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MUSIC THEORY & ANALYSIS



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COLOPHON

Music Theory & Analysis (MTA)

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Michiel SCHUIJER

Music Theorists and Societies

Abstract

Most professions today are informed by national structures and the cultures that sustain them. This relatively recent notion in the sociology of professions explains why there are sometimes striking differences between communities devoted to the same discipline in various societies. This is the starting point for a transnational study of music theory as a profession.

First we focus on the United States, where the “professional music theorist” was heralded in the late 1950s, and where the discipline presented itself with degree programs at colleges and universities, with a network of societies, and with its own channels of publication in subsequent years. Although European music theorists have adopted some of these attributes of professionalism, they did not progress as far in achieving autonomy of the discipline in their own countries. Indeed, the pursuit of professional autonomy has been highly controversial among them—even among the British, who came closest to equaling the success of their North American counterparts.

This study describes how music theory has been (or has become) shaped as a professional discipline, and it concludes that this was not a unified process—sometimes not even at a national level. One shared concern has been the involvement of music theorists in scholarly research and debates. This has pushed the discipline to a high level of maturity, but at the same time it has overshadowed the equally important question of which practices music theory serves. A comparison with the professionalization of nursing leads to the discomfiting observation that many music practices still lack a theory.

Keywords

professions, history, music theory, sociology, Fourcade, Kraehenbuehl, Babbitt, Forte, Nattiez, Boyer

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*Music Theorists and Societies*¹

Michiel SCHUIJER

I.

Recently my eye fell on this passage from a book review:

What is the relationship between ideas and institutions? Marion Fourcade's marvellous book *Music Theorists and Societies* provides some answers. In her view, the music-theory profession varies dramatically across countries . . . in how it is organized, how it practices music theory, and even how it defines a music theorist. Moreover, the book belies the idea that music theory consists of a unified, coherent intellectual apparatus. . . . The development of music theory as both a profession and an intellectual discipline is to a large extent institutionally defined and nationally specific.

The reviewer continues to summarize the author's discussion of three nationally specific music theories. In the United States, he writes,

the decentralized competitive system of higher education . . . led music theorists to pursue a successful strategy of "scientific professionalism." . . . They placed a premium on credentials (the Ph.D.), as well as mathematics, as a means of professional legitimation and boundary maintenance.

¹ This article originated as a keynote lecture at the Fourth Encontro de Musicologia de Ribeirão Preto, São Paulo, Brazil, 31 July 2012. As such it was included in the proceedings of that conference; see Rodolfo Coelho de Souza, ed., *Interseções da teoria e análise musicais com os campos da musicologia, da composição e das práticas interpretativas* (Universidade de São Paulo, Faculdade de Filosofia, Ciências e Letras de Ribeirão Preto, 2012). Over the following two years I kept working on the paper and presented different versions of it in Amsterdam, St. Petersburg, Leuven, and New York. I am indebted to Rodolfo Coelho de Souza, the convenor of the conference in Ribeirão Preto and the editor of its proceedings, who kindly gave me permission to publish the end result of my revisions in another forum. I also thank the Russian Society for Music Theory and the Dutch-Flemish Society for Music Theory, as well as my American colleagues Philip Ewell and Joseph Straus, for the opportunities I have had to discuss my findings with a knowledgeable and critical audience. Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to John Koslovsky for many helpful comments and for proofreading the final version of the paper.

In France, however, the field was under the influence of a more centrally steered cultural agenda—the agenda of reclaiming a leading role for the country in the international musical avant-garde:

So it was the composers, not the academics, who initially took up music theory. With the expansion of the state after the war and the advent of indicative planning it was the combination of state administrators and composers that became the pole of music-theoretical knowledge production.

In Britain, the last of the three nations featured in Fourcade’s book, a “public-minded elitism” reigned, which, in the words of our reviewer,

slowed the development of music theory as a recognized form of specialized scientific expertise. As a result music theory and analysis long remained the province of gentlemanly amateurs, whose substantive concerns focused much more on issues of public taste and access to culture than those of their American colleagues. Eventually, however, this gentlemanly culture gave way to a more American-style professionalism.

This is what I read; however, the review was not so written. Marion Fourcade is a sociologist. I imagine she would be interested to hear how music theory has fared in different countries, but her book is on economics and is entitled *Economists and Societies*, an obvious allusion to Max Weber’s *Economy and Society*.² In the preceding quotations, I replaced the words “economics” and “economist” with “music theory” and “music theorist”; on one occasion, I wrote “composers” where the original text had “engineers.” When I mentioned France’s aspiration to renewed cultural prestige, that supplanted a reference to its program of economic recovery after the Second World War.³ And in the last excerpt, the focus of the British economists who made way for the music theorists was not on issues of public taste and access to culture, but on “poverty, distribution, and welfare economics.”

Yet with these substitutions, the quoted excerpts make surprising sense. After all, there are analogous comparisons to be made across the respective countries when it comes to the study of music theory; and it is true that, from a global perspective, music theory has long suffered from the lack of a “unified, coherent intellectual apparatus.” Indeed, Ph.D. programs in music theory proliferated first and foremost in the United States;

2 Marion Fourcade, *Economists and Societies: Discipline and Profession in the United States, Britain, and France, 1890s to 1990s* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009, doi:10.1515/9781400833139). The quotes have been adapted from reviews by John L. Campbell, *American Journal of Sociology*, 115/5 (March 2010), 1608–10, doi:10.1086/652931; and Axel van den Berg, *Canadian Journal of Sociology/Cahiers canadiens de sociologie* 35 (2010), 511–13.

3 Fourcade, *Economists and Societies*, 11.

and although mathematics has not been omnipresent in American music-theoretical discourse, it has nonetheless played a role in the politics of identification, legitimation, and exclusion that have allowed music theory there to attain the status of an academic discipline.⁴

In France there really were state administrators who took up the cause of contemporary music—figures such as Marcel Landowski and Jean Maheu, the successive directors of music in the French Ministry of Culture in the 1960s and '70s. Maheu funded a number of centers that fostered, in the words of Georgina Born, “interrelated scientific research and technological development around music”—that is to say, knowledge production—“as well as the production of new music itself.”⁵ The most powerful of these centers was, of course, the Paris Institut de Recherche et de Coordination Acoustique/Musique (IRCAM), which was headed for fifteen years by Pierre Boulez—composer, conductor, and a notorious adversary of academics.⁶

Finally, are there musical counterparts of the gentlemanly and public-minded British economists? One Brit who came to my mind when I read the review of Fourcade’s book is the pianist, composer, and conductor Donald Francis Tovey (1875–1940). His popular essays on music—which originated as program notes for the concerts of the Edinburgh Reid Orchestra—have long served as a standard for music-analytical discourse in his country.⁷ As such, his work has been perceived as both a blessing and a curse: a blessing, because in no other country have so many people outside the circle of specialists enjoyed encounters with music analysis; and a curse, because, by its very success, Tovey’s approach interfered with the development of any more formal theoretical framework from which to derive questions and undertake research. Tovey never made an attempt to build such a framework. He was wary of theorizing and said so repeatedly in his writings.⁸ In 1980 Arnold Whittall could still write, somewhat bitterly: “Analysis is not a discipline that has made very great advances in Britain: indeed, the preferred approach has often been

4 I have described this development at length in Michiel Schuijjer, *Analyzing Atonal Music: Pitch-Class-Set Theory and Its Contexts* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2008).

5 Georgina Born, *Rationalizing Culture: IRCAM, Boulez, and the Institutionalization of the Musical Avant-Garde* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995), 84.

6 In an interview with Joan Peyser for the *New York Times* (“A Fighter from Way Back,” 9 March 1969), Boulez launched an attack on the affiliations of American composers with universities. For a discussion of this interview and of the different conceptions of the university in Europe and the United States, see Schuijjer, *Analyzing Atonal Music*, 258–68.

7 Donald Francis Tovey, *Essays in Musical Analysis*, 6 vols. (London: Oxford University Press, 1935–39).

8 The following quote may serve as an example: “Musical theorists [*sic*] can hardly be blamed for the wish to found a system of classical harmony on an acoustic basis equivalent to the scientific basis of perspective. It is a hopeless task; and the failure of all such attempts may serve to convince us that the foundations of an art can never be identical with those of a science, however much works of art may use material which is capable of scientific analysis.” Tovey, *Essays*, vol. 1, *Symphonies*, 5.

notably unsystematic.”⁹ However, two years later Whittall himself would become the first professor of music theory and analysis at a British university (King’s College); and with Jonathan Dunsby, Christopher Wintle, and others, he would form a group that led the way to an American-style professionalism in British music theory and analysis, something most clearly represented by the journal *Music Analysis*.

