

TEXTBOOK EXAM
on Harmony Textbooks

PART I:

Q1) Compare and contrast textbooks with vertical vs. horizontal conceptions of harmony.

Two of the books with an obvious linear conception of harmony are the Aldwell/Schachter and Gauldin. The Aldwell/Schachter explicitly states in its preface that the book "reflects the theoretical and analytic approach of Heinrich Schenker." Although Aldwell/Schachter does not serve as a text on Schenkerian theory, voice-leading graphs with Schenkerian symbols appear in various places in the book (such as p. 612). Gauldin also makes his approach clear in his preface when he states: "This text [correlates] harmony with the interaction of melodic lines, especially the soprano bass voices....harmonic function is largely derivative of this contrapuntal framework." Throughout the book, Gauldin uses his own seemingly modified version of Schenkerian analysis, and boils chord progressions down to strings of unstemmed quarter notes.

The drawback to this highly linear conception of music, at least in the case of Aldwell/Schachter, is that form takes a back-seat to linear motion; although students have not learned about the *Urlinie*, which for Aldwell/Schachter probably drives large-scale organization in music, students are given no substitute for how large forms are created. In Aldwell/Schachter, it is almost as if longer pieces are merely the succession of phrase after phrase.

In contrast, the texts by Kostka/Payne and Benward/White seem to take a more Rameau-influenced slant on harmony. The Benward/White is probably the most strongly embedded in this vertical view of harmony. Their "Macro-Analysis" method seems to boil all chord progression down to a circle of fifths. The students are told to hunt for these fifth relations even when the relationships do not necessarily carry the same harmonic function. The end result is that students may have an overly simplified conception of harmonic progression and not see motion towards a goal or hierarchy within a phrase.

The Kostka/Payne is not so egregious in its ignorance of linear motion, but still, Kostka/Payne makes potentially dangerous generalizations because of their vertical stance. For example, when talking about augmented 6th chords, Kostka/Payne states that there is no need to show inversions since augmented 6th chords have a purely harmonic function, yet the quality of an augmented 6th chord versus a diminished 3rd chord are noticeably different and resolve in different ways.

Q2) Describe three (3) books that contain creative exercises.

The Henry/Rogers text contains a good variety of exercises, especially in the way these exercises are divided into "Self-Tests" and "Review and Application" exercises. Most of the exercises in the first volume are fairly straightforward (i.e. labeling and spelling), but things start to get very interesting by the second volume. Henry/Rogers dives into real analysis and composition, giving such exercises as (on p. 473) directions to "Compose an atonal suite of three movements for trumpet, horn, and trombone." Arguably, tasks such as this may be difficult some (many?) students, but the authors give a good example of a successful composition following these directions and often relate the composition projects to pieces and analyses that were recently completed or discussed.

The Laitz text also includes a good variety of exercises. Just the simple singing exercises I think are quite good for students. Some theory texts avoid making a direct connection between the theoretical concepts and hearing those concepts, but by having students sing linear versions of harmonic progressions, Laitz forces the students to hear and internalize the musical issue at hand. These sight-singing "interludes" take up minimal space in the text, do not require any supplemental materials (like a CD), and can be done by one or more students in class or out of class, thus also having a flexibility of use that differs greatly from written exercises.

The Roig-Francoli text also includes singing of pitch patterns, but I would like to discuss the analysis-orientation as a type of creative exercise (perhaps as a tangent to question #4 which I am not answering). Page 775 in the Roig-Francoli has an entire set of questions devoted to analysis of some Beethoven piano sonatas (as part of the discussion of sonata form). Roig-Francoli asks fairly open-ended questions that do not necessarily have "correct" answers. Similar to Roig-Francoli's task of having students write biographies of more obscure composers (Zachau, Walther), the author seems to want to encourage the essay skills of the students, not just the labeling-and-spelling-of-chords skills.

Q3) Compare and contrast how two textbooks dealt with the same topic (MIXTURE).

I ended up looking at how textbooks dealt with mixture and how they transitioned this topic (or did not transition this topic) into the introduction of augmented and neapolitan sixth chords and the introduction of modulation (especially foreign keys), although for the sake of time, I will focus mainly on the topic of mixture here with some discussion of how it relates other issues. I chose these topics because they seemed like intertwined and interrelated issues that could be taught in different ways.

The texts that dealt most poorly with this topic, I thought, were the Henry/Rogers and the Kostka/Payne. Perhaps the worst of these two, in my opinion, was the Henry/Rogers. "Borrowed" and augmented sixth chords were squeezed into a single chapter. For a two-volume book, the seven pages in volume 2 devoted to borrowed chords were just not enough. Modal shift (modulation to parallel keys) is included in volume 1, but the authors fail to really connect the two. Moreover, since there is not subsequent chapter or discussion of modulation after the chapter on borrowed chords, the authors fail to take advantage of further implications of mixture.

