

Newsletter

of the
Society for Music Analysis

Number seven, August 1994



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Contributors to this issue

Adrian Bamford is completing his doctorate at the University of Birmingham.

Amanda Bayley is working on her doctoral dissertation at the University of Reading.

Kate Daubney is completing her doctoral dissertation on the music of Max Steiner at the University of Leeds, and lectures at the University of Derby.

Dai Griffiths is Senior Lecturer in Music at Oxford Brookes University.

Nicholas Marston is Lecturer in Music at the University of Bristol.

SMA matters

The schedule for the SMA has been planned through to Summer 1995. It has been decided not to follow LancMAC with an autumn study day, given the proximity of the European Congress in February 1995, and the plenary meeting of the SMA a month after.

This edition of the Newsletter initiates a series of articles on the practical experience of teaching music analysis. Further contributions are welcome, and should be sent to the Editor.

Finally, a *kleine bitte* to those few members who have yet to renew their subscriptions: the Society's administration costs soar when notices have to be issued. So that resources can be channelled towards the organisation of events, please make use of the standing order facility. Copies are available from Dr Catherine Dale, SMA Treasurer, Department of Music, University of Hull HU6 7RX, tel. 01482 46311, fax 01482 466205.

SMA Diary-in brief

23 - 25 September 1994 : Lancaster University Music Analysis Conference (LancMAC '94)

17-19 February 1995 : Third European Congress on Music Analysis, Montpellier, France. Further details will appear a subsequent issue of this newsletter. A session, organised by John Rink, will have the theme 'the narrative process of performance as analytical paradigm'. Nominations for participation should be addressed to him at the Department of Music, University of Surrey, Guildford, Surrey GU2 5XH.

25 March 1995: Plenary Meeting, University of Reading

25 May 1995: TAGS Day in association with the Annual Postgraduate Study Day at the University of Surrey

29 - 31 July 1995 : International Tippett Conference, University of Newcastle upon Tyne

Editorial

Despite previous strenuous attempts to avoid a conventional piece of opinionated writing at the front of this organ, I have given in on this occasion, partly to mourn the passing of *The Oldie*. That eccentrically British journal, full of delightful, tongue-in-cheek pomposity, was explicitly dedicated to the preservation of old, sound values in the face of the global idolatory practice of worshipping uncritically at the fountain of Youth. The Publisher's decision to cease production was no doubt made entirely on commercial grounds: the editorial tone of Richard Ingrams clearly did not find a sufficiently large sympathetic constituency. Yet the demise of *The Oldie* may give us some cause for contemplation.

In musicology we have in recent years witnessed an astonishing growth of work full of youthful exuberance and iconoclastic tendency which goes under various banners, but is generally called New Musicology. The emphasis of contemporary thought and cultural practice towards what were formerly marginal activities, heralded in Derrida's trilogy of 1967 and the basis of much of Foucault's work, has brought sweeping change. Where the re-emergence of nationalism, that pernicious form of separatism, has set the world alight with civil conflict of appalling brutality, in the humanities we see the emergence of interest groups who stake out their own territory with vigour, but who for many reasons (no doubt some of which are justified) eschew the possibilities of integration within broad curricular views. Is it mere paranoia to think that the move to highlight hitherto peripheral aspects of music is a determined way to undermine more traditional modes of study?

Certainly, there were imbalances in the structure of academic music which badly needed redressing. Until recently there were pitifully few female staff members in music departments. It is salutary to note that most of those appointed this calendar year have been women: their presence will greatly enhance the life of departments. What seems to me unacceptable, though, or just short-sighted, is when new interests which emerge (and this is not a matter of gender) make their defining characteristic an attack on the *status quo* of more traditional forms of music study. (If New Musicology has a single defining characteristic, it is after all a turn away from music-based musicology.) The increasing modularity of degree programmes gives rise to separate courses whose syllabuses are necessarily separate from other courses, to avoid duplication of teaching. These courses, designed by subject specialists, have in the free market of a true modular scheme to be made student-attractive to guarantee substantial enrolment. If the consequence is that courses with sassy titles give everything to a student except study of the music itself, then the music itself is devalued, and the much-deplored reduction of music in our culture from art to ornament will have become partly an academically-driven change. Is this not the opposite of what most music-lovers, most of us, would wish?

The Society for Music Analysis has, in the short period of its existence, taken pride in supporting activities which go beyond the closed shop of a-contextual analysis. I believe we all welcome a broadly-based study which places the study of music in relation to its creation, perception and social function. The key here is the *study of music*. If music were only a commodity, then I would happily earn vastly more as a banker or lawyer. But it isn't. To acknowledge that fact, to advocate it, we need study of the *substance itself*. If that seems obvious, we need occasionally, nay continually, to reinvent the wheel. As the economist Hayek wrote, 'If old truths are to retain their hold on....minds, they must be restated in the language and concepts of successive generations'. The key word is restatement. When the smoke of New Musicology has cleared, we will still need a keen intellectual scrutiny of the notes, however it may be expressed.

The Editor's views are his own and do not necessarily represent those of the Society.

LancMAC 94

Conference programme

Friday 23 September

- 11.00-13.00 registration
13.00-14.00 lunch
14.00-14.15 opening address
14.15-15.00 Ian Cross (Wolfson College, Cambridge) Music Analysis and Music Perception
15.00-15.45 Allan Keiler (Brandeis University) In Search of a Past for Schenker
15.45-16.15 tea
16.15-17.00 Gregory Proctor (Ohio State University) Idealised Voice Leading, an Analytic Universal
17.00-17.45 Richard Cohn (University of Chicago) Third Relations, Common Tones, and Hexatonic Systems
18.00-19.00 sherry reception, sponsored by Cambridge University Press
19.00 dinner. After-dinner speaker: Jonathan Dunsby

Saturday 24 September

- 08.00-09.00 breakfast
09.15-10.00 Raymond Monelle (University of Edinburgh) Semantic Opposition in Debussy
10.00-10.45 Robert Pascall (University of Nottingham) Hearing/Reading Beethoven's Cavatina, Op. 130, Mvt 5
10.45-11.15 coffee
11.15-12.00 Deborah Mawer (University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne) Beyond Le Boeuf: Analysing Milhaud's Fifth Chamber Symphony
12.00-12.45 Dai Griffiths (Oxford Brookes University) 'Sometimes it's hard to be a woman': Fixities and Flexibilities of Gender in Recent Song Eualie More Dalton Room (parallel session)
11.15-12.00 William Renwick (McMaster University) Hidden Fugal Paths: Interpreting the Middleground in Handel's Fugues
12.00-12.45 Michael Spitzer (University of Durham) Musettes and Combinatorial Schemata in Mozart's C major String Quintet
13.00-14.00 lunch
14.15-15.00 Alan Street (University of Keele) 'Von Heute auf Morgen': Schoenberg and the New Criticism
15.00-15.45 Julie Brown (Emmanuel College, Cambridge) In the Beginning was the Song: Allegory, Theory and Schoenberg's Musical Idea
15.45-16.15 tea
16.15-17.00 Bruce B. Campbell (Michigan State University) The Graphical Presentation of Musical Analysis by Computer Poster sessions
(1) Analysis, Perception and Performance
Peter Johnson (Birmingham Conservatoire) Performance as Text
Stephen Malloch (University of Edinburgh) Timbre and Technology: An Analytical Partnership
Mina Miller (University of Kentucky) Multiple Meanings/Multiple Forms: On the Relationship of Large-Scale Formal Structure to Interpretation and Performance of Schumann's Fantasie, Op. 17, Mvt 1
Anthony Pople (Lancaster University) Interactive Courseware for Music Analysis under the Teaching and Learning Technology Programme
Tom Royall (University of Keele) Octave Equivalence: An Alternative View
Neil Todd (University of Sheffield) Towards a Perceptual Analysis
(2) Schoenberg, Schenker and others
Jack F. Boss (Brigham Young University) Schoenberg and Schenker: A Hegelian Synthesis
John Covach (University of North Texas) Schoenberg's Turn to an 'Other' World
James Guthrie (University of Southwest Louisiana) The Chain Technique in Lutoslawski's Chain

