

Tamara W. Roemjantsew*

Report on Two Conferences in the Netherlands

New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999.

KEYWORDS: conferences, analysis, methodic.

ABSTRACT: During 1999 two important conferences have been held in The Netherlands. This article contains a summary of topics discussed and purposes set by the newly founded Dutch Society for Music Theory Conference and a report on the 4th European Music Analysis Conference (Analysis in Europe Today: The Different Traditions). The English version here published is based on reports by Michiel Schuijjer (*Tijdschrift voor Muziektheorie*/Magazine for Music Theory, November 1999, pp. 214-216), Patrick Van Deurzen and Leo Leutscher (Newsletter of the Society for Music Theory, December 1999, pp. 2-6).

[1] The year 1999 has been an important one in the field of Music Theory; two public events have taken place: in February the inaugural conference of the new Dutch Society for Music Theory was held at the Amsterdam School of Music, and in October the Fourth European Music Analysis Conference took place in Rotterdam. These two events underscore a development that started with the foundation of the Magazine for Music Theory (*Tijdschrift voor Muziektheorie*) almost five years ago. Without a network of national and international contacts it is nearly impossible to keep in touch with the developments in the professional field. As in the rest of Europe, those employed in the music-theoretical field have been functioning without a structured and specialized forum or platform. From 1989 onwards the French *Societe Francaise d'analyse musicale* has served as an example for numerous European countries in which societies for music theory have been founded since. The main purpose of these societies is to develop the music-analytical component within the professional and scientific field of music. Due to the division between music education at conservatories and schools of music and the education at universities, and along this line between musical practice and musical research, development of the music-analytical component has not been a major priority in The Netherlands, nor in some other European countries. Music theory and analysis serve a purpose mainly within the curricula of conservatories and schools of music where they are part of undergraduate or pedagogical courses, whereas research generally takes place at the musicology departments of universities.

[2] The main purpose of the inaugural conference of the new Dutch (and Flemish) Society for Music Theory, which took place on February 12 and 13, was to discuss and investigate the daily practice of the educational system at conservatories and schools of music in the Netherlands and Belgium. Another important aspect was to place music theory within an international perspective; to view music theory within a broader scope is one of the purposes of the Society for Music Theory. The practice within education was the focus during sessions on harmony and eartraining methods. During another session attention was drawn to possible changes due to the developments in the field of information-technology. Two projects based on computer-supported education were presented: the Music Web, of which one of the initiating institutions is the Royal Conservatory in The Hague, and UniSono, a project initiated by the Catholic University of Leuven, the Lemmens Institute and the Royal Conservatory in Brussels. The institutional status of music theory as a subject, its place in relation to musical practice on the one hand and to musicology on the other hand, was the point of departure for the lectures of Mark Delaere (Professor at the Musicology Department of Catholic University Leuven) and Ludwig Holtmeier (Associate Professor at the Hanns Eisler Hochschule fuer Musik in Berlin). Part of the above mentioned lectures was formed by discussion about the repertoire that is being focused on; music theory has been mainly developed along with and based on Western classical music from about 1700 till 1900. In recent years, however, a start has been made to focus on other styles and genres as well. This focus was underlined by sessions on Indian music and on Jazz; Barbara London's (Berklee College, USA) lecture on Jazz Harmony illustrated this focal point. Her lecture also took place within another frame, namely, international contacts. Another international session was represented by Nicholas Cook's lecture on "analysis and performance-practice." In his lecture Nicholas Cook explained the relevance of comparing two versions of Brahms' Piano Trio Opus 8. His lecture was related to a performance of the Trio, and interaction with the performers was established by explaining and studying the two scores with them. After his lecture two Dutch theorists, Paul Scheepers and Hans Maas responded by showing their point of view on a specific part of Nicholas Cook's lecture.

[3] One hundred four participants attended the inaugural conference of the Society for Music Theory. All conservatories--eleven Dutch and four Flemish--and the universities of Amsterdam, Groningen, Leuven and Utrecht were represented. Based on these numbers alone the conference can be regarded as successful. But it is not only statistics and the fact that the conference has been organized that count; more important are the reactions, responses and contacts of and between those working within the music-theoretical field. Having established the foundation for further

developments, the possibility has been created to further improve the circumstances of a music-theoretical network and to continue discussing and advancing the curriculum at conservatories within The Netherlands.

