




COMMUNICATION: CONFERENCE REPORT

## International Conference on Musical Form

Durham University, 21–23 June 2021

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The 2021 International Conference on Musical Form, originally planned to take place in Newcastle in 2020 but eventually held online a year later, presented a rich array of topics related primarily to small- to large-scale aspects of musical forms and structures. The conference, supported by the Society for Music Analysis Formal Theory Study Group, included ten sessions, two keynote talks, a poster session and a roundtable. The historical range of works under consideration was likewise amply varied, with talks and sessions dedicated to the music of leading nineteenth-century figures such as Liszt, Wagner and Bruckner and their cultural milieu, to the music of fin-de-siècle Vienna, to post-1900 music by Elgar and Debussy, and to a few later twentieth-century composers. Some of the talks, and especially the posters, went beyond the typical purview of formal analysis to consider other repertoires, such as pop music, R&B, Brazilian music and more. This variety notwithstanding, many of the papers presented at the conference were directed at the music of the so-called 'long eighteenth century'. Readers of this journal would have presumably found special interest in talks related to this latter group, most of which were included in the sessions 'Classical Form', 'History of *Formenlehre*' and 'Beethoven and the Romantic Generation', discussed below.

In her paper 'Do Musical Forms Migrate? – Aspects of the Popularization and Distribution of the Small Rounded Two/Three-Part Form in Europe of the 18th Century' – which is a part of a larger corpus study dedicated to Viennese music – Beate Kutschke (Universität Salzburg) offered a possible musical link between the cultural centres of London and Vienna. Specifically, Kutschke argued that SRTTF (small rounded two/three-part forms), which were immensely popular in collections of folksong, popular song, dance and ballad opera published in 1710s–1760s London (especially those featuring numbers from *The Beggar's Opera*), later inspired similar formal conventions in instrumental works of the so-called Viennese classical style. In 'Reinforcing Weak Expositional Midpoints Using Extra-Formal Insertions' Rebecca Long (University of Louisville) examined two peculiar slow movements from Luigi Boccherini's early string quartets Op. 2 (published in 1767), found in the quartets G163 and G159. In both, the separation between the primary theme and the transition is obscured. The prevalence of similar expositional procedures in Boccherini's later works is worth further examination. In his eloquent paper 'The Sonata-Fugue Hybrid in Haydn's Early Symphonies' Carl Burdick (University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music) put forward a fresh reading of Haydn's use of fugal strategies in his early symphonies, focusing on No. 3 (c1760–1762) and No. 40 (1763). As Burdick convincingly demonstrated, in his 'sonata-fugue hybrid' Haydn fuses principles of fugal continuity with rotational patterns, which not only went hand in hand with his penchant for monothematicism but also contributed to his experiments with continuous expositions and altered recapitulations.

The short title of the paper given by Matthew Arndt (University of Iowa), 'Was ist Satz?', stood in stark contrast to its ambitious scale. Arndt re-examined the elusive meanings of the term 'Satz', and, drawing on linguistic and grammatical definitions, as well as on Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's

theories on colour, provided a thought-provoking criticism of the potentially misleading, and possibly redundant, terminologies used in both William Caplin's formal-function theory and in James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy's sonata theory. Instead, he proposed a set of eight types of sentences (or *Sätze*), eight categories of clauses (or *Teilsätze*) and eight phrase types, which, he argued, could help make music analysis more lucid and intuitive. Indeed, it will be interesting to see how Arndt develops his formal approach to make it more accessible and applicable. Next was John Koslovsky (Conservatorium van Amsterdam), who discussed (and demonstrated from the keyboard) examples where Felix Salzer's analyses manifested doubts regarding Schenker's treatment of prolongations ('Structure, Prolongation, and Form: A Historical-Critical (Re-)Appraisal'). Koslovsky suggested these doubts can, in hindsight, be clarified in light of what Janet Schmalfeldt famously termed 'the process of becoming' (*In The Process of Becoming: Analytic and Philosophical Perspectives on Form in Early Nineteenth-Century Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011)).

In his 'Form and Chromaticism in Beethoven's Seventh Symphony' Julian Horton (Durham University) delivered a fascinating reading of deeper chromatic structures in Beethoven's A major symphony, focusing on a recurring C/F complex. As Horton showed, Beethoven disrupts the expected tonal trajectory of the work while at the same time providing an expressive intra- and cross-movement cyclical treatment of chromatic insertions. Thus the symphony's unique tonal narrative expands beyond Hepokoski and Darcy's normative 'essential sonata trajectory'. Horton's presentation was followed by that of Caitlin Martinkus (Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University), who, in her 'Form Functional Displacement in Schubert's Sonata Forms', examined 'un-developmental' development sections in Schubert's late works. As Martinkus rightly observes, Schubert often 'relocates' developmental techniques (as can be found in some of his secondary themes), whereas in the development section he occasionally prefers to use expansions and variation techniques, in order to loosen the formal texture. Taken together, these strategies refine our understanding of Schubert's formal sensitivities. Further aspects of formal ambiguity were explored by the next speaker, Matthew Poon (University of Toronto), who discussed examples of fused syntactical units in Schumann's symphonic works ('Formal Fusion in Robert Schumann's Sonata Forms').

