

Newsletter of the Society for Music Analysis

Number one, April 1992



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Contributors to this issue

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The inauguration of the SMA

On 1 January 1992, a new initiative in British musicology was launched with the inauguration of the SMA. Based in the UK, but welcoming worldwide membership, the Society is intended to provide a focus for music-analytical work. Its aims are simply stated:

- To foster the development of all aspects of the discipline of music analysis and its connection with related disciplines.
- To encourage teaching, research and creativity in music analysis and to advocate and uphold the highest standards of musicianship.
- To promote, facilitate and provide a forum for the exchange of information and ideas pertaining to music analysis and its teaching, including the publication of a newsletter.
- To conduct meetings of the Society, and to coordinate conference and seminar activities.
- To liaise internationally with societies with similar interests.
- To provide contact for students and professionals with the music analysis community and to foster the interests of younger members.
- To foster equal opportunities of all Members of the Society.

Members receive the *Newsletter* of the SMA, prospective discounts on subscriptions to journals, reduced conference or day fees for events under the Society's aegis, and are invited to participate in the planning of Music Analysis Conferences, Seminar days and TAGS days (Theory and Analysis Graduate Student days). It is intended that the Society will represent members' interests to national, European and international bodies, and negotiate reduced subscriptions and fees wherever possible.

An interim Executive Committee has been formed. The serving Officers are Jonathan Dunsby (Chairman), James Ellis (Vice-Chairman), Deborah Roberts (Secretary) and Catherine Dale (Treasurer). The members at large to date are Craig Ayrey, Nicholas Cook, Stephen Hinton and Robert Pascall. This interim Committee will serve the start-up period of the SMA. Elections to a subsequent Executive Committee will take place in March 1993, at the First Annual General Meeting of the Society, to be held during SotoMAC, the University of Southampton Music Analysis Conference.

Those who join the SMA before 1 January 1993 will be Founder Members and their names noted as such in membership listings of the Society. The current annual subscription is £25 (Ordinary) or £15 (Student), but Founder Members are invited to subscribe in 1992 for £18.50 (Ordinary) or £11 (Student).

The Society's *Newsletter*

This publication is designed to communicate information about SMA events, but clearly it goes much further. It is a forum for the exchange of views, a fairly informal platform for the discussion of matters of importance to members. In this, it may in the future supplement the meetings of the SMA, continuing debate beyond the temporal and geographical confines of the seminar or congress. The editorial policy is strictly non-interventionist, so contributions are not refereed, a stance in keeping with the stated aim that the *Newsletter* is an open-access publication. Contributions are invited therefore on any subject relating even peripherally to analytical concerns: they should be sent to the Editor at the address given on the final page. The Diary of SMA events will form a permanent feature of the *Newsletter*: A further section, the Noticeboard, will consist of announcements from members: items for inclusion are welcome from all interested parties. Items will be included which have been received up to two weeks before the date of publication, which will be quarterly on the first day of April, July, October and January.

In the present, inaugural issue the aims of the SMA are set out, with comment on the Society's formation from Arnold Whittall. The SMA does not exist in a vacuum in Europe, and work has already begun to establish contact with other bodies: Jonathan Dunsby reports. The debate in the UK over the National Curriculum for Music in primary and secondary schools has escalated recently, and since the idea of including an analytic component has been attacked prominently, the Society has a clear duty to consider the issues. In this issue there are two contributions from members working in the field.

SMA Diary

16 May 1992

TAGS Day

(Theory and Analysis Graduate Students Day), Director Peter Foster, University of Reading, Department of Music, 35 Upper Redlands Road, Reading RG1 5JE, UK, tel. 0734 318411, fax 0734 314404.

A Theory and Analysis Graduate Students Day is to be held at the University of Reading Department of Music on Saturday 16 May 1992. The programme will include the following papers by postgraduate students: 'Thematic structure in Brahms's G major Violin Sonata' (Sarah Callis, University of Nottingham), 'The performance of Chopin Preludes: in search of an interface with analysis' (Chee-ye Jennifer Tong, University of Southampton), 'The conflicts between political and personal ideals in Elliott Carter's music in the 1940s' (Sam King, King's College London), 'An analytical investigation of Trevor Wishart's *Vox* cycle' (Karen Irwin, University of Durham), 'Octatonicism and post-tonal harmonic species in inter-war Britain' (Christian Kennett, University of Reading). There will also be an Open Forum entitled 'Beyond Formalism', chaired by Craig Ayrey, in which discussion will be focused on various recent publications relevant to this issue.

