Analysis Through Composition: Principles of the Classical Style, by Nicholas Cook. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996

Review by Joel Galand

The past few decades have witnessed a profusion of research on the so-called classical style, much of it by theorists. These new publications evince a renewed interest in broad style-historical issues, such as rhythmic organization, thematic construction, form, and genre. The insights afforded by more specialized studies of eighteenth-century treatises, by Schenkerian theory, and by neo-Schoenbergian theory of various stripes—to name but a few areas of research—are now being applied on a grander scale, yielding articles and monographs that ought to be of equal import to theorists and historians alike.[1] Until very recently, however, this research has not led to a new *Kompositionslehre* that might be used for courses in late-eighteenth-century model composition—this despite the prevalence of such courses in music departments here and abroad. There exist general textbooks on musical form from which one could draw relevant readings, supplemented perhaps by materials drawn from the writings of Leonard Ratner and Charles Rosen. Nicholas Cook's *Analysis Through Composition: Principles of the Classical Style*, however, is a first: a manual of classical-style composition that thoroughly and explicitly incorporates the treatises, exercises, arrangements, compositional sketches, and fragments left behind by eighteenth-century composers.[2]

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[1] Here are a three, arbitrarily chosen, examples of the studies I have in mind: William Rothstein, *Phrase Rhythm in Tonal Music* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1989); Kofi Agawu, *Playing with Signs: A Semiotic Interpretation of Classic Music* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991); Janet Schmalfeldt, "Towards a Reconciliation of Schenkerian Concepts With Traditional and Recent Theories of Form," *Music Analysis* 10 (1991): 233-287.

[2] Leonard Ratner, *Classic Music: Expression, Form, and Style* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1980). Ratner incorporates primary materials, but his is not a model composition textbook. Salzer and Schachter's *Counterpoint in Composition* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1969) introduces examples from Fux's *Gradus* and Mozart's Atwood Papers, but it is not a text on style composition.

Cook's title already hints at the text's pedagogical aim. In his preface, Cook elaborates:

> The basic principle behind this book is that many practical musical activities involve analysis, otherwise known as musical intelligence. For example, when Beethoven arranged his Piano Sonata Op. 14 No. 1 for string quartet, he didn't transcribe the music mechanically, one note at a time: that would have shown a complete lack of musical intelligence. Instead, he stripped off piano figuration, and recast the tunes and harmonies in a manner appropriate for strings. That is to say, he discarded what was decorative and kept what was essential. He was performing a kind of analysis, even though it was carried out in purely musical terms. (p. vii)

It follows that instructors looking for a traditional textbook on form and analysis will not find that here: instead, students are meant to learn analysis by solving problems within the constraints of the style—arranging, realizing accompaniments, expanding small pieces into larger ones, and completing extant compositional fragments. In short, students do the sorts of "things that apprentice composers actually did in the late eighteenth century" (p. viii). Along the way, of course, they refine their skills in harmony and counterpoint. But more crucially—and this is unusual for undergraduate textbooks—they learn something about the history of theory, specifically, the ways in which eighteenth-century composers learned their trade and explained it to others:

> The idea is to bring about what...I call a "composer's-eye view" of the Classical repertory. Once you have some hands-on experience of how the music was made, you are in a much better position to understand its historical development or relate it to its social context. In short, you can appreciate it as a human product. (p. viii)

To be sure, Cook's fifty assignments do include some purely analytical exercises. But even these are directly related to practical problems and to primary documents. In chapter 5 ("A Lesson From Mozart"), for instance, Cook asks students to write essays on two of Thomas Atwood's string quartet exercises, explaining their shortcomings and speculating on the reasons for Mozart's revisions. Later exercises call for producing short string quartet movements by completing some of the exercises Mozart set for Atwood and Barbara Ployer. The last section of the text, on sonata form,

includes a facsimile and transcription of Beethoven's sketches for the Sonata in G, Op. 49, No. 2, from the "Kafka Miscellany." On the basis of these, Cook has students trace the work's evolution and then reconstruct another, unfinished movement.[3]

Cook assumes that students will already know a fair amount of theory. If they can't make idiomatic use of the more common chromatic harmonies (augmented sixths and the like), *Analysis Through Composition* will certainly prove too ambitious. Students have presumably taken about one year of elementary counterpoint and harmony, including species counterpoint and figured bass. Cook does incorporate some review of these matters, but always on the fly, as they arise in the context of a specific activity. As an example of Cook's approach, consider chapter 4 ("Modulation and Chromaticism"). This chapter is not a conventional textbook survey of its ostensible topic. Rather, Cook begins by citing a sixteen-bar piece drawn from Koch's 1786 treatise *Versuch einer Anleitung zur Composition.* The opening and closing four-bar phrases remain entirely in the tonic and rehearse much the same melodic material. The modulatory second phrase reaches a perfect authentic cadence in V, while the third phrase reaches a half cadence on V, in preparation for the tonic return of the opening material. Cook analyzes Koch's eight alternatives for the third phrase, which exploit a variety of sequences and tonicizations. In the course of explaining some of these, he invokes prototypes (e.g., *fonte*, *monte*, and *ponte*) drawn from another early treatise, Joseph Riepel's *Grundregeln zur Tonordnung insgemein* (1755). Among the exercises for this chapter is one in which, given a sixteen-bar dance, students write eight alternative versions of the third phrase modeled on Koch's eight schemas. They begin to understand that a variety of phrases and progressions can share a single syntactic role in the overall form. From there, students go on to complete a dance, given only the first four bars. Finally, they compose an original minuet and an original song, both about sixteen bars long, with the added possibility of an introduction and postlude. (A few of

