



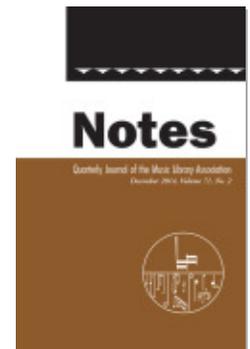
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A Theory of Music Analysis: On Segmentation and Associative Organization by Dora A. Hanninen (review)

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THEORY

A Theory of Music Analysis: On Segmentation and Associative Organization. By Dora A. Hanninen. (Eastman Studies in Music, vol. 92.) Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2012. [xii, 530 p. ISBN 9781580461948. \$82.] Music examples, illustrations, glossary, bibliography, index.

Comprising research spanning over a decade, *A Theory of Music Analysis* constitutes a comprehensive account and a culmination of Dora A. Hanninen's work to date. To the extent that no theory of music is independent of analysis, this work is indispensable as a theory of analysis. The main (philosophical) concern of the book is how to create a precise analytical language, one that can secure a credible interpretation; intertwined with this is a (practical) concern with how to employ this language in a way that reflects the individual analyst's flair. Analytical applications are not set against theory as singular instances of ready-made methods; on the contrary, by negating the usual rhetoric of theory and analysis, Hanninen sets out to provide a kind of *metatheory*, independent of the particular existing music-theoretic tools that it aims to encompass. This level of interaction between Hanninen's overarching metatheory (or simply "theory") and particular, or what she calls *orienting* theories is, I think, most intriguing and—although at times not easy to ascertain—promising.

From the outset, the author wishes to safeguard the "interpretive autonomy and imagination of the individual analysts" who use the theory (p. 4). In this spirit, the book addresses music theorists, analysts, and musicologists. It is ideal for a postgraduate and academic readership and it could serve as a main reference item in analysis courses. Analysis scholars will appreciate its focus on segmentation. From atonal-theoretic to semiotic methods, segmentation relies on interpretation of the music score. Hanninen endeavors to formalize segmentation protocols by constructing three basic types of criteria; although she provides comprehensive lists for the three types, these lists are left open-ended.

The book encompasses a wide range of Western music traditions from the baroque onward. This feature is one among its sev-

eral qualities of methodological flexibility, afforded precisely by the relation between metatheory and orienting theory. From Bach to Brahms and from Varèse to Babbitt, the first half of the book abounds in examples and indicative applications of analytical tools and concepts. The second half comprises a set of six detailed analyses of mostly piano-based music, two European (Beethoven and Debussy), and four American (Nancarrow, Riley, Feldman, and Morris). Analytically, the book employs, and thus presupposes, a firm knowledge of common-practice tonality, serial systems, atonal theory, and Schenkerian analysis. These four approaches suffice to cover the repertoire with which Hanninen engages. Having said that, the flexibility just mentioned should provide enough space for one to apply new orienting theories to analysis (e.g., the often-idiosyncratic approaches by Iannis Xenakis, who is mentioned briefly).

Orientations and *criteria* for segmentation form the theory's conceptual part, while *associative sets* and *organization* lie on the objective end, *segments* being the interface. The schematic of the theory is a synoptic representation of these five levels, which interact within three domains: *sonic* (psychoacoustic), *contextual* (associative), *structural* (theoretical). Thus, orientations refer respectively to disjunction, association, theory; and criteria can be sonic, contextual, structural, or linked as structural-sonic, structural-contextual.

Any analyst of the post-tonal repertoire will appreciate the difficulties around segmentation strategies. Allen Forte's distinction between primary and composite segments, or the practice of imbrication, can be useful, but his reference to contextual criteria for segmentation was left unsystematized. In practice, this was counterbalanced by a refining of the segmentation process according to both those contextual criteria and set relations (*The Structure of*

Atonal Music [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1973], 91). Such practices point to a conundrum of theory and analysis: to what extent should we allow (the orienting) theory to affect our interpretation? Such problematics are usually confronted in analysis classes, where students are required to provide a convincing (as opposed to convenient) segmentation. The three types of criteria that Hanninen's theory provides refer to disjunction (bottom-up feature extraction; sonic), association (by some kind of repetition; contextual), and specific orienting theory (compositional/analytical strategies; structural). The interaction between these three provides a sufficiently rigorous (albeit at times demanding) framework for segmentation. Following this rigorously allows one to mitigate the tension between theory and "the music."

