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ADORNO ON SCHENKER: RECONSTRUCTING THE FORMATION OF A CRITIQUE

When exploring Theodor Adorno's ambivalent attitude towards Heinrich Schenker's method, both in philosophical terms and in analytical practice, perhaps no text offers more cogent glimpses than his lecture 'Zum Problem der musikalischen Analyse' (2001c), delivered on 24 February 1969 at the Frankfurt University of Music and Performing Arts only a few months prior to his death. While Adorno praised Schenker for the sophisticated technical level of his analytical work and for acknowledging the inextricable relationship between analysis and performance, he nonetheless subjected him to a trenchant polemical attack. In addition to rejecting outright Schenker's nationalistic convictions and visceral antagonism to musical modernism, he adamantly opposed Schenker's 'reductive process', a method of harmonic analysis which he understood to be guided by the sole and highly tendentious intention of bringing the decisive physiognomic characteristics of the individual work down to no more than 'certain fundamental structures of the most basic kind' (1982, pp. 173–6; both quotations on p. 174). To be sure, Adorno's technical objection appears quite dated today. With the advantage of historical distance, scholars have recognised that his polemical attack is itself, ironically, the result of a reduction – indeed, a 'misunderstanding' (Spitzer 2006, p. 65) – of Schenker's theory. Moreover, Daniel Chua (1995) and Kofi Agawu (2004), among others, have long debunked Adorno's oppositional stance as a false dichotomy, advocating instead an integrated approach that calls for a return to the work-immanent epistemology of Schenkerian analysis precisely through the lens of Adornian hermeneutics. Yet, as Adorno's oppositional stance towards Schenker has passed into history, a very different dimension of his reception has begun to emerge: the discursive functions with which his reception is tied up.

Bringing this discursive dimension into sharper focus, however, poses formidable challenges, because Adorno's image of Schenker is simultaneously underdetermined and overdetermined. It is *underdetermined* in that Adorno, despite the broad scope of his output and of course some major feats in the philosophy and analysis of music, remained rather reticent about Schenker. At the same time, it is *overdetermined* in that, on the rare occasions Adorno does engage with Schenker's work, his remarks are all too clearly shaped by the influence of Arnold Schoenberg, whose complex rivalry with Schenker has been well documented.¹ Given this fundamental discrepancy, it is hardly a

surprise that Adorno's reception of Schenker has not garnered much attention among Adorno scholars,² nor that in those cases in which scholarship has attended to the Adorno-Schenker connection, discussions have primarily taken a comparative approach, one which, in the absence of a real dialogue between the two men, has struggled to go beyond merely charting their individual theoretical viewpoints in relation to commonplace tenets of nineteenth-century music aesthetics and criticism.³ Nicholas Cook has even labelled such a comparative approach 'perverse', noting succinctly that '[o]ne might summarise the relationship between Schenker and Adorno by saying that where their views aren't identical they are diametrically opposed, which is to say [...] that the framework of thought is the same even when the polarity is reversed: Schenker is to Adorno as Hegel is to Marx' (2007, p. 192).

The aim of this article is to tackle this fundamental discrepancy from both ends. First, drawing on hitherto unexamined sources held at the Theodor W. Adorno Archiv, Frankfurt am Main, I seek to gather the relevant traces and piece together the puzzle of Adorno's engagement with the works of Schenker and two of the theorist's most influential advocates, Felix Salzer and Oswald Jonas. Based on this reconstruction, secondly, I wish to show that the fascination Adorno had with the Schenkerian edifice cannot be plausibly detached from the opportunities it offered him to pass comment upon the scholarly and political debates of his time. In particular, I argue that Adorno's reception of Schenker's musical thought can be understood in relation to three discursive concerns: (1) advocating for the importance of Schoenberg's contributions to the discipline of music theory, (2) questioning the methodological reorientation of postwar Austro-German musicology and (3) reinforcing his opposition to positivism in the domain of musical analysis. While it would certainly be too simple to shoehorn the complexities inherent in Adorno's Schenker reception into distinctive stages – or even to map these discursive concerns directly onto different phases in Adorno's development – I nonetheless seek to propose, as an initial heuristic framework of enquiry, an understanding of his reception which sees its focus gradually shifting over the course of time, beginning with the first evidence of encounter in the 1930s, before highlighting strategic changes in the mode of commentary following his return to Germany in 1949 and the so-called positivism dispute (*Positivismusstreit*) in 1961. My aim, then, is not to revisit the somewhat tired debates about the validity of the criticism that Adorno presented in his 1969 lecture; nor do I wish to claim that his reservations offer any new impetus for contemporary Schenkerian analysis. Instead, the aim of this essay is to provide a historical account of Adorno's engagement with Schenker's ideas and, in this way, to contribute to the ongoing scholarly efforts to reconstruct and understand more fully the history and formation of Schenker reception.

Receiving Schenker's Spirit through Schoenberg's Hands

It is not known when Adorno first encountered Schenker's work. To my knowledge, the earliest empirical evidence that links Adorno to Schenker is a letter he received from Schoenberg dated 6 December 1930. Writing four years after Adorno had completed his composition and piano studies with Alban Berg and Eduard Steuermann in Vienna – years during which there is good evidence that Schenker's work had been debated among the members of the Schoenberg circle (see e.g. Dunsby 1977) – Schoenberg sought to encourage Adorno to compile 'a dictionary of musical (aesthetics or) theory' (1964, pp. 145–6). Envisaging such a dictionary as taking the form of a historical overview of the main developments in the field grouped according to selected themes and discursive trends, he provided Adorno with a comprehensive list of contemporary theorists he thought should be considered for inclusion. Even though Adorno chose not to pursue this project further, much to Schoenberg's disappointment,⁴ it is for our purpose significant to note that Schenker's name is not only included in this list but in fact heads it, appearing even before 'Schoenberg' and 'Wiesengrund'. Thus this letter indicates that by 1930 Adorno must have taken note of Schenker's writings and was quite possibly even aware that Schoenberg and Schenker held some differing theoretical views. As Adorno himself in fact would recall some three decades later in a letter to Walter Kolneder (to which I will return in more detail), '[e]ven Schoenberg, a world apart from Schenker, maintained a certain degree of esteem for him'.