All postgraduates are very welcome, and any interested parties. Attendance is free for members of the SMA. The cost for non-members will be £5, including lunch (cheques should be made payable to the SMA). Enquiries should be addressed to Peter Foster as above. We look forward to seeing a large number there for what promises to be a very interesting day.

Peter Foster, Amanda Bayley, Chris Kennett

27 October 1992

SMA Day Seminar

University of Nottingham

26-28 March 1993

SotoMAC '93

University of Southampton Music Analysis Conference 1993, Director Professor Nicholas Cook, Department of Music, Highfield, Southampton SO9 5NH. The Call for Papers appears separately in this issue, together with contact information. The Conference will contain the first Annual General Meeting of the SMA.

15 May 1993

TAGS Day

City University, London

SMA Noticeboard

Members of the SMA can display notices in the Noticeboard free of charge. The copy date for each issue is two weeks before the date of publication.

Music Analysis in Britain Today

Arnold Whittall

'The future for analysis in Britain is a great deal brighter than its past might suggest'. So this incurable optimist concluded in *Acta Musicologica*, 1980. The implication could have been that anything short of the total extinction of the subject would be an improvement: and while such a sweeping assertion would have been grossly unfair to several distinguished British musicians, from Tovey to Keller, it is now clear that the period since 1980 has seen many new and significant developments in British music analysis. Whether all are improvements is not for me to say.

I would instance the proliferation of academic courses (undergraduate and postgraduate) that acknowledge music analysis as a distinct - though never isolated - practice: the launching of a journal in 1982, and of a regular conference from 1984 (both of which might just have played a part in stimulating comparable developments on the European mainland). Now, with the formation of a Society with clearly defined and carefully planned objectives, the opportunity for consolidation is enhanced: and consolidation is undoubtedly needed, not least because a good many of us have been so preoccupied with launching and nurturing new initiatives that we have spent too little time *doing* analysis, too little time thinking about what analysis *is*.

In 1980 I cited Ian Bent's assessment of the three most important areas of ongoing analytical activity: working with Schenker, feature analysis, and the search for a syntax. It is this third topic which, I believe, has been the central and most productive concern of the last decade in Britain, often in association with elements culled from the other two (reduction, prolongation, formal models, motivic differentiation and process), but with a blessed reluctance to abandon all contact with the idea of 'style' as informing all the interacting aspects of complete pieces. To this extent, I might hazard the judgement that the British remain analysts first, theorists second, and sometimes not theorists at all. Yet many of us have become conscious of the theoretical assumption (often all too tacit) that the idea of 'syntax' embodies assumptions about music as a 'language' that is supposed to make sense primarily as a coherent, hierarchically 'grammatical' design

whose meaning and continuity are guaranteed by that design. During recent years the 'new musicology' (itself primarily the result of a healthy suspicion of theoretical dogma) has come along to place all such positivistic strategies under a giant question mark: and so what seemed secure and full of potential in 1980 proves to be not a clearly-defined field waiting passively for the analyst's attention, but an unbounded space whose very surface is unstable and whose character is in constant transition. Not everyone is prepared to swallow such post-structuralism whole, and there is indeed still plenty of structuralist work to be done; but the climate in which it is done seems certain to be an unsettling one.

This begins to sound threatening but, for myself, I don't see it as such. The events of the past decade and more have already proved that analysis in Britain is a vital and legitimate activity, reaching into many areas of musical life. I can only conclude that the future, while as ever uncertain, should be even brighter, because we analysts now have a past that continues to radiate a brightness of its own. Nevertheless, before self-congratulation gets out of hand, it is worth remembering that there are still musicians, even in institutions of higher education, who think analysis at best unnecessary, at worst dangerous. Missionaries are still needed....



