

Newsletter of the **Society for Music Analysis**



Edited by Nicholas Marston

No. 13: Autumn 99

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From the Editor

Editorial address: Dr Nicholas Marston, St Peter's College Oxford OX1 2DL. Tel: 01865 278908. Fax: 01865 278855. E-mail: nick.marston@spc.ox.ac.uk

That this year's *Newsletter* appears even further beyond the target publication month of July than did its predecessor is due at least in part to my wish to include some account of the British Musicological Societies' Conference [BMSC], which took place at the University of Surrey in mid-July. I am grateful to Oliver Dahin for his work in this respect, as well as to those other contributors who have helped to provide such a lively account of a good part of the Society's activities during the past year. As always, John Rink and Sally Britten have been invaluable in their help and support behind and in front of the scenes.

Many SMA members will already have read Anthony Pople's elegant Editor's Note in the latest issue (vol. 18 no. 1: March 1999) of *Music Analysis*, with its quiet suggestion that we not forget 'the musical specifics'. With this in mind, along with the spectre of those 'brief episodes of crassness' to which Anthony alludes, it has been instructive to reflect on BMSC with the help of the reports published both in these pages and, most immediately, in the latest RMA Newsletter (vol. 2 no. 2: September 1999). In his presidential address there, Julian Rushton draws attention to the relatively poor attendance, particularly on the part of 'senior musicologists' from British music departments, at a plenary event of this kind. For my part, as a member of the BMSC Programme Committee I was disappointed by the small number of submissions with a primarily analytical focus, whether or not stemming directly from SMA members. Indeed, Oliver Dahin loses no time in identifying 'the further contextualization of music' as another and larger theme which Elgarishly 'went' but was not (always) played over the rich offerings at Surrey; and he implicitly laments the paucity of sessions discussing 'music itself' in more detail'. The electrical engineer attending a parallel Surrey conference—as if parallel sessions in a single conference weren't enough—with whom Susan Bagust struck up conversation was more to the point: BMSC offered 'not enough discussion about the music itself and too much about ideas for their own sake' (see Susan Bagust's report on the conference in the September RMA Newsletter). 'Larger and diverse gatherings' are needed to help prevent the fragmentation of our discipline, as Julian Rushton observes; and as one who remembers vividly the sense of suspicion, if not outright ridicule, attaching to music analysis in certain quarters in the late 1970s, I rejoice in Susan Bagust's perception that 'maybe we are all getting less territorial'. But if, on the other hand, the explanation (Bagust's again) is that 'the different perspectives really are getting less distinct', is there really no danger that we may lose at least as much as we stand to gain?

Note to Contributors

Material for inclusion in the next issue (14: July 2000) of the *Newsletter* should reach the Editor not later than 1 June 2000.

Society for Music Analysis: Programme, 1999–2001

21–24 October 1999

Fourth European Music Analysis Conference

Rotterdam Conservatory, Pieter de Hoochweg 222, 3024 BJ Rotterdam, Netherlands

Enquiries to Patrick van Deurzen (e-mail: pdeurzen@xs4all.nl)

February/March 2000

Winter Study Day

Details to be confirmed

27 May 2000

TAGS Day (for Theory and Analysis Graduate Students and staff)

Department of Music, King's College London, Strand, London WC2R 2LS

Enquiries to Julian Littlewood (julian.littlewood@kcl.ac.uk)

22–24 September 2000

OXMAC 2 (Oxford University Music Analysis Conference)

Faculty of Music, University of Oxford, St Aldate's, Oxford OX1 1DB

Enquiries to Nicholas Marston (nick.marston@spc.ox.ac.uk)

October 2000 to March 2001

'The World of Twentieth-Century Music'

Major lecture series by Professor Arnold Whittall (see separate advertisement)

Chancellor's Hall, Senate House, University of London, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HU

Enquiries to John Rink (j.rink@sun.rhbc.ac.uk)

Late October/early November 2000

Autumn Study Day: 'Music and Subjectivity'

Department of Music, Goldsmiths College, Lewisham Way, New Cross, London SE14 6NW

Enquiries to Craig Ayrey (c.ayrey@gold.ac.uk)

February 2001

Winter Study Day (in conjunction with the RMA): 'Studying Improvisation'

Department of Music, Royal Holloway, University of London, Egham TW20 0EX

Enquiries to John Rink (j.rink@sun.rhbc.ac.uk)

The World of Twentieth-Century Music

a major series of public lectures presented in 2000–2001 by

Professor Arnold Whittall

Emeritus Professor of Musical Theory and Analysis, King's College London; Visiting Professor, University of Reading; and Distinguished Visiting Lecturer, Royal Holloway, University of London

All lectures will take place on Thursday evenings at 6 pm in the **Chancellor's Hall, Senate House, University of London, Malet Street, London WC1**. The definitive programme and information on how to apply for (free) tickets will be released in July 2000. These lectures are sponsored by the Department of Music, Royal Holloway, University of London, and supported by the Society for Music Analysis.

Dates and provisional titles

26 October 2000

Western Discontents: Locating Modernism before 1914

16 November 2000

Old Institutions, New Music

7 December 2000

Schoenberg or Stravinsky?

25 January 2001

The Subject of Britten

22 February 2001

Playing the Establishment: Boulez, Carter, Birtwistle

15 March 2001

Revoicing Expression: Postmodern Classicism

Enquiries to John Rink (j.rink@sun.rhbc.ac.uk) after July 2000

Royal Holloway
University of London

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON NINETEENTH-CENTURY MUSIC

29 June to 2 July 2000

CALL FOR PAPERS

The Music Department at Royal Holloway, University of London will host the eleventh International Conference on Nineteenth-Century Music from 29 June to 2 July 2000. The Conference will be held on the College's campus in Egham, Surrey, which is 35 minutes by train from London and a short journey from Heathrow and Gatwick airports. The Keynote Paper will be given by Hermann Danuser (Humboldt Universität, Berlin), and there will be a special round-table session chaired by John Daverio (Boston University) on 'Romanticism and the Historical Consciousness'.

