

Newsletter of the Society for Music Analysis

Number five, August 1993



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Contributors to this issue

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Peter Foster is currently engaged in Doctoral research at the University of Reading, and is Membership Secretary of the SMA.

Liz Garnett is currently engaged in Doctoral research at the University of Southampton.

SMA matters

Following a busy Spring for the SMA, reports of the main events are contained within this issue of the Newsletter. A dispassionate report of SotoMAC will in due course form part of the schedule for *Music Analysis*: it seemed interesting in the short term to solicit impressions from the Director of the Conference, Nicholas Cook. The event contained the first Plenary Meeting of the Society, where there was a healthy representation from younger Members. Full minutes of this meeting are available for Members' information: the main points raised were the level of membership, the Executive Committee and the functions of officers, the future timetable of events, and connections with societies overseas. There was a warm statement of support from Richmond Browne, who was one of the leading lights in the formation of the US-based Society for Music Theory. Members are reminded that meetings of the Executive take place frequently, and that issues raised with officers or members-at-large will be addressed at these meetings.

The present membership of the Executive Committee is as follows: Jonathan Dunsby (Chairman), James Ellis (Vice-Chairman), Deborah Roberts (Honorary Secretary), Catherine Dale (Treasurer), Nicholas Cook, Stephen Hinton, Robert Pascall, Anthony Pople, John Rink, Alan Street, Arnold Whittall. We welcome Peter Foster to the new post of Membership Secretary. All membership matters should be referred to him: his address is given on p. 5.

Those unable to attend SotoMAC may have been puzzled not to have received an April Newsletter: it was felt by the Executive Committee that from a news point of view an issue at the time of SotoMAC and the Plenary Meeting would have been somewhat redundant. Then again, there is a regrettable reticence on the part of Members to provide abundant copy such as correspondence, simple statements of views, and so on. This disclosure amounts to a plea for action from Members: this publication should be a vehicle for the transmission of ideas, at whatever stage of development. Certain provocative statements may never make it into the pages of learned journals: but they are nonetheless worth making. Here is the medium for your voice!



SMA diary - in brief

30 October 1993 : SMA Autumn Seminar Day, University of Newcastle upon Tyne, Department of Music.

19 March 1994 : SMA Plenary Meeting. This will take place in London, and there will be an attractive interweaving of analytic contributions to form a whole day's event.

21 May 1994 : TAGS Day, Director David Griffiths, Oxford Brookes University.

23 - 25 September 1994 : Lancaster University Music Analysis Conference (LancMAC '94), Director Anthony Pople.



Lancaster University Music Analysis Conference 1994

Call for papers

LancMAC '94 will take place on 23 - 25 September 1994. Proposals are invited for papers. The Conference will not be thematically organized: the aim will simply be to present the best examples of current work in music analysis in an international context. The Programme Committee consists of Anthony Pople (Chairman), Jonathan Dunsby, Roger Parker and Robert Pascall. Abstracts of 300-500 words should be sent to the Conference Director, Dr Anthony Pople, at the address given below. They should be written in English, and must be postmarked no later than Friday, 11 March 1994.

The accommodation facilities of Lancaster University include rooms with en suite facilities.

Further information will appear in subsequent issues of this Newsletter. For specific enquiries please contact Dr Anthony Pople, Lancaster University, Department of Music, Bailrigg, Lancaster LA1 4YW, tel. 0524 593774, fax 0524 847298, Email mua002@uk.ac.lancaster.

SMA Autumn Seminar Day

Saturday 30 October 1993

Department of Music, University of Newcastle upon Tyne

CALL FOR PAPERS

For its Autumn meeting, the SMA is planning a Seminar Day which will investigate further the interaction between analysis and performance. Its format will be similar to last November's event held at the University of Nottingham. It will consist of an afternoon session of papers (with an extension into the late morning if offers of papers are numerous), followed by an evening concert performance.

The Seminar Day is concerned primarily with two works: the String Quartet No. 3 of Béla Bartók and Beethoven's Quartet Op. 132 (following Nottingham's set work, Op. 131). They will be played by the Adriano Quartet, a young ensemble in residence at the University of Newcastle whose members are drawn from the Northern Sinfonia.

Papers of 30 minutes duration are invited on topics connected with these works, treated individually, inter-relatedly, or in a broader context. It is hoped that some papers will focus on performance-related issues, benefitting from the opportunity for close contact with the players, who will be present during the afternoon session. Proposals are welcome from all.

Abstracts of 200 words should be sent as soon as possible, and in any case not later than 1 September 1993, to:

Dr Deborah Roberts, Honorary Secretary, SMA, University of Newcastle, Department of Music, Armstrong Building, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 7RU. (Tel. 091 222 6000 ext. 8844 or 6736, fax 091 261 1182).