The 5th British Music Analysis Conference (SotoMAC) will take place concurrently with the 28th Conference of the Royal Musical Association at the University of Southampton on 26-28 March 1993.

The SotoMAC programme committee is

- Nicholas Cook (Chair)
- William Drabkin
- Daniel Leech-Wilkinson
- Allan Moore

We invite proposals for papers and sessions on any topic related to analysis. We hope that sessions will cover the following topics, among others:

- Analysis of oral traditions
- Analysis of recorded music
- Analysis and chronology
- Analysis, transcription, and editing
- The future of analysis teaching

We welcome contributions to these topics relating to popular and non-Western music as well as those relating to the Western art tradition. Free papers will also be accepted.

Abstracts (no more than 200 words) by 1 September 1992 to
Nicholas Cook
University of Southampton
Department of Music
Highfield
Southampton SO9 5NH, UK

Fax 0703 593197

Email mci003@uk.ac.soton

There is a separate programme committee for the 28th RMA Annual Conference (chaired by Mark Everist, Department of Music, King's College London) and we welcome the submission of a proposal to each programme committee.

Sociétés Européennes d'Analyse Musicale (SEAM) and the SMA

Jonathan Dunsby

Societies for those interested in music analysis exist not only in the UK, but also in Belgium, France and Italy, and are being formed in other countries of continental Europe. In order to coordinate activity, a small liaison committee has been established, including SMA representatives, to advise on the constitution of the SEAM, which will act as a central source of information and advice.

Representatives from the countries mentioned above, as well as Germany, met in Paris in late January 1992. Among other important matters, it was decided that future European Congresses, following the first in Colmar, France in 1989, and the second in Trento, Italy in 1991, will have an agreed theme. Suggestions have included 'text and context in music analysis and in interpretation'; 'the relations between systematic and historical enquiry'; and 'information technology and music analysis'. It is accepted that there will always be a place for contributions that lie outside the conference theme. The SMA has offered to host the fourth European Congress in the UK in Autumn, 1995.

It will be interesting to see how the harmonization of national societies might proceed. Some degree of cooperation in matters of mutual interest is clearly desirable, indeed probably essential. Yet differences of approach are easy to identify. The *Société Française d'Analyse Musicale* (SFAM), for example, has a deep commitment to educational purposes at all levels, which has not been a tradition here since the founding of the journal *Music Analysis* in 1982; and the SFAM attention to the professional qualifications of its membership is not likely to be a useful feature of the

British scene. It is noticeable too that different, almost opposing attitudes are taken to conferences, which tend to be programmed here with a sharp eye to quality, as a step towards publication, but which on the continent may be much more geared to selection largely on the basis of topic. At the January SEAM meeting one European colleague warned eloquently of the dangers of what was called the 'vulgarization' of the discipline of music analysis, to the consternation of some of those who have been at the heart of continental developments in recent years. And it was noted that in Germany and Austria, where there is a considerable readership for *Musik-Theorie*, there does not in fact appear to be any real call for a society.

These and other issues are likely to confront members of the SMA far into its evolution. *Music Analysis* was launched into a Europe that, in these matters, was virtually a vacuum, and some satisfaction may be taken in the message sent, nearly a decade later, to the CityUMAC '91 conference by Jean-Jacques Nattiez, which divulged the opinion that British research is still the best model of music-analytical scholarship. Nevertheless, in 1992 the SMA meets an environment humming with music-analytical activity in many different places and languages, and we may come to feel that taking stock of the American giant during the 60s and 70s was a relatively easy challenge when we look at what must now be done. Should there be a great deal to learn from our colleagues across the Channel, we shall have access to that knowledge only from determined efforts to communicate over the deep cultural and intellectual divides.

The SEAM can be contacted in Brussels by fax on 010 332 512 8275.

The Place of Music Theory and Analysis in the Music National Curriculum: A Personal View by Christopher Polyblank

The publication in January 1992 of the National Curriculum Council's report on the responses to the proposals of the Music Working Group recommended two attainment targets: Performing and Composing, and Knowledge and Understanding, for all pupils aged 5 - 14 in State schools in England and

Wales. Following a lengthy controversy, on 11 March 1992 the Secretary of State issued his final proposals for the music curriculum, deciding on the need for two attainment targets, Performing and Composing, and Listening and Appraising.