Indeed, a review that Adorno wrote of Rudolf Schäfke's *Musikästhetik der Gegenwart in Umrissen* (1934) reveals the depth to which Adorno's understanding of Schenker was initially shaped by Schoenberg's musical thought. In the final chapter, devoted to the latest developments in music theory, Schäfke advances two main arguments. First, he claims that the writings of Schenker, along with those of August Halm and Ernst Kurth, had overcome and ultimately transcended the polemical debates that crystallised towards the end of the nineteenth century between proponents of *Formalästhetik* and *Inhaltsästhetik*, synthesising them into a new paradigm, for which he had elsewhere coined the term *Energetik*.⁵ He considers Schenker's *Harmonielehre* (1906) to be a particularly crucial contribution to this paradigm shift, describing it as the first study to present '[musical] energetics as a coherent system' ([1934] 1964, p. 396).⁶ At the same time, Schäfke's chapter offers, with refined acuity, a number of observations concerning the aporias inherent in *any* analytical inquiry, impasses which, Schäfke argues, even 'energetic' approaches can only continue to push against, failing ever actually to traverse them. In particular, he points out the seemingly insurmountable discrepancy between musical perception and analytical reflection; the fallacious assumption that analytical observations are 'objective' and thus separable from the 'subjective' interpretation of the analyst; and the tendency built into any music theory-making towards ahistoricism.

Adorno, who may have been sceptical of Schäfke's academic pedigree from the outset,⁷ was clearly keen to suggest in his review that Schoenberg's analytical ideas supersede the theories advocated by the 'energetic' figureheads. He initiated this argumentative manoeuvre with a bold claim. The philosophical problems which Schäfke saw as constraining music analysis could be circumvented, Adorno proposed, if one were 'to give up the talk about "pure" compositional technique and instead to understand technique as the specific domain of compositional *decisions* about the musical content'. But in order to come to grips with these 'decisions', he argued that it was necessary for the analyst to look elsewhere: not in theory-books, but at the reviews and textbooks written by composers themselves, such as Schoenberg's *Harmonielehre* (1911), inasmuch as they provide a wealth of insights into first-hand challenges posed by real-life compositional practices and concrete aesthetic ideas (1934, p. 362). In a polemical response to Hans Redlich written only two months later, Adorno re-emphasised Schoenberg's pivotal position in this regard, maintaining that 'the Schoenberg circle follows objective aesthetic premises and convictions that are of a kind that not even Kurth and Schenker as the most advanced scholars, not to mention the officials of established music history, have ever got close to' ([1934] 1971, p. 407).

Despite these concerns over placing Schoenberg in the vanguard of contemporary music-theoretical discourse, Adorno nevertheless granted the 'energetic' figureheads – these 'most advanced scholars' – a very high level of respect (just as he reported that Schoenberg did). Yet, whereas the impact of Kurth's and Halm's ideas on Adorno's analytical work has been widely acknowledged, little attention has been paid to the influence, if any, that Schenker's thought had on Adorno. To an orthodox Adornian the very suggestion of such influence might seem heretical, but closer examination of Adorno's letter to Kolneder, mentioned above, suggests that it is far from absurd. In this source, Adorno explicitly acknowledged that he had 'learned more from his [Schenker's] analyses of Beethoven than from anything else in academic musicology'. This hitherto unnoticed statement raises the fascinating question of what exactly it was that Adorno had 'learned' from Schenker.

In a search for clues, the inventory of Adorno's library (*Nachlassbibliothek*; hereafter, NB) held at the Theodor W. Adorno Archiv promises to provide some first tangible traces. Adorno owned Schenker's study of the Ninth Symphony (1912), the four *Erläuterungsausgaben* of the late piano sonatas (1913, 1914, 1915 and 1921) and *Der freie Satz* (1956).⁸ However, it is difficult to assess how closely he actually perused these texts. None of the marginalia scattered in these volumes can be attributed to Adorno himself (which also casts doubt as to whether the underlining found in these copies is his own),⁹ and it is unclear when these volumes came into Adorno's possession. Moreover, to my knowledge, Adorno never referred to any of Schenker's writings directly, except for a rather noncommittal aide-mémoire in a fragment on Beethoven dating from 1952 that 'there is Schenker's analysis of the Fifth' (1998, p. 9). However,

whether he possessed a copy of Schenker's *Beethoven: Fünfte Sinfonie* (1925) could not be verified; the NB has no record of this. What Adorno had 'learned' from Schenker's writings on Beethoven is, therefore, unclear from the contents of the NB.

However, it strikes me as not far-fetched to speculate that Schenker's work on Beethoven served Adorno as an (unacknowledged) authority to corroborate what he identified, shortly after the publication of his essay on Beethoven's late style in 1937, as a cornerstone of the composer's aesthetic imagination: the notion that in Beethoven's work the dialectical distance between 'tonality' and 'idea' is narrowed down to the point where both poles are indistinguishably merged, with the result that tonality itself is, as it were, made to 'speak'. In my understanding of the sources, the notebook known as the 'Buntes Buch' (which Adorno began to use in 1939) documents some of Adorno's earliest reflections upon this interpretative vision. On page 28 (in the note identified as fragment 112 in Rolf Tiedemann's editorial numberings of the sources), Adorno wrote that '[t]o understand Beethoven means to understand *tonality*', before concluding that his monograph on Beethoven 'must be one about the concept of tonality' (Adorno 1998, p. 49; emphasis in the original; translation amended). Interestingly, in the next few pages Adorno, in attempting to flesh out this idea, uses the conspicuous expression *Auskomponierung der Tonalität* twice: on page 30, where it figures as part of a philosophical formulation (fragment 35); and again on page 32, where it precedes a number of analytical observations devoted to the *Waldstein* Sonata (fragment 131).¹⁰ Given the significance of the term *Auskomponierung* (composing-out) in Schenker's writings, one may wonder whether Adorno's use of this expression reflects a deliberate appropriation of, or even attempt to buy himself into, the theorist's analytical vocabulary for his own project on the composer.

This being said, neither of these fragments shows any obvious reference to Schenker's ideas. Most notably, the harmonic reading of the opening bars from the *Waldstein* Sonata presented in fragment 131 clearly suggests that Adorno, in a remarkably uncritical manner, followed the principles of chord-by-chord roman-numeral analysis and, concomitantly, failed to distinguish between passing and structural chords, as Hellmut Federhofer (2004, pp. 305–6) illustrated with reference to the appearance of ♭VII in bar 5. Although from a Schenkerian perspective this chord can be considered to be neatly embedded into a linear chromatic descent preparing V⁷ in bar 9,¹¹ Adorno's isolated 'vertical' approach (mis)interprets it as a disruptive force, as an instantiation of the 'negation of the negation' that underscores the 'ambivalence' of the preceding dominant chord in first inversion (Adorno 1998, p. 55). This suggests that if Adorno had indeed borrowed the term *Auskomponierung* from Schenker, he failed to absorb its technical implications.¹²

