REPORT

THE 1994 LANCASTER UNIVERSITY MUSIC ANALYSIS CONFERENCE

Richmond Browne

A decade had passed since the first BritMAC and it remained only to venture North, beyond Liverpool and Birmingham and Manchester, nearly to Carlisle, nearly to Hadrian's Wall. After London (twice) and Cambridge, Oxford and Southampton,[1] one welcomed the westren wind sweeping in from the Irish Sea.

Friday afternoon

In reports on conferences previous, this reviewer has often found a "theme" running through various papers. Though none of the BritMACs to date have been organized around an announced single topic, it has often happened that one seemed to come to the surface early on—perhaps because some issue of emerging import was on the minds of several participants as they worked in solitude but in a community where notions

rapidly became slogans in the all-but-instant dialogue now available on electronic mail. These suggestions, once stated with felicity, are developed informally in subsequent discourse through graceful allusions to some earlier speaker's formulation—or they may indeed be the sole property of each listener as the conference progresses, in an interior perception/cognition operation not unlike the very one we call music listening.

At any rate, for this reporter, Ian Cross (Wolfson College, Cambridge), by his very title: "Music Analysis and Music Perception," sounded in the opening paper an intellectual note that seemed to echo in many following statements. Put simply, it runs thus: as studies of music as a cognitive process grow in number and depth, it is becoming clearer and clearer that there is a real and important difference between *theories of music*—derived from musical practice, the analysis of scores, the study of music as notated or translated into language or other modes of informing about music, and *theories of musical cognition*—the supposed workings of the brain as it perceives sound across time, categorizes it and its reactions to it into at least proto-musical events, recategorizes these things into memory (and thereby alters that memory), and utilizes its own strategies to conduct further perceptions in the light of these experiences. That the apparatus we use to talk about, formalize, or abstract music is not necessarily (not even possibly) identical to the interior dialogue of musical perception/cognition (increasingly seen as completely interdependent) is a principle of real significance. It may be central to the revamping of our discussion, as in the "new" musicology, properly seen. A new ontology calls forth a new epistemology.

Cross said this sort of thing and much more, with greater elegance. As he put it, without a delineation of the two realms, cognitive science and musical experience, it will often be the case that one will claim to subsume the other. The error, as formulated by Bruner, took place when "the cognitive revolution [was] diverted from its originating impulse by the computational metaphor," the first revolution having been convinced that "the central concept of a human psychology is *meaning*" shaped by "intentional states [and] the symbolic systems of the culture."[2] Nicholas Cook has referred to the notion that folk psychology can safely be ignored as the deletion of the listener as a free agent.

Evaluating the theories of Lerdahl/Jackendoff and Narmour, Cross finds their work only partially successful in evoking the explanatory power of science to deal with unconscious acts by individuals. Recent work by Johnson and Laird (based on that of George Lakoff) suggests that the epistemology of science itself is more culturally determined than positivism would have us believe, and Churchland's hopes that cognitive science will produce a new and improved folk psychology must be seen as ambitious, for now.[3] Once again, a warning against misplaced concreteness.

The very next paper, "In Search of a Past for Schenker" by Allan Keiler (Brandeis University), gave a powerful demonstration of the difficulties involved in defining the work of a major musical analyst and analytical theorist with respect to that of seminal figures before and after his time. Keiler, surely the most deeply linguistic of current theorists, offered strong evidence that conflations of Schenker with the organicism attributed to Goethe are mostly "fossilized encomia," and that the seemingly prescient hints of generative thinking one can find in Schenker from the perspective of our Chomskian time could not have been known as such to him, since the concepts of rule-governed systems were simply not yet available. Thus the beauty of so many of Schenker's statements lies in their isolated musical convincingness, not in their orderly or explicit derivations. They must be taken largely as theories of music, not of musical cognition.

Gregory Proctor (Ohio State University), in "Idealized Voice Leading, an Analytic Universal," has satisfied one of the many completion manias which activate tonal music's surfaces. Using an elegant gamut notation, his idealized voice leadings account for all of the voice–leading connections between tonal triads and seventh chords. Some possibilities are eternally impossible/fascinating, like the resolution of V7 to I in root position if both are in complete form. Others occur more than once, and require context for disambiguation. Schenker presented only applications of these, in competing styles; William Benjamin[4] and Allen Winold[5] have presented similar but more constrained treatments of the notion; Proctor would seem to have exhausted the topic.