Some music teachers will be sorry to see the reintroduction of knowledge-based teaching, but I for one see this as a golden opportunity to re-establish, and in some cases establish, several fundamental principles in respect of music theory and analysis. These two areas of academic study have, in my view, for too long been neglected aspects of musical education in this country, with theory associated with the drudgery of pigeon-hole type exercises required to be 'trudged through' as a necessary adjunct to instrumental or vocal examinations. This narrow understanding of the word 'theory' is a far cry from the definition most accepted by musicologists, who would surely agree with Claude Palisca that 'theory is mostly understood as principally the study of the structure of music' (*The New Grove*).

Analysis is similarly open to misconception, and it is still widely equated with the mere labelling of themes and sections of musical works according to pre-conceived formal moulds. The idea of taking a piece of music as the starting point in a larger study of musical perception, for example, is foreign to the culture of most music teachers educated at tertiary level in this country during the past 20 years.

This is not to say that the significant advances in music education in this country are to be decried: far from it! There has been a surge of activity in composing, mainly due to the incentives of using music technology, which has taken much of the drudgery out of the purely physical labour of writing music down, and which gives the opportunity for instant sound replay of one's efforts.

However, I think most people involved in the preparation of pupils for GCSE would agree that young peoples' efforts in composing music are based largely on improvisation, and that there are often situations where musical notes are manipulated without a thorough understanding on the pupils' part of the underlying principles whereby the music 'hangs together'. This idea is not new: 'If heaven has gifted you with a lively imagination, you will often in lonely hours sit as though spell-bound at the pianoforte, seeking to express the harmony that dwells within your mind... But beware of giving yourself up, too often, to a talent that will lead you to waste your time and strength on shadow pictures. You will only obtain mastery of form and the power of clear construction through the firm outlines of the pen. Write more than you improvise therefore' (*Schumann as Critic*, ed. L B Plantigna, New York, 1967: p. 417).



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Whilst I do not wish to prescribe a music curriculum for schools, there are certain elements which I feel are essential for consideration at the present time. Amongst these would be a study of strict counterpoint for students at 6th form level, if not earlier. In an interview published in the *Journal of the International Society of Musicians* (January 1992), Malcolm Arnold gives the following advice to young composers: 'Work hard, and get a good technique. I studied strict counterpoint - yes, all the species - and it gave me a great command over the basic stuff of music'.

In my own work as an inspector of schools' music, I have noted that those pupils who received instruction in counterpoint (often from quite a young age) seem to have a better understanding of the principles of voice-leading, and would consequently be better equipped to tackle an undergraduate course which featured modern approaches to theory and analysis (for example, Schenkerian techniques). Schenker himself, of course, in the Introduction to *Free Composition*, was clear in his view that it would be possible for schoolchildren to understand his teaching 'if teachers would devote themselves solely to one task, to train their students to hear music as the masters conceived it'.

In a thought-provoking article in *Music Teacher* (December 1991) Keith Swanwick wrote: 'Before we can sensitively assess the music-making or music-taking of students we have ourselves to engage in appraising, to become music critics able to analyse what is made and said by pupils. We need to define the dimensions of analysis, to identify the strands of appraising...'. These are indeed new dimensions for music teachers and will require much thought, planning and in-service training. Indeed, in my own Education Authority we are hoping to include an exploratory course for teachers on aspects of music theory and analysis in 1992/93.

I have not mentioned other issues, such as aesthetics, an understanding of which is essential for the proper appreciation of our Western cultural heritage, but these matters can likewise be addressed provided there is a willingness to measure up to the demands of Music taking its proper place as a Foundation Subject in our National Curriculum. To those who love their subject this task will not be a chore, but a positive pleasure!

The views expressed here are the author's own.