Nonetheless, although it is difficult to determine Schenker's influence on Adorno's Beethoven project, it is striking that Adorno continued to regard the theorist's method as being capable of providing profound insights into

the secrets of Beethoven's musical language. In 'Zum Verständnis Schönbergs' (1955), Adorno expounded that 'Heinrich Schenker [...] was the first to reveal [the] subcutaneous structure, above all in Beethoven' (2002a, p. 634). In the same vein, in his essay 'Musik und Technik' (1958b) he reasoned that '[e]ven Beethoven was aware – as Schenker pointed out – of connections below the official level of motivic-thematic craftsmanship which created a unity all the deeper and more binding, the less manifest they were' (1977, p. 90).¹³ Yet, although Adorno ostensibly credits Schenker's theory with providing insights into the complex fabric of Beethoven's works, it is not hard to discern that his appraisal actually operates within the ambit of Schoenberg's method of motivic – or, in Carl Dahlhaus's famous rendering, 'subthematic'¹⁴ – analysis. Indeed, both of the passages show Adorno subtly but decidedly replacing Schenker with Schoenberg as the real patron of 'subcutaneous' analysis. In 'Zum Verständnis Schönbergs' he ultimately glides from Schenker to Schoenberg so smoothly that the non-expert reader at whom this essay is aimed (Adorno and Doflein 2006, p. 157) would probably not even notice. There is another part to the musical structure, Adorno writes here, which cannot be 'reached by the usual analyses', one 'which *Schoenberg* called subcutaneous, a structure under the skin, which derives the whole from the very specific germ cells and which first generates the more profound, true unity' (2002a, p. 634; my emphasis). Similarly, in 'Musik und Technik' Adorno contends (following his earlier remark, according to which Schenker's method provides insights into the 'less manifest' motivic relationships) that '[i]t was never in any way *Schoenberg's* intention that the rows as such – either thematically or as something reminiscent of key – should be audible' (1977, p. 90; my emphasis). These passages thus suggest that *Auskomponierung* in Adorno's account is really meant to mean *Auskonstruierung* or even *Durcharbeitung* in the full Schoenbergian sense of these terms, the elaboration of worked-out motivic and harmonic relationships.¹⁵ It seems, then, that Adorno co-opted Schenker, in much the same way he also engaged with Kurth (see Holtmeier 2004, p. 189), as a vicarious agent for Schoenberg's – and, ultimately, his own – musical agenda.

Schenker as Corrective within the Reformation of Postwar Austro-German Musicology

This mode of Schenker reception is bound up with yet another crucial discursive function. Upon his return to Germany in October 1949, Adorno begins to position Schenker positively alongside Schoenberg as a fellow advocate for the study of musical works in autonomous terms.¹⁶ In 'Musik, Sprache und ihr Verhältnis im gegenwärtigen Komponieren' (1956), Adorno contended that Schenker was important because, 'like Schoenberg, whom he scandalously underrates, he has aimed at a concept of musical content' (1993b, p. 404). And even as late as November 1962, at a time when Adorno had begun to take an

increasingly sceptical view of the Schenkerian edifice, he continued to refer to Schenker in this way and had planned to 'quote him' in a (never completed) study entitled 'Über den Begriff einer Musikphilosophie' (2001a, p. 29).

It is not implausible to understand Adorno's renewed insistence on the autonomy of the musical work as a critical response to the methodological reorientation of Austro-German musicology after World War II. As Pamela Potter (1998, p. 263) and Michael Walter (2001), among others, have pointed out, postwar Austro-German musicology underwent a process of shifting its epistemological scope towards approaches and methods ostensibly unencumbered by ideology, such as the philological analysis of source materials and the study of biography. As a consequence, questions relating to the technical features of musical works were increasingly neglected, a development that it is not hard to imagine Adorno regarding with disapproval. From Adorno's perspective, this radical reorientation must have seemed not only hopelessly naïve, but also susceptible to entanglement in a new set of ideologies.¹⁷ For him, in sidelining approaches to the study of music that sought to unravel the 'gnostic' dimension of the individual work (e.g. Abbate 2004) – or what Schenker described as the study of 'the tonal necessities [that have remained] hidden until now' (1992, p. 4) – the discipline precluded the material-based, immanent critique of ideology that the historical moment demanded.

The Internationale Ferienkurse der Neuen Musik in Darmstadt certainly provided a fitting context for Adorno to reinforce his opposition to these recent developments. In his lecture 'Kriterien der neuen Musik', delivered in 1957, Adorno explicitly stressed the accomplishments of Schenker, along with those of Kurth, with regard to a concept of musical content: 'With few exceptions, contemporary musicology avoids grappling with this pivotal task [of providing an understanding of the works themselves], and those who take it on are marginalised in the discourse. It is telling that the really important and productive musicologists of our times, namely Schenker and Kurth, have been treated like dead dogs and complete outsiders, and I am saying this without meaning to evoke the impression that I wish to identify myself with their theories' (2014, p. 254). In the written version of the lecture, published in the following year as part of the *Darmstädter Beiträge* (1958a), Adorno re-emphasised his view as follows: 'Without wishing to undervalue the achievements of musicology, it remains barely indisputable that up to now it has made little headway in grasping the crucial phenomenon, namely the structural understanding of the works themselves. Those of its exponents who did make the attempt, such as Heinrich Schenker and Ernst Kurth, were relegated to the status of outsiders' (1999, p. 154).

This indictment had some lasting impact, as Adorno himself was shortly to find out. On 3 March 1960, the Austrian musicologist Walter Kolneder sent Adorno a copy of his recently published essay 'Sind Schenkers Analysen Beiträge zur Bacherkenntnis?'. In it Kolneder responds polemically to Adorno's lament made in the *Darmstädter Beiträge* that Schenker and Kurth had been wrongly

marginalised. Kolneder's essay takes Adorno's comments as its starting point for a critical reappraisal of the epistemological value of Schenker's method, through a reading of the sixth of Bach's Twelve Little Preludes. Unsurprisingly, Kolneder concluded that the type of harmonic and voice-leading relationships Schenker's analyses elicit fail to account for the music's 'idea' (*Einfall*) and its motivic-thematic import (1958, pp. 67–9). For Kolneder, Adorno's rather optimistic evaluation of Schenker's method as being principally capable of providing a 'structural understanding of the works themselves' was therefore unjustified. In the final lines of his essay, Kolneder implied that by characterising Schenker as an 'outsider' to academic musicology, Adorno merely assures his own outsider status, in the negative sense of the term, in relation to the discipline.

