Newsletter
Dutch-Flemmish Society of Music Theory

Volume 4, nr.1 Spring 2020

Letter from John Koslovsky, outgoing president

Dearest colleagues and friends,

As we continue to hear in the news, we are living in challenging times. We are all holed up in our homes, some with family, and some alone. For those working in the public sphere, things have come to a virtual stand-still; for those active at schools, the responsibilities have more than doubled with the start of online education. But amidst the general pandemonium and uncertainty, it's fantastic to hear about all the initiatives colleagues have taken to continue to teach and research music theory and analysis. We would like to encourage our members to share their ideas and experiences with one another, as a way of offering additional support for each other and maybe even encouraging new forms of collaboration. As part of the general effort, the DFSMT board has set up a page on the website where members can suggest educational or other links to foster music theory education and research. Members are welcome to suggest links or other ideas for the website. And please send along any interesting initiatives that you may be working on in the field of music theory during the corona crisis!

As I leave the board this year, I would like to express my gratitude for having served on the board of the *Vereniging voor Muziektheorie*: first as a general member (2011-2015), then as its chairman (2015-2020). I have drawn an incredible amount of satisfaction and inspiration during my time as a board member. Above all, it has brought me in contact with numerous colleagues and students both within the Netherlands and Flanders, and it has given me the opportunity to connect with theorists from all over Europe and to learn about their many pedagogical and scholarly traditions. These factors have made the hours of extra work behind the scenes all the more worthwhile: writing emails; organizing meetings and events; ensuring that the DFSMT remains visible; and meeting with the board at cafés, restaurants, and schools all over the lowlands. For me, there was no better way to conclude my time on the board than with a conference ("Beethoven 2020") where so many of my theory colleagues and friends were present. I can only continue to encourage the members to consider playing an active role in the board: it is a rewarding experience!

I especially wish to publicly thank my fellow board members for their unwavering support and goodwill over the last five years. I can honestly say that every meeting we have had has been nothing but a positive and collegial experience. And, last but not least, I want to thank the entire membership for putting its trust in me to run the society: as someone who came to the Netherlands only in 2010, I have always considered the DFSMT to be that group of like-minded teachers and scholars within the lowlands with whom I can further give shape and meaning to my professional passion: music theory. Needless to say, I will remain an active and dedicated member for as long as the DFSMT exists!

I am confident that our board will continue to promote music theory in the lowlands in all its guises, and will also maintain a strong representation of the Dutch-Flemish constituency in the field of music theory in Europe for the years to come.

John Koslovsky

The presidency of John Koslovsky, 2015-2020

On the 13 February 2020 the Dutch-Flemish Society for Music Theory celebrated its twenty-first birthday. In founding a professional society with fellow enthusiasts, you hope that the society you've founded will outlive your own time as a board member. And your successors accept the responsibility to garner interest in the membership, so that later others will in turn take up the task. Every yearly meeting of the society is in this way exciting and yet tense: will enough new members come to serve on the society's board? Let's face it: for a president about to step down from his position this can feel like a bit of an exam.

Judging by the fact that, at the last general meeting of the society on 29 February, which took place during the international Beethoven conference at the Conservatorium van Amsterdam, all vacant positions of the board were easily filled, John Koslovsky has after five years as acting president amply passed that test. And the conference was a fitting décor for the stepping-down of a president who nine years ago, as a newly emigrated American to Amsterdam, stepped onto the board, and who now gave both the international conference guests *and* the DFSMT members a surprising glimpse into the recent history of Dutch music theory during a retrospective on the career of Paul Scheepers, who retires this year as a teacher. Afterwards there followed a dual performance with pianist-theorist Inés Costales in a lecture-recital around Beethoven's op. 110 piano sonata, wherein John positioned Paul's analytical insights with those of Heinrich Schenker, Roger Kamien, David Beach and William Kinderman — but also with his own ideas as well as those of some of Paul's own students.

It was a performance that marked John's relation with the Dutch-Flemish Society for Music Theory.

Since its founding, the society has aimed to focus both on the pedagogical practices of the Dutch-Flemish region and on international music theory and analysis — still remember? A difficult starting point, it seemed, because it constantly begged the question: how much of each? You could compare the situation with a scene from the film *Prick Up Your Ears* (Stephen Frears, 1987): in a crematorium, the ashes of two deceased loved ones, Joe and Ken, are mixed together by Joe's sister: "I am afraid I've put in too much of Joe," said the sister; whereupon a friend of both men replies: "It's a gesture, darling, not a recipe."