If you are interested in attending the Seminar Day, which is free to SMA Members, and would like to receive further details, please fill out this slip (which may be photocopied) and despatch to the address given above.

Send further details of the SMA Seminar Day on 30 October 1993 at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne.

Name:

SMA Membership Number:

Contact address:

Telephone/fax/Email (delete as appropriate):

SMA Members

1993 subscription renewals

Some members have not yet renewed their subscriptions to the SMA for 1993. It is our wish to keep individual mail-shots to a minimum so as to minimize expenditure on the more mundane administrative matters, thereby leaving more funds for the support of meetings and projects. Please check your membership details (and cheque-book stubs) carefully, and if you have overlooked this payment please send the necessary remittance (Ordinary £25, Student £15) immediately to the new Membership Secretary at the address given below. Members are encouraged to pay by Standing Order to simplify renewals for the Society and for Members, and a form for this purpose, which may be photocopied, is printed below. Those who have already renewed their 1993 subscription may care to initiate this method of payment now for 1994.

To: Mr Peter Foster, Membership Secretary, SMA, Department of Music, University of Reading, 35 Upper Redlands Road, Reading RG1 5JE, UK.

I enclose renewal for my 1993 SMA subscription of £25/£15*

Name:

Address:

Instruction to your bank to pay the SMA subscription by Standing Order.

Please send the completed form to the Membership secretary, address as above. Please remember to complete the year you wish payment to commence.

To: The Manager,

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Please make payment of £25/£15* annually from my account on or soon after 1 January, commencing 199 , to Society for Music Analysis, Midland Bank, University Branch, 550 Beverley Road, Hull HU6 7LQ, sort code 40-25-19, account no. 51331116, until advised otherwise by me in writing.

Signature:

Date:

*delete one option

Study Day Reports: TAGS Day, City University, 15th May 1993
and Study Day for Music Postgraduates, University of Surrey,
27th May 1993.

Peter Foster

The healthy state of music research at postgraduate level was in evidence at two recent study days, held respectively at City University and the University of Surrey.

TAGS days (Theory and Analysis Graduate Students' Days to the uninitiated) have become a regular feature of the music-analytical calendar; this year's was the second to have been put on as an event of the SMA (see Alan Street's report on last year's TAGS day in the second issue of this Newsletter). Its organizer, Luke Windsor, had assembled an extremely coherent programme, which was also notable for the originality of much of the research presented, and the avoidance, on the whole, of more familiar topics of discussion.

The pre-lunch session was the most conventionally analytical in its content, dealing with music from between the wars, but all three speakers brought distinctive approaches to their presentations. The music of the Greek composer Skalkottas was evidently new to a substantial proportion of the audience, and this was certainly his debut at a meeting of the SMA: Evangelia Mantzourani (Goldsmiths' College) presented a paper entitled 'Analysing the Overture of the First Suite for large orchestra by Nikos Skalkottas'. This work was the composer's first large-scale twelve-tone work; however, Mantzourani showed how previous studies of his work had misunderstood Skalkottas's use of twelve-tone technique. Rather than using the permutations and transpositions of classic serial technique, Skalkottas used a number of different twelve-tone rows in the piece, which the analysis showed to be interrelated through common unordered hexachords. Next, Charlotte Bilefield (Trinity Hall, Cambridge) spoke on 'The "unprecise memory": Schoen-

berg's use of traditional Jewish textual and musical sources in *Kol Nidre*'. In this setting of the Jewish liturgical text for *Yom Kippur* Schoenberg used preexistent melodies from Jewish liturgical tradition, in spite of his general opposition to this practice (for example, in his article 'Folkloristic Symphonies'¹), on the grounds that traditional melodies do not lend themselves to logical working-out by developing variation. Bilefield summarized the published versions of the *Kol Nidre* chant consulted by Schoenberg, which, due to the 'unprecise memory' of tradition, display very considerable differences. Her analysis then showed how he solved his compositional dilemma by selecting elements from the chant sources which were most suitable to motivic development, and concluded that *Kol Nidre* offers a fascinating example of Schoenberg's motivic technique at this relatively late stage of his career, which, in its integration of preexistent melodic material into a highly original and personal style, is comparable to the music of Bartok and Vaughan Williams. Charles Wilson (King's College London) brought the morning session to a close with his analysis of Stravinsky's 'Hymne' from the *Serenade in A*. Wilson was the first of several speakers to refer to experimental research into music cognition, in this case, research in the USA into the action of 'minimal tonal cue-cells'; neither was he afraid to theorize about tonal function. He maintained that since all the trichords containing interval class 6 (the tritone/diminished fifth) which can occur within a given diatonic collection are unique to that diatonic collection, these trichords act as powerful and immediately recognizable indicators of local tonics. His analysis of part of the 'Hymne' then focussed on local tonicity established by these tonally univalent

cue-cells, and also used recompositions to exemplify the possible alternative implications. Wilson's decision to concentrate on local harmonic structure, deliberately eliminating 'secondary parameters' from consideration, and his rejection of any larger-scale tonal unity led to his coming under fire from questioners who preferred to hear large-scale pitch and registral convergence onto A.

