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SCHEMATIC DEFORMATION: SYSTEMATIC LINEARITY IN GRIEG'S 'TAKK' AND OTHER LYRIC PIECES

It is undeniable that the main interest of Edvard Grieg (1843–1907) as a composer lay in the field of harmony rather than traditional counterpoint,¹ and research on him has accordingly focused on the vertical aspects of his harmonic style.² Patrick Dinslage (2001) has therefore claimed that possible connections between Grieg's studies in music theory and the development of his harmonic style may have been overlooked. His studies in Leipzig in 1858–1862 gave Grieg a thorough education in theory that was heavily concentrated on counterpoint (Utne-Reitan 2018a and 2018b). In this article I shall not attempt to draw a causal link between Grieg's counterpoint exercises and his harmonic style. Instead, I will present analyses which demonstrate that parts of Grieg's harmonic language do indicate a linear (i.e. contrapuntal) understanding of harmony. I go on to claim that some of these instances of linear harmony might be explained from the perspective of schemata.

Musical schemata are not carved in stone. They are, rather, subject to deformation through the composer's play and experimentation. In this article I will investigate a particular type of linearity in Grieg's music that I describe later as 'systematic linearity'. My focus is primarily the piano piece 'Takk', Op. 62 No. 2. In it, Grieg makes use of an interesting harmonic progression which I will call *x*. While this particular progression is difficult to explain vertically, a linear perspective might be the key to understanding it. I will argue that progression *x* is a deformation of the omnibus – an expressive chromatic schema regularly found in nineteenth-century music. I will also compare the analysis of 'Takk' with similar instances from the collection of *Lyriske stykker* (*Lyric Pieces*). Before diving into the analyses, I will present the theoretical foundation for the analytical work, including short discussions of the terms 'schematic deformation' and 'systematic linearity' as well as a presentation of the omnibus schema. This focus on schematic patterns of voice leading is novel in the context of Grieg research and may thus provide a new perspective on the composer's harmony.

Schemata, Linearity, Omnibus

The main analytical perspective in this article is inspired by Robert Gjerdingens's (2007) work on schema analysis. I use the term 'schema' – 'stock musical

phrases' (Gjerdingen 2007, p. 6) – when indicating the presence of an commonly known underlying voice-leading pattern. In the eighteenth-century *galant* style, a limited number of schemata constituted music's fundamental building blocks. Although nineteenth-century composers worked within a quite different aesthetic paradigm, Romantic ideas of originality and individuality did not eradicate the use of musical schemata.³ Gjerdingen (2019 and 2020) has claimed that indeed schematic aspects pervaded pedagogical thought at the influential Paris Conservatory throughout the nineteenth century.⁴ Furthermore, Michael Henri Weiss (2018) demonstrates that schemata may be found in a range of different nineteenth-century musics.⁵ It is, however, safe to say that the intensified emphasis on originality and individuality in nineteenth-century music radically changed the role of musical schemata, making them less noticeable and less frequent than they were in the eighteenth century.⁶

In this article, I will consider complex passages in Grieg's music that are difficult to analyse from the perspective of functional harmony. I will argue that several of these passages may plausibly be interpreted as instances of schematic deformation. I use this term when referring to passages that seem to be based on commonly known musical schemata but deviate significantly from the prototype of the schema in question. The term 'deformation' is well-known in contemporary music theory, owing primarily due to its use in the 'new *Formenlehre*'. It may in some contexts come with negative connotations but should not be misinterpreted as a value judgement. I follow James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy in their definition of 'deformation' as 'a technical term referring to a striking way of stretching or overriding a norm. As a technical term it is intended to carry no judgmentally negative connotation, as in some popular usages of the word' (2006, p. 615).

By 'systematic linearity' I refer to the pitch material in passages that (1) are structured in linear rather than vertical terms and (2) follow a principle of systematicity in their voice leading. The most obvious examples are harmonic sequences. The distinction between vertical (*Klang* oriented – chords as entities in themselves) and horizontal (linearly oriented – chords as results of counterpoint) harmonies is not clear-cut. Rather, they should be seen as two extremes on a continuum. Ernst Kurth has claimed that we conceptualise the horizontal and vertical musical aspects as two forces, each of which strives 'to bring the individual tone under its influence, chordally or linearly' ([1917] 1991, p. 43).⁷ Thus, a passage may be more or less linear, and I reserve the use of the term 'systematic linearity' to those instances which resist intelligible interpretation by way of analysis from a vertical point of view (e.g. roman numerals and chord functions) but are explicable from points of view emphasising underlying systematic procedures governing the voice leading (e.g. schemata).

The case study of 'Takk' below treats a deformation of one particular schema: the omnibus. This advanced schema was well-known in the nineteenth

Ex. 1 An extended omnibus progression

The musical score for Ex. 1 shows an extended omnibus progression in two staves. The bass line is chromatic, and the other voices are connected to it through voice exchanges. The progression is divided into four segments, each a minor third higher than the previous one. The chords are labeled as follows:

- Model ('Small omnibus'): a: Ger⁷, i⁴, Ger⁶
- Minor third up: c: Ger⁷, i⁴, Ger⁶
- Minor third up: eb: Ger⁷, i⁴, Ger⁶
- Minor third up: f#: Ger⁷, i⁴, Ger⁶

century. The foundation of the omnibus progression is the harmonisation of a chromatic line (usually in the bass) through voice exchanges.⁸ The fully chromatic 'extended omnibus' or 'omnibus cycle' splits the octave into four segments, each a minor third from the next and each of which plays out a core progression that has been termed the 'small omnibus' (Telesco 1998, pp. 258–9). Owing to the smooth voice leading and cyclical nature of the extended omnibus, it has some affinity with the concept of a 'maximally smooth cycle' (Cohn 1996). It is admittedly not *maximally* smooth, but it is certainly a 'smooth cycle'.⁹ Ex. 1 shows one variant of the extended omnibus.¹⁰