Adorno, who was to review Kolneder's first monograph on Anton Webern very positively some three years thereafter (1963c) and put in a good word for Kolneder in a letter to Rudolf Stephan concerning a professorship,¹⁸ reacted to this criticism amicably. In his response from 29 March 1960 he wrote:

I am anything but a student or proponent of Schenker, and indeed I find your criticism legitimate. I chose my words really rather cautiously, and they don't go beyond what you have said about him and Kurth on pages 72 and 73. Needless to say, his views on new music, not to mention politics, prevent me from making any identification with him; nevertheless, I have learned more from his analyses of Beethoven than from anything else in academic musicology – [Arnold] Schering, for example. Even Schoenberg, a world apart from Schenker, maintained a certain degree of esteem for him. I am fully aware of course that one must not lose sight of his foolish posturing and the delusions of grandeur that eventually led him to confuse himself with Beethoven. I don't think that our views diverge concerning this complex at all.

If in the opening of your essay you thus find my admonition so problematic, I am particularly pleased to see that in the concluding remarks you concur with me on the decisive issue, namely that musicology neglects a structural understanding of the works themselves. I don't think of it as a pure vice on the part of philosophers or sociologists when they reflect upon the discipline of musicology from a certain distance. I keep encountering the tendency that polemics become neutralised by the way the very existence of the phenomenon under scrutiny is contested, and dissolved instead into a plurality which can no longer be targeted by the individual argument. This is how the battle against the musical youth movement was fought, and which eventually motivated me to write my essay 'Kritik des Musikanten'. Though as soon as it suits musicology to declare itself a unified discipline, it does not hesitate. I sense that you largely agree with my assessment of academic musicology.

It's not that I like to think that the phenomena that I have discussed result from a conspiracy of musicologists against Kurth or Schenker or anyone else. Rather, with a kind of Hegelian cunning, objective tendencies prevail here, without ill intentions by the individual, and sometimes even benevolent scholars fall prey to them.

[I]ch [bin] alles andere als ein Schüler oder Anhänger Schenkers [...], und [...] mir [erscheint] Ihre Kritik durchaus legitim [...]. Meine Formulierung war ja wirklich sehr vorsichtig, und geht gar nicht über das hinaus, was Sie selbst über ihn und Kurth [auf] Seite 72 bis 73 gesagt haben. Daß allein seine Stellung zur modernen Musik, von der Politik zu schweigen, mir jede Identifikation mit ihm verwehrt, bedarf keiner Worte; doch habe ich immerhin von seinen Beethoven-Analysen seinerzeit mehr gelernt als von allem, was die akademische Musikwissenschaft – [Arnold] Schering etwa – dazu beitrug. Auch Schönberg, weiß Gott durch einen Abgrund von Schenker getrennt, hat ihm eine gewisse Schätzung bewahrt, [sic] Daß man die Narreteien von ihm abziehen muß, daß er Größenwahn hatte und schließlich sich selbst mit Beethoven verwechselte, ist mir völlig gegenwärtig. Ich glaube nicht, daß wir mit Rücksicht auf diesen Komplex divergieren.

Wenn Sie im Anfang Ihres Aufsatzes meinen Vorwurf gegen die Musikwissenschaft also so gravierend empfinden, dann freut es mich um so mehr, wenn Sie im Schlußabsatz mir im Entscheidenden Recht geben; daß die Musikwissenschaft das strukturelle Verständnis der Werke selber vernachlässigt habe. Ich halte es nicht für ein bloßes Laster der Philosophen oder Soziologen, wenn sie, aus einer gewissen Distanz, Komplexe wie die Musikwissenschaft zusammenfassen. Immer wieder begegnet mir heute die Tendenz, Polemiken dadurch zu verharmlosen, daß man die Einheit des kritisierten Phänomens bestreitet und es in eine Pluralität auflöst, die dann nicht mehr von der Argumentation getroffen werde. So hat man es anfangs auch im Kampf gegen die musikalische Jugendbewegung gehalten, und das nicht zuletzt hat mich zur 'Kritik des Musikanten' veranlaßt. Sobald es im übrigen der Musikwissenschaft paßt, sich als kompakte Einheit zu deklarieren, zögert sie nicht. Wenn ich mich auf Obertöne verstehe, stimmen Sie in meiner Beurteilung der zünftigen Musikwissenschaft recht weit mit mir überein.

Ich bilde mir nicht ein, daß die Phänomene, die ich meine, auf eine Verschwörung der Musikwissenschaftler gegen Kurth oder Schenker oder sonstwen zurückgingen. Vielmehr setzen sich da, ohne den bösen Willen der Individuen, mit einer Art Hegelschen List der Vernunft, objektive Tendenzen über den Köpfen der Menschen durch, und auch Gutwillige werden zuweilen deren Instrumente. (TWAA Br 792)

This letter offers unique glimpses into Adorno's reception of Schenker in a number of ways. First of all, as discussed in the previous section, it provides first-hand evidence that on some level Adorno had engaged with Schenker's writings on Beethoven and was in fact aware of Schoenberg's ambivalence towards Schenker. Less directly, though no less crucially, it also shows that Adorno, at that time, still saw what he elsewhere termed Schenker's 'provincial-reactionary ideology' (1963a, p. 396) as separable from the analytical insights to which his theory gave rise. Arguably, it is this depoliticisation of Schenker's method – a mode of reception which, referring to a different context, Cook described as 'pick[ing] out the plums and ignor[ing] the rest' (1989, p. 415) – which allowed Adorno to affirm Schenker's relevance in the postwar period

despite the unpalatable nationalism and racism which the theorist espoused. Finally, it is this apolitical assessment of Schenker's accomplishments which enabled Adorno to draw parallels between Schenker's 'outsider' role and his own relation to academic musicology. As he noted in correspondence with the Saarland musicologist Joseph Müller-Blattau on 19 November 1963: 'The fact that I have been consistently ignored by academic musicology and belittled altogether, I have become accustomed to – Halm, Kurth and Schenker had the same experience after all. Although I don't do musicology the way academic musicologists do, I aspire to write the books that academic musicologists will write about one day'.¹⁹

Schenker and the Charge of Positivism

In the aftermath of the 'positivism dispute' at the Annual Meeting of the German Society of Sociology, held from 19 to 21 October 1961 at the University of Tübingen, Adorno's reception of Schenker was to change drastically in tone and direction. While in the 1950s Adorno still stressed the importance of Schenker's work as a corrective to what he identified as the increasing affinity of academic musicology for positivism, beginning in the 1960s Adorno became suspicious that Schenker had, in his own way, imported a certain type of positivism into the arena of musical analysis and interpretation, one that ran against the critical-hermeneutic approach to which he felt music-analytical practices should be subjected.²⁰

The formation of this change can be glimpsed in the revision that Adorno made when preparing his famous Kranichstein lecture 'Vers une musique informelle' for publication. In the first version, presented in two parts on 4 and 5 September 1961, Adorno makes no explicit mention of Schenker. In the revised manuscript, however, on which he worked in stages throughout the following year and which eventually appeared in his essay collection *Quasi una fantasia* (1963b), he criticises Schenker's method on the grounds of what he terms the 'hypostatisation' of tonal relationships. Even though he acknowledges once more that 'Schenker's lasting achievement as an analyst is and remains the fact that he was the first to demonstrate the constitutive importance of tonal relationships, as understood in the widest sense', he has his readers entertain the notion that Schenker, '[d]azzled by the [tonal] idiom, [...] hypostatized it'. The *Urlinie*, Adorno writes, 'is in reality probably the essence of that idiom expressed as a norm', before casting it now explicitly in the light of Schenker's ideological agenda: '[n]otwithstanding insights into structure which have affinities with Schoenberg's practice, he [Schenker] strove to establish for a reactionary aesthetics a solid foundation in musical logic which tallied all too well with his loathsome political views' (1992, p. 281).

