

An Analysis of Contemporary Tonal Music: An Oxford Studies in Music Theory Review

In the realm of music theory, Oxford Studies in Music Theory stands as a beacon of academic rigor and groundbreaking research. With its latest publication, *Contemporary Tonal Music*, the series delves into the intricate and evolving landscape of contemporary music, shedding light on the complexities and nuances of tonal harmony in the 21st century. This article aims to provide an in-depth analysis of this seminal work, examining its key contributions, theoretical foundations, and implications for the understanding and appreciation of contemporary music.



Pieces of Tradition: An Analysis of Contemporary Tonal Music (Oxford Studies in Music Theory) by Alan Young

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Print length	: 206 pages
Lending	: Enabled



Tonal Harmony in Contemporary Music

Contemporary tonal music refers to a diverse range of musical styles that embrace the principles of tonal harmony while pushing its boundaries and exploring new possibilities. Unlike traditional tonal music, which adhered to strictly defined rules and conventions, contemporary tonal music allows for

greater harmonic flexibility, textural experimentation, and rhythmic complexity.

Oxford Studies in Music Theory: Contemporary Tonal Music explores this multifaceted genre, providing a comprehensive analysis of its harmonic techniques, formal structures, and expressive qualities. The book features essays from leading music theorists and composers, each offering a unique perspective on the subject.

Theoretical Foundations

The theoretical foundations of *Contemporary Tonal Music* are rooted in the work of renowned music theorists such as Heinrich Schenker and Allen Forte. Schenker's theories of structural hierarchy and motivic development provide a framework for understanding the formal and harmonic organization of music. Forte's set theory offers a systematic approach to analyzing pitch-class relationships, allowing for a more detailed examination of harmonic structures.

Building upon these foundations, the contributors to *Contemporary Tonal Music* present innovative analytical techniques that illuminate the intricacies of contemporary harmonic practices. They employ concepts such as extended tonality, polytonality, and pandiatonicism to account for the harmonic ambiguity and textural complexity that characterize much of this music.

Key Contributions

One of the key contributions of *Contemporary Tonal Music* is its comprehensive analysis of the works of influential contemporary composers. The book dedicates entire chapters to composers such as

Elliott Carter, Milton Babbitt, and György Ligeti, providing detailed harmonic analyses of their groundbreaking compositions.

These analyses reveal the diverse ways in which these composers manipulate and extend traditional tonal harmonies, creating novel and often unpredictable harmonic progressions. The book also examines the influence of non-Western musical traditions and technologies on the development of contemporary tonal music.

Another significant contribution of *Contemporary Tonal Music* is its exploration of the relationship between tonality and other musical elements. The contributors discuss how contemporary tonal music often incorporates elements of atonality, modality, and serialism, creating a rich and multilayered musical experience.

They analyze how these different musical elements interact and complement each other, contributing to the overall expressive and formal coherence of the music.

Implications for Music Theory and Practice

Contemporary Tonal Music has profound implications for the field of music theory and the practice of music composition. It challenges traditional notions of tonality and harmony, providing a more nuanced understanding of the complexities of contemporary music.

The analytical techniques presented in the book empower music theorists and composers with new tools for analyzing and creating music that defies conventional boundaries. By exploring the rich harmonic vocabulary and

structural possibilities of contemporary tonal music, the book inspires a deeper appreciation of the genre and its potential for innovation.

Oxford Studies in Music Theory: Contemporary Tonal Music is an essential resource for anyone interested in the intricacies of contemporary music. It offers a comprehensive analysis of harmonic practices, theoretical foundations, and key compositional techniques, shedding light on the evolution and diversity of this fascinating genre.

The book's groundbreaking insights will not only enrich the understanding of contemporary tonal music but also inspire new avenues of research and creative exploration. As the landscape of contemporary music continues to expand and evolve, *Oxford Studies in Music Theory: Contemporary Tonal Music* will remain a cornerstone publication, guiding music theorists, composers, and music enthusiasts alike through its complexities and innovations.

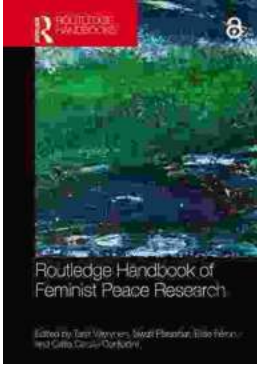


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