[3] The transcriptions are from Joseph Kerman, ed., *Autograph Miscellany from* circa *1786 to 1789* (London: British Museum, 1970). The unfinished piece is WoO 51, but Cook does not identify it, perhaps so that students will not easily discover the published completion by Ferdinand Ries (Frankfurt am Main, 1831).

Mozart's more chromatic *Lieder* serve as models for the latter assignment.) There is the further option of composing a minuet and trio for small orchestra, the basics of classical orchestration having been presented in chapter one. By the time students have finished chapter 4, they will not only have gained a certain fluency is writing short binary forms; they will also have learned something about eighteenth-century compositional theory.

The overall organization of the book progresses quite sensibly from smaller to larger forms and from greater to lesser dependence on pre-existent material. The Introduction reviews the basic analytical principles and terminology to be used later. For the most part, Cook eschews British terminology (e.g., "bars" for "measures," or "crotchet" for "quarter note"), although a few Britishisms remain ("imperfect cadence" for "half cadence"). Cook's analytical discussions are eclectic, as befits an introductory text, but they depend on essentially two principles. The first, based on the eighteenth-century approaches of Koch and Riepel, is what Cook calls the "modular principle," which involves identifying phrases and their subsequent manipulation through various types of expansion and reconfiguration. The other principle, that of prolongation, derives most immediately from Schenkerian theory. Although students are not required to produce any formal graphs, the text permits them to gain some fluency in making rhythmic and harmonic reductions: in other words, they learn to read foreground diminutions accurately and to group chord successions according to an underlying *Stufe*. Some degree of competence along these lines is implicit in those exercises in which students are expected to arrange a piano score for a small orchestra or compose an accompaniment to an elaborate melody.

Part I ("Harmony and Texture") comprises two chapters on arrangement and accompaniment, respectively. Mozart's arrangement of J.C. Bach's Sonata Op. 5, No. 2 as the Concerto K. 107 (specifically, the trio from the minuet movement) serves as an *entrée* to the basic principles of classical orchestration. Assignments include orchestrating Mozart dances that survive only in keyboard score but were clearly intended for orchestra (because of awkward tenths, for example). Right from the start, therefore, Cook gives students hands-on experience with C clefs, with transposing instruments, and with instrumental ranges, providing a welcome

antidote to theory textbooks that are entirely based on keyboard textures. In fact, keyboard writing first appears only in chapter two, in connection with song accompaniment. Providing fodder for song exercises are *Lieder* surviving only as unfigured outer voices (e.g., Mozart's *Lobgesang auf die feierliche Johnnisloge*, K. 148) and arias from obscure *Singspiele* for which students are unlikely to find a piano-vocal score (e.g., Ignaz Umlauf's 1778 mega-hit, *Die Apotheke*).

The three chapters of Part II ("Harmony and Line") focus on the completion and composition of short songs and dances. Cook's materials are derived largely from Mozart's *Atwood-Studien* and Koch's *Versuch*. Part III ("Variation and Expansion") contains four chapters, of which the first pair addresses the variation set as a specific compositional genre. Then, in chapters 8-9, Cook broadens the variation principle to include the expansion—not merely the figuration—of an underlying prototype. It is here that he explicitly invokes Kochian "modular expansion" and Schenkerian "flexible prolongation" as the "two complementary principles that are used in Classical music to create length" (p. 80). Chapter 8 ("The Classic Composer's Workshop") uses the modular principle to show how the second reprise in a symmetrical binary dance (e.g., 8 + 8) might derive from the first. Pertinent here are Koch's techniques for expanding such dances, through internal repetitions, sequences, interpolations, cadential expansions and extensions, appendices, and rhythmic/harmonic augmentation. To reinforce these points, Cook discusses Haydn's Symphony No. 14/II, a fifty-two–bar expansion of an eight-bar theme from the Divertimento Hob. II: 2 ("Der Geburtstag").[4] His analytical exercises include determining the underlying periodic prototype of sonata expositions; his compositional exercises culminate in the composition of an entire movement by expanding a given theme,

[4] Elaine Sisman has also used this pair of Haydn pieces to argue for the analytical pertinence of Koch's theories. See "Small and Expanded Forms: Koch's Model and Haydn's Music," *The Musical Quarterly* 68 (1982): 444-475; rev. as chapter 4 of *Haydn and the Classical Variation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993): 79-108.