But Richard Cohn (University of Chicago), talking about "Third Relations, Common Tones, and Hexatonic Systems," was able to offer a useful extension of one kind of voice-leading in triadic chains whose successive connections are classically legitimate, but which quickly lead to major-minor third-chains of peculiar value in the music of Franck, Liszt, Mahler, and Wagner. In such patterns (e.g., A♭+, G♯-, E+, E-, C+, C-, A♭+, etc., in Riemannian notation), the triads still function as acoustic norms, but little remains of harmonic function in any traditional sense. In cognitive terms, what is being demonstrated is that there are always more patterns available than any one system can make use of. Stylistic novelty lies in the utilization of these possibilities.

Lancaster being both near and far from London, people were still arriving or already departing even as Friday evening's banquet took place. Conference director Anthony Pople and his assistants Kirsty Kirkpatrick and Lucy Warren had everything nicely organized, however, and excellent food was received with pleasure, as were all too brief remarks by Society for Music Analysis and Conference Program chair Jonathan Dunsby. Although this was the first BritMAC to be held outside of London and Oxbridge without participation by the Royal Musicological As-

sociation, a very satisfying number of musical scholars from every level of academic practice in the United States and Great Britain (and points beyond) were to be found conversing warmly as the evening went on.

Saturday morning

On a cold morning, Raymond Monelle (University of Edinburgh) warmly translated everyone to a faun's afternoon with the charm and power of a master interpreter. He found "Semantic Opposition in Debussy" between the literary dialectic and musical unity of this character piece, not, as Ratner has shown for classical music, at the level of first and second subjects, but juxtaposed by Debussy in the first two phrases, which Monelle sees as a "shepherd's pastoral = flute/syrinx chromatic insistence" and a "woodland pastoral = horn pentatony in developmental multiplicity," Convincing though his presentation was, some listeners challenged the detailed reading of each theme, hearing/reading some interpenetration of the two images. Monelle's reply was as artful as Debussy could have wished.

At the end of his own abstract for "Hearing/Reading Beethoven's Cavatina, Op. 130, mvt. 5," Robert Pascall (University of Nottingham) claims that "Beethoven's Cavatina 'speaks' of sublime motions of the human spirit through a play of oratoric and operatic conventions manipulated to delineate serenity, disruption, and resolution. Such hermeneusis emphatically does not constitute metaphor, neither is it over-interpretation (using but marginalising the piece); rather it validates itself as an explicative humanist interpretation, provisionally fulfilling the semiosis of the piece, and forming an essential aspect of holistic analysis." Coming from a graduate student, that would constitute hubris. From Pascall, it is simple justice. Surely there is room in someone's catalog for a collection of the teachings of this master; I remember no more comprehensive and convincing one-hour didact.

Only twice during LancMAC94 were we asked to choose between conflicting sessions. My colleague John Covach (University of North Texas then, University of North Carolina when you read this) attended two of them while I went to the others. Covach reports:

> In her "Beyond *Le Boeuf:* Analyzing Milhaud's Fifth Chamber Symphony," Deborah Mawer (University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne) set out to reclaim the "seriousness of purpose" in Milhaud's music, arguing that the structural sophistication present in many of the composer's works has gone largely unnoticed, and thus unappreciated. In addition to presenting a rich barrage of convincing analytical examples, Ms. Mawer also considered Milhaud's 1923 theoretical paper in *La Revue Musicale,* "Polytonalité et Atonalité." While the scope of the paper allowed us only a

glimpse into the details of Milhaud's music and the theoretical underpinnings, it is evident that further work on this topic will provide both a fuller picture of Milhaud's work and the deeper appreciation of this music that Ms. Mawer envisions.