[4] From October 21–24 the 4th European Music Analysis Conference took place at the Rotterdam Conservatory. During those four days 153 representatives of 62 institutions (conservatories, schools of music, and universities) from 16 different countries (Belgium, Germany, England, Austria, France, Spain, Italy, Greece, Suisse, Poland, Ukraine, United States, Canada, Israel, Australia and the Netherlands) attended the conference. The purpose of the conference was to connect and investigate the various streams within analysis in Europe, and to trace the traditions of these streams. The participants were given the opportunity to learn from each other by sharing their points of view while discussing and reflecting. A broad scope of analytical methods like those of Riemann, Schoenberg, Schenker, Tovey, and more recent methods like pitch-class set theory, neo-Schenkerian techniques, computer-based analysis, and analysis of performances were to be found among the various lectures. Remarkable was the fact that semiotic analysis (Nattiez) was not discussed. The diversity in analytical approaches turned out to be a specific European aspect, whereas in English-speaking countries most methods are based on Schenkerian analysis for tonal music, and on pitch-class set theory for atonal music. The difference between Europe and the English-speaking countries turned out to be an important theme during the conference, and it will continue to be during the next (5th) EuroMAC in Bristol (UK) in 2002. One of the general purposes of the conference was to connect music theorists and musicologists; this purpose became extended by the possibility to meet with the participants of the Gaudeamus competition (an international competition for contemporary music); the participants of the competition were offered the possibility to attend the various sessions.

[5] Following is a selection of topics of the sessions. "Vestiges of an Early Style: On Varese's First Version of *Amerique*" by Dieter Nanz (Austria). The point of departure in Nanz' paper was the comparison of the first version (1918–1922) of Varese's *Amerique* (of which the score had been reconstructed by Klaus Augermann in 1990) with the final version of 1927. In "Temporal plasticity in Beethoven's Bagatelles Opus 126 No. 1 and 6," Frank Samarotto (USA) showed a comparison of the various planes of a composition and the way perspective is applied in some paintings.

[6] Various sessions on Ligeti's compositions gave a multi-sided view on his work. For many participants the performance of his Violin Concerto gave the analysis session ("Ligeti's Violin Concerto: Rediscovery and Reinterpretation as Basic Formbuilding Principles" by Yulia Kreinin from

Israel) an extra dimension. Amy Bauer (USA) took a quote from Ligeti: "Music has to be well constructed, but also to be poetical," as a point of departure for her lecture "Canon as secret rule and chaotic system in the music of Ligeti", in which she made use of the system of the mathematician Aristid Lindemayer. Finally Stephen Taylor showed Ligeti's application of passacaglia technique in the Horn Trio and Violin Concerto in his lecture "Passacaglia and lament in Ligeti's recent music."

[7] A session entitled "The *Trois Poemes de Mallarme* of Debussy and Ravel" gave an interesting perspective of Mallarme's poetry and its place in the history of literature. Contributions on this topic by Clemens Kemme (The Netherlands): "Futile Sighs of a Moondrunk? Ravel's and Debussy's Mallarme-settings," Peter Kaminsky (USA): "Text-music Transformation in Ravel's *Trois Poemes de Stephane Mallarme*," Carles Guinovart (Spain): "The *Trois Poemes de Mallarme* of Debussy and Ravel", Stephen Downes (UK): "Nommez-nous...: Chords, names and desire in Debussy's setting of Mallarme's *Placet Futile*," and Craig Ayrey (UK): "Syntax, Figures and Dissemination in Debussy's *Soupir*."

[8] The second conference of the Society for Music Theory will take place in Antwerp at the Royal Flemish Conservatory on February 25 and 26, 2000. The main subject of this conference will be the education-practice of music theory. Three working groups, established during the inaugural conference, will report on their findings: the working-group Research and the working-groups Classical methodic and Jazz methodic. At this moment two international guest-speakers have confirmed their presentation: Prof. Dr. Clemens Kuehn will give a lecture in which the exchange between theory and practice is being discussed ("Vermittlung? Inhalte!"), another lecture will be given by Dr. Paul Berliner, who published a thorough investigation on improvisation in jazz (*Thinking in Jazz: The Infinite Art of Improvisation* [Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1994]).

Tamara W. Roemjantsew
Utrecht School of the Arts
Faculty of Music
Mariaplaats 28
Utrecht, NL-3511 LL
roemjantsew@momu.nl