For John Koslovsky, teaching and research go hand in hand; and he is accustomed to practice his profession in different worlds and also in different parts of the world. Remarkably enough, he was a board member in a time when the society seemed to be bringing to an end the tradition of a yearly international conference, and instead moved towards organizing and supporting smaller-scale events that were more connected to a particular theme at a supporting institute. Another development that he, together with his fellow board members, strongly advocated for was of a more "national" orientation: enhancing student involvement in the activities of the society. In 2017 the DFSMT created a student position on the board, and during the "Music Theory and Integration" conference of 2018 — a co-production of the DFSMT and the Conservatorium Maastricht — the first-ever "student symposium" took place.

At the same time, John was very active in strengthening contact with other European societies for music theory and analysis. On behalf of the DFSMT he drew up a task force to coordinate the collaboration between the societies, and which oversees the continuity of the EuroMac events. In addition, he has streamlined the collaboration with Leuven University Press in publishing the society's journal, *Music Theory & Analysis*. The presence of Veerle de Laet, managing editor of LUP, at the last society business meeting confirmed a solid rapport between the society and the publisher. With colleagues of the *Gesellschaft für Musiktheorie* John was also planning a future joint conference. He hands this initiative over to his successors as a work-in-progress still to be realized.

The Dutch-Flemish Society for Music Theory is visible, and can be proud of its visibility. On behalf of the members I want to thank John for his presidency over the past five years.

Michiel Schuijer

In memoriam Theo Verbey

On 13 October 2019 Theo Verbey passed away, at the age of 60. Theo was a member of the DFSMT and, especially at the beginning of society's existence, very involved in the its activities. He meant a great deal for Dutch music theory, above all in his role as a teacher of music theory, arranging and orchestration, a role that he fulfilled at both the Royal Conservatory in the Hague and at the Conservatorium van Amsterdam.

He was a beloved docent who always left a great impression upon his students with his broad and deep knowledge of the history and development of the art of instrumentation, as well as with his immaculate arrangements and orchestrations. He took his teaching duties extremely seriously. With every orchestration assignment he gave to his students he would completely work out his own solution, so that students each week could have a look into the workshop of the master. And for all of his students he meticulously noted down the results of their work, which we maintained for years afterwards as a way of following the fruits of his labor, and of that of the conservatory.

Theo was also held in high regard by his colleagues. No one could dispute his authority as theorist and orchestrator; and the thoughtful way in which he approached the students outside of his classroom was well known. And he showed the same kind of thoughtfulness in his daily contact with colleagues, which always displayed the utmost professionalism and well-informedness.

As a composer Theo held an important place in the Dutch musical landscape. His rich and accessible way of composing easily attracted musicians and the general public alike, and for him it was self-evident that his music would occupy a place within the Western Classical music tradition. You could say in turn that in his work you could clearly hear that he was also a theorist. As such he belonged to a dying species, the composer-theorist: in the Netherlands he was one of the last binding factors between two disciplines that have been bound to one another since time immemorial.

For those who were fortunate enough to know Theo personally, you would know that he was not very different at home than he was in his classroom: extremely engaging and gentle, sometimes reserved, but always cordial. He enjoyed conversation over a glass of wine about his favorite topics — music of course, but also literature, politics and his home Amsterdam — and always did so with the utmost respect, even when it concerned a difference of opinion. Even if he had a clear opinion about a topic, he was always nuanced and he never doled out a quick judgement.

His gentle and careful nature, his helpfulness, his keen spirit and his knowledge of the music which was dear to him will be remembered by all who were fortunate enough to cross paths with him.

Ralf Pisters

Beethoven 2020: Analytical and Performative Perspectives

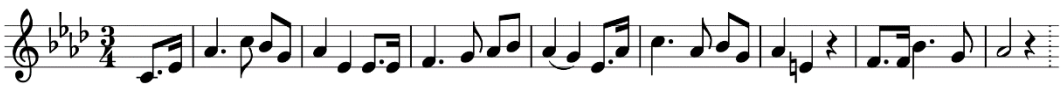
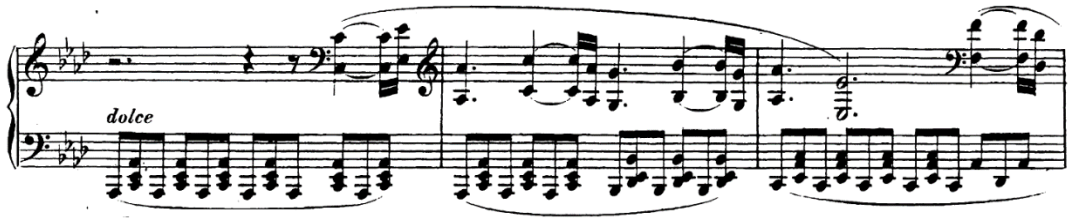
During the weekend of 29th February and 1st March, the Dutch-Flemish Society for Music Theory organized, in collaboration with the Conservatorium van Amsterdam, the conference with the title: "Beethoven 2020: Analytical and Performative Perspectives". Coinciding with the 250th anniversary from the birth of the German composer, the objective of this conference was to reflect on the impact of Beethoven's music in the field of music theory and the challenges that his compositions may pose for both analysts and performers.