The Programme Committee (David Charlton, Katharine Ellis, John Rink) invites proposals for papers on any aspect of music in the nineteenth century, but contributions on the following topics are particularly encouraged:

popular musics
music and technology
performing traditions
music as commodity
memory and reminiscence
music in literature and art
music and the State
temporality in music

Individual papers should last no more than twenty minutes. Proposals for round tables or study sessions up to two hours long are also welcome.

Abstracts (200 words) should be submitted to David Charlton at the address below by **1 December 1999**, as should **proposals** for round tables/study sessions (500 words). The programme will be announced early in January 2000.

Further information can be obtained from David Charlton, Department of Music, Royal Holloway, University of London, Egham TW20 0EX, England (tel +44 1784 443946; fax +44 1784 439441; e-mail d.charlton@rhbnc.ac.uk).

The Virtual Work of Music: Transcriptions, Completions, and Other Forms of Fluidity: University of Reading, 20 March 1999

Elena Konstantinou

Hosted by the Music Department of the University of Reading, and organized by Jonathan Dunsby, this well-attended SMA Winter Study Day was undoubtedly a success. With six papers and a round-table discussion, the day was characterized above all by the striking diversity of approach with which each of the participant speakers addressed the elusive general theme. While certain more philosophical concerns reverberated through all the sessions, this was a feast of polyphony which, invigorating rather than disconcerting, sparked a genuine interchange among all those present. The receptive but questioning response to the invariably adventurous presentations in a relaxed, congenial atmosphere was indicative of an earnest, shared effort to further our understanding, and thus justice was done both to the multiform concept of 'fluidity' and the unassuming notion of a 'study day'.

The morning session, chaired by Christopher Wilson (Reading), was launched by Nicholas Bannan's (Reading) aptly enterprising 'Archetypes, Theft, and Creative Listening'. Essentially an investigation of the creative processes underlying both the act of composing and that of listening, this was an attempt to relate these to models derived from the fields of child development and language acquisition in particular, and evolutionary morphology in general. Drawing primarily on Richard Dawkins's biological theories and his generation of 'biomorphs', and noting also the implications of Deacon's concept of 'communicative contagion', Bannan outlined the principles of his own experimentation with musical biomorphs and improvised rhythmic responses. Emphasizing the concept of 'tessellation' and the divergence between naive and trained responses, he concluded that 'the transmission of the musical statement depends on a degree of shared perception'. The latter part of this presentation used the identification of generic similarities

and those of compositional device to suggest the 'unacknowledged debt' of Stravinsky's *Feu d'artifice* to *L'Apprenti sorcier* by Dukas. Time did not permit what would have been a welcome expansion on certain inevitably passing references, despite a wealth of evidence fleetingly presented. The ensuing discussion, however, gave both speaker and audience the opportunity to elaborate further on some of the issues raised. In particular, Bannan mentioned ongoing unpublished research in Australia and Greece into the development of musical perception and creativity in children; in reply to Mieko Kanno's question concerning the exploration of language in music of the 60s and 70s, Bannan reviewed his previous comments on the movement from 'naivety' to 'experience', using the example of Paul McCartney. The divide between art and popular music in relation to qualitative judgement was later raised (Arnold Whittall, KCL and Reading), but when questioned on the application of linguistic and biological models to music (Ken Glog, Cardiff) Bannan argued in favour of the recognition of the role of musical behaviour in the development of individuals, which might actually aid the formulation of linguistic models, based on evidence of humans' measurable response to musical parameters even before birth.

The challenge to traditional models, this time in relation to the music of Giacinto Scelsi, was at the heart of the animated paper that followed. Having first amended the title of her paper to 'Giacinto Scelsi (1905-1988) and the Multiplicity of Musical Representation' (rather than 'the Concept of'), Mieko Kanno (York) stressed the need for a new critique, better equipped for the assessment and expression of the essence of Scelsi's idiosyncratic music, both theoretically and in practice. A review of Scelsi's notational system gave some insight into the individuality of his scores and pointed to the difficulties surrounding source material, including persisting

authorship disputes. Duration and timbre, despite their variability in performance, were identified as the vital, organic components of Scelsi's music, and the resultant diversity of representations of the work and perceived 'multiplicity of structures' became a central issue. Karno suggested that rather than compromising the identity of the work, the fluidity of these traditionally fixed parameters is integral to it, and in her concluding remarks she urged performers to modify their approach to this music accordingly. Some indication as to the nature of this relatively obscure music was communicated at the outset by an extract from the String Trio (1958), although the subsequent presentation might have been facilitated by provision of examples from scores. In response to questions from the floor, Karno elaborated on Scelsi's exceedingly secretive method of working and the inadequacy of the instructions he left, but cautioned against undue dependence upon recordings of his music as source materials, even when they had been supervised by the composer. Discussion centred on the role of notation and performance practice, which, as Robert Pascall (Bangor) observed, may be different in different ages, and on structure as 'architecture', 'immutable', and perhaps necessarily dependent on fixed elements (John Rink, RHUL). It seemed that there was much to pursue in the responses.

After coffee, the morning session continued with the erudite 'Analysis and All That Jazz: A Pragmatic Interpretation', presented with great elegance and uncanny persuasion by Rhiannon Mathias (Reading). Concerned with the values underpinning the music of George Gershwin, Mathias began by recounting criticisms and comparisons involving the composer, taking as her point of departure Allan Moore's review (in *Music Analysis*, 17 (1998), 256-60) of Allen Forte's *The American Popular Ballad of the Golden Era, 1924-1950* (Princeton, 1996). One of the generation of American composers motivated by the early twentieth-century 'emerging quest for American national consciousness', Gershwin desired to 'create a truthful American music', and this led him to confound the boundaries between 'high' and 'low' art. In

turn, this endeavour was contextualised in relation to a Pragmatist perspective, and especially in relation to Dewey's notion of art, which, as expressed in his *Art and Experience* (1934), challenged traditional Western European aesthetics by advocating a more unified concept valuable for its power to enhance common experience. Gershwin's image as a 'musical pragmatist' was greeted with questions from the floor pertaining precisely to those elements in his works and methods that would be thought to distinguish 'art' music from other types. Significantly, when the composer's utilization of Schillinger's permutation system was broached (George Mowat-Brown, Open University), it was proposed that given his admitted lack of rigorous training, Gershwin was trying to overcome problems of form while perhaps lending 'serious' value to his work. On the same topic, recent research findings that Gershwin resorted to permutation techniques in *Porgy and Bess* were offered by Lawrence Zbikowski (Chicago).