Now, by way of a premature summary, we can say that there are interesting parallels between the history of economics as presented by Fourcade and the history of music theory. Both fields have evolved in markedly different ways in the United States, France, and Britain; and what is more, the differences are markedly similar. This observation reinforces Fourcade’s idea that professions and disciplines are deeply informed by institutional structures and the national cultures behind them. It also points to an explanation for the differences observed within the field of music theory: differences of context, method, and representation that seem to have hindered the development of a truly international music-theoretical discourse in the recent past.

However, as I have said, this summary is premature. Quite apart from the influences to which music-theoretical practices are exposed, these practices themselves are not unified within a single area of musical or music-related endeavor. Rather, they are dispersed across a range of areas, including education, composition, research, and performance. Therefore, my observations about the American, French, and British varieties of music theory may not be seen as essential or even relevant by American, French, or British music theorists. This would be highly dependent on the areas in which these individuals are active.

To expand on this, let me go back to what I said earlier about France, and particularly about IRCAM as a project of the French state. Is it actually correct to describe it as a center of music-theoretical knowledge production? It has not always been seen that way. When, in 1997, Nicolas Meeùs published a report on the state of affairs in French music theory for the American journal *Music Theory Online*,¹⁰ he made no mention of IRCAM. He wrote about the influence of Viennese harmonic theory (the Roman-numeral system) on the French practice of music analysis; the reception of Heinrich Schenker’s ideas in the

9 David Fallows, Arnold Whittall, John Blacking, and Nigel Fortune, “Musicology in Great Britain since 1945,” *Acta Musicologica* 52 (1980), 57, doi:10.2307/932434. Whittall’s contribution to this article does not contain a single reference to Tovey, but in a book he wrote with Jonathan Dunsby eight years later, Tovey’s influence warranted a whole chapter, which concludes as follows: “This is why British research was for so long starved . . . of analytical confidence. It had a favoured model in Tovey, but not the means to develop that model since there was no system on which to build.” Jonathan Dunsby and Arnold Whittall, *Music Analysis in Theory and Practice* (London: Faber & Faber, 1988), 72.

10 Between 1996 and 2000 *Music Theory Online* published seventeen such “international reports” from correspondents in Austria, Britain, China, France, Germany, Greece, the Netherlands, and Sweden.

French-speaking world; and the semiotic (or “semiological”) strand in French studies of music that started with the work of Jean Molino and Jean-Jacques Nattiez, especially with the latter’s *Fondements d’une sémiologie de la musique* of 1975.¹¹

As a review of the current orientations in the teaching of music theory at French conservatories and universities, Meeùs’s report was probably right on the mark, but it proceeded from a very specific idea of where music theory is practiced and what it is about. The theories he mentioned had been used—if not created—in the service of music analysis. At the time, this was not the primary concern of IRCAM, as a 1999 report on its activities by Hughes Vinet illustrates. This report listed five main fields of exploration: acoustics, music perception and cognition, sound analysis and synthesis, real-time systems, and computer-aided composition.¹² Analysis was not absent from IRCAM’s program, but it was put to different uses: it was applied not to musical repertoire, but to potential musical materials, with a view to creating new musical structures. It is true that this practice was hardly comparable with the analysis of the harmony or form of a finished composition. Still, it may have been premature to conclude that it had no bearing on music theory, much of which, after all, has had its origin in the composer’s workshop.

Meeùs’s exclusion of IRCAM from his sketch of the French music-theoretical landscape in the 1990s shows that institutional patterns in a society may not only contain music-theoretical activities—for example, within the environment of a university or a conservatory—but can also cut across them. Furthermore, it demonstrates that certain activities appear to qualify as music theory, while others that contribute no less to the conceptualization of music do not. This raises the question of whether music theory is the province of music theorists only. In other words, is music theory a profession or just a field? Or is only one part of that field reserved for professionals, and shielded by training programs and exam requirements?

11 Nicolas Meeùs, “Music Theory and Analysis in France and Belgium,” *Music Theory Online* 3/4 (1997), <http://www.mtosmt.org/issues/mto.97.3.4/mto.97.3.4.meeus.html> (accessed 5 July 2012). Meeùs frequently speaks about “Europe,” although the actual scope of his report does not exceed the boundaries set by its title.

12 Hugues Vinet, “Recent Research and Development at IRCAM,” *Computer Music Journal* 23/3 (1999), 9–17, doi:10.1162/014892699559850. Today, music analysis, and humanistic approaches in general, hold a more prominent place on IRCAM’s program. Still, the main mission of the institute is interventionist rather than scholarly. Its focus is on creative processes, for which it aims to provide incentives, and on the development of technology to expand the cognitive horizon of composers, musicians, and audiences. As a consequence, music analysis within IRCAM is concerned not so much with individual works as with musical practices. See the institute’s handbook, *Recherche et développement/Research and development* (Paris: IRCAM, 2010), www.ircam.fr/recherche.html (accessed 5 July 2012).

II.

The notion of a “professional music theorist” originated in the United States. It came into existence in February 1959 as the theme of a session at the biennial convention in Kansas City, Missouri, of the Music Teachers National Association: “The Professional Music Theorist—His Habits and Training.”¹³ In 1983 Milton Babbitt used the term as a *nom de guerre* when he was lecturing at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. This is an oft-quoted excerpt, but it is entertaining enough to bear repeating in full:

We have produced now at least two generations of professional music theorists. . . . There were virtually no professional theorists in this country, unless you count the people who took degrees at teachers’ colleges by counting the number of six-four chords in the *Teutonic* Sonata of Edward McDowell . . . or those people who found new labels for old chords or old labels for new chords. That’s really all that one could call theory. There was no such thing as a professional theorist at any university that I can think of when I began becoming involved with universities.¹⁴

And the “professional theorist” figured again in the historical overviews and critical assessments of American music theory that appeared in the 1990s, a time of reorientation and self-reflection in musical studies at large.¹⁵ In one of these introspective papers Patrick McCreless stated that “the modern academic incarnation of music theory is peculiarly American and may be dated to about 1960, when the ‘professional theorist’ came onto the scene.”¹⁶

Peculiarly American indeed! To my knowledge, it is not quite so common to speak of “professional music theorists” in any other country, at least not with the same emphasis—not even in Britain, where music theorists have turned to the American example in their attempts to give a more prominent profile to their discipline. This raises the question of what it means for music theorists to use the qualifier “professional” (or not to use

13 *Journal of Music Theory* 4/1 (1960), 62–84, doi:10.2307/843047. The session consisted of a position paper by David Kraehenbuehl and responses by Norman Phelps, Howard Murphy, Gordon Binkerd, and Robert Melcher.

14 Milton Babbitt, *Words about Music: The Madison Lectures*, ed. Stephen Dembski and Joseph N. Straus (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), 121.

15 See, for example, Patrick McCreless, “Rethinking Contemporary Music Theory,” in *Keeping Score: Music, Disciplinarity, Culture*, ed. David Schwarz (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1997), 13–53; and Fred Everett Maus, “The Disciplined Subject of Music Analysis,” in *Beyond Structural Listening? Postmodern Modes of Hearing*, ed. Andrew Dell’Antonio (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2004, DOI:10.1525/california/9780520237575.003.0002). The various tendencies that influenced academic discourse about music in this period (e.g., critical social theory, post-structuralism, gender studies, feminism, post-colonial theory) have often been mistaken for a single movement under the name “New Musicology,” probably because each of them implied a criticism of established practices and orientations.

16 McCreless, “Rethinking Contemporary Music Theory,” 15.

it, for that matter). Babbitt distinguished professional music theorists from those who merely occupied themselves with music theory (either for pay or as a pastime). He could remember the days when American colleges and universities neither delivered nor hired such qualified people.¹⁷ His recollection is confirmed by the proceedings of the meeting in Kansas City of twenty-four years earlier, which states that “a truly professional theorist is . . . a rare ‘bird’”; that the “average musician [receives] most of his theoretical training at the hands of a theory pedagogue”; and that a student of music will be “quite certain that music theory includes little more than harmony (beginning, intermediary, and advanced), and counterpoint (strict and free).”¹⁸

So the context that initially prompted the designation of “professional music theorist” in the United States was either one in which people performed tasks for which they were unqualified, or one in which there were no opportunities for qualified people to perform those tasks. What Babbitt and others felt was that those who were appointed as “theory pedagogues”—regardless of their actual backgrounds and abilities—transmitted “traditional but no longer vital knowledge of music,”¹⁹ and thus failed to establish a rapport with contemporary culture and thought.

