end of the medial zone.²¹ From that point of view, it is a harmonic extension of that conclusion, lingering on the resonance of the V:PAC at bar 33, letting it resound more fully. On the other hand, its new figuration and dance-like topic set it apart as an episodic interpolation – into the 'gap' now created between the end of *b* and the beginning of the *a''* reprise.²² However we hear it, Chopin brings the interpolation to an Adagio standstill at bars 45–46 and holds it with a fermata that allows the bright, tonicised G sharp major to linger in the air. He then follows it with a beat of silence before dropping back to the grey and gloomy dejection of C sharp minor for the onset of the final zone.

- Bars 47–58: *final zone (a'')*. This completes the compound lyric binary, with the i:PAC/ESC at bar 58. Here we find the common situation where the (prototypically) eight-bar final zone is expanded to twelve bars, enhancing its trajectory toward its concluding PAC. The *a''* reprise-figure is an amalgam of (first) *a'* and (then) *a* that takes a new turn, *appassionato*, at bar 54. This launches the 'despairing' expansion that finally closes the door, i:PAC, on this conjured world of affective dejection.
- Bars 58–65: *coda*. As often happens in Chopin's nocturnes, this coda is underpinned by a tonic pedal, holding fast to the PAC closure of the melodic schema that precedes it. Here it is embellished with delicate, virtuosic right-hand shivers into the upper register and back again, while with the final *rallentando* (bar 62) and *triple-piano* and (perhaps wishfully ironic) Picardy C sharp major final two bars die away into the emptiness of the silence into which the nocturne had entered with its first bar.

What happens in the F sharp major Nocturne, Op. 15 No. 2, *Larghetto*, is more sharply defined. This is an even clearer example of a noc-

²¹ The augmented sixths of bars 34 and 38, though (cf. bars 29–30), remind us of the only 'provisional' status of this presumed 'G sharp major', that is, of its larger role as V of C sharp minor.

²² Unlike the Paderewski edition, the Cortot edition, underscoring the allusion to the Second Concerto, calls for a sudden acceleration of tempo, *animato*, for this triple-time interpolation.

turne that features a disruptive interpolation between the medial and final zones, as represented in Figure 2. Its framing structure is that of a compound lyric binary (with an 8+8 initial zone), *aa' - b // a'' + coda*.

- Bars 1–16: *initial zone, aa'*. Here we have a normative compound period, in which both the antecedent and the consequent are structured as sentences (presentation + continuation): both the eight-bar antecedent and the eight-bar consequent, that is, are subdivisible into (2+2) + 4 bars, representable as $\alpha\alpha'\beta$. To be noted here, and throughout every recurrence of the $\alpha\alpha'\beta$ theme (twice here and once in the final zone) – and indeed, even as each α module moves into its α' successor – is the process of ever-enhanced embellishment. Quite apart from fitting the theme into the standardised shell of its square-cut borders (antecedent + consequent), Chopin submits it to a process of ongoing warmth – a progressive growth of incandescence. The emotional temperature of each eight-bar, $\alpha\alpha'\beta$ phrase reaches its peak on a single, crystalline high note, as if plucking out a shining star from the nocturnal sky: $F\sharp_5$ in bar 6 and $F\sharp_6$ in bar 14. This process of accumulating incandescence, searching out and gaining the glimmering star, will be exquisitely maximised in the final, a'' zone to come.
- Bars 17–24: *medial zone (b //)*. Starting off on a new harmonic journey, this begins on V, C sharp major, which could be heard either as an active V of the tonic or a bid to set forth in V. However we read it, the complementary 2+2 bars at the opening (quasi-presentational) – each striving hopefully upward, then immediately wilting, *dolcissimo* – first cloud over the $C\sharp$ bass in bars 18–19 with two bars of $f\sharp_4^6$ (the chord of the tonic *minor*, or iv_4^6 of a potential C sharp major), which is then changed into that of $D\sharp_2^4$, bar 20. In turn this chromatic alteration jostles the bass into continuing a more extended chromatic descent (bars 19–22) from the preceding $C\sharp$, through $C\flat$ and B, and finally onto $A\sharp$, while the local apex pitch, $F\sharp_5$, keeps resounding in the top voice before resolving downward to $E\sharp_5$ in bar 22. The downbeats of bars 22, 23 and 24 reiterate that $A\sharp$ chord as V of D sharp minor, *crescendo* and *con forza*, each time preceded by a neighbouring augmented sixth chord. The figurational and tonal stress of bars 22–24 is palpable,

the local dissonances harsh. Particularly with their triple repetition of a dominant followed by a rhetorical caesura, *ritardando* (bar 24), these three bars bring us to the writhing and anguished conclusion of the medial zone. The staged harmonic problem, though, is that this is the 'wrong dominant': not V of I but rather a hyper-emphatic V of vi, D sharp minor. Clouded and strenuous, the medial zone has been anything but trouble-free.

- Bars 25–48: *interpolation*. We now enter an impassioned onrush set forth in an urgent *doppio movimento*. This 24-bar interpolation – into a 'gap' created after the end of b – is awash with cresting waves of sound that disrupt the lyric binary process and put on hold the generically normative roundedness of the anticipated a'' reprise. What we have here is a struggle, increasingly desperate and panicked, to regain the 'lost' or 'proper' dominant that the medial zone did not supply. *Sotto voce* but rhythmically agitated, it opens with an immediate lift up a minor third to V^7 of F sharp major – the very dominant seventh capable of returning us to the tonic, as if registering its medial-zone loss ('Where are you?'). This 'corrective' V^7 is extended into a four-bar module (but notice the ominous minor-mode mixture with the $A\flat$ in bars 27–28) that is immediately repeated in bars 29–32. In bar 33 the tonal level shifts to $E\flat_2^4$, V_2^4 of A major (up another minor third), and the sequential four-bar figuration, bars 33–36, now intensifies. When this frenetic $E\flat_2^4$ passage begins its own repetition in bar 37, it is almost immediately pulled back to a wildly cried-out dominant ninth of F sharp *minor* in bar 39, which dominant is prolonged, first in a climactic three bars of *crescendo*, bars 39–41, and then in a gradual *decrescendo*, to its *molto rallentando* and *smorzando* extinction in bars 47–48 – and a fermata-pinned moment of rest: catching one's breath after the assault. To be noticed in all of this is that the interpolation that had begun on the dominant of F sharp major now ends, exhaustedly, on that of F sharp minor. Though predictive of the minor mode, that concluding dominant is at least a more 'proper' one than that which had closed the medial zone, and one that closes the 'gap' with its own harmonic interruption.
- Bars 49–58: *final zone (a'')*. Now in *Tempo I* and back in F sharp major, we return to the delayed business of completing the com-

pound lyric binary. This requires little explication, except to note the final zone's characteristic expansion from eight to ten bars, delaying and then realising the final I:PAC/ESC, along with its further enrichment of the leading theme's ongoing process of increased incandescence. Not to be overlooked, though is bar 54's vaulting upward one last time to touch that high register, crystalline star, *sforzando* – again on F#₆ but then springing over that F#₆ onto the A#₆ above it and rippling deliciously downward to the A#₄ two octaves below, producing an unexcelled exquisiteness in its impression of sensual overflow.

- Bars 58–62: *coda*. This consists of descending star glitter grounding the now-attained F sharp major closure. It begins with the highest pitch sounded in this piece, D#₇, *sforzando*, and works its way downward in resonant, pedal-sustained arpeggios.

The structure of Op. 15 No. 2 is not adequately described as a large ternary form. To think of it only as a large or compound ABA' form neutralises the connotation of the eruptive interpolation by assimilating the whole into the descriptive shorthand of a standard form. What Chopin has given us instead is a compound lyric binary arrangement ripped open at one of its most vulnerable points, invaded by a passionate intensity that can be withheld no longer – a *sérénade interrompue*. And that is both the structural and the expressive point. The disrupted structure, the deformationally interrupted lyric binary, is a leading feature of its affective content. Schematic structure merges with expressive content, becoming one with it.