The day's transatlantic contribution added a most welcome dimension to the proceedings, and was all the more remarkable for its unexpected drawing together of some of the most prominent themes thus far: featuring George and Ira Gershwin's *I got rhythm* as an example, Zbikowski's comprehensive 'A Multiplicity of 'Rhythms': Cognitive Categories and Musical Identity' embraced reasoning processes and cognitive theory; the perception of identity and multiplicity; the concept of the 'work' in relation to performance, score and performance practice; and the forces that mould musical practice. Equally sweeping was the stunning speed with which this concentrated paper, expertly thorough and accompanied by exhaustive handouts, was delivered. Centring on the multifarious developing identity of *I got rhythm* during the period 1930 to 1946, as exemplified in recordings, Zbikowski proposed that 'each work of music may be construed as a cognitive category, whose members are the various scores, performances (recorded and otherwise) and imaginings', and that the illusion of a stable identity for *I got rhythm* may be accounted for by the

operations of superseding conceptual models. Following a detailed explication of category-typology and structure, the use of frame diagrams to represent internal relationships, typicality effects, and the notion of a 'prototype', different categories of selected recordings of this song were constructed. Their inspection revealed a prevalence of certain attributes over others and changes in the 'judgement of typicality' over time, suggestive of a broader conceptual model. Based on this principle, three models or identities of the song were formulated: popular song, jazz standard, and a basis for improvisation/composition—each linked with a specific performance practice in a mutually formative relationship, indicative of and parallel to the interrelationship between more context-specific 'local' models and the wider 'global' ones that guide our very reasoning. It was in this light that Zbikowski described scores—and in the ensuing open discussion, recordings—as an 'artifactual manifestation' rather than an 'intellectual status' of the work. As for the reasons for the extraordinary success of *I got rhythm*, he noted that the piece held a particular appeal for jazz musicians thanks to its fast rhythm which challenged their virtuosity in improvisation.

John Rink chaired the afternoon session, which began with the day's guest speaker. In his delightfully vivid and thoroughly engrossing retrospective 'Form, Fugues, Faust and 'Feste Burg': A Revaluation of Mendelssohn's "Reformation" Symphony', Roderick Swanston (RCM) traced people, events, and ideas that led up to and, more or less overtly, influenced the commission and conception of Mendelssohn's symphony; then, drawing on a survey of the construction and material of the work itself, Swanston combined his findings in an endeavour to expose the work's musical and symbolic significance and to redress hasty criticisms of both it and its composer. Commissioned for the tercentenary of the Augsburg Confession, the 'Reformation' Symphony was charged with external, political, and religious tensions, as well as with the young Mendelssohn's own musical and ideological pursuits. Symbolic meaning

was attached to distinct parallels with Beethoven's Ninth, a prominent reference to the Dresden Amen, and other musical echoes. Discerning the influence of Goethe, Hegel, and Schleiermacher, and ideals such as the struggle for self-discovery, faith, and redemption, perpetual evolution and unity, and the expressive power of music in its linking of design and idea, Swanston concluded that this work could well be considered 'the depository of [Mendelssohn's] best and most ambitious thoughts', 'a noble and significant attempt by a brilliant, twenty-year-old man to put into music, in the most elevated way he knew of, the ideas and aspirations that had surrounded him and penetrated his ever-receptive consciousness in Berlin in the late 1820s'.

There being at this point no time available for questions, Vania Schittenhelm (Reading) moved things swiftly on with 'Transcribing with Busoni'. As its circumspect argument unfolded, this paper's resonance with the very same trains of thought that had permeated the preceding presentations became manifest, so that, similarly to Zbikowski's paper, this sensitive account functioned also as a synthesis of the day's prime focal points. Contemplating Busoni's practice of transcribing—one of the many facets of his versatile interests that also included composing, performing, conducting, editing, teaching, and writing---Schittenhelm illustrated the æsthetic and theoretical views implicit in his embracing of all these activities, as well as his perception of music 'itself'. Transcriptions were central to Busoni's work, informing and complementing all its other aspects, even despite the opposition of some of his contemporaries. It transpired that Busoni's Platonic beliefs caused him to regard a work of music as an abstract idea that could only partially be understood and materialized in any one musical manifestation, and thus to favour the notion of a 'collaborative art' between performers, composers, and transcribers---all essentially equivalent. It was asserted that the spirit behind Busoni's work is not dissimilar to that of Piet Mondrian, Jorge Luis Borges, or even---and interestingly---

that of Glenn Gould, who defended technological and interpretative intervention in order to 'actualize previously idealized aspects' of a composition. Answering questions, Schittenhelm reaffirmed that Busoni's pianism underpinned his work as a transcriber; and returning to the matter of Schoenberg's views on transcription (Bannan) and the conflict between him and Busoni which she had touched upon earlier, she detected a degree of expediency on both sides.

With more food for thought than one might have hoped for, all were eagerly awaiting the culminating roundtable discussion which was chaired by Sophie Fuller (Reading) and featured a panel comprising Jeanice Brooks (Southampton), Arnold Whittall, and Jonathan Dunsby. The members of the panel embarked on an initial appraisal of events, noting the areas they had found the most striking. Commencing with the observation that the day had progressed from the twentieth to the nineteenth century, Whittall admired the potent idea of integration as it had emerged from Swanston's account, but wondered whether the modern tendency to view music as an 'anti-synthetic phenomenon' that resists unity and integration might bear relevance to nineteenth-century, as well as post-tonal, twentieth-century music. Motivated by her acknowledged interest in history, Brooks identified a single thread running through all the papers, namely the question of the relationship between the work as an entity and its notation. It was maintained that notation is often not seen in an historical perspective, and pointing to earlier, sixteenth-century music Brooks contended that notation is not transparent, but an 'approximation', an inefficient tool which musicians still insist on in order to assume the methods of scientists, art historians and literary critics. In her opinion, such models are not applicable to music, and to illustrate this she juxtaposed the actuality of seeing a painting with the requisite 'imagining' of a musical score to music. Conversely, Dunsby discerned two 'foci' in the preceding discourse, with Bannan, Mathias, and Swanston exploring

philosophical ideas, truth, and experience, whereas the emphasis on virtuosity in the commentaries of Kanno, Schittenhelm, and Zbikowski relayed how ideas of 'fluidity' can take music to the margin of being unperformable.