In contrast, Kostka/Payne does follow the chapter on mixture with a chapter on enharmonic modulation. As well, in the chapter on mixture, they bring up mode mixture as a method of moving to certain foreign keys, although not much time is spent on this topic. I also thought Kostka/Payne was a little too prescriptive on how mixture is used. They brushed aside b^7 as not very common and mentioned that it mostly just functions as V/bIII , which is a statement that is patently untrue when it comes to popular musics of the past half-century. As well, Kostka/Payne did not really address the issue of secondary mixture, focusing just on tones from parallel keys.

I like the treatment of mixture and its relation to other subjects better in the Clendinning and Marvin book. One good example is their topic of "mixture in instrumental music," where the authors foreshadow the subject of the Neapolitan 6th quite well, setting the student up to easily transition to that topic later. Clendinning and Marvin also address the functions of mixture, which I think is important. For instance, they differentiated between mixture as color (to evoke issues of text setting), mixture as embellishment, and mixture as a way to modulate. Finally, with their discussion of chromatic mediant and submediants, they tie in secondary modulation to account for more situations than merely just parallel keys.

Gauldin has one of the best sections on mixture and best interconnects this topic with others in his book. Gauldin lays out each example of chords created through parallel mixture and finds musical examples to show this specific chord's usage and proceeds to devote individual attention to each case. His treatment of mixture in the minor is not simply confined to the Picardy third (as in some texts), but brings in ii, #iii, and #vi. As well, Gauldin brings up secondary mixture as a way to account for further chords out of the key. But probably my favorite part in the way Gauldin handles mixture is how he introduces it early in the text to allow him to set up two whole chapters on modulations to foreign keys, a topic that no text treats to the extent that Gauldin does.

(Your text does a great job too, Steve, but I just wanted to mix up the texts I write about a little).

Q5) *List two books that deal with rhythm and meter throughout the text; discuss one example.*

The Henry/Rogers text discusses rhythm and meter at various points in the text. Particularly when beginning to talk about music of the late 19th century and early 20th century, Henry/Rogers realize that rhythm and meter become very crucial and defining characteristics and devote specific emphasis to those topics. For example, folk and national rhythms are discussed in chapter 9 of volume 2 as elements that create and inform an entire new musical style.

Perhaps the most interesting if not questionable treatment of rhythm and meter appears in the text by Roig-Francoli. In his text, the author attempts to introduce many of the arguably controversial topics of music theory in rhythm and meter. For example, on pp. 357-360, Roig-Francoli uses the poetic structure of strong and weak accents to discuss phrase structure and phrase hierarchy within hypermeter. Strong accents and weak accents create structures like poetic "feet." This discussion is reminiscent of Cooper and Meyer's theories, although in a seminar with Temperley, it would seem this theory of multiple levels of rhythmic accents was displaced by Lerhdahl and Jackendoff's distinction between meter and grouping. Roig-Francoli also has a lot of references to modern conceptions of hypermeter as he footnotes articles by Cohn, but I am not sure at the end of the day whether these analytical approaches are appropriate for the undergraduate music student (but that's another story).

Q6) *Which texts have the best intros to fundamentals for music majors?*

I think the books with the best introductions to fundamentals for music majors would be the Laitz and the Aldwell/Schachter. Music majors, one assumes, would have a good ability already to read music on the staff and correlate those notes to the piano keyboard. Many topics, such as intervals or rhythmic notation, are probably already known if not at least familiar to music majors, many of whom have received some theory training, whether it be in high school, privately, or in summer camp.

The fundamentals section of a text meant for music majors should be mainly as a reference for those students who may need to check some definitions quickly or just quickly read through some text to get reacquainted with the topics. The Laitz text does break things down so that potentially a beginner with no music-reading experience could use the text (such as providing note names as related to the keyboard), this section in Laitz's text feels more like a summary or glossary of fundamentals and moves quickly from one topic to the next. By page 63, the student is already grappling with two-voice species counterpoint in Laitz's book, which is a potentially easy topic, but seems to be something that does not often get covered in high school since it involves some level of composition.

By page 63 (the exact same page number!) in the Aldwell/Schachter text, students are being introduced to "Procedures in Four-Part writing," so this text obviously moves quickly through fundamentals as well. As I recall, the Aldwell/Schachter text does not begin with a discussion of note names on the staff or attempt to relate notes on the staff to notes on the keyboard. It is assumed that students using the book have the basic ability to read music. The lack of completely rudimentary material in the Aldwell/Schachter may be a detraction, especially in the case of single-line players who may only be able to read a single clef (or vocalists who may be unable to read music!), but I think Aldwell/Schachter has taken for granted that students with such problems are going to possibly need a very different track than those students coming in with years of reading experience.