As the lines indicate, each sequence segment (the small omnibus) performs a voice exchange between the fully chromatic line (in the bass) and one of the other voices; the other two voices stay put. The procedure is then repeated a minor third higher, splitting the octave into four small omnibus voice exchanges, with all chords connected by movement by semitone. This equal division of the octave complicates any notion of a stable tonal centre.¹¹ The omnibus may also be based on a descending chromatic line (consider the retrograde of Ex. 1). The prevailing chord structure in the omnibus model is the German augmented sixth (enharmonically a dominant seventh). In each segment of the small omnibus, the German augmented sixth chord performs a voice exchange with a minor $\frac{6}{4}$ chord in the middle (the standard resolution of the chord). The voice exchange leads to the German augmented sixth chord being present in two inversions: the conventional $\frac{6}{5}$ structure and the less common $\frac{6}{3}$ one. Owing to its unclear tonal identity – which complicates a plausible functional interpretation – and its smooth voice-leading pattern, the extended omnibus is a staple of systematic linearity.¹²

The omnibus idea, sometimes presented as a complete sequence but most frequently as extracts from the model (or a closely related variant thereof), is common in nineteenth-century music (see Yellin 1998), and this is true of Grieg's music as well. We know that he experimented with the omnibus progression as early as his student years (Dinslage 1996). It is, however, unlikely that it was the teachers who introduced him to the schema (Utne-Reitan 2018b, pp. 110–13).

Grieg's Gratitude: an Analysis

'Takk' (or 'Tak' in archaic Norwegian/Danish), usually translated as 'Gratitude' (a direct translation would be 'Thanks'), was published as the second number in the seventh volume of *Lyriske stykker* (Op. 62) in 1895. Like most of Grieg's lyric pieces, 'Takk' has a simple formal design: A₁||:BA₂:||Coda. Although the composer wrote repeat signs in the manuscript, the repetitions are written out in the printed score.¹³ Grieg often characterises his rounded binary designs with highly contrasting B sections, and 'Takk' is no exception. Owing to this strong contrast, which unequivocally separates each formal segment, 'Takk' may also plausibly be interpreted as a ternary form that has been extended by repetition.

The work shows both Grieg's mastery of elegant and clearly functional harmony which is neither extraordinarily vertical nor horizontal in the A sections and his experimentation with harmony that is built on systematic linearity in the B section.¹⁴ I will argue that in this contrasting section, the most complex chord relationships are products of the voice-leading pattern, and not the other way around. When analysing this contrasting section, I place particular emphasis on a progression which I will claim has structural properties similar to those of the omnibus progression presented above. A comparison with Ex. 1 will be used to explain the underlying linear structure of this most intricate part of the piece. Before getting into the details of the section, I will provide a brief presentation of the two other distinct parts of the piece. Following the analysis, I will briefly discuss interpretations of the piece focusing on the character expressed by Grieg's title: gratitude.

A Sections and Coda

The harmony in the A₁ section (bars 1–12 and 13–24) can be easily explained through traditional functional harmonic analysis. After a presentation of a completely diatonic four-bar theme in G major, there follows a four-bar sequence pointing towards B minor, the relative minor of the dominant key. This is a small tonal detour before the conventional cadence in the dominant, D major, which closes the section in bar 12. The simple, archaic character of the A₁ section – characterised by symmetrical periodic phrasing (consistently 2+2 bars) – is clearly related to the title of the piece (more on this below). The complete twelve-bar A₁ section may be split into three four-bar segments, on a higher level resulting in a theme reminiscent of the archaic three-part *Fortspinnungstypus* typical of the late Baroque period: idea (bars 1–4), sequence (bars 5–8) and cadence (bars 9–12). The complete A₁ section is reproduced as Ex. 2.

The sequence (bars 5–8) illustrates the complexity of the above-mentioned false dichotomy between the vertical and horizontal forces in music. It is built on the traditional harmonisation of a chain of bass suspensions (see Sanguinetti 2012, pp. 133–5) and possesses a clear foundation in a systematic linear-contrapuntal process. However, it does not entirely resist a reasonable

Ex. 2 Edvard Grieg, 'Takk', Op. 62 No. 2, bars 1–12

Allegretto semplice

p la melodia molto cantabile

poco cresc.

vertical interpretation either (i.e. as a diatonic circle-of-fifths motion). Thus, the sequence is much more linear than the initial idea, the vertical orientation of which is more clear, but it is not as tonally complex as the instance of systematic linearity that appears in the B section.

Although section A_1 ends in the key of the dominant, the very similar A_2 section (bars 38–49 and 63–74) ends in the expected tonic. Grieg achieves this by altering the end of the first phrase so that it modulates to the subdominant key, C major. The remaining part of A_2 is a transposed version of the ending in A. Grieg rounds off the piece with a coda (bars 75–81) that brings back the texture from the B section and builds on its distinct half-diminished sonority (see the following section), here in falling fifths. The omnibus-inspired progression of the B section is not included in the coda. The piece ends with a plagal cadence in the tonic key of G major (see Kreft 2000, pp. 229–35, for a fuller discussion of the coda).

The Contrasting B Section

The melodic structure of the B section (bars 25–37 and 50–62) is based upon a chromatic neighbour-note figure which is transposed upwards and supported by a long and intensifying crescendo. This chromatic neighbour-note figure also

Ex. 3 Edvard Grieg, 'Takk', Op. 62 No. 2, bars 25–37

[Allegretto semplice]

25 *pp* *cresc. e stretto*

30 *più cresc.*

34 *f* *rit.* *p*

Ped. * Ped. *

makes a motivic connection to the A sections, which has the same melodic motive in the first half of bar 1. While the lyrical melody can be said to be the focus in the A sections, the harmonic progression gets the spotlight in the B section. The complete section is reproduced as Ex. 3.

