Tertian relations in the Mendelssohn violin concerto

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Thesis

The interval of the third is a unifying musical element with thematic significance in Felix Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto in E Minor, Op. 64.

Overview[1]

I. Analysis of musical surface gestures

II. Analysis of underlying harmonic framework

III. Analysis of larger key area relations

IV. Acknowledgement of potential counterarguments

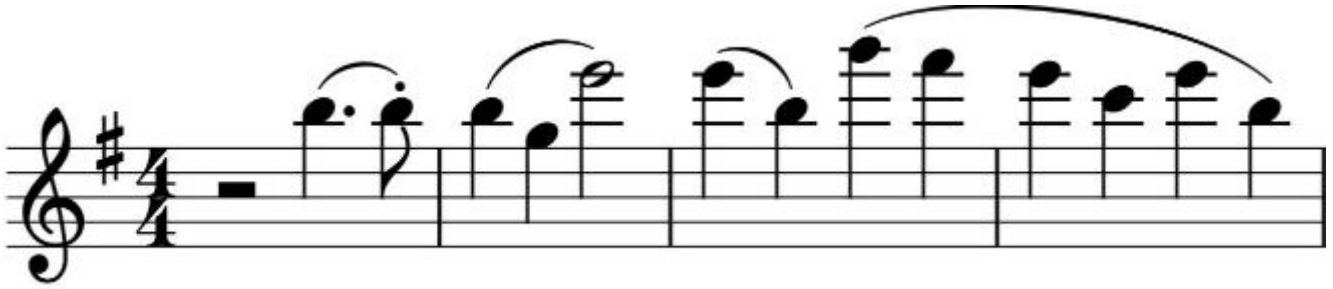
[1] All examples based on the International Music Company (IMC) Edition (ed. Francescatti)

MUSICAL SURFACE ANALYSIS

SECTION I

Fig. 1a: Theme 1.1[2]

mvt. 1: mm. 2-5



[2] All themes are indicated in format of [movement].[number]; Theme 1.1 designates theme 1 of movement 1

Fig. 1b: Melodic reduction of Theme 1.1

mvt. 1: mm. 2-4

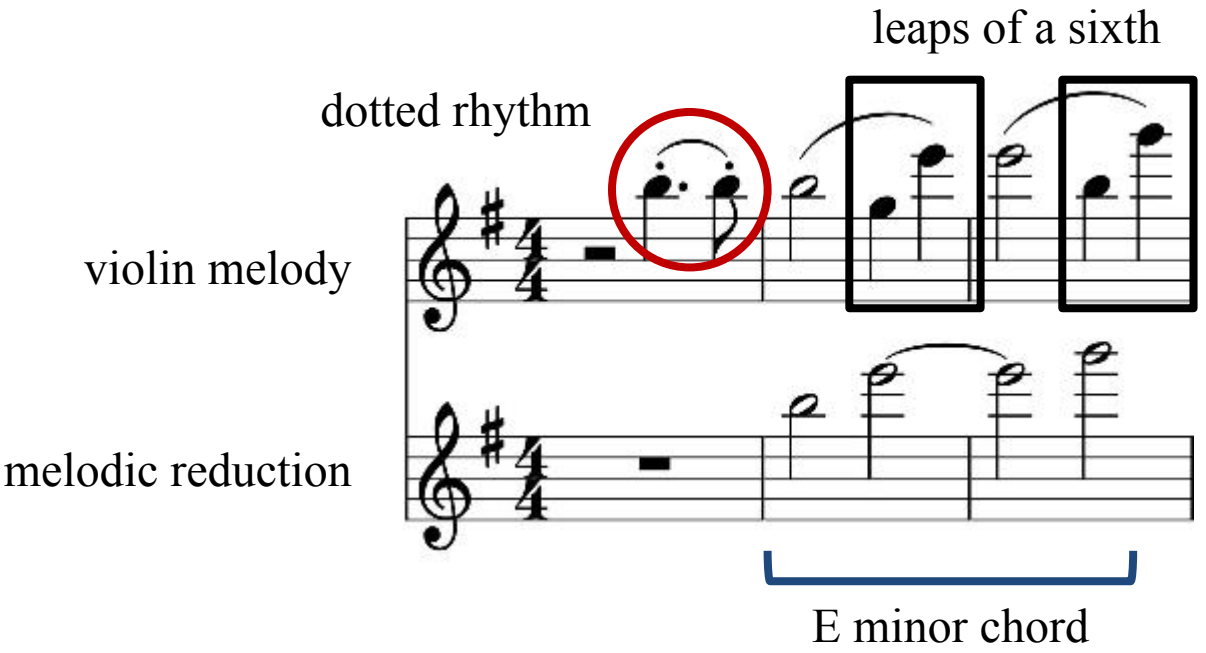


Fig. 1c: Instances of Theme 1.1

mvt. 1: various

III = G major
mm. 168-170

derived from vii^{o7}/E minor
mm. 211-213

I = E major
mm. 262-264

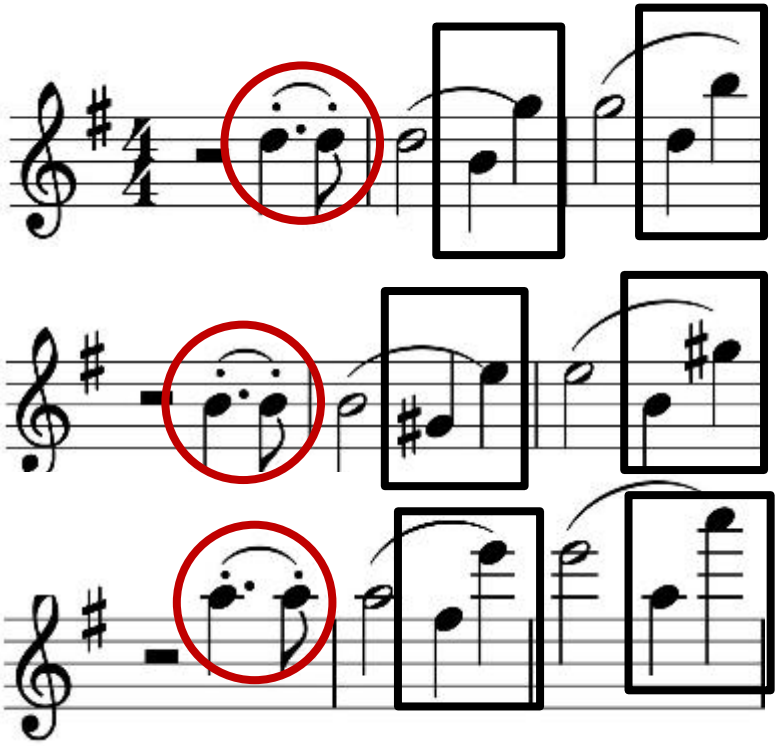


Fig. 1d: Themes 1.1A and 1.1

mvt. 1: mm. 76-78 (1.1A), mm. 2-4 (1.1)