3 for Orchestra

David H. Smyth (Louisiana State University) Schenker's Formenlehre Revisited

Bertha M. Spies (Potchefstroomse Universiteit) Historical Continuity in the Transformation of Tonal Note Formations into Atonal Note Formations

19.00 dinner, after-dinner speaker: Arnold Whittall

Sunday 25 September

07.00 SMA Executive Committee

08.00 breakfast

09.15-10.00 Robert W. Wason (Eastman School of Music) A Pitch-Class Motive in Webern's 'George Lieder', Op. 3

10.00-10.45 Jeremy Moore (Royal Academy of Music) Tonal Remnants and Grandiloquence: The Relationship of Maverick Serial Practice to Expression in the Works of Jean Barraque

Enalie More Dalton Room

(parallel session)

09.15-09.45 Pwyll ap Sion (Coleg Prifysgol Gogledd Cymru, Bangor) Nyman's Neurological Opera: Science qua Art

09.45-10.45 Richmond Browne (University of Michigan), convenor Reading Edelman: A Colloquium

10.45-11.15 coffee

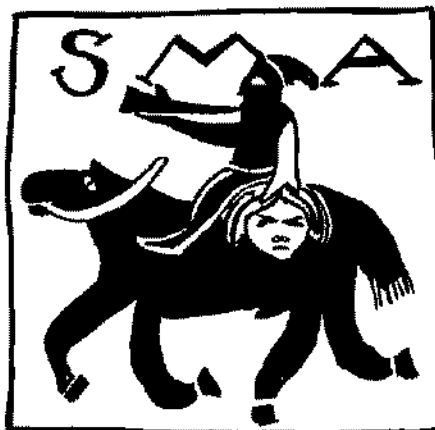
11.15-12.00 Michael Russ (University of Ulster at Jordanstown) Casting Light on Musorgsky's Sunless

12.00-12.45 Jonathan D. Kramer (Columbia University) The Finale of Mahler's Seventh Symphony Viewed from a Postmodernist Perspective

13.00 lunch

conference ends

14.00-15.00 SMA Plenary Meeting



University of Newcastle upon Tyne
International Tippett Conference
Saturday 29 - Monday 31 July 1995

CALL FOR PAPERS

To mark Sir Michael Tippett's 90th birthday year, Newcastle University will host an international conference aiming to promote research on the composer, foster new perspectives on his work, and re-appraise old ones. The conference will run alongside live performances as part of Newcastle's projected Tippett Festival. Included in this will be Tippett's newest work, *The Rose Lake*, played by the Northern Junior Philharmonic Orchestra under Nicholas Cleobury in Newcastle City Hall on 31 July 1995.

Papers are invited on all aspects of Tippett's music and related contexts, from historical, analytical, critical, cultural and other relevant viewpoints. A session will be supported by the SMA. Proposals for round-table discussions are also welcome. Please send abstracts of 300-500 words to the Conference director by 25 November 1994

Newcastle upon Tyne has excellent rail, road and air connections. The city enjoys a rich cultural life, and is ideally placed for exploring historic Northumbria and its scenic coast. Accommodation for the conference will be in the University's Castle Leazes Halls.

For further information please contact:

Dr David Clarke, Conference Director,
Department of Music, University of Newcastle upon Tyne,
Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 7RU, UK

Tel. 091 222 6736, fax 091 261 1182

The Teaching of Analysis: the View from a Joint Honours Degree

Dai Griffiths

Although I've taught tonal music at various levels of education, music analysis, strictly speaking - 'this is how you do it' - is something which I have yet to deliver. I've supervised analytical dissertations at Oxford University and Oxford Brookes University, prepared students for Oxford University's Critical Comment paper at first and third year levels, and, here at Oxford Brookes, taught what is essentially a harmony course with an analytical slant. It is the latter which I think is most germane to a discussion of the teaching of analysis, certainly from the perspective of a joint honours degree, but perhaps in a wider sense too.

The cardinal problem at present is the wide variety of entry levels to the music degree. Music, probably far less than other subject areas, has yet even to begin to adjust to the GCSE: the harmony course which used to take four years now takes two, and in consequence much of the work of A-level has by definition to spread onward to degree level. (Consequently, beyond degree level the Master's programmes assume a more general importance.) The most one can do, it seems to me, is to graft basic analytical work on to what has been left out of the harmony course; and it is to that end that much of our course 0400, a twenty-seven week compulsory for all music students, is cardinally dedicated.

We start with variation and diminution. The composition of variation attempts, not particularly successfully but reasonably effectively, to bridge various kinds of free composition. By composing a variation, as well as studying variation sets, the students confront one of the essential principles, of composing-out or of prolongation. (This is an amalgam of extracts from Forte's two textbooks, *Tonal Harmony in Concept and Practice*

(1962) and *Introduction to Schenkerian Analysis* (1982). Page 2 of the Instructor's manual for the latter is instructive in this context for what it assumes to have been achieved *before* the course which it adumbrates commences.) The free composition is not especially successful because people arrive with such vast differences of expectation, even from A-level, of what free composition means. Some will write bizarre 'effect' variations, others work to particular stylistic criteria, while a small number compose (as requested!) simple diminutions. At least the exercise gets us talking the same language (neighbour note, passing note, and arpeggiation), and the basic separation of pastiche composition and analysis has taken place. Consequently, analysis progresses quite quickly, while pastiche work is generally very slow.

Already during this simple exercise we have run into several potential problems, and these may stir readers to recollection or recognition:

1. The stylistic exercise is still here. During the second term, modelling an answer on Mozart is part of the task. Disentangling the function of these little exercises is difficult: you can tell how much grief they give the students in blobby notes and considerable erasure. But simply to remove the exercise, and make the course completely analytical, would still in my opinion lose a lot. Defining the precise moment of handover - 'so much for the two-part inventions, it's now time for analysis and Xenakis' - is still to my mind a problem, if not *the* problem.

2. Repertory: we have spent a long time in the first few weeks with the final movement of Mozart's K. 284 and Brahms's Haydn Variations, and we might

already begin to wonder, with Derrick Puffett, 'how one can teach voice-leading techniques to students who know very little music, who perhaps know only one Beethoven string quartet, or no more than half a dozen of his piano sonatas? Surely this is to get things the wrong way round?...Perhaps it is simply a conviction that getting to know the music, even superficially, is as important as analysing it' ('Can Analysis be Taught?', *Music Analysis*, Vol. 4, Nos 1-2, p. 188). This sets up a very unsettling dichotomy, of course, between 'knowing' music and its analysis. But we know what he means. My Brahms example is plucked from thin air, with little or no context. It's a technical thing. Naturally we do all the 'knowing' things: we listen to the record; we play the piano duet; we even *sing* arrangements of the theme and some of the variations (we do quite a lot of singing). But they're analysing Brahms without having heard the Haydn quartets; they don't know their Mendelssohn.

