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¹john.koslovsky@ahk.nl**Tristan and the Act of Music Analysis: Conflicts, Limits, Potentialities****ABSTRACT****Background**

Whether or not the Prelude to Richard Wagner's opera *Tristan und Isolde* is the most analyzed piece in the history of Western music, its ongoing canonical status behooves us to consider how it has affected the field of music analysis over the past 150 years. Three orienting questions are asked: 1) how has the Tristan Prelude shaped the development of music theory since the nineteenth century?; 2) to what extent can we examine the process through which an author went to arrive at a given result?; and 3) what new insights can be gained when we allow for a more pluralistic intermingling of contexts and approaches to Tristan?

Aims and Repertoire Studied

Using the Tristan Prelude as its focal point, this paper takes the first steps in developing an approach to the history of music analysis that navigates both historiographical and intertextual issues. More than any other piece, Tristan is able to mediate the many conflicts that arise between analytical approaches: while it can demonstrate the limits of one particular approach vis-à-vis another, it may also reveal new potentialities that divergent analyses offer when seen from an intertextual and processual point of view. In this paper I thus consider how an analysis can open up a wider intertext around a musical work, as we position one analysis against another, or one analysis against many others, or even one analysis against the entire history of analysis. Just like music theory and analysis, intertextuality is rich in its use of language, terminology, codes, and symbols. Intertextual modes of thinking allow us to explore how any written or oral utterance can take part in a vast interplay of texts, thereby raising our awareness of the many meanings an utterance can sustain, whether considered synchronically — at one given point in time —, diachronically — how it evolves over time —, or what I would call 'trans-chronically' — across disparate points in time.

Methods

Building on studies by Klein (2005) and Korsyn (1999), the paper makes use of two key terms from the early twentieth-century Russian philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin, who was in many ways a pioneer in intertextual thinking before it even emerged as a concept in the 1960s. The first of these terms is the notion of 'dialogism'. Generally speaking, dialogism refers to the way in which every human utterance that has ever been made, or that will be made, or that could be made, is never done so in isolation. An utterance participates in an unending dialogue with other utterances, constantly readapting itself to ever-changing social, cultural, and political modes of discourse. The second term of Bakhtin is 'heteroglossia', which draws

attention to the relationship between so-called 'standard' and 'marginal' discourses, and stresses the way in which an utterance can bear traces of other utterances, whether in the past or in the future.

With this basic framework, the paper will position three contemporaneous analyses of the Tristan Prelude against one another: Horst Scharschuch's idiosyncratic Riemannian analysis of 1963; Jacques Chailley's style-historical analysis of 1963; and William Mitchell's Schenkerian analysis of 1967. With these three authors as the comparative centerpiece, the paper will sketch a broader historiographical and intertextual network surrounding the history of analyzing Tristan, with the goal of refocusing our analytical priorities around this work and penetrating the continuities and discontinuities between competing analyses. Despite the differences in analytical methodology, historical outlook, cultural framework, and theoretical competency, these three authors come to a number of strikingly similar conclusions regarding the opening of the Prelude.

Implications

In the end, the paper aims to open up a further dialogic space in music analysis, both in our historical considerations as well as in the way we approach analysis as an intertext — that is, by traversing the fissures separating the reified verities of a 'unified' analysis and the multiple interpretive transpositions underlying our deciphering of analytical texts. Regarding the history of analyzing the Tristan Prelude, the paper reveals new ways of engaging with the broader reception of this work and proposes how we might make better allow historical and contemporary thoughts to intermingle with one another.

Keywords

Wagner, *Tristan und Isolde*, Intertextuality, Bakhtin.

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