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Sylvain Caron

Suzannah Clark. 2011. *Analyzing Schubert.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 290 pp. ISBN 978–0-521–84867–1.

When I moved to New York in 1982, my notion of the "asphalt jungle" was entirely overturned. At the very zenith of its decay in the eighties, the city had sprouted a riotous vegetation, quite opposite my conception of the city as paradise paved. Struggle as they would, the city "fathers" could do nothing to suppress this rebellion.

I went to New York in search of Schenker—in the midst of the Schenkerian conquest, as it became known later. With unerring precision I chose the wrong university—Columbia—and a thesis advisor, Patricia Carpenter, for whom Schenkerian theory was a mildly suspicious endeavour. Her suspicions were not aroused by the close readings of scores, which she admired. I believe she found the theory methodically counterintuitive—it required one to submit evidence to a preconceived system. She was a close reader of Arthur Danto, had studied and written on phenomenology (a dissertation on the fugue quite unlike any other, and the seminal article "The Musical Object"), and devised an approach—not a method per se—called the "tonal problem," which sought to balance system with discovery. But she was a woman in a discipline governed by men for whom Schenker was a goad to testosterone. Her thoughts and writings were never taken seriously (although she herself was recognized later as a "pioneer" woman in music theory—an honorific well deserved that unfortunately did nothing to remedy the neglect). In the eighties, her thought was merely more vegetation to be pruned in the conquest of what the Schenkerians held to be a theoretical wilderness. Her neglect was collateral damage in the war for orthodoxy.

I think she would have liked Suzannah Clark's new book on Schubert, as I do. Clark's aim is to question the theoretical assumptions of the models hitherto applied to the analysis of Schubert, and perhaps to question one principal theoretical assumption—that the analyst applies a model, rather than deriving a model, from the object. Applying theoretical models to Schubert, we shall always find him anomalous. Deriving properly Schubertian paradigms from his music, we shall always find theoretical models anomalous. Clark's task is to contextualize what has become ubiquitous in theory, to qualify the conventional. Her point is that anyone analyzing Schubert will find the conventional become unconventional, such as the motion of leading-tone-to-tonic set against harmonies other than V–I, and treated as equivalent to the latter in force and logic. Throw out the textbooks.

In truth, we find in Schubert an overabundance of context, a riotous contextual vegetation. Clark notes a feature that could become a Schubertian emblem, the repetition of a salient pitch in many different pitch contexts; some of these contexts are places where, according to theoretical orthodoxy, it shouldn't be found, like a Manhattan tendril poking its way through a sidewalk and around a lamppost. It is this kind of unanticipated tactic that produces the normal in Schubert's harmony.

I hesitate to call this "defamiliarization." Viktor Shklovsky has been cited to death. But the Schubertian effect Clark describes is subversive of fixed meaning, a counterintuitive tactic—reading against the grain—in the sense that literary criticism took up after the Russian structuralists. The good news according to Clark is that music theorists have come to embrace "new contextual frameworks," presumably like those advanced by structuralism and post-structuralism. The bad news, however, is that "the methodologies of music theory itself have remained remarkably unchanged" (269).

The root of the problem lies in the conventional nature of music theory, a fixedness in approach with a marked effect, given the strength of theoretical models to shape thought: "The problem … lies with the sheer force of music theory in shaping our ways of understanding music" (268). Clark is talking about the Beethoven effect, the V–I, period-and-sentence syndrome, which has had such a monopoly, if not a stranglehold, on music theory, the effect of which is to treat Schubert's harmony as largely an anomaly. This is an approach that, as noted above, renders itself ultimately anomalous. Clark declares her aim to be simple: "My book traces the impact that different theoretical apparatuses have had on the perception of Schubert's music and on his place in history from his own day until now" (5). But she is not shy about declaring the state of affairs in music theory to be problematic, filled with pedigreed habits of thought that turn genuine impulse into compulsion: "This book is a history of obsessions with music theory in Schubert's reception—obsessive attempts to protect Schubert from being judged by music theory or to wield it precisely in order to judge him; obsessions about its role in hermeneutics and in Schubert's biography" (4). Clark, however, is not set on reinventing the wheel. The book shows mastery of (but not slavish devotion to) a host of analytic approaches.

The first chapter is a model of reception theory, taking apart the nineteenth-century myths of Schubert as a sort of toxic cocktail blended of *enfant terrible* and Kasper Hauser. Adorno and Tovey, principally the former, were twentieth-century correctives in this regard. Taking a cue from Adorno, Clark avows, "My purpose in the rest of this book will be to home in on those passages in Schubert's music that may serve as a means of questioning some of the most cherished tenets of music theory. In other words, instead of using music theory to analyze Schubert, I shall use Schubert to analyze music theory" (54).