WRITING OVER THE MEDIAL ZONE WITH A CONTRASTING EPISODE

Let us now consider a situation in which, following a normative initial zone, the *entire* medial zone is taken over with expanded and dissimilar material. In this case, the more normative medial-zone material, which typically does not present a decisive change of topic or texture from that found in the initial zone, is replaced, 'written over', with a contrasting episode – sometimes an extended one – that takes its place. This option is illustrated in Figure 3.

From the 'top-down' perspective, it may seem that the Figure 3 schema could be regarded as a compound ternary ABA' form. On the face of it, this is not an unreasonable claim, especially since both of the A sections are usually closed with a I:PAC. On the other hand, such a view dispenses with the lyric binary model that in one way or another pervades the majority of the nocturnes. (As we shall see, unequivocal ABA' formats – and there are a number of them among Chopin's nocturnes – precede B with a *complete* lyric binary, *aa' – b // a''*.) Again, in the case of a nocturne that generally traces its way through the Figure 3 schema, the thing to notice, reckoning from the 'bottom up', is that prior to the central, contrasting block ('B'), we have only the initial zone of a lyric binary – only its first portion. To be sure, one might construe the result as a *hybrid* between the compound ternary ABA' form and a lyric binary that has been subjected to a post-initial-zone upheaval. All things considered, the balance, I suggest, tips more toward the latter, the lyric binary reading.

The first of Chopin's published nocturnes, that in B flat minor, Op. 9 No. 1, *Larghetto*, provides an instructive example of this variant. I illustrate its structural outlines in Figure 4: the relevant bar numbers are provided in smaller Arabic numerals. What is immediately apparent is the initial-zone/final-zone frame, bars 1–18 (*aa'*) and bars 71–80 (*a''*), with a brief appended coda following it, bars 81–85, the last two bars of which provide a major-mode, Picardy-third close. The broader proportions of the initial and final zones are those of a compound lyric binary. Chopin builds the wistfully melancholic, B flat minor initial zone as a compound period, 8+10 bars, with a sentential antecedent ($\alpha\alpha'\beta$) and an expanded sentential consequent, and the final zone, like the consequent, also occupies ten bars.

All that is clear enough, but for our purposes the main point of interest is the large, central block in the middle, bars 19–69, that writes over the normative medial zone. Not least of its features is that it is built as a complete, self-enclosed structure in D flat major, B flat minor's relative major (III). Moreover, Chopin organised the main portion of this large 'B' section as a separate, complete theme, bars 19–50, whose schematic repetitions of four- and eight-bar units articulate its own compound lyric binary, one that is extended to repeat its own medial and final zones: *cc' cc' – d // c' – d // c'*, (8+8) + (4+4) + (4+4). (Its sixteen-bar initial zone, *cc'*, is compound, while the shorter medial and final zones are those of

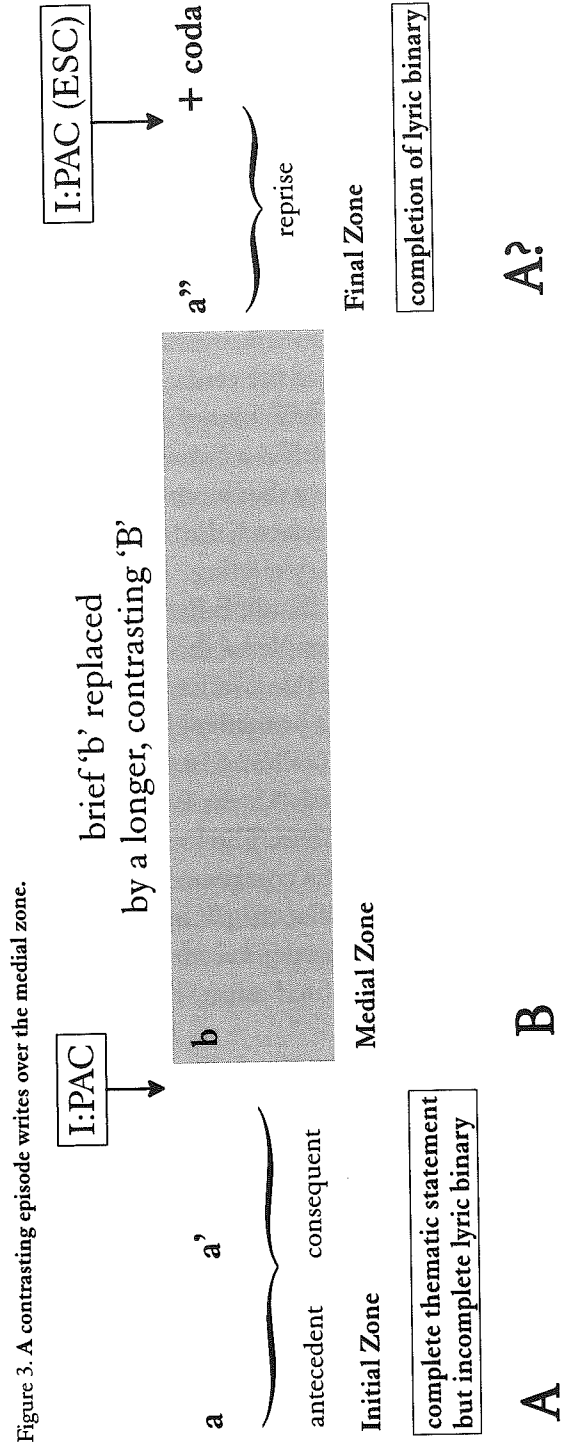
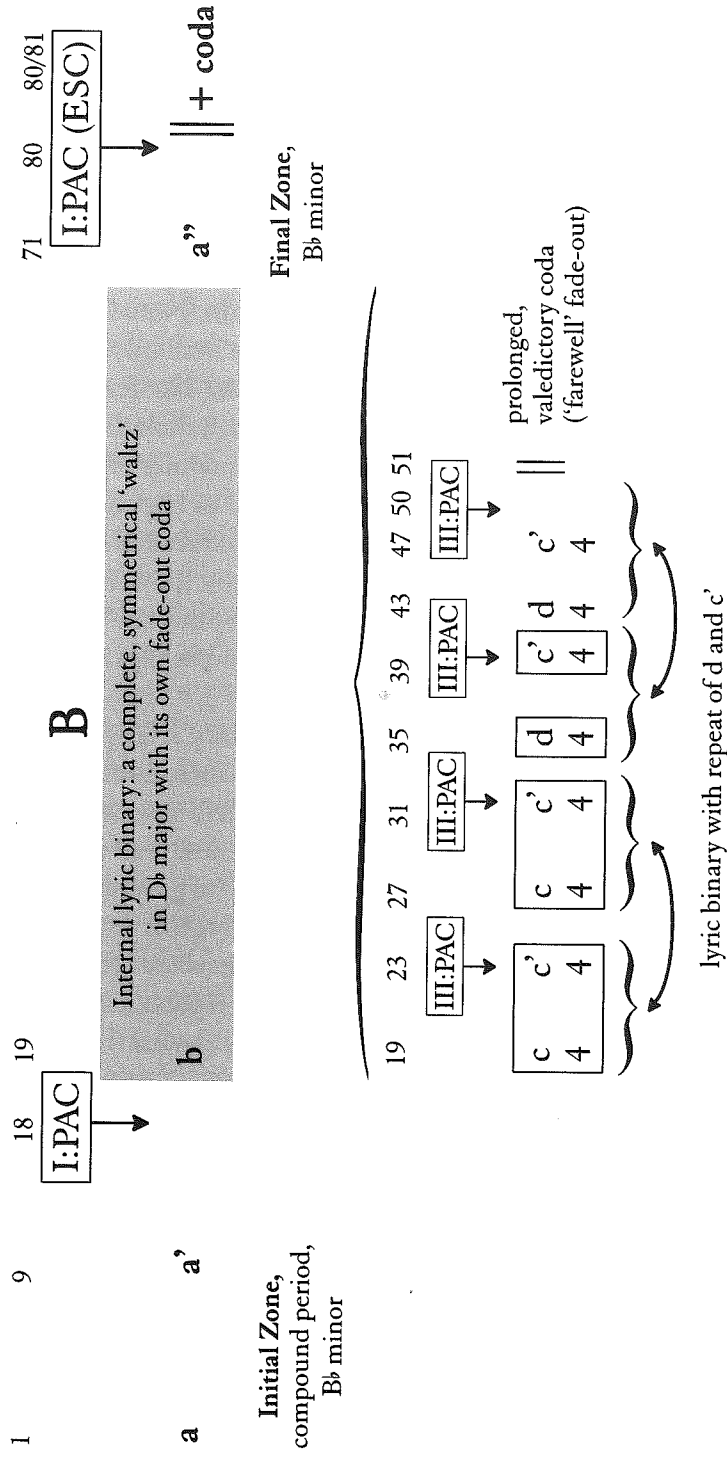


Figure 4. Chopin, Nocturne in B flat minor, Op. 9 No. 1.



the simple lyric binary.) In addition – and strikingly – this internal lyric binary is succeeded by its own prolonged, fade-out coda, bars 51–69. Such a full-length *internal* coda ratifies the utter separateness of this broad, central section from those of the outer frame. We thus have an interior, self-standing lyric binary in D flat major (III) enclosed within the external-frame first-and-third zones of a B flat minor lyric binary: $aa' - [\text{contrasting B, internal lyric binary} + \text{coda}] // a'' + \text{coda}$.