It is illuminating to look at this matter, again, from a sociological perspective. The term “professionalization” denotes a process that has taken place in a great number of fields over the course of two centuries, with a deep impact on societies. In all these fields—nursing, teaching, civil engineering, and accounting, among others—practitioners have organized themselves so as to define and maintain a central body of knowledge and skills, often referred to as a “theory,” and to establish codes of conduct. They have set requirements for those who seek entrance to their field and have developed formal training programs that made it possible to meet these requirements. The sociology of professions deals with such processes, the conditions of time and place that stimulate and shape them, and their effects in terms of social relations and practices.

Let me present here, as an example, a rather sobering definition of professionalization by Magali Larson, who has been a prominent thinker on the topic. She sees it as “the attempt to translate one order of scarce resource—special knowledge and skills—into another—social and economic rewards.”²⁰ The point of forming a professional

17 See also Brian Harker, “Milton Babbitt encounters Academia (and Vice Versa),” *American Music* 26/3 (2008), 336–77, DOI:10.2307/40071711.

18 David Kraehenbuehl, untitled paper, in “The Professional Music Theorist—His Habits and Training: A Forum,” *Journal of Music Theory* 4/1 (1960), 62, doi:10.2307/843047.

19 *Ibid.*, 62.

20 Magali Sarfatti Larson, *The Rise of Professionalism: A Sociological Analysis* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1977), xvii.

community, according to Larson, is to achieve a monopoly in a particular activity: a monopoly on the supply of services to society (meaning that membership in the community is a warrant of the highest quality of service), a monopoly on testing and licensing (meaning that the community has obtained licensing powers for itself or has secured a strong basis at accredited educational institutions); and a so-called discursive monopoly. Thomas Broman, a much younger American scholar who has studied the development of German medicine in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, calls this last a monopoly on “the ability to speak the truth.” Such a monopoly, Broman writes, “can be granted only if a profession succeeds in presenting its theoretical apparatus as scientific—that is, as empirical, objective, disinterested, methodologically rigorous, and so forth.”²¹

I cite this statement for a number of reasons. First, it illustrates the importance that has been accorded to the presence of an abstract knowledge base. This base figures prominently as a distinguishing characteristic of professions in the majority of descriptions. Second, Broman’s description suggests that professional authority is dependent on relations with institutions that confer scientific status on theoretical bodies. This further increases the dignity of professions. Third, it makes me wonder about communities that stake a claim to a space in professional society but do not pursue scientific status per se. Does this form a barrier to their aspirations? Does the requirement of scientific relevance have a bearing on the behavior of these communities, or on the boundaries of their disciplines? Or are there other routes toward the empowerment of these communities that have gone less noticed by the sociology of professions?

The literature on professional culture is vast. Originally it focused almost exclusively on developments in Britain and the United States, free-market societies where the exercise of professional authority was presumed to be least contained by the state. A more recent trend has been to broaden the scope of the sociology of professions so as to study professionalization in societies with a more centralized political authority as well.²² Fourcade’s *Economists and Societies* and Broman’s work on German medicine are

21 Thomas Broman, “Rethinking Professionalization: Theory, Practice, and Professional Ideology in Eighteenth-Century German Medicine,” *Journal of Modern History* 67 (1995), 837, doi:10.1086/245230.

22 Other important contributions to the sociology of professions include Alexander Carr-Saunders and Paul Wilson, *The Professions* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933); Talcott Parsons, “The Professions and Social Structure,” *Social Forces* 17/4 (1939), 457–67, doi:10.2307/2570695; Gerald L. Geison, ed., *Professions and the French State, 1700–1900* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1984); Harold Perkin, *The Rise of Professional Society: England since 1880* (London: Routledge, 1989, doi:10.4324/9780203408629); and Andrew Abbott, *The System of Professions: An Essay on the Division of Expert Labor* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988). Michel Foucault’s pioneering work into disciplinary history should also be considered in this connection. See Jan Goldstein, “Foucault among the Sociologists: The Disciplines and the History of the Professions,” *History and Theory* 23/2 (1984), 170–92, doi:10.2307/2505005.

part of this trend. Furthermore, sociologists today tend to retreat from an all-too-specific definition of professionalism and to describe more varied patterns of organization and institutionalization in various spheres of occupation.

III.

To define a “professional music theorist” was a significant step in what the social historian Harold Perkin calls “a strategy of closure.”²³ A set of stringent qualifications for practitioners limited access to the field and thus helped to exclude the unqualified. Plus, it raised the standards of accomplishment in the field and enhanced the social status of those working in it. The first person to assert the professional status of music theory in the United States was David Krachenbuehl, the passionate and eloquent founding editor of the *Journal of Music Theory*. In his words, the professional music theorist

is first and foremost a musician. His knowledge of music, through the first-hand experience of composing and performing music, should be greater than that of any other musician. Secondly, he is a skilled thinker, versed in the techniques of logical demonstration, rational proof, and verbal argument. Thirdly, he is a professional, that is, he spends the major portion of his time thinking about music, searching out the clues which will lead to new and useful theoretical systems. As is always the case, the creation of new things requires thorough knowledge of the old. The professional theorist, then, is also an expert on theoretical systems of the past.²⁴

How have music theorists enforced this vision? What conditions were created for this type of professional to succeed? The main stages in the professionalization of American music theory are well-enough known: the development of a specialist discourse through peer-reviewed journals and regular meetings (from the mid-1950s on); the adoption of a coherent body of theory, originally centering on Heinrich Schenker’s concept of structural levels and Allen Forte’s set-class system (beginning in the early 1960s); the establishment of academic programs that take students from a bachelor’s degree up to a Ph.D. (in the mid-1960s); the foundation of professional societies at both the national and regional levels (in the mid-1970s); the inevitable blurring and shaping of professional identity in confrontations and exchanges with related fields as well as with colleagues abroad (from the late 1980s); and, finally, the emergence of interest groups that organize their specializations (e.g., film and multimedia, jazz, or music pedagogy) along professional

²³ Perkin, *The Rise of Professional Society*, 2.

²⁴ Krachenbuehl, “The Professional Music Theorist,” 67.

lines, sometimes resulting in new professional profiles. The most eminent example of this last, “reproductive,” stage was the creation in 2006 of the Society of Mathematics and Computation in Music.²⁵

These stages can be matched with my earlier brief description of a process of professionalization. Indeed, American music theorists seem to have followed the sociology of professions’ playbook. The false impression may, however, have arisen that professionalization is an autonomous process, initiated and controlled by practitioners of the discipline alone.²⁶ In reality, it is negotiated between these practitioners and a potential market or existing institutional framework. This is also true of the process that American music theorists started. In the first moments of their self-definition, they attuned their pursuits to the environment in which they were most likely to operate: the American academy. What they saw as their mission had to become part of the mission of colleges and universities. They had to be at once music theorists embedded in the academy and academics representing music theory.

Allen Forte’s article “Schenker’s Conception of Musical Structure” has become a classic of this malleable attitude.²⁷ It appeared in the *Journal of Music Theory* in April 1959, two months after the launch of Kraehenbuehl’s competence profile, and seemed to benchmark Schenker positively against that profile. “Schenker’s work provides us with a model of what the work of a music theorist should be,” Forte wrote. “He has . . . the artist’s trait of courage and perseverance combined with intellect and insight (which we also associate with the true scientist).”²⁸ What attracted Forte to Schenker’s analytical method was that it showed relations between tones over both shorter and longer time spans. Forte believed that this would help improve music-theory instruction and put it on a par with “science education”; in particular, he believed it would enhance students’ appreciation of large-scale tonal coherence.²⁹

Forte could not have foreseen that, years later, his minute demonstration of Schenker’s method on a song by Robert Schumann—“Aus meinen Thränen spriessen” (the second song from the cycle *Dichterliebe*, op. 48)—would itself be analyzed as a cultural artifact.

25 For a fuller account of the first part of this history, see Joseph Kerman, *Contemplating Music: Challenges to Musicology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), 60–112. McCreless, in “Rethinking Contemporary Music Theory,” takes it ten years further and views it from the perspective of Foucauldian sociology.

26 This is implied by traditional criteria for the identification of professional groups. One of these criteria stipulates that a group possesses “considerable autonomy in conduct of professional affairs.” Broman, *The Transformation of German Academic Medicine*, 6119.

27 Allen Forte, “Schenker’s Conception of Musical Structure: A Review and an Appraisal with Reference to Current Problems in Music Theory,” *Journal of Music Theory* 3/1 (1959), 1–30, doi:10.2307/842996.

28 Forte, “Schenker’s Conception,” 30.

29 *Ibid.*, 25.