Speaking again of the disinclination for 'open-endedness' in musicological appraisal, Whittall argued that a listener might be more receptive to Scelsi's music than to Mendelssohn's, for instance, finding it easier to accept the multiplicity in the sparingly documented music of the first, than in the second, which is laden with teleological interpretation. Whittall remarked on the insistence of twentieth-century musicology on proving itself 'right' or 'definite'; taking Bannan's example, he proposed that interpretation might become more concerned to 'project genuine conflict' in the thought behind a composition, to 'dramatize' it, and to depict it with more flexible networks.

Further to this last note, Dunsby offered a comparison with the reinforcement of such scientific models in the fields of biology and genetics, as part of a process of continual discovery and re-evaluation, at which Whittall invited Bannan's comments on whether it is feasible for music to be discussed in terms of 'structure' and 'linguistics'. Bannan expressed some reservation in view of the, as yet inconclusive, ongoing research in the area, although his feeling was that Dawkins's evolutionary morphology might be applied to a range of phenomena and therefore had the potential to benefit the study of music. Quoting Lawrence Kramer, Dunsby contested the validity of models pertaining to verbal language, and their effectiveness in music.

Greater participation was drawn from the floor as Brooks voiced her suspicion of 'empirically verifiable' methods and a heavy reliance on scientific models which assume that there is an 'immutable' object of study, and called for a more 'permeable' model, such as a category. Whittall countered that such permeability is already inherent in the notion of a work, which, by its nature, cannot be anything

other than 'virtual', and Mathias pointed out both that Dewey had attempted to replace scientific models and that there is a wealth of literature along these lines. When Mowat-Brown, referring to Brooks's earlier comparison between the appreciation of a work of music and a work of art, asserted that interpretative intervention occurs in both cases, Brooks explained that, contrary to the experience of art, one must 'imagine a link' between notation and sound. She later described this as a dynamic process, a dialogue that needs be represented, instead of attempting to portray a work of music as something 'stable'. The necessity of such complication was questioned, however, by Pascall, who rejected the prospect of 'solipsistic dialogue' and 'inter-subjective agreement' and called for an approach that balances relativism and positivism.

Music theory can be didactic, Whittall claimed, on account of its history and the manner in which it 'evolves' towards the recognition and explanation of truths about music; seen to be part of this evolutionary process, Schenker might be characterized an 'enabler', rather than a provider of truth. From this perspective, Brooks added, one might also observe the history of what was considered important; although Swanston thought that what one detected was simply a 'portion of the truth', depending on the tools available at any one time. He denied that art historians were able to see art as completely as had been implied by Brooks, recognizing instead that faced with a text, a performance, or a received performance, one would

inevitably think of it as a 'whole' in order to appreciate it, even though this appreciation might only be partial. Addressing Whittall's previous mention of Schenker, Jonathan Cross (Bristol) queried the persistent 'fascination' with Schenker, the place of his organicist views in the twenty-first century, as well as the importance of Schenker studies to the modern curriculum. In response, Dunsby defended Schenker's aesthetic, whilst Whittall felt that Schenker should remain a part of the academic routine, and suggested that the twenty-first century might witness a return to more traditional values. This final exchange, signalled the end of the deliberation, and with thanks to all the participants the day was brought to a close.

That such extra-musical explorations should have ended up at Schenker seems very telling. It may well be that the future brings a return to time-honoured values; yet on this occasion, in spite of the conspicuous absence of any attempt to analyse a work *per se*, the quest for 'fluidity' generated a no-less substantial array of resourceful papers and potent argument. Commendable for the manner in which it facilitated interchange and nurtured enterprise and open dialogue, this study day was successful in accommodating contributions that, although diverse, were nevertheless sufficiently well-defined to allow for effective expansion and debate. Rich in spirit, and intelligent in its conception and design, this was a highly rewarding experience that certainly set a standard for events of this scope.



TAGS Day for Music Postgraduates
Royal Holloway, University of London, 20 May 1999
Lee Tsang

Tags Day 1999, organised by Matthew Riley and Elaine Goodman, took place in the familiar setting of Royal Holloway, University of London. Despite a reasonable turnout, the absence of scholars from Midland, Northern, Scottish, and Irish universities was noted. This is something I understand the SMA organisers are keen to remedy: next year's TAGS Day will, one hopes, take place a little further north!

* * *

Conferences can sometimes have too many papers; as this TAGS Day proved, the conference-going experience is likely to be more interesting and relaxed if questions from the floor are not overly constrained by the timetable. Thus the absence of the first speaker (Charles Wiffen, Royal College of Music), while greatly regretted, did at least have the beneficial effect of introducing into the day's proceedings some necessary slack.

Matthew Riley (Royal Holloway) nobly volunteered to present his paper in the first session. However, this change in the schedule may have irritated latecomers who turned up specifically to hear Riley's paper, originally timetabled for the afternoon session on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century music. Nonetheless, Riley's 'Forkel on Diminution: A Revision of Eighteenth-Century Musical Semiotics' did get the conference off to a sound start. Riley explained how attitudes to diminution changed during the late eighteenth century: early on, diminution techniques were regarded as elaborate compositional artifice; later, the 'vivacity' that could be conveyed by diminution was regarded by the likes of Forkel as a 'natural' sign (that is, it could be instantly decoded, it appealed to the emotions). This reversal of attitudes seemed to affect reception of music that was devoid of diminution: such music was 'dry'—and 'arbitrary'—because it was no longer regarded as easy to 'decode'.