Although the musical foreground texture does not immediately signal a linear framework, the background certainly does. To make the harmonic progression clearer, I have provided a reduction and a harmonic analysis in Ex. 4. The section begins and ends with a dominant ninth on D and may thus be read as a long prolongation of the dominant of the main key. The reduction shows a chromatic ascending line and a pedal point on the dominant in the bass. The bass stays on this pedal point until bar 32, when it starts to descend chromatically to its own dominant (A), which leads back to the initial D dominant ninth chord by the skip of a fourth. The functional chain of dominants at the end mirrors the beginning of the section, which may be interpreted as two steps in the subdominant direction, successfully evading (or postponing) resolution

Ex. 4 Reduction of Ex. 3

25

chromatic line

G: V^9 IV iv/IV V^7/V bVI^7/V

Pedal point on the dominant

Double-deceptive resolution x

Prolongation of V^9

32

chromatic line

Fr^3/V V^7/V V^9

(x continued) Chain of dominants

of the initial dominant ninth chord.¹⁵ The V^7/V in bar 28 is resolved 'double-deceptively' to bVI^7/V , thus evading return to the initial V .¹⁶

The chromatic lines in contrary motion are the structural foundation for the progression between the functionally clear dominant ninth chords in the beginning and end of the section. The attempt at a functionally oriented roman numeral analysis of the chords between the two framing dominant ninth chords only leads to a less than convincing explanation of the passage. This is especially clear in bars 30–34, in which it is difficult to find a plausible functional interpretation. In the most functionally unclear area, which I have marked *x* in Ex. 4 (indicating that it is unknown), we find the only pure triad in the section: D^b (bar 32). This chord, which is in a tritone relation with the tonic, demonstrates the problems of explaining the progression with functional tonal harmony. However, the logic behind the progression becomes clear when analysed with a focus on linear rather than vertical aspects: *x* is entirely rational, but only when read from a horizontal point of view focusing on the linear forces rather than attempting to label each chord's harmonic function. Below I will demonstrate how a theoretical model relatable to the omnibus might be the underlying structure. Firstly, however, I will present *x* on its own terms.¹⁷

The passage marked *x* (bars 30–34) is based upon a chord progression in which a D^b triad functions as an axis of a linear motion connecting two sets of half-diminished chords on both sides of the axis. Bars 31–33 perform a voice exchange around the D^b triad axis, where the surrounding chords are inversions of a D^{o7} chord. The half-diminished sonority is the most prominent in the section, and the roots of the three different half-diminished chords are related

Ex. 5 (a) The conventional small omnibus; (b) the chord progression in Grieg, 'Takk', bars 31–33

(a) Small omnibus

(b) Grieg's 'Takk', bars 31–33

by rising minor thirds: $B^{o7}-D^{o7}-F^{o7}$ (the significance of this relationship will be addressed below). Richard Bass has claimed that 'the possibilities for functional connections between half-diminished chords are so limited that it is extremely rare for two of them to occur consecutively within tonal harmonic progressions' (2001, p. 45). This makes the study of this Grieg progression, saturated as it is with half-diminished sonorities, especially compelling. To draw a more comprehensive picture of how this passage plays with conventional models of voice leading, I will compare the progression to its more well-known sibling: the omnibus.

There are several shared characteristics between x and the omnibus. This is most evident when comparing the three central bars of the progression (Ex. 5b) to the small omnibus with a descending bass (Ex. 5a). The following similarities become clear:

1. Two chromatic voices move in contrary motion, performing a voice exchange.
2. The two other voices – in the interval of a minor third (or major sixth) – are not moving.
3. The axis of the voice exchange is a triad, while the surrounding chords are seventh chords.
4. The progression may be extended through a sequence in minor thirds, dividing the octave into four symmetrical parts (more on this below).

The main difference is that x contains half-diminished chords instead of German augmented sixth chords (or their enharmonic equivalent). Note that the half-diminished chord also functions similarly to an augmented sixth chord by resolving the interval of a minor seventh (enharmonically, an augmented sixth) chromatically to an octave, as is a trademark of augmented sixth chords. Although augmented sixth chords that are related enharmonically to the half-diminished chord structure are not as common as the 'German', 'Italian' and 'French' types, they are not unknown in the literature (see Harrison 1995 and Bass 2001). The half-diminished chord as augmented sixth may be resolved in different ways, and the resolution in x seems to be one of the less common – it is only mentioned briefly in a footnote in Bass's study (2001, p. 45).¹⁸ (However, there is some affinity between the resolution in x [transposed: $F^{o7}-E$]

Ex. 6 (a) An extended x progression; (b) the same with voices exchanged

Chord sequence: $B^{\flat 7}/A$, B^{\flat} , $B^{\flat 7}$, $D^{\flat 7}/C$, D^{\flat} , $D^{\flat 7}$, $F^{\flat 7}/E^{\flat}$, F^{\flat} , $F^{\flat 7}$, $G^{\sharp 7}/F^{\sharp}$, G , $G^{\sharp 7}$

Labels: Model, Minor third up, Minor third up, Minor third up

Label: Grieg's 'Takk', bars 30–34

and the very well-known and much-discussed progression in the opening bars of Wagner's *Tristan* [enharmonically: $F^{\flat 7}-E^7$]). The triad in the centre of the voice exchange is also different from the common omnibus, being a major $\frac{5}{3}$ chord in the Grieg excerpt and a minor $\frac{6}{4}$ chord in the conventional omnibus.

It is thus clear that there are several similarities between x and the omnibus. In his analysis of 'Takk', Ekkehard Kreft (2000, pp. 229–35) actually indicates a similarity between an excerpt of the B section in 'Takk' and two cases of the omnibus progression by Liszt and Tchaikovsky. However, he does not say how the voice exchange and sequential pattern characteristic of the omnibus also apply to the progression in question – thus entirely overlooking the structural significance of this case of systematic linearity. While Kreft points out local similarities, his analysis fails to show how this affects the overall underlying structure of the B section. As I will argue, the surrounding chords are products of this voice-exchange pattern in a sequence similar to that seen in the omnibus. This linear pattern functions as the underlying structural foundation for most of the B section.

The extended omnibus divides the octave into four equal parts, resulting in a sequence in minor thirds. This could also be done with the voice exchange in the Grieg piece, which might explain the structural logic behind x . Sequencing the voice exchange from 'Takk' into a complete cycle leads to the theoretical model in Ex. 6a. A comparison of Exs 1 and 6a reveals another feature that the progression shares with the omnibus: all chords are connected by semitone motion in two voices while the remaining two voices stay put.¹⁹ This principle of smooth voice leading thus occurs not only within each sequence segment but throughout the whole sequential cycle. Above, I argued that owing to this close

Table 1 Chords in Edvard Grieg, 'Takk', Op. 62 No. 2, bars 28–36 compared to Ex. 6b

Bar no.	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36
Grieg's 'Takk'	A ⁷ /D	B ^b M ⁷ /D	B ^{o7} /D	D ^{o7}	D ^b	D ^{o7} /C	F ^{o7} /C ^b	E ^{7(b5)} /B ^b	A ⁷
Model (Ex. 6b)	B ^{o7} /D	B ^b /D	B ^{o7} /D	D ^{o7}	D ^b	D ^{o7} /C	F ^{o7} /C ^b	F ^b /C ^b	F ^{o7} /C ^b

chromatic relationship that pervades the omnibus, it is a 'smooth cycle'. The same applies to x , given its cyclic nature and similar smooth chromatic voice-leading pattern. This lends further support to the claim that x offers a schematic deformation of the omnibus.

