
The Foreground, Bars 37-49

Here the affective journey holds the key to the tonal understanding. Surprisingly, the D major brings back the limpid second melody: the falling line dissolves energy, and when the D \flat major situation is reached, the new, arabesque-like figure emerges to start the lead-back to the opening material. Once again the line ascends, but now only to fall further and thereby allow the returning main melody to speak from a low, inner voice. The whole describes a miraculous dissolution, as though wrath had been turned away by gentleness.

If we move up from the fourth system to the third we may learn how to interpret the voice-leading of the second and first. On the fourth system the upper voice F \sharp falls to F. On the third system, the F \sharp is covered by the A of the D major triad, and F by the the A \flat of the implicit D \flat triad (the same that Britten deleted from the manuscript). That is to say, the two goals of the B section are both presented with the fifth degree on top, though in neither case does the fifth degree act as a head note for a progression. The presentation, of course, matches that of the tonic triad, which also has the fifth degree F on top.

The first and second systems together reveal the complexity of the modulation from D major to D \flat . As the first system shows, the upper voice falls in a passage of thirds through a whole-tone scale. The second system shows that this scale is made up in the right hand of a fall from F \sharp to D, and then from an implicit D \flat to A \flat . The removal of the D \flat creates the whole-tone progression. In the left hand, however, F natural quickly replaces F \sharp , and a sixth-progression leads down from this F, first to A \flat and then, later in the page, through G \flat to F again. That is to say, at the beginning of the second system there is briefly a bipolar situation where both D major and D \flat unfold concurrently. The right-hand chords in the descending progression likewise mix triads with whole-tone chords.

Ironically, the work's affective struggle is at its most acute in this passage of

dissolution: the bright D major competes with the gravity of D \flat major, and the uncanny whole-tone scale, the clashing ninths and the tiny emotional eruptions that prolong elements of the D \flat major scale all sound as the residue of a conflict even more complex than we understood it at the strident highpoint in bar 35.

When the fifth degree of D \flat is reached at bar 42, the chord that replaces the D \flat triad is itself one of these whole-tone harmonies (and is marked with a bracket in the first system). This has three functions. It replaces the structural German-sixth (shown in the fourth system (iiia)) while preserving its notes E, B \flat and G \flat ; it releases a new bipolar situation between the aspiring white-note phrygian music and the muttering black-note pentatonic music; and it allows the E to emerge from its midst to lead back to F once it has gained the uppermost register.

The resolution of the long held bass G \flat to F is likewise marked by bipolar adventure. First the G \flat rises into an upper register through a pentatonic scale. Then at bar 45 it falls over two octaves through an arpeggiated augmented triad (G \flat , B \flat , D, G \flat), itself a mode of equal replication. Within each stage of the arpeggiation the music repeats literally the intervals of the 'pentatonic motif' G \flat -E \flat -D \flat as B \flat -G-F and D-B-A, with a Stravinskyan literalism (like the strict inversionsal symmetry found elsewhere in Britten). The 'natural' notes G, B and A offer a piquant contradiction to the prevailing harmony.

whole tone whole-tone harmony phrygian (white-note) pentatonic (black-note)

modes (filters)

(iv)

(iv) simplified

(iia)

D: $\overset{5}{3}$ — 2 — 1 D \flat : 8 — 7 — 6 — 5 B \flat : 5 — $\overset{5}{5}$

37 42 49

D D \flat

b: III B \flat : [bIII] 9 86 85 (V)

III [bIII] (V) $\overset{6}{4} \overset{5}{3}$

Detailed description of the musical score analysis: The score is divided into four systems. The first system, 'modes (filters)', shows a melodic line with three distinct modes: 'whole tone' (bars 37-42), 'whole-tone harmony' (bars 42-49), and 'pentatonic (black-note)' (bars 49-50). Below this are two staves for the (iv) system, with a bass line showing chords D and D-flat. The third system, '(iv) simplified', shows a bass line with chords b: III, B-flat: [bIII], and (V). The fourth system, '(iia)', shows a bass line with chords III, [bIII], and (V) with a complex fingering $\overset{6}{4} \overset{5}{3}$. Fingerings and bar numbers (37, 42, 49) are indicated throughout.