3. Simplicity and complexity. It may well be - and I'm only guessing - that students coming into the British University, with their curious amalgam of two teachers' approaches (the school teacher and the instrumental teacher), are all set for sterner stuff than these simple pieces of tonal music. Simplicity is of course relative, but many of these students, increasingly, I find, are all set for the panoply of jazz harmony or twentieth-century music. Way to go. Simple pieces of tonal music, however complex the discourse one wishes to create around them, remain for the brighter students simple, where Chopin or Brahms is more challenging.

From here we move on to an extended term's work, essentially on sonata form, but which also includes a review of advanced harmony: why G sharp or A flat in a diminished seventh construction, and how does that problem eventually dissolve? Here I find Schenkerian thinking, as opposed to Schenkerian technique - another stomach-churning dichotomy - makes its true entry with, paradoxically, the most complex of

passages, the development section. The process goes something like this: you don't really understand this development as just a series of random chord progressions, chucked together, do you? And even if we use a functional description like 'V of V of vi' rather than 'B7' or 'III7' we're still getting nowhere near the heart of how this passage works against the background of the exposition on the one hand and the recapitulation on the other. Now how can you represent the sense that this tough passage consists, not of a 'flat' series of numbers, but of a 'jagged' landscape of musical peaks and troughs? Is the peak of the passage defined by its temporal proximity or by its tonal centrality? Now, let's try and represent that through an abstract graphical system which saves us from language, and avoids our slipping into tension and climax....Suddenly, the difference between an unstemmed and a stemmed black note becomes a matter of some import, probably due to a degree of ownership over the answer: the students know these movements very well by now. But you'll all recognize the paradox: it's all very empirical.

During the final term we head off into early nineteenth-century harmony, concentrating on Schubert's use of major-minor mixture. This again leads back towards an element of free composition, the students having suffered style-based pastiche during the second term. Schenker-via-Forte is again in the background: Forte's recent piece on Cole Porter includes an excellent guide to a minimal reductive technique, applicable to song ('Secrets of Melody: Line and Design in the Songs of Cole Porter', *Music Quarterly*, Vol. 77, No. 4 (Winter 1993), pp. 607-647: the exact reference is to p. 627).

The next direction for this course would be either towards creativity (free composition, but with everyone speaking the same language) or greater tonal complexity: by the end we deal with some fairly complex passages (the G flat impromptu of Schubert or 'Pause' from *Die schöne Müllerin*). Also, I do find the

techniques of reduction developed during the second term making some impact, and they are useful for work in the second and third year of the course.

What have we achieved by the end of the course? I feel confident that everyone, of whatever talent or interest, has reached the same point at which the old A-level harmony course would end; most of the students will have gone beyond that into more advanced tonal harmony; we all share a language which can adapt itself to tonal music in most contexts; we have begun a very basic level of graphic representation. Most important, due to

the level of pieces which we confront at the *end* of the course, many of the earlier exercises from Mozart and Haydn seem in retrospect quite straightforward. (From the people who brought you modularization, this is a strong argument for, precisely, the 'long, thin module'.) In other words, what follows now depends upon which questions one would wish to bring to the music. The strict analysis course, on the straight music degree, might now wish to go back over some of the pieces in more detail, and more systematically. Though *why* do so is a question I leave for someone else to answer.



Music Analysis and Teaching in Tertiary Education

Adrian Bamford

'... my teaching, in contrast to more rapid methods, slows the tempo of the educational process. This not only leads the student to genuine knowledge, but also improves the morale of artistic activities in general.'
(Schenker)

'I regard the fusion of analytical, historical and physical skills as the only acceptable basis for music education and training at our [conservatoire] level.'
(Lumsden)

'We want to promote analytical research so that it can find its proper place in the musical world in general, sometimes very conspicuously but perhaps most often in small but crucial ways.'
(Dunsby) ¹.

Great Britain in the 1980s: Thatcherism, yuppies and the ubiquitous Filofax. There were, however, those who rejected the aspirations of Essex man and adopted the ostrich approach. By the end of the monetarist decade the seeds of its own destruction had already been sown and we are still suffering in its wake. I think the 1980s saw a parallel with music analysis: Schenkerism, Schenkerites and the Schenker graph; I'm glad to say I haven't seen anyone carrying a Schenker graph down the street. But more seriously we saw the establishment of *Music Analysis*, a Chair in Theory and Analysis at King's College London, the MAC conferences and more recently the inception of SMA. The tide was turning and any music department worth its salt appointed an analyst: quite right too! Intensive courses in voice-leading, pitch-class set and semiotic analysis appeared on the undergraduate curriculum and a broad body of students, of which I was one, were fed a diet of *Ursatz*, nexus sets and paradigms, stimulating many to postgraduate programmes which are annually becoming more rich and varied. However, unlike Thatcherism, we have not witnessed the self-destruction of our

discipline, on the contrary, we have seen a broadening of analytical thought, but perhaps not a universal understanding. Yet there are still some music departments and individuals whose insularity is almost impenetrable, where Schenker is taboo and an analytical voice either falls on deaf ears or is totally absent. Time will take its natural course, but there are a number of ways in which we can seek to stimulate and promote an interest in analysis, as a discipline worthy of being studied and ultimately understood, and demonstrate how it can lend a hand in shaping the undergraduate curriculum.

I am concerned that the present nature of some undergraduate courses in analytical method are too intensive, trying to cram too much theory and technicality in too short a period of time, usually ten weeks, at the expense of appreciating why we Schenkerise and what the results serve to demonstrate. Furthermore, I am troubled by the basic training (or lack of) first year undergraduates receive in analysis and harmony/counterpoint, the latter, I believe, having an overwhelming effect on how students interpret and comprehend tonal structure. A few years ago I was faced with such a problem in planning a 2nd/3rd year Schenker option. A compromise solution was reached with five weeks of theory (1.5 hours) coupled with five seminar discussions embracing an 'Introduction to Schenkerian Analysis'. I was alarmed at the prospect of covering those essential basics in just five weeks but nonetheless conscious of the need to sensitize students to the practical insights a Schenkerian approach can bring. Without the time constraints imposed by the current 'term' system my task would have been much easier. At the same time I was also teaching first year harmony, counterpoint and keyboard tutorials (30 minutes per week), a logical approach being to utilise Fuxian species counterpoint. I was frustrated, not at having to teach species counterpoint two or three times a week,

but because some of my Schenker students were finalists who could not comprehend linear concepts, even at an elementary level, and were not aware that Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven had been exposed to Fuxian ideals. This basic deficiency hindered their ability to assimilate even the fundamental concepts of Schenkerian theory, restricting and complicating my task in an already tight schedule. A couple of months ago a nineteenth-century scholar said to me, '...Fux counterpoint, well it's all very well in its place but Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven didn't just study counterpoint you know'. Such comment serves only to divert attention away from the issues and reveals a covert attitude not at all unrelated to that shared by *le resistance* to Schenker. There view is that Schenkerian analysis offers too narrow an insight into tonal structure, yet it also demonstrates that anything that is intimately related to Schenkerian principles is of little value too, in this case Fux counterpoint. As an undergraduate I was taught the Fuxian method 'before' I progressed to study Schenker, albeit the method. Analytical method *à la* Schenker is but one logical consequence of an education *à la* Fux. Here are some others:

1. You acquire an ability to 'think' and write contrapuntally.
2. You gain an insight into baroque linear theory in contrast to Rameau's vertical approach.
3. It provides a practical ground in 'embellishment' procedures so important to the performer of baroque music.

