Judd, Cristle Collins. 2000. *Reading Renaissance Music Theory: Hearing with the Eyes*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lindley, Mark. 1982. "Preface to a Graduate Course in the History of Music Theory." *College Music Symposium* 22: 83–102.

McCreless, Patrick. 1997. "Rethinking Contemporary Music Theory," in *Keeping Score: Music, Disciplinarity, Culture*. David Schwarz, Anahid Kassbian, and Lawrence Siegel, eds.. Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 13–53.

Schubert, Peter. 1994. "Authentic Analysis." *Journal of Musicology* 12: 3–18.

Embracing the Non-West

The future of American music theory rests, in part, on coming to terms with non-Western music and associated theories. While not new, this claim has grown in pertinence in recent years not because we are bored with the canon, not because traditional theories have failed us, but because we have become more keenly aware of the diversity of our world. Think back to the fourth volume of *The Music Forum*, published in 1976, which carried an extensive article on Japanese koto music by composer-theorist David Loeb. The centerpiece of the article was a transcription of Yatuhashi's composition, *Midare*. Loeb developed a detailed linear analysis of variation processes in *Midare*, showing how a pentatonic deep structure is brought to life through imaginative use of various diminutions. He provided a concise historical background and rehearsed some theoretical considerations before plunging into the moment-by-moment analysis.

Loeb's article appeared in one of the central organs for the dissemination of music theory research in this country, the venue for Carl Schachter's well-known rhythm articles, Roy Travis's provocative voice-leading graphs of the first movement of Bartok's Fourth String Quartet, and William Mitchell's Schenkerian study of the *Tristan* Prelude, among others. But I have often wondered: how many students have actually read Loeb's article? How many

colleagues place it on their reading lists? Who among us has taught the techniques of variation by invoking *Midare* or other non-Western models? I wonder, too, how many of us noticed Jay Rahn's important book, *A Theory for All Music* when it appeared in 1983? Its subtitle alone, *Problems and Solutions in the Analysis of Non-Western Forms*, suggests that it ought to be of interest to students of music theory. The book ranges widely, embracing American Indian, African and Chinese repertoires, among others. Aiming "to broaden the scope of musical theory, so that it might truly account for all music", Rahn drew on Benjamin Boretz's concept of an "all-musical system" in formulating his theory. The Boretzian connection, too, should have enhanced the book's appeal to mainstream music theorists.

Again, it is possible to wonder about the reception of other work that deals with non-Western repertoires: Michael Tenzer's magisterial study of Balinese gamelan music (2000); Harry Powers' comparative study of mode (2000); and Robert Morris' recent essay on Carnatic (South Indian Classical) music (2001). Morris transcribes two performances from recordings and displays each composition paradigmatically so as to reveal the processes of variation. Indeed, Morris's study of South Indian music could be profitably juxtaposed with Loeb's of Japanese music, mine of a West African song repertory (Agawu 1990), and any number of similar studies. The idea that compositions are built on archetypes, deep structures or *Ursätze* that are then composed out by means of a variety of stylistic and idiomatic resources—this idea gains in credibility from these and other studies.

How and why have music theorists succeeded in keeping these sorts of studies in the margins? Partly, I suppose, because the repertoires upon which the theories are based are not familiar, or at least not as familiar as the usual fare drawn from the European canon. So, although there are groups dedicated to performing non-Western music on a number of American campuses, the music(s) remain distant, other, and exotic, not as familiar and natural as tonal and (to a lesser extent) post-tonal repertoires. And it will be said that reading about music that is not in one's head, music

whose performances one cannot react to critically—such reading is not ideal behavior for the music theorist.

Another reason for the marginalization of analyses of non-Western repertoires stems from the implicit conditions imposed by the discipline of ethnomusicology. It is generally assumed that non-Western music is studied by ethnomusicologists, not theorists or historical musicologists (Temperley 1998: 69). And although ethnomusicology admits both anthropological and musicological approaches, the former predominates not least because it values cultural context. And context is known only to those who have been to the field to collect specimens for analysis. Those who cannot boast dedicated periods of fieldwork are not likely to be taken seriously.

And yet there is a vast recorded legacy of non-Western music in libraries and archives in the US and Europe, recordings waiting to be studied and analyzed. Why should music theorists not dig into this treasure and use their skills to develop theories about this or that repertoire? After all, given music's performative essence, some compromising of authenticity (or 'context') is unavoidable in any creative engagement with a given non-Western repertoire. So, rather than fear the resulting anachronism, we should embrace it fully and imaginatively.

Ethnomusicological strictures about analysis must therefore be set aside as theorists move to expand the purview of their discipline. Study of non-Western forms is likely to foster reflection upon the nomenclature and assumptions that make up our conceptual apparatus. What a melody is, how it works, the mechanisms by which simultaneities are negotiated, which notes are essential and which auxiliary—these and numerous other issues are likely to be freshly and productively debated. Furthermore, intense engagement with non-Western music is bound to improve our understanding of Western music. Turn to the rhythmic language of Beethoven or Brahms after close study of West African drum ensemble music and you will almost certainly be more alert to the structural origins of the effects produced by Beethovenian and Brahmsian strategies.

A word of caution, however. Globalization is very much in the air, and music theorists may feel that engaging with non-Western music will help them respond to some of the ethical imperatives of contemporary society. Yet, for those who understand globalization as American imperialism, the rush to globalize music theory may not be necessarily desirable. The most pertinent reason for thinking globally or even universally has to do with the very notion of music theory as a generalizing enterprise. In order to fulfill its mandate, theory ought to transcend particulars and reveal commonalities on the largest possible scale. And in seeking to transcend particulars, cosmopolitan theories are just as likely to influence as to be influenced by others. If music theory is to shed its current image as an ethno-theory masquerading as a general theory, then coming to terms with the non-West may well have to be its first order of business.

Kofi Agawu

References

Agawu, Kofi. 1990. "Variation Procedures in Northern Ewe Music". *Ethnomusicology* 34/2: 221-244.

Loeb, David. 1976. "An Analytic Study of Japanese Koto Music". *The Music Forum* 4, ed. Felix Salzer (New York: Columbia University Press): 335-93.

Morris, Robert. 2001. "Variation and Process in South Indian Music: Some *Kriti*s and their *Sangatis*". *Music Theory Spectrum* 23/1: 74-89.

Powers, Harold S. 2000. "Mode". *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd edition, ed. Stanley Sadie.

Rahn, Jay. 1983. *A Theory for All Music: Problems and Solutions in the Analysis of Non-Western Forms* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press).

Temperley, David. 1998. Review of *African Rhythm: A Northern Ewe Perspective* by K. Agawu, *Current Musicology* 62: 69-83.

Tenzer, Michael. 2000. *Gamelan Gong Kebyar: The Art of 20th-Century Balinese Music* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press).