Commentators such as Joseph Kerman, William Rothstein, Robert Snarrenberg, and Fred Maus have taken it as a focal point in their critiques of contemporary music theory, and they turned the analysis inside out—much the same treatment that Forte gave to Schumann’s song. These writers wanted to show how an academic research regime could modify one’s engagement with a work of art, with an interpretative practice, or with both. Kerman and Maus pointed to topics that fell outside Forte’s purview and that had, in their view, remained blind spots for American music theory ever since—topics like the musical rendering of emotion and the role of the listener in the constitution of meaning.³⁰ Rothstein and Snarrenberg noted how Schenker, an organicist thinker and a radical adherent of the nineteenth-century cult of genius, was put on a par with modern scientists. Both observed a transformation in the language of Schenkerian analysis—and with it, of the music, as the object of that language.³¹

What struck these commentators in Forte’s text was not so much a strategy of closure—the definition of knowledge and skills that took a special aptitude and a prolonged effort to acquire—but rather a strategy of adaptation. And they all agreed that it had been successful: why would they bother otherwise to write about it at such length? They just thought that this success had been acquired at a high price, and that some of the boundaries music theorists had set needed to be challenged. They expected music scholars to be concerned with cultural context, whereas Forte wished to mine the internal depths of musical scores with the concentration of an ideal performer. This is what he brought into the American academy—in exchange, as it were, for the “scientific habitus” he had adopted from it: music analysis—and Schenkerian analysis in particular—represented an idealized performance culture.³² I realize that this is an unusual notion; Forte’s analyses

30 Joseph Kerman, “How We Got Into Analysis, and How to Get Out,” *Critical Inquiry* 7 (1980), 330–31, doi:10.1086/448101; Maus, “The Disciplined Subject of Music Analysis.”

31 William Rothstein, “The Americanization of Heinrich Schenker,” in *Schenker Studies 1*, ed. Hedi Siegel (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 193–203; Robert Snarrenberg, “Competing Myths: The American Abandonment of Schenker’s Organicism,” in *Theory, Analysis and Meaning in Music*, ed. Anthony Pople (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 29–56.

32 With the term “habitus” I invoke the work of the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. He first used this term in “Champ intellectuel et projet créateur,” *Les Temps modernes* 246 (November 1966), 865–906. Later definitions appeared in *Esquisse d’une théorie de la pratique* (Geneva: Droz, 1972) and *Le Sens pratique* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1980). It refers to the nature of the involvement of humans in social practices, and it negotiates between two sharply opposed viewpoints: one that stresses the influence of the practice on the behavior of participating individuals and one that stresses the capacity of individuals to bend and change these practices. A habitus consists of a set of inherited dispositions with which individuals confront present situations. It expresses itself in concrete actions rather than in a fixed set of rules or beliefs. Although these actions are informed by prior education and experience, they are performed *ex tempore*, as it were, and often depend on other, more contingent factors than learned concepts and skills. A unique characteristic of a *scientific habitus*, according to Bourdieu, is that the actors are capable of disengagement from their empirical selves by immersing themselves in the collectivity of the scientific field.

never seem to address straightforward performance issues. However, the reader should be reminded of his appreciation of Schenker's pedagogical activity as a private piano and music-theory teacher, and of his attitude toward performance:

Schenker believed that a composition could be reproduced correctly only if the performer had grasped the composer's intentions as revealed by the score, and if he had developed an aural sensitivity to the hierarchy of tonal values which it expressed.³³

Of course, there is much to say about a statement like this. For now, it suffices to observe that Forte outlined not just an analytical theory, but also the abstract knowledge base of an informal teaching practice he admired. Seen from a sociological perspective, he thus carved out a path from occupation to profession, with an explicit appeal to scientific authority. In many ways this turned out to be "a successful strategy of scientific professionalism," as Marion Fourcade would call it, although obviously the success has filled some with a sense of loss.

* * *

If the promotion of Schenkerian analysis has been a significant step in the development of music theory as a distinct area of professional endeavor in the United States, the rise of a mathematically informed style of research transformed its early boundaries into barriers for those who approached music from a humanistic perspective. And there may have been music theorists, too, who felt excluded, for the new mathematical rigor was advertised as a radical break with the music-theoretical past. Writing in 1958, Milton Babbitt saw "a half-century of revolution in musical thought," which made it necessary for "the informed musician to reexamine and probe the very foundations of his art."³⁴ Mathematics supplied Babbitt—an ardent follower of logical empiricism—with a formal system for spelling out general characteristics of the twelve-tone system he was using as a composer.³⁵

The mathematization of music theory could easily fall under the same strategy of scientific professionalism that I just mentioned. However, there are two important differences, which suggest that this may actually have been another process: first, it was

33 Forte, "Schenker's Conception," 4.

34 Milton Babbitt, "Who Cares if You Listen," *High Fidelity* 8/2 (1958), 38.

35 "Empirical theory construction to the end of either discovering a known formal theory of which the empirical theory is an interpretation or constructing such a formal theory, serves not only the goal of clarity, precise communication, and efficiency, but of providing knowledge of general and necessary characteristics of the empirical system through the structure of the formal model." Milton Babbitt, "The Structure and Function of Musical Theory: I," *College Music Symposium* 5 (Fall 1965), 59.

in fact a strategy for composers rather than music theorists; and secondly, it started out being notably unsuccessful—that is, it did not lead to a rapport between these composers and the intended beneficiaries of their services. In particular, it found no immediate resonance with the universities that had hired them as music teachers. This we learn from a recent article by the musicologist Brian Harker published in the journal *American Music*.³⁶ Harker examined the role of music in American universities from the 1930s to the 1950s through the lens of Babbitt’s early academic career at Princeton University. Like others before him, he observed that university composers of a modernist bent were eager to take a leaf from the book of mathematics and physics departments. These composers felt an affinity with what they saw as the intellectual vanguard of their time, and they hoped they could benefit from its academic prestige.³⁷ Babbitt’s writings from this period constitute the clearest evidence of an effort to assimilate music theory into the culture of science.³⁸ However, the academic community did not see composition as a worthy intellectual pursuit, and modern music—particularly the serial twelve-tone music so vital to Babbitt’s thinking—was long held in contempt.

Harker has added a necessary perspective to popular narratives about pioneers breaking through the walls of established institutions, or bringing change from within through deliberate effort. Such narratives are often at best incomplete: they don’t take into account the role of the institutions themselves—or, more accurately, of the people who held key positions in them. Did they invite, encourage, or merely tolerate the work of these innovative thinkers? And to what extent did that work change the institutions? Harker’s research shows that, insofar as we can speak of communication between the theory of contemporary music composition and the sciences, it was a one-way street: nobody had asked Babbitt to establish a composition program with a strong focus on science-oriented theory at Princeton—but neither could he do that all by himself. Indeed, he had a hard time establishing his own position there. Strikingly, in view of the confident tone of his writing, Babbitt appears in Harker’s account as somebody who did not have, or pursue, administrative power. His doctoral dissertation, submitted in 1946, had been rejected—an

36 Harker, “Milton Babbitt Encounters Academia.”

37 Harker doesn’t mention names, but we know that Babbitt listed George Perle, Ben Weber, and himself as members of an American “twelve-tone school”; Robert Erickson, Richard Maxfield, Dika Newlin, George Rochberg, and Keith Robinson were composers whose work betrayed “a creative interest in twelve-tone composition.” Milton Babbitt, “Some Aspects of Twelve-Tone Composition,” *The Score and I.M.A. Magazine* 12 (1955), 54. Edward T. Cone should also be included here, especially for what he wrote in his essay “The Creative Artist in the University”: “The strength of the natural sciences lies in the recognition of the primary role of creative thinking; for I would vitalize the humanities by bringing the creative artist into the university as a prime factor of its educational and scholarly life, in order to afford the student first-hand experience in his chosen field, such as he now has in physics or chemistry.” *American Scholar* 16/2 (1947), 193.

38 Harker specifically quotes from Babbitt’s essay “Who Cares if You Listen.”

incident that, long before it began to add to his fame as a pioneer, had impeded his prospects for a career at Princeton or elsewhere.³⁹ However, he had built a reputation as a composer and music theorist outside his institution,⁴⁰ which gave others with more influence a reason to step in on his behalf: the composer Roger Sessions, who, when asked to return to Princeton University in 1951, insisted that Babbitt—a music-theory and music-history instructor for more than twelve years—be put on the tenure track; and the classicist Whitney Oates, chairman of the Special Program in the Humanities, who lent his support to the emancipation of music theory and composition from Princeton’s musicology program.