Whereas Riley's paper was most obviously situated in the theoretical domain, Joanna Harris's discussion of 'Thematic Characterization in Janáček's *Vec Makropulos*' was primarily analytical. Harris (Trinity College, Cambridge) described various features of musical themes in *Vec Makropulos*, but not the musical characterisation of the opera's dramatic themes nor indeed relationships between musical themes and the characters of the drama; the abstract supplied in the programme suggests that Harris did originally intend to discuss these other matters; but if the ambiguity of the paper's title is no longer appropriate, Harris might perhaps consider the rather less concise but more accurate term 'characterization of musical themes'.

Although her paper was interesting and generally well presented, Harris's approach seemed rather reactionary. Challenging Ernest Newman's condemnation of Janáček as a 'scrap by scrap composer', she claimed that aspects of his music could be understood in terms of 'organic thematic development'. The analogy with Darwinian evolution seemed opportunistic, however: it is, among other things, the fragmentary nature of Janáček's music that defines him as a modernist. Harris ascribed to the final stages of two series of short phrases (bars 192, 196, 198, 200, 201, 209, and 208-209; 210-211, 212-214, 215-216, 219-220, 221-223, 224-225, 227-228, 229-230, 231-232, and 234-235) the notions of 'maturity' and 'decay': to have reached 'maturity' suggests that the 'developments' of the first statements were teleological—but what were the goals here? Do the 'developments' really describe musical organicism? Or are they simply 'variations' of themes?

The paper that followed did not exactly set out to appeal. For those (I do not include myself among them) who are sceptical about the usefulness of set theory, a paper entitled 'A Hexachord-Regulated Pitch-

Class Set Genera System derived from Inclusion-Related Growth Chains' is hardly likely to persuade them otherwise. Despite some references to musical examples and pointers for application, Bernard Gates (Open University) did not entirely shake off the impression that this was theory for theory's sake. But those who stuck with this paper were rewarded: Gates offered an alternative to current pitch-class set genera systems. In fact, his system is a mediation between what Jonathan Dunsby, chairing the session, described as the 'over-determined' Fortean and 'promiscuous' Parksian approaches. One of Gates's most striking observations was that a reciprocal complementary relationship exists between Z-related sets. This is a property that seems to have been overlooked in all previous set-theoretical literature.

In stark contrast to Gates's paper was 'On Understanding Webern', by Morag Grant (King's College London). Grant admitted her scepticism concerning set theory, and stated that modernism is about multidimensionality. But if this is so, set theory must surely have its place; set-theoretical studies usually claim to provide only a partial rather than a full picture.

Grant drew parallels between Piet Mondrian's paintings and Anton Webern's music: in Mondrian, the juxtaposition or superimposition of vertical and horizontal lines can be seen as a 'conjunction of extreme opposites'; in Webern, moving and 'static' figures provide the conflict. This analogy between the plastic and aural arts can, however, be limiting. Grant suggested that static figures may be characterized as extended or repeated notes or chords. But a chord played crescendo or diminuendo has a very strong directional quality: while the pitch element remains 'static', there is yet a clear sense of motion within dynamic and timbral dimensions. To suggest that this is a Mondrian-like conflict would perhaps be stretching the analogy too far, because we are working within different dimensions.

The musical example that Grant believed

most strongly illustrated her point was the opening (bars 0-3) of the third of Webern's Five Pieces, op. 10. But why should we regard the repeated chords and the violin figure as being 'in conflict'? If we were really to draw an analogy with painting, we might describe this passage as a 'line' which is angular on one level (pitch distribution) and a curved expansion and contraction on another (crescendo-diminuendo), against a regulated textured backwash of different colours (the repeated chords). Moreover, the 'line' consists of four different bands of colour presented consecutively (the four pitches), and the colour within each band deepens or lightens (crescendo or diminuendo, respectively).

I enjoyed this paper; it was delivered assertively and it made me think. However, what Grant showed applies to only a small number of Webern's compositions. While I agree that it is important to take on board comparisons with Mondrian's paintings, such comparisons are going to help us really understand Webern only if we can illustrate where they break down. Music has a more extensive palette—a greater capacity for multidimensional expression—than do the visual arts. If Mondrian's paintings were indeed a source of inspiration, how does Webern depart from the simple models? How are Mondrian's ideas extended or developed in Webern's own art?

Robin Marsden's paper, 'The Fear of Missing: Hidden Moti(f)ves and Max in Weber's *Der Freischütz*', was confused and confusing. Marsden (formerly Goldsmith's College, University of London) complained that there is very little detailed analysis of Weber's music. However commendable his attempts to rectify this situation, Marsden's own analyses were unconvincing because, as he admitted, he was confused. The harmonic underpinnings of his Schenkerian graphs lacked strong dominant-tonic relationships, but Marsden was unable to make a virtue of the weak progressions he outlined. The 'moti(f)ves' of the paper's title were, it seems, intended to convey a double meaning (musical motifs, psychological motives); but the links

between psychological concept and musical material were often unclear in the analyses.

In the opening to a paper on 'Johannes Brahms's Schumann Variations, op. 9', Julian Littlewood (King's College London) seemed rather more at ease with Schenkerian principles. Littlewood explained that the grand design of the Schumann Variations cannot be understood in Schenkerian terms. He looked at other ways of analysing the overarching structure, drawing attention to 'dramatic and generic characterisation' and Brahms's allusions to the music of Robert and Clara Schumann. He also suggested that the overall form may be partly governed by 'theories of kinetic control'. This was interesting stuff, but I would have liked a fuller explanation of what 'kinetic control' means in this context and how it really does affect the overall form. I wonder, too, whether it would be possible to take this analysis one step further. What are the wider implications of this research? Why did Brahms disregard the Schumann Variations as 'juvenilia'? And why did he feel that future approaches to variation composition should be 'stricter'?

Nick Reyland (University of Wales, Cardiff) gave us 'A Taste of Forbidden Fruit: An Examination of the Re-emergence of Melody in György Ligeti's Ten Pieces for Wind Quintet'. This interesting, well-argued paper highlighted the problem of pigeon-holing a composer's works into stylistic periods. Reyland suggested that Ligeti's so-called return to melody in *Melodien* (1971) could be traced in earlier works dating from 1957 onwards. The re-emergence of melody in the music of the 1960s and 1970s is not, however, peculiar to Ligeti, and Reyland might usefully contextualise his study by exploring distinctions between the approaches of Ligeti and other composers.