Ex. 6a is not directly comparable, however, with x in 'Takk', because Grieg places the ascending chromatic line in the soprano rather than in the bass. Flipping the voices around makes the point clear, and I have done so in Ex. 6b where the exact chords from Grieg's 'Takk' appear.

I believe this kind of theoretical omnibus-inspired structure – a deformation of the omnibus schema – is the basis for the linear passage I have labelled x . To demonstrate why, I will consider how Grieg enters and leaves the progression. In Ex. 4 I labelled both the preceding and the succeeding chords functionally. In bar 29 Grieg resolves a V/V double-deceptively to a \flat VI⁷/V. In bar 35 Grieg initiates the falling-fifths root motion that eventually will lead to the tonic. One can argue that these surrounding chords, which might (in probably a somewhat forced fashion) be interpreted functionally, also are products of the sequential pattern, and thus they elegantly create a bridge in and out of the pattern. The \flat VI⁷/V in bar 29 is a B^b major seventh chord, which, according to Ex. 6b, 'should' have been a B^b major triad. It is thus the same structural chord, with colour added by suspending the A from the previous chord. Grieg starts the functional cadence based on falling fifths in bar 35 by introducing Fr⁴₃/V. This chord is an alteration of the dominant chord on E (enharmonic F^b) – functionally V/V/V – which actually would have been the next chord in the pattern. Thus, more than half of this fascinating, and quite peculiar, B section seems to be directly derived from an underlying sequential pattern which is entirely based on a linear understanding of harmony.

To make the point clear, in Table 1 I have put the chord symbols of the ascending-sequence model next to the chord symbols of bars 28–36 in 'Takk' in order to facilitate a comparison of the degree of correspondence. Note that the chords in bars 28 and 36 have no relation to the omnibus-based model at all. It is, however, intriguing that they are the same chord with and without the pedal point: the dominant (A⁷) of the prolonged dominant ninth chord (D⁹). Bar 29 presents a double-deceptive resolution of this dominant tension that works as a pivot towards the following linear motion, which I have called x and which linearly and systematically works its way back to the A dominant seventh chord so that it finally may resolve to the dominant ninth chord which initiated the

passage. The interesting progression between the two V/V chords is hard to explain functionally but, as demonstrated, makes sense when considering it as a case of systematic linearity resulting from schematic deformation.

Notes on Interpretation

Previous hermeneutic analyses of 'Takk' have emphasised the *religioso* tone of the piece, primarily from the chorale-like texture and phrasing in the A sections (Dorfmüller 1999 and Loesti 2008). Although this is true of the initial idea, the sequence over the tied-bass pattern in the middle of the A theme is more reminiscent of the *galant* style – echoing the idiom used in Grieg's *Holberg Suite* (Op. 40), written eleven years earlier. However, both idioms – *religioso* and *galant* – clearly express the mood indicated by the piece's title: 'Gratitude'. I interpret the A sections as expressing this through a character that implies simplicity and timelessness. A central question is then: gratitude for what? This is where the highly contrasting B section comes into play, and the analysis above becomes relevant for hermeneutic enquiry.

Although Grieg does not use the conventional omnibus progression, I have argued that most of the B section builds on the same structural principles. This does not necessarily mean that the omnibus and Grieg's omnibus deformation share the same affective connotations. I will, however, as a starting point (and for the sake of the following argument) assume that there might also be a similarity in connotation. Paula Telesco (1998, pp. 251–5) connects the origin of the omnibus to that of the passacaglia and the lament aria. It shares much of the same emotional content as these older models. The common denominator is the chromatic descent in the bass – often called the *passus duriusculus* (roughly, 'harsh passage'). This is a pattern associated with grief and lamentation, well-known since the *Affektenlehre* of the Baroque period. It thus traditionally bears specific interpretative associations. What in modern English-language discourse has been called 'the extended omnibus' (and variants of it) is known as *Teufelsmühle* in German music theory (see Wason 1985, pp. 12–25 and Dittrich 2007). This German term, which may be translated as 'devil's mill', was already being used by theorists in the early nineteenth century (see Förster 1805, p. 37). It is not hard to understand why this harmonic schema received that label, given the smooth, 'devilish', chromatic voice leading that just keeps on going like the turning of a mill wheel. Just like the *passus duriusculus* that it builds on, the *Teufelsmühle* probably acquired its name from its expressive connotations.

My analysis confirmed several similarities between the omnibus and the B section in 'Takk'. The many shared similarities makes it probable that the aforementioned interpretative aspects connected to the omnibus are relevant also to the omnibus deformation in 'Takk'. This leads to a rather dark interpretation of the B section that stands in considerable opposition to the character indicated by the title of the piece. A plausible interpretation is that in the B section Grieg is depicting a kind of escalating tension (e.g. a conflict). This interpretation

is additionally supported by the underlying crescendo. By implication, the A sections, with their *religioso* and *galant* overtones of diatonic simplicity and symmetry, function as a depiction of gratitude for the resolution of this tension.

Complex Structures in Simple Forms

My analysis of ‘Takk’ shows that Grieg could structure sections of small, and arguably simple, formal designs (e.g. binary and ternary) in a sophisticated manner. In ‘Takk’ this was achieved by building the B section around a play with complex but systematic linear structures – in this case, an omnibus deformation (progression x). In the following, I will show that this instance of a complex structure in a simple form is not unique in Grieg’s oeuvre.