To be sure, Adorno's criticism hardly goes beyond the reservations that Schoenberg had expressed some four decades earlier. As Jonathan Dunsby has

shown with reference to a gloss written into the composer's copy of the first volume of Schenker's 'Tonwille' pamphlet, Schoenberg had already by 1923 identified the *Urlinie* as 'the uniform reduction of all appearances to their simplest base' (Dunsby 1977, p. 32). This said, Adorno's attack has its own discursive place. In implying that as a result of the pursuit for 'a solid foundation in musical logic' Schenker 'hypostatized' the tonal idiom, Adorno essentially elides Schoenberg's reservations with his own objections against scientific positivism. The extrapolation of his objections to Schenker's method can, for example, be thought through in the context of his 1957 essay 'Soziologie und empirische Forschung', which was to be included in the famous essay collection *Der Positivismusstreit in der deutschen Soziologie* (1969). Indirectly reflecting upon the surveys he conducted as part of the Princeton Radio Research Project, Adorno admonishes here that '[i]n that moment in which one hypostatizes that state which research methods [read, for our purposes here: Schenker's method] both grasp and express as the immanent reason of *science*, instead of making it the object of one's thought, one contributes intentionally or otherwise to its perpetuation' (1976, p. 74; my emphasis). When reading the criticism Adorno levelled at Schenker in 'Vers une musique informelle' against the backdrop of his critique of scientific reasoning, it is not hard to discern why for him any effort to reveal a 'musical logic' on the 'normative' grounds of the *Urlinie* tends to amount to no more than a reification of musical insights.

The 'positivism dispute' may not have been the reason Adorno turned against Schenker, but, I wish to venture, it shaped how he perceived the post-Schenkerian debates that erupted in Austro-German music scholarship following the publication of Jonas's new edition of *Der freie Satz* (1956) (see e.g. Dahlhaus 1959).²¹ Indeed, although Adorno seems to have been aware of these debates from the beginning of their formation,²² the sources suggest that his engagement with these discourses only began to gain momentum shortly after the 'positivism dispute', possibly by coincidence. At the time that he was about to finish revising 'Vers une musique informelle' for publication,²³ Adorno had had an 'extensive' (*ausgiebig*) meeting with Felix Prohaska, the incumbent director of the Niedersächsische Hochschule für Musik und Theater in Hanover and former principal conductor at the Frankfurt Opera, as is evinced by a letter to Kolneder on 20 March 1962 (TWAA Br 792). During this conversation, Prohaska seemed to have promised to give Adorno a copy of Felix Salzer's *Structural Hearing* (1952) – which in fact he sent on 23 March 1962,²⁴ accompanied by the following note:

Please find enclosed the 'Salzer', as promised. Whether he [the book] will serve you well, I don't know. I myself owe a great deal to Schenkerian theory. But it is with great and 'reassuring' pleasure to know that the book of the 'other' Felix (as we used to say in our families) is now in your possession.

Hier folgt der angekündigte 'Salzer'. Ob er Ihnen zu allem behelfen [?] wird, weiß ich nicht. Ich selber habe der Schenkerschen Lehre viel zu verdanken. Aber das

Buch des 'anderen' Felix (wie es in unsern Familien früher immer hieß) bei Ihnen zu wissen, ist mir eine große u. auch 'beruhigende' Freude. (TWAA Br 1166)

In his response on 29 March, Adorno mentions that because of time constraints he had not yet been able to thoroughly engage with Salzer's study and its abundance of musical examples, though he was happy to share his first impressions:

I am somewhat relieved, as the scope of the concept of structural hearing employed in Salzer's work is explicitly limited to tonality; whereas the term as used in '[Der getreue] Korrepetitor' targets precisely those moments that are not predetermined by tonality. By the way, I was pleased to see that Salzer, a pupil of Schenker's, seems to engage with new music in such an open-minded way, although I cannot share his vision of a possible future of tonal composition. My first impression is that, while one may expect this book to provide a radically new approach, the analysis developed therein ultimately adheres to traditional categories. But I completely concur with Salzer in his assessment that current music theory merely describes and labels rather than actually providing an understanding of the phenomenon at stake, and moreover that the prerequisite of musical explanations concerns the relationship between the whole and the individual part, though I am inclined to construe this relationship less defined by the whole and, indeed, conceive of this totality *as a form of becoming*. Yet it is difficult to say to what extent these critical remarks point at actual differences. I could imagine that a discussion with Salzer, for example on the radio, might be productive.

[I]ch bin jedenfalls insofern beruhigt, als der Begriff des strukturellen Hörens, wie er bei Salzer verwandt wird, ausdrücklich auf die Tonalität eingeschränkt ist, während er so, wie er im '[Der getreue] Korrepetitor' verwandt wird, gerade auf die Momente sich bezieht, die nicht gleichsam von der Tonalität vorgegeben sind. Übrigens hat es mich angenehm berührt, daß ein Schenker-Schüler doch offenbar der neuen Musik mit soviel Aufgeschlossenheit gegenübersteht, wenngleich ich seine Prognose über eine mögliche Zukunft tonalen Komponierens nicht zu teilen vermag. Mein erster Eindruck ist ein wenig der, daß, während man bei dem Buch wirklich einen radikal neuen Ansatz erwartet, es im Lauf der durchgeführten [*sic*] Analyse doch mehr oder minder auf traditionelle Kategorien zurückfällt. Ganz überein stimme ich mit Salzer darin, daß die bisherige Musiktheorie eigentlich nur beschreibt und benennt, aber nicht wirklich erklärt, und auch darin, daß der musikalische Erklärungsgrund das Verhältnis von Ganzem und Teil ist, obwohl ich dies Verhältnis wohl weniger als vom Ganzen her vorentschieden denke, und auch die Totalität vielmehr als eine *werdende* bestimmen würde. Aber wie weit es sich hier um wirklich prinzipielle Differenzen handelt, vermag ich noch gar nicht zu übersehen. Ich könnte mir eine Diskussion mit Salzer etwa auch im Radio recht fruchtbar vorstellen. (TWAA Br 1166)