But there is more to say about this central section. Notwithstanding its 6/4 time signature, to the listener its triple-time circularity and recurrent heavy downbeats on each half-bar suggest waltz-like features. The external binary's initial and final zones, sounded in a melancholy B flat minor, frame the interior major-mode waltz in the manner of a memory, conjuring up, ghostlike, a now-lost but once-grand or hopeful amorous moment, a D flat major vision no longer present but recalled in delicate, ashen regret – all rendered notationally elliptical by the 6/4 signature. Especially with its extended, valedictory coda, the internal binary can be read as conjuring up a memory of things past, or perhaps a visionary dream of what might be but is not.

Most touching of all is the internal lyric binary's fade-out coda, bars 51–69: the dying-away of the vision. From its onset through bar 66, the left hand is given over to a static, sonorous field resounding with rich overtones: a quasi-mechanical, damper-pedal-sustained ostinato arpeggiation of D flat open fifths, one role of which is to ground this coda, as often happens in Chopin, with a tonic pedal. Over this resonant left-hand field, the coda subdivides into two sections: a new idea (bars 51–58) and its fading triple-*piano* echo (bars 61–69). Each section leads off with a horn-fifth figure in the right hand, carrying in this context the connotation of a bittersweet farewell to *temps perdue*.

Adding to the sense of valediction is the bar 51 introduction of a telling Cb_5 , $b\hat{7}$ of D flat, initially *fortissimo*, then lingering, hanging in the air in a dynamic fade, before being transferred down an octave to Cb_4 in bars 57–58 – and then being dissolved away altogether. The unrealised tilt toward the subdominant accounts for the effect of relaxation here, but most striking of all is Chopin's allusion to what, in earlier repertoires, Robert Gjerdingen has termed the quiescenza schema. Often found at the openings of codas, the full galant-Classical quiescenza pattern inscribes a rotary linear motion away from and then back to the tonic,

executed by a $\hat{8}-b\hat{7}-6-b\hat{7}-\hat{8}$ figure in an upper voice, prototypically over a tonic pedal.²³ What we have in bars 51–58 is the introduction, and then the freezing, of only the first harmonic move of the quiescenza, the $b\hat{7}$ tilt, which is then arrested in its tracks for a full eight bars, left to ring in the air in a poignant, time-suspended stasis. Moreover, the typical coda role of the quiescenza is to move through its rotary cycle twice: the pattern and its immediate repetition. It is to this tradition that Chopin refers in the echo-recall of the first section, bars 61–69, fading away into the distance, only now with the tell-tale $b\hat{7}$ filtered out and the horn-fifth onset made even more explicit than it had been the first time around.

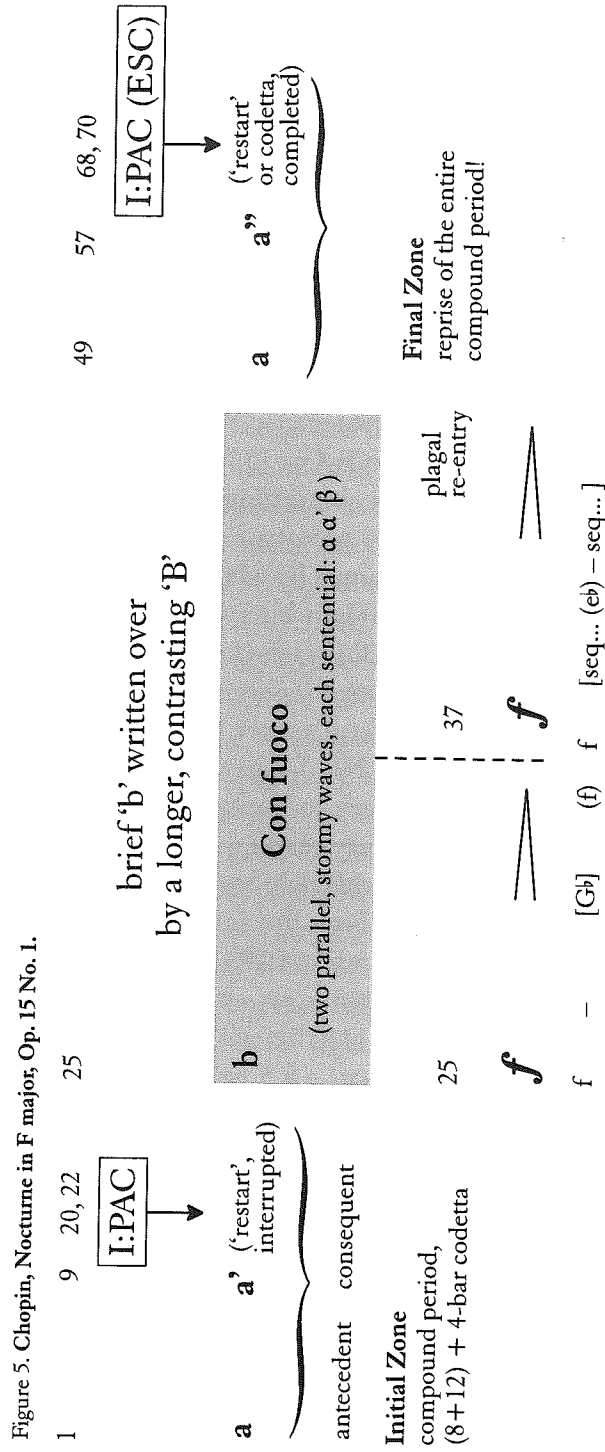
Yet another, though potentially more problematic, realisation of the Figure 3 pattern is found in the Nocturne in F, Op. 15 No. 1 (Figure 5). Once again, we find an internal, decisively contrasting section, a large B section instead of the lyric binary's more prototypical *b* – here, two tumultuous, *con fuoco* waves of sound – framed by what might be read as the initial and final zones of a compound lyric binary.

A closer look at Op. 15 No. 1, however, illustrates the terminological snarls that can entangle one in this and related repertoires. Quite apart from the large-B overwriting of the small form's more standard medial zone, *b* (which, as was the case with Op. 9 No. 1, can be accommodated within an expanded or altered lyric binary conception), two further challenges to any undernuanced lyric binary reading are found here. The first is that its final zone replicates, with only small changes, the initial zone's complete compound period: both the antecedent (which ends with a iii:HC) and the consequent (ending I:PAC). Thus instead of invoking the prototypical lyric binary schema, $aa' - b // a'' + \text{coda}$, as a ground plan for the overall form – albeit one that will be subjected to singular manipulations – we have instead $aa' - b // aa' + \text{coda}$, whose double-phrase final-zone fullness is not a characteristic feature of Italian operatic song, which normally compresses the post-*b* return of *a* material into a single, climactic phrase.

Does any such final-zone recurrence of both the antecedent and the consequent, aa' , disqualify that variant as a 'lyric binary' (that is, as that connotative subtype of the larger category, rounded binary/small tern-

²³ Gjerdingen, *Music in the Galant Style* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 181–196.