The majority of Grieg’s works are collections of pieces with smaller formal designs.²⁰ This includes his extensive production of songs (mostly in strophic form) and *Lyriske stykker* (mostly in ternary form and extensions thereof). Daniel Grimley claims that the latter exceedingly popular series of 66 *Charakterstücken* ‘positively celebrate the heterogeneity of modern life, in their rich array of sentimentality, nostalgia, and the picturesque’ (Grimley 2016, p. 129). To complement the above analysis of ‘Takk’, I will provide analytical comments to passages from three additional pieces from the ten volumes of *Lyriske stykker*: ‘Melodi’ (Op. 47 No. 3), ‘Bekken’ (Op. 62 No. 4) and ‘Sommeraften’ (Op. 71 No. 2).²¹ Together with ‘Takk’, these pieces reflect the heterogeneity of topic and character in the genre that Grimley has noted.²²

In my discussion below of the three works, I will build on analyses by Benedict Taylor (2017) and place them in dialogue with my analysis of ‘Takk’. All examples (‘Takk’ included) are from pieces based upon a simple ternary formal design extended by repetitions. In all of the examples, the A sections are more or less straightforward, while the B section provides a stark contrast, employing a more complexly structured design that builds tension over a gradually intensifying crescendo. The play with underlying systematic voice-leading patterns in the contrasting B sections will be the focus in the following brief analytical comments. These comments must not be read as exhaustive analyses, but rather as complements to the case study of ‘Takk’ above that indicate a pattern in Grieg’s way of structuring (especially contrasting) formal sections based on systematic linearity – a systematic linearity that in some (not necessarily all) cases may be explained in terms of schematic deformation. Although I will only address pieces from one genre in Grieg’s production – albeit a heterogeneous one – I believe that the findings are not limited to this genre, but might in fact tell us something fundamental about a neglected aspect of Grieg’s harmonic style.²³

‘Melodi’ (Op. 47 No. 3)

‘Melodi’ (Op. 47 No. 3) is included in the fourth volume of *Lyriske stykker*, published in 1888; it is in A minor, and its formal design is A₁B||A₂Coda.

Ex. 7 Reduction of Edvard Grieg, 'Melodi', Op. 47 No. 3, bars 17–26

The A sections (bars 1–16, 41–56 and 81–96) are built over diatonic linear motion, and the more complex B section (bars 17–40 and 57–80) is based on chromatic linearity. Taylor thus uses the piece to illustrate a ‘reciprocal relation between chromatic and diatonic lines’ (2017, p. 111), drawing on Richard Cohn’s (2012) analogy between late Romantic music and bilingualism. This is the same opposition between diatonicism and chromaticism found in ‘Takk’ and the other examples discussed below.

The B section is built over a rising chromatic bass. The beginning is strictly systematic and has much in common with ‘Takk’ (see the harmonic reduction in Ex. 7). The most striking similarities between the two works are the abundance of half-diminished sonorities, and the fact that the roots of these half-diminished chords are related by minor thirds: $E^{o7}-G^{o7}-B^{o7}$. The other structuring factor is the use of sequence – in this instance a four-bar model that is repeated a minor third higher. A third stage is initiated, but at bar 27 Grieg breaks the structuring pattern. A continuation would have divided the octave into four equal parts by minor thirds, much like the extended omnibus. However, Grieg does not bring the cycle to an end – which is ‘characteristic of the composer’s practice’ (Taylor 2017, p. 111). This was the same in ‘Takk’: the underlying schema had the possibility of spanning an octave, but Grieg avoids a too predictable and unexcitingly systematic pattern by using an excerpt only.

Instead of continuing the established sequence, Grieg builds tension on the F_b/E_b in the bass, waiting to resolve it to an F until bar 33, which is the climax of the section. The remaining bars retransition over a diminuendo and are built over a descending bass line. The B section in ‘Melodi’ thus shares several structural features with the B section in ‘Takk’: both are built on the principle of systematic linearity.

‘Bekken’ (Op. 62 No. 4)

The title of ‘Bekken’ (Op. 62 No. 4) is most often translated as ‘Brooklet’ (a more precise translation would be ‘The Brook’). This B minor piece is from the same 1895 volume as ‘Takk’, and the two pieces have the same formal design: $A_1||BA_2||Coda$, with repetitions written out in the printed score. The B

Ex. 8 Edvard Grieg, 'Bekken', Op. 62 No. 4, bars 17–29

[Allegro leggiero]

17 *pp*
Monte deformation
b: V $\frac{1}{2}$ F# V $\frac{1}{2}$ C: V $\frac{1}{2}$

20 *cresc.*
I 1 d: V $\frac{1}{2}$ i 6

23 *f*
Omnibus deformation
Eb: V $\frac{1}{2}$ I 1 bb: Ger 6 i 6 vii $\frac{7}{V}$

26 *fz*
Phrygian half cadence
g: Ger 6 i 6 vii $\frac{7}{V}$ e: Ger 6 i 6 vii $\frac{7}{V}$ b: iv 6 V

section (bars 17–32 and 41–56) is split into two parts, both built over underlying systematic linearity. Bars 17–24 consist of an ascending sequence, while bars 25–29 are built over a descending chromatic scale leading to a retransitional dominant function in bars 29–32. The B section (retransition omitted) is reproduced together with a simplified analysis as Ex. 8.

The ascending sequence in bars 17–24 – a variant of the chromatic Monte schema.²⁴ – is built around ascending chromatic lines in two of the middle voices. The strict underlying voice-leading pattern, with a basis in the chromatic lines, lead to brief glimpses of functionally remote tonal areas (e.g. E \flat). This is much like the functionally foreign chords in 'Takk', which are similarly a result of schematic deformation. The first stage of the sequence (bars 17–18) is characterised by tension resulting from a simultaneous false relation between the upper voice and one of the inner voices (A \natural against A \sharp , not included in the roman numeral analysis). This occurs in a later sequence stage as well (bars 21–22). Taylor comments that 'an ascending sequence (Bm→C→Dm→E \flat) produces

grating false-relations between a descending Aeolian or melodic minor $\hat{4}\hat{7}-\hat{4}\hat{6}-\hat{5}$ figure in the treble and the ascending harmonic minor leading-note motion $\hat{\#7}-\hat{8}$ in the bass [*sic*] (bb. 17–18, 21–2)' (Taylor 2017, p. 74). It is thus two separate linear systematic patterns – or forces, to use Kurthian terms – at work simultaneously that are based on different scale material. These strong linear forces override the vertical aspects, resulting in the 'grating' false relations.

