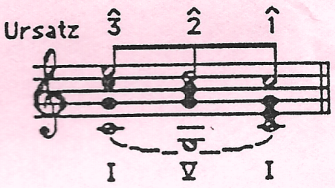

Texas Society for Music Theory

PROCEEDINGS
VOLUME 7

Abstracts of Presentations
from the
Fourteenth Annual Meeting
at
Texas Tech University
February 28-29, 1992

Copies may be requested from:

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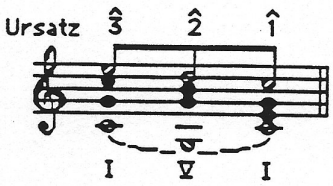

TEXAS SOCIETY for MUSIC THEORY

FOURTEENTH ANNUAL MEETING--FEBRUARY 28-29, 1992
TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY, LUBBOCK, TEXAS

Friday, February 28 MUSIC BUILDING, ROOM M 248

8:30 am **TSMT Registration**

9:00-10:00 am Welcome and Paper Session I
Wayne Hobbs, Director of the School of Music, Texas Tech University
Norman L. Wick: "Shifted Downbeats in Classical and Romantic Music"
Ben Yang: "The Subdominant and Motive in Brahms's String Quartet, Op. 51, No. 1 in C minor"

10:30-11:30 am Paper Session II
Kathryn Hoppe: "Melodic Dictation Strategies and Common Errors"
Joán C. Groom-Thornton: "Building an Undergraduate Understanding of Twentieth-century Analysis"

12:00 noon TSMT Luncheon, Green Room of the University Center

1:45 pm Keynote Address
Allen Winold (Indiana University): "Recent Studies in Music Cognition and their Application to Music Theory Teaching"

3:00 pm Paper Session III
Michael McVay: "Scriabin: A New Theory of Harmony and Structure"
Kristin M. Elliott: "Symmetry and Parallelism in the Serial Works of Igor Stravinsky"
Joseph Shuffield, Jr.: "Nattiez's Tripartition as an Analytical Strategy for Britten's Turn of the Screw"

Saturday, February 29

9:00 am Lecture/Demonstration Music Building, Room M 01
Steven Paxton, "Music Fundamentals at the End of a Century: Electroacoustics, MIDI and Software Tools"

11:00 am TSMT Members' Business Meeting Music Building, Room M 248

Program Selection panel:
Gene Biringer (Texas Tech University), Dennis Cranford (University of Texas at Arlington)
Rebecca Jemian (Lamar University), Rosemary Killam (University of North Texas)

Texas Society for Music Theory Executive Board:
Roger Graybill, President (Univeristy of Texas-Austin), James Bennighof, Treasurer (Baylor University)
Don McManus, Secretary (Angelina College), Kathryn Hoppe (Odessa College)
Gene Biringer (Texas Tech University), TSMT 14 Host Representative

SHIFTED DOWNBEATS IN CLASSICAL AND ROMANTIC MUSIC

NORMAN L. WICK

Patterns of metrical accent heard in musical compositions of the classical and romantic periods are occasionally at odds with the notated bar lines, so that a felt downbeat is sometimes shifted to a different part of the measure for some portion of the piece.

Any of several phenomena may take meter out of phase with the bar lines, resulting in this certain rhythmic and notational peculiarity. The cause of the shifted downbeats may be the use of *hemiola*, the employment of written-out *fermati* or *ritardandi*, a persistent shift of grouping, an unspecified metrical change, or an elision of less than one measure of material.

Examples from the works of Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Chopin and Brahms exhibit the restatement of material having a contrasting rhythmic placement. The identification of the sources of each irregular orientation, from among those possibilities listed above, clarifies the relationship of the notation to the normal perception of the metrical pulse.

Reductive sketches further clarify the effects of the shifted downbeats upon both the middleground linear functions and, if present, the hypermeter.

THE SUBDOMINANT AND MOTIVE IN BRAHMS'S STRING QUARTET, OP. 51, NO. 1 IN C MINOR

BEN YANG

In June 1869, when Fritz Simrock, Brahms's publisher, asked Brahms for a string quartet, Brahms answered, "Seeing that Mozart took exceptional trouble to write six beautiful quartets, so we want to use our utmost exertions to make one or two passable ones." In 1873 Brahms finally completed the two Op. 51 quartets, C-minor and A-minor respectively, and sent them to Simrock for publication.