My own contribution (Yonatan Bar-Yoshafat, The Open University of Israel) focused on a subtype of three-key expositions from the late eighteenth to early nineteenth centuries, found in several piano sonatas and chamber works by Dussek, Reicha and Hummel. Unlike in 'normative' three-key expositions, where the tonal trajectory progresses linearly from one zone to the next, here the progressions display a more convoluted plotline, in which the third key is eventually rejected and the music reverts to the second key, a phenomenon I refer to as Retracted Tonal Zones (RTZ). Unlike tonicizations of scale degrees, RTZs are often longer, arrive at more remote keys, and display distinct thematic and instrumental characteristics.

I leave out from this report many interesting papers that explored works outside the historical scope of this journal. A mention should be made, however, of Stefan Keym's 'Dramaturgies of Dynamics in Sonata Form', presented in a session devoted to 'secondary parameters'. Keym (Universität Leipzig) proposed that the emphasis on thematic contrasts and modulation processes in sonata-form theories, which dates back to the days of A. B. Marx and earlier, comes at the expense of a more nuanced, genre-specific understanding of musical forms. Thus, for example, he noted the varying uses of dynamics as form-functional tools in Beethoven's symphonic works and in his piano sonatas.

The first keynote talk, 'Type 2 Trouble: Apparent (and Real!) Reversed Recapitulations in Nineteenth-Century Sonata Forms', was delivered by Steven Vande Moortele (University of Toronto). Vande Moortele began with a familiar predicament in *Formenlehre*, namely that contemporary theories of form are usually built on eighteenth-century music (in particular, on that of the Viennese 'troika'), which are often less suited for nineteenth-century works. Vande Moortele focused on 'binary' (or 'Type 2') sonata form, which, as he had previously noted in his book *The Romantic Overture and Musical Form from Rossini to Wagner* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), was scarcely in use by the mid-nineteenth century. Taking his cue from

Schmalfeldt's above-mentioned 'process of becoming', he convincingly showed how, in several cases from c1825 to 1885, the final stages of the development section can be interpreted retrospectively as the initiating phases of the recapitulation (or 'Development⇒Recapitulation', to use Schmalfeldt's familiar analytical symbol).

Schmalfeldt herself (Tufts University) delivered the second keynote talk, entitled "'Nineteenth-Century" Subdominants'. As its name suggests, her talk surveyed intriguing uses of subdominants in late eighteenth- to late nineteenth-century music, either as 'local' means of expression or as part of large-scale formal functions. Schmalfeldt suggested rethinking the IV–I cadence, seeing it not as a 'weak' substitute for the more common V–I cadence, but rather as a lyrical or expressive one (reminding us that concepts are seldom neutral and that we should be wary of value-loaded terms – a recurring topic that came up in other talks as well). The examples of expositional secondary themes in the subdominant and subdominant recapitulations of primary themes that Schmalfeldt had provided were helpful in clarifying the need for more research on the importance of subdominants, especially in music composed from the late eighteenth up to the mid-nineteenth century.

The roundtable, moderated by Julian Horton, was an engaging 'deep dive' into a few fundamental queries on '*Formenlehre* and Canonicity'. The panel members included Horton, Schmalfeldt, Vande Moortele, Peter Smith (University of Notre Dame) and Benedict Taylor (University of Edinburgh), who responded to questions posed by the early-career-researcher representatives Laura Erel (Durham University), Kelvin Lee (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven) and Hazel Rowland (Universität Tübingen). Should music scholarship be aligned with contemporary market demands, or should it foster knowledge regardless of changing trends? To what extent do practical, career-oriented considerations of academia shape our notions of the 'canon'? Such questions triggered varying answers from the panellists, each of whom emphasized different relevant angles (and in this connection, Horton rightly suggested that we move from the exclusively singular 'canon' to 'canons' in the plural). Another question asked whether it were possible to expand music analysis beyond the boundaries of Western music, without this effort amounting to a colonialist act in itself. Smith observed that while it is true that, to a large degree, *Formenlehre* is 'sonata-[euro-]centric', for him this attests to the fact that the masterworks of the past still challenge us and deserve our attention. Schmalfeldt wisely noted that such 'damned if you do, damned if you don't' questions are paralyzing and fruitless, and, as the programme of the conference exemplified, the boundaries of the discourse are already broadening. Overall, this engaging conference left participants with much to reflect on. The only downside was that, as an online event, the interesting conversations that spontaneously ignite in hallways, conference halls and coffee corners could not be adequately replicated in virtual space. Let us hope we can resume those previous experiences soon.

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