

Analysis and performance. Views on the performers musical awareness

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The analysis as a tool to be used by performers for a deeper understanding of the works represents more than an abstract explanation of a musical work, being able to form an integral part of one's interpretation, whether as performer, writer, or teacher. It also represents the most useful way of exploration and innovation of musical interpretations. Performers who use music analysis efficiently will find it a valuable method for finding the kind of musical richness they desire in their interpretations. The use of analysis in performance offers a rational basis and a unique way of interpreting music in performance.

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1. Introduction

Musicians encounter an elaborate range of mental and physical demands when it comes to practice and performance, having to process and accomplish complex musical information with original artistic awareness, technical facility, and a keen mindfulness of audiences' expectations. One of the most thrilling challenges facing music researchers is to develop ways of helping performers to meet those demands efficiently and effectively. For various practical and technical reasons, progress has been rather slow, although they are shaping cross-disciplinary collaborations and producing innovative methods for investigating how exceptional musical performances can be achieved. Accumulating hours of practice is not enough. Given the time of practice that is necessary for reaching the highest levels in any field, even small improvements in effectiveness may yield differences in achievement.

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2. Musical awareness

Even in a simple piece of piano music, the ear hears a vast number of notes, many of them played simultaneously. The situation is similar to that found in language. Although music is quite different to spoken language, most listeners will still group the different sounds they hear into motifs, phrases and even longer sections.

An analysis should aim to explain the organic coherence of the musical works. In short, this coherence is mainly achieved through directed tonal motion, where the relationship between dominant and tonic harmonies is the basic principle, as synthesized in a fundamental structure. Therefore, the main assumption Schenker makes, for example, is the subordination of some sounds to others as their elaborations, and the correspondence of this phenomenon at different levels of musical structure. This assumption permits the performer to represent music in a hierarchy of levels.

Some theorists believed that much of the responsibility for the general poor understanding of music lay with other theorists and critics. There are a series of writings that aimed to clarify and correct existing theories of harmony and counterpoint and also bringing them together as a comprehensive theory of tonal music.

3. Musical analysis

Schenkerian analysis is probably the most spread approach in analyzing tonal music (at least in the English-speaking world). Schenker's main purpose was to improve the understanding of music amongst musicians, but he also tried to develop an analytical system that would bear comparison with other traditionally more rigorous disciplines. Schenker's approach is based on his argument that much of contemporary performance practice is rooted in the nineteenth-century cult of the virtuoso, which has resulted in an overemphasis on technical display. To counter this, he proposes specific ways to reconnect the composer's intentions and the musician's performance. Most of Schenker's theory is culturally, stylistically specific: the availability of just a few forms of the fundamental structure, the voice-leading principles, and the emphasis on triads, among other constraints, make it applicable just to a very specific repertoire.

In any piece, Schenkerian analysis should reveal compositional purposes, musical and extra musical associations, and ideas to bring into one's listening experience of the piece. "Functions" are thus the effects of following or breaking rules mentioned earlier, in connection with contrapuntal practice. In this light, it is important to affirm that a Schenkerian view of hierarchical levels is that the higher, more abstract levels of an analysis bear a metaphoric relationship with the musical

surface. That is, they are a way of understanding the surface as a complex combination (prolongation) of simpler musical ideas represented by different middleground graphs according to the analysts' musical intuitions and insights. Thus, it is important for analysts to try out multiple readings of a piece, and work on incorporating the richness provided by each into a sort of meta-reading of the surface.

Functions can be any aspect of a Schenkerian graph including the "effect of being passing", or more simple functions such as Riemannian chord function, or a passage's function as a development of the main motives of the piece, or the extra musical associations of a passage, or any other kind of musical insights that come from thorough analysis. It is important for a listener to be making associations between structures in the music and structures in the mind: in one's knowledge of musical patterns, rudiments, and fundamental structures, in one's memory of different musical ideas and patterns in this and other musical works, and in one's understanding of extra musical ideas, structures, and metaphors. As musical psychologist Caroline Palmer says, music subsists in structure. (Palmer, 1996)

Established techniques of musical analysis were developed for application to scores, and as a result are of limited value to the study of music in either live or recorded performance. Both Schenkerian and motivic approaches have emphasized synchronic rather than diachronic relationships, resulting in a poor match with the highly time-based concerns of performers. The score-based approach has also brought with it an aesthetic of unity, which is not only potentially old-fashioned (because of its origins in nineteenth-century organicism) but also orientated towards the concerns of composers rather than performers. Finally, it focused on those aspects of music that are captured by notation, whereas the interpretive practice of performers lies largely in those dimensions which notation does not capture. The combined result has been a tendency to understand performance as a reproduction of compositional relationships, which represents an inadequate model of the purposes of performance or the manner in which listeners experience performances.