One crucial methodological distinction regarding segmentation is that between "phenosegment" (or "phenoseg") and "genosegment" (or "genoseg"). The former is readily perceptible, observable, supported by several criteria, while the latter refers to the one-dimensional perspective of a single criterion for a potentially-perceptible segment. Genoseg, importantly, is not merely theoretical, as it *is* (potentially) observable; when this is so, observation will call for analytical method (much like the electron microscope of the biologist). This distinction affords different levels of analysis, where genosegs operate "behind the scenes" and their degree of convergence enhances or inhibits phenoseg formation. The most immediate question that arises therefore relates to the analytical object. As phenoseg refers to the "holistic perception" of "an emergent—rather than collective—sound—object" (p. 73), Hanninen is careful enough to clarify that analysis is not a process of segment creation (as in computer modelling of music perception), but an exploration of segments as given to perception. The question comes down to whether analysis is concerned with (the perception of) sound-objects or with the musical score.

According to Theodor Adorno, analysis aspires to an interpretation of the notation into music, a process of discovering the non-written elements of the music by accessing its structure ("On the Problem of

Musical Analysis," *Music Analysis* 1, no. 2 [July 1982]: 172). Notation is fixed in time, but it is unthinkable without the temporal event: temporality is what allows the score to be read silently, without the need for performance (*Quasi una fantasia: Essays on Modern Music* [London; New York: Verso, 1992], 296–97). Hanninen recognizes this in her approach: although she admits a "lower bound for music perception" as postulated in auditory perception and cognitive psychology, hers is not a theory of perception or cognition, but rather of "analysis as an *individual* and *imaginative* account of musical events" (p. 15). This implicates the relation between structure and performance.

The author uses the term "structure" as defined by Felix Salzer (in *Structural Hearing: Tonal Coherence in Music* [New York: Dover, 1962]), that is, as an underlying framework (e.g., voice leading). The structural domain, however, is a reference to "a theory of musical structure," either pre-existing or devised by the analyst (p. 481). Similarly, structural criteria assume "theoretic orientation" (p. 482). There is, therefore, a parallelism between theory and structure. As orienting theories can be devised ad hoc, these ideas appeal to some level of abstraction. It seems to me that there is an implicit distinction between conceptual and musical abstraction, the former taken in the sense of a developed theoretical framework (e.g., Schenkerian), the latter as abstract musical ideas (e.g., Hanninen's voice-leading matrix) that afford such frameworks. This is what I would be inclined to call "structural." Hanninen locates segmentation within the process of "traversing" from the conceptual (what I read as "abstract") to the objective end. The abstract aspect of music is realized in the sonic and contextual domains: "realization is to perception as genosegs are to phenosegs"; "a set of enabling circumstances at the genoseg level" (p. 89). As Hanninen points out, orienting theories can arise from particular analyses and emerge to the abstract level before they can move back "down" to the music through segment formation (p. 429); this causes a shift in perception, which "depends upon realization, but it also involves two other factors: the relative salience of structural versus nonstructural segments in the music

at hand, and the listener's active engagement of the orienting theory that underlies realizations" (p. 89).

Structure and perception—and consequently, structure and performance—are distinct: according to Hanninen, in fully-notated works "the performer can only make adjustments on the sonic domain" and thus any attempt in performance to "bring out the structure" is futile (p. 61). This is partly due to the abstractness of structure and partly due to the fact that associative organization is given by the score. This landscape of associative sets (sets of associated segments) is therefore the focus in the analysis of Terry Riley's *In C*, which takes into account different performances. In this case, segmentation is given by the score and performance is a recomposition of the landscape according to a useful introduction of concepts such as associative (as opposed to temporal) proximity, range of variation, and profile of associative organization. Such concepts (metamusical abstractions?) are numerous; they permeate all analyses and provide for the richness and uniqueness of the author's exceptional synthesis of intellectual strength and musical sensibility.

The exquisite presentation and application of Hanninen's methodology, its nu-

merous examples in a plethora of music-theoretic and analytic instances, as well as its potential and extensions, are too much to cover in this review. The book comprises a most relevant treatise of music analysis and is indispensable to the analyst in search of advancing or developing theoretical frameworks and novel applications, as well as to the teacher, not simply of music analysis, but of training in analysis. If I insist slightly on the idea of musical abstraction, this is due to the intriguing potential that this work allows for not-yet-developed orienting theories, or—to take this further—for a kind of musical abstraction that is impossible to fully theorize upon. This might point to Adorno's call for a rethinking of the object of analysis and of the "musical subject" as "the reflection of musical experience upon itself" (*Quasi una fantasia* [London; New York: Verso, 1992], 321). The fact that *A Theory of Music Analysis* focuses on the contextual subschematic (from orientation, to segments, to associative organization) is what, I think, affords the space for such reflection on and of purely musical ideas.

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