Unfortunately, the opportunity for a public exchange between Salzer and Adorno never arose. Yet Adorno's palpable relief on sensing a paradigmatic difference between Salzer's use of the term 'structural hearing' and his own theory of listening is striking in itself. Adorno had developed his theory of

listening only a short time earlier in the lecture 'Typen musikalischen Verhaltens' (1962), recorded, on 26 November 1961, by the Norddeutscher Rundfunk. It thus comes as little surprise that he was greatly concerned with drawing lines of demarcation between Salzer's work and his own. Indeed, in the preface to *Der getreue Korrepetitor* he sets great store by the fact that 'the concept [of structural hearing] and its full implications had been developed and presented in public by the author [Adorno] well before he had been referred to Felix Salzer's *Structural Hearing*', before insisting that both theories must be understood as 'entirely independent from one another' (1963a, pp. 159–60). Notably, this statement differs from the corresponding passage of the initial draft, completed on 11 September 1961, where Adorno had written that Salzer's *Structural Hearing* 'is still unknown to the author' ('auch jetzt noch ist es dem Autor unbekannt'; TWAA Ts 7731, *post correcturam*). These sources thus suggest that Adorno only began to take serious note of Salzer's study through Prohaska's recommendation, in spring 1962.

Around the same time that he came across Salzer's magnum opus, Adorno also appeared to be casting a critical eye on the most recent developments at the Wiener Akademie für Musik und darstellende Kunst. As Evelyn Fink (2003 and 2006, esp. pp. 160–1) was able to reconstruct, following the shutdown of the Schenker Institut in 1938 in the aftermath of the annexation of Austria, the teaching of Schenker's method was resumed in Vienna only with Franz Eibner's evening seminars in the fall semester of 1951. Shortly thereafter, Eibner's seminars were integrated into the curriculum of the Akademie. But in 1962 the teaching of Schenker's methods at the Akademie underwent a fundamental reorientation when the baton was passed to Oswald Jonas. The author of *Das Wesen des musikalischen Kunstwerks: Einführung in die Lehre Heinrich Schenkers* (1934) and numerous articles on Schenker's analytical method, the editor of *Der freie Satz* ([1935] 1956) and the editor of the English translation of *Harmonielehre* (1954), Jonas had made a name for himself as a committed advocate for the professionalisation of Schenker's method among the generation of postwar music theorists. Although he reportedly cultivated a collegial friendship with Erwin Ratz, the sole theory teacher at the Akademie who came from the Schoenberg circle (Kretz 1996, pp. 59 and 91), it is not hard to imagine that these developments were a thorn in Adorno's side. It is unclear whether Adorno ever commented directly on Jonas's work. But in the context of a discussion with Rudolf Kolisch about the trends and developments in recent music scholarship, it is quite conceivable that we find Adorno (at least) alluding to Jonas's efforts to institutionalise Schenker's musical thought. In a letter to Kolisch dated 17 September 1963, Adorno wrote: 'It is particularly disastrous that the analytical engagement of musicologists these days, especially by those in Vienna, is informed by Schenker's method' (Theodor W. Adorno Archiv 2003, p. 251).²⁵ Indeed, Adorno's discontent seems to have been deep-seated. Only six weeks later, in a letter to Günther Anders dated 31 October 1963, Adorno launched another attack. In response to Anders, who had shared with him that he

was ‘held [...] by some musicologists, who only confine themselves to sketching skeletons of musical works, as an Adornian beyond reform’, Adorno noted: ‘I am pleased to read [in your letter] [...] a sentence which I wish to interpret as opposition to the spreading enthusiasm for Schenker. I find this just as atrocious as you do, and the Schenkerians find me atrocious’ (Theodor W. Adorno Archiv 2003, pp. 280–1; both quotations).²⁶

Anders’s flattering words may have made some impression on Adorno. Around the same time he was to receive Anders’s letter, Adorno self-critically wrote into one of his notebooks that his ‘hypothesis that the performance is the x-ray photograph of the work requires correction in so far as it provides not the skeleton, but rather the entire wealth of subcutanea’ (2006, p. 160). It strikes me that this ‘correction’ marks an important moment in Adorno’s Schenker reception. Up to this point, Adorno had used the metaphors of the skeleton and the x-ray in rather general terms to outline his ideas for a practice of ‘subcutaneous analysis’ (see for example 2006, pp. 74, 109 and 159), a vision that he initially considered equally represented by Schoenberg and Schenker’s methods, as discussed above. Now, in 1963, Adorno seems to be keen to conceptually reserve the term ‘skeleton’ for his critique of Schenker’s tendency to ‘hypostatise’ tonal relationships, while maintaining the term ‘x-ray photography’ (or ‘fluoroscopy’) for his appraisal of Schoenberg’s analytical approach. So, for example, in his essay ‘Wagners Aktualität’ (1965), Adorno casts Schenker as ‘a retrograde proponent of the power of skeletons’ who, in an attempt to explain ‘the entire musical progression along orderly steps within the usual functional harmony of thorough-bass and corresponding melody’, only concerns himself with ‘abstract generalities in music’ (2002b, p. 590). The same line of argument is also found in two sources dating from 1964. In his essay in memory of Eduard Steuermann, Adorno stressed that the analytical insights provided by Schoenberg’s method are not ‘oriented along the “Urlinie” as a skeleton’ but instead aim to provide a kind of ‘fluoroscopy of the structural particularities as expressed in the individual work’ (1964, p. 313). And in an early version of his essay on Richard Strauss dated 2 May 1964 and written on the occasion of the centenary of the composer’s birth, Adorno even explicitly aligns the term ‘skeleton’ with his reservations against Schenker’s ‘hypostatisation’:

It was Schenker’s mistake to hypostatise, in an act of firm skeletisation, all kinds of compositional dimensions through tonality as the system of musical relationships, and to praise it as an indispensable asset. Too bad that Strauss erased this system, while some of the compositional elements he uses depend on this system and, as a matter of fact, emerge from it. Without this contradiction, Schenker’s indignation [over Strauss] loses its *raison d’être*. He failed to recognise the critical extent to which what he disparaged actually prepared, through negation, [a new type of] integral composing, one which goes far beyond the specific scope of integration in the tonal system. With this in mind, in a compositional-technical sense we ought to speak here of a necessity of [historical] development (despite [Walter]

Benjamin's reservations against the use of this term in the domain of aesthetics) which found in Strauss one of its most illustrious advocates.