The conference included more than twenty lectures of 45 minutes. The outcome was very positive, and the participants (about seventy people!) could enjoy two days of inspiring scholarship, granted by the good organization and the high level of the lectures. The 'parallel session' format can leave a bittersweet taste, as one is always left with the feeling of having missed something; but thanks to this setting, the variety of topics was broader and could satisfy the different interests of the attendants. This has been a strong point of the conference: the point of departure was perhaps music theory, but in the end the topics of the lectures covered neighbouring fields such as musicology and performance practice. On a more concrete level, it is remarkable to behold the variety of lenses through which Beethoven's figure and his music could be discussed in just one weekend.

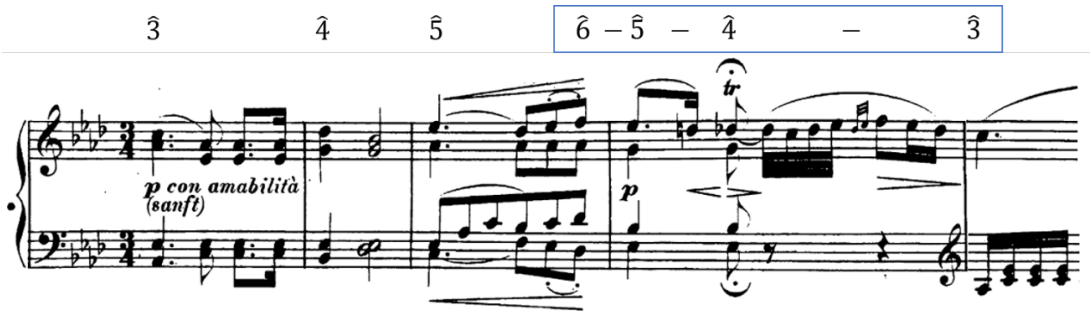
The conference started with a lecture by Thomas Posen (McGill University) on Beethoven's *Eroica* Symphony. Through a study of Beethoven's sketches for the exposition of the first movement, Posen explained the formal and tonal strategies that Beethoven could use to alter the lyrical role of the subordinate theme as a means to increase the rhetorical power of the arrival of a new lyrical theme in the development. The lecture included Posen's performance of his own reconstruction of the single-line sketches.

Other topics which came along during the conference included: Beethoven's creative process, discussed through the study of his drafts and sketches; tonal strategies, formal issues, melodic treatment and timbre and orchestration in Beethoven's works; Beethoven through the eyes of theorists, with one lecture over Schoenberg's views and another about Rudolph Reti; and Beethoven in music pedagogy.

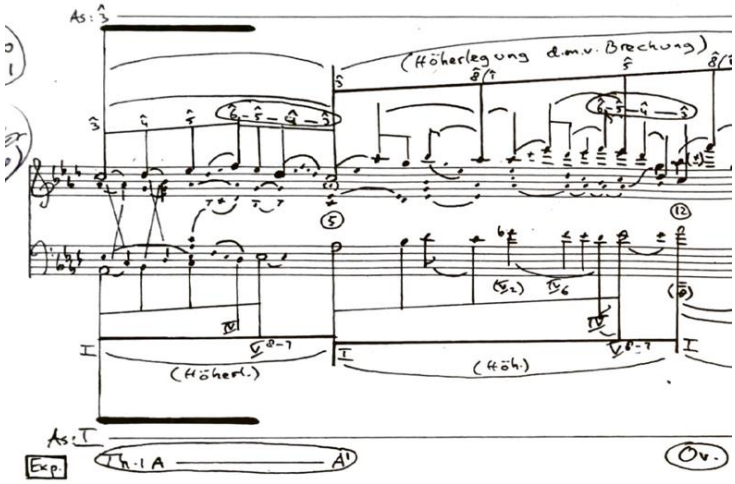
The use of schemas and models in Beethoven's music was also a topic of discussion in several lectures. Dmtri Tymoczko (Princeton University) came up with a compositional schema occurring in countless passages of Beethoven's compositions, one which is based on the contrary motion between the outer voices. Because of its ubiquity in Beethoven's music, he has named this schema the 'Ludwig'. In addition, Nicole Biamonte (McGill University) discussed the appearance of the 'folia' scheme in Beethoven's works, suggesting that its use was in many cases meant to bring to the music an 'aura of retrospection' with a Baroque flavour. The title of her lecture was "Hidden Vernacular Quotations in Beethoven's Middle Period", and it included a very convincing explanation of how the Scottish folk tune "On the Banks of Allan Water" may have been the basis of the subordinate theme in the 1st movement of the *Apassionata* (See Examples 1 and 2).