The first year of an undergraduate should be the linch-pin to a sound understanding, as opposed to knowledge, of compositional principles. Without a clear understanding of counterpoint and tonal harmony a student cannot analyse (tonal music), after all the analytical process is, in essence, the application of one's knowledge in the multi-tasked act of criticism.

So what am I driving at? Well, it seems to me that the advent of semesterisation in the tertiary system heralds major changes in the way we approach undergraduate education across the spectrum of musical disciplines. I opened this discussion with comments by Schenker, Lumsden and Dunsby; such

comments are most relevant to undergraduate analysis teaching in the transitional climate prevailing in tertiary education in Britain. A 'back-to-basics' approach might not be such a bad thing. Semesterisation will extend the average ten week term to fifteen weeks which could provide ample time to integrate such disciplines as Fux counterpoint into more traditional methods of harmony and counterpoint teaching in the first year. Extending the teaching period would also contribute to the slowing down of the educational process that Schenker deemed so important, and this would be particularly beneficial for introductory courses covering analytical method.

David Lumsden's case for a fusion of disciplines is one which academia has perhaps shunned, though it is slowly creeping into university syllabi. There are certainly a number of postgraduate courses in performance and analysis, composition and analysis etc, which bridge some of the gaps between the practical/creative and academic sides to music, but do we have the same variety of undergraduate options? It seems to me that somewhere down the line analysis (in Britain) has steered too rigid a course and consequently has been blinkered to the possibilities offered by the work of some of our radical thinkers. Hans Keller's work with functional analysis seems to have fallen by the wayside, but think of the benefits and the breath of fresh air this all-embracing approach could bring to undergraduate education. It offers a unique opportunity to pull together all those disciplines we teach individually, analysis, composition, performance (in an ensemble context). I suppose it can be viewed in an historical context too and what's more it's essentially a British concept - well, Austrian if you want to be picky! It might not be a conspicuous way of promoting analysis, but it's certainly a practical one.

Jonathan Dunsby has stated that 'the average undergraduate at a British university is unlikely to complete a program without having at least heard of Schenker'². But students, particularly those writing dissertations in their final year, need exposure to Schenkerian and other principles if only to allow them to digest and assess the ever increasing

amount of literature which utilises specialised analytical methods, even if they don't employ these procedures themselves. In departments where analytical method is an undergraduate option, shouldn't there be some kind of obligatory course for the musicologist, composer and performer which acquaints them with theory and application of contemporary analytic thought? I think this was what I was aiming to achieve with my introductory course to Schenkerian analysis. Furthermore, we have the occasional TAGS day which is primarily for the postgraduate community, but I see no reason why the SMA couldn't institute a small number of study days/seminars/workshops for the undergraduate population. Something which embraces a number of disciplines, for example composition, analysis and performance, providing a forum for ideas to be pooled from both students and teachers with a variety of backgrounds.

There is one other area that I would like to comment on briefly concerning those 'generalized' first year analysis courses we (analysts) and others teach, often involving the study of a set work. Through contact with other teachers, I am amazed at the lack of insight some demonstrate when approaching serial compositions. No problem with the tonal repertoire and even those early compositions of the Second Viennese School, form, harmony, rhythm, orchestration and contour etc can all be dealt with lucidly. Along comes a serial piece and the latter is abandoned in favour of 'note counting', as it has become known. Speaking as a composer, I see the advancement to a compositional method which utilises all twelve semitones of the chromatic octave as the next logical step forward with respect to 'pitch'. That the series has to be dealt with almost exclusively, to the neglect of those aforementioned elements, is beyond me. Of course a basic understanding of the nature of twelve-note composition is required, but through my teaching I have found that by approaching a twelve-note composition as a 'composition' with no pre-fix, just as Schoenberg recommends, a student gains much more from the experience and hence a deeper appreciation of how the piece works. It is interesting, but

perhaps not surprising, that one the one hand analysts are frequently criticised for concentrating their efforts on aspects of a work's pitch structure, whilst on the other *le resistance* and the like tread a similar path but 'are unaccountable for their actions.

Analysis lies at the heart of an understanding and appreciation of music at all levels and is consequently of immense importance to the music undergraduate. Viewed in the not too distant light of semesterisation, is it not an opportune moment for many to re-think their curriculum and in so doing to heed Schenker's words?

Notes

1. See Heinrich Schenker, *Free Composition*, p. xxiii; David Lumsden in James Ellis 'Analysis for Performers,' *SMA Newsletter* 3 (Oct. 1992), p. 8; Jonathan Dunsby, 'European Developments,' *SMA Newsletter* 6 (Jan. 1994), p. 7.
2. Jonathan Dunsby, 'Schenkerian Theory in Great Britain' in *Schenker Studies*, ed. Hedi Siegel, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990, p. 184.



**The Colston Research Symposium, University of Bristol,
27-30 March 1994**

Amanda Bayley

The Music Department at Bristol was chosen to host the 1994 Colston Research Symposium, admirably organised by Windham Thomas, Head of Department. The Colston Research Society exists to support research at the University of Bristol, and each year a major symposium is organised which passes from one department to another. This year's theme, 'The Intention, Reception and Understanding of Musical Composition', aimed to provide common ground for composers, analysts and critics to explore the potentially wide variety of topics within this area. As might be expected, the potential diversity was reflected in the papers. The generous time allowed for each paper, coupled with the sessions scheduled for general discussion, provided ample opportunity to broaden the topic at any stage, and involved fruitful cross reference between papers.

The Symposium was unique in its underlying trend towards practice, due to a strong contingent of composers and performers. Academic conferences are rarely fortunate enough to benefit from such input from experienced practitioners: These four days featured two major recitals, by Charles Rosen, and the HET Trio of Amsterdam (flute, bass clarinet and piano). The latter included the premiere of a work by Jonathan Harvey, which provided the opportunity for a case study for the Symposium. Following this concert, Charles Rosen (Benjamin Meaker Visiting Professor at the University of Bristol during the spring term 1994) and Jonathan Harvey were each awarded an Honorary Doctorate.

Bojan Bujic (Magdalen College, Oxford) launched the Symposium with a paper providing a useful philosophical context for everything that followed. In 'Form

and Forming : from Victorian aesthetics to the mid-twentieth century avant-garde' he explored notions of musical structure and form as presented by philosophical writings of the period. The authors James Sully, Edmund Gurney, Nicolai Hartmann and Peter Strawson were quoted in order to contrast different perceptions of time, from moment-to-moment experience (forming processes) to the overall perception of processes (form), from both a composer's and a listener's point of view. Bujic represented this familiar conflict between background and foreground by comparing Nicolai Hartmann¹ and Heinrich Schenker, on both philosophical and analytical/musicological levels respectively, in order to create a context for understanding the mid-twentieth century views of Boulez and Stockhausen on structure and moment-form respectively.