Covach continues:

> The paper by Dai Griffiths (Oxford Brookes University) titled "'Sometimes it's hard to be a woman': Fixities and Flexibilities of Gender in Recent Song," was both thought-provoking, addressing what are ultimately very serious and crucial issues in interpretation, and delightfully entertaining, filled with carefully chosen musical examples drawn from both popular art and music. Working outward from Roland Barthes' famous essay, "The Grain of the Voice," Griffiths explored how text setting and the performance of the text can interact with the context of the text in very surprising ways. Three interrelated questions were posed: "What happens when a text produced by a woman is sung or set by a man? Or when a text by a man is sung or set by a woman? And how do we understand that song, as women and as men?" Weaving a path through musical examples by Elliott Carter (setting texts of Robert Lowell and Elizabeth Bishop), the Smiths, and Polly Harvey, Griffiths illustrated in a compelling fashion how an interpretation focused on issues of gender can open up a very interesting and worthwhile set of music-analytical concerns.

While John Covach was with Mawer and Griffiths, this reporter was enjoying two highly professional revelations of classical magic. William Renwick (McMaster University) showed us the secret of "Hidden Fugal Paths: [by] Interpreting the Middleground in Handel's Fugues." Part of the way Handel managed the composing-out of fundamental structure was (in contrast to Bach's sectional handling of each entry or set of them) due to his trick of dove-tailing interior cadences via *ingano:* a deceptive downturning of the leading tone to a flatted seventh, so that a V-I close becomes V-V/IV-IV, etc. This and other exploitations of tonal/modal ambiguity were nicely handled in a well-planned paper.

Michael Spitzer (University of Durham) needed sleight-of-hand to avoid foot-in-mouth while navigating the treacherous waters of schematic Gestalt-grunding/reification (it is impossible to continue this way, but he did, brilliantly). In a reading saved from excruciating detail only by crediting his audience with powers of auditory disenjambment equal to the exquisite combinatoriality of Mozart's music, "Musettes and Combination Schema in Mozart's C Major String Quartet" made Gjerdingen's $\hat{1}$-$\hat{7}$/$\hat{4}$-$\hat{3}$ schema into a continuous mosaic of $\hat{1}$-$\hat{7}$ (T5) $\hat{1}$-$\hat{7}$ becoming $\hat{4}$-$\hat{3}$, $\hat{4}$-$\hat{3}$. This trick depends on the intervallic rarity of ics 1 and 6, of course,[6] and constitutes a version of the *ingano* that Renwick found in Handel.

Where Meyer saw a gap to fill (in $\hat{1}$-$\hat{7}$, $\hat{2}$-$\hat{1}$), Gjerdingen[7] posits a cultural artifact capable of deformation and/or prolongation, and thus gives us, in Spitzer's terms, "new links between the realms of tonal prolongation and topical reference (planes which Agawu thinks are distinct)." Sometimes the sheer flood of words from a really fluent speaker (Milton Babbitt, Alan Street?) can outrun everyone in the arroyos of a lecture hall—but it is fun if you can float. And here again the line between what music can do (has done) and what the brain does (how it does it) may be seen as a *limen:* a boundary which will eventually become a cottage industry.

Saturday afternoon

Alan Street (University of Keele) on "'Von Heute auf Morgen': Schoenberg and the New Criticism." Schoenberg subsumes his successors, whose *glossia* almost displace his texts. Only Adorno has anticipated present-day postmodernity, where imitation is a cop-out for attempted murder. Yet as Babbitt, Boulez, and Keller cannot decide which sin to commit, they follow him, who was willing to die to save himself . . . or was it music . . . from . . . ethnicity?

I'll go out and come in again.

Schoenberg and the cult of personality—the cult has one father/Babbitt, Boulez, Keller compete to be the sons—Taruskin sees this not as homage, but as a poietic fall—music with its manufactured technology is sanctioned only locally—a politics of exclusion—Taruskin emphasizes the history of performances, not writings—Bloom says composers make history, they don't rewrite it—Dika Newlin asks why Schoenberg's bio is so hard to write: she feels overpowered by its subject—S has usurped the authority to define his own place—Berg: "he is the father"—man as idea—a visionary—pure logos—lonely prophet/moralist—a model of the Jewish—feared God would not allow [what?] . . . sense of destiny—responding to [other] genius and tradition, to authority, constitutes authority—upholding Jewish/Christian tradition, not just in music . . . David Gross: tradition is a facsimile—something "seen again." Now a historiography of the Schoenberg tradition:

(1) Babbit. Near positivist, active critic of the European, pluralist/pragmatist American; paradoxically a student of S's reception history—anti-Adorno (because B is a structuralist), yet sees S as anti-system, as empiricist.