Figure 5. Chopin, Nocturne in F major, Op. 15 No. 1.



ary), particularly since it is one that is absent from normative Italian-song realisations? Given the overwhelming prevalence of more prototypical lyric binary melodic grounding in most of the other nocturnes, one would be hard-pressed to insist that it must be regarded as something substantially different and therefore outside the 'lyric binary' family of possibilities (while it remains obviously classifiable within the larger rounded binary/small ternary forms). Nonetheless, the family resemblance between the two formats cannot be mistaken, and within the bel-canto-oriented nocturnes it is most prudent to regard the larger schema as an imaginative, though hardly surprising, deviation from the Italianate lyric binary prototype.²⁴ As I shall note further on, within the later nocturnes, the fuller $aa' - b // aa'$ schema, only now as a three-zone melody that precedes a contrasting B section (the hallmark of a large or compound ternary form), is also present in Op. 27 No. 1 and Op. 62 No. 1, while all of the other large ternaries have more prototypical lyric binaries in that initial-zone portion of the piece.²⁵

Adding to this first issue is a more problematic second, having to do with Chopin's presentation of the initial zone, an exquisite realisation of the early Romantic affective topic of the wistful, the tender, the dreamlike. Bars 1–20 provide us with a typical thematic block: a songlike compound period, with expanded consequent. So far this is what we expect from a lyric binary initial zone. Immediately striking though, is the extension of bar 20's I:PAC with a two-bar repetition of the cadence ('one more time'), ending with a second I:PAC in bar 22. This two-bar lingering over the cadence suggests a clinging unwillingness to 'let it go' in order to proceed into whatever medial zone might follow it.

²⁴ Whatever one's view of this, it is clear that the overall schema in play is that of the three-zone, songlike variant of the widely shared, rounded binary/small ternary form. The terminological issue, of interest largely to professional analysts, does not affect the larger argument in play here.

²⁵ Nor is the $aa' - b // aa'$ schema uncommon within piano miniatures by other composers of the era. One familiar example, though hardly a unique one, can be found in the 'Träumerei' movement of Schumann's *Kinderszenen*. While that movement is readily identifiable as unfolding in the commonplace rounded-binary/small ternary format, and even though, like its lyric binary analogue, it is presented without notated repeat signs, its thematic heritage need not be identified with the formulas of Italianate song. Except for calling attention to that potential analogue, then, there may be little gain in insisting that 'Träumerei' is 'in' lyric binary form – unless, of course, one were to accept a more expansive understanding of that designation.

By itself this is not enough to dissuade us from hearing it as a largely normative initial zone. More surprising is that bar 22's I:PAC elides with a brief return to the beginning of the melody (bars 22–24 = bars 1–3), albeit *smorzando* (dying away) and, at the end, broken off or, better, vaporising into the inaudible with the fermata-held silence, bringing everything to a quizzical halt. At bar 22, then, the thematic period lapses into the onset of self-repetition – as if this musical dream were to be recycled in potentially endless loops (and might be implied as still continuing, only temporarily fading out of earshot). And that, of course, is not at all typical of lyric binary (or rounded binary/small ternary) initial zones. Within the context of the early nocturnes, one might say, a lyric binary schema is begun but, caught up in the replications of its own dream, does not relinquish itself to proceed into the medial zone. This makes perfectly clear 'poetic' sense, though from the purely formal, lyric binary perspective what is happening is transgressive, deformational.

Following the fade-out fermata of bar 24, 'grim reality' fills in the gap with the double-statement of a minor-mode, roaringly distressed storm, *con fuoco* – a large and contrasting B section, blotting out the dream repetitions and writing over any more normatively 'lyrical', medial-zone *b* that one might have expected. B's aggressive onslaught eventually dies down, *diminuendo, rallentando, e calando* (bars 45–48), and its fadeaway 'allows' us to rejoin the (still ongoing?) endless loops of the wistful dream: as with the thematic block, *aa'* + 'one more time' repetition of the cadence, + elided, *smorzando* restart of the theme (bar 70), this time, more codetta-like, fading away into the misty V⁷-I arpeggiations over a tonic pedal (bars 73–74).

In terms of analysis, where does all this leave us? It is obvious that Op. 15 No. 1 deviates from the prototypical, Italianate lyric binary in more than one respect. On the other hand, from the point of view of the present argument, for it to be housed within the large or compound ternary family (ABA') requires the presentation of a full, or implicitly full, three-zone lyric binary *before* the onset of B. Because that does not happen here, I consider it as a poetically evocative singularity or adaptation that is more groupable within the lyric binary family of structures.

The four remaining nocturnes whose overall structure Chopin set into dialogue with the lyric binary format – and hence as groupable within it – also present us with unusual adaptations (deformations) of it. Still, each is graspable from the perspective of the prototypical lyric

binary format, even while treating the schema's conceptual framework with remarkable plasticity – a fundamental gestural principle to be remoulded, reshaped, recast. In brief:

- The G minor Nocturne, Op. 15 No. 3, may be the structurally oddest of the group. (As such, it concludes a group of three nocturnes whose formal structures are more unusually configured, more disruptive, than those found in the Op. 9 set.) It begins as if aspiring to become a much-expanded lyric binary (the double-phrase, limping *a*, bars 1–23, ending in D minor (v:PAC), replicated in *a'*, bars 25–50; and *b*, bars 51–88), but its urgently intensifying but eventually disintegrating medial zone gives way in bar 89 to a contrasting *religioso*, F major section for the remainder of the piece – a *non sequitur* change of tone. Although at the end of the piece this section's F major falls briefly onto a sombre D minor (bar 149), then twists back, *pianissimo*, into G minor and a Picardy-third G major close (bar 152, *requiescat in pace*), there is no final-zone reprise of the opening. The whole might be regarded either as a truncated lyric binary (had there been a final-zone reprise, it would have been a nocturne of the Figure 2 type) or, better, as a lyric binary that unexpectedly stalls and is abandoned by the end of the medial zone, then is devotionally memorialised (perhaps mourned) in the *religioso* that follows it.²⁶
- The B major Nocturne, Op. 32 No. 1, does not feature an internal, contrasting section and is a complicated variant of the *aa' – b // a'' – b // a'' + coda* type (that with a 'one more time' repeat of the medial and final zones), though here modified in two ways. First, the initial zone, the normative *aa'*, can be read as containing an internal interpolation, '*x*' (beginning with the second beat of bar 8 and largely over a dominant pedal), rather like a brief, preliminary '*b*' section before the second statement of *a*, bars 13–20. This produces an initial zone that can itself be mapped as rounded thematic unit, *ax//a*, bars 1–20 (rather like a shrunken or diminutive lyric binary – an internally nested 'sub-zone' that can come to be subsequently regarded as an initial zone of the larger whole). Second, each of the

²⁶ The classic study of the musical contents of Op. 15 No. 3 is Jeffrey Kallberg, 'The Rhetoric of Genre: Chopin's Nocturne in G Minor', *19th-Century Music* 11/3 (1988), 238–261.

two medial-zone *b* sections proper, beginning with the three-beat upbeats to bars 21 and 42, concludes with the tonic-key cadential material associated with the *a* section, though here expanded (bars 35/36–41, 56/57–61). As a result, final-zone material is represented only by its brief, PAC cadential figure, which is not separate from but folded into the end of the medial zone. Additionally, at bar 62, the final cadence is undermined. What we have, then, is a purposely 'failed' lyric binary structure, that is, one staged as unable to produce its final, B major PAC. Instead, the structure falls apart into brusque interruptions, a collapse into B minor and stern recitative, and a stark, Adagio conclusion on B minor. The effect of the whole nocturne is one of prolonged, idle daydreaming or wool-gathering fantasy suddenly awakened by harsh reality.