Bar 25 marks the beginning of the next voice-leading schema by starting a descending chromatic motion in the bass. The first chord functions as a pivot, as it is an altered version of the next chord in the Monte sequence. It 'should' have been a $C^7/B\flat$ (with a false relation in the upper voice), but instead it is a $C^{b9(b5)}/G\flat$. If we regard the C as an appoggiatura, this chord functions as a German augmented sixth chord that resolves to the expected $B\flat$ minor $\frac{6}{4}$ (with added notes in the top voice), which leads to a less altered version of the initial dominant chord: C^{b9}/E . Again, if we regard the C as an appoggiatura, this chord acts as vii^{b9}/V in relation to the B minor chord (which should not be misread as a key centre in this context). If this structure – two versions of the same dominant chord surrounding a minor $\frac{6}{4}$ triad – sounds familiar, that is because it is very much like the small omnibus. In bars 26 and 27 the same structure is sequenced in descending minor thirds, creating a continuous chromatic line in the bass, just as expected in the omnibus progression. One could thus claim that here too Grieg plays with a deformation of the omnibus schema, although the result is vastly different from progression *x* in 'Takk'. In bar 28 Grieg uses only smooth semitonal voice leading to get from the omnibus deformation to the retransition,²⁵ which is initiated by a Phrygian half cadence (the subdominant has an added ninth not included in the roman numeral analysis).

'Sommeraften' (Op. 71 No. 2)

'Sommeraften' (Op. 71 No. 2) – whose title translates as 'Summer's Eve' – is from the tenth and last volume of *Lyriske stykker* (1901). It is in $D\flat$ major and has a formal design that is close to the one found in 'Takk' and 'Bekken', but with fewer repetitions and lacking a coda: $A_1||:BA_2||$.

The B section (bars 9–19 and 32–42) – reproduced together with a simple analysis as Ex. 9 – begins with an intensifying ascending sequence built around dominant seventh chords that move chromatically upwards: $A\flat^7$ (bars 9–10), A^7 (bars 11–12) and $B\flat^7$ (bar 13). In each of those bars the dominant seventh is followed by a minor seventh chord with the root a fourth lower (the bass is delayed by one beat compared to the upper voices). Before moving on to the next stage, Grieg lowers the fifth of the minor seventh chords, thus also here using the half-diminished sonority (not included in the roman numeral analysis). An extended functional interpretation would emphasise that each new V^7 is an enharmonic pivot, as is the German augmented sixth in the previous temporary key centre (theoretically, that is – they are too brief to act as key centres).

Ex. 9 Edvard Grieg, 'Sommeraften', Op. 72 No. 1, bars 9–19

[Allegro tranquillamente]
poco mosso

9 *p* *cresc. e stretto*

Db: V⁷ ii⁷ V⁷ ii⁷ D: V⁷ ii⁷ V⁷ ii⁷ Eb: V⁷ ii⁷

Monte Romanesca deformation?

14 *più cresc. e stretto*

Ped. ii⁷ Eb: V⁷

Tritone relation of bar 13

17 *f*

G: V₃¹ Db: V⁷

Tritone-related dominant chords

But while this vertically oriented interpretation (which functionally makes little sense, as each sequence stage is moving ‘backwards’ from a dominant function to a subdominant function) certainly describes a sequence – a systematic pattern – it does not really explain convincingly how the passage is structured.

An essential component of this pattern is not described in the analysis: the several chromatically ascending lines in both the outer and inner voices. Although it makes little sense if we see it as being driven by vertical (i.e. functional) forces, the passage’s structural logic can be more easily grasped when seen as a result of linear forces. Combined with the systematicity already described, one could reasonably claim that this is a case of systematic linearity. The sequence does also share some similarities with a well-known *galant* schema: the Monte Romanesca. This traditional voice-leading schema mixes traits from the Monte and Romanesca: a chord progression in which the root progression is by rising fifth or falling fourth, as at the beginning of the Romanesca, is put

in a stepwise ascending sequence, as in the Monte (Gjerdingen 2007, pp. 98–9). Conventionally, this would be done diatonically by moving the sequence model to the next diatonic step. As already indicated, Grieg uses a chromatic version, which uses a tritone skip between the roots of the last chord of each sequence stage and the first of the next. The use of seventh chords – with the first chord of each stage transformed into a dominant – adds to the possible deformation at play. This schematic interpretation is admittedly somewhat more far-fetched than the argument for omnibus deformation in 'Takk'. However, the schematic similarities do indicate a clear underlying system that has its roots in historically well-known voice-leading patterns underlining the linear nature of the passage. The passage might not be an unequivocal instance of schematic deformation, but it is certainly a case of systematic linearity.

As with the previous examples, Grieg abandons the systematic pattern before the continuation gets too predictable. What happens in 'Sommeraften' is quite similar to what we see in 'Melodi', in which the pattern, instead of continuing, is halted at the third stage: the V^7-ii^7 progression in E_b (bar 13) is followed by its tritone opposition, V^7-ii^7 in A (bars 14–15), before returning to the main chord of the third sequence stage, B^7 (bar 16). Owing to the enharmonic tritone interval in the chord structures, 'seventh chords on tritonal roots are famously blessed with close voice-leading possibilities' (Taylor 2017, p. 133). Grieg teases these possibilities in 'Sommeraften' when switching to the tritone-related progression and back again. A chromatically descending bass signals the end of the section (bars 16–19).²⁶ This mirrors the slower, chromatically ascending bass line that accentuated each stage of the sequence in the beginning of the section. The last chord (bars 18–19) is the climax of the crescendo and the structurally important dominant chord that leads to the A_2 section, which starts with the tonic, D_b . As in 'Takk' and 'Bekken', the B section of 'Sommeraften' begins and ends with the dominant chord of the main key. It may thus be read as a linear prolongation of the dominant function – systematically leading away from the dominant chord and then back again.

In a 1906 letter to his close friend Julius Röntgen, Grieg writes: 'I have always considered polyphony to be a *means*, not an *end*. That is the case with the great masters. There, the relationship between polyphony and homophony is that of the most beautiful harmony. That is my ideal and it will always remain so' (Grieg and Röntgen 1997, p. 421; my translation).²⁷ Polyphony as an end (i.e. an explicitly contrapuntal texture) is not characteristic of Grieg's style. The analyses in this article have shown that a more implicit form of counterpoint as a means (i.e. harmony as a product of underlying linear forces) is certainly a whole other story.

The B section of Grieg's 'Takk' tells us a great deal about the linear aspects of Grieg's harmony. The harmonic progression in this section is challenging to explain functionally, and traditional harmonic analysis would only lead to absurd pigeonholing that obscures rather than explains the nature of the progression.