In the classical tradition, there is a close connection between the techniques and values of composition and those of performance: it is therefore appropriate to attempt the adaptation of established analytical techniques for the study of performance.

Schenkerian analysis unveils a "deep structure" of the music, which reduces a whole composition or movement to a few important "structural" events. This deep structure, the fundamental structure of Schenker's background, symbolizes a clear sense of directed motion from the beginning to the end of the piece.

The attempts to extend Schenker's theory leave its most specific principles and try to retain the general structural framework of Schenkerian analyses, the hierarchical, generative, transformation-based structure, which is often understood as having universal validity. However, much of what is usually assumed to be universally applicable, in fact originates from aesthetic norms tied up with tonal music.

Schenker's theory emphasizes the fact that music tells us a story, with its beginning, development, and end, a complete story, which does not need any other source than the music itself to be meaningful. However, this kind of sustained musical flow is not characteristic of all music.

Even when dealing with this absolute music, there are some problems in the application of this theory. It focuses on harmony and voice leading at a large level and considers any other musical parameters of musical form to be secondary or "surface" events. The deep structure on which it is based is not an obvious musical event; it must be discovered through analysis, and its effects on the music are not easily perceivable, except in the case of very short compositions. By contrast, the "secondary" parameters can be much more obvious. Therefore, these theories are the more useful when these parameters of musical form enhance the deep structure, that is, when, for example, in the classical sonata form "the tonal plan [...] governs the disposition of themes and textures, the patterning of loud and soft and high and low, the pacing of climax and relaxation" (Cook 1994, 89).

It seems that the search for deep structures by means of harmony and voice leading is just one of the possible ways to organize large-scale structure. Considering the repertory that Schenker's theory focuses on, the existence of this kind of organization of musical structure does not mean that music must be perceived in a way that emphasizes this large-structure.

The idea of analysis focusing almost exclusively on purely musical, audible facts which lies at the core of Schenker's theory, is strongly cultural-specific, and the translation of this idea to other musical cultures creates the risk of neglecting more important features of their music.

Schenkerian analysis is a subjective method of analysis that reflects the musical intuitions of the analyst, because there is no mechanical procedure of analysis. Many of the analysts and performers consider that the analysis represents a way of hearing a piece of music. Schenker himself was certain that a tonal masterpiece contains an inner truth-content, while few are sufficiently gifted to appreciate it. Although it is a subject of debate among music theorists whether there is a single correct hearing and analysis of a piece of tonal music, even those who hold that, agree that the analysis can only be arrived at and evaluated subjectively by a professional listener.

Schenker's approach is grounded in the fundamental principles of harmony and counterpoint and requires a solid development of the musical aptitudes and ear. Therefore, learning how to perform Schenkerian analysis is above all else learning a way of hearing and understanding tonal music, and it requires study and practice.

4. Musical Performance

The help offered by Schenker's analysis into performing, as the musician affirmed, is recognized in performer's world, considering that his approach situated the analysis into performing.

In order to apply Schenkerian analysis to performance interpretation, the performer has to conceptualize the role of analysis in performance – the ideal of applied analysis. A musician who has such a full understanding of the effects and functions will exhibit the richness of the analysis in the performance of the work. A performer who understands and can hear the relationship between a recurring melodic fragment and an underlying hidden parallelism will play the music differently and more communicatively than one who simply has so-called “musical intuition” about the way the music should be interpreted. Analysis is thus a tool for bringing interpretive insights into focus and allowing them to be communicated either verbally or aurally in performance.

The ideal of applied analysis, formulated in terms of its relevance to performance issues, its precision in giving performance suggestions, and its capability of offering positive instructions, guides the examination of theoretical works of Schenker himself and of other theorists, and sets the direction for performance interpretations. The structural features discovered from Schenkerian analysis are found to be relevant and decisive in performance issues such as articulation, temporal nuance, dynamic shading, and the like. The precision of performance suggestions depends on the terms used in one's verbalization. Schenker and other theorists achieve with varying degrees of success in this respect. The ways of giving performance suggestions, of Schenker himself and other theorists, are mostly positive even though some of the suggestions are ambiguous. Interestingly, some theorists tend to make performance suggestions in a negative way that telling performers what not to do. However, performance suggestions, not intended to be binding, should be given positively to avoid ambiguity and abstraction. The originality offered by the analysis and the performance suggestions should not be underestimated.