On one occasion Brahms told his friend, Alwin Cranz, that he had written and destroyed twenty string quartets during these years. Although there is no way of knowing exactly how many years Brahms meant by "these years," it is not difficult to guess that Brahms experimented with the string quartet and obviously struggled with those first attempts at the genre. Undoubtedly, a string quartet was brewing in his mind from a very early stage of his creative life. At any rate, string quartets appear to have lain dormant or have been brewing in the composer's mind for some time.

Brahms's fondness for subdominant harmony, the "dark" side of the falling fifth as opposed to the "brightness" of the dominant harmony, is not a new fact. However, discussions on the compositional reasons behind Brahms's fondness of the subdominant are scarce. It may be of interest to see that Brahms's rather somber subdominant harmonic coloring via the subdominant division seems to have derived from his unfolding of an internal energy of a motive which can well be identified in the subdominant environment.

The streamline flow of a motive is so essential in Brahms's music that its influence is felt in every aspect of his music. The departure from the structural norms in Brahms's music in general is due to his emphatic motivic play whose priority overrides the concerns of the normative harmonic aspects of a certain frame.

In general, so powerful is the opening motive in Brahms's music that it carries immediately to the intrinsically motive-related harmony, the subdominant. The subdominant harmony (or subdominant division), whose momentum grows from the beginning, finds its many strategic places in the Op. 51 string quartets.

Consequently, subdominant or flat side harmonies, in place of the dominant or sharp side harmonies, are frequently called for because they work well, *per se*, in identifying the main motive. It is intrinsically intertwined with the subdominant.

As the opening motive pervades along with the subsequent music invariably tracing back to the opening motive, the resulting deviant harmony may find its source from the in-born character of the motive. Therefore, motivic priority over harmony, as seen in the Op. 51 quartets, calls for the subdominant region instead of the customary dominant region in the conventional harmonic scheme of a form.

MELODIC DICTATION
STRATEGIES AND COMMON ERRORS

KATHRYN HOPPE

The paper reports the results of a study designed to examine notation strategies used by musicians when taking melodic dictation, document common pitch and rhythm errors, and ascertain whether dictation errors were due to misperception or notation error. A computer was used to document the evolution of the notation of each melody. After each melodic dictation was completed, the musician was asked to sing the melody. This response was recorded and later compared with the transcription to determine whether errors were the result of misperception or improper notation. Errors made during the transcription process and errors that remained in the final answers were tabulated, and common errors were identified. Data were also compared according to type of melody (familiar, unfamiliar), serial position within the melody, and experience group (freshmen, sophomores, professional musicians). All physical responses that were used to aid the dictation process were documented.

Results showed that musicians preferred to notate in a consecutive manner from beginning to end, especially when transcribing familiar melodies. Other orders of notation, and sketching of scale degree numbers and/or durations above and below the staff, were found more often in unfamiliar melody transcriptions than in familiar melody transcriptions. Although familiar melodies required less time to transcribe, there was little difference in accuracy between familiar and unfamiliar melody transcriptions.

The most prevalent type of pitch error was the notation of strings of correct intervals on incorrect scale degrees. This occurred most often in conjunct motion sections of a melody. Another common type of pitch error was the notation of incorrect intervals. This occurred most often in disjunct sections of a melody. Incorrect intervals were usually underestimated in size. Common rhythm errors included metric shifts, difficulty with dotted rhythm patterns, and the notation of simple meter patterns in compound meter melodies.

Both pitch and rhythm accuracy were highest in the beginning serial position and lowest in the end serial position. Professional musicians produced the most accurate results, but there was little difference in accuracy between freshmen and sophomore music students. Vocalizations showed that most melodies were perceived correctly, and errors were due to incorrect notation.

BUILDING AN UNDERGRADUATE UNDERSTANDING OF TWENTIETH-CENTURY ANALYSIS

CONCEPTS, TERMS AND TECHNIQUES FOR A SHORT COURSE IN MUSICAL APPLICATIONS

JOÁN C. GROOM-THORNTON

Many undergraduate "core" theory courses now accommodate some twentieth-century analysis. This study is usually confined to a semester or even a part of a semester. While several books have recently been published for this study, they often contain more information than can be accomplished in the time allotted, or they soon accelerate from a basic level into too advanced a level of mathematical set theory. Or they may teach basic techniques of set theory and dodecaphonic analysis, but fail to move beyond the technical basis to more relevant musical questions. This paper will outline a concise, coordinated focus with terms to assist analysis and facilitate musical applications.

