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*Editors*

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*Address*

c/o Department of Arts and Cultural Studies, Section of Musicology,  
University of Copenhagen, Karen Blixens Vej 1, DK-2300 København S

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## Conference

### Southampton Music Analysis Conference (SotonMAC), Southampton, 29–31 July 2019

The British Society for Music Analysis (SMA) held its annual international conference 29–31 July, 2019. This year's conference venue was the University of Southampton, giving the conference the shorthand name 'SotonMAC'. The conference was extremely well organized and executed: From the earliest stages of the conference – the call for papers, the proposal answer, the registration – to the last day of the conference, everything went smooth and on schedule. There were between two and four parallel sessions, and the conference rooms were conveniently located next to each other, making the alternation between sessions swift and easy. Preceding the conference was also a two-day summer school for masters and doctoral students as well as early-career scholars with tutors Michael Clarke (University of Huddersfield), Andrew Hicks (Cornell University), Kenneth Smith (University of Liverpool), and Eric Wen (Curtis Institute of Music); this report focuses only on the conference.

This year's conference was unthemed and as such, the eighty-seven papers that were given during the three days showed a great variety of topics and research areas. Many of the usual suspects – Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Brahms, Liszt, to name but a few – received the attention that they very often do at music analysis conferences; luckily so, for there is still much to say about the music of these composers: Reuben Phillips' (Princeton University) intriguing analyses of harmony in Brahms' deceptively simple Waltzes Op. 39 showed as much, as did Eric Wen's (Curtis Institute of Music) Schenkerian dissection of Bach's Fugue in B minor, BWV 869. But there was also a refreshingly large amount of research focused on composers with a (thus far) more peripheral position in the analytical literature – Carl Nielsen (1865–1931), Franz Schreker (1878–1934), Bohuslav Martinů (1890–1959), Witold Lutosławski (1913–1994). Nielsen's third symphony was at the centre of Christopher Tarrant's (Newcastle University) discussion of new approaches to sonata form, a paper which – to the surprise of the only Danish musicologist in the audience – drew on Torben Schousboe's thesis (*magisterkonferensspeciale*) of 1968 (more can be read in Tarrant's recent article 'Structural Acceleration in Nielsen's *Sinfonia Espansiva*' in *Music Analysis*, 38/3 (2019), 358–86). Furthermore, there were quite a few papers on more recent composers and composers whose name has not become part of the established canon: Joseph Mayseder (1789–1863), Josef Suk (1874–1935), Roberto Gerhard (1896–1970), Paavo Heininen (1938–), Toshio Hosokawa (1955–), and many more. Despite the great variety of topics and composers,

a few areas seemed to achieve particular attention. Among these were the broad concept of ‘tonal space’ and the global history of music theory.

The focus on ‘tonal space’ could be seen in no less than three interconnected sessions bearing this title, as well as in Suzannah Clark’s (Harvard University) brilliant keynote lecture ‘Two Lessons in the Hermeneutics of Tonal Spaces’. In the said sessions it became clear that the idea of tonal space could be utilized in many different ways and on different repertoires: from neo-Riemannian analyses of harmony in John Coltrane’s ‘26-2’ (Jamie Howell, University of Southampton) to analyses of contour networks in the first movement of Bartók’s String Quartet No. 4 (Daniel Wu, Soochow University School of Music). The common denominator of ‘tonal space’ was the conceptualization of music and musical structure as extending in some kind of space, often visualized in two or more dimensions. The most well-known tonal space is perhaps the *Tonnetz* of Hugo Riemann that has received prolonged attention in neo-Riemannian research, but alternative *Tonnetze* existed in theoretical literature well before Riemann, and new *Tonnetz* representations are still constructed, as the conference aptly demonstrated. Stephen Brown (University of Arizona), for example, showed that the music of Lutosławski moved through a *Tonnetz* not ordered by the usual thirds and fifths, but other intervals such as interval-class 2 on one axis and interval-class 5 on another (that is, whole tones and fourths/fifths) with convincing and interesting analytical results.