A composer's perspective of 'form and forming' was provided by Robert Saxton (Head of Composition, Guildhall School of Music and Drama). He talked about his own music from a non-critical standpoint, which provided a practical and personal way of developing the issues introduced by Bujic. Purposely titled as a list of abstractions, 'Conception to Reception - the Process of Composition from Detection to Confection', Saxton presented his different experiences of time as 'frozen' and as 'linear' with reference to his compositions from the 1980s, *The Ring of Eternity* and *Circles of Light*. He defined 'detection' as 'the mind role of the composer beginning with the concept of idea', and 'confection' as 'the act of mixing or compounding illustrative of the process of composition'. Saxton paralleled the latter with the way the mathematician Roger Penrose² explains his method for arriving at the proof of a

mathematical formula, and pursued the relevance of linguistics and philosophy to the perception and reception of music.

Robert Sherlaw Johnson (Worcester College, Oxford) vividly described a method of composing which is essentially intentionless due to the unpredictability of 'Composing with Fractals'.³ A fractal is a concept related to chaos theory adapted to form a computer programme for the generation of chaotic dynamical systems, which are then translated here into music as the raw material for composition. Sherlaw Johnson showed how the computer generated unpredictable musical patterns according to the values inserted into the mathematical formula. The degree of 'composition' involved was questioned: Sherlaw Johnson admitted that this was limited to superimposing overlays, or by extending various sequences. The delegates were left to ponder how the end result might be received or understood in a wider context. Sherlaw Johnson's own composition *Fractal in A flat* prompted interesting questions of the listener's perception of pattern, and how such a piece might be experienced in the context of the different perceptions of time already discussed by Bojan Bujic and Robert Saxton.

Far removed from the subject of musical composition, Nicholas Cook (University of Southampton) provided a visually entertaining example of applied reception theory, investigating how recorded music is presented to consumers. In 'The Domestic *Gesamtkunstwerk*: record sleeves and reception' he discussed how record sleeves complement the music with words and pictures. Using numerous concrete examples, Cook showed how particular performances are usually promoted, heavily dependent on the personae of the conductor and soloist. Viewing the changing aesthetic perceptions since the introduction of the LP in the 1950s, Cook constructed an iconography of classical music that revealed more about the social values with which the music is associated than about the music itself. Fascinating indeed, though this writer regretted that the work was not located within existing historiographical studies.

Susan Bradshaw (Goldsmiths, University of London) made a case against the tendency of performance interpretations to converge towards bland similarity by suggesting a raft of practical ways for the performer to convey what is seen in the score. Rather than allowing the score to plummet to extinction, she insisted that the score must be thought of as 'custodian of some original truth, however illusory', since composers mostly have direct contact with performers only through the score. She pointed out that composers reveal as much by what they do not need to define as by what they do define. Bradshaw urged that the performer should at least pay due attention to articulation markings, in order that the end result is not a distortion of what is seen in the score. Using examples drawn from the piano repertoire, she showed how Beethoven's articulation is 'cumulative, always goal-directed', while Berg's slurs are not only intended to show articulation, but sometimes to outline phrasing and motivic elements. Debate centred on whether priority should be given to visual or aural sources, which was also pursued later in the proceedings.

The evening concert featured two performances of Jonathan Harvey's *The Riot*, played by HET Trio of Amsterdam. During the round-table discussion the following morning, listeners' and players' perceptions were exchanged, as well as a report of compositional intention. There were no startling contradictions between them. Reports were given by listeners who had not seen the score and from a listener who had followed the score in rehearsal and concert, and was thus able to pinpoint and put into perspective features that the other listeners had perceived. For the performers the score had been written very clearly. Although unlimited direct communication with the composer was possible, they had only needed to converse briefly, mainly about practical issues of balance and tempo change. Harvey's explanations reinforced rather than contradicted ideas the players and listeners had extracted. Interestingly, the composer did not attempt to be systematic about certain decisions he

had made: he justified his use of abstract tonal references, for example, by citing them as dramatic devices which made it challenging for him to make them belong to the piece.

David Osmond-Smith (University of Sussex) pursued such disparities between systematic thought and intuition in the composition and analysis of post-war music, using examples by Ferneyhough, Berio and Birtwistle, in order to 'question the self-identity and the purpose of analysis within the spectrum of musical praxes'. He took up from Susan Bradshaw the issue of reading scores of works, since for new music we often only have repeated access to a single performance: 'if we are to be reinventing [the work] we are compelled to read [it]'. He explained how reading has evolved as a new autonomy, distinct from the early nineteenth-century ideology which valued subjective judgements of listening experiences. 'One aim of analysis might be to institute a metacompositional sense of play when exploring a score, in effect a re-opening of questions that the composer's intuitive decisions have closed in order to present a 'work' to the public.⁴ But if so, the analyst of music by living composers has to decide with particular urgency whether he aspires to place the reader in a rough simulacrum of 'the composer's shoes', or whether on the contrary [one] is creating ways of playing with a score that may not necessarily have anything to do with the games instituted in order to create it.'

Comments which followed questioned Osmond-Smith's affirmation of the independence of analysis from composition. Should not a congruence develop between them? In response, Osmond-Smith returned to the earlier debate of the reliance on visual or aural sources, encouraging both a reading of the score and an analysis of the sound, enjoying the play between the two.

Tangential to the main Conference theme, Adrian Thomas (Queen's University, Belfast) located musical composition within a social and historical context, investigating how Polish composers responded to Stalin's 'Sociorealism' in the decade following the Second World

War. Familiarity with the problems the composers had to face left the Western European listener in a better position to understand their music. For example, there was a new requirement for uplifting songs in mass music which was made manifest in many forms. They were often incorporated into 'serious' music, with composers writing marches and odes to replace pre-war dissonant music which we were able to identify from Thomas's numerous recorded examples. By contrast the cantata was not a traditional form in Poland, but became a vehicle for mass communication and a signpost for socialist realism due to regulatory procedures designed to enforce the party line. A pungent example of this is Panufnik's *Lullaby*.

Raymond Warren (University of Bristol) followed the Reception Dinner with the Colston Research Society Annual Popular Lecture on Tippett's opera *King Priam* (1960). In response to the well-documented intentions of the composer and the subsequent rich critical response to the work, Warren attempted to tread a pathway between the two by examining the understanding that singers have of their roles. This fascinating discussion centred on Priam in Act I, composed by Tippett with sparse, angular music, and used video material from the Kent Opera production to illustrate the argument.

The Symposium benefitted immensely from the presence of Charles Rosen (University of Chicago). His talk, 'Composer-Performer-Reception: a wide-ranging view of conventions', took the form of an anecdotal account of his special experiences as a performer working with composers, namely Elliott Carter and Pierre Boulez. Although Rosen shed illuminating scattered thoughts on numerous issues, most of his remarks acknowledged a 'tradition of playing': when Rosen played Carter's Piano Sonata to the composer, it was not at all what Carter was used to nor expected, neither awash with pedal nor played like Ravel. In the context of historical performance practice it is often assumed that composers knew how their own works ought to be played, but Rosen pointed out that this is not the case. Taking Bartók and Debussy as examples he explained

how their playing of their own compositions was based on a tradition or style different from that in which they composed since composers and performers advance at different rates. Although it had previously been suggested that 'composers should be their own arbiters' in solving the problem of which sources to rely on, Rosen considered it a mistake to think we can find a tradition by asking composers because they are in the same position as performers: only personal ideas can be dealt with.

