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Clara Schumann, Andante

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Schumann, Clara

Andante Espressivo from *Quatre pièces fugitives*, Op. 15

Published in 1845, the Andante Espressivo exhibits the chromatic harmony used generously during the time period while exhibiting characteristics of classical ternary form. This piece is well suited for discussion in a lower-level theory class in which students are asked to complete a harmonic analysis of the first nineteen measures. The analysis given indicates the Roman numeral analysis for the first nineteen measures. Within these measures, students will encounter instances of secondary functions, tonicizations, a cycle progression (measure 13-14), and numerous non-chord tones. The overall phrase structure also provides interesting discussion due to the interpolation occurring in measures 11-14. Additional harmonic analysis is given at the coda at m. 75. The overall structure of the piece (ternary form) is clearly marked on the score. Discussion regarding the changes between the A and the B section could easily be integrated into the lower level theory course.

A discussion of the modulation at the end of the A section (m21-24) would be better suited to the upper level theory class, perhaps the sophomore level. The modulation to f# minor in measure 20 (through the use of the Italian 6) provides a great discussion for voice leading and function. The alternation of the tonic and subdominant chords (marked in the score at measure 25-31) also help to unite the B section. Measure 40-42 are unstable in terms of tonality and the advanced student would be able to engage in a discussion about the modulation from F# minor to C major. Cadence points play an important role in the overall phrase structure of the piece, and through careful listening and analysis, more advanced students will be able to decipher the phrase form in terms of extension and meter.

In the traditional curriculum, few pieces are studied that are composed by women. By including a piece by Clara Schumann, an excellent opportunity is afforded by the instructor to talk about the composition within a cultural context. Other compositions by women composers such as Fanny Hensel and Amy Beach would be ideal pieces to follow this particular assignment.