Only after his position at Princeton had been secured could Babbitt cultivate a professional profile for contemporary composers that put them on a par with advanced researchers. By that time, however, he was swimming with the tide: in 1958, large investments began to be made in American higher education, both by the federal government and by private organizations (such as the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations), in response to the Soviet Union’s advances in space technology. The efforts to expand the base of scientifically literate citizens resulted in a “rapid growth of academia and academic positions, including those for composers.”⁴¹ The establishment of a doctoral research program in composition at Princeton University was part of this process, not the result of Babbitt’s scheming, as Aaron Girard has argued in another study of the institutionalization of music theory in the United States.⁴² That said, Babbitt made excellent use of the time

39 Harker, “Milton Babbitt Encounters Academia,” 361–62. Harker doesn’t answer all the questions concerning the rejection of Babbitt’s dissertation, which presented a formal theory of twelve-tone serialism. There is no citation for the quote to the effect that the readers “couldn’t pass judgment on something which they couldn’t comprehend.” This wasn’t true for at least one reader: the mathematician John Tukey, who is quoted (again without citation) as saying that he “was happy with [the dissertation] from a mathematical point of view.” Harker suggests that Tukey’s happiness was in fact to Babbitt’s detriment; that for the historical musicologists on the committee the approval of a mathematician was like a blessing from Satan. In any case, Babbitt had to wait until 1992 before the dissertation was accepted—with due regard to all formalities, but obviously as a tribute to his achievements. It is currently available from UMI as Milton Babbitt, “The Function of Set-Structure in the Twelve-Tone System” (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1992).

40 Before receiving tenure in 1956, Babbitt had been awarded the 1949 New York Music Critics’ Circle citation; had served as president of the American section of the International Society of Contemporary Music (1951–52); and had been appointed to the faculty of the Salzburg Seminar in American Studies (1952). In addition, he had published articles in the *Journal of the American Musicological Society* and *The Score and I.M.A. Magazine*.

41 Jann Pasler, “The Political Economy of Composition in the American University, 1965–1985,” in idem, *Writing through Music: Essays on Music, Culture, and Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 324.

42 Aaron Girard, “Music Theory in the American Academy” (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 2007). Girard especially credits Arthur Mendel for the establishment of the Ph.D. in composition. Mendel, a specialist in Renaissance and Baroque music, was the head of Princeton’s music department from 1952 to 1967. Judging from his statements on the matter, cited by Girard, he had come a long way to make himself a spokesman for the composers on his faculty. His pragmatic arguments in favor of the doctorate may have been all the more effective: he presented it not as a statement on the relationship between composition and modern science, but as a license for academic employment. See also Schuijjer, *Analyzing Atonal Music*, 266–67.

and facilities afforded him. In Harker's words, he "promoted serialism among his students in part to establish a bulwark of collective achievement to stand against the opposition he faced."⁴³

IV.

The American academy did not impose its values on music theorists and theorizing composers; the latter adopted them of their own accord. This aroused a sense of antagonism among European music theorists. It struck them as peculiar that American music theory developed within an academic environment but separately from musicology, which they saw as the home of musical scholarship at large. At various meetings, they reminded the American community of the situation in their home countries, where thoroughbred music theorists worked at conservatories, academies of music, or *Musikhochschulen*—institutions acting independently from universities and devoted primarily to the training of practicing musicians.⁴⁴ Indeed, an academic culture had been slow to develop at many of these institutions. It was not before the announcement of a European framework for higher education in the Bologna Declaration of 1999, and the start of the process of coordinating learning outcomes and evaluation criteria some years later, that this became a common objective—or at least a shared concern—of their administrations.⁴⁵

In spite of their sometimes unsupportive institutional environments, European music theorists have been involved in attempts to provide an answer to the academic exposure of American music theory ever since the foundation of the British journal *Music Analysis* in 1982. They have organized conferences, founded their own professional societies, and started specialist journals, much like their American counterparts (see Table 1).

43 Harker, "Milton Babbitt Encounters Academia," 367.

44 Apart from the "international reports" in *Music Theory Online* (see note 10), these occasions included inaugural meetings of national societies for music theory and analysis and encounters at the European music analysis conferences, which were attended by American scholars. There were also publications that voiced the anxieties of European music theorists. The German periodical *Musik & Ästhetik*, for example, was explicitly founded to reinvigorate an intellectual culture of music which, according to the editors, had lost much ground to American scholarship; see the editorial in *Musik & Ästhetik* 1 (1997), 5–12.

45 The Web site www.ehea.info provides access to the main documents of the so-called Bologna Process. The Association Européenne des Conservatoires (AEC) has been very active in linking the objectives of the Bologna Process to the field of music, as its Web site testifies. See www.bologna-and-music.org.

Table 1: The foundation of societies and journals devoted to music theory and analysis in Europe from 1970. The far-right-hand column shows the eight European music-analysis conferences jointly organized by the national societies. Countries are indicated by their ISO 3166 codes.

Year	Society	Journal	EuroMAC
1970		<i>Zeitschrift für Musiktheorie</i> (DE) †1978	
1982		<i>Music Analysis</i> (GB)	
1985	SFAM (FR)	<i>Analyse musicale</i> (FR) †1993	
1986		<i>Musiktheorie</i> (DE)	
1989	SIdAM, GATM (IT) SBAM (BE)		Colmar (FR)
1991			Trento (IT)
1992	SMA (GB)		
1994		<i>Musurgia</i> (F) <i>Bolletino del GATM</i> (IT) †2002	
1995	Gesellschaft für Musik und Ästhetik (DE)		Montpellier (FR)
1996		<i>Tijdschrift voor Muziektheorie</i> (NL/BE) †2013	
1997	HDGT (HR)	<i>Musik & Ästhetik</i> (DE)	
1999	VvM (NL/BE)	<i>THEORIA</i> (HR)	Rotterdam (NL)
2000	GMTh (DE)		
2002		<i>Rivista di analisi e teoria musicale</i> (IT)	Bristol (GB)
2003		<i>Zeitschrift der GMTh</i> (DE)	
2007			Freiburg (DE)
2011	OTM (RU)		Rome (IT)
2013		<i>Zhurnal Obshchestva teorii muzyki</i> (RU)	
2014		<i>Music Theory & Analysis</i> (BE/NL)	Leuven (BE)

The Société Française d'Analyse Musicale (SFAM) was founded in 1985, together with its journal *Analyse musicale* (replaced in 1994 by the more independent *Musurgia*).⁴⁶ Two Italian societies followed in 1989: the Società Italiana di Analisi Musicale (SIAM)—a society for teachers and students of music analysis—and the more scholarly Gruppo di Analisi e Teoria Musicale (GATM), which until 2001 had only institutional members. The year 1989 also saw the birth of a Francophone Belgian society for music analysis, the Société Belge d'Analyse Musicale. The British Society for Music Analysis began in January 1992, almost ten years after the launch of *Music Analysis* and following on a series of music-analysis conferences (BritMACs, for short).⁴⁷

In February 1996 music theorists in the Netherlands and Flanders greeted their new journal, the *Tijdschrift voor Muziektheorie*, which published articles in Dutch, English, and German. It preceded the Dutch (later Dutch/Flemish) Society for Music Theory by three years. In Germany, the birth of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Musiktheorie, in the summer of 2000, was celebrated with a turbulent conference in Dresden one year later. The first issue of the associated online journal appeared in 2003. It posed a challenge to the printed Laaber publication *Musiktheorie*, which had existed since 1986 but addressed a much broader musicological readership.⁴⁸

These initiatives, though they were all reactions to the professionalization of American music theory and proliferated in the wake of the European music-analysis conferences (EuroMACs) held from 1989 on, differed in their nature and purpose. In countries such as Belgium, France, and Italy they were intended to raise the profile of music analysis within the domain of musicology. Nicolas Meeùs, in his 1997 review of the developments in France (and Wallonia, the Francophone part of Belgium) spoke of “a European [*sic*] will to develop analysis within the science of music at large, rather than as an autonomous approach opposed to the historical one,” and he continued, “We want the term ‘musicology’ (and the discipline itself) to remain as comprehensive as possible, as is its German counterpart, *Musikwissenschaft*.”⁴⁹ In Germany and the Netherlands, however, the same initiatives

46 The very first issue of *Analyse musicale* (November 1985) mentions the SFAM as its founding organization. However, at the time the society may not have been registered yet as a legal entity (Nicolas Meeùs, personal communication, 20 October 2013). According to Rémy Campos, the society was founded in 1987, which was probably the year of its declaration as an “association loi 1901.” Rémy Campos, “L’analyse musicale en France au XXe siècle: discours, techniques et usages,” in *L’analyse musicale, une pratique et son histoire*, ed. Rémy Campos and Nicolas Donin (Geneva: Droz/Haute École de Musique de Genève, 2009), 436.

47 The American music theorist Richmond Browne reported on these conferences in the *Journal of Music Theory* 31/1 (1987), 165–71; 33/1 (1989), 228–36; 36/1 (1992), 207–16; 38/2 (1994), 355–67; and 39/2 (1995), 385–95.