Stephen Walsh (University of Wales, College of Cardiff) presented a fascinating study of the relationship between critic and composer by examining critics' responses to Stravinsky's music. Quoting material which has since become inaccessible, Walsh sought to justify the composer's hostility towards them. Not only was Stravinsky victim to the reactionary Russian musical establishment when *Firebird* and *Petrushka* were first played in Russia, but he was also subjected to varying degrees of rejection and animosity in Paris and London after 1920 and on his first visit to America in 1925. By following such a trail of critical destruction, Walsh concluded that the Press reveals itself as the distorting mirror of modernism, telling us much about the reactions which surrounded the artist, but little about the music itself. A curious parallel with Cook's paper emerged, that musical commentary is all about context but avoids the content of the art-work itself.

Overall in this stimulating meeting, there was an understandable atmosphere of diverse interests more than shared sympathies. Nevertheless, the Colston Symposium provided an ideal forum for composers, performers and critics to air their views and concerns about how music is conceived, perceived and received, the Proceedings of which will be published in due course. In an attempt to discover more about this intriguing triarchical relationship, it proved an invaluable way of increasing discourse on a practical as well as a theoretical basis. In this respect, it provided a

pointer to the planning of future conferences.

Notes

1. In Lippman, W., *Aesthetics: a historical reader*, Vol. 3, Pendragon Press: New York, 1990.
2. Penrose, R., *The Emperor's New Mind: Concerning Computers, Minds and the Laws of Physics*, Oxford University Press, 1989.
3. In the visual domain a fractal is the length of a jagged line made up of the lengths of an infinite number of constituent straight lines.
4. The distinction between 'work' and 'text' is adopted from Roland Barthes in *Image, Music, Text*, translated by Stephen Heath, Fontana: London, 1977.



Gender Theory and Analysis Study Day

University of Southampton, 23 April 1994

Kate Daubney

The Postgraduate Study Day on Gender Theory and Analysis at the University of Southampton on 23 April 1994 was an opportunity for both research students and academic staff to group together to discuss their work. Papers covered both existing material and new work in the field, and looked at the work of men and women in analysis and composition.

Claire Jay (University of Southampton) gave the first paper, 'Music Analysis, Beethoven and Men'. She explored the perpetuation of a canon of musical analysis which is imbued with an ideology generated by its 'maleness' of origin. With reference to Schenker, Ms Jay discussed the nineteenth-century perceptions of music as a female activity, to which the response of analysis had been male, and the similarly gendered relationship between nature and genius.

Rachel Segal (University of Leeds) gave the next paper which considered extra-musical issues relating to misogyny and sexual paranoia, and their manifestations in fin-de-siècle opera. This paper addressed a perceived lack of definitive socio-cultural approaches to music by exploring evidence of ways in which medical and psychological perception in the period were prejudiced against women. Citing examples of such attitudes, Ms Segal argued that such women had been estranged from learning and expertise because of their sex, and that as physically and intellectually inferior in a phallogentric society, they provided models for the operatic characterizations of this period. Ms Segal challenged one of the trends in current gender theory in music, that of looking only within the immediate musical environment of composition, analysis and performance. Her approach contributed to the need for musical analysis to

consider the broader context of music.

Robin Gadd (University of Southampton) provided much food for thought by giving some insight into deconstruction as a possible method for 'Writing the Theory of Music'. He outlined the motivation and philosophy behind deconstruction and discussed some of the issues to arise in the potential application of the concept to music. Mr Gadd also referred to the most recent work of Leonard Meyer, and observed that Meyer's work had moved towards a bending of structuralist and 'criticalist' issues. Such a blend, it was argued, might offer a possible basis for an application of deconstruction to gender theory in music.

In the post-lunch session, Toni Calam (King's College London) addressed problems faced by women analysts and women composers in her paper on the music of Elizabeth Lutyens. From a standpoint which was essentially rooted in the development of analytic methods appropriate to the work of Lutyens, Ms Calam discussed the perception that analysis as a hegemonic construct was preventing work on women composers. Ms Calam also undertook a detailed analysis of Lutyens's *Lament of Isis*, Op. 74a as a demonstration of how contradictory criticisms of Lutyens might be redressed by the application of a feminist rather than a masculinist ideology of analysis.

June Boyce (King Alfred's College, Winchester) proposed a broader model of music analysis than has traditionally existed in her paper 'Women's Ways of Valuing'. Picking up on the broader context of women as listeners, composers and performers, she outlined a system of ways of valuing music which filled gaps in the experience, knowledge and communication of women involved in

musical activity. She discussed a spiral of musical development that shapes how women acquire knowledge, express it and value it, and which could extend beyond traditional female roles in music making.

The final session began with a position paper given by Liz Garnett and Victoria Vaughan (both University of Southampton) which explored the dynamics of gender ... music analysis. It outlined the existing issues in gender theory and analysis, noting one of the central premisses: that as the analysis method moulds the nature of the analysis, so the analysis moulds the method. Elizabeth Leach (King's College London) and Charlotte Purkis (University of Southampton) gave response papers. Ms Leach's was a more formal response which agreed with much of the general direction of feminist theory as outlined in the position paper. She also challenged some of the traditional notions, giving for example an alternative perspective on sexual paranoia. Charlotte Purkis's response took the form of a fragmented

collection of thoughts, presented in the form of a stream of consciousness. The relative brevity of her comments and ideas, often expressed through single words, challenged the existing models of analysis, and she emphasized the need to look to the past, present and future for new ideas.

The variety of papers given at the conference stimulated much discussion, and the breadth of issues covered by different contributors demonstrated the enormity of the area still to be explored. The incorporation of both specific and more generally based concepts challenged both existing and emerging ideologies. The message which ran constantly through all the papers was that an open mind, and a reconsideration of the existing position of gender theory in the understanding of the musical experience, can only be of benefit. All who attended this enjoyable and informative conference will have left with much to consider.



TAGS Day: Oxford Brookes University, 21 May 1994

Amanda Bayley

This year's TAGS day (Theory and Analysis for Graduate Students) was the third to have been put on as an event of the SMA and the tenth year in which TAGS days have existed. Organised by Dai Griffiths (and supported by the School of Visual Arts, Music and Publishing at Oxford Brookes University) the day was unusual in that, in addition to graduate papers, the distinguished American scholar David Epstein (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) attended. Coincidentally, the event was very much a continuation of the Analysis and Perception theme of last year's TAGS day (see Peter Foster's report in the fifth issue of this Newsletter). This connection was most evident in the opening session where the first two speakers were familiar from last year.

Kirsty Kirkpatrick (University of Lancaster) presented an extremely lucid paper investigating John Sloboda's claim that 'listeners ... can discern the large-scale relationships which analysts characterise'.¹ She challenged his assumption that 'musical knowledge' is arrived at through listening and merely articulated by analysis, by presenting the results of tests she had carried out on listeners' responses to Debussy's *Jeux* and comparing them with five published analyses of the piece. The overall results indicated that during 'normal' listening, interest or excitement did not correspond with points of structural importance (i.e. there was no correlation with what listeners and analysts felt were important). Yet when specifically required to listen out for moments of analytical interest the judgments of listeners were much closer to those of analysts. Contrary to Sloboda's claim that listeners hear relationships which analysts then analyse, Kirkpatrick argued that her latter test provided a strategy for listeners, encouraging them

to match the music being heard with established analytical criteria. She concluded that without the strategy structurally important events were either masked by the saliency of surface details such as timbre, or embellishment, or were in fact imperceptible.