Schenker's Irrtum war es, jene Art fester Skelettierung aller kompositorischen Dimensionen durch das Bezugssystem der Tonalität zu hypostasieren, als unverlierbares Gut anzupreisen; schlecht bei Strauss, daß er jenes Bezugssystem durchstrich, während die einzelnen Kompositionselemente, die er benutzt, nach jenem System verlangen und meist selber von ihm erzeugt sind; ohne diesen Widerspruch verliert Schenker's Empörung ihre raison d'être; er hat nicht erkannt, wie sehr, was er brandmarkte, negativ ein integrales Komponieren vorbereitete, weit über den partikularen Umfang der Integration im toaneln [*sic*] System hinaus; insofern wäre, trotz [Walter] Benjamins Einwänden gegen die Verwendung des Begriffs in der Ästhetik, in technisch-handwerklichem Sinn, von der Notwendigkeit einer Entwicklung zu reden, die in Strauss eines ihrer vornehmsten Instrumente hatte. (TWAA Ts 43780; this passage has been erased)

Marking the last new element of Adorno's Schenker reception, this aversive impulse against the 'hypostatization' and 'skeletalization' of structural relationships – one which would eventually find full articulation in his 1969 lecture – offers some crucial insights into the level of his engagement with Schenker's ideas. As the sources gathered in this article suggest, Adorno's understanding of Schenker was probably not developed from a close reading of Schenker's writings but was instead first and foremost mediated via other influences and discourses, and, in this sense, indeed 'somewhat limited' (Paddison 1993, p. 170). It is thus certainly not unfair to characterise Adorno's reception of Schenker's work in the way Hermann Mörchén (1981) famously described the relationship between Adorno and Martin Heidegger: in terms of a *Kommunikationsverweigerung*, a refusal of communication. To infer from this refusal, however, that such a mode of reception inevitably fails to be a fruitful one would be too hasty a conclusion. On the contrary, as Mörchén perspicaciously argued, the refusal can have its own 'communicative meaning' ('kommunikativer Sinn philosophischer Kommunikationsverweigerung'). Such meaning, he suggests, is to be found in the nature of polemics itself: in circumstances where 'communication [...] would only lead to a bad form of complexity or divert attention from what needs to be addressed', its refusal in fact 'can be an *imperative*' (1981, pp. 659–60; emphasis in the original). While the real motives for Adorno's refusal to engage closely with Schenker's writings are certainly more generally to be found in his deeply ambivalent attitude to academic musicology as a whole, undoubtedly Schenker's work served Adorno as a critical reference to communicate what he, in the context of the (re)formation of musicology as a discipline in particular and the *Geisteswissenschaften* in general, saw as imperative. It thus seems likely that Adorno's lack of thorough engagement with Schenker is indeed a case, not of absence of evidence, but of evidence of absence. However, it would be short-sighted to claim that this leaves us with little to say. Rather, this absence, as I have tried to show, is rendered productive in the way it fulfils a variety of discursive

functions, and in fact it is this form of presence that, arguably, grants Adorno's Schenker reception its historical value.

NOTES

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1. In recent years, the intellectual kinship between Schenker's and Schoenberg's music theories has undergone critical reassessment by a number of scholars, including Arndt (2017), Borio (2001), Boucquet (2005) and Dudeque (2005, pp. 45–54).
2. For example, none of the contributions in Nowak and Fahlbusch (2007), a volume devoted exclusively to Adorno's conception of musical analysis, considers Adorno's engagement with Schenker.
3. A welcome yet rather general discussion of some axiomatic differences and commonalities between Schenker's and Adorno's conceptions of music analysis has been put forward by Federhofer (2004).
4. It has become the scholarly consensus to attribute Adorno's decision not to pursue Schoenberg's proposal to the underlying tensions and alienations that characterised their relationship; it is also conceivable that Adorno, at this time fully devoted to finishing his *Habilitationsschrift* on Kierkegaard, simply did not feel sufficiently prepared extemporaneously to bring such an ambitious project into being.
5. Schäfke refers to a lecture he delivered in 1925 entitled 'Musikästhetik und musikalischer Einführungsunterricht' ([1934] 1964, p. 394).
6. For a detailed discussion of Schäfke's final chapter and the impact this had on the formation of the early reception of Schenker, along with Halm

and Kurth, among others, as a representative of ‘musical energetics’, see Rothfarb (2002).

7. Adorno seems to have become aware of Schäfke’s work for the first time through his review of Berg’s *Wozzeck* (Schäfke 1926 and Adorno and Berg 1997); see Adorno’s letters from 13 August, 19 August, 6 September and 17 September 1926. Adorno commented in a letter written on 24 October 1926: ‘The essay is solidly and even affectionately written, but with an ultimately subaltern philologists’ devotion, and has the dangerous intention of drawing a reactionary ideology out of *Wozzeck* (the harmonic and the linear being simultaneous; the primacy of the connection to the old formal tradition; obviously wicked lies). But at least the piece maintains a certain standard, and is better than all the hack jobs that have otherwise been done on *Wozzeck*. But he clearly comes from the Berlin music history class of Professor [Hermann] Abert’ (Adorno and Berg 2005, pp. 79–80).
8. A catalogue of Adorno’s *Nachlassbibliothek*, compiled by Nina Weisweiler and Alexandra Land, has been made available through the Theodor W. Adorno Archiv (version dated 4 March 2015).
9. I am grateful to Michael Schwarz for pointing this out to me.
10. Adorno probably knew the work through first-hand performance experience, as the fingerings written into his copy of the score provided by the Köhler-Schmidt edition suggest (NB Adorno 4326).
11. Federhofer (1981, pp. 140–5) provides a full account of his reading of the opening of the *Waldstein* Sonata.
12. In the context of his interpretation of Mahler from the 1960s, Adorno also writes about ‘the composed-out supertonic scale step [*Stufe*] of the main tonality’ (1991, p. 90; translation amended) in a way that is devoid of any Schenkerian implications.
13. Still, in his lecture ‘Zum Problem der musikalischen Analyse’, Adorno claimed that the ‘Schenkerian concept of the Fundamental Line to some extent correctly applies’, in attempting to grapple with the insight that ‘[i]t is actually *tonality itself* which, in the case of Beethoven, is both theme as well as outcome’ (1982, p. 175; emphasis in the original).
14. Although in his chapter on subthematicism from his monograph on Beethoven (pp. 202–18) Dahlhaus does not explicitly refer to Schoenberg’s writings, there is no doubt that his discussion is deeply informed by the composer’s conception of developing variation and *Grundgestalt*. On this matter see for example Webster (1993, pp. 213–6).
15. Such a Schoenbergian take on the term *Auskomponierung* makes it possible for Adorno to extend its scope to include post-tonal music (see for example

