

*A: Novack's Analysis of
Pre-Baroque Music/Historical
Musicology; letters & programs*

Folder A –

In addition to the following scans, this folder also contains photocopies of the article “Recent Approaches to the Study of Harmony” (a book review) by Saul Novack from the journal *Perspectives of New Music*, Spring-Summer 1964 (Volume 2, Number 2), which is available in the UNT Music Library. In addition, there is a photocopy of “The Analysis of Pre-Baroque Music” by Saul Novack, which can be found in *Aspects of Schenkerian Theory* (ed. By David Beach) – MT 6. A766 1983. Finally, there is also a photocopy of the article “Aspects of the Creative Process in Music” by Saul Novack, which can be found in the journal *Current Musicology* issue 36 (from 1983).

Dear Saul,

Jan 2, 1992



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I hope all is well with you and your wife. It's too bad we couldn't meet over Christmas break; I was looking forward to seeing you. Things have been quite hectic. Upon our return to New London, I had a lot of exams, etc. to grade in order to get the marks in on time. Once that responsibility was out of the way could I begin to think of other matters: hence this letter - a somewhat delayed response to your message. I really do hope all is well with you and will give you a call in a few days.

I have spoken with Noel + Clara about you at some length and all three of us remember the wonderful times we had sitting in your classroom. I know that Noel deeply appreciates your teaching! even today, he remembers some of the things you said years ago. I am hoping that at some point the two of us might visit you.

My work is going well. I can't remember if I mentioned that Leon Botstein is going to do a concert at the Bard Festival based on my



Strauss research. I have boiled part of my diss. down to an article, which will be publ. in a volume of Strauss studies (Princeton Univ. Press). I will give a public lecture prior to the concert on Aug. 23, 1992. (If you can make it, I will try to get you and your wife tickets.)*

Next September, I have been invited to address the International Bruckner Symposium in Linz. They are paying my way from the UK and my entire expenses while in Linz! I am also hoping to read papers at Cambridge and the Hebrew University — but this is still tentative at present. All in all, my work is beginning to achieve international recognition.

With regard to my teaching position, I have become rather fatalistic. They have my teaching evaluations for the past three years, they have letters from seven top-rate scholars, they have my articles publ. in 19th C Music, Musical Quarterly,

* Actually there will be two performances this summer. The other one will be on July 25, 1992 at Harkness, the Connecticut Symphony Orchestra. I think that this will be a good performance! If you can make it, I will try to get you tickets for this. Perhaps this event will be easier for you to make because of proximity to N.Y.C.

②

Theory + Practice etc.. I have good, respectful relationships with my colleagues + students. If all of this does not earn me my position, what will?

Where I feel I really could use your help is with Mr. Cirker. Assuming that I do hold onto my job, I would like to spend the next three years working on two books: 1) A study of Richard Strauss's Metamorphosen and 2) An investigation of a no. of Schenker's working manuscripts. With regard to 1), I spoke to Lewis Lookwood at the Chicago AMS. He has a series: ~~the~~ "studies of musical genesis" publ. by Oxford. I showed him my publications to date and discussed the project with him. He was, so I am told by a mutual friend, quite impressed with my work and has asked me to draw up a book outline. With regard to 2), I made the proposal for a book in Dover's manuscript facsimile series. You wrote the letter. I have been waiting and waiting to hear back from Mark — and so far nothing has happened.

I think that a follow-up communication directly to Hayward Cirker from you might just tip the balance. ~~There is~~ ~~the~~ A book of this nature — a number of high-quality color reproductions of Schenker's working drafts with informative commentary — could sell well. Furthermore, they have promised me more help if I should stay at Connecticut College. I would only have to teach 2 + 2 courses next year + there are other forms of assistance. Thus, I would really like to devote myself to this project. Given Mark's background, he would be able to offer excellent editorial help.

Jan 6, 1992

Dear Saul,

I received your letter today! I hope that your surgery went well. Thank-you for writing to Noel. I know that you are one of the people he most respects — whatever you say will be taken seriously.

Last night, I took Debbie to the airport. Each time I put her on the plane for another month of separation becomes more painful; I am really hoping that this will be the last time. As soon as we know that I have a job here, Debbie will leave her job and we will sell our house in Toronto.

You asked me some time ago if I still consider myself Jewish. Yes I do. I thought that you might be interested that I am working on two projects on "Jewish" themes. One of these is a study of the Jewish element in Dmitri Shostakovich's music. This is a joint project with Solomon Volkov, author of Testimony - The Memoirs of D.S. My contribution is a technical discussion of what I call "the enharmonics of despair." Also, Debbie is still deeply involved with the Jewish community in Toronto; I maintain a connection through her. I am in touch with Eytan Agmon in Israel and am hoping to make a trip there next December. Kamien + I have corresponded about a possible lecture at the Hebrew University.

I am going to try to send you a copy of my paper for the Schenker conference, probably end of February. It will, I hope, be easier to understand than the proposal, which was too "boiled down."

In the meantime, warmest regards,

Tim

P.S. You asked me for a cv with list of publ.. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~
~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ The Schenker article in MQ
 has been delayed an issue because I made some changes
 and corrections.

Analysis and Historical Musicology

A convincing Schenkerian analysis of any composition adds considerably to the understanding of that particular work which, when placed within the context of the historical framework, contributes to our knowledge of music history. Historical musicology has been very slow in accepting the value of such analysis, the resistance at times marked by rejection and even outright hostility. Within recent years there has been a growing acceptance of the importance of Schenker's theories, as for example the subvention provided by the American Musicological Society for the publication of *Free Composition*. Schenkerian oriented studies of historical problems have been appearing in publications and dissertations in recent years, though such studies can be found as early as 1935 in Felix Salzer's ground-breaking work, *Sinn und Wesen der Abendländischen Mehrstimmigkeit*..