Personally, I found J.P.E. Harper-Scott’s paper to be a highlight in the ‘tonal space’ sessions, as well as in the conference at large. Harper-Scott took on the difficult but interesting task of bridging the gap between neo-Riemannian theory and ‘proper’ Riemannian theory – what Steven Rings has dubbed ‘paleo-Riemannian theory’ (see *The Oxford Handbook of Neo-Riemannian Theories*, Oxford University Press, 2011). Specifically, Harper-Scott argued that Riemann’s theory of functions can be modelled onto Richard Cohn’s well-known hexatonic cycles (Cohn, ‘Maximally Smooth Cycles, Hexatonic Systems, and the Analysis of Late-Romantic Triadic Progressions’, *Music Analysis*, 15/1 (1996), 17): Cohn’s ‘northern’ cycle, then, would represent the tonic and different transformations of it (the tonic *leittonwechsel*, the *variant* of that and so on around the cycle); Cohn’s ‘western’ cycle would represent the dominant and similar transformations of it; the ‘eastern’ would represent the subdominant and its transformations; and the ‘southern’ would represent what Harper-Scott called ‘mixed functions’, manifested by the pair Sp and DD and their transformations. Even though Harper-Scott’s figure in some way implies a conglomerate of *four* and not *three* main functions (as per the four cycles), Harper-Scott made a strong case when he applied his analysis to excerpts of Waltraute’s part in Act One of Richard Wagner’s *Götterdämmerung*. With a smaller gap between paleo- and neo-Riemannian theory thus achieved, one cannot help but wonder about the still gaping gap between these two ‘Riemannians’ on the one hand and the numerous *post*-Riemannian adaptations of Riemann’s function theory in countries all over Europe on the other hand, many of which immediately disposed of Riemann’s harmonic

dualism. A monistic representation of a similar tonal space would be interesting – if possible, at all.

Suzannah Clark's keynote lecture was a thought-provoking investigation of the idea of directionality in tonal space and the metaphors we rely on when we speak of such directionality: tones that go up and down, right and left (that is, typically, in sharp and flat directions). Amongst other things, she argued that much is won in keeping such directional metaphors in congruence with conventional intuitions about direction in music. Demonstrating the dangers of incongruence, she discussed how a subtle reconstruction of the *Tonnetz* used in the analyses of key relations in Robert Schumann's *Dichterliebe* in Fred Lerdahl's *Tonal Pitch Space* (Oxford University Press, 2001) and in Berthold Hoeckner's 'Paths through *Dichterliebe*' (*19th Century Music*, 30/1 (2006), 65–80) radically changed their analytical results and thus challenged the meaning – the text-music relationship – that Lerdahl and Hoeckner derived from their respective *Tonnetz* paths. With tonal space as such a hot topic at the conference, this reminder was appropriate.

Another hot topic was the global history of music theory. Thomas Irvine (University of Southampton) had pre-organized a panel on this topic running across two consecutive sessions, and a third, independent session entitled 'Beyond Europe and North America' contributed with even more perspectives. At issue were both general discussions and concerns about Eurocentrism in music theory's historiography, questions about the difficulties of implementing a more global view in curricula, as well as concrete dives into music theory from China, Persian and Ottoman Empires, and elsewhere. The sessions echoed, at least in my mind, a recent call for global perspectives in music theory published in *IMS Musicological Brainfood* (vol. 3/1, 2019), and as such it seems that this research area experiences a surge of interest that will be exciting to follow in the future.

It was announced that next year's SMA conference will be held 23–25 July at the University of Birmingham under the nickname 'BrumMAC'. Keynote speakers will be Dmitri Tymoczko (Princeton University) and Anna Zayaruznaya (Yale University).

*Thomas Jul Kirkegaard-Larsen*

*The author:*

Thomas Jul Kirkegaard-Larsen, Ph.D. fellow, School of Communication and Culture – Musicology, Aarhus University, Langelandsgade 139, DK-8000 Aarhus C · thomasjkl@cc.au.