'Composing Out' the principles of music analysis across the wider musical community

Deborah Roberts

University music departments have traditionally been the seeding grounds for propagating the tenets of music analysis. However, there is great potential for the 'composing out' of these main ideas across the wider musical community. Indeed it seems essential for the success of the new, and long-awaited, Society for Music Analysis that it spread its message broadly and accessibly through schools and colleges. This is not a necessary chore but rather a great opportunity, in the mid to long term, for raising the standards of the discipline and thus informing the level of 'thinking' for all musicians. It should form part of a vision for the future of music analysis. The development of the Society, and of music analysis more generally, would seem to depend upon a solid

foundation, together with a guarantee of 'new blood' and new ideas. The SMA should endeavour to popularize what for some is the rather 'stuffy' image of analysis, without sacrificing academic standards, so that analysis can be both intellectually fascinating and fun! The discipline needs to be attractive to students (at various levels) as well as to established academics. There is a strong argument, I suggest, for setting students off in the right direction, even whilst relative beginners where analysis is concerned, since it is undoubtedly less effective to correct misconceptions later. Within secondary (and even perhaps primary) education, I believe that we should stress the strength of analysis in informing performance (as well as historical awareness), because this

tends to dominate a student's early experience. It seems critical that we think ahead in this way: some present A level students are, after all, future postgraduates.

Through my contact with both secondary and tertiary music education, I am sometimes uncomfortably aware of the gap between what may purport to be analysis at sixth-form level and the discipline which confronts a new university student. Confusion can stem from the fact that a pupil may have been led to believe that 'analysis' is synonymous with a Tovey-style approach, which, although it has its place, is inevitably general, formally-based and rather superficial. He or she may not have been encouraged to see that analysis can be directed towards any or all musical parameters, or that there are distinct schools of analytic thought, or to recognize that extraordinary musical thinkers deserve recognition alongside the contributions of celebrated composers. Structural pitch analysis may seem an entirely new concept for someone who has not connected the wordy

essay with the refreshing graphic presentation which can be perceived aurally. Ideally, I feel that there could be a more natural progression from secondary to tertiary study, founded upon the same basic tenets.

There is surely great scope here for genuine introductory packages to structural analysis which presuppose no prior understanding, yet still explain the main tonal and post-tonal concepts and methods in a convincing and imaginative fashion. In the same way that the best instrumental string teachers, of both advanced students and beginners, are conscious of the different teaching approaches of Suzuki, Paul Rolland and others, analysts should adopt a catholic approach to the teaching of analysis, at whatever stage.

In fact, might not structural analysis also have a powerful role to play within instrumental teaching, strengthening its relevance at the earliest stages of learning? The demonstration

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of how basic models underlie the music, together with aural training, properly integrated within instrumental teaching programmes, could pay dividends in developing understanding, interpretation, intonation and even reading skills, alongside technique. The use of such models could assist an explanation of the difficult concept of the contrapuntal overview of a composition, avoiding a note-by-note rendition.

It is clearly necessary to consider the practical implementation of these ideas, and this is bound up inexorably with the recent debate of National Curriculum requirements. As has been widely reported, there is considerable difference of opinion between the National Curriculum Council itself and the advisory Music Working Group. There follows an overview of the structure of the recommendations contained in the *National Curriculum Council Consultation Report* (January 1992).

Music education structure is defined in terms of Key Stages (KS). Administratively the argument centres on whether KS 1-3 (and the non-statutory KS 4) should be divided into two or three Attainment Targets (AT). The Music Working Group favours three, Performing, Composing, and Appraising, which mirror the elements of GCSE, Performing, Composing, and Listening. In this scenario, analysis would feature mainly in Appraising, though it would also be relevant in informing Performance.

The Council, however, argues convincingly that it is necessary to involve a certain amount of theory which is not approached exclusively via practical activity, in order to increase the basic level of knowledge and understanding. It thus advocates a system of two ATs, which it claims will also be more workable: Performing & Composition (combined), balanced by Knowledge & Understanding. Due to pressure from the Music Working Group, it seems likely that these ATs will appear in a ratio of 2:1. The academic study of analysis and that of 'musical history and theory' (*National Curriculum Council Consultation Report*, p. 23) would certainly seem to be better served by this latter approach. The Council's Programmes of Study (PoS) require pupils to 'understand the contribution made to the development of music by a range of influential composers' (p. 13), such as Bach, Beethoven and Schubert; Stravinsky, Britten and Tippett. This is part of a balanced

curriculum which also embraces folk, popular music, music of the British Isles and of various cultures, Western and non-Western (p. 22).