I do not question the value, methods, or contributions of historical musicology. One critical area, however, the discussion of the internal nature of musical compositions, has been descriptive rather than analytical. I need not describe the usual concentration on thematic content and the identification of modulations. Sometimes such descriptions are helpful and add to our aesthetic understanding. This is the area of so-called "style analysis". Historical musicology, ever since Guido Adler, has leaned heavily on such procedure. How can Schenkerian analysis fill the void created by these descriptive processes?

Analysis of the analyses is necessary. We must establish criteria that enable our analysis to determine the structural style of a composition. The final graph must be examined critically to determine its structural style. It is obvious that the graph of a 16th century piece is markedly different from a graph of a piece by Bach, and that a graph of a Bach fugue differs from a Bach courante, for example. Many features must be examined, such as, to cite a few: the nature of the outer voices and their relationship to each other; the exchange of voices, both immediate and distant; the character and length of prolongations, and their relationship to thematic elements; the rhythmic features of the linear analysis; register, registral shifts, and transfer of voices;

these, briefly mentioned, and many other critical factors, must be applied to middleground as well as to foreground. For example, motivic factors in the middleground are very important. The discussion of the background likewise is essential. Where do the structural tones occur, and how are they related to the spatial disposition and outer form? What are the harmonic and/or contrapuntal features of the background? All such features, including the ones mentioned, have been discussed in past articles and papers. They must be directed towards a systematic examination of structural style. Particularly valuable is the critical comparative evaluation of a group of compositions. To do so requires the interlocking of structure and thematic design. We are becoming increasingly aware of the need to extend the Schenkerian direction to embrace all the facets of a composition. Each genre generates its own requirements. Thus we can begin to shed light on a composer's structural style within a genre, or within his various genres. Most notable in this direction have been the various Schenkerian- oriented studies involving the relationship of music and words, or the more complex, music and drama. Further, can we begin to formulate aesthetic judgments from the analysis of analyses? I believe that the convincing graph reveals a world of beauty that can be felt and can be articulated. Thus, interlocked with the thematic content, the graph reveals affective forces generated by the composition.

The inter-relationship of theory and practice is of prime importance, with already notable achievements in a number of studies. More remains to be done.

The greatest void to be filled in by Schenkerian studies still lies in the history of polyphony before c. 1600. There are fundamental problems that cannot be solved by traditional methods of counterpoint-harmony. The juxtaposition of modality succeeded by tonality, vis-a-vis Renaissance-Baroque still remains a basic historical misconception. This is a most fertile area for further study. One should be cautioned however that the most valuable contributions can be made only with a solid background in historical musicology. There are a number of fascinating problems that require Schenkerian-oriented investigation.

Another relatively neglected area in historical musicology lies in its failure to deal ^{sufficiently} ~~successfully~~ with the nature of composition and the changes in musical syntax that occurred at the end of the 19th century and the early part of this century, at least to embrace Mahler, Strauss, Debussy and Ravel, for example. I emphasize "for example". First of all, we need textbooks to expand the already available and excellent material for teaching our students the chromaticism of this period, to include Wagner!

Published reviews of traditional writings can be helpful in focussing attention on the relevance of Schenkerian analysis to the discussion of actual compositions. I remember a review by William Mitchell that appeared in *Musical Quarterly* in 1968 in which he convincingly challenged through the use of linear analysis the author's approach in his study of Beethoven's string quartets, a work highly regarded by other reviewers.

It should be noted that I frequently use the term "Schenkerian-oriented". I imply that in historical studies in which a wide ambitus of the subject matter is being examined, it is not always necessary to present foreground, middleground and background levels. The flexibility in the use of foreground alone, or foreground and middleground, may be determined by the nature of the problem being considered.

The rapidly growing body of students nurtured by linear thinking and hearing, and Schenkerian discipline, augurs well for the future. Among such trained students surely there will be many who will make their careers primarily in the field of historical musicology. In various ways, they will use what they have learned.

The following are selected topics as examples of historical studies to which Schenkerian analysis may be applied.

Medieval Era

1. Triadic frameworks in early polyphony: the twelfth century.
2. Intervallic determinism: studies in the Las Huelgas manuscript (thirteenth century).
3. Clausula studies in W2.
4. Settings to the sustained tone (two, three, and four voices) in the thirteenth century.
5. What is old and what is new in the Machaut Mass?

Renaissance

1. Cantus- Firmus mass settings of L'Homme Armé (a comparative study of selected compositions). [an excellent dissertation topic]
2. Giovanni Gabrieli's identification of mode in keyboard works: a guide to tonal organization.
3. The significance of 16th century dance in the study of the history of tonal structure.
4. Josquin's *Missa L'Homme Armé super voces musicales* : the art of deceptive unity.
5. The melodic paraphrase in Motet and Mass composition: how do the added tones function?

Baroque

1. Bach's Chorale *Herzlich tut mich verlangen* : a reconsideration of the variants.
2. The concerti of Antonio Vivaldi: a reappraisal.
3. The organ fantasias of J.S. Bach.

Classic-Romantic

1. Studies of the scherzo: The string quartets of Haydn.
2. The keyboard fantasia after J.S. Bach: selected studies.
3. Linear intensification and structural romanticism: the late quartets of Beethoven.
4. Schubert's Heine settings: the order of the songs reconsidered (on the basis of the poetic evidence and inter-related musical structures).
5. Studies of the scherzo: the decline of the scherzo in Schumann and Bruckner.
6. (Post Romantic) The whole-tone affair in Debussy (structural considerations).

Saul Novack 3/92