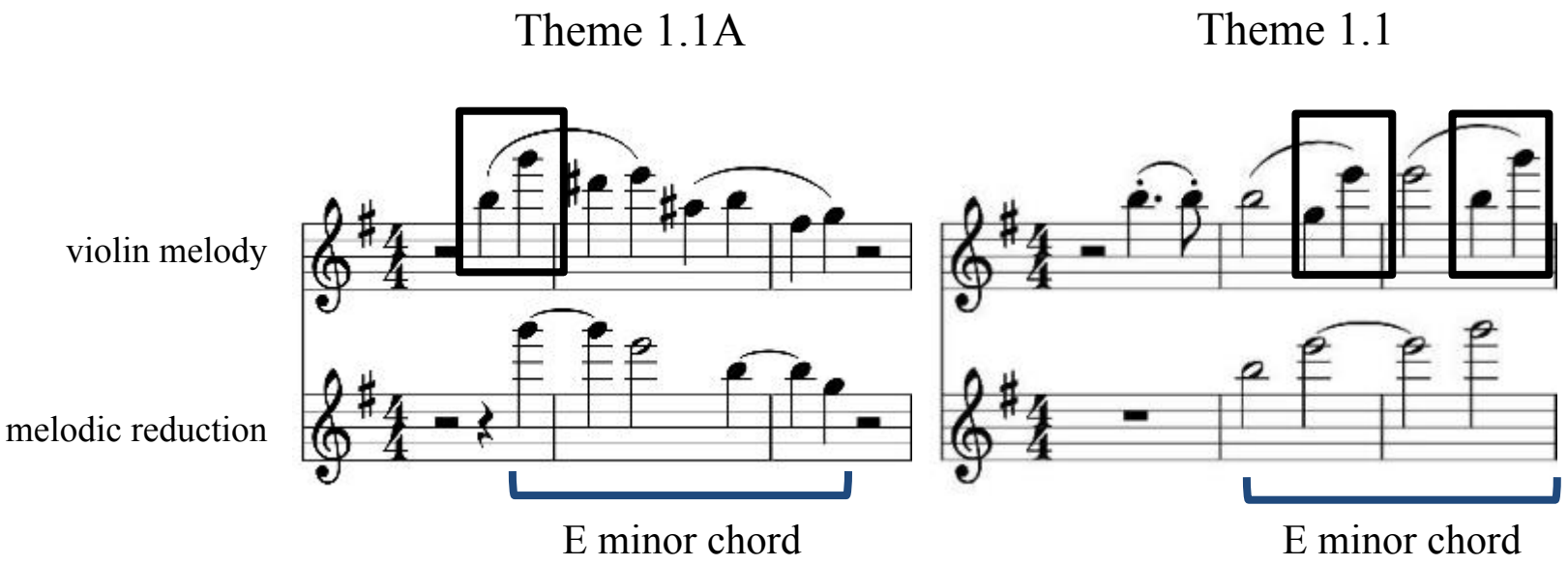


Fig. 2a: Theme 1.2 and reduction

mvt. 1: mm. 139-144

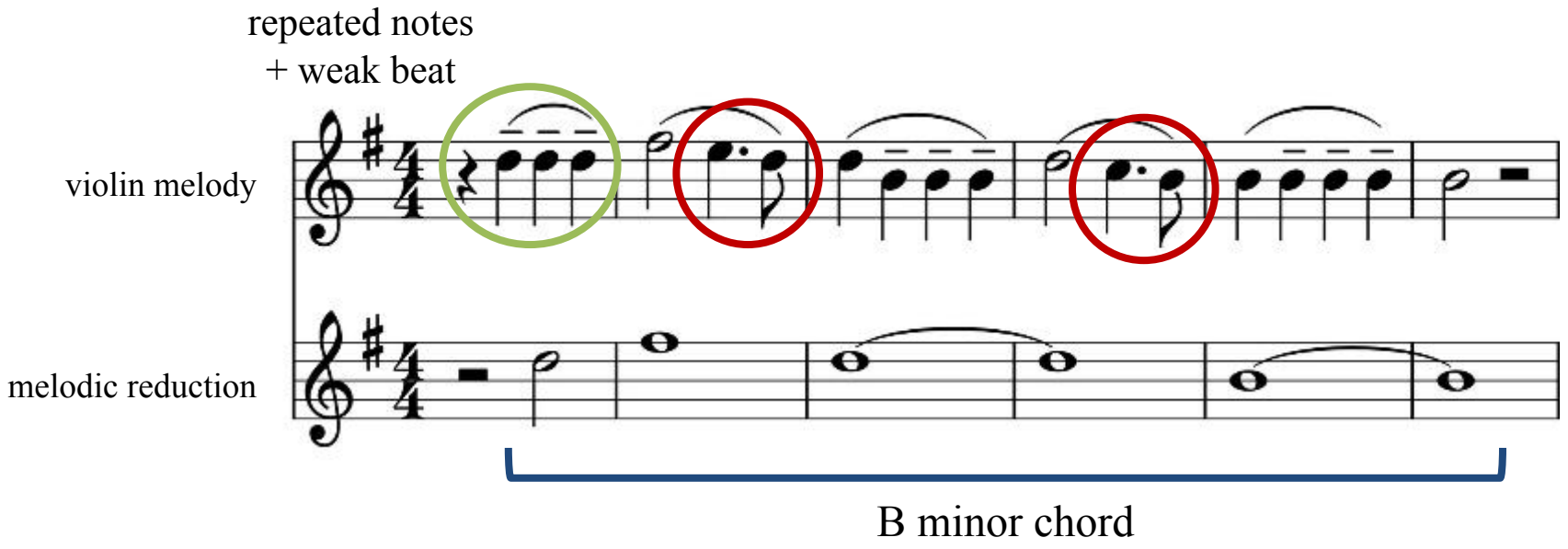


Fig. 2b: Instances of Theme 1.2

mvt. 1: various

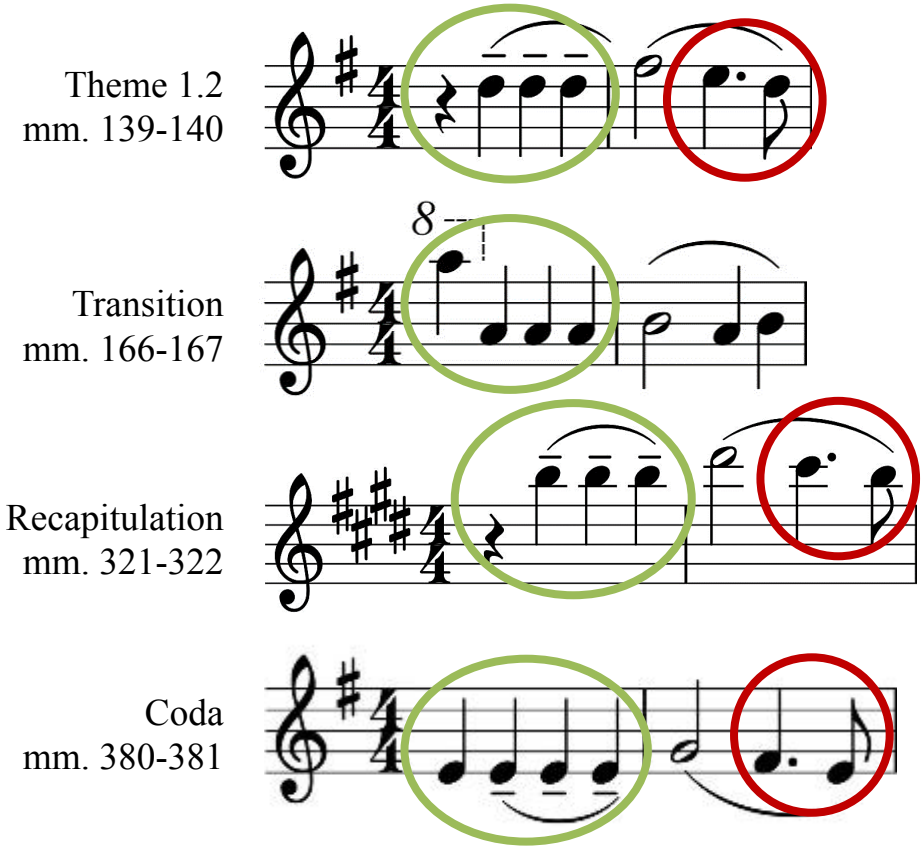


Fig. 3: Theme 2.1

mvt. 2: mm. 9-12

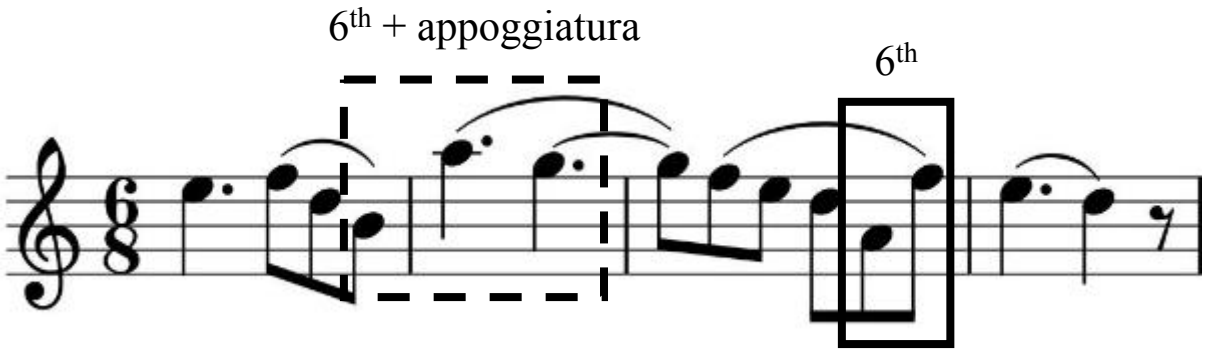


Fig. 4: Themes 2.1A and 2.1

mvt. 2: mm. 21-23 (2.1A), mm. 9-11 (2.1)