Reyland's analytical work focused on the third of the Ten Pieces, taking the form of quasi-Schenkerian graphs and highlighting various interval classes. The discussion could have shown more clearly how the melody itself (bars 10-12) may be

distinguished from the surrounding amorphous textures. For instance, in contrast to the stepwise motion of the lines in the outer sections, the unison melodic line consists of larger intervals and greater registral variation. The textural change is also likely to draw the listener's attention to the melody; none of the lines in the previous section stands out so clearly.

The closing paper, by Björn Heile (University of Southampton), was on 'Musical Irony, Modernism, and the Challenge of Dialogics'. Heile problematized the notion of musical irony, focusing on the third movement of Mahler's Symphony No. 1 ('Titan'). In discussing the 'topography' of musical irony, he rather overstated the role of ambiguity, claiming that it is one of irony's 'decisive features'. In what sense must the musical 'meaning' be ambiguous? As far as the listener is concerned, if the 'ironic meaning' is regarded as intentional, a piece of music can be regarded as unambiguously ironic.

Also contentious was the significance accorded to the entry of the E^b clarinets (bar 45) in the Mahler extract. Heile claimed that this marks the point at which the music may be perceived as ironic, while the preceding music may be seen as ironic in retrospect. But I perceive obvious irony prior to the clarinet entry: the first oboe entry (bars 19ff.), with its acciaccaturas and mix of staccato and legato articulation, conveys a sense of capriciousness that could be regarded as ironic in the context of the sombre minor version of the *Frère Jacques* theme (timpani plus low, legato strings and winds). In other words, a sense of irony is set up by the perceived contrasts in brightness, articulation, and dynamic nuance. Moreover, the oboe material, which is derived from the *Frère Jacques* theme, comes across as an unpredictable element when set against the regularity of both the timpani pulse and the *Frère Jacques* round. In Heile's recording, the performers were perhaps responsible for conveying the 'ironic' meaning because they exaggerated the timbral and character differences.

Heile's remarks on dialogics seemed to be

'tagged on' at the end. He could have given the paper a stronger theoretical grounding by exploring the intricacies of a Bakhtinian interaction with reference to specific musical examples. Although I yearned for a little more analytical and theoretical rigour in this and other respects, the paper did communicate; and Heile's relaxed approach provided an enjoyable and fitting end to a thought-provoking day.

* * *

As is often the case at TAGS Day, twentieth-century music was particularly well represented, and a number of papers focused on music of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. One might say that one speaker (Matthew Riley) held the torch for the 'early music' crowd on this occasion---but only if we can regard as representative a paper referring to the music of C. P. E. Bach. While I very much welcome research papers on twentieth-century music (my own specialism), I wonder where are the scholars of ancient, medieval, renaissance, and early baroque

repertoires. And what of those who study ethnomusicology, pop music, and film? No one-day conference can touch on every genre or historical period; but these and other areas of research have at the very least been under-represented in the TAGS forum. As theorists and analysts, we are---or should be---interested in what other areas of research have to offer, because they may enrich or modify the way(s) that we approach or think about our own research. It might be fruitful if future TAGS day organisers and the SMA committee could encourage scholars of under-represented areas of research to share their theoretical and analytical practices.

Whatever the genre or historical period from which research is derived, more of our conference papers should perhaps be placed in a wider context. Although in recent years there has been some evidence of interdisciplinary research, is it not time that TAGS jumped wholeheartedly onto the interdisciplinary---and indeed multicultural---bandwagon? Perhaps next year we will see TAGS Day marking the millenium by broadening its scope.

Third Triennial British Musicological Societies' Conference 1999 University of Surrey, 15-18 July 1999 Oliver Dahin

Taking in delegates from five separate societies (the British Forum for Ethnomusicology, the Conference on Twentieth-Century Music, the Critical Musicology Forum, the Royal Musical Association, and the Society for Music Analysis), this was, not surprisingly, a conference without an ostensible overarching theme. Even if a previous commitment had not prevented my attendance on 17 July, the fact that sessions ran in parallel, sometimes with as many as four papers being presented simultaneously, would still render the following account a necessarily partial one.

By way of summary, one might simply note that most papers were concerned with the

further contextualization of music, whether through source materials, disciplines other than musicology, or the outside world more generally. Two sessions, for example, discussed the important relationship between music and political influence in the twentieth century. Claire Taylor-Jay (University of Southampton) discussed Hindemith's *Mathis der Maler*, with a particular view to discerning the composer's own political leanings from it. On the one hand, the work follows Nazi doctrine by avoiding excessive dissonance and including several German folksongs; on the other, Hindemith has often been described as having withdrawn into an 'inner emigration' in these years, thereby absolving him of any responsibility with

regard to the intention or effect of his works.

As a pendant to this paper, though situated in a session on 'Music and critical opinion', Marina Frolova-Walker (University of Southampton) discussed the changing tides of fortune experienced by Russian composers in the pages of the official music journal *Sovetskaya Muzika*. Whilst also fascinating in its own right (particularly the story of the changing hierarchy of composers), both this and Taylor-Jay's paper treated the gap between musical works and political doctrines as if they were unproblematic: thus, Taylor-Jay provided a wealth of contextual support surrounding the Nazi assumption of power and subsequent reorganisation of all aspects of public life, but her stated aim to 'explore the connections between contemporary politics and Hindemith's own aesthetic and political beliefs', and to 'show how the fictional and real artists are motivated by a wish to help their people' was difficult to assess independently of the more general arguments, and without the benefit of some musical or analytical insight. Even if it could be demonstrated that Hindemith's use of tonal structures, for example, signified an ambivalence about or even concession towards official Nazi doctrine, how might this contention be squared with the commonly-held notion that similar structures in the works of Shostakovich give rise to ostensibly dissident, non-conformist works?

Clearly, a wider contextualization can provide only half the solution; perhaps a broader reading of Hindemith's application of folk-song, tonal structure, and his compositional procedure, especially with regard to text-setting (perhaps following the lead of scholars such as Lawrence Kramer and Agawu¹) might yield some progress in the understanding of composers and their works in relation to their political regimes.

