

*J: Novack paper: A Tribute to
Felix Salzner*

Folder J

In addition to the following scanned pages, this folder also contains a listing of all of the files in the Oster Collection, illustrations from Schenker's *Kontrapunt*, a listing of the table of contents of Schenker's *Kontrapunt* Part VII and VIII, and copies of handwritten notes by Jeanette Schenker from Part VIII (all of these items were compiled by Hedi Siegel).

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FELIX SALZER- mentor, colleague, friend: - We have come together to join his beloved and devoted wife, Hedi, and the loving relatives who have come from near and afar, to take note of the unique qualities of this man, and to affirm them in our memory. Had he not existed among us, the lives of many of us would have been radically different. We all cherish him as a caring and loving human being whose departure has inflicted upon us a great personal loss. Deep as are my personal feelings, I wish to speak of Felix Salzer as a humanistic musician-intellectual who not only contributed immeasurably to the institutions with which he was associated, but whose dedication and perseverance in the furtherance of his concepts has assured him a permanent position of great importance in the history and study of music theory, not only in the United States but in other countries as well, especially Canada, England, Australia and Israel. In this brief time I can comment only on a few salient features of his work.

Felix Salzer was an intimate pupil of the Viennese theorist, Heinrich Schenker, who only within very recent years has been acknowledged as the greatest musical thinker of this century. Felix has done more to perpetuate Schenker's theories and to make them known to an ever-widening public than any other person.

The events that outline Felix Salzer's biographical continuity are skeletal, merely accounting the years in relation to associ-

ations, positions and publications. Beneath the surface of these facts of life that can be found in the leading musical encyclopedias are the riches of the intellectual-musical forces that developmentally led Felix in his life-struggle to articulate a world of ideas. In his earliest years he was conditioned by a cultural environment of the highest possible level. His parental home was the scene of intensive musical activity characteristic of the golden years of Vienna. As a youngster he heard chamber music performed in his home by leading musicians of the era. He could have chosen for himself any future professional life possible in early twentieth century Vienna, but music was his calling. There was no other choice to be made. His parallel development as a musician - with a conservatory diploma in conducting-and a Ph.D. in musicology reveal the early fusion of musician and scholar, and it was with this amalgam of forces that he was drawn to Heinrich Schenker and his revolutionary theories of tonal structure. He also found in Schenker's theories the basis for understanding the continuity of the historical development of musical structure in Western Civilization. As a full-fledged musicologist - the student of the eminent Dr. Guido Adler - Professor of Musicology at the University of Vienna - Felix was totally prepared and conditioned to undertake a study of the history of tonality from its earliest manifestations in 12th century polyphony through the 16th century. This study, published in Vienna in 1935, when Felix was but 31 years old, was a book of great adventure and originality. I have never forgotten the excitement he generated within me when I first heard him lecture in 1940 at the then Mannes

School of Music on the music of the 13th and 14th centuries. Suddenly the deep, dark recesses of the past were illuminated, and I envisaged instantly a panorama of the historical reality of triadic tonality.

Structural Hearing, first published in 1952, developed through his earlier years of teaching at Mannes, represents the central core of Felix's work. It evolved not as a pure reiteration of Schenker's doctrines but as the far more difficult task of designing the communication of these theories to the student in moving from the simple to the complex progressively and systematically, always leading the student to hear the direction and flow of musical events as organic units - small and large - hence the title, Structural Hearing.

Strange and semantically difficult as the title seemed to us at that time, we understand it now - for Felix gave the abstract theoretical concepts of Schenker the significance of meaning in human, experiential terms. The overwhelmingly didactic import and success of this work embraced some remarkable achievements, such as the innovative clarification of the meanings and functional differences of harmony and counterpoint, important new insights into the nature of musical form as the fusion of design and structure, and the development of tonal coherence not only in early music but beyond Brahms and into the 20th century.

In a later book, Counterpoint in Composition, written together with his young colleague and former pupil, Carl Schachter, the principles of so-called species counterpoint, studies by suffering students for so many decades, and regarded by them as arid, pure exercise with no relevance to music literature, - these species now were exposed and related intimately in a beautifully progressive procedure to actual compositions of various styles and periods. The last chapter, with examples spanning 450 years of music, is in itself a major contribution to theory and the study of composition, as well as to the understanding of music history.

Finally, there are the five volumes of The Music Forum, and the concluding volume scheduled for publication in two parts within a year, all published in series at various times since 1967. First

begun together with Felix's dear colleague, William Mitchell of Columbia University, the essays embodied in these volumes represent Felix's great wish to provide a true forum for Schenkerian and other analytical studies neither constrained by limitations of space nor excluded from other media of publication because of the viewpoints expressed. The collection, a fulfillment of Felix's dream, covers a wide range of music history, and includes studies of autographs, translations of writings by Schenker and others, and various analytical articles. Felix contributed an article to each volume. While they are all important, I must mention mention Felix's study of theme and variations in Mozart's String Trio K.563. This study is a work of singular beauty and importance, and represents only one of a group of analyses which Felix had hope to complete as a large-scale work on them and variations. He was engaged in this most significant endeavor when his final illness overwhelmed his creative powers. Felix's intellectual personality was extraordinary. He was exceptionally open-minded, and frequently accepted differing opinion from younger colleagues and also from students - a rare and precious quality in academia.

The vitality, beauty, force of discipline, and spirit of Felix Salzer have been passed on to his countless students, in the classroom and through his writings, and they will continue to flow through them to succeeding generations. Thus his achievements will endure just as does the music he so dearly loved, such as the works we are about to hear this afternoon.

It has been a great privilege and honor to offer these very few words in tribute to FELIX SALZER.