- Viewed in the large, the F sharp minor Nocturne, Op. 48 No. 2, can be construed as a grand-scale reworking of the lyric binary schema. Here Chopin enlarges the three prototypical '*a*' blocks, the two in the initial zone and the one in the final zone, into broad, self-standing stanzas (bars 1–28, 29–56 and 101–131, the first two of which also feature a brief, introductory lead-in), whose sheer size makes them seem more like capital-letter *A* sections than the smaller '*a*' sections familiar from the other nocturnes. These three '*A*' stanzas house a separate, contrasting '*B*' section in D flat major (bars 57–100), an internal lyric binary with repeated medial and final zones, *cc' – d // c' – d // c'*. The shape of the whole, consequently, is a 'magnified', quasi-strophic *AABA'* structure followed by a coda at bar 131. With its magnification of the *A* blocks and its contrasting, *più lento* *B* section, this nocturne can be read as a blend or synthesis of the smaller *aa' – b // a''* and the larger *ABA* formats. Also notable is Chopin's harmonic treatment of the first stanza (bars 1–28), which he repeats literally as the second. This is built from two overlapping statements of the same modulatory sentence, $\alpha\alpha'\beta + \alpha\alpha'\beta$ (bars 3–11, 11–23), though on different tonal levels. The first modulates from F sharp minor to C sharp minor; the second, expanded, from that C sharp minor to G sharp minor, with a Picardy-third G sharp major cadential resolution (bar 23), precipitating a codetta affirming that G sharp major (bars 23–28). Thus each of the first two *A* stanzas is brought to a tonal

level two fifths higher than where it had begun. The much-varied final stanza, bars 101–131, steers clear of this modulatory move, bringing us back to and resolving in the F sharp minor tonic (bar 127), immediately brightened with a Picardy-third-grounded codetta (bars 127–131) and followed by a coda to the whole in the same tonic major (bars 131–37).

- The E flat Nocturne, Op. 55 No. 2, is another, like Op. 32 No. 1, that does not contain a sharply contrasting interior portion. In part for that reason, its whimsical, free expansion of the lyric binary format might recall some of the procedures found in that earlier piece, and yet he also introduces into this later one a number of differences. Here again he shapes the initial zone, bars 1–12, as a three-stage idea, a nested, mini-lyric-binary $4+4+4$, *ax | a'*, ending I:PAC. The medial zone is much expanded and proceeds in two distinct phases, each with its own cadence. Bars 13–26, ending I:PAC, can be regarded as a fourteen-bar *b¹*, and we might expect the onset of the final zone at this point. Instead, we are given a new idea – call it *b²*, bars 27–34, whose harmonic task, it would seem, is to undo the apparent finality of the I:PAC of *b¹* in order to convert it into a more normative I:HC interruption, which is what happens in bars 33–34. Since bar 35 brings back only the first four bars of the initial zone and cadences with a I:PAC at bar 38, these bars take on the role of a final zone, and we might imagine that the lyric structure has now been completed. Instead, bar 39 returns to a varied *b¹*, suggesting a 'one more time' repetition of the medial and final zones. This time, however, *b¹* ends not with a I:PAC, as before, but with a I:IAC (bar 47). Instead of yielding to either *b²* or the *a* idea once more, however, we hear yet another variant of *b¹*, bars 47/48–55, this time ending I:PAC. This means that the *b¹+b¹* material, bars 39–55, returns as a compound antecedent-consequent pair, insisting in a two-phrase statement that it indeed has the right to conclude with that I:PAC. But with that bar 55 I:PAC, the harmonic journey of this deformational lyric binary is now completed, and there is no harmonic need for the '*a*' material to return as a final zone. And it does not. Instead, bars 55–67 are given over to a coda, sounded mostly over a tonic pedal. In sum, the shape of the whole is: $ax | a' - b^1, b^2 | a'' - b^1 + b^1 - coda$.

COMPOUND TERNARY NOCTURNES

While the nine nocturnes cited above may be grouped together as formal outcomes whose conceptual backdrop is traceable to the lyric binary schema – as either more or less straightforward instances or imaginatively manipulated deviations of it (that is, with that format as a referential idea through which one can interpret the dialogical structures of the various pieces) – eight others can be regarded as large or compound ternary ABA' structures. Recall once again that, at least within this limited, Chopin-specific study, to qualify as an ABA' ternary, the nocturne must present a complete or nearly complete lyric binary structure – all three zones, small-letter $aa' - b // a''$ – before giving way to the B block.²⁷ This criterion results in large-scale structures that are more straightforward, less susceptible to challenging deformational treatments, and therefore less problematic for the analyst. In sharp distinction to his treatments of the lyric-binary-grounded group, Chopin regarded the large ternary ABA' pattern as a more stable formal arrangement in order to throw the fullest attention on the locally realised compositional details of melody, harmony, texture, embellishment and choice of musical topic.

The clearest large ternary cases would be found in those pieces in which a central B section has a complete lyric form on both sides, resulting in a fully symmetrical arrangement, as shown in Figure 6. Let us call this the *first type* of the large ternary, ABA' structure, the type with a full reprise after B. In such a plan, A is laid out as $aa' - b // a''$ or, more expansively, $aa' - b // a'' - b // a''$; B comprises a contrasting middle section; and A' consists of a reprise of at least $aa' - b // a''$, a full lyric binary, followed by a coda.

This type is found in only three of the nocturnes: the A flat major, Op. 32 No. 2 (framed by a two-bar, *Lento* introduction and coda), the G minor, Op. 37 No. 1, and the C minor, Op. 48 No. 1. In all three, the A' reprise, while melodically complete, features some aspect of dynamic

²⁷ I write 'or nearly complete' because, in some of the nocturnes, Chopin suppresses or evades the expected concluding cadence in the lyric binary's initial zone, steering away from it at the last moment or evaporating it away instead of realising it. This technique of cadential suppression permits one section – such as an opening A section – to melt or flow without closure into its successor.

Figure 6. ABA' nocturnes, first type (those with three-zone reprises following B).

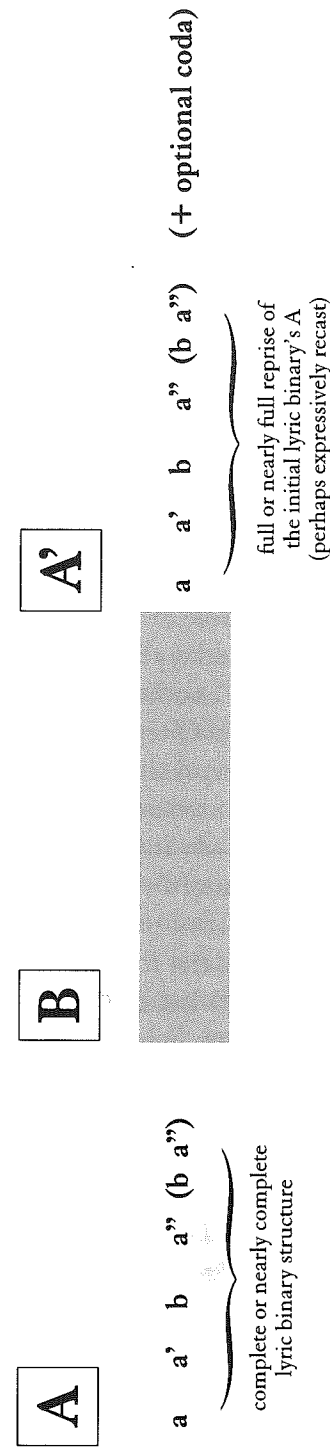
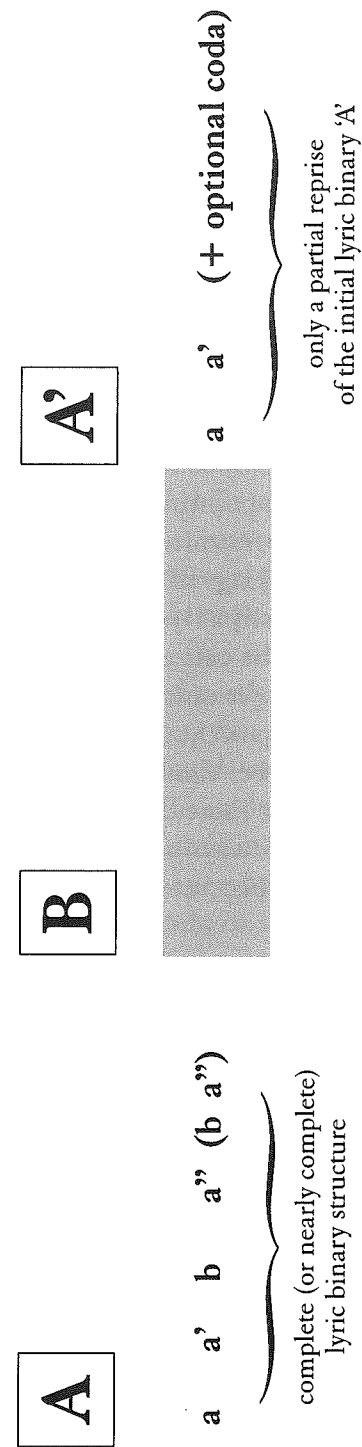


Figure 7. ABA' nocturnes, second type (those with shortened reprises following B).