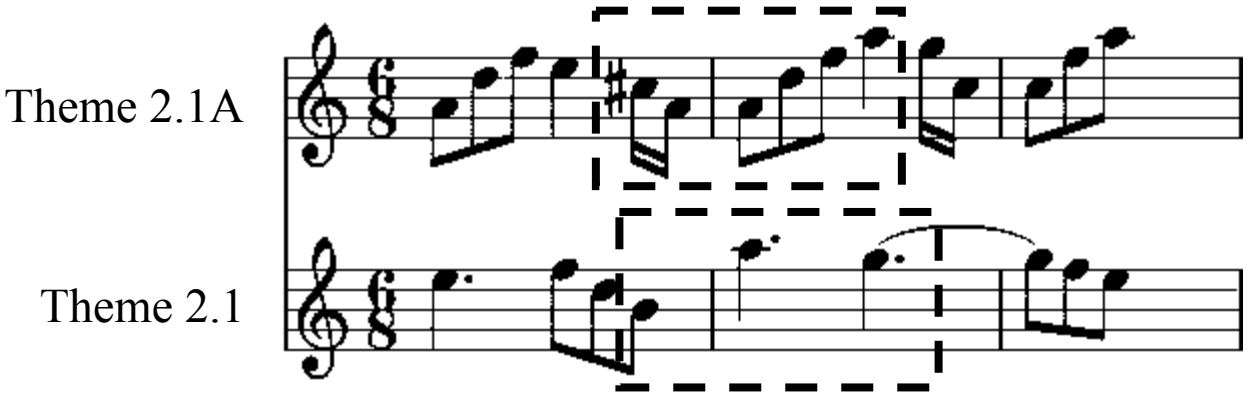


Fig. 5: Theme 3.1

mvt. 3: mm. 22-25

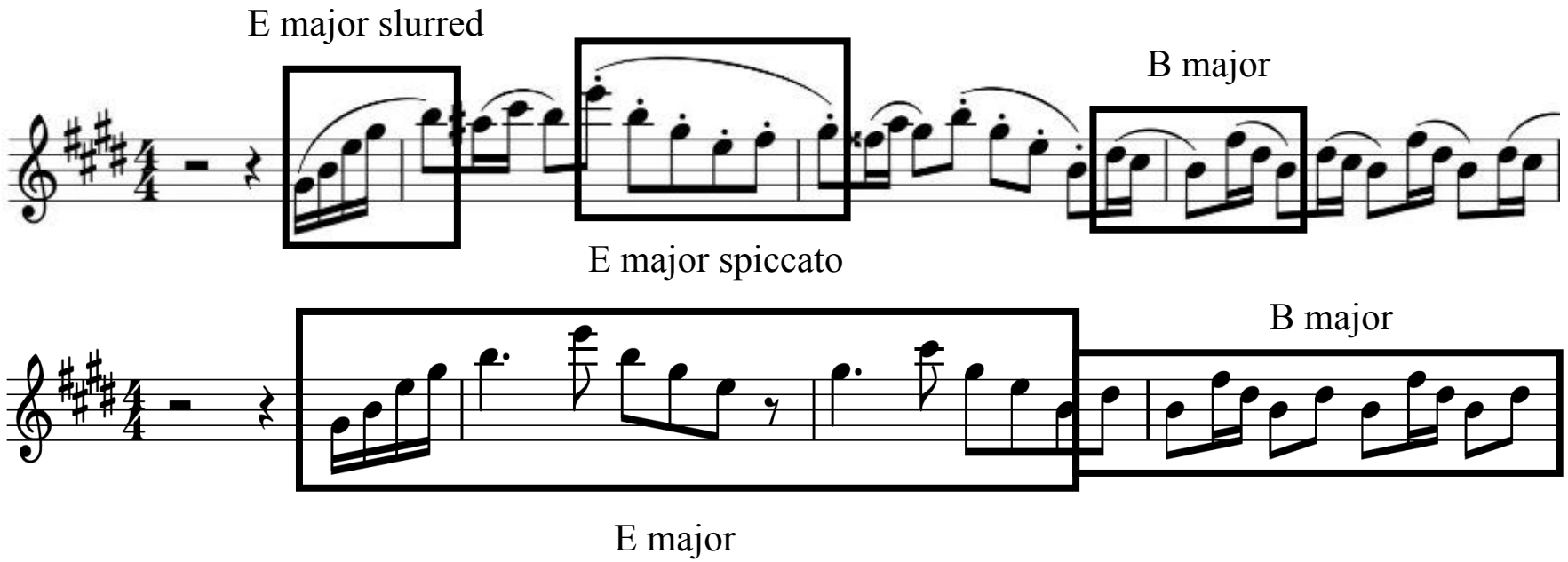
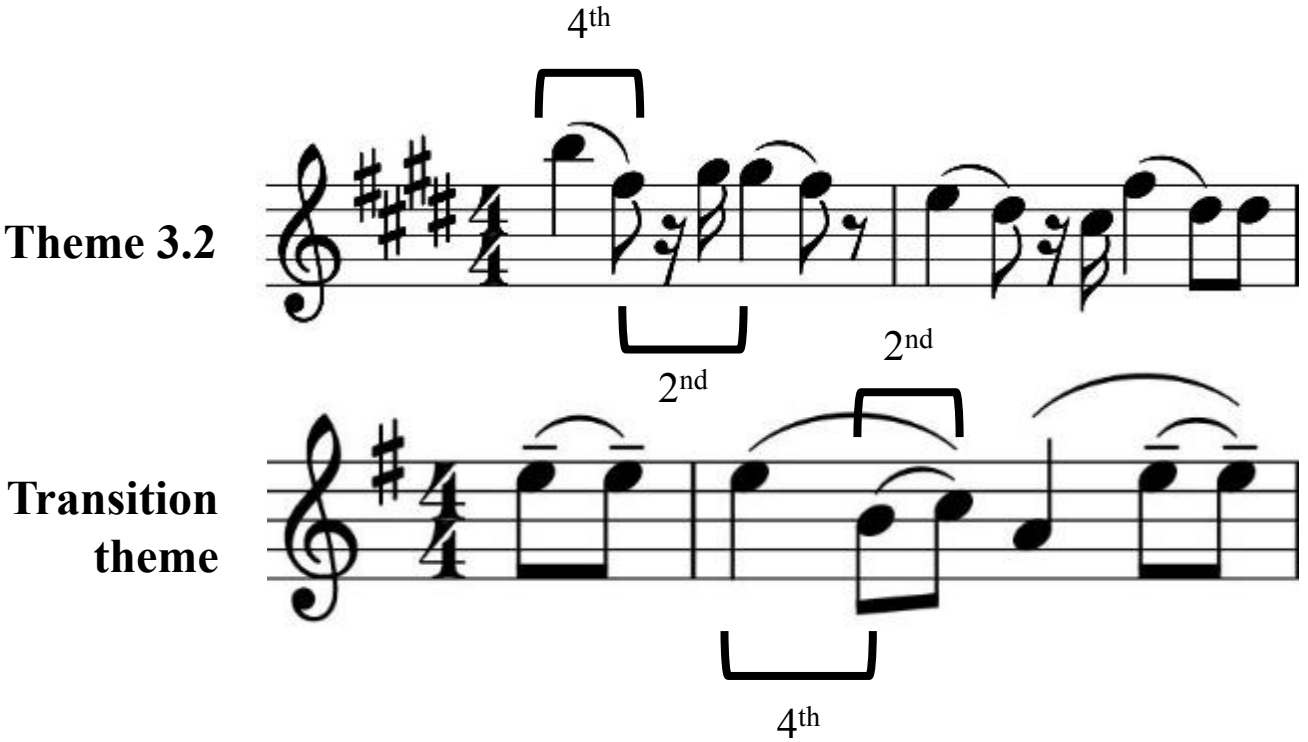


Fig. 6: Theme 3.2

mvt. 3: mm. 69-70 (3.2), mm. 1 (Transition)