Amongst the lively response to the paper David Epstein suggested that her experiments might be developed further in the direction of temporal progression as a way of cohering disparate elements in *Jeux*. In a more general sense he proposed that the subject of analysis might proceed by considering analytical statements in the context of aural reality rather than merely expounding theoretical expositions.²

There was a dramatic change of repertoire in the next paper given by Tom Royall (University of Keele). He explored metre and grouping in heterophonic rhythms in the James Brown recording *Give it up or turn it loose*. He reasoned that 'polyrhythmic' music is rarely treated systematically because of the existence of over-elaborate theories of metre. Instead, based on the psychological premise of Cooper and Meyer that 'simultaneous musical events are apprehended as having one basic mode of articulation, because our minds tend to organise the musical texture in the simplest way'³, Royall proposed a relatively modest theory of accent and timing within which groupings describe finer details of musical texture. Rather than transcribing the recording into conventional notation he devised his own method for representing rhythmic aspects of the music, distinguishing between pulses which are timed relatively carefully and those which are timed relatively regularly. He concluded that such a method is quite sufficient for documenting our experience of

heterophonic rhythms.

Helen Gould (University of Southampton) spoke about narrative process in Elliott Carter's *Symphony of Three Orchestras* (1977). Whereas recent studies in narratology have tended to make general comparisons between music and literature in the Classical and Romantic repertoires, she focused on how a specific literary work of this century - Hart Crane's poem *The Bridge* - inspired the Symphony. Carter had himself suggested many features between the two in his writings, and Gould pursued the comparisons to elucidate some of the processes occurring in the work. She summarised the various ways in which features of thematic characterisation - such as instrumentation, texture, rhythm and harmony - played a part in the overall plan of the orientation of thematic material from the 'natural' to the 'mechanical'. She then showed how such characteristics of themes closely correspond with themes and techniques employed by Hart Crane, insisting that such an approach is preferable to the emphasis usually placed on pre-compositional thinking.

The afternoon session began with two papers on Schoenberg. Stephen Collisson (King's College London) presented an analytical review of Walter Frisch's recent publication, *The Early Works of Schoenberg 1893-1908*.⁴ Frisch considers Schoenberg's musical and aesthetic development by examining the composer's compositional sketches and theoretical writings, tracing the development of his tonal procedures through detailed analysis of the works of the period. In response, Collisson questioned several of Frisch's analytical comments concerning metre and harmony by providing convincing alternative analytical readings: For example, Collisson's treatment of Reger's *Resignation* directed our attention away from metre and towards the structural importance of melodic and harmonic characteristics. He offered a preferred thematic construction of Schoenberg's early *Scherzo for string quartet*, and an interpretation of the second movement of Schoenberg's Second String Quartet, Op.10, focusing on important melodic linkages which Frisch had neglected. His general conclusion was that Frisch

tended to prioritize theory over practice, sometimes overlooking certain aspects of harmonic, melodic and rhythmic considerations of the music. Following his paper Collisson clarified that he was in agreement with most of the analytic statements made by Walter Frisch but had chosen to question certain misreadings in order to provoke further reconsideration by others.

Jon Halton (King's College London) analysed structural functions in *Erwartung* (1909), concentrating on the perception of textural levelling and the idea that the music consists of interacting polyphonic strands. He disputed the general claim of the work's 'athematicism' by making 'motivic' (i.e. melodic in the looser sense) and timbral connections, and investigating links with Schoenberg's use of harmonic and 'motivic' 'types' in his early works such as the String Quartet, Op.10. Halton's plan of sectionalisation and cadential organisation in *Erwartung*, in terms of prolonged chords and ostinato figurations (which were easy to pick out from the score and from a recording) contributed towards his long-term aim of providing structural coherence within the work in order to facilitate aural analysis of the 'complex, erratic music'. He was reluctant to apply pitch-class set theory but was in agreement with Annette Davison's (Exeter University) suggestion which emerged in questions that emphasising the function of ostinato in this and in other works, such as *Die glückliche Hand* (1911-13), might provide a strong sense of coherence which has yet to be pursued as an exclusive area of research.

The final session of the day contained David Epstein's paper, 'Shaping time: performance, brain and structure', which considered neurological aspects of the perception of temporal relationships in music. Since writing *Beyond Orpheus: Studies in Musical Structure*⁵ David Epstein explained how he had become fascinated by the issue of temporality as a result of feeling dissatisfied with tempo relationships in his own, and in other, performances by conductors. His presentation stemmed from his work in the neurology department at the Medical School in the University of Düsseldorf where he is carrying out scientific

investigations into the role of the brain and the central nervous system (CNS) in his search for a rational basis for determining tempo. Epstein revealed how elements of tempo control can be derived from structural relationships built into a piece. But he is still in the process of assessing whether or not a logical underpinning exists according to the function of neurones within the CNS.

In particular Epstein was concerned with the conflict between rhythmic and metric structure 'supporting unique motion embodied in every piece within the Classical and Romantic repertoire' (rather than in twentieth-century music where 'each composer is an island'). He began by studying consistencies of temporal relationships in performance before proceeding to investigate tempo changes inherent in actual compositions.

He provided striking examples of proportional temporal relationships recorded from different performances of the same piece by the same pianist - Patrick O'Gearn playing Chopin's B minor Piano Sonata, and Jörg Demus playing Schumann's *Träumerei* - to show how a highly developed control of temporal pattern is maintained from one performance to another even when phrases are reshaped according to their particular function within the form. Epstein then proposed that changes in tempi are integral to a composition since they are identified by the rhythmic proportions of motifs. He gave Beethoven's Fourth Symphony as a prime example where Beethoven 'consistently uses motifs to embody upbeats [which] only operate successfully throughout the piece if the first and last movements have an identical pulse'. Epstein isolated further crucial temporal relationships in Brahms's Second Symphony and in the Adagio from Mahler's Fourth Symphony.

His challenging subject - to be explored more fully in his forthcoming book *Shaping Time: Music, the Brain, and Performance*. - prompted extensive debate, including to what extent neurological knowledge of absolute tempo is innate or is learned, which ultimately remains open-ended. It would have been especially interesting to have had views from music psychologists and neurologists in this country who are presently investigating similar areas.

This year's delegates and speakers were particularly fortunate to be able to benefit from David Epstein's energizing influence, enhancing the already lively interaction between participants. Indeed, commenting on the varied programme of the day, Epstein was clearly (and justifiably) enthusiastic about the current state of research being undertaken by postgraduates in this country.

1. Sloboda, J. *The Musical Mind: the Cognitive Psychology of Music*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985.
2. I draw the reader's attention to further justification for pursuing such an 'aural reality' (particularly in the perception of twentieth-century music) in connection with a recent concern about the way composers, performers, listeners and analysts perceive music. I refer to the case study of Jonathan Harvey's premiere featured in the Colston Symposium, also reviewed in this newsletter.
3. Cooper, G. and Meyer, L., *The Rhythmic Structure of Music*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1960.
4. California University Press, 1993.
5. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1979.



International Conference on Nineteenth-Century Music

Department of Music, University of Surrey, 14-17 July 1994

Nicholas Marston

Anyone appointed to an academic post in a British university in recent years will probably have been required to undergo an 'induction course'. During at least one session of this course the appointee will have been told that formal lecturing is an outmoded educational medium; that ways to vary the presentation of one's material should be sought; and that the typical concentration span of an averagely intelligent student is about twenty minutes. (Incidentally, the relevant session of the induction course which I last attended ran to some three hours.)