Example 1: Scottish folksong "In the Banks of Allan Water"

Example 2: Beethoven - Piano Sonata Op. 57 "Appasionata", 1st movement

The closing plenary session was a tribute to Paul Scheepers, a music theory teacher in Amsterdam and The Hague, who will retire at the end of this academic year. Paul has played a major role in the music theory sphere of the Netherlands, both as a teacher and as a researcher. The lecture-recital format chosen by John Koslovsky and Inés Costales started from the idea that the best way of honouring him was to show his passion for teaching and for Schenkerian analysis through the simulation of a hypothetical lesson based on his own notes and graphic analysis. The chosen work was the exquisite Piano Sonata in A flat major, Op. 110, with a focus on the 1st movement and some comments over the other ones. The clear explanations by John, together with the nice music performance of the different passages by Inés, made the lecture very easy to follow even for those who, like me, were not really familiar with the work. By raising our awareness of the tetrachord $\hat{6} - \hat{5} - \hat{4} - \hat{3}$ (see Examples 3 and 4) as the guiding motive in the first movement and pointing out the recurring absence of the $\hat{2}$ step leading to $\hat{1}$ in important cadential moments, they succeeded in making us experience the music differently and enjoy the power of playing with the listeners expectations of closure in music structure.

Example 3: Beethoven - Piano Sonata Op. 110, 1st movement



Example 4: Paul Scheeper's graphic analysis of the opening measures of Beethoven's Op. 110, 1st movt.



The lecture recital was completed with a beautiful performance of the complete sonata. Finally, Paul came to the stage to receive the warm applause of the public. The presence of friends, colleagues and students who, along many generations, had been part of Paul's long and fruitful career, made of it a very emotional event.

In summary, during these two days of academic reflection and discussion, the Dutch music sphere was enriched by the presence of high-level researchers coming from different parts of the world. The organization of this sort of event helps us to keep ourselves active and updated about the latest developments and emerging concerns in music theory. I personally left the conference with renewed energies to get deeper into some of the subjects discussed and to start new readings, and I hope that the same happened to many others. The reactions to the conference were very positive, people were satisfied with the overall quality of the lectures and the good organization. The 250th anniversary of the birth of the great Beethoven was therefore duly celebrated.

Román Santos Mateos

Online Education

From one day to the next, over the weekend from 13 to 16 March, the educational landscape changed completed due to the measures taken to combat the corona virus. Music theory lessons all of a sudden could no longer take place with the physical presence of students. Teachers were asked to come up with other, suitable ways to continue their lessons (or at least a part of them) in the space of just a couple of days. While some teachers had already tentatively begun before the crisis to give

shape to online forms of education and development online tools, now all of a sudden everyone was confronted with online education as the only option. I have now experienced an enormous outburst of energy and creativity amongst theory teachers and students. Instruction videos for Microsoft Teams, tips for Zoom, sharing of ideas for interesting forms of working in video chats; in a normal situation we would be carefully working and experimenting in so-called “pilots” of two to three years. Now within the space of a week we operate within a new reality. Much is possible, but in discussions with colleagues we also hear that many essential aspects of our courses are very difficult to realize through the online medium. For the world of music performance it means that making music together—and thus sharing acoustic and physical space in one and the same place, with the inspiration that is drawn from it—has been reduced to a computer screen, which hardly compares to the real thing. And although music theory courses in many ways can be meaningfuilly handled “on paper” and in discussion through a screen, we also miss the “practice-based” approach that so many teachers have developed over the years. It also raises larger questions about the context in which music education—and the music world as a whole—will have to operate for the coming time. For the time being we will complete this academic year (with as much variation as possible) through the online world and think further about what the “1,5 meter society” is going to mean for the music-educational world in the near future. The measures will undoubtedly have an influence on our work coming time.