- 1962, p. 393) and even Samuel Beckett's *Endgame* (see in this context Weller 2010, pp. 187–8). By translating *Auskomponierung* as 'working-out', Edmund Jephcott felicitously captured this Schoenbergian streak of the term (Adorno 1998, pp. 17 and 55), albeit at the cost of obscuring its identity for the English-speaking reader.
16. Hinrichsen (2004, pp. 209–10) has drawn attention to this often overlooked aspect of Adorno's reception of Schenker, emphasising the fact that both Adorno and Schenker likewise sought to depart from the type of subjective musical hermeneutics commonly associated with the writings of Hermann Kretzschmar.
 17. For an example of Adorno's reservations against the philological-positivistic approach, see his polemical comments on Georg von Dadelsen's work in n. 25.
 18. The correspondence between Rudolf Stephan and Adorno is archived as TWAA Br 1480.
 19. A transcription of this letter is provided in Custodis (2009, p. 197). The fact that Müller-Blattau was involved in National Socialism lends Adorno's statement a certain historical irony. As Custodis was able to reconstruct (p. 199), Adorno probably became aware of Müller-Blattau's involvement only in April 1965.
 20. For an illuminating list of criteria on the basis of which Adorno objected to positivism in music-analytical practice, see Paddison (2002, pp. 220–1).
 21. For a discussion of the reception of Schenker's work in German musicology after World War II, see Schwab-Felisch (2005).
 22. On 17 October 1956 Adorno received a letter from Rudolf Komarnicki which expresses the view that, while Salzer at least kept some critical distance from Schenker's ideas, Jonas was troublingly devout (TWAA Br 793). Whether he replied to this letter could not be verified.
 23. Adorno produced two versions, the first dated 28 March 1962 and the second dated May of the same year.
 24. Both volumes of Salzer's *Structural Hearing* are archived under the signature TWAA NB Adorno 3625 and NB Adorno 3626; they do not bear any marginalia or underlinings.
 25. This sentence is preceded by comments where Adorno shared his reservations against what he perceived as the philological-positivistic tendency in German musicology, a trend which he considered epitomised by the work, for example, of the then-editor of the *Neue Bach-Ausgabe*, Georg von Dadelsen. In a letter dated 4 September 1963 (TWAA Br 790),

Kolisch had reported to Adorno that ‘Prof. Daddelson’ [*sic*] had injected himself into the process of philological analysis of the relevant sources for the Schoenberg collected edition (which at this stage was yet to be officially launched). Having been asked by Kolisch whether he knew von Dadelsen, Adorno eventually responded: ‘I am not happy at all about the interference of German musicology in the Schoenberg collected edition – in this sense I belong to the orthodoxy, [a position the validity of] which I only see increasingly confirmed through my experiences with German musicology during the last years. How could this come to be? Concerning Mr Daddelson [*sic*] I must say that I don’t know anything about him that is particularly bad; but it is certainly the case that he does not have any real connection to this [i.e. the real issues that concern the Schoenberg edition]. If it requires an academic musicologist [to take on the role of principal editor of the edition], one should pick one of the young and really gifted scholars from the Göttingen Circle and upon whom I have had a significant impact, for example Rudolf Stephan [...] or Carl Dahlhaus [...]. In the case of all the others, disaster looms as soon as it [i.e. the editorial work] goes beyond merely copying [out the notes]. The unbearable thing about musicologists is their way of elevating themselves upon the things by means of stylistic categories and generalisations, without actually understanding them. There are signs that this might change, though I won’t be alive long enough to see it – except for the things that I write myself’ (Theodor W. Adorno Archiv 2003, pp. 250–1). At the time the Schoenberg edition was eventually launched, Adorno returned to the matter of von Dadelsen with even greater vehemence in a letter to Kolisch dated 16 June 1965: ‘What gives German musicology the right to meddle in your work for the Schoenberg collected edition? Right now I’m seething, once again, against this gang. Didn’t you say that Mr von Dadelsen had a hand in this? He is literally one of the worst. I would definitely try to avoid working with these people – [otherwise] you will run with dead certainty into arguments, and one shouldn’t get oneself into situations where the intractability [of conflict] is a given. Please forgive this wise advice; you know that of course just as well as I do, and there are probably some objective aspects involved which have pushed you into this situation’ (‘In welcher Weise hat denn die deutsche Musikwissenschaft in Deine Arbeit an der Gesamtausgabe Schönberg hineinzureden? Ich schäume im Augenblick einmal wieder gegen die Bande. Sagtest Du nicht, Herr von Dadelsen habe seine Hände darin? Das ist buchstäblich einer der Allerschlimmsten. Ich würde unbedingt versuchen, zu verhindern, daß Du mit diesen Leuten zusammenarbeiten muß – es gibt mit absoluter Sicherheit Krach, und man soll sich nicht auf Situationen einlassen, deren Ausweglosigkeit von Anbeginn abzusehen ist. Bitte verzeih den weisen Ratschlag; Du weißt das natürlich genau so gut wie ich, und wahrscheinlich sind irgendwelche

objektiven Momente im Spiel, die Dich in diese Situation gedrängt haben' [TWAA Br 790]).

26. It might not be purely coincidental that the expression Adorno chose, 'ausbreitende Begeisterung für Schenker', makes the institutionalisation of Schenkerian analysis sound like an infectious disease.

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NOTE ON THE CONTRIBUTOR

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ABSTRACT

Since the publication in 1982 of Theodor Adorno's late lecture 'On the Problem of Musical Analysis', it has been well established that Adorno had an ambivalent attitude towards Heinrich Schenker's analytical method, to the extent that the two men are usually thought of as antagonists while sharing the same concern for a work-immanent understanding of the content of music. Yet beyond this lecture, surprisingly little is known about Adorno's actual engagement with Schenker's writings. The aim of this article is twofold. First, drawing on hitherto unexamined sources held at the Theodor W. Adorno Archiv in Frankfurt am Main, this essay reconstructs and examines Adorno's engagement with Schenker's ideas and the work of two of the theorist's most influential advocates, Felix Salzer and Oswald Jonas. Based on this, secondly, the article places Adorno's ambivalent attitude towards Schenker's method within the

broader scholarly and political debates of his time. In particular, it will be argued that Adorno's reception of Schenker can be understood in relation to three discursive concerns: (1) advocating the importance of Schoenberg's music-theoretical thought, (2) questioning the methodological reorientation of postwar Austro-German musicology and (3) reinforcing his opposition to positivism in the domain of musical analysis. In this way, this article aims to contribute to ongoing efforts to reconstruct and understand more fully the history of Schenker reception.