A hybrid between compound ternary, ABA' form and lyric form?



or tempo intensification that distinguishes it from its more subdued model in A. In Op. 32 No. 2, the initial A section, guilelessly *sempre piano e legato*, returns as an A' expressively transformed into a vehement *appassionato* and *fortissimo*. The whole piece, with its ever-swelling, triplet-torrential B section, is a study in dynamic accumulation. In Op. 37 No. 1, A' begins quietly, *pianissimo* (bar 67, even more choked back than bar 1's *piano*), but its second phrase – the dam bursting – cries out in a heart-rending *fortissimo* (bar 71). And in Op. 48 No. 1, the A' return of the *Lento, mezza voce* A section is presented stormily, *agitato* and twice as fast, *doppio movimento*.

Considered as a group, these three Type 1 ABA' structures are the most rigidly schematic of the large ternary arrangements, and it may be worth pointing out that the A sections of both the G minor and the C minor nocturnes, Op. 37 No. 1 and Op. 48 No. 1, suggest the mournful ploddings of a funeral march, with their B sections (both laid out melodically as lyric binaries) taking on the topical role of a major-mode 'Trio.' The curiosity in both is their unexpected overlays of the funeral-march topic onto that of the 'nocturne' – or, from another angle, their blendings of the two seemingly incompatible genres. Once past the very earliest, *bel canto* nocturnes, Chopin treats the expressive content of the genre more flexibly. While in order to be presented as a 'nocturne', it must always begin quietly, with a songlike melody in the 'soprano' voice, it becomes capable of being blended with more varied musical topics.

Another kind of ABA' ternary, which I will call the format's *second type*, comprises those with shortened reprises (small-letter aa' only) following B, as illustrated in Figure 7. In this situation, what precedes B is a complete (or nearly complete) lyric binary – my central criterion for an ABA' form – while what follows B is only a partial one, like the final zone of a lyric binary. Like the Figure 3 lyric binary variant, this Figure 7 arrangement can be read as a hybrid. It features aspects of both compound ternary form (with the complete lyric form before B) and the lyric binary (with its abbreviated reprise), though in this case the arrangement tilts rather toward the ternary than the lyric binary group. While of course notable – and fascinating – variants of the format can be found among them, I count five of these: B major, Op. 9 No. 3; C sharp minor, Op. 27 No. 1; F minor, Op. 55 No. 1; and the two Op. 62 noc-

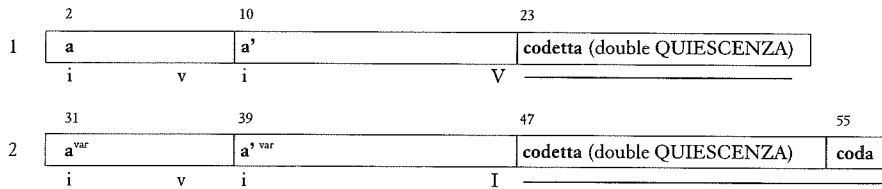
turnes, the composer's last compositions in this genre. Of some interest is that the initial A sections of Op. 27 No. 1 and Op. 62 No. 1 feature the 'family-related', lyric binary variant with a full reprise of the initial period, aa' – b // aa', an issue discussed earlier with regard to Op. 15 No. 1.

THREE ROTATIONAL NOCTURNES

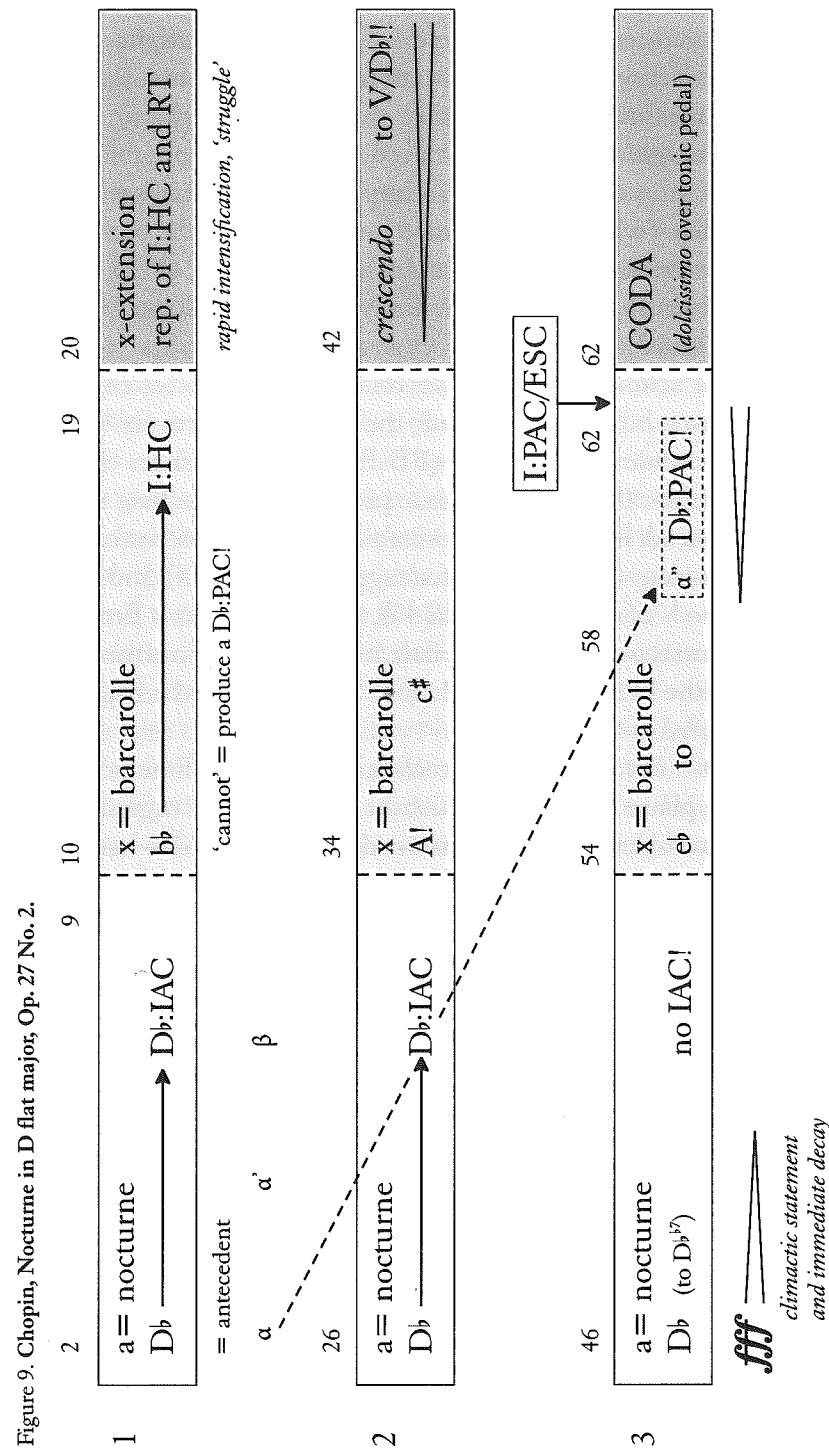
Thus far we have considered seventeen nocturnes and divided them into two groups: nine lyric-binary-based and eight large-ternary-based (ABA'). If we scan the opus numbers of each group, it is clear that Chopin generally favoured the simpler lyric binary formats in the earlier nocturnes and the large or compound ABA' ternaries and their hybrids in the later ones. Of Chopin's twenty nocturnes, these seventeen set in relief the remaining three, each of which sports a different principle of organisation: what I call a *rotational structure*, a set of varied cyclings through an initially stated thematic complex. The simplest is the early, E minor Nocturne from 1827 but published posthumously as Op. 72 No. 1. This nocturne is neither lyric-binary nor ternary-ABA'-oriented. Instead, as shown in Figure 8, it is *double-rotational*, constructed as two cycles through a thematic pattern or initial layout. The first layout of the thematic pattern, Rotation 1, ends in major V (B major, confirmed with two rounds of the quiescenza figure, the second incomplete, as a codetta) and Rotation 2 ends in the tonic major, E, with a similar, but transposed, double-quiescenza codetta and a concluding coda to the whole. The tonal resolution in Rotation 2 suggests a tangential – but only loosely tangential – dialogue with sonata practices, something that Chopin could have observed in a few of John Field's early nocturnes.