(2) Boulez Condemns S's American conciliatory pieces—condemns memory—S is Dead through [?] his successors.

(3) Hans Keller. Defender of Schoenberg and Freud, *contra* Schenker and the thesis of repressed tonal backgrounds—censure of Boulez as narcissistic—notes Viennese tradition of protesting tradition—likes Stravin-

sky (who has geographic [?] limitations) and Britten—creativity = resistance, not in works but in paradigms.

Adorno. [pre-]Echoes Boulez: aesthetic resistance = a fault common to all modern; new music levels, and becomes flat

Mann. Dr. Faustus—(mis)-paradigmatic of man—Faustian mystery of identity—order/chaos—Christian vs. Nazi—in Genesis of [the?] Novel: serialism becomes more in the book than

vom Heute auf Morgen: a parody of trad/pop—a *Zeitoper.* Irony = self-hate.

Farbenmelodie (S in 1951: competitive w/ Webern)

The division of poietics and history—theory/analysis should sublimate dialectic process—Patricia Carpenter: reading S back into history—Hanslick—[Severine] Neff: organicism [is derived] from others' mechanics [?][!]

Epistemology grounded in the secular—Fr.: "no one can kill in absentia"—myth of origin/visible past—visible theology: simulacra: devaluation of the sign—ideology responds to ideology

Genius or de-mystification—defying reduction—Barth: unbinding releases gender . . . race . . . ethnicity—Ringer: S as Jew—Judy Brown: S had to submit to his differentness, yet 12-tone is to redeem [what?] from "Jewishness" . . .

Revision liberates, but may be political

the Politics of identity: a general reconciliation needed—musicology: all forms of humanness—"music into discourse"—against transcendence—is value what musicology is about?

Listening to Alan Street is nearly impossible, unless you are some combination of Kevin Korsyn, Carolyn Abbatte, and Alan Street. Yet here is his abstract:

> As chief radical among early twentieth-century musical modernists, it is unremarkable that Schoenberg should subsequently have become the focus of intense critical scrutiny. Less readily appreciable is the extent to which this criticism has formed a dominant image of the composer. For example, the writings of, among others, Boulez, Babbitt, and Keller are customarily taken to represent a form of apology endemic to contemporary creative revolution: a mediating influence in the face of technical and aesthetic alienation. Such interpretations are then held to be supplementary to Schoenberg's extensive self-analyses. Yet if only because they are understood to provide a more systematic realisation of ideas partially formulated by their inventor, these secondary expositions acquire a primary significance which consequently stands to displace the original subject of inquiry.
>
> That Schoenberg studies have nonetheless maintained an orthodox critical perspective may be explained by their strong orientation to-

wards composition and the context of its production. By contrast, the aspect of reception has been relatively neglected except for the signal contributions of the composer's most rigorous critic, Theodor W. Adorno. Although Adorno's analysis of modern musical philosophy is grounded in a conception of structural autonomy, its espousal of non-identity places it in close proximity to the differential logic of present day post-structuralism. Moreover, Adorno's commitment to criticism as an element of necessity also anticipates the factitious condition of postmodernity wherein interpretive interposition becomes omnipresent. The prospect of a postmodern interpretation of Adorno which arises from this conjunction also invites speculation over a postmodern conception of Schoenberg, a question which may be addressed with reference to writings by Roland Barthes, David Gross, Michel Foucault and Jean Baudrillard, as well as Thomas Mann's novel, *Doctor Faustus.*

The paper following Alan Street's was by Julie Brown (Emmanuel College, Cambridge) and led a quiet audience to the safer ground of piece-centered discussion. "In the Beginning was the Song: Allegory, Theory, and Schoenberg's Musical Idea" explored Schoenberg's trope of his new music as an emergence of divine creative authority, seeing the first song of *Das Buch der hängenden Gärten* in both theoretical and poetic senses as an evocation of Creation itself. This sort of thing requires a sure touch, considerable diffidence, and a close reading of the poem in question. Brown's practice of sensitive musical analysis was reassuring at this juncture.

