

Primäre Klangformen, Linearität, oder Auskomponierung?: The analysis of medieval polyphony and the critique of musicology in the early work of Felix Salzer

Although considered one of the most influential music theorists in the United States after the Second World War, little is known about Felix Salzer's scholarly activities in Vienna during the 1920s and 30s. This early scholarship—which combined his training as both a musicologist and Schenkerian—culminated in a book that is today mostly forgotten, *Sinn und Wesen der abendländischen Mehrstimmigkeit* (*The Meaning and Essence of Western Polyphony*, 1935). This work was an attempt to understand the historical development of polyphony from the 12th- to 17th-century using Schenker's concept of *Auskomponierung* (Composing-out), and simultaneously was meant to challenge the views of many contemporaneous medieval and renaissance scholars.

In this paper I first investigate the basic premises of Salzer's work and compare them to the work of two other authors in the field of early polyphony: Rudolf von Ficker and Marius Schneider. I then look at two analyses from *Sinn und Wesen*: Perotin's Organum Quadruplum *Sederunt Principes* and Guillaume de Machaut's motet "Quant en moy." The aim of the analyses is to show how Salzer employed *Auskomponierung* in a threefold way: 1) to examine the development and "essence" of Western polyphony; 2) to analyze many musical works within that development and discuss the issues they pose to the modern ear; and 3) to challenge Ficker's notion of *Primäre Klangformen* (Primary Chord Forms) in Perotin and Schneider's Kurthian-derived notion of *Linearität* (Linearity) in Machaut.