Thus I have long wondered whether the academic conference as we know it is really a Good Thing. Why do we persist in organizing and attending - at increasing financial cost - three- or four-day events which consist largely of an undiluted stream of formal lectures, many accompanied by hefty batches of examples and typically lasting 30-35 minutes? Is this really the best way in which to communicate the fruits of what is often entirely new research? Am I failing if, as is often the case, I pick up the general drift of an argument while missing many of the details? And if my experience is typical, do we need to be treated to the details on those occasions anyway?

The standard response to such questions is that the real purpose of conferences is to bring researchers together to discuss their work face-to-face, and to provide a forum in which work in progress may be scrutinized and refined prior to publication. It is in the interstices of the formal programme, so the argument goes, that the serious conference business takes place: at breakfast, lunch, dinner; in the foyer; above all, in the bar, where the concept of the 'round table' session is

most convincingly exemplified. The ideal might be a conference without papers...and one may in any case wonder to what extent the scant regard paid to unpublished conference papers in the HEFCE Research Assessment Exercises will eventually erode our willingness to stand and deliver. But such willingness was not in doubt at the latest International Conference on Nineteenth-Century Music, held at the University of Surrey between 14 and 17 July 1994; and notwithstanding my opening remarks, it is good to be able to report that this long-running biennial event (the twentieth-anniversary year will fall in 1998) now seems firmly back in the calendar after a 'blip' in 1990. This was probably the best-attended of these conferences so far, with some 130 delegates attending from Britain, Canada, Germany, Norway, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, and the USA.

The 'overwhelming' response to the Call for Papers led to the decision to institute parallel sessions for almost half the duration of the conference. Although the large number of delegates guaranteed respectable audiences at such sessions, there was inevitably some frustration at the difficult choices which had to be made. The greatest difficulty came on the final morning, when papers on 'Opera post-1950' (Roger Parker, Julian Rushton, Thomas Grey and Anthony Barone on Verdi and Wagner; Rose Theresa on the Palais Garnier) were pitted against studies of 'Analytic Thought in the Nineteenth Century' (Ian Biddle on Schelling's *Philosophie der Kunst*; Fred Maus rereading Schumann's essay on the *Symphonie Fantastique*; Ian Bent on hermeneutics and the writings of Schleiermacher; Peter Holt and Scott Burnham on Reicha and Marx respectively). In Robert Pascall's

characteristically generous phrase, this was indeed a 'maze of excellence' through which one tried to find a route which would do equal justice to the quality of competing papers. Alternatively, those who were flagging by this stage could take obvious advantage of the parallel timetabling to claim attendance everywhere without losing face: in these situations you can't deceive your neighbour (Rushton's subtitle), but you *can* deceive your colleagues in the 'other' room.

At an earlier stage, on Friday morning one could choose between papers on 'Aesthetics and Meaning in Nineteenth-Century Song' and 'Music in European Culture: Nationalism', in the latter of which Cecelia Hopkins Porter's examination of the symbolism of the River Rhine in mid nineteenth-century German song was particularly interesting. Later in the day the choice was between 'Revisions and Revisionism' in the music of Rachmaninoff and Liszt and 'Grieg as Nationalist', the second of three sessions devoted to 'Music in European Culture'. The third of those sessions, 'Music, Patronage and Politics', was timetabled against three papers on Beethoven which, in my view, were among the odder choices for the programme. Michael Tusa's examination of the sketches of the 1805 version of 'In des Lebens Frühlingstagen' from *Leonore* drew heavily on material already published in *JAMS*, while Barry Cooper's assessment of 'Subthematicism and Metaphor in Beethoven's Tenth Symphony' came to seem increasingly like a justification *ex post facto* of his heavily criticized 'realization' of a non-existent work. (In a later session, however, Cooper's informed comments on sex and angelic gender provided some of this conference's interstitial highlights.)

With a five-paper session on nineteenth-century analytical thought and an eloquent and inspiring keynote address by Arnold Whittall entitled 'New Wagner criticism and the language of analysis', music analysis would appear to have been a real presence at this conference. Yet despite the complaint of at least one delegate that, on the evidence of this programme, nineteenth-century studies are too heavily 'text based', I heard very few papers in which really close-to-the-text analysis was the main concern. One such was the opening paper, Joel Lester's

analysis of Schumann's little-studied piano accompaniments to Bach's solo violin sonatas and partitas. In teasing out the evidence in these accompaniments of the way in which Schumann (mis)heard Bach's originals (the title of the session was 'Past and Present: Influence in the Nineteenth Century'), Lester was able to create an image of Schumann as analyst which resonated with the papers of the final session mentioned above. The third Beethoven paper, Glenn Stanley's discussion of metric ambiguity and clarification in the first movement of the Piano Sonata, Op. 109, was another in which hearings and mishearings, this time of upbeats and downbeats, led to some lively and intensive discussion of very specific passages from a celebrated work.

Whether or not any accurate picture of the present state of nineteenth-century studies can be said to have emerged at Surrey is doubtful. Any conference programme is necessarily selective, and the process of selection is influenced by many factors. This one, like so many others, seemed to have at least something for everyone: in addition to the sessions already mentioned, there were papers on performance practice, and the two so-called 'Roundtables' (actually no differently organized than the other sessions), on 'Rewriting the Feminine in Nineteenth-Century Opera' and 'The Unknown Chopin', in which elements of the New Criticism found their main outlet.

Some eyebrows were raised at the preponderance of transatlantic speakers on the podium ('of the forty-seven papers...over half [twenty seven] will be read by scholars from North America, seventeen by British musicologists', announced the programme handbook). I raise the issue not from any antipathy to US colleagues but rather because this conference reinforced my suspicions, already fuelled by applications from intending research students, that nineteenth-century studies, with a few well-known and very distinguished exceptions, are relatively unpopular in British musicology. All the more reason, some might say, for maintaining a conference which focuses on that particular century. Yet at a time when the traditional periodic view of music history has greatly receded we should perhaps

question the merit of retaining the familiar series of period-based British music conferences, of which the Nineteenth-Century Conference is one. If nineteenth-century (or baroque, or medieval and renaissance) studies are too heavily biased in one direction or another - whether or not nineteenth-century studies are too heavily 'text based', the century harbours the 'big name' problem, as this conference partly demonstrated - might not new directions emerge from scholarly gatherings which cut across the historical spectrum more incisively than is presently the case in Britain? In other words, is there a case for an AMS-style jamboree - a kind of super-RMA *omnium gatherum* - at one extreme, and much smaller, issue-centred conferences (ideally with papers circulated prior to the event) at the other?

Delegates left Surrey with no clear statement of the venue for the 1996 conference, but there is no real danger that one will not emerge. And whatever form the 1996 conference takes, the person(s) undertaking the arduous task of making it all happen will benefit greatly from the magnificent example set by John Rink, who succeeded not only in managing a hugely complex event with enviable calm and style but also in delivering a lengthy paper, 'Chopin's Unknown Piano Concertos', in which he performed his own musical examples on one of the splendid pianos in the Cobbe Collection at Hatchlands Park. Finally, Rink's selfless generosity in freeing them from the 'tyranny of the bar (dead)line' will long be remembered by that small group of hardened delegates for whom, in the words of Baron Ochs, 'keine Nacht...[war] zu lang'.



'On the one hand, music is most readily comprehensible to the soul, to the immediately sensitive realm of human feeling; on the other hand, it presents difficulties for those wishing to grasp its effects.'

Rudolf Steiner (1906).