Review Forum

Analysing Musical Multimedia by Nicholas Cook.
Oxford: Clarendon Press;
New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Why a whole forum of reviews on Cook's *Analysing Musical Multimedia*? I hope readers find that the diverse contributions by Scott Lipscomb, Daphne Leong, and Lawrence Zbikowski justify the forum almost entirely on their own. Then there is the book. It inaugurates its own sub-discipline which reaches into several disciplines besides mainstream music theory, such as music perception and cognition, human physiology, cognitive science, film studies, cultural history—even television marketing. Of course the book invites reaction from so many angles.

From the perspective of music perception and cognition research, several issues arise. To some extent these spring naturally from the perceptual interaction between aural and visual sensory modalities, which is inherent to multimedia. Yet they also stem from the particular orientations Cook chooses in addressing his topic. For instance, how relevant is synaesthesia to analyzing multimedia? What is the significance of a theory devoted to analyzing music-derived multimedia, as opposed to theatrical films, in which music is secondary? How does Cook's book spur empirical scientific work on music perception and cognition, and stimulate interdisciplinary dialogue? Lipscomb's contribution to the forum considers these issues, also bringing to bear his experience teaching and applying Cook's theory in a classroom context: a course he has taught on Multimedia Cognition.

Cook's topic raises issues that rarely, if ever, arise when music is considered alone. So it provides a fresh context to examine the application of pre-existing theories, such as those of musical rhythm and grouping. For instance, what does it mean for one medium, say a visual one, to model a particular "hearing" of a musical passage? How is such a model evaluated? And how does the artistic merit of the multimedia piece influence the process and

result? These are among the issues examined in Leong's contribution, which is probably the first in our field to evaluate a multimedia analysis on grounds of rhythmic accuracy. It opens doors to future rhythmic analysis of film.

Multimedia also provokes inquiries into musical meaning. Schoenberg envisioned *Die glückliche Hand* from the start as multimedia, combining music not just with text, but also elaborate instructions for stage action and color lighting. How do we interpret the meaning(s) from such a work? How do recent developments in the musical application of conceptual blending theory offer ways to streamline and formalize Cook's approach to *Die glückliche Hand*'s "lighting crescendo"? Zbikowski explores these concerns. He then re-analyzes the "lighting crescendo" using the technology of conceptual integration networks (CINs). His analysis points to the psychological tumult of the opera's protagonist, as a meaning conjured by the multimedia experience.

Finally, I suspect the relevance for our discipline of analyzing musical multimedia is not yet fully appreciated. Music theorists already routinely lavish analytical attention on a large body of classical music works, operas and ballets—from Monteverdi and Striggio's *Orfeo* to Stravinsky and Balanchine's *Agon*, and beyond—which are actually instances of musical multimedia, and therefore fall within the scope of Cook's theory.[1] Furthermore, multimedia permeates many aspects of our culture—both high and low—more now than ever. The climate of technological change in the early 21st century forecasts a rise in multimedia, and our access to it. There is good reason for the sub-discipline of analyzing musical multimedia to grow.

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[1] In fact, aspects of Cook's theory have already been applied to opera in Philip Rupprecht's *Britten's Musical Language* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).