One of the major problems with contextual studies of musical works is that of finding explanations which can stand up in comparison to the wealth of detail

extractable using more 'traditional' interpretative approaches. In the session entitled 'Living with music', Marion Guck (University of Michigan) spoke on 'Imaginative relations with music' and attempted to examine the nature of our love for the music we study. Using the example of Bach's keyboard Partita in B^b (BWV 825), she described the rising and falling arpeggios, and their union in the harmony, as physical acts which can synchronize with the subjective body and its 'internal rhythms', and reflect the individual's (her) particular love for the work. Her paper implicitly criticized those who shy away from the 'experience' of music, and clearly recalled an earlier study in which she discussed the slow movement of Mozart's Piano Concerto in A, K488.² I must admit to finding both of these attempts sadly oversimplistic, naive, and even embarrassing. What Guck terms 'analysis' is really a regression to a facile kind of description; more troubling is her stated claim that there are no *prima facie* grounds for the argument that cultural readings pre-empt personal readings. Although currently popular, such a view constantly risks selecting works at random in order to prop up and explain 'my' reactions to music; it is more a form of self-analysis than musical reading, and threatens to descend into the chaos of infinite readings and hence irresponsibility towards the particular work in question.

In 'Something obvious about difficult music', which preceded Guck's paper, Joseph Dubiel (Columbia University) dealt with the issue of the difficulty involved in listening to the music of a composer such as Babbitt. Instead of arguing for a 'stable and consistent structure that can be recovered only with difficulty', Dubiel presented Babbitt's music as localized, in which the 'reinterpretation' of events yields the material for successive passages of music, thus altering the 'perceived quality' of that material; in other words, the work becomes a series of provisional moments. Both Guck and Dubiel argue for a move towards the subjective, the corporeal, and the uncertain. The danger lies perhaps in thus hearing music as a play of surface sound which exists in an historical and

analytical vacuum. As Agawu has pointed out,³ these various forms of 'New Musicology' have not yet found a use for the amount of information available via analysis; until they do, it seems that they must remain unlikely candidates for the understanding of music beyond postmodern subjectivism.

One area of scholarship in which the notion of contextualist reading is an absolute prerequisite is that of film-music studies, to which three papers were devoted. Annette Davison (University of Sheffield), in 'Up in flames: love, control, and collaboration in the soundtrack to David Lynch's *Wild at Heart*', presented the valorizing of music as a central issue in the film, in which the 'the concept of "music" in itself' becomes a 'means of escape'. This has been a commonly-noted phenomenon in the field of film-music studies, perhaps most memorably in the various discussions of Hitchcock's *Vertigo*. Davison also illustrated the intrusion of typical Hollywoodian musical signifiers, and the attendant 'modes of spectatorship' that these encourage, as well as Lynch's methods for synchronizing the soundtrack (though not necessarily the music) with details of the diegesis to create a 'musical whole'.

Papers like this one typically raise the question of the status of music within the filmic world; certainly, the presentation of independent soundtracks on CD does not resolve the dilemma. The tendency, surely--and particularly in view of Davison's notion of a 'musical whole'--is to view the music as existing on an (at least) equal footing with the rest of the film, while at the same time implicitly admitting the contradiction that it must also be subject to a contextualist reading. However, as Sally Plowright (University of Birmingham) showed in her paper 'The music in film musicals: the Warner Bros. 1933 formula', soundtracks are almost always created as some kind of collaborative effort; while this is obviously far less true for more recent films than it was in 1933, there can really be no sense in which a film is created on the basis of its music, rather than the other way around. Hence, a film composer

typically composes his music on the basis of his having viewed the film, and with due regard to balance and harmony with the vocal dialogues and so on.

Julie Hubbert (University of South Carolina) closed this session with 'Wagner and the aesthetic of film music', and offered a more theoretical discussion of the dependence of the film-music industry on the German composer. However, while it is undoubtedly true that Wagner has been the primary model for many film composers, Hubbert's suggestion that film may be the 'Wagnerian artwork of the future' cannot ignore the fact that very few films, if any, actually attain to (let alone advance beyond) genuine leitmotivic techniques; contrary to Wagnerian opera, film-music leitmotifs rarely work in contradiction to the action, and therefore lack the sophistication of being able to pre-empt or subvert it.

The conference boasted no fewer than three 'keynote' papers, the first two of which doubled as the inaugural Peter le Huray Memorial Lectures. Tim Rice (UCLA), in 'Metaphor, location, and time in the understanding of music', offered an interesting way of understanding music in the various 'conceptual locations' of the late twentieth century, ranging from the entire world to the individual. Using the example of traditional Bulgarian music from the early years of the century, through the Communist era, to the free-market commercial stage, Rice showed how his model is multi-directional: in the free-market stage, for example, the influence of Western popular music begins to permeate the traditional folk music, but at the same time this allows Bulgarian music to achieve an international audience, even if a limited one. The three axes of his model--time, music, and conceptual location--were charted on a three dimensional graph, each being accorded different status under the various parameters. Thus music is variously seen as sound structure, art, culture, performance event, text, or commodity. Rice's paper presented an ethnomusicological model with ramifications for the sociology of all music, especially given the putative 'global-

village' culture of our century, and seemed to offer a more neutral, universalizing perspective than the kind described by Adorno; in contrast to the latter, Rice offered no particular value judgements on his observations.

The other two keynote speakers were Franco Fabbri (Milan), who spoke on 'Browsing music spaces: categories and the musical mind', and Arnold Whittall, who generously replaced Alexander Goehr at short notice. Although speaking on the subject of 'Fulfilment or betrayal? Twentieth-century music in retrospect', Whittall began in 1805, with Michaelis's remarks on the distinction between the beautiful and the sublime, and then swept forward to critique the recent writings of Taruskin and, particularly, Roger Scruton, in his *The Aesthetics of Music* (Oxford, 1997). For Whittall, the Postlude from Stravinsky's *Requiem Canticles* demonstrated the possibility of a 'positive though not uncritical engagement with traditional techniques' in the music of the twentieth century, while in another example he convincingly debunked Scruton's claims of the non-closural ending of the first movement of Schoenberg's Fourth String Quartet.