From a linear point of view, on the other hand, its logic becomes apparent. The analysis showed that Grieg's usage of a less conventional harmonic progression (progression x) is based on a strict harmonic voice-leading pattern that shares many characteristics with the well-known omnibus progression. It may be read as a case of systematic linearity built on a deformation of a commonly known musical schema. This passage is grounded in a linear understanding of harmony where the underlying fluent voice leading is the structural framework, and the resulting chord progressions are by-products of this systematically linear process. A passage like the B section of 'Takk', driven by the linear forces at play, supports the claim that some of Grieg's unconventional harmonic progressions are built more on a horizontal (i.e. contrapuntal) than a vertical understanding of the craft. Comparison with other lyric pieces shows that 'Takk' is not a unique case of play with structures based on underlying systematic linearity but is in fact characteristic of Grieg's oeuvre.

The analyses in this article indicate that systematic linearity – for instance, in the form of schematic deformation – is used as a structural framework for formal sections in several of Grieg's compositions. This suggests that systematic linearity and schematic deformation were part of Grieg's compositional toolbox. How this affects our overall understanding of Grieg's sophisticated and many-faceted harmonic style is yet to be determined. There is much more yet to be explored and discussed in future music-analytical research in the process of drawing a comprehensive picture of Grieg's harmony.

NOTES

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1. Grieg famously calls the realm of harmonies his 'dreamworld' (*Traumwelt*) in a 1900 letter to Henry T. Finck, nonetheless emphasising later in the same paragraph the importance of chromatic lines in this realm (Grieg 1957, pp. 51–2).
2. This almost certainly is true of all the early studies of Grieg's harmony (e.g. Freiheiter 1932, Fischer 1938 and Schjelderup-Ebbe 1953). Arguably the most influential on later Grieg research, Schjelderup-Ebbe's study investigates Grieg's contribution to impressionism. Thus, it is no wonder that his focus was on the vertical aspects of Grieg's harmony – of chords as *Klang*. Although this has continued to be the dominant view, recent studies of Grieg's harmony present a more nuanced picture that tend to include linear perspectives (e.g. Kreft 2000 and Taylor 2017). Sutcliffe's 1996 article on 'Klokkeklang' (Op. 54 No. 6) might well be considered

a turning point in the study of Grieg's harmony. Through sophisticated analysis of the pitch structure of this lyric piece – often regarded as one of Grieg's most progressively 'impressionistic' pieces (see Benestad and Schjelderup-Ebbe [1980] 2007, pp. 322 and 403) – Sutcliffe shows that to 'point to the impressionist aspect of the piece is in fact just about the least interesting thing one can say about it' (1996, p. 165).

3. One significant change in the transition from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century was that the work concept gradually became regulative (Goehr [1992] 2007). In connection to this, the Romantic idea of the composer as genius, emphasising individuality and originality, to a large extent replaced the notion of the composer as craftsman, emphasising function. This also affects the premises for musical analysis and aesthetic judgement, in that it leads to a focus on the particularities of a given work rather than on the genre and norms it represents (see Dahlhaus [1970] 1983, pp. 10–15).
4. While this does indicate the relevance of a schematic approach to nineteenth-century music in general, I have no reason to believe that Grieg's theory teachers at the Leipzig Conservatory emphasised a schematic approach in the sense they did in Paris.
5. Weiss (2018, pp. 52–53 and 297–301) discusses two examples from Grieg's music: a Prinner in the *Holberg Suite* (Op. 40) – not surprisingly, given the imitation of eighteenth-century style – and a Romanesca in the lyric piece 'Vals' (Op. 12 No. 2). One could add that an additional instance of the Romanesca is found – in a much less *galant* fashion, with parallel fifths in the left hand – in the A section of the lyric piece 'Trolldog' (Op. 54 No. 3). The B section of the same piece also ends with the schema which Gjerdingen (2007, pp. 181–95) calls the Quiescenza.
6. Byros (2009) touches upon this transition from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century, claiming – drawing on Meyer (1989) – that both mode of listening and musical style changed from emphasising tight 'scripts' to emphasising looser 'plans'. This change in the nature of musical knowledge coincides with the shift from the Classical *épistémè* (emphasising order) to the modern *épistémè* (emphasising the organic) as outlined by Foucault ([1966] 2002). Differences between Classical and Romantic music in terms of schemata are also discussed in Rawbone and Jan (2020).
7. Dahlhaus discusses the separation of harmony and counterpoint in Kurth's writings, stressing that 'instead of being mutually exclusive opposites, the concepts of linear and harmonic counterpoint complement each other' ([1968] 1990, p. 96). The two extremes may be hypothetical in themselves, as they need to complement each other (in tonal music at least), but the difference in degree is highly relevant. In some passages the vertical forces will dominate over the horizontal, and in others the opposite will obtain.

8. The most common ‘classical omnibus’ (Yellin 1998) is a five-chord progression that connects V_2^4 to V^7 chromatically through voice exchange. I will not focus on the classical version in the present article.
9. Cohn (1996, p. 15) – focusing on triadic progressions – defines the term as instances that (a) make out a *cycle*, (b) have *set-class consistency* and (c) have *maximally smooth* transitions between chords. With two alterations, this also applies to the omnibus: the smooth chromatic voice leading takes place in two voices rather than one, and it includes two set classes (here, two chord types) rather than one. If one regards the minor $\frac{6}{4}$ -chord as a passing chord (supported by the voice exchange), one could also claim that there is complete set class consistency in the cycle.
10. Ex. 1 is based on a reduction of a passage from Tchaikovsky’s Sixth Symphony (Ijzerman 2018, pp. 274–5).
11. The roman numeral analysis included in Ex. 1 supports this claim: the tonal reference point changes in each segment (none is established as a stable tonal centre). The cycle is not a chain of modulations, but rather a suspension of a clear tonal centre.
12. Eriksen (1999, pp. 261–2) presents a functional analysis of an extended omnibus but admits that the result feels forced. He writes that the progression consists of ‘substansharmoniske progresjoner’, which indicates that the progression in question is best understood in terms of voice leading rather than harmonic function (see Larsen and Maegaard 1981).
13. The manuscript in question is dated 11 January 1895, and served as the *Stichvorlage* for the first edition, published by Peters (Fog, Grinde and Norheim 2008, p. 288). It is digitally available at the website of the Grieg Archives, Bergen Public Library (<https://bergenbibliotek.no/grieg/>). All bar numbers in the article refer to the printed score (I have consulted the *Gesamtausgabe* from Peters), not the manuscript.
14. This switching between ‘first practice’ functional harmony and ‘second practice’ chromaticism – which Cohn (2012) has compared with bilingualism – is typical of nineteenth-century harmony, and Grieg is no exception in this regard (see Taylor 2017, pp. 6–10).
15. I regard augmented sixth chords as altered versions of V/V in the given key. The chord in bar 35 (Fr_3^4/V) is thus an altered version of $V/V/V$, which creates a functional chain of dominants in bars 35–37. Bar 27 might also plausibly be interpreted as ii^{o7}/IV (if one regards the pedal point as a chord member in this bar). This certainly points towards the half-diminished sonorities that will dominate the section later on. However, it obscures the functional symmetry in the section: functional root movement

