MU 493: Exam #1, Take-Home Analysis
Due Friday April 7th by noon

Prepare an analysis of the Chopin Nocture in b-flat minor, Op. 9, no. 1, mm. 1-9 (downbeat). Score and recording on the class web site. This part of the exam consists of written out answers to seven questions (eight if you do the extra credit) plus five very short graphic analyses (six or seven with the extra credit).

Since this is not a complete composition, do not expect to find a complete Urtext in the upper voice. Since the progression begins and ends in the tonic, however, you can expect the lower voice to be a small-scale copy of the fundamental progression (Schenker’s transference of the fundamental structure).

Write out answers to the following questions on a separate sheet of paper, preparing sketches for graphic analyses as you go.

1. What is the fundamental progression for any piece in b-flat minor? (Give both chord letter names and qualities (M or m) and roman numerals). How long are these basic harmonies prolonged in this passage (give measure numbers).

2. Does this passage use a basic (i.e., an elaborating) progression? If so, which one?

3. Explain how the elaborating progression in #2 can be said to “horizontalize” the tonic. (OK, so I just gave you part of the answer to #2☺)

4. What is(are) the underlying chord progression(s) in mm. 1-4 (don’t count the pickup), in roman numeral notation? What harmony do(es) this/these progression(s) prolong? Is this prolongation a harmonic prolongation or a contrapuntal one? (Hint: there’s a b-flat pedalpoint on the strong beats, beats 1 and 4, in these measures that is sometimes not the actual functional bass tone.)

4. What scale degree in the bass (Stufe) is prolonged in mm. 5-7? Is the prolongation harmonic or contrapuntal (explain).

Prepare two graphic analyses. Graph A (bass clef only): show the bass voice of the fundamental progression with its elaborating progression (if applicable). Label the structural harmonies with roman numerals.

Graph B (bass clef only): show a middleground sketch of how each of the main structural chords of the fundamental/elaborating progression (each of the Stufen) is prolonged.

5a. Consider the opening phrase, the pickup notes through the first half of m. 2. For each dotted half-note beat, choose either one or two structural melodic tones, taking into account the supporting bass tones. Name the structural melody tones and explain how this melody is a horizontal projection of the tonic triad.

5b. Now consider the second phrase, m. 2.5 to m. 4.5. What is the relationship between this phrase and the first phrase both melodically and harmonically? What
tones seem to be prolonged over each beat in this phrase? Are the structural tones the same or different, compared to phrase 1?

5c. In Schenkerian terms what is the function of the g-flat” on beat 5 of m. 1? What is the function of the e-flat” on beat 6 of measure 1? In a Schenkerian hearing, is the c” that appears as the last note of measure 1 an upper voice or an inner voice tone? To what note does that final c” connect or lead?

**Graph C (treble clef): show your hearing of the structure of the right hand melody in the first two phrases (mm. 0-4.5).** Show the main structural tones with stems, and the most important embellishing tones (a handful or fewer!) as stemless black note heads. At this stage show only a middleground representation rather than a graph that accounts for every note. If you’re really good, you can show inner voices!

6. The second half of the excerpt, from the pickups to m. 5 to the arrival of a strong-beat tonic in m. 9, suggests an elegantly fluid structural melody. What is that melody in letter names? [If you’re stuck—go on to graph D, the next step and come back to this one.]

**Graph D (treble and bass clef): show combined 1st and 2nd species counterpoint-style reduction of mm. 5-9, using a whole note for each new bass tone.** Does the outer-voice, contrapuntal framework follow the general rules of species counterpoint?

**Graph E (treble clef): capture in graphic notation your hearing of the structure of the right hand melody in mm. 5 (downbeat)-9.** Show the main structural tones as quarters, and the most important embellishing tones (a handful or fewer!) as stemless black note heads. At this stage show only a middleground representation rather than a graph that accounts for every note. Your graph should capture way in which this melody horizontalizes an important chord!

7. If you were to prepare a complete analysis of the Nocturne, it’s pretty clear what Stufe is being prolonged in this entire passage (mm. 1-9)—give the bass tone and the principal melody tone in the upper voice that are composed out in this exquisite passage.

8. Prepare a brief graph F that shows the principal bass tones and voice leading in the inner voices (the tones other than the bass tone in the LH) in mm. 5-7. How does Schenkerian theory account for such progressions in terms of voice-leading? Why would Schenker roll in his grave at the thought of labeling the G-flat Major chord in the second half of bar 5 “VI.” How does conventional theory account for the b-double-flat in mm. 6-7? How does Schenkerian theory explain (far more elegantly) that note?

9. **Graph your hearing (Graph G) of the pickup notes, including the f” on the downbeat of bar 1.** Label all harmonic tones or graph them in a way that makes their function clear.