DODECAPHONIC ANALYSIS

Beginning with row analysis provides a basis for techniques which can be later reapplied in atonal theory, as labelings of the larger sets (rows) are reflected in the smaller groupings. Four terms I have developed to assist students in defining the row and its musical usages are: (1) **contrapuntal-linear**, (2) **time-slice**, (3) **melody and accompaniment**, and (4) **sets**. In addition, three main terms which define the composer's logic and structure in row choices are: (1) **intersection**, (2) **invariance**, and (3) **combinatoriality** (all levels). These two sets of criteria will quickly move the students past the point of just identifying row forms used, and will involve them in more musically and structurally relevant significances which are often otherwise missed.

PITCH-CLASS SET ANALYSIS

The fourth definition for the musical use of the row (**sets**) provides an introduction to techniques to be explored in this section. At this point, the techniques for determining "BNO" (prime form) and the interval vector (content) should be introduced as these two concepts provide the basis for musical conclusions in set comparisons. The three levels of comparison are: (1) "like" sets, (2) like-sized "unlike" sets, and (3) unlike-sized sets. The second category compares sets in terms of close relationship potentials as outlined by Allen Forte in his Structure of Atonal Music (Yale University Press, 1973). The goal in applying these comparative analysis techniques is to use them to determine structural and musical principles in the music. The techniques should not be an end in themselves!

In summary, these two areas of contemporary analysis will build a good foundation of techniques to be used and musical conclusions to be drawn by the college music student.

SCRIABIN: A NEW THEORY OF HARMONY AND STRUCTURE

MICHAEL MCVAY

Alexander Scriabin's method of pitch selection in his atonal works has been a subject for debate and speculation since even before his early death in 1915. Theories ranging from harmonic to set theory have been introduced, seeking to shed light on this composer's unique, unclassifiable musical style.

The "mystic chord" gained widespread attention when Scriabin based Prometheus, Op. 60 entirely on transpositions of this six-note sonority. Afterwards, Scriabin announced that he was extending his six-note "principle" to nine. Theorists at the time found mystic chords in the atonal post-Prometheus music, but also mystic chords with unexplainable "added tones."

More recently, theorists have analyzed Scriabin's atonal music using the octatonic scale. "Extra" notes are explained as traditional non-harmonic tones, such as passing tones and appoggiaturas. However, some non-scale tones play a prominent role in the music and do not resolve through voice leading.

Most theorists seem to ignore the fact that the mystic chord (C, F#, B-flat, E, A, D) and the octatonic scale (C, D-flat, E-flat, E, F#, G, A, B-flat) are irrevocably linked: they both contain the same "French-sixth" sonority (C, F#, B-flat, E) that serves as the base of the mystic chord. Furthermore, five out of the six tones of the mystic chord are octatonic.

The mystic chord and an inversion can be found even in Scriabin's earlier tonal works, functioning harmonically. The "French-sixth" basis retains all four pitches when transposed a tritone, allowing for tritone bass movement, alternating sonorities a tritone apart, and tritone-based tonal structures.

This theory speculates that these tonal experiments led directly to Prometheus, and then to his atonal method of composition, which stems from the mystic chord, its inversion at the major third, and the transposition of these two chords at the tritone. These four chords share the same invariant harmonic basis: the "French-sixth" sonority. The quartet of chords combine to form two nine-note scales. Scale #1 is the octatonic scale, plus one extra note, found at the top of the generating mystic stack. Scale #2 consists of seven tones from the octatonic scale, plus two extra tones a tritone apart, found at the extremities of all four related mystic chords.

Scale #1 and/or scale #2 account for every pitch in several entire works. The "added tones" from harmonic analyses are octatonic. The "extra" tones in the octatonic analyses are accountable by the mystic chord. Thus, the pitch which is added to the octatonic scale is not haphazard, but serves to indicate the primary functioning mystic chord.

The works are composed in harmonic blocks. The succession of phrases and motives directly corresponds to the changing of harmony (or the transposition of scales). Also, the usages of the scales and the octatonic subsets are directly related to the overall structures of the works. Therefore, this theory reintroduces the harmonic factor into the compositional style of Scriabin.