48 *Musiktheorie*, in turn, was founded to fill a void left by the short-lived *Zeitschrift für Musiktheorie* (1970–78), but it has developed into a *Zeitschrift für Musikwissenschaft*, as attested by its current subtitle.

49 Meeùs, “Music Theory and Analysis in France and Belgium,” paragraph 2.2.

served a different goal, namely to empower music theorists working at *Musikhochschulen* and conservatories and ensure their contribution to music scholarship. The following paragraphs will offer some background for these differences, with special focus on the interplay between disciplinary priorities and institutional contexts.

France. Rémy Campos begins his 2009 chronicle of French music analysis, remarkably, by invoking some of the criteria that have served to discriminate between professions and other occupations:

In France, music analysis did not exist as a discipline before the last third of the twentieth century. “Discipline” is taken here as an autonomous professional field of endeavor equipped with institutions, with shared doctrines and practices, with a common code of conduct and tools of evaluation, [and] with channels of publication and transmission.⁵⁰

What existed before music analysis became a “discipline,” in the words of Campos—that is, before it was represented by a professional body (the SFAM)—was a large variety of analytical practices: for example, composers dissecting scores of revered masters at the piano with their students gathered around them, either as private teachers (like Nadia Boulanger and René Leibowitz) or as the appointees of institutions (like Vincent d’Indy at the Schola Cantorum or Olivier Messiaen at the Paris Conservatoire); performers offering courses in interpretation (like Alfred Cortot) or giving lecture-concerts (like Igor Markevitch); and university scholars developing scientifically viable approaches to music as structured sound (like Nicolas Ruwet and Jean-Jacques Nattiez). This last group perhaps came closest to the idea of a discipline as Campos defines it: its members shared a doctrine—in this case, that music analysts ought to select topics and follow procedures which could lead to verifiable statements; they found in each other a common interest in music as a system of signs; and they achieved a certain degree of organization, although this was, for the most part, the work of only one, Jean-Jacques Nattiez, and most of that work took place not in France but in Canada, at the Université de Montréal, where Nattiez was appointed.⁵¹

50 “En France, l’analyse musicale n’existe pas comme discipline avant le dernier tiers du XX^e siècle. Discipline est ici entendu comme un champ d’exercice professionnel autonome doté d’institutions, de doctrines et de pratiques partagées, d’une conscience de corps et d’outils d’évaluation, d’organes de publication et de transmission.” Campos, “L’Analyse musicale en France,” 353 (my translation).

51 Under Nattiez’s leadership, the music department of the Université de Montréal became a principal center of semiotic studies. From 1974 to 1980 he chaired the Groupe de Recherches en Sémiologie Musicale, which had its headquarters there. See Paul Bouissac, “Semiotics in Canada II,” in *The Semiotic Web*, ed. Thomas A. Sebeok (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1988), 166–68, doi:10.1515/9783110868388.145. In France, Nattiez occasionally used *Musique en jeu*, a journal of contemporary music, as a platform for research into musical semiotics. Campos discusses at length the thematic issues of this

If the promulgation of “musical semiology” was a significant step in the professionalization of French music analysis—which is what Campos’s chronicle implies—it had somewhat curious consequences. Obviously, it was a strategy of adaptation: semiologists placed music analysis within the human sciences, specifically with linguistics and semiotics.⁵² However, this strategy created a mixed community, in terms of both nationality and disciplinary background. By the time it bore its first fruits, in the late 1960s, semiotics had developed into a truly international research field, attracting scholars trained in philosophy, anthropology, psychology, literature, and (ethno)musicology.⁵³ The orientation of music analysis toward this field was particularly noticeable not only in France but also in Italy, Czechoslovakia, and Finland.⁵⁴ In the United States, the work of Fred Lerdahl and Ray Jackendoff represented a scientific alliance of contemporary music theory and transformational-generative linguistics,⁵⁵ while semiotics left profound traces on the analytical work of Kofi Agawu and Robert Hatten.⁵⁶ Thus, on the one hand, the adaptive strategy was successful in that it animated an international discourse of music analysis and created intersections with other disciplines. On the other hand, it excluded many music-theory teachers—especially those who worked within the traditional setting of a conservatory, where they had to instill in students an aesthetic commitment to music.

journal that Nattiez published in 1971 (no. 5), 1973 (nos. 10 and 12), and 1975 (no. 17). Campos, “L’analyse musicale en France,” 429–34.

- 52 There has been considerable debate on the relation between the terms “semiotic(s),” as used by Charles Sanders Peirce (1839–1914) for his theory of signs, and “semiology” (*sémiologie*), which was coined by Ferdinand de Saussure in his *Cours de linguistique générale* (Paris: Payot, 1916). Peirce referred to signs and signification in general, Saussure more specifically to language. Yet today the two terms are seen as interchangeable; preferences of usage seem to depend on language and tradition. Here I use “semiotics” for the general case and “semiology” when referring to scholars who applied this term to themselves.
- 53 In 1969 an International Association for Semiotic Studies was founded, with seventeen countries represented on its executive board. At the inaugural meeting in Paris, the term “semiology” was officially abandoned in favor of “semiotics,” although that did not end the discussion mentioned in note 52. See Paul Bouissac, “Semiotics in Canada,” in *The Semiotic Sphere*, ed. Thomas A. Sebeok and Jean Umiker-Sebeok (New York: Plenum Press, 1986), 59, doi:10.1007/978-1-4757-0205-7_4; and Raymond Monelle, *Linguistics and Semiotics in Music* (Chur: Harwood Academic, 1992), 26.
- 54 The first three countries already had established research traditions in the field of linguistics and/or semiotics, while in Finland folklore studies provided an important basis for the development of such a tradition. For a survey of the entire field in this period, see Jean-Jacques Nattiez, “Réflexions sur le développement de la sémiologie musicale,” in idem, *De la sémiologie à la musique* (Montreal: Université du Québec à Montréal, 1988), 189–234, trans. Katherine Ellis as “Reflections on the Development of Semiology in Music,” *Music Analysis* 8/1–2 (1989), 21–75. See also Monelle, *Linguistics and Semiotics in Music*.
- 55 Fred Lerdahl and Ray S. Jackendoff, *A Generative Theory of Tonal Music* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1983).
- 56 V. Kofi Agawu, *Playing with Signs: A Semiotic Interpretation of Classical Music* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991, doi:10.1515/9781400861835), and *Music as Discourse: Semiotic Adventures in Romantic Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008, doi:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195370249.001.0001). Robert S. Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven: Markedness, Correlation, and Interpretation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), and *Interpreting Musical Gestures, Topics, and Tropes: Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004).

In 1998 the Italian musicologist Claudio Toscani, a board member of SIDAM, publicly regretted the “extreme professionalization” of music scholarship,⁵⁷ with explicit reference to the increasing reliance of music analysts on structuralism and linguistic models. He argued for a reunion of music analysis and hermeneutics in the interest of professional music education.⁵⁸

The SFAM did not pursue a full-fledged professionalizing agenda either—at least not insofar as this agenda coincided with the semiologist one designed to meet the requirement of scientific relevance. This kind of relevance had proven controversial as a basis for monopolizing “the ability to speak the truth” (Broman) on matters of music theory and analysis. Rather, the society aimed to represent a broad range of practitioners and provide access to knowledge and educational resources.⁵⁹ It embraced methodological pluralism, but this liberal policy begged the question of how to establish professional autonomy. Which authority should grant music analysis the status of a learned discipline? The answer lay in joining the ranks of a discipline that already had that status and changing it from within—in making analysis a less specialized, more integrated part of musicology. The “comprehensive musicology” of which Meeùs spoke should encourage analytical practice and debate. In addition, music analysts could benefit from a close relationship with creative practices, which were beginning to wield their own institutional power through such institutes as IRCAM in particular. Hence, perhaps, the small but meaningful gesture on the part of the SFAM of honoring a composer, Olivier Messiaen, as the “founding father” (*père fondateur*) of French music analysis.⁶⁰

The Netherlands and Germany. The original mission statement of the Dutch Society for Music Theory, as published in the program of the Fourth European Music Analysis Conference (Rotterdam 1999), includes an endorsement of music theory as a “research discipline.” This seems to challenge the terms under which some French and Italian music theorists and musicologists promoted music analysis.⁶¹ It can be understood, however, in view

57 Claudio Toscani, “Musiktheorie und Musikwissenschaft in Italien,” *Musik & Ästhetik* 8 (1998), 85.

58 *Ibid.*, 94–95.