More rotationally sophisticated are the remaining two nocturnes: those in D flat, Op. 27 No. 2, and in G, Op. 37 No. 2. Like the E minor Nocturne, the D flat Nocturne is in dialogue with neither the lyric binary format nor the ternary ABA'. Instead, as shown in Figure 9, it is *triple-rotational*, consisting of three thematic rotations: an initial thematic pattern or referential layout (Rotation 1) plus two varied recyclings of it (Rotations 2 and 3).

Figure 8. Chopin, Nocturne in E minor, Op. 72 No. 1 (c.1827, double-rotational).



- Bars 1–25: *Rotation 1*. Following an initial bar of arpeggiation, the D flat Nocturne's Rotation 1 moves through three phases. Most notable here is the decisive change of musical topic from phase 1 to phase 2: after eight thematic, bel canto bars (bars 2–9), the opening 'nocturne' slips into a dreamlike or elegiac, minor-mode barcarolle (bar 10) with that genre's characteristic parallel thirds and bobbing rhythms. Chopin builds the bel canto Phase 1 sentimentally, as an asymmetrical $\alpha \alpha' \beta$, 2+3+3, and ends it with an imperfect authentic cadence in the tonic D flat, I:IAC, in bar 9. The tonic-key IAC marks this first phase as an eight-bar compound antecedent. And as a normative antecedent (functioning like a musical 'question'), Chopin could have followed it up with a parallel consequent (the 'answer' to that question), a complementary α' , in the orthodox lyric binary manner. That is why I label phase 1 with our familiar small-letter 'a'. But instead of continuing as a lyric binary, in bar 10 the music slips away from its nocturnal, D flat moorings, out of bel canto texture, and into something different: a romantically misty, melancholic barcarolle. I label it 'x' to indicate its lack of participation in the more common lyric binary procedure.
- This phase-2 barcarolle flows forth initially on B flat minor (ν), and, like phase 1, it proceeds sentimentally. Harmonically, Chopin leads the phase-2 music through a sequence of descending fifths, from B flat minor (bars 10–13) to E flat minor (here an ascending fourth, bars 14–17) and winding up on an active A flat dominant of D flat (bars 18/19), sounded as a half cadence (I:HC). Moving into phase 3, the x-extension (bars 20–25), the half cadence in D flat is repeated and soon dissolves into an anticipatory retransition (RT) into the next rotation.
- Given the topic change from phase 1 into phase 2 – the shift into the barcarolle and that topic family's usual connotations of



a romantic or enchanted journey of lovers – one might suggest retrospectively that the connotation of the bel-canto-style first phase is that of the invitation to that journey, a classic *invitation au voyage*. One might proceed further to wonder whether the suggestion of the invitation implies a masculine agent – he who invites – while the presumed lovers' journey, the barcarolle, might be read as feminine, or at least as a response to the invitation – in turn suggesting a potentially gendered dialogue between phases 1 and 2.

- Bars 26–45: *Rotation 2*. This second rotation recycles the same three phases, but now in phase 2, the barcarolle starts on A major (bar 34), enharmonically $\flat VI$ of D flat, then sequences through C sharp minor (bar 38), but fails to produce an immediate half cadence. Instead, Rotation 2 moves into a phase-3 *crescendo* and rapid intensification with a sense of struggle (bars 42–45) and finally seizes onto V of D flat, *forte* (bar 45), in order to push it further, as a grand anacrusis, into a climactic moment of the nocturne: the return of the D flat bel canto theme, triple-*forte*, as the beginning of Rotation 3.
- Bars 46–62: *Rotation 3*. The proclamatory return of the bel canto nocturne, phase 1, suggests a much-heightened, even urgent insistence. That urgency, though, is immediately subjected to harmonic and dynamic decay through the introduction of scale degree $\flat \hat{7}$ onto the D flat sonority (bar 49), which instantly arrests all progress. (This now-sustained $\flat \hat{7}$ might remind us of the somewhat similar incomplete quiescenza figure observed above in the Op. 9 No. 1 Nocturne (bar 51), where it had also been introduced into a passage of D flat major.) As a result, the D flat 'nocturne' phase 1 dissolves away (almost as a gesture of renunciation), this time failing to produce its antecedent-ending imperfect authentic cadence. Instead, it slips once again into the phase-2 barcarolle (bar 54), which this time begins on E flat minor (ii of D flat). Most importantly, in this Rotation 3, Chopin steers this tonally fluid barcarolle phase squarely onto its once-distant but nonetheless predetermined home shore to produce, with a now-finally-confident *crescendo* and fortified by a fleeting back-reference to phase 1's head-motif (α , bar 58), an ultra-emphatic D flat perfect

authentic cadence (bar 62), and with it the attainment of essential structural closure. Phase 3 is then turned into a tonic-pedal grounded coda (bars 62–76), affirming and ultimately dissipating the energy accumulated in the effort that had been required to produce the I:PAC at bar 62.

Op. 27 No. 2's triple-rotational structure can also be read in musically narrative terms. Its three 'a-then-x' rotations can be construed as three quests to articulate and close a D flat major resolution to the opening antecedent. The first two quests, Rotations 1 and 2, are unsuccessful: no D flat PAC is attained in either one. But the third rotation, finally, confidently – and, above all, guided by the firm hand of the nocturne's head motif – grasps and secures that desired essential structural closure, the ESC at bar 62. It is only in this third rotation that the barcarolle finally produces the D-flat-PAC answer to the antecedent question posed by the 'nocturne' – with the only D flat PAC in the piece.

Notwithstanding the twice deferred and then attained D flat PAC, it would be reductive to classify Op. 27 No. 2 as a brief sonata, as was also the case with the earlier E minor Nocturne. Thematically, the piece does not breathe the air of sonata form – nor that of rondo form, as is sometimes claimed, despite the refrain-like recurrence of the music of bars 2–9, more an initiating gesture than a fully realised idea in itself²⁸ – but rather that of a short-form nocturne, or a dreamlike, barcarolle journey to an eventual D flat cadential closure. Rotation 1 is not an exposition in any normative understanding of that term. And yet the piece's general idea of suspended and finally attained tonal closure might carry a scent of 'sonata allusion' in it, since Chopin assigns Rotation 3 the task of tonal resolution to the closing moments of the contrasting (but brief) phase-2 section – something that happens, as mentioned above, in some of John Field's early nocturnes. In my view, the preferable option is to read Op. 27 No. 2 as a rotational structure, though one that, in the loosest of senses, might carry out some harmonic features that we associate with a sonata.

²⁸ The rondo-inflected reading may be found, e.g., in Hugo Leichtentritt, *Musical Form* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), 301: 'Op. 27, No. 2, shows the mixed rondo and song form already pointed out in Mendelssohn's "Songs without Words": a, b, a, b, a, coda. Every return of the principal theme is more elaborately ornamented.'