PART II:

QA) Compare and contrast three (3) texts for use at a state university.

I would like to discuss three texts that I think might actually be the most useful (or most used) in a state university setting: Clendinning/Marvin, Kostka/Payne, and Henry/Rogers.

• Kostka/Payne

It is my understanding that the Kostka/Payne is used fairly pervasively in such situations today, so I would like to discuss this text first. Superficially, the text is not very attractive. Perhaps such a detail is tangential to the discussion of music theory, but every time I open up the 2004 edition of Kostka/Payne, I feel like music theory is going to be boring and dry just by the color scheme they have used. The faded maroon/red color makes the book look like its 50 years old even though it's basically brand new. There are a lot of good layout features, such as the little headphone icon for musical examples on the CDs and the large "Checkpoint" text boxes that help focus a student on the important points, but I cannot get past the color.

Kostka/Payne seems to walk the line between the I6/4 notation and the V6/4 notation by using I6/4 but then bracketing it as V, which I think is a little confusing for students, although it does address the basic issue. But their solution almost seems tacked on, as if they really believe in the I6/4 but have conceded that other (better?) theory textbook writers prefer the V6/4 label.

There are also other features that seem tacked on. For example, the title of the book is *Tonal Harmony with an introduction to 20th-Century Music*. Much like the title, the late 19th-century and 20th-century music seems added at the end and not really integrated into the rest of the textbook. The brief look at the 12-bar blues form on page 331 seems like an attempt to integrate and make a naturally flow of theory topics, but it seems inserted rather than naturally arising out of the theoretical discussions.

As such, there does not seem to be a sense of "spiral learning" in the text. The text also has a very strong Rameau-influenced view of harmony (as mentioned before), which I think de-emphasizes counterpoint, a topic which they never really address. Also, I am not 100% sure that Kostka/Payne achieve the goals that they set out to ostensibly achieve as stated in their preface. They say "actual musical practice is emphasized more than rules or prohibitions," but yet they have an entire chapter on voice-leading that explicitly lays out rules and prohibitions such as parallel and direct octaves and fifths.

That being said, I think the Self-Tests are good since there are answers in the back of the book. The accompanying Finale software, which helps students complete homework on a computer, is a jump-start into the modern age of music education. The text also has a good

amount of examples from the literature with a good variety of instrumentation that is presented in its original form and not condensed down to a piano texture as occurs in other texts.

• **Clendinning/Marvin**

The Clendinning/Marvin text seems to be targeted at a very similar audience as the Kostka/Payne but in my opinion does a much better job. The light-blue text and highlight color alone is much nicer to look at! In their preface, Clendinning/Marvin make a good concession that many of a school's music majors will be everything from orchestral musicians to video game composers to popular musicians, and I think the text does a good job of attempting (considering the pedagogical limitations) of addressing all of these interests and potential students. Not only the textbook contain a lot of real music, but it does so in a variety of instrumentations, genres, and styles (ragtime, Gershwin, plus lots of 20th-century composers such as Taverner and Corigliano).

The variety of ways concepts are brought up, just in terms of layout and method, are impressive. The "Key concept" boxes highlight new ideas while "Summary" boxes focus on essential ideas after they have been presented. Both the "Another way" and "Try It" boxes give students multiple avenues with which to approach a topic as well as different exercises to help ingrain and learn concepts. As well, "Terms You Should Know" and "Questions for Review" at the end of chapters combined with "Overview" and the "Repertoire" list at the beginning of chapters help put further emphasis on the important concepts instead of relying on students pulling this information out of prose passages. The plethora of multimedia aids (CD, website, MacGamut, etc.) also help strengthen the presentation.

There are a ton of chapters in this textbook, and one of the ways learning is encouraged is through interspersing chapters on form with chapters focused on a specific harmonic concept. For example, after the chapter on secondary dominants (Ch. 19) comes a chapter on Phrase Rhythm and Motivic Analysis (useful to answer Q7 in Part I of the exam had I chosen to do so). It is only in the subsequent chapter that tonicization is revisited, thereby giving the student some space in which to digest the original concept before moving on the further complications on that topic.

One small criticism of the Clendinning/Marvin text is that the guitar chord shapes are not very well voiced. Sometimes, the guitar chord shape does not correspond to the notated chord, sometimes the guitar chord shape is unplayable by any human guitar player without six fingers, and many times there are easier, most useful, or more typical voicings that would be appropriate. I understand that the text is trying to appeal to guitar players, but these voicings need to be at least revamped if not just removed. I think the guitar voicings should be deleted altogether since the guitar player can usually read chord symbols and if not, there are texts devoted to chord voicings that a guitar player could access that will (although not always) treat the subject more appropriately.