using the Haydn example as model.[5] Chapter 9 uses the analysis and composition of cadenzas and modulating preludes as the occasion for exploiting Cook's second principle, that of prolongation. Here, a caveat is necessary. Cook seems to use the term "prolongation" in a rather more general sense than would a Schenkerian:

> The modular technique is rather like creating a mosaic: small, inflexible fragments are combined to make the big picture. What I have called the principle of flexible prolongation is just the opposite: it could be compared to stretching a rubber band. (p. 80)

Thus, Cook differentiates an *Eingang* from a cadenza on the grounds that "[i]f an *Eingang* prolongs a V, then a cadenza prolongs a V^{6-5}_{4-3}" (p. 131). Strictly speaking, however, the descending melodic step associated with the cadential six-four resolution is not itself something capable of being prolonged. One might more accurately distinguish between the two improvisational situations by simply pointing out that an *Eingang* represents a durational expansion of a V^7, while a cadenza temporally expands a six-four: they both replace fermatas. Moreover, if we interpret the Classical cadenza as an interpolation *between* the six-four and its resolution, thus invoking Koch's concept of *Einschaltung*, then the "modular technique" is more relevant here than the "principle of flexible prolongation" after all.

The element of flexible, improvisatory prolongation is the last ingredient Cook needs for Part IV ("Sonata"). The title of chapter 10 ("The Complementation of Dance and Fantasy") fairly well sums up Cook's approach to sonata form. A sonata movement, heard according to eighteenth-century compositional theory, is an expanded binary-dance form. The modular approach of what Koch called "the mechanical rules of melody" explains expansion techniques up to a point. But in more complex movements, the course of transitional and developmental passages is better charted using the prolongation principle that Cook introduces in connection with the cadenza and fantasia. (Indeed, "free fantasia"

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[5] Such exercises are simpler versions of the analyses with which Rothstein demonstrates his theory of phrase rhythm.

is a traditional British term for "development section," although Cook does not use it.)

A few practical considerations are in order: Cook's writing style is a model of clarity, and he infuses it with just enough informality to sustain the student's attention. The elevation grade of this particular Parnassus as one ascends from Dance Arrangement to Sonata Form is fairly evenly spread. Nevertheless, it is not a hike for novices. Cook guides his undergraduates up, but these are British students who have passed their A-levels. Stateside, we can't always count on such experienced freshmen. Most of us won't have the luxury of spending two weeks per chapter either. *Analysis Through Composition* will most likely find a place within a third- or fourth-semester theory course designed for music majors. The book lends itself well to selective use (I tend to skip the chapters on keyboard variations and cadenzas). Should students resent purchasing a book used only in part, the author and Oxford University Press offer a generous solution: they allow unlimited photocopying of worksheets at no fee.

Analysis Through Composition could be put to good use in a variety of institutions, but I recommend it in particular for music majors in a liberal arts setting, where classes tend to be relatively small. One reason is practical: in smaller groups, it is far easier to take advantage of the practical activities the text emphasizes, such as arranging dances for small ensembles, or comparing successive revisions of Atwood's little quartet movements. Ideally, students should spend a certain portion of class time actually performing and critiquing one another's work. Moreover, much of Cook's source material, stemming as it does from eighteenth-century treatises, exercises, and fragments, is simply not available on records; it should be brought alive in class performances.

Another reason to recommend this book for liberal arts students is its emphasis on primary source materials. Liberal arts students are—or ought to be—interested in learning something about how theory classes today compare to the ways eighteenth-century composers learned and transmitted their craft. Aside from providing an abundance of source material, including facsimiles of original manuscripts and early prints, Cook integrates into his text all sorts of historical *aperçus* that may well have the effect of lending a certain hermeneutic distance to the repertoire, even as it brings it

closer to students in other respects. For example, having remarked that Atwood, a private student of Mozart's, became one of the first professors in the newly-founded Royal Academy of Music, Cook launches into a discussion of how the institutionalization of music education changed the nature of treatises and of their approach to musical form. In short, Atwood incarnates the replacement of the master-apprentice guild system by the modern professions. The facsimile of an eighteenth-century print is Cook's occasion for surmising that the now largely obsolete oblong format fostered a more immediate apprehension of long-range musical processes. A hint at the growing field of musical semiotics appears in chapter 11, where, in a manner reminiscent of Kofi Agawu's work, Cook introduces quasi-Schenkerian middleground graphs of expositions, as well as topical analysis inspired by Leonard Ratner. Cook's imaginative integration of subdisciplines—model composition, analysis, history of theory, social history, musical semiotics—should appeal to a variety of students, and not just the theory wonks among them. Although recent research on the classical style has surely affected the way undergraduate "form and analysis" courses are taught, there had been little published evidence until now of such a trickle-down effect. Certainly, there had been nothing comparable to the influence that Schenkerian theory began to have on undergraduate harmony textbooks in the 60s and 70s. The time was ripe for a theory textbook that, while not ignoring the pedagogical contribution of Schenkerian theorists, also incorporates what we have been learning from musicologists about the classical style. Cook gives us just such a book, and a fine one at that.