A striking shift in the repertoire under consideration was evident in the post-lunch session: Tom Royall (University of Keele) probably succeeded in broadening a few horizons with his paper 'Slow sounds and low sounds - meaning and structure in the Beastie Boys'. He drew on Nelson Goodman's theories of musical meaning, distinguishing between music's ability to denote and to exemplify words - in this case, the words 'slow' and 'low' in the track analysed. Goodman also insists that music exists only as perceived sound, not as any pre-perceptual structure. Royall therefore developed his own method of representing the sound of the music exactly, rather than transcribing it into conventional notation, and showed how slowness and lowness were exemplified by various different sound phenomena in a complex symbolic system. Luke Windsor's own presentation, 'The "motivated sign" in electroacoustic music' also sought to explore processes of signification, this time drawing on the semiotic theory of Umberto Eco. Eco has suggested that the relationship between signifier and signified is not wholly arbitrary, but can be 'motivated' by context. Windsor showed how certain sounds which might be ambiguous in isolation are clearly identified with certain sources in Wishart's *Red Bird* and Daoust's *Mi bemol*. This type of relationship between sounds and extramusical signifieds was termed 'extrinsic signification'; however, in the two works considered, the same sounds took on intrinsic meaning in relation to other musical elements. Windsor argued that it is the complex web of signification created by the combination of extrinsic and intrinsic referral in electroacoustic works such as these which enables them to transcend the merely anecdotal or descriptive character of some electroacoustic music.

Where the 1992 TAGS day had focussed on interdisciplinary trends in the humanities, the three speakers in the final session this year were concerned with the implications of cognitive science for music theory and analysis. Niall Griffith, a computer scientist from the University of Exeter, braved a den of potentially leonine, if for the most part somewhat technologically challenged, music theorists to speak on 'Using Neural Networks to Model Tonality'. Griffith sought to create models of how very simple tonal functions are perceived by children: he therefore used nursery rhymes as data for a series of computerized logical operations designed to analyse and predict the frequency and order of different scale degrees. In general, the results of his experiments tended to confirm standard views of tonal functions, giving priority to configurations like the circle of fifths. Returning to what was for most of the audience rather more familiar territory, Nicola Dibben (City University) presented the results of an investigation into 'The Cognitive Reality of Hierarchic Structure in Tonal and Atonal Music'. Using durational reductions constructed according to Lerdahl and Jackendorf's method², and Lerdahl's own durational reductions of Schoenberg's Op. 11 No. 3³, she had carried out a series of experiments to test whether a group of musically trained subjects were able to distinguish correct from incorrect analytical reductions. Her subjects, who consisted of music students and academic staff from City University (to the evident relief of certain delegates, the results of the experiment were not subdivided!) heard the piece or extract, followed by two analyses, of which they had to identify the correct one. In the case of the tonal compositions, a statistically significant proportion of the subjects got the answer right; however, for atonal works this was not the case. Dibben concluded that either Lerdahl's analyses must have been wrong, or else atonal music is not able to be comprehended as hierarchical or prolongational in the same way as tonal music. Preferring the second explanation, she argued that these experiments must throw prolongational theories of atonal structure into question. In the lively debate that followed this paper, delegates questioned whether Lerdahl and Jackendorf's durat-

ional reductions were the best type of reductive analysis to use in this study, rather than the same authors' prolongational reductions, or voice-leading analysis. It was further suggested that the identification of the incorrect tonal analysis might have been due to the incoherence of the analysis itself as a piece of tonal writing, rather than to its flaws in relation to the piece. The question of the listeners' competence was also raised: it is arguable that the subjects may have been competent listeners to tonal music, but not to atonal. The final paper of the day, given by Kirsty Kirkpatrick (Lancaster University) and entitled 'Analytical Reductions and Perceived Structure - an experimental investigation', addressed substantially similar questions, but with explicit reference to Schenkerian foreground reductions. The hypothesis from which her experiments proceeded stated that if a reduction of surface complexity provides a valid or good version of the music it should pass unnoticed by the listener as the reduction is capable of 'standing for' its decorative counterpart.