- in rising fifths in the beginning and functional root movement in falling fifths towards the end.
16. A deceptive (or interrupted) cadence is V–vi (in major); a double-deceptive cadence borrows the submediant from the parallel key, producing V→VI.
 17. Although *x* is not a common harmonic progression in nineteenth-century music, in 1895 it is not an innovation. Grieg himself had used it at least one time earlier – in a quite different context – in bars 145–164 of the first movement of his String Quartet in G minor (Op. 27), published in 1879. I do not claim that Grieg was the first composer to use this progression, although at the moment of writing I do not know of earlier instances where it has been used similarly.
 18. The present article was already accepted when Philip Lambert's (2021) detailed and systematic study of half-diminished chords was published. Lambert addresses this particular resolution (calling it X_1M) but does not discuss – or cite any examples of – the context that I have dubbed progression *x*.
 19. This form of close chromatic relationship between chords is a staple of Romantic harmony that in Scandinavian music theory has been called *substansaffinitet*. This strain in Scandinavian function theory, associated with Larsen and Maegaard (1981), has some affinity with more recent developments in North American neo-Riemannian theory (see Kirkegaard-Larsen 2018).
 20. This is why Grieg has often been called a miniaturist. Discussions related to Grieg and miniaturism, and the unfortunate value judgements that often accompany the 'miniaturist' label, have long been a central topic in Grieg research. For more recent discussions, see Grimley (2006, pp. 4–7) and Volioti (2018, pp. 596–9).
 21. An analysis of another lyric piece – 'Drømmesyn' (Op. 62 No. 5) – that also describes a structure built on underlying linearity is presented in Tymoczko (2011, pp. 314–16). Dinslage's recent analysis of the lyric piece 'Melankoli' (Op. 47 No. 5) also resonates well with the argument in the present article. He argues that the opening bars are product of an implicit lament bass (2018, pp. 76–9). By extension, one could claim that there is a subtle schematic deformation at play.
 22. According to Grimley's (2016, pp. 112–13) survey of different topics and genres in the lyric pieces, 'Takk' (Op. 62 No. 2) falls into the 'moods/emotional state' category, 'Melodi' (Op. 47 No. 3) into the 'dance and musical genres' category and both 'Bekken' (Op. 62 No. 4) and 'Sommeraften' (Op. 71 No. 2) into the 'time and place' category.

23. One can find passages that in some way or another are structured on a linear foundation throughout Grieg's oeuvre (see Utne-Reitan 2018b, pp. 108–32). Furthermore, Eriksen has indicated that two specific linear patterns should be regarded as Griegian 'fingerprints', underscoring their importance in Grieg's harmonic style: '[In Grieg] *diatonic* melodies in the upper voice acquire a heightened expressivity by being accompanied by *chromatic* movements in the lower voices. In my opinion this kind of harmony in Grieg's music may be categorised into two basic patterns: (1) A pedal point or central axis along with two other voices moving chromatically downwards in parallel motion – frequently major or minor thirds moving towards the tonic. (2) A diatonic upper voice accompanied by dominant seventh chords in root position moving chromatically downwards (more infrequently upwards) in the lower voices' (Eriksen 2007, p. 7). Both patterns, depending on the context, may qualify as cases of systematic linearity.
24. The most basic form of the Monte schema is the well-known diatonic 5–6 sequence. In the chromatic Monte each 6-chord is turned into the dominant of the next 5-chord (see Gjerdingen 2007, pp. 89–106, and Ijzerman 2018, p. 211–18).
25. I have not written any roman numerals under these two linear chords because they bear no clear functional meaning when read from a vertical perspective. This is admittedly also the case for the chords in the omnibus deformation (see n. 12), but these have been given roman numerals to show the internal relation between the chords within each sequence segment.
26. Notice the continuing play with tritone relations (bars 17–19). To get to this second tritone relationship, Grieg inserts a mediant skip (bars 16–17). According to Taylor, the play with dominant chords and their tritone substitutions, in addition to the mediant skip, contributes to the mainly 'languidly non-functional' effect of the piece (Taylor 2017, p. 135).
27. 'Ich habe immer Polyfonie als *Mittel* nicht als *Zweck* aufgefasst. So ist es bei den grossen Meistern. Da steht immer Polyfonie und Homofonie in schönster Harmonie. Das ist mein Ideal und wird es immer bleiben'. The quote is from a passage in which Grieg describes Max Reger's music as so polyphonic that he simply cannot digest it.

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ABSTRACT

This article presents an analysis of Grieg's lyric piece 'Takk' ('Gratitude'), focusing on the B section of the piece. In that section Grieg makes use of a harmonic progression that is difficult to explain vertically (i.e. in terms of functional harmony). However, it may be explained as a result of play with chromatic voice-leading patterns. The progression in question – which is saturated with half-diminished chords – shares several formal characteristics with the well-known omnibus progression. It is thus argued that 'Takk' features a deformation of this chromatic voice-leading schema. The progression in question (called *x*) has the same sequential possibilities as the omnibus, which helps reveal an underlying logic in the complex structure of the piece's B section. Grieg's omnibus deformation in 'Takk' is an excellent example of how he chose to structure formal sections based on underlying systematic linearity. A comparison of 'Takk' with other lyric pieces sheds light on some regularities regarding systematic linearity in Grieg's music, for instance in the form of schematic deformation.