59 In a statement from 1991, the SFAM presented itself as “an association that brings together, in France, specialists and practitioners of music analysis to contribute to the development of their discipline and to the enhancement of their skills” (“Une association qui regroupe en France les spécialistes et les praticiens de l’Analyse Musicale pour contribuer au développement de leur discipline et à l’amélioration de leur qualification”). “Who’s Who,” special issue of *Analyse musicale* (July 1991), 2. Quoted in Campos, “L’analyse musicale en France,” 438 (my translation).

60 *Ibid.*, 442. For insightful accounts of Messiaen’s teaching, see Jean Boivin, *La classe de Messiaen* (Paris: Christian Bourgois, 1995); and Vincent Benitez, “A Creative Legacy: Messiaen as Teacher of Analysis,” *College Music Symposium* 40 (2000), 117–39.

61 And, I should add, their Belgian counterparts, too. But this did not preclude an active involvement of musicologists and music theorists from Dutch-speaking Belgian universities and conservatories in the activities of the society, which acknowledged this in 2004 by changing its English name to “Dutch-Flemish Society for Music Theory.”

of the somewhat ambiguous form that professionalization had taken in Dutch music theory: a number of highly selective and intellectually demanding programs of study had been established at conservatories, but with the sole purpose of providing faculty to teach such practical subjects as solfège, harmony, counterpoint, and analysis—a purpose more reminiscent of apprenticeship training than of formal academic education. (Indeed, students of these programs were often hired as teachers by the same conservatory after graduating.) Involving Dutch music theorists in research activities and professional debates was meant to give them a stake in the development of their field as well as endowing them with more authority, both within and outside of their own institutions. However, since these institutions provided no platform for any career other than that of a teacher, and since they had no system for rewarding research output, the effect of such activities on the professional status of Dutch music theorists has been minimal. Collaborations between conservatories and universities, insofar as they offered scope for professional development, were tailored to the promotion of composers and performers to academic ranks through an “artistic doctorate.”⁶² Such programs were not particularly welcoming for music theorists, who thus remained outsiders on all fronts.⁶³

In Germany, too, the initiative to found a society for music theory grew out of a concern about the status of the discipline and its members in the knowledge society.⁶⁴ The perspective for success of this initiative was greater than in the Netherlands. Unlike Dutch conservatories, some German *Musikhochschulen* had the right to award doctoral degrees in subjects like *Musikwissenschaft* and music pedagogy. This provided the new German society with a challenging, yet attainable mission objective: the doctorate in music theory. It came high on the society’s initial agenda, for almost immediately after its inaugural conference in Dresden the host institution—the Hochschule für Musik Carl Maria von Weber—announced the addition of such a doctorate to its graduate-level offerings. Ludwig Holtmeier, the conference convenor, who had joined the theory faculty at Dresden the year before, fought a brief campaign to promote the doctorate in music theory at a national

62 The most conspicuous of these collaborations is DocARTES, a doctoral program for creative and performing musicians offered by a Dutch-Flemish consortium of conservatories and universities and coordinated from the Orpheus Institute in Ghent, Belgium.

63 The handbook of DocARTES stipulates that the applicant must hold “a master’s degree in the creative or performing arts” and be “a highly accomplished and reflective practicing musician (in performance, composition, or music pedagogy)” (9). It speaks of “research in-and-through musical practice” (9, 18), and of “the artist’s perspective,” which is “at the heart of each project that qualifies for its support” (26); <http://www.orpheusinstituut.be/uploads/assets/475/1402664434-docartes-handbook-2013-2014.pdf> (accessed 12 August 2014).

64 See Ludwig Holtmeier, “Einleitung,” in *Musiktheorie zwischen Historie und Systematik: 1. Kongress der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Musiktheorie, Dresden 2001*, ed. Ludwig Holtmeier, Michael Polth, and Felix Diergarten (Augsburg: Wißner Verlag, 2004), 9–11.

level.⁶⁵ He envisaged a future in which professional music schools would hire faculty with doctorates so as to meet the academic standards imposed by the Bologna process, and he feared that, without an appropriate program of doctoral studies, music theory would be taught by musicologists with insufficient training in the discipline.⁶⁶ He thus favored a strategy of closure similar to that of American music theorists in the 1960s and '70s, but it did not lead to a similar rupture between disciplines. After Dresden, only two other *Musikhochschulen* started a Ph.D. in music theory: one in Mainz (2007)—a school that had long been administered as a department of the Johannes Gutenberg University—and the other in Lübeck (2009). Elsewhere music theorists contented themselves with the possibility of graduating with a doctorate in *Musikwissenschaft* while having one or more theorists on their advisory committees. German music scholarship, in sum, has tended to divide less along disciplinary fault lines than along institutional ones—that is, those that exist between *Musikhochschulen* and universities.

V.

It is interesting to note that in these years, as attempts were made to cultivate a new scholarly branch of music theory and analysis in Europe, the very notion of scholarship had come under debate in the United States. In 1990 Ernst Boyer, then president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, published his influential study *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*. Boyer had concerns about the rise of an exclusive notion of scholarship, one that gave priority to research and publication while ranking application and teaching as secondary. This, he feared, would deepen the gulf between theory and practice, weaken professorial engagement with society, and impoverish academic life. He aimed at “a more comprehensive, more dynamic understanding of scholarship . . . one in which the rigid categories of research, teaching, and service are broadened and more flexibly defined.”⁶⁷

Boyer proposed four types of scholarship: a scholarship of discovery, the most familiar type, aspiring to contribute to the advancement of knowledge; a scholarship of integration, forging connections between different areas of knowledge; a scholarship of application,

65 See Ludwig Holtmeier, “Zum Dresdner Promotionsrecht,” *Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft für Musiktheorie* 1/1 (2003), 137–45, <http://www.gmth.de/zeitschrift/artikel/487.aspx> (accessed 15 November 2014).

66 Ludwig Holtmeier, “Blick zurück nach vorn,” *Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft für Musiktheorie* 8/1 (2011), 189–93, <http://www.gmth.de/zeitschrift/artikel/628.aspx> (accessed 15 November 2014). See also idem, “Laudatio zum 65. Geburtstag von Prof. Dr. Clemens Kühn,” in Hochschule für Musik Carl Maria von Weber Dresden, ed., *Jahrbuch 2010* (Dresden: Elbtal, 2010), 105–8.

67 Ernest L. Boyer, *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate* (New York: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1990), 16.

devoted to a lively interaction between theory and practice; and a scholarship of teaching, creating commitment to the pursuit of knowledge and understanding in society.⁶⁸

Boyer's work has affirmed professional fields that used to have no research tradition of their own. Its importance is acknowledged by, among others, Afaf Ibrahim Meleis, a professor of nursing and sociology at the University of Pennsylvania. Meleis has described the development of a theory of nursing disentangled from the influence of biology and medicine and seeking affiliation with the human sciences.⁶⁹ This reorientation clearly fell into Boyer's category of the scholarship of integration but also went hand in hand with substantial changes in the nursing practice. It involved new criteria for the quality of nursing, such as a focus not just on an illness or a surgery but on the patient's whole person, a concern for the needs of patients as perceived by themselves, and an awareness of the importance of self-care. It is important to understand that these criteria were not imposed on the nursing practice from on high—quite the contrary: they were deeply informed by insights collected at the workplace. Thus, nursing also represented a scholarship of application.

The history of nursing theory as narrated by Meleis offers another example of how a professional discipline can grow out of a field of practice. I will use this history as a backdrop for some final observations on the state of music theory in different societies and on the relationship between professionalism and scholarliness in that discipline—two concepts that entertain an intricate relationship in the present discussion. But let me first briefly recapitulate the developmental stages that nursing theory has traversed.

The seeds of professionalism are sown when practitioners identify fundamental problems in their field and begin to ponder solutions. This is what Meleis calls the "stage of practice." One of his examples is the work of Florence Nightingale, who nursed war victims under the supervision of field surgeons during the Crimean War (1853–56). She recognized the importance of hygiene and proposed criteria for the environment in which patients were treated, the most essential of which were pure air, pure water, efficient drainage, cleanliness, and light.⁷⁰

In the next stage, curricula are developed with a view to educating people who can uphold the new standard of practice or raise it still further. According to Meleis, this is a "stage of education and administration."⁷¹ In the nursing field, this stage commenced

68 Ibid., 17–24.

69 Afaf Ibrahim Meleis, *Theoretical Nursing: Development and Progress*, 5th ed. (Philadelphia: Wolters Kluwer/Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, 2012).

70 Florence Nightingale, *Notes on Nursing: What It Is and What It Is Not* (New York: D. Appleton, 1960, doi:10.1017/CBO9780511751349), 24.

71 Meleis, *Theoretical Nursing*, 60.

with apprenticeship programs provided at hospitals—the so-called Nightingale schools. After the Second World War, nursing became a degree course at colleges and universities, where students could also prepare for educational and administrative roles.