Like the previous speaker, Kirkpatrick enjoyed the benefit of an amenable body of music students to act as subjects for her experiments: Bach's four-part chorale settings provided the repertoire upon which these were based. The subjects were played a mixture of unreduced chorale excerpts and reductions from which diminutions in the ultimate foreground had been removed (e.g. quaver passing notes), and were asked to identify the examples which were perceived as uncharacteristic of the (extremely familiar) musical style. Taken as a whole, the experiment showed that there was no significant correlation between the reduced chorales and those which were identified as stylistically uncharacteristic, so that to some extent at least, the foreground reductions are capable of standing for the originals. However, reductions which had an additional factor differentiating them from chorale style, such as an 'incorrect' dissonance, were far more consistently identified as uncharacteristic; to complicate matters further, certain features in the unreduced examples also tended to be found uncharacteristic. This paper too

provoked a lively exchange about the value of this type of study, and the extent of its relevance to analysis: while analysis must be related to the aural experience of music, many analysts would want to draw a distinction between music analyses and accounts of music cognition. To this delegate, the name of Nattiez was conspicuously absent from the discussion of these issues (as it had been from the previous session's engagement with semiotics): location of the arguments within his tripartitional scheme would perhaps have raised further interesting questions, such as how rules which originate on the poietic side (i.e. the rules of counterpoint) can also play a part in esthetic processes. At any rate, the apparent upsurge of interest in this country in experimental methodologies of musical research, as evidenced by the high quality of this final session, has re-opened the analysis/cognition question, and we may look forward to future discussion of the subject as scholars in this country attempt to absorb the recent work of Eugene Narmour.

This TAGS day was particularly notable for the willingness of postgraduate members of its audience to engage their peers in voluble and articulate debate, and it is to be hoped that the speakers found this as helpful as it was fascinating for the delegates. Finally, thanks were expressed to our hosts at City University, particularly to the conference organizer Luke Windsor, and those who were impatient to satisfy their curiosity regarding North London's other great event of the day - the Cup Final - departed in haste!



The Study Day for Music Postgraduates was a new and very welcome initiative by John Rink and his colleagues at the University of Surrey. Intended to complement the RMA Music Research Students' Conference, held annually in December, the Study Day comprised eleven papers extending across the gamut of musicological topics and grouped roughly chronologically. Analytical subjects and the SMA were well represented: this report will concentrate on the more analytical papers, while presenting a wider summary of the day's proceedings.

The first three papers dealt with different aspects of the reception of the music of Mozart and Beethoven. Rachel Cowgill (King's College London) surveyed the musical lectures of Dr William Crotch (1775-1847), whose tripartite division of music into the Sublime, the Beautiful and the Ornamental (based on traditions in English aesthetics going back to Burke) tended to relegate modern instrumental music to the lowest rank of composition. Her paper showed how Mozart gradually rose in Crotch's estimation, becoming 'The Greatest of the Moderns'. Thomas Cooper (Royal College of Music) spoke on 'The Romantisation of Beethoven: Aesthetic approaches in selected editions of the piano sonatas'. He referred to W.S. Newman's account of how the mystique of the Romantic artist shaped the image of Beethoven, and showed how these same Romantic concepts influenced the editorial practices of Bulow and others, whose editorial accretions tended to emphasize the improvisatory and (melo-?) dramatic quality of the sonata Op.31, No.2. He argued furthermore that modern 'Urtext' editions such as Wallner's (Munich, 1953) proceed from similar Romantic presuppositions, since in aiming to arrive at an original, authoritative version of the work, they aim to privilege a single moment of creative inspiration in which the work was conceived definitively; however, this single, finite version of the work can rarely be justified from the sources. Alan Loader (University of Cambridge) offered a critique of the school of thought in the literature on Beethoven's Opp.130 and 133 which has seen the B-A-C-H motive (with its retrograde) as a unifying figure

in the Bb-major quartet. He referred to sketches to settle questions of chronology in the composition of the movements, showing that, contrary to Nottebohm's belief, the first movement was composed before the main subject of the *Grosse fuge*. Since in addition to this, analysts have found reasonably convincing examples of B-A-C-H in the later finale of Op.130, Loader rejected Erwin Ratz's claim that the occurrence of B-A-C-H in earlier movements prove that the *Grosse fuge* is the 'real' finale.

