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SchenkerGUIDE: A Brief Handbook And Website For Schenkerian Analysis



Synopsis

SchenkerGUIDE is an accessible overview of Heinrich Schenker's complex but fascinating approach to the analysis of tonal music. The book has emerged out of the widely used website, www.SchenkerGUIDE.com, which has been offering straightforward explanations of Schenkerian analysis to undergraduate students since 2001. Divided into four parts, SchenkerGUIDE offers a step-by-step method to tackling this often difficult system of analysis. Part I is an introduction to Schenkerian analysis, outlining the concepts that are involved in analysis. Part II outlines a unique and detailed working method to help students to get started on the process of analysis. Part III puts some of these ideas into practice by exploring the basics of a Schenkerian approach to form, register, motives and dramatic structure. Part IV provides a series of exercises from the simple to the more sophisticated, along with hints and tips for their completion.

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Customer Reviews

Informative, concise and well written.

The Kindle version of this guide is technically flawed by periodic interruptions of the continuity of the prose. The principle issue is that sentences that are chopped in two have their remaining part interpolated forward in the text thus creating further continuity problems downstream. Here's a list of seven instances using square brackets to indicate the hiatuses:

1. Example 2.4 give some examples of Roman numerals and figured bass in practice. A letter followed by a colon denotes the relevant key, with minor keys in lower case; Roman numerals (all in upper case) indicate the chord within that key. At its simplest the addition of figured bass to the Roman numeral labeling system can be used to clarify inversions, as in the first chord of Example 2.4a, where the 6 below the staff (short for 6/3) shows that the dominant chord is in first inversion.
2. As well as indicating triads and sevenths in their various inversions, figured bass is also used to show suspensions within a chord, such as 4 resolving to 3, as in the last measure below.
3. "Species counterpoint" formed part of the musical education of such major figures as Haydn, Mozart, (The following sentence interrupts the previous one, as indicated by square brackets:) [Take the time to play through these examples on the piano--you will find that everything in this book makes much more sense if you do so. Failing that, you will find midi files of many of the examples on [...].] Beethoven and Brahms; the principles it embodies are integral to the compositional tradition to which these composers belong.
4. In addition, he outlines a foreground, middleground and background. Schenker gives formal labels to the various layers of an analysis.
5. The middleground layer closest to the background is referred to as the first-level middleground, and consists only of direct elaborations of the background.
6. In the first measure of this example the upper voice ascends through the three notes of a root position triad against a lower voice that sustains the root note of the chord.
7. As the diminished seventh is effectively a stack of minor thirds, it contains no dissonances and can therefore be arpeggiated.

The pattern that emerges is that the sentence interrupted before the left-hand bracket in example 1, for instance, is completed in example 2 after the right-hand bracket. The same is true of the pairs of examples 4 and 5, and 6 and 7. Now that I've

discerned this pattern of error I can probably make sense of the book but it's tedious and I feel that my money has been poorly spent in renting this insightful guide to a challenging approach to the analysis of music.

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