HARMONIC FRAMEWORK ANALYSIS

SECTION II

Fig. 7: Melodic and harmonic reductions

mvt. 1: mm. 25-36

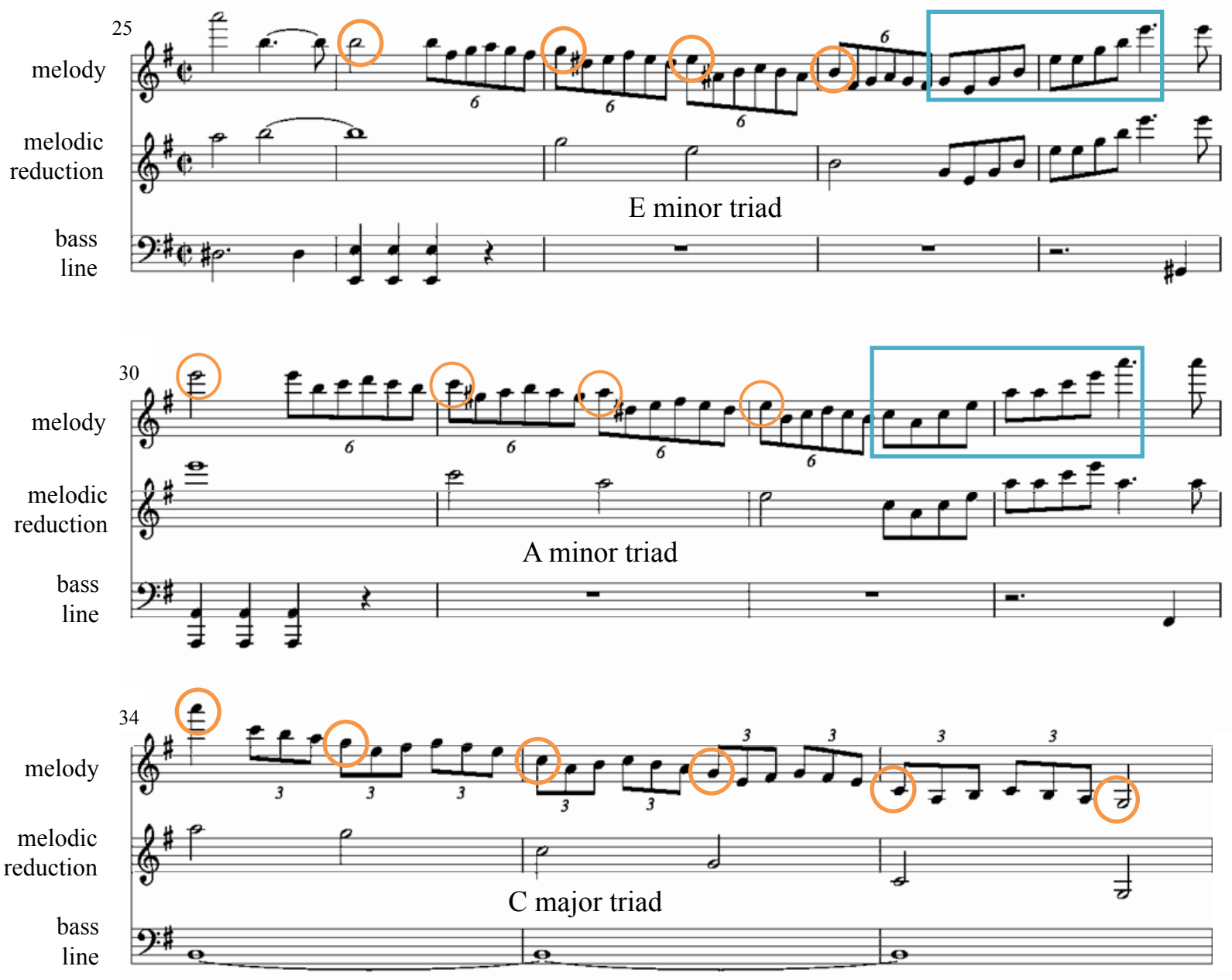

25
melody
melodic reduction
E minor triad
bass line
30
melody
melodic reduction
A minor triad
bass line
34
melody
melodic reduction
C major triad
bass line