Grasping the rotational organisation of Op. 27 No. 2 helps us to confront the extraordinary G major Nocturne, Op. 37 No. 2. On the piece's immediate acoustic surface, what initially strikes the listener are, first, the piece's rapid and mercurial harmonic shifts – an unstable fluidity seems to be the operative principle throughout – and, second, the similarly fluid absence of cadential closure between its alternating and contrasting thematic portions, producing the impression of a nearly seamless, continuous flow. This 'liquid' quality might well have been suggested by the connotative aspects of its opening theme, which (like the 'phase-2' thematic idea of Op. 27 No. 2) is in dialogue with the barcarolle topic family. Examining the nocturne as a whole, we see that the barcarolle idea begun in bar 1 returns – more properly, is slipped back in – at bar 68 and bar 123, shortened in length each time. Additionally, the relationship of its first, and most extended, appearance, bars 1–28, to a lyric binary structure is tenuous at best, and there is no sense of its cadential completion as a melodic structure. This material alternates with a contrasting berceuse-like theme, sounded at length twice, both times suggesting a harmonically free treatment of the lyric binary format, bars 29–68 and bars 84–123 (the second of these is a full repetition of the first, transposed up by a major third), and then returned to very briefly at the end, as a final, back-glancing gesture now closing in the tonic, bars 133–139. Thus the barcarolle-berceuse alternations occur thrice, and the nocturne can be read as triple-rotational, with each rotation led off by barcarolle material: Rotation 1, bars 1–68; Rotation 2, bars 68–123; and Rotation 3, much shortened, bars 123–139.

ENVOI

At this point, it is possible to provide a summary of the various types of structure found in Chopin's nocturnes as a generic set. From the perspective presented in this essay, the twenty nocturnes can be grouped into three flexible categories, shown in Figure 10. Nine of the nocturnes are lyric-binary-oriented (though realised in quite different, freely imaginative ways); eight of them are large ternaries, ABA' (where Chopin builds the initial A as a lyric binary); three of them are idiosyncratically rotational.

Figure 10. Formats of Chopin's twenty nocturnes.

Lyric-Binary Oriented	ABA'	Rotational
• C# minor, Op. posth.	• B major, Op. 9 No. 3	• E minor, Op. 72 No. 1
• Bb minor, Op. 9 No. 1	• C# minor, Op. 27 No. 1	• Db major, Op. 27 No. 2
• Eb major, Op. 9 No. 2	• Ab major, Op. 32 No. 2	• G major, Op. 37 No. 2
• F major, Op. 15 No. 1	• G minor, Op. 37 No. 1	
• F# major, Op. 15 No. 2	• C minor, Op. 48 No. 1	
• G minor, Op. 15 No. 3	• F minor, Op. 55 No. 1	
• B major, Op. 32 No. 1	• B major, Op. 62 No. 1	
• F# minor, Op. 48 No. 2	• E major, Op. 62 No. 2	
• Eb major, Op. 55 No. 2		

We should understand any such groupings as flexible constructs. Within each group, we find a variety of realisations. And apart from questions of schematic layout, each nocturne displays individualised aspects of musical-topic allusion: bel canto song, barcarolle, waltz, mazurka, *tempesta*, hymn, berceuse, funeral march, and so on. Other individualising aspects are linked to features of internal musical growth and ongoing process. Among the most important of these are ever-increasing decoration and textural intensity with each thematic repetition, dramatic changes of tempo, texture or dynamics (for instance, forceful, dynamic restatements), unexpected tonal swerves, and evaporated cadences and dissolved structural boundaries, producing run-on sections not separated by the more normative closural breaks, the most radicalised of which are found in Op. 37 No. 2.

Finally, I should underscore that I present my formal groupings here only as proposals. They do not by any means solve the intricacies of structure in Chopin's nocturnes. I do hope, though, that they provide somewhat differing starting points from which we might continue to explore the internal and process-oriented idiosyncrasies – the marvellous idiosyncrasies – of each one.

ABSTRACT

One common view of the musical structure of Chopin's twenty nocturnes – the eighteen published during his lifetime, along with the two posthumously published ones (E minor, Op. 72 No. 1 and C sharp minor, Op. posth.) – is that they most typically conform to our generalised expectation of the piano miniature of the era: principal thematic statement – contrasting digression – reprise of all or part of the original statement – optional coda. Thus one might approach the analysis of each piece with the expectation of finding a large (or 'compound') ternary schema: ABA' + coda. So far as it goes, this 'top-down' generalisation accurately describes many of the nocturnes. Yet a complementary perspective emerges if one looks at them from the 'bottom up', that is, as variants, expansions or compoundings of the smaller-scale, quasi-standardised short format that I call the *lyric binary* arrangement – a schema often found in the Italian arias and songs of the era.

Symmetrically quadratic (often disposed in 2+2, 4+4 and 8+8 units), its most prototypical schema is aa'ba'' (+ coda), though one also encounters expansions and internal repetitions of that pattern, such as aa'ba''ba'' (+ coda). This latter format, for instance (with repeated ba''), is found in the E flat major Nocturne, Op. 9 No. 2, structurally Chopin's simplest piece in the genre, and as such a useful guide to perceiving the lyric binary pattern in some of the others. A close look at each of the nocturnes suggests that in terms of overall form, they fall into three groups (though within each group one finds a number of variant realisations). Nine of the nocturnes are grounded in the lyric binary pattern (sometimes with digressions or interpolations); eight are better described as large ternary structures (ABA', where the initial A is itself built as a lyric binary); the other three conform to neither pattern and are best approached as rotational structures, featuring two or three varied cycles through a thematic pattern or initial layout.

Keywords: large ternary form (ABA'), lyric binary form (aa'ba''), small ternary form, rounded binary form, action zones, initial zone, medial zone, final zone, cadence (HC, IAC, PAC), essential structural closure (ESC), rotation, rotational form, period (antecedent, consequent), sentence (presentation, continuation)

ABSTRAKT

W powszechnym mniemaniu struktura muzyczna dwudziestu nokturnów Chopina – tj. osiemnastu opublikowanych za życia kompozytora oraz dwu pośmiertnie (*e-moll* op. 72 nr 1 i *cis-moll* op. posth.) – odpowiada naszym ogólnym oczekiwaniom wobec ówczesnej miniatury muzycznej: obszar tematu głównego – kontrastujący odcinek środkowy – reprzyza całości lub ekspozycji – opcjonalna koda. Analizując je, można zatem spodziewać się rozległej (lub „skróconej”) formy trzyczęściowej ABA' + kody. I przechodząc od ogółu do szczegółu, taki model zasadniczo opisuje adekwatnie wiele z tych nokturnów. Inną jednak, komplementarną perspektywę zyskamy, spoglądając na nie w odwróconym porządku, od szczegółu do ogółu, jako na warianty, rozszerzenia i zawężenia w skali mikro quasi-standardowego krótkiego schematu, który określam jako „dwuczęściową formę liryczną”, często obecną w ariach i pieśniach włoskich epoki.

Prototypowym schematem tych zbudowanych symetrycznie z jednakowych członów (2+2, 4+4, 8+8 itd.) struktur jest aa'ba'', choć możliwe są także jego nieznaczące rozszerzenia oraz wewnętrzne powtórzenia (jak aa'ba''ba''). Ten ostatni na przykład (z powtórzeniem ba'') to wzór *Nokturnu* op. 9 nr 2, strukturalnie najprostszego wśród utworów Chopina w tym gatunku, a zatem i najbardziej użytecznego w odkrywaniu dwuczęściowego wzoru lirycznego obecnego w innych. Gdy przyjrzymy się każdemu z nokturnów, okaże się, że można je przypisać do jednej z trzech grup (choć w każdej z kolei znajdzie się po kilka wariantów). Dziewięć opartych jest na dwuczęściowym wzorze binarnym (niekiedy z wtrętami i dygresjami); osiem lepiej jest opisać jako większe struktury trzyczęściowe (ABA', gdzie odcinek A sam w sobie ma budowę binarną); trzy kolejne nie odpowiadają żadnemu z tych schematów, za to lepiej poddają się analizie, jeśli spojrzeć na nie jako na struktury rotacyjne z dwoma lub trzema zróżnicowanymi cyklami wzoru tematycznego lub początkowego.

Słowa kluczowe: duża forma trzyczęściowa (ABA'), dwuczęściowa forma liryczna (aa'ba''), mała forma trzyczęściowa, skrócona reprzyzowa forma dwuczęściowa, strefa aktywna, strefa początkowa, strefa środkowa, strefa końcowa, kadencja (półkadencja – HC, mała kadencja doskonała – IAC, wielka kadencja doskonała – PAC), kadencyjne zamknięcie ekspozycji (ESC), rotacja, forma rotacyjna, okres (poprzednik, następnik), zdanie (ekspozycja, rozwinięcie)