MTO 15.2 Examples: Brown, Axis Tonality

(Note: audio, video, and other interactive examples are only available online)
http://www.mtosmt.org/issues/mto.09.15.2/mto.09.15.2.brown.php

Figure 1. Opening modulations in several of Shostakovich's fifteen string quartets

No. 1: C major to E♭ major
No. 2: A major to C# minor
No. 4: D major to B minor
No. 5: B♭ major to G major
No. 7: F♯ minor to E♭ major
No. 9: E♭ major to B minor
No. 14: F♯ major to E♭ major
No. 15: E♭ minor to C major

Figure 2. Inter-opus third relations among the first six string quartets, and the last six

First six quartets (1938-1956)
C major - A major - F♯ major - D major - B♭ major - G major

Last six quartets (1964-1974)
A♭ major - F minor - D♭ major - B♭ minor - F♯ major (= G♭ major) - E♭ minor
**Figure 3.** Straus's summary of large-scale tonal motion in Stravinsky, *Symphony of Psalms*, first movement (adapted from Straus 1981, 248)

**Figure 4.** *Symphony of Psalms*, first movement, piano part starting two measures before R9: explicit presentation of the axis E-G-B-D
Figure 5. Shostakovich: Cello Concerto No. 1, first movement, large-scale tonal structure

Figure 6. Shostakovich: Cello Concerto No. 1, first movement, opening phrase. The bass line E♭-D-C-B drives the music from its initial E♭ major toward C minor

Figure 7. A scalar ordering of Shostakovich’s motto (D-E♭-C-B) links E major and C minor
Figure 8. Shostakovich: Cello Concerto No. 1, first movement, secondary theme, measures 82–87
A reordered version of Shostakovich’s motto now occurs prominently in a C minor context

Figure 9. A recurring, small-scale expression of the axis underlying the movement

Figure 10. Shostakovich: Cello Concerto No. 1, first movement, measures 74–77
The accompaniment presents the axis C-E\textsuperscript{b}-G-B\textsuperscript{b} at the transition from the primary theme to the secondary theme
**Figure 11.** Shostakovich: String Quartet No. 3, second movement, opening
The first violin’s initial C undermines the viola’s opening E minor triad and suggests a conflict between E and C as pitch centers

![Image of the first violin and viola music notation for the String Quartet No. 3, second movement, opening.]

**Moderato con moto \( \dot{=} 138 \)**

**Figure 12.** Shostakovich: String Quartet No. 3, second movement, ending.
Final chord (boxed) comprises the notes E-G-C-E♭ (spelling upward), suggesting a blend of E minor, C major, and C minor

![Image of the final chord notation for the String Quartet No. 3, second movement, ending.]

**Figure 13.** Shostakovich: Twenty-Four Preludes and Fugues (1950–51), Prelude No. 9 in E major, Phrase 1 (measures 1–10)

![Image of Prelude No. 9 in E major, Phrase 1 for the Twenty-Four Preludes and Fugues.]

**E major \( \rightarrow \)**

**C♯ minor \( \rightarrow \)** (top line only)

**E major \( \rightarrow \)**

**C♯ minor \( \rightarrow \)**
The first set of beams shows the T1 axis D-F-A-C; the second set shows the chord B-D-F-A, which connects this axis back to E major via half-step voice-leading, rounding out the first half of the prelude.
Figure 16. Phrase 4 (measures 38–46)

Figure 17. Retransition (measures 46–56)

Figure 18. Reprise and conclusion (measures 56–71)
Figure 19. Large-scale tonal structure of the E major prelude

![Tonal structure diagram](image1)

Figure 20. Measures 1–2 of “The Abbot,” as arranged by Tchaikovsky (No. 32 from 50 Russian Folk Songs)

![Musical notation](image2)

Figure 21. “Past the Swift River, Past the Swift Currents,” as arranged by Rimsky-Korsakov (No. 100 from 100 Folk Songs with Piano Accompaniment)

![Musical notation](image3)
Figure 22a. Rimsky-Korsakov: Scheherazade, third movement, opening
(piano arrangements taken from DeVoto 1995, with slight alterations)

Figure 22b. Borodin: Polovetsian Dances, measures 15–18
(piano arrangements taken from DeVoto 1995, with slight alterations)

Figure 23. Mussorgsky: Boris Godunov, ending: an ambiguous blending of A minor and its submediant, F major