Fig. 8a: Reduction of mm. 238-244

mvt. 1: mm. 238-244

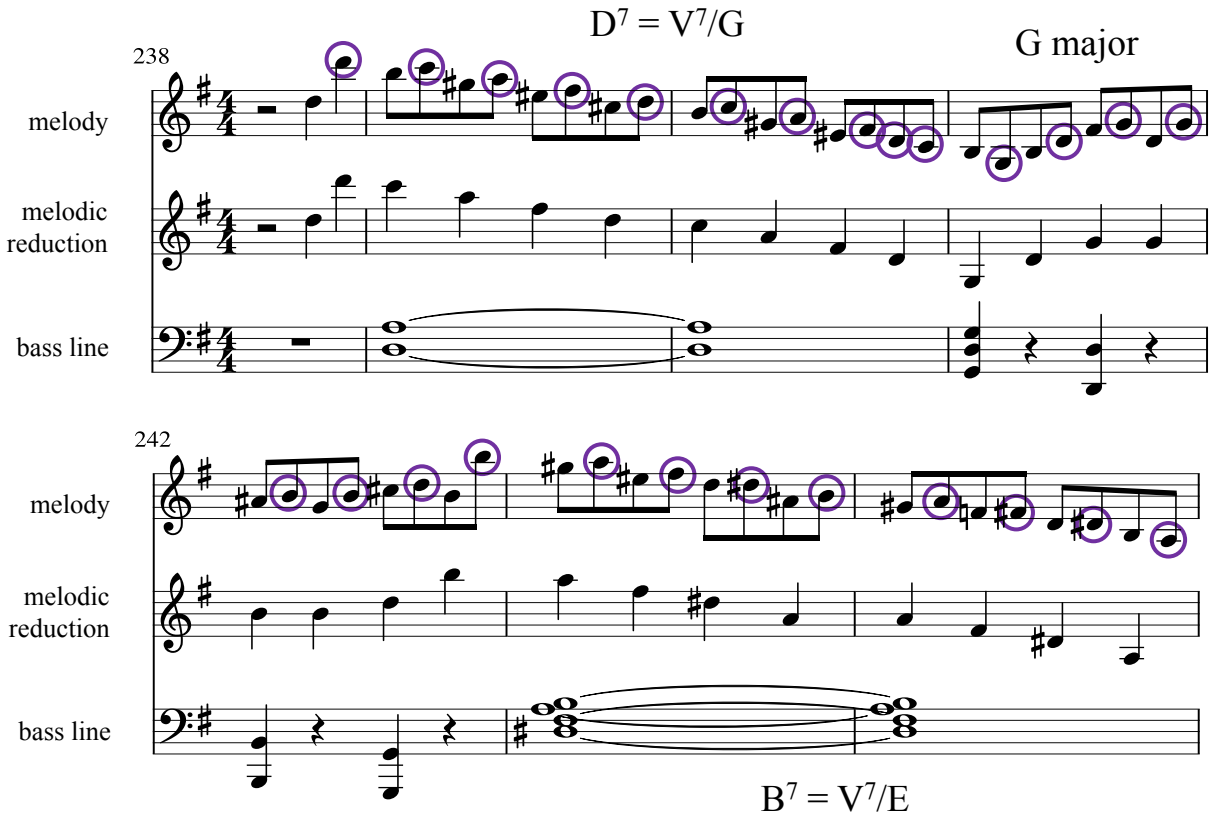


Fig. 8: Approaching dominant by thirds

mvt. 1: mm. 238-255

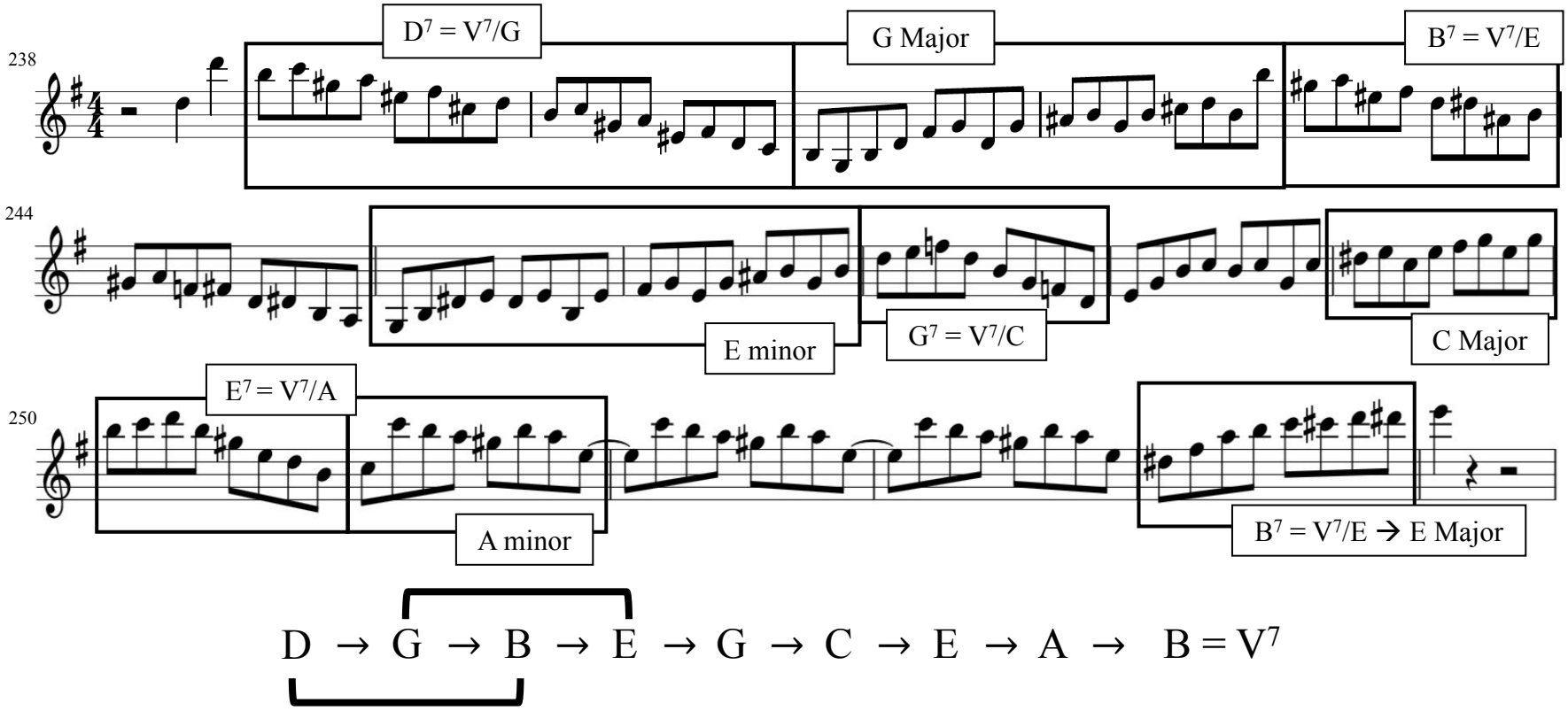