The pre-lunch session contained three papers on Renaissance music (broadly defined). Jennifer Bailey (University of Oxford) spoke on 'Comings and Goings in the music of John Dunstable'. She first drew attention to the problem of anachronism in the analysis of this repertoire: most theories of formal and harmonic organization are still based on much later music. Her analysis deliberately eschewed later analytical concepts as far as possible: she attempted first of all to identify the formulae which define various levels of closure in the repertory chosen (Dunstable's three-part mass movements which are not based on plainchant), then proceeded to make deductions about opening formulae. The treatment of closing formulae suggests that the music can be understood as a sequence of phrases - a distinctly nineteenth-century analytical category. An investigation into phraseological syntax revealed certain consistent practices: for example, contiguous phrases tend not to close onto the same chord. This may suggest a view of structure as a series of phrase articulations, each of which has a necessary function within the structure. Bailey's paper continued in the vein of her presentation at the RMA Music Research Students' Conference in December last year, which addressed similar questions in the Old Hall repertory: although her analysis employs a strictly inductive approach, avoiding existing theories of structure as far as possible, it may also offer the basis for a more complete theoretical picture of early Renaissance music. The next paper, given by Liesel Carrington (University of Nottingham) dealt with 'The Manuscript Z356 of the Biblioteca Riccardiana in Florence: the

problems of editing fifteenth-century chansons'. She employed the theory of textual stemmatics to address issues regarding the provenance of the manuscript and its associations with contemporary manuscripts. David Smith (University of Oxford) brought the morning's proceedings to a close with his paper on 'Intabulation procedures in the keyboard and lute music of Peter Philips', which examined techniques of transcription of vocal or consort works for keyboard and lute, as well as some of the problems of authorship.

The post-lunch session was equally varied: Liz Garnett (University of Southampton) spoke first, on the topic of 'Brothers in Arms: revolutionary allegory in Cherubini's *Lodoiska*' [see also her contribution to this issue of the Newsletter - ed.]. She showed how Cherubini's eponymous heroine was a product of the strongly gendered concepts of patriotism and revolutionary struggle in 1790s France: France's revolutionary leaders generally resisted the upsurge of feminism with its demands for a political voice for women, and the rights to be educated and to serve in the army, offering instead an idealized vision of motherhood - a powerful national symbol in a nation of brothers. Garnett argued lucidly that *Lodoiska*'s musical material in the opera is derived from that of the male characters, and that her consequent lack of a distinct musical personality is coupled to an absence of any autonomous desires or needs; instead, she is 'an ideal object of love, belonging to all *men*', functioning as a symbol for the homeland which is the goal of their struggle. Next, Carolyn Ritchie (University of Glasgow) charted the progress of a monopoly over liturgical music in 'The role of the Court Kappela in the development of Russian Orthodox church music during the nineteenth century: censorship and publication'. She showed the developments in the Kappela's own chant publications, as well as rise and fall of its powers of censorship. Barbara Whittle (Open University) then spoke on 'Schenker's critique of nineteenth-century theory'. She observed that this critique has so far been a failure, since

the methods of teaching harmony and counterpoint which Schenker attacked are still used in music education today; she claimed that they are even taught in some university departments as a preparation for studies in Schenkerian analysis (some SMA members might wish to defend themselves against this accusation⁴). She summarized the development of harmony and counterpoint teaching in the nineteenth century, and Schenker's objections that the exercises in nineteenth-century *Harmonielehren* bore no relation at all to composition or true voice leading; she then called for a much more thorough-going adoption of the pedagogic practices recommended by Schenker at all levels of musical education, not just when they would lead directly into the study of Schenkerian analysis. Surprisingly, her paper contained no reference to Riemann, and in response to a question, she was sceptical about his importance for the development of Schenker's critique.

The final session was concerned with the music of Bartok and Stravinsky. Amanda Bayley (University of Reading) spoke on 'The function of the slur in Bartok's string quartets', showing how, for Bartok, articulation provides a means of thematic development which is comparable to harmonic and rhythmic manipulation. Using extracts from all six quartets, she explored the function of Bartok's very precise use of the slur both to identify and conceal motivic and harmonic entities, and some of its implications for pitch hierarchies, in the absence of tonality. She concluded that performers need analysts to specify the very varied but vital functions of the slur in musical scores. Finally, the day ended as it had begun with a speaker from King's College London: Jeremy Thurlow offered a bold critique entitled 'Sophocles, Cocteau, Stravinsky: reinterpreting the *Oedipus Rex*'. In a wide-ranging survey of the work's genesis and background, he argued that the considerable divergence of views between Cocteau and Stravinsky led to an interpretation of the myth in which, *pace* Judith Weir, clarity and logic are sacrificed in a grudging compromise.

The two strongly contrasted events together illustrate something of the range of analytical research currently in progress. The papers at Surrey on musical education and on analysis and performance addressed previous concerns of this newsletter and of SMA events, while other speakers at both events raised a number of issues which should continue to occupy Members' attention for some time to come.

Notes.

1 *Style and Idea*, ed. Stein (London: Faber, 1975), pp.161-66.

2 *A Generative Theory of Tonal Music* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1983).