Tea. Tobacco. The fading warmth of Autumn at the edge of the Empire . . . well, the Roman empire, then . . . an American reporter talks with British friends and thinks a bit too much about tomorrow's traipse at Vindolanda and Haltwhistle Burn. Back to the last paper.

The last speaker on a Saturday afternoon had better be forthright, even challenging. Bruce Campbell (Michigan State University) was ready, and his "The Graphical Presentation of Musical Analysis by Computer" went well. He gave an overview of recent advances in CD-ROM technology using Apple Computer's Hypertalk language aimed at university instructors and musician-programmers—two kinds of people who seldom share their individual expertises—and thereby risked daunting the first while boring the second. Many were the questions, so successful was the presentation.

Another fine dinner (a bit pricey for some) gave the acknowledged principal of the British theoretical renascence his always-welcomed time to place things in perspective. Arnold Whittall (King's College, London) received the warm reception which surely is his due. And then the real business of the conference went on into the late evening: talk with old

friends not on the program (Craig Ayrey, R.J. Samuels, J.A. Ellis, Nicholas Cook, Esther Cavett-Dunsby, Jim Samson, Naomi Cumming) about people not present but warmly remembered (Derek Puffett, Christopher Wintle, Allen Forte, Carl Schachter). Much talk about watching young scholars turn slowly into veterans, and newer ones emerge with confidence, about the similar list of valuable people in the United States whom one always looks for at an SMT meeting, and how wonderful it would be if the two groups really knew each other. There is a sense in which music is an entirely private matter, but none in which talk about it can be.

Sunday morning

The now-familiar innovation of the poster session was up and running all weekend, with much comment for the presenters standing by to defend their work. One can mention only a few: Minna Miller (University of Kentucky) on large scale in Schumann's *Fantasie;* Tom Royall (University of Keele) on perceived octave equivalence; Neil Todd (University of Sheffield) on perceptual analysis; Jack Boss (Brigham Young University) on Schoenberg and Schenker; John Covach on Schoenberg's otherworldliness; David Smythe (Lousiana State University) on Schenker's *Formenlehre.* There is something quite satisfactory about being able to look at an argument in the selfpaced, nonserial way a poster allows—and then ask the author what she meant, if he had considered your own pet idea, what will come next.

But the morning's papers had begun and one hurried to either Wason and Moore, or to ap Siôn and Browne. Of the former pair, William Renwick writes:

> In "A Pitch-Class Motive in Webern's 'George Lieder,' Op. 3," Robert W. Wason (Eastman School of Music) gave us a highly empirical "tonal" reading of the piece—tonal in the sense that the pitch D is a focal point, a point of reference, sometimes an object of motion or repose. The reading was fair and as objective as such a reading can be. What the paper could have used was a more general discussion of the other processes involved, and what we know of the compositional method in Webern's atonal work.

Renwick continues:

> I had no previous acquaintance with the music of Barraqué, so found the material in "Tonal Remnants and Grandiloquence: The Relationship of Maverick Serial Practice to Expression in the Works of Jean Barraqué" interesting in its own right. Jeremy Moore (Royal Academy of Music) did a good job of explaining the "healthy" way in which Barraqué used serial

techniques without becoming servant of them, and demonstrated how he accommodated within his serial practice tonal elements and references as a means of heightening dramatic expression.

Meanwhile, your reporter was attentive to Pwyll ap Siôn (Coleg Gogledd Cymru, Bangor) as he gave us a taste of [Michael] "Nyman's Neurological Opera: Science qua Art." The text (and title of the work) is from Oliver Sacks's *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat.* The principal character is a musician who is suffering from acute visual agnosia (i.e., he can see but does not know that he can). Although the patient is deranged and deluded in many ways, when the plot calls for him to reluctantly sing some Schumann, his performance of *Ich grolle nicht* is without flaw. This occasions much talk in the opera, and skillfully by ap Siôn, about the sense in which science is deconstruction, and music a science restoring "the abstracted corporeal resonances of the imaginary mind."