Thereafter follow stages of “research” and “theory.” Both are still very much tailored to educational needs: to organizing the relevant knowledge and skills into a coherent body, and to raising the academic level of practitioners so that they can contribute to the advancement of the discipline. Meleis notes that, indeed, a scholarship of teaching dominated nursing theory in these stages of its advent.⁷² Only later, from the 1970s onward—in the stages of “philosophy,” “integration” and “interdisciplinarity”—was a balance struck between the various types of scholarship. Nursing theory attained scholarly maturity, empowering nursing as a profession.

This brief history shows professionalization as a process in which practitioners claim intellectual ownership of their field. Now, who owns the field of contemporary music theory, and how? This question cannot be answered directly. We should look again at the first stage of Meleis’s chronology—the stage of practice—and then ask: what practice needed music theory? Who observed the fundamental problems that gave rise to music theory in its current state as a professional discipline, and what were these problems?

I propose that music theory was needed to enhance a practice of classroom teaching which had established itself as part of the music programs of conservatories and universities. Our keen observers taught fundamentals and general skills courses at these institutions, and they familiarized students with repertoire. Yet they experienced a tremendous gap between their syllabi and the demands of the practice for which they had to prepare their students. These syllabi—for subjects like harmony, counterpoint, solfège and ear training, and possibly also a (rudimentary) form of music analysis—were unsuited to engaging students with questions and issues of contemporary musical life. Moreover, they failed to situate musical thought within a broader intellectual history and thus to contribute to the academic training of musicians.

Viewed against this background, the “professional music theorist” once heralded by David Kraehenbuehl is not a member of an autonomous and self-contained scholarly discipline, but rather belongs to a professional community of music teachers that has organized itself to create a substantial body of theory. The prevailing view of the professional music theorist as a researcher may consequently need some adjustment. Already in 1997 Patrick McCreless observed a “tension between the disciplinary expectations of the research university, for which modern theory groomed itself, and those of the university

⁷² *Ibid.*, 61.

music schools, conservatories and liberal arts colleges where most music theorists are employed.”⁷³ If mapped on Boyer’s division of scholarly practice, McCreless’s words suggest that music theorists have been prepared for the practices of discovery and integration, but that they have found employment, first and foremost, in the practice of teaching.

A considerable part of contemporary music theory has been spurred by questions and concerns of composers, but, again, especially at institutions where these worked as educators—for example, at Princeton University, the institutional home of Milton Babbitt; or at the Conservatoire de Paris, where Olivier Messiaen taught harmony, analysis, and composition. The extent to which the theoretical work of composers is facilitated and acknowledged depends, as we have seen, on the institutional makeup of a society and on prevailing traditions of education and professional practice. This is also true, by the way, for the extent to which composers see themselves as proprietors of music theory.

Unlike composers, performers did not have a big stake in the development of contemporary music theory. Yet, theory has consistently been taught to students of performance in order to enhance *their* professionalism. It is not difficult to understand, then, why practicing musicians have never fully embraced the legacy of music theory. Performance issues entered theoretical discourse either as a consequence of the rise of theory-based analysis—what could a Schenker graph, a hypermetrical scheme, or a transformational network tell a performer?⁷⁴—or because of a wish to explore the analytical implications of different recorded versions of a musical work.⁷⁵ In both cases, the impetus came from the side of music theory rather than from the side of performance practice.

73 McCreless, “Rethinking Contemporary Music Theory,” 34.

74 Examples of analytical texts that have been written with a view toward guiding performers include Edward T. Cone, *Musical Form and Musical Performance* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1968); and Wallace Berry, *Musical Structure and Performance* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989). Janet Schmalfeldt, “On the Relation of Analysis to Performance: Beethoven’s Bagatelles Op. 126, Nos. 2 and 5,” *Journal of Music Theory* 29 (1985), 1–31, doi:10.2307/843369, aimed to show the benefits of a two-way approach, further explored in Joel Lester, “Performance and Analysis: Interaction and Interpretation,” in *The Practice of Performance: Studies in Musical Interpretation*, ed. John Rink (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995, doi:10.1017/CBO9780511552366), 197–216. The musicologists Eric Clarke and Nicholas Cook involved the composer Bryn Harrison and the pianist Philip Thomas in a study of the roles of analyst, composer, and performer while they were working together on a piece by Harrison: “Interpretation and Performance in Bryn Harrison’s ‘Être-temps,’” *Musicae Scientiae* 9/1 (2005), 31–74, doi:10.1177/102986490500900102.

75 The analytical study of music recordings developed with the realization that a performance is another representation of notated music besides the score and could hence shed another light on it. This idea has been promoted especially in Britain by scholars such as Nicholas Cook, Jonathan Dunsby, Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, and John Rink. It has yielded a large number of publications from the early 1990s on. See, for example, Patrick Campbell, ed., *Analyzing Performance* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996); John Rink, ed., *Musical Performance: A Guide to Understanding* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, doi:10.1017/CBO978051181739); and Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, *The Changing Sound of Music: Approaches to Studying Recorded Musical Performance* (London: CHARM, 2009), <http://www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/studies/chapters/intro.html> (accessed 27 August 2013).

Music theory, we may conclude, is currently not a field to which all musicians feel entitled. Those who have shaped the field as part of their professionalization process over the past decades form a relatively small group within the music community. Moreover, the composition of this group, and the relations it entertains with other groups, have differed from country to country. In France and Italy, for example, the professionalization movement separated music theorists from composers, drawing them into a closer alliance with musicologists. In the United States, it initially drove a wedge between music theorists and musicologists, while there were frequent and intensive exchanges between music theorists and composers. British music theorists have adopted American theoretical frameworks and other attributes of professionalism, but they have always adhered, or claimed to adhere, to slightly different values. In particular, like their French counterparts, they too have tended to describe their occupation as “music analysis” rather than “music theory,” with an air of pragmatism and openness to other disciplinary viewpoints.⁷⁶

One of the hallmarks of professionalism is the interpenetration of professional practice and theoretical discourse. From this point of view, professionalism has never been fully established and consolidated in musical life. Music theory cannot claim, in general, to guide musical practice, let alone to endow the music professions with epistemic authority in society. To achieve that function, it needs a broader ownership base among musicians. This requires, as a minimal condition, an expansion of the palette of practices that inform it, and the active intellectual involvement of those who represent these practices. For all that music theory has to offer composers and performers, it should also continue to receive ideas from them. It will thrive not as a province of specialists, but as a transboundary field of knowledge created, maintained, and critically engaged by all musicians.

⁷⁶ This appears from the title of their journal (*Music Analysis*, as opposed to the *American Journal of Music Theory* and *Music Theory Spectrum*), the themes of their conferences (music analysis conferences), and the name of their professional society (Society for Music Analysis, in contrast to the American Society for Music Theory). The oft-advertised priority of analysis over theory may have come about as a reaction to a particular stage in the development of American music theory, when Schenkerism and set-class theory exercised a particularly strong gravitational pull on the activity in the field. However, before this pull began to weaken somewhat, it could also be felt in Britain. For a thoughtful report on the reception and use of Schenkerian theory in British music analysis, see Jonathan Dunsby, “Schenkerian Theory in Britain: Developments and Responses,” in *Schenker Studies 1*, ed. Hedi Siegel (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1990); see especially p. 186. See also Dunsby and Whittall, *Music Analysis in Concept and Practice*.

Abstract

Most professions today have an international community, but they are also informed by national structures and the cultures that sustain them. This is a relatively recent notion in the sociology of professions, which has helped explain why there are sometimes striking differences—in terms of education, practice, orientation, and social status—between communities devoted to the same discipline in various societies. In this article, it serves as a starting point for a transnational study of music theory as a profession.

It seems appropriate for such a study to begin with a focus on the United States, where the “professional music theorist” was heralded in the late 1950s, and where the discipline presented itself with degree programs at colleges and universities, with a network of societies, and with its own channels of publication in subsequent years. Although European music theorists have adopted some of these attributes of professionalism, they did not progress as far in achieving autonomy of the discipline in their own countries. Indeed, the pursuit of professional autonomy has been highly controversial among them—even among the British, who came closest to equaling the success of their North American counterparts.

However, this is not a study that views historical developments in terms of success or failure. It describes how music theory has been (or has become) shaped as a professional discipline, and it concludes that this was not a unified process—sometimes not even at a national level. One shared concern has been the involvement of music theorists in scholarly research and debates. This has pushed the discipline to a high level of maturity, but at the same time it has overshadowed the equally important question of which practices music theory serves. A comparison with the professionalization of nursing leads to the discomfiting observation that many music practices still lack a theory.

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