3 'Prolongational Structure in Late Chromatic and Atonal Music'. Paper given at CityUMAC, City University, 1991.

4 Christopher Polyblank's 'The Place of Music Theory and Analysis in the Music National Curriculum' in Issue 1 of this Newsletter, and Jonathan Dunsby's article on Schenkerian Theory in Britain in *Schenker Studies*, ed. Siegel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) offer more optimistic views of the effect Schenker's ideas have had on musical education in the UK.

Letter to the Editor

From Professor R. Pascall.

I write in connection with the fascinating and absorbing account by Dr Roberts in your last issue, of the equally fascinating and absorbing SMA Day Seminar at Nottingham last November.

Members may wish to know that Hans Keller's *Functional Analysis No. 2* on Beethoven's String Quartet in F minor Op. 95 and Christopher Wintle's Paper 'Beethoven's Functional Analysis: the String Quartet in C# minor Op. 131' heard on that occasion is published by the Department of Music at Nottingham in its series *Papers in Musicology*. Copies are available to SMA Members for £3, representing a 50% discount on the retail price.

I was delighted to take part in the SMA Day myself, especially as it gave me an opportunity to respond to what I have always perceived as a Wagnerian challenge with regard to Op. 131. His remarks seem in the first instance irredeemably naive; yet investigated in the context of 19th-century thought they prove complex and enriching, encouraging us to hear music as speaking from and to the human condition in its rounded wholeness. Indeed, a telling point was made by Christopher Wintle in the discussion following my paper was that Wagner had achieved, in his Beethoven essay, the basis of a combination of those categories of creativity and reception separated by Schiller: the naive and the sentimental. I am sure that analysts will never exhaust the riches of Wagner's philosophy of music, which must be regarded as having reached its fullest form in this essay.

I would wish to point out that the translation of Wagner's *Beethoven* I used on this occasion was in fact based on Edward Dannreuther's translation of 1880, which I modified in several places in the interests of clarity for modern audiences and closer reflection of the original German. I regret not having made this entirely plain at the time, and am grateful for the opportunity now to set the matter right.

Robert Pascall, University of Nottingham.

Some Notes on Virtue

Liz Garnett

Dircé's aria in Cherubini's *Médée* (1797) stands out stylistically not only from its surroundings within the opera, but also from much of French operatic music of the 1790s, by virtue of an extraordinarily florid cadenza. The virtuoso coloratura of Italian opera is entirely foreign to the style of eighteenth-century France, which aimed at a generally syllabic style of text setting in the interests of dramatic truth rather than vocal display. What, then, is one to make of it?

The opera is based on the legend of Jason and the Golden Fleece, and Dircé is set up in the opening scene as a virtuous foil to Jason's previous wife, Médée, who, we are told, is a barbarous witch, author of many atrocities. Dircé's aria is sung to Hymen, the god of marriage, in ecstatic anticipation of her forthcoming union with Jason, and has a number of anomalous features in addition to this cadenza.

One is the pervading self-abasement of the words - she sings of her wish to abandon her soul - and also their frankly sexual imagery: 'come and penetrate her [Dircé's] senses with your divine flame'.

Another is the aria's only minor mode inflection, which is associated with the words 'it is from you [Hymen] alone that I await happiness', at the start of the second subject. Even if one holds reservations as to the universal semiotic associations major mode/joy and minor mode/sorrow, the opera's opening number has made the connection unequivocally. In the context of a sonata form movement, such a use of the dominant minor in the early stages of the second movement makes sense (Beethoven's Sonatas Opp. 2 & 3 appeared the previous year): it would seem that Dircé yields to musical convention at the expense of fidelity to her own feelings. Alternatively, this detail could be read as a moment of truth rather than falsehood, a hint that perhaps the imminent self-abnegation that she celebrates is not quite the prospect of unalloyed joy she anticipates, and she acknowledges this despite herself. This is borne out by events: having relinquished all power of self-determination, she has death ignominiously thrust upon her.

The next appearance of these words is even more remarkable, as it follows hard on the heels of another invocation of

Example 1

Viens pénétre ses sens de ta divine

flamme c'est de toi seul c'est de toi

Hymen's 'divine flame' which reintroduces the f-naturals of C major in such a configuration as to construct a pitch ceiling which is penetrated by an ascent through F sharp to G with the further assertion that she awaits happiness only from Hymen. Thus the connection made in her words of self-abasement and sexual joy is graphically reinforced by the melodic writing (example 1).