This reviewer conducted, at the 3rd ICMPC in Liege in July 1994 and again at the SMT meeting in Tallahassee in November, gatherings of persons who had read enough of American Nobelist neurobiologist Gerald M. Edelman's work[8] to be interested in discussing the extent to which a new and rather powerful view of the workings of the brain might invigorate some questions for music perception and cognition. A similar meeting took place at the present LancMAC, but will not be reviewed here—indeed, its purpose was not expository but exploratory, and that end was achieved.

Two more major papers remained, even as train schedules beckoned. The University of Lancaster is situated, like so many modern monastic colleges, on a remote hillside well away from the presumably distracting noise of its pronominal site. This city lover finds little to recommend in such rustication, but perhaps others enjoyed the sense of being marooned with little to do but pursue the intellectual fleece.

Michael Russ (University of Ulster at Jordanstown) can always be counted on for a fact-filled, beautifully organized analysis with some further point in mind, and his "Casting Light on Musorgsky's *Sunless*" did not disappoint. Russ has a great talent for seeing affectual significance in analytic detail of the seemingly most ordinary sort. The pivotal song in the cycle is "Be Bored"; in this careful reader's hands, dissonance becomes deceit, simplicity sarcastic banality, the piano society, the composer the poet *and* the vocal part, and reality unbearable. It sounds forced, but it comes off like a Carl Schachter or Edward Cone masterstroke. Here is another writer whose work should be made available to a wider professional public.

Last of all, and perfectly comfortable with it, Jonathan Kramer (Columbia University) used every bit of his time with an enormous deconstruction called "The Finale of Mahler's Seventh Symphony Viewed from

a Postmodern Perspective." Kramer was one of the first music theorists to see beyond structuralism. His work has been consistently built on stubborn psychological insights about disconnectedness, temporal crosscut, interfusion of detail, what Fromm called long ago (approximately) "the dreamer's displacement of accent." So postmodernism was waiting for Kramer, and Mahler is not the only human being one can find in history waiting to be misunderstood. The technical stuff in a Kramer discursion is all in plain view: in Mahler everything happens out of phase, migrates and interpenetrates, takes place out of turn, reaching an emulsion which is a "non-teleological form that is nonetheless tonal." There were times during Kramer's talk when the audience seemed restless, as if things were getting a bit close to home. Please read my first sentence again.

The end of LancMAC94 was that it calmly dissipated. The Society for Music Analysis now runs these things; it held a board meeting, but saw no reason to have a general one. From Clapham Common to the slopes above Morecambe Bay, the enterprise has attained corporate status and misplaced its doubts. Well done.

NOTES

1. For reports by this author on KCLMAC 84 and CUMAC 86, held at King's College London and Cambridge University, respectively, see *JMT* 31 (1987): 165–71; on OXMAC 88, at Oxford University, see *JMT* 33 (1989): 228–36; on CityUMAC 91, at City University London, see *JMT* 36 (1992): 207–16; on SotoMAC 93, at the University of Southampton, see *JMT* 38 (1994): 355–67.
2. Jerome Bruner, *Acts of Meaning* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press), 33.
3. Paul M. Churchland, *Scientific Realism and the Plasticity of Mind* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp. 107–119.
4. See William Benjamin, "Pitch-Class Counterpoint in Tonal Music," in *Music Theory: Special Topics,* ed. Richmond Browne (New York: Academic Press, 1987): 1–32.
5. See Allen Winold, *Harmony: Patterns and Principles* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1986).
6. See Richmond Browne, "Tonal Implications of the Diatonic Set," *In Theory Only* 5/6-7 (1981): 3–21.
7. See Robert Gjerdingen, *A Classic Turn of Phrase* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988).
8. See Gerald M. Edelman, *Bright Air, Brilliant Fire: On the Matter of the Mind* (New York: Basic Books, 1992); *The Remembered Present: A Biological Theory of Consciousness* (1989): *Topobiology: An Introduction to Molecular Embryology* (1988); and *Neural Darwinism: The Theory of Neuronal Group Selection* (1987).