In anticipation of further developments and in the hope that music can once again be heard live, including in our lessons, the Dutch-Flemish Society for Music Theory would like to create a platform for its members to exchange best practices with one another. We would like to hear from our members about the seminars, workshops, websites, software, and new technologies they are developing and that they wish to share with others. Information can be send to Suzanne Konings (s.konings@koncon.nl).

Suzanne Konings

2020 Business meeting and Honorary membership Pieter Bergé

On Saturday, 29 February the DFSMT held its annual business meeting at the Conservatorium van Amsterdam (during the Beethoven conference). At this meeting the general membership made acquaintance with Veerle De Laet, the managing editor at Leuven University Press. De Laet gave the members an overview of the activities of MTA and the working method of the press and editorship. We spoke at length about the previous delay in publication in 2019 (which in the meantime has been caught up), as well as about the importance of keeping up the number of subscribers and ensuring the timely payment of subscription fees to keep the journal running at a professional level. For this reason, it is very important that members pay their membership fees in a timely fashion. To ensure this, we are now considering moving to an automatic payment system (automatische incasso) for membership fees in the near future. We will inform the membership about this in due course. But in general, we are all very enthusiastic about the co-editorship of Markus Neuwirth and Derek Remes, and about the pedagogy sections edited by Peter van Tour. We look forward to receiving the 2020 issues!

Next to John Koslovsky’s departure from the board, we also bid farewell to two other board members of the DFSMT: Giannis Montesantos and Karst de Jong. Both Giannis and Karst have been instrumental in supporting the board in particular and the society in general: Giannis by setting up a professional-looking website; and Karst by offering his experience from previous board membership and by keeping the face of the society alive on social media. We wish to thank them once again for all their work!

We are also happy to announce that three new members have joined the board: Suzanne Konings, Ralf Pisters, and Román Santos Mateos. Suzanne, Ralf, and Román are a welcome addition to the board, and guarantee a solid representation for the foreseeable future. The new board will inform the members shortly about the role each board member will play. The website will also soon be updated to reflect the new composition of the board.

Further, we mentioned at the business meeting that we wish to encourage music theory students to make use of the Lürsen funds. This fund is an endowment which is aimed to stimulate students to

pursue music theory in the lowlands. In the past the fund has been used as a monetary prize for Masters and PhD theses and more recently to cover travel costs for students to participate in conferences, workshops, and the Music Theorist in Residence program. We intend to continue to use the funds for these purposes, but also invite proposals from students of music theory who wish to make use of the funds in another way to enhance their career and educational ambitions.

Other points that were addressed concerned the financial reports of 2018 and 2019, both of which have been finalized (with thanks to David Lodewyckx, Pieter Herregodts and Jan Ezendam), as well as the initiative to co-organize an event with the GMTH, which has unfortunately not yet taken off. And finally, on the suggestion of Clemens Kemme, the board was also encouraged to organize a special event for the DFSMT in 2024, in celebration of its 25th anniversary. This idea was warmly welcomed by all. Suggestions for such an event are welcome!

On the morning of Sunday, 1 March (during the Beethoven conference) a special moment was given in honor of Pieter Bergé, the former president of the DFSMT. Pieter was awarded an honorary membership to the society, and for the occasion Barbara Bleij had delivered a personalized speech to Pieter and Karst de Jong played a series of improvisations on Pieter's name and on the concept of the cadence. Pieter also offered his own heart-warming reflections about the society and about music theory.

Music Theorist in Residence 2020

It is with great regret that we had to cancel this year's Music Theorist in Residence, Joel Lester. The halt on travel due to the corona virus has made it impossible to bring Professor Lester to the lowlands. Lester was looking forward very much to meeting teachers and students, and to talk about his forthcoming book on Brahms's violin sonatas: the trip cancelation was thus also a great disappointment for him. However, depending on how the health crisis transpires in the coming months, we hope to bring Professor Lester to Amsterdam and Leuven in the first half of 2021. We will keep you informed as soon as we have more information and can announce new dates.

EuroMac 10

On 20 March the Russian Society for Music Theory (OTM) called a meeting to make a final decision regarding the proposals for EuroMac 10 (21-26 September, Moscow conservatory of music: https://euromac.mosconsv.ru/). By now, all authors should have been informed about whether their proposal has been accepted or rejected. In total, some 495 proposals were submitted to the conference. At present it has not been announced whether the organizers intend to go ahead with the conference or not (given the current crisis), but as soon as the board has information about this it will inform the members.