The equivalent part of the recapitulation substitutes the first person pronoun for that of the third person, thus reducing the distance between Dircé and the 'divine flame' she invokes, and the musical expression is correspondingly heightened. The pitch ceiling is now a perfect fourth higher, and made more insistent by repetition, and its penetration is delayed: the first two high Cs of the cadenza cannot resolve the harmonic tension of the B flat, as they are supported by sub-dominant harmony which merely capitulates to the pull of the non-diatonic note. Thus the climax is delayed until the last bar of the cadenza, where the high C appears as part of a triumphant 6/4 - 5/3 cadence (example 2).

bringing to the foreground Dircé's subsequent dramatic conduct - waiting (while Médée acts, Dircé is acted upon) - consoled by Jason, supported by her ladies-in-waiting, poisoned by Médée. Such melodic writing also carries the implication of being decorative, inessential, which resonates with Dircé's general non-participation in the action. A related reading follows that of Carolyn Abbate of the Queen of the Night, by seeing the abandonment of intelligible text for vocalising as the abandonment of presence on the part of the character to become a mere voice-object, almost instrumental rather than human: the act of singing supplants what she sings about as the focus of attention¹. As she has already, by her own admission, abandoned her soul, should we be surprised if she also abandons her identity?

If Dircé is the virtuous half of a classic virgin/whore dichotomy, against whom we are invited to judge the 'unnatural' mother who commits infanticide, the way text and music interact to articulate this virtue is quite telling. Its most prominent characteristic is revealed as a wish for a total self-immolation in

Example 2

The musical score for Example 2 consists of five staves. The top two staves are the vocal line, and the bottom three are the piano accompaniment. The lyrics are in French and are written below the vocal line. The lyrics are: "viens pé-né-tre mes sens de ta di-vi-ne flam-me c'est de toi, de toi seul que j'at-tends - le bon-heur c'est de toi c'est de toi de toi seul que j'at-tends - le bon-heur". The music features a complex harmonic structure with many accidentals and a high, sustained note in the final cadence.

But is the role of the cadenza solely that of prolonging penetration, of delaying climax? Its function in terms of the aria's sonata form is indeed, as the etymology of the term suggests, to emphasise the final cadential passage by delaying it; its placing on the words 'j'attends' could, then, be regarded merely as opportunistic word setting. Alternatively, it could be read as

marital union that she not only eroticises for herself, but, in so doing, also provides some stunning entertainment for all onlookers.

Note.

¹ Carolyn Abbate, *Unsung Voices: Opera and Musical Narrative in the Nineteenth Century*, Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1991, pp. 10-11.

SotoMAC 93

Nicholas Cook

Each year the acronyms get worse. The Fifth British Music Analysis Conference took place on 26-28 March this year at the University of Southampton, so it became SotoMAC. And as if that wasn't bad enough, it was held in conjunction with the 28th Annual Conference of the Royal Musical Association, so the whole event became RMA/ SotoMAC 93.

It all developed via a series of mishaps. The starting point was the Southampton New Music Festival, an event that has taken place every three years or so during the past decade under the auspices of the Western Orchestral Society (that's the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and Sinfonietta). The 1993 Festival was due to be held at the end of March, and as a contribution towards it the Department of Music at Southampton University suggested holding a MAC conference (I suppose I should just say, a MAC) to coincide with the Festival. It seemed a neat arrangement: the conference would give the festival an audience, and the festival would give the conference a focus. True, it would mean that the MAC would fall at much the same time as the RMA Annual Conference, but then the RMA conferences had been pretty low-key affairs during the last few years. We didn't expect too much delegate overlap with SotoMAC.

The first thing that went wrong was that Mark Everist took over the organization of the RMA conference. Being Mark, he immediately started planning a high-profile international event with multiple sessions and all the rest. Fortunately he lives in Southampton and knew about the plans for SotoMAC, so called me and we discussed the matter. Obviously we didn't want to be putting on rival shows at more or less the same time. Could SotoMAC move to London? No, I said;

we're committed to Southampton because of the New Music Festival. But why not move the RMA conference to Southampton instead, and hold the two conferences together? And to cut a very long story short, that's what happened.

Each conference had its own programme committee (the other members of the SotoMAC committee were William Drabkin, Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, and Allan Moore). But we prepared a joint call for papers, inviting submissions to one committee or the other or both. We included the usual pious hopes as to what kind of papers people might submit (including 'The future of analysis teaching', for which we had precisely one submission), and also a listing of the New Music Festival events with which the conference would coincide. We had mailed the first 1700 copies of the call for papers to Oxford University Press just in time for inclusion in the forthcoming issue of *JRMA* when the second thing went wrong: I got a letter from the Western Orchestral Society saying that in view of its currently serious financial situation, it had no option but to cancel the 1993 New Music Festival. Obviously it was now too late to have second thoughts about RMA/SotoMAC 93, but we just had time to courier a further 1700 copies of the call for papers to OUP, this time with the section on the festival cut out.