The performer's task is to strip the concept of motif of the inappropriate assumptions of score-based analysis, and to extend it to those dimensions, which

are of particular concern to both performers and listeners (whose experiences are as much moulded by the performance as by the works that are performed). The result should be a more theoretically informed approach to the understanding of recorded performances than is currently available.

Structural performance approach provides clues needed to identify complex musical direction, creating "less obvious relationships between close musical points, facilitating a controlled rhythm that joins what seems chaotic at first sight" (Cook 1999, 232-233). As Cook remarks, the of a reduction do not always control entirely the linear and harmonic texture, therefore performer's role is not to emphasize this structure, but to play it transparently. Certainly, this is not valid in any situation. As Adorno noted, "in some music, it forms part of the sense not to make the structure transparent – but that is then itself a part of the structure the analysis must lead us to" (Adorno 2006, 71). In the same manner, Rothstein contests the idea that once you know "what a musical work contains in structural terms, the performer can then highlight" (Rothstein 1995, 218). The structural elements. Schenkerian analysis helps identifying the situations in which the performer purpose is not to highlight the structure, but to avoid this kind of pedantic clarification. Even if the performer is convinced by some of the details revealed by deep analysis, he must find a way, or to decide whether to disclose information to the public through performance.

Heinrich Schenker's *The Art of Performance* (Rothstein 1995, 218) shows this great music theorist in a new light. Filled with concrete examples and numerous suggestions, the book is interesting for both music theorists and practicing performers.

Schenker shows how performers can benefit from understanding the laws of composition. He demonstrates how a literal interpretation of the composer's indications can be self-defeating, and he provides a lively discussion of piano technique, including suggestions for pedal, sound color, orchestral effects, and balance. He devotes separate chapters to non-legato, legato, fingering, dynamics, tempo, and rests. In addition to the examples for pianists, Schenker covers a number of topics, such as bowing technique that will prove invaluable for other instrumentalists and for conductors. The book ends with an aphoristic and expressive chapter on practicing.

While Heinrich Schenker's theoretical writings helped transform music theory, this book portrays his experience as a musician and teacher to suggest a sharp reevaluation of how musical compositions are realized in performance.

Being aware of the ideology and the settings in which mental content was established by the classic composers starting with their social life to their spiritual and political life that beset them, Schenker issued the hypothesis that behind those

structures built with mathematical accuracy there is semantics. Therefore, in order to find a methodology that offers a semantic function for the classical and romantic compositions, interesting statements like "The main line is genius' fortune" may occur.

The approach of schenkerian method of analysis by contemporary musicians may find a much more clear direction than that of pure music theory. Analysis reveals componistic purposes, musical and extra-musical associations, this being the only method for the awareness of music. Through analysis, it can be discovered the coherence of a whole composition, the analytic brightness of a composition depending on hearing and understanding of composition. The development of a personal strategy helping performers to get through this entire way, improving the required competence is extremely important. The analysis represents a crucial part of an work during the identification and conceptualization process of structure and tension dissipation, it represents a part of bits control, a part of apogee around which are built discovering phrases of correct performance componistic effect. The performer must have the ability to approach each part of a work with accuracy because any omission can ruin the entire structure.

5. Conclusions

Many musicians have discovered that schenkerian principles, correctly applied, open musical insights not obtainable from other methods of analysis. Musical analysis from the schenkerian point of view – musical and analytical – lies at the core of all musical studies (intuitive or intellectual). Schenkerian analysis reveals connections among tones that are not readily apparent. Direction and precise functions of tones and chords are in relation to the structure of tonal music. Whatever the style, the basic characteristics of musical direction, continuity and coherence are the same and represent the universal denominator.

Much of the future for exploiting applied research to enhance musical performance lies in the direct collaboration of performers, teachers, theorists and researchers, all working toward an agenda of addressing musically relevant issues through methods that are scientifically sound. There is still much to learn about the long and complex process of developing analytical and musical performance skills. The process is, however, well worth understanding, since it is both a universal of human culture and a small-scale version of cognitive development.

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