

# Synthesizing the Tonal and Rhetorical Dramas of Franz Clement's D-minor Violin Concerto (c. 1807)

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Best remembered as the commissioner, dedicatee, and first performer of Beethoven's Violin Concerto, Franz Clement was also a composer, one whose modulations were deemed “bizarre” and “unnatural” by his contemporaries. Nowhere is this better seen than in the first movement of his 1807 Violin Concerto in D minor.

In both the opening ritornello and the solo exposition, a medial caesura on the dominant of F suggests an impending S in the expected relative major. And yet, a few measures later, the bass C wrenches up a half step to C $\sharp$ , derailing the music away from the expected key of F and instead to the shocking key of E major. This E-major music has all the rhetorical trappings of S; the only problem is its key area: E major in a global D minor.

Curiously, this same issue returns in the recapitulation: following a i: HC medial caesura, the music soon veers off track and cadences in C $\sharp$  major.

We show that the catalyst for Clement's surprising key scheme is the concerto's first chromatic tone in m. 2. This raised fourth scale degree, G $\sharp$ , both embodies underachievement and provokes overcompensation. First, it sags below the expected  $\hat{5}$ , just as the keys of E and C $\sharp$  major lie one semitone beneath their conventional tonal stations. And second, its overcompensation ultimately leads to this pitch's promotion to an essential component of the *Ursatz*, replacing the diatonic G $\flat$  altogether in the deep middleground.