Fig. 9: Implied resolutions and $\mathbf{V}_{5}^{6}{}_{3}^{4}$

mvt. 1: mm. 113-120

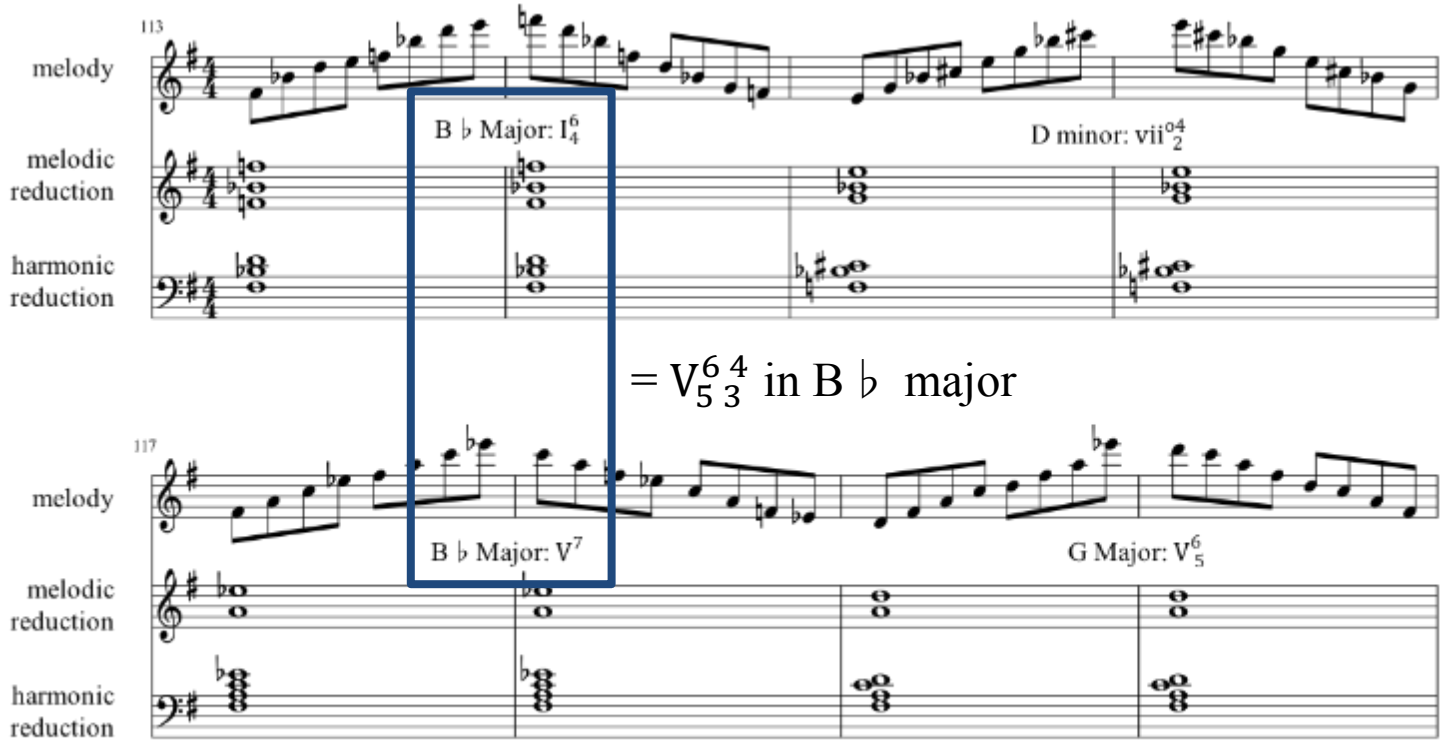
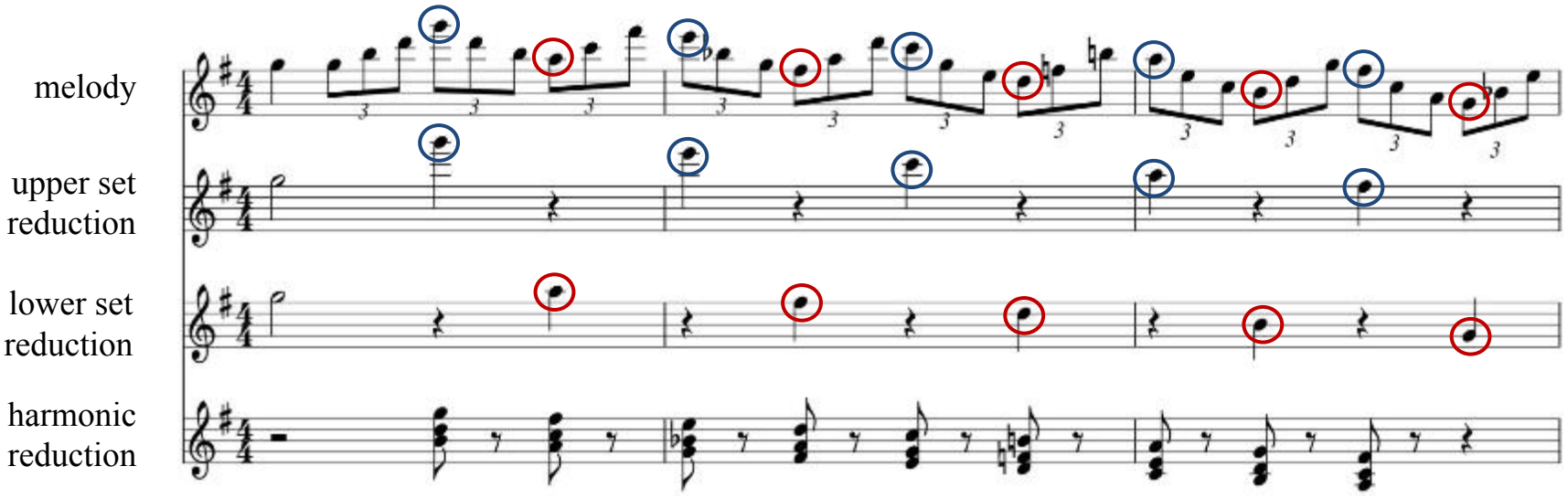