Some of the other pious hopes we expressed in the call for papers met with more success than the one about teaching analysis, and both the SotoMAC committee and the RMA one received a number of submissions dealing with popular and non-western repertoires. The two committees went through their submissions separately, but we also swapped lists of submissions, and it became clear that in order to make

coherent sessions we would some-times need to combine SotoMAC and RMA papers. We discovered, for instance, that we had two Chinese music submissions apiece; put together, they would make a worthwhile session. The same thing happened with popular music. These were duly billed as RMA/SotoMAC sessions.



It was the popular music session that generated most of the publicity attracted by RMA/SotoMAC 93. It all began with a submission by Philip Lodge entitled 'Principles of melodic construction in the songs of ABBA'. Somebody saw this title in the draft conference programme and sent it to *Private Eye's* Pseuds' Corner. From there it got into the *Observer* Colour Supplement. On the Monday I went into the office and found the answerphone jammed with messages from TV and radio stations I didn't even know existed, all asking me to get back to them about Philip Hauenstein's paper on ABBA. I don't take the *Observer*, so I had no idea what was going on. I phoned the first number and said I had never heard of Philip Hauenstein, but yes, I did have someone giving a paper on the songs of ABBA. After a certain amount of confusion, it turned out that Philip had changed his name from Lodge to Hauenstein a few weeks after submitting the paper!

It's interesting that it was the ABBA paper, and only the ABBA paper, that attracted media interest. The title of Richard Middleton's paper ('Repertory, authorship, and the construction of meaning in the Eurythmics' hit recordings') struck me as just as ripe for Pseuds' Corner as Hauenstein's; but the media weren't interested in that, or in Lori Burns's paper on k. d. lang. I think

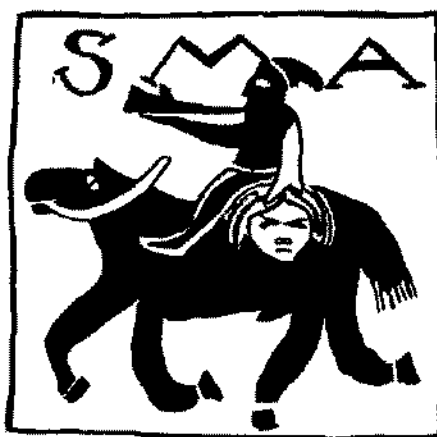
it is the idea of 'experts flying in from all over the world', as the local paper put it, to talk about something as naff as Abba. (I mean, we may like the tunes, but we don't talk about Abba. The Eurythmics, on the other hand, are in good taste; they're fair game for academic discussion.) At all events, the popular music session was full of reporters and microphones and TV cameras; some of the reporters had evidently got the idea that the whole conference was about pop music, and kept asking me why I considered it so important. As for Philip Hauenstein, I saw him on a BBC TV programme on Abba a few weeks ago, presenting some of the material from his paper.

I'm not going to talk in any detail about the papers; no conference director is in a fit state to take in the papers properly. What made it all worthwhile was that so many people (somewhere between 250 and 300) from so many places (Europe, North America, Asia, Australia) and with so many different musical interests turned up and found so much to say to one another. What Mark and I had been afraid of was that, if there were separate MAC and RMA conferences taking place at around the same time, this would have a splintering effect - people would go to one conference or the other, but not both. After all, the very coexistence of the SMA and the RMA already carries the seeds of an American-style schism between theory and musicology; we didn't want to reinforce this by having two conferences in competition with one another. In the event, with its multiple sessions (up to four at any one time), RMA/SotoMAC 93 effectively eradicated any such distinction; to be sure, there were some sessions that obviously belonged on one side of the fence or the other, but as often as not you had to look at the programme in order to be certain whether you were at a RMA or a SotoMAC session (or an RMA/SotoMAC one, of course).

What happens next? I hope the RMA/MAC combination will be repeated in the future; we need the disciplinary focus provided by a single conference of relevance to *everyone* in higher education music. (That will mean

involving composers and performers to a higher degree than was the case in RMA/SotoMAC 93, where the concerts played only an ancillary role; it probably also means working with the successor organization to NAUMS.) On the other hand, I'm not suggesting that we want to go for a Southampton-style jamboree every year. Maybe we should be aiming at a pattern whereby the MAC and RMA conferences (or as they will be from

1994 on, the SMA and RMA conferences) are held together one year, separately the next, and so on. Or the SMA conferences could take place every eighteen months, being held separately when they fall in the autumn, and together with the RMA when they fall in spring. With the next SMA conference in autumn 1994, that would mean the next combined conference could be in spring 1996.... Any takers?



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