By the end of Key Stage 3, the AT statement sounds ambitious, if it is not to be superficial: pupils should have demonstrated that they can 'discriminate between and respond to harmonic, rhythmic and melodic structures' (p. 30), and that within programmes of study pupils should 'analyse music critically using appropriate vocabulary, showing an understanding of style and an ability to relate it to its social, historical and cultural background' (p. 31). However, the statements for KS 4, within the *Additional Advice to the Secretary of State for Education* (January 1992), do not seem to maintain the same speed of progression discernible through KS 1-3, although they may well be more realistic. Pupils should be able to 'apply a developing knowledge of musical notations, structures and stylistic conventions' (p. 12), and in PoS should 'Listen to, analyse and appraise critically music of different styles, genres, forms and moods' (p. 13).

Many national examining boards embrace Music within their GCSE syllabus (including ULSEB, AEB, SEG, JMB and NEA), but the framework of Performing, Composing and Listening is always maintained. Here the main function of analysis is again in informing performance, though I argue that it would be desirable to increase the theoretical emphasis within Listening in order to ease the progression to A-level study.

At A level, analysis is embraced by all examining boards within the Common Aural Perception Test (Paper 1, 28% of the total marks), Part II of which consists of Aural Analysis (26%) and Stylistic Analysis (24%). Aural Analysis involves 'comparisons of different presentations of the same or similar material (for example, different variations of the same theme, related extracts of the same work, different orchestrations of the same material, different performances of the same music)' and a question requiring details of 'rhythm, melody, tonality, harmony, form, texture and instrumentation, nuance' to be notated on a two-stave skeletal outline (*ULSEB Syllabus: June 1992*, p. 699). The University of London Schools Examination Board is widely regarded as perhaps the most natural progression from GCSE, though Associated Examining Board is also popular in maximizing the emphasis on performance-related disciplines. ULSEB

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covers analysis independently within Papers 4 and 5 on Musical History and Analysis. The brief is similar to that within the Stylistic Analysis section of Paper 1, though there is some scope for specialization in Paper 5, since candidates study one of five musical 'genres' (*ULSEB Syllabus*, pp 706-7). ULSEB includes an optional dissertation, Paper 5R (p. 707), which can account for 18% of the overall mark: it is here one finds the greatest potential for concentrated analysis. AEB's approach in Music-633 is broadly parallel. All students pursue analysis within Paper 3: Historical and Analytical Studies (20%). Detailed analytical study tends to be focused on the Prescribed Work, presently Brahms's Bb Piano Concerto, rather than on the Prescribed Topic, which demands coverage of a wide area, for example British Music, 1920 - Present Day. The Prescribed Work is viewed in its 'musical and historical context, including aspects of form and other stylistic elements, instrumentation and performing practice' (*AEB Syllabus: 1992*, p. 22). Written description and evaluation remains the main vehicle of communication, though graphic notation might usefully be introduced as a supplementary tool. As with ULSEB, the greatest scope for developing analytical study lies in the optional 'Individual Study File' in Paper 4, which might involve an analytical investigation of up to 5000 words (*AEB Syllabus*, p. 24).

Thus it can be seen that analysis at A level still tends to be tackled by an essay-type approach, which does not yet credit the distinctive contributions of specific analytical thinkers, or explore the potential of graphic representation. However, there is opportunity for raising the profile of structural analysis. At present this may be more readily achieved through the dissertation option than through short examination papers.

This article has aimed simply to open issues for discussion. I am keenly aware that the subject is complex. Clearly, careful planning, together with an appropriate approach and content, will be critical to the success of any initiative which seeks to raise the profile of analysis. Targets must be relevant, realistic, attainable, and seen as assisting with the delivery of the National Curriculum, GCSE and A-level examinations. One is only too aware of the many demands made upon the time and resources of music teachers and their educational establishments. However, there is undoubtedly considerable scope for 'composing out the principles of music analysis': in these early days of the SMA, discussion of how best to design initiatives is a key to future progress.



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