Fig. 10: Interlocking thirds

mvt. 1: mm. 181-183



LARGER KEY AREA RELATIONS

SECTION III

Fig. 11: Key Diagram, Mvt. 1

mvt. 1: Allegro, molto appassionato

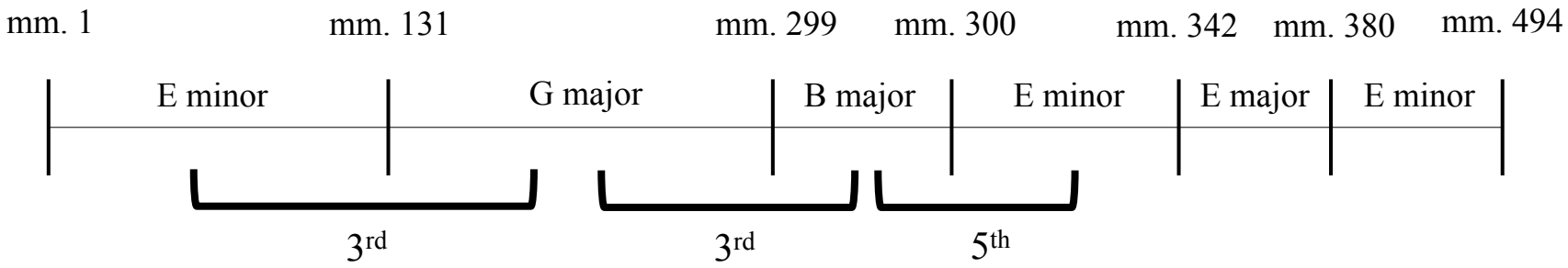
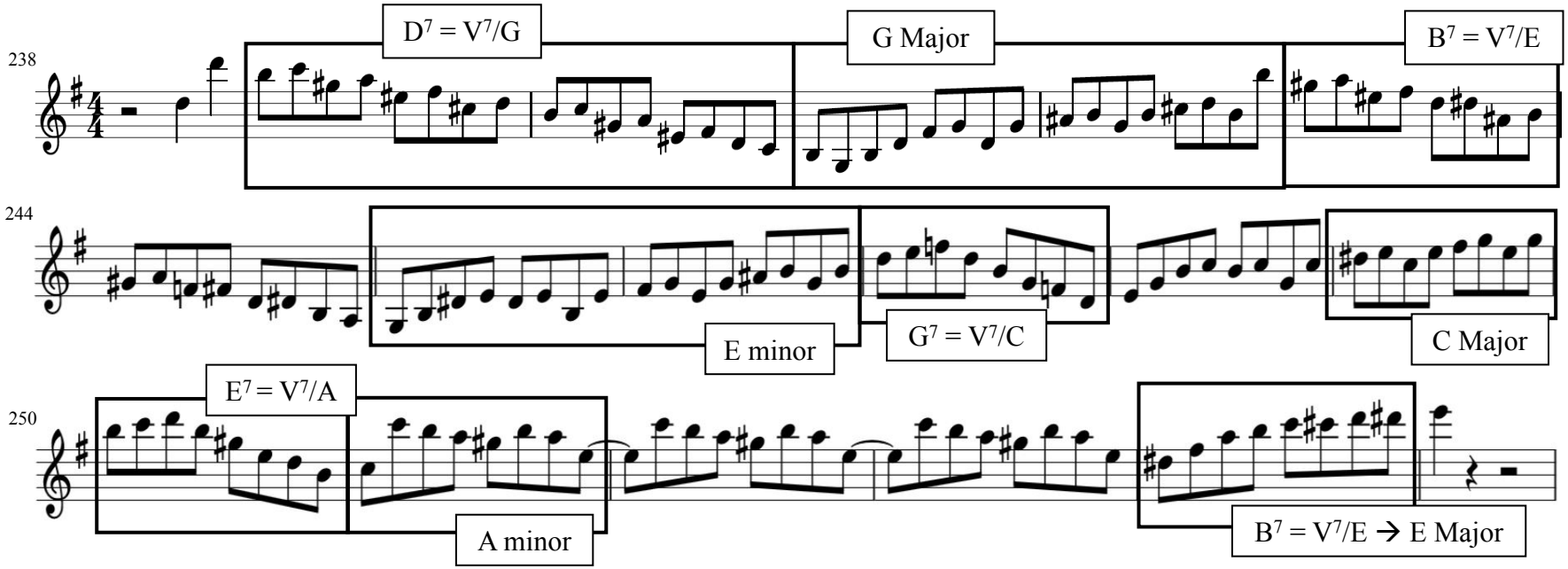