SYMMETRY AND PARALLELISM IN THE SERIAL WORKS OF IGOR STRAVINSKY

KRISTIN M. ELLIOTT

In Conversations, Robert Craft addresses the following question to Igor Stravinsky: "I have often heard you say 'an artist must avoid symmetry, but he may construct parallelisms.' What do you mean?"

Stravinsky replies:

> ...[Piet] Mondrian's "Blue Facade" is a nearer example of what I mean. It is composed of elements that tend towards symmetry but in fact avoids symmetry in subtle parallelisms. Whether or not the suggestion of symmetry is available in the art of architecture, I do not know. However, painters who paint architectural subject matter and borrow architectural designs are guilty of it. And only the master musicians have managed to avoid it in periods where architecture has embodied aesthetic idealisms, i.e., when architecture was symmetry and symmetry was confused with form itself...

Those remarks by Stravinsky serve as the point of departure for this essay. After establishing a working definition of the terms "symmetry" and "parallelism", my discussion turns to the examination of specific examples from Canticum Sacrum, Movements, Sermon, Narrative and Prayer and The Flood. Within these examples, elements of symmetry and parallelism are found in the employment of pitch materials, in the construction of tone rows as well as the use of specific intervals, and in the structure of individual movements and entire works. It is obvious that the aspects of symmetry and parallelism found in these examples are integral parts of these works. But, the question that comes to mind is what was Stravinsky's intent when he incorporated these elements into his music? Does he intend them to be an aid to the audience, i.e. a way to make his music more comprehensible to the listener, or, are they merely a compositional aid for the composer? Another question along these same lines is are these symmetries and parallelisms aural, visual or both?

In the second part of my discussion, I propose that the above questions are addressed best by viewing symmetry and parallelism on two different levels---one that is factual or measurable and another that is experienced. This distinction considers those aspects of symmetry and parallelism that are gleaned from a study of the score as measurable and those that are revealed through an aural association with the music as experienced. My discussion concludes with a reexamination of the examples presented at the outset taking into account these newly proposed levels of symmetry and parallelism.

NATTIEZ'S TRIPARTITION AS AN ANALYTICAL STRATEGY FOR BRITTEN'S TURN OF THE SCREW

JOSEPH SHUFFIELD, JR.

Jean-Jacques Nattiez's semiological tripartition, as an analytical model, thoroughly addresses the multidimensional problems of opera analysis. It is thus capable of addressing the unique complexities of Benjamin Britten's The Turn of the Screw, especially those arising from the opera's relationship to the original novella by Henry James.

The tripartition is based upon Nattiez's definition of the musical work (or any work of art) as a **symbolic form**, a collection of signs capable of generating a complex web of **interpretants**, which are also signs. Meaning "is the **constructive** assignment (by either composer or audience) of a web of interpretants to a particular symbolic form." The tripartition assigns three dimensions to a symbolic form such as The Turn of the Screw: it is the result of a **poietic** or creative process which is physically embodied in a **trace**---the score and performances---accessible to the five senses, and receivers or audiences, when confronted by the form, construct a meaning or meanings through an **esthesic** or active perceptual process.

Henry James, especially sensitive to the creative nature of the esthesic process, uses literary devices in his novella (subjective narrative, ambiguous pronoun reference) which allow readers to create meaning for the work based upon their personal experiences; for example, readers are free to interpret the ghosts in the story as objectively real, or as products of the governess's imagination. The degree to which the opera reproduces this deliberate ambiguity has been the focus of much criticism and analysis---Myfanwy Piper, at Britten's insistence, wrote words for the ghosts to sing, and featured them in scenes from which the governess is initially absent, ostensibly removing much of the ambiguity present in the original story.

Examining both the novella and the opera from within the framework of the tripartition clarifies this question, and illustrates the degree to which the opera exploits the creative nature of the esthesic dimension: Piper's "objectification" of the story creates ambiguities, rather than eliminating existing ones, through her characterizations of the children as well as the ghosts. Britten deepens these ambiguities through his music, employing musical processes analogous to James's literary devices; these include harmonic structures and processes generated from a tone-row, thematic development and association, and timbral contrasts. This examination reveals that Britten's and Piper's sensitive response to the characters of the children and the ghosts creates additional opportunities for construction meaning not found in James's novella.