The second chapter is a quite remarkable blending of recent modes of analysis, including the transformational and the Neo-Riemannian, with which she is intimately familiar. Its goal is expressed as an unburdening of song: "I would not burden song with the need for an overarching, a priori harmonic logic" (138). Her graph, as she puts it, "allows Schubert's harmonic practice … to unravel Schenkerian principles" (138). The third chapter takes up the question of sonata form—hitherto considered a fraught question in Schubert. Touching upon a number of scholars, Clark turns at length to Dahlhaus and the notion of memory. But her conclusion again seeks to caution music theorists: "The greatest problem for late twentieth- and twenty-first-century Anglo-American scholars in particular is that we have inherited a particularly restrictive—albeit powerful—system of tonal analysis: Schenkerian theory. Whether one is specifically trained as a Schenkerian or not, knowledge of the structural focus on the tonic and dominant is inescapable. Schubert's harmonic adventures … are therefore almost certain to be considered digressive" (203).

It is not the case that Schubert was incapable of writing a sonata form (or, for that matter, Beethoven incapable of fugue). Quite the contrary, the sonata form was and remains largely incapable of Schubert, a fact much theory seems incapable of digesting. The question of sonata form carries on into chapter 4. It is a very close reading of the sonata thesis of dominant contrast as a pillar in sonata form, one that no student of theory should leave unread. And yet, that said, it seems as if the author is drawn back toward the close quarters of what I shall call "tight theory," for want of a term suitable to polite company. The debate born (circa 2000) by Rick Cohn's *19th-Century Music* article "As Wonderful as Star Clusters: Instruments for Gazing at Tonality in Schubert," to which Charles Fisk replied in "Comment & Chronicle," seemed at the time to mire the subject of form back in absolutist theories. The debate's central question could be read as a dangerous antipode to Clark's project: "which theory" will do justice to Schubert, a question that again elevates a sole theoretical perspective, as if one might do justice to Schubert with only one theory—perhaps the by-now-familiar sonata theory of Hepokoski and Darcy, with its self-indulgent controversies among sonata theorists. Just how far are theorists willing to unleash the bonds of analytic method? Surely any generic expectations—sonata form, key relation, the relation to the dominant, whatever—are incomplete unless they consider the material perspective. Our lack of understanding temperament in Schubert (the tuning of Schubert's piano, his string quartet, his orchestra) calls into question any theories of a repositioned fifth space. I think Clark has gone

quite a remarkable distance in questioning the tight precepts of much current music theory. (I call it the teaching-voice-leading-to-undergraduates syndrome: spend all day enforcing orthodoxy, and you'll find it difficult not to adopt the same stance when writing theory at night.) To judge by our sister disciplines of literary and cultural theory, we have a way to go yet.

After I left New York, the city went on to be "cleaned up," as some call it, in the nineties. Its current face retains something of that polished consistency. So, too, Schenkerian theory went on to largely complete its conquest, certainly of the undergraduate curriculum at the hands of Aldwell and Schachter. I call this "Schenker lite," since it drains off much of the lively controversy of his thought. Of late, however, the irrepressible unconventional has reared its head again, so that the field comes to resemble the first issues of the *Journal of Music Theory* from the early sixties, before the editorial directorship was taken over and the catholic spirit repressed. I would like to think that Clark has breathed a fresh vitality into the field. The last time I visited New York City, I noted with great pleasure the return of unruly tendrils curving out of sidewalk cracks and onto lampposts, this under the aegis of the economic recession. In New York, as in Schubert, the anomalous never sleeps.

Murray Dineen

Anne-Sylvie Barthel-Calvet (éd.). 2011. *Propositions pour une historiographie critique de la création musicale après 1945*. Metz : Centre de recherche universitaire lorrain d'histoire. 239 p. ISSN 0768-5009 (couverture souple).

La production musicale du XX^e^ siècle a laissé une quantité considérable de traces écrites, tant du côté du compositeur, dans des essais, textes de conférences et entretiens, que de celui qui se définit comme critique, historien de la musique, musicographe ou musicologue. Quant à la musique d'avant-garde d'après la Seconde Guerre mondiale, ces traces sont particulièrement abondantes. Les dix dernières années ont vu publier un grand nombre de textes qui tentent de rendre compte de l'histoire de la musique de concert du siècle dernier[1].

Le présent ouvrage, issu des communications des journées d'études « Historiographie critique de la création musicale après 1945 : Enjeux épistémologiques et méthodologiques », tenues à l'Université Paul Verlaine de Metz les 9 et 10 septembre 2010, se penche sur les différentes façons dont cette histoire peut être étudiée à partir de ces traces. Anne-Sylvie Barthel-Calvet, organisatrice du colloque et éditrice du volume, signale que loin d'être un matériau brut ou neutre que l'historien n'a qu'à inscrire dans un récit historique, le discours du compositeur est déjà « indéniablement porteur d'une dimension historiographique (souvent plus exactement auto-historiographique) et s'avère avoir une

[1] Dans ce contexte on pourrait citer : Cook et Pople (2004), Nattiez (2003), Taruskin (2010) et même un ouvrage vulgarisateur comme celui de Ross (2007). Des travaux scientifiques sur la musique d'avant-garde par M. J. Grant, Ben Parsons, Amy Beale, Eric Drott, Laurent Feneyrou et Philippe Albéra méritent également d'être mentionnés dans ce contexte.