Fig. 8: Approaching dominant by thirds

mvt. 1: mm. 238-255



D → G → B → E → G → C → E → A → B = V^7

Fig. 11: Key Diagram, Mvt. 1

mvt. 1: Allegro, molto appassionato

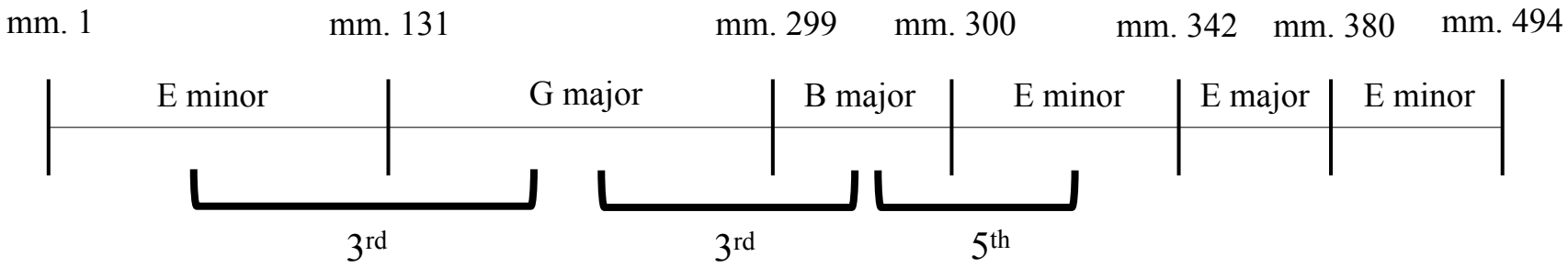


Fig. 12: Key Diagram, Mvt. 3

mvt. 3: Allegretto non troppo / Allegro molto vivace

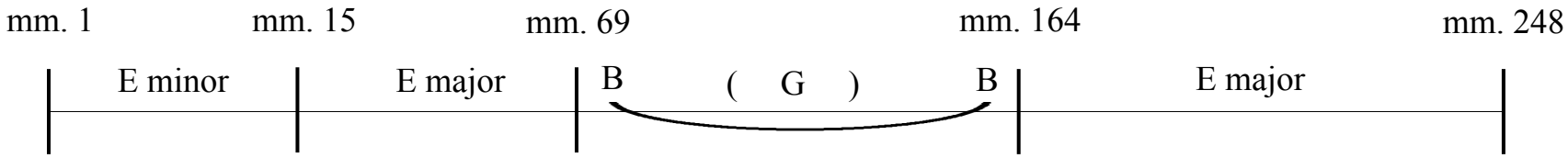
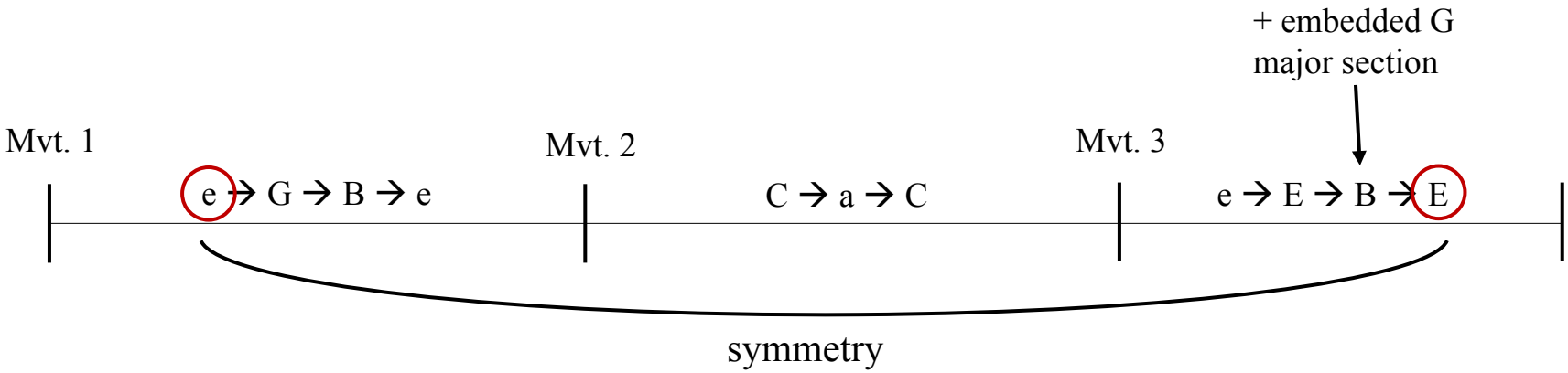


Fig. 13: Key Diagram, concerto



Series of keys (when stacked): A, C, E, G, B

COUNTERARGUMENTS

SECTION IV

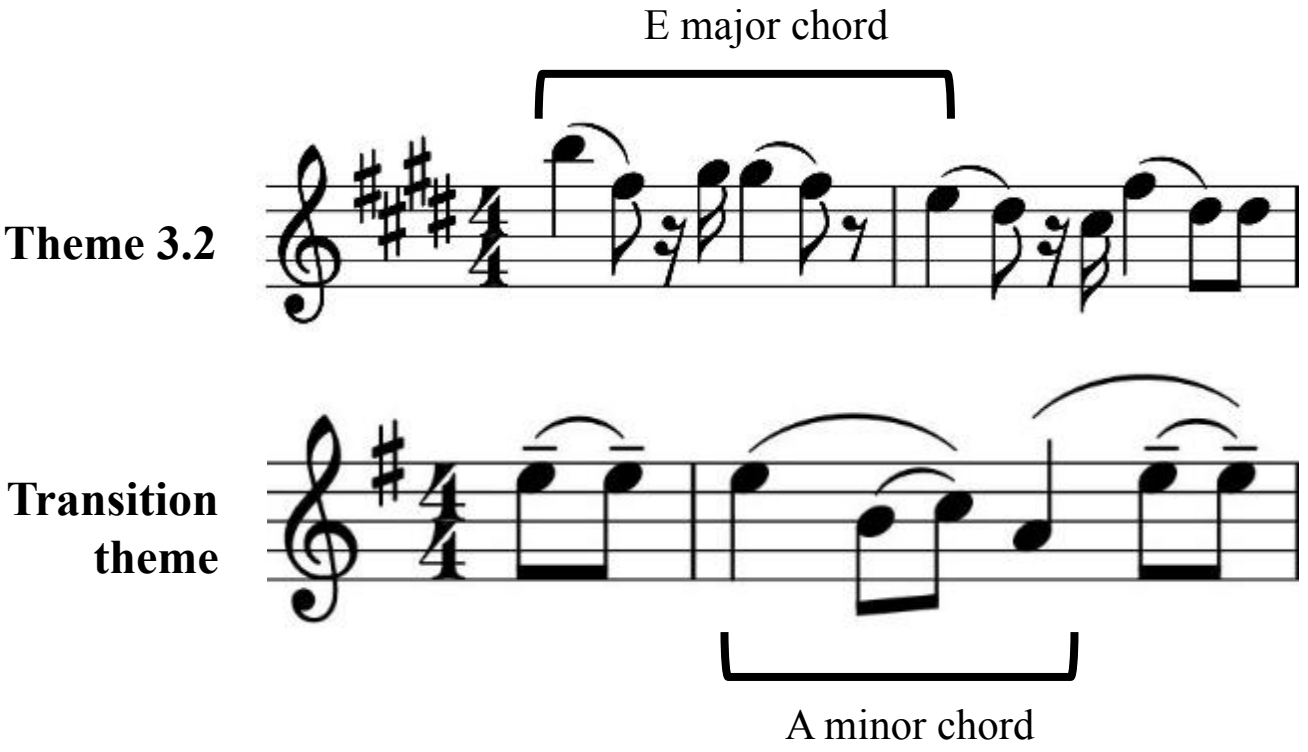
Counterarguments

I. Passages for virtuosic purposes
- the fact that these surface figures were used indicates importance of third

II. Coincidental use; arpeggios used to indicate chordal harmonies
- this purpose is not mutually exclusive with thesis
- presence of third in every level of analysis indicate importance of third

Fig. 6: Harmonic decorations and chords

mvt. 3: mm. 69-70 (3.2), mm. 1 (Transition)



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II. Coincidental use; arpeggios used to indicate chordal harmonies
- this purpose is not mutually exclusive with thesis
- presence of third in every level of analysis indicate importance of third

III. Tertian key relations in the musical language of the Romantic Era
- degree of prevalence of interval of third demonstrates significance

Conclusion

- Prevailing harmonic language of the Romantic Era
- Thematic significance
- Degree of prevalence within the concerto
- The third is a unifying element of this work

Bibliography

"Felix Mendelssohn." *Naxos*. Accessed May 2, 2016. http://www.naxos.com/person/Felix_Mendelssohn/24619.htm

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Mendesslohn, Felix. *Violin Concerto in E Minor, Op. 64*. Ed. Julius Rietz. Leipzig: Verlag von Breitkopf und Härtel, c. 1874-1882: 1-55.

Questions