One of the problems with importing into musicology scholarship from other disciplines was highlighted in a session devoted to 'Influence and post-structuralism'. Mark McFarland (University of North Texas) described the difference between the commonly-held notion of 'influence as generosity', in which influence is established by one composer's access to and assimilation of another's work, and Harold Bloom's notion of 'influence as anxiety'. By invoking several of Bloom's 'revisionary ratios', McFarland attempted to show how Debussy was influenced by Stravinsky's *Petrushka* in his own ballet *Khamma*. The problem, which was raised during the question session, was that his claim could easily have been made without any particular reference to Bloom at all. Although McFarland did stress that his point was to show that neither the traditional nor the Bloomian theory perfectly accounted for his findings,

the fact remains that the many 'intricacies of this musical relationship' could be explained using conventional musicological terminology.

Greg Laybourn (Goldsmith's College, London) made a similar point in a paper called 'Problems in deconstructive music analysis'; and one might add that the various 'musical deconstructions' which have emerged in recent years rarely amount to much in the Derridean sense (I am thinking of Robert Snarrenberg's reading of the Brahms Intermezzo, Op. 118, no. 2, although more recent work such as Rose Subotnik's reading of Chopin is more sophisticated). The influence on musicology of the dominant French literary criticism of the later twentieth century has thus been largely negligible, although Anthony Pryer (Goldsmith's College, London) attempted to draw its destabilizing of notions of authorship and uniqueness into his discussion of the famous aria 'Possente Spirto' from Monteverdi's *Orfeo*. As he noted, elements of the *passamezzo antico* tradition are both present (as formal model) and absent (dissolved by lyricism) here; furthermore, the idea of authorial identity is made fragile, in that 'Possente Spirto' is based on a specific song-type also used by Caccini, and which had a complex pedigree before Monteverdi came to write this aria. Thus, Pryer argued, Derridean notions of erasure, play, deferral, and so on, can usefully be invoked in music; and although to do so may seem wilful or, strictly speaking, unnecessary, in the case of 'Possente Spirto' such notions at least provide a useful (and usable) set of terms with which to explain the pre-history of a work.

One of the few sessions to discuss (dare one say?) 'music itself' in more detail was 'Sketches and the compositional process'. Most interesting here was an insight into the working methods of György Kurtág given by Rachel Beckles Willson (King's College London, and University of Bristol) in 'A new discovery: Kurtág and analysis'. She focussed on the composer's attempt to analyse works by Debussy and Bartók, in particular using systems devised by Lendvai, which Kurtág also applied to

analyses of his own work. Beckles Willson's thesis was that, given that the composer named Bartók as his primary influence, this information reveals much about how both the music and the composer work. Once again, the question of influence is important here, and it would perhaps be difficult to prove a correlation between these analyses and the other creative achievements of the composer, especially considering that many of the Lendvai-inspired sketches are extremely rudimentary.

The summary impression of a conference as wide-ranging as this is inevitably one of fragmentation. Successive sessions were in no way linked to each other, and so there was predictably little chance for the enrichment of any one particular topic. To that extent, one might be forgiven for coming away with the impression of a certain shallowness. However, what was

clearly displayed was musicology's increasing desire to branch out and explore the past (including its own past) with an increasingly postmodern eye. The fact that some of the papers seemed to have little to say, especially with regard to music, can no doubt be attributed to the fact that the full assimilation of so many divergent disciplines, to the extent that this is genuinely possible, is presently far from complete.

¹See Lawrence Kramer, *Music and Poetry: the Nineteenth Century and After* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1984); Kofi Agawu, 'Theory and Practice in the Analysis of the Nineteenth-Century Lied', *Music Analysis*, 11 (1992), 3-36.

²Marion Guck, 'Music Loving, Or the Relationship with the Musical Work', *Music Theory Online*, 2. 2 (1996).

³Kofi Agawu, 'Analyzing Music Under the New Musicological Regime', *The Journal of Musicology*, 15 (1997), 297.



Contributors to this issue

Oliver Dahin read Music at St Edmund Hall, Oxford, and recently completed the MSt course there, assisted by the award of an SMA Bursary. He will spend most of the academic year 1999-2000 in Berlin, where he will be working on a DPhil thesis dealing with the music of Hanns Eisler.

Lee Tsang is Research Fellow and Lecturer in Music at the Birmingham Conservatoire (University of Central England). He is currently completing a PhD thesis on timbre, music analysis, and music perception at the University of Southampton. His work focuses on the music of the Second Viennese School.

Elena Konstantinou is currently engaged in doctoral research on the keyboard works of Nikos Skalkottas at the University of Reading. As a pianist, she is an active solo and chamber musician.

TAGS Day for Music Postgraduates

Saturday 27 May 2000

**Department of Music
King's College London**

On Saturday 27 May 2000, the Music Department at King's College will host the next **TAGS Day** for Theory and Analysis Graduate Students, sponsored by the Society for Music Analysis. The proceedings will start at 10.00 and end at 17.00, and will take place in the St David's Room at the College (Strand, London WC2).

Students registered for any postgraduate music degree are invited to attend (as are university staff and other interested parties), and those whose research has reached an appropriate stage who would like to read a paper are asked to submit a **brief abstract (200 words or less)** describing their topic by **15 April 2000**. Papers will last 20–25 minutes, and there will be time for discussion after each one, as well as informal opportunities throughout the day for interaction with other students and staff in attendance.

There will be no registration fee. King's College is within easy reach of all mainline stations in London.

**For further information, please contact Julian Littlewood, TAGS Day Director
(julian.littlewood@kcl.ac.uk).**

Please tick as appropriate and return by **15 April 2000** to Julian Littlewood, TAGS Day, 53 Old Road, Headington, Oxford OX3 7JZ (tel: 01865 762666; fax: 020 7848 2326).

I am interested in attending the TAGS Day on 27 May and would like to receive programme details in due course.

I would like to read a paper at the TAGS Day on 27 May. **I enclose an abstract of no more than 200 words.**

Name _____ Institution _____

Address _____

Degree Registration/Staff _____ Contact Telephone _____