• **Henry/Rogers**

For a variety of reasons, I think the Henry/Rogers text has potential success in a state university setting, although I can see possibilities where it would not work. Foremost, I would like to point out that the Henry/Rogers is set up as a "Comprehensive Musicianship" course, which rolls in history and composition pretty closely with the investigation of theory. There is a lot of historical background information on composers and theoretical concepts. For example, Artusi's criticism of Monteverdi's use of dissonance is quoted. As well, two long paragraphs are

devoted to the life and times of Muzio Clementi. These bits of historical information could be seen as strengths (reinforcing history classes) or weaknesses (taking time away from the main focus of the subject).

The text also has a good investigation of "Contemporary Music" with an entire chapter devoted to music after 1950. This chapter is very clearly divided into "Electronic Music," "Indeterminacy," and "Minimalism," which I think are the main trends from this era although they are rarely talked about in theory textbooks because they are difficult subjects to theorize about. Twelve-tone and serialism are often the final chapters for most textbooks, but not with the Henry/Rogers. I also like the Henry/Rogers discussion of "Wrong-Note" harmony in Shostakovich and Prokofiev, who are composers I think most performers know and love but composers who are rarely discussed in a theory textbook.

The large amount of composition and analysis in the book could be a negative feature. As I mentioned earlier, some of the composition projects seem quite difficult for an average undergrad student and the analysis exercises are quite open-ended in scope. On the other hand, if students are performance majors, perhaps they can more easily create ensembles to try out these compositions that they would write and feel less afraid of composition and more inclined to try it out. We did not have the workbooks available for this text (there are two available plus an anthology), and I think the workbooks would have given a better variety of exercises for students.

Some final thoughts on Henry/Rogers: The "Self-Tests" in this text are good for spot checks, although it seems somehow appropriate yet tragic that the answers to these self-tests are online and that the URL for the web site is incorrect as printed in the textbook. The preface says it represents linear analysis methods, but there is apparently nothing resembling a voice-leading graph in the textbook, which I think is a detriment.

QB) *What books would you use in a [music/conservatory] setting?*

[Prof. Laitz: I assume you are asking what book I would use in a conservatory setting, because otherwise I cannot tell the difference between "performance majors at a state university" as in the previous question and "freshman/sophomore music majors" in this questions. Would not the former category belong to the latter?]

[Actually, now that I reread this and the former question a few times, maybe this last question is supposed to address our own personal choice whereas the previous question was addressing just any three random textbooks. I am not sure.]

Either way, one obvious choice for me in teaching theory would be the Laitz text. One main reason is that I am most familiar with this text and it is obviously geared to a conservatory population and aimed at students with a strong musical background. In my own undergraduate education, I was taught with the Aldwell/Schachter text, but in retrospect, I really do not like the Aldwell/Schachter. One of the great ironies of Aldwell/Schachter is that composition and analysis projects never really move beyond the phrase or the phrase-group level. As a result, students can be led to have a very narrow view of harmony as acting on a very local, chord-by-chord level, when in fact it is the authors' explicit goal to avoid seeing harmony in a chord-to-chord way if they are really trying to emphasize Schenkerian thought.

In any event, one of the strongest features of the Laitz text is the supplemental CD set (8 CDs) plus the two workbooks. Other texts have workbooks, of course, but the Laitz workbooks really have a good variety of exercises (figured bass realizations, analysis, composition, ear training, etc.). The best part is the way those 8 CDs coordinate with the workbooks. Teaching

written theory is always a balance of ear versus mind. But considering great music is written by ear every day by people with no formal written theory training, the emphasis should be on developing the ear, which having those CDs and sight-singing exercises helps.

The large amount of prose and written sections in the Laitz is useful, I think, although some students may get bogged down in the length of sections. The conversational tone of the text, though, helps pull readers in. The musical selections are often very long, too, but one of the only ways to teach and discuss larger forms (rondo, sonata) is to have such passages, although the anthology approach used by other texts (Clendinning/Marvin, Henry/Rogers, etc.) may be a better set-up to deal with full musical pieces (assuming that students buy or reference these supplemental volumes). As someone who was educated with the Aldwell/Schachter, I find the varied and clear explanations of phrases, periods, and sentences very useful as well.

The dearth of 20th-century music in the Laitz text could be a significant disadvantage, but that depends on the curriculum. If the school had another semester available for 20th-century music theory, then this would be a non-issue. There do seem to be few (i.e. not many if any) texts, though, that would properly supplement the Laitz to round out the history of musical style from an analytical and theoretical perspective.

In general, though, the Laitz brings together a lot of core concepts in tonal theory and presents them in an accurate fashion (which is not always the case in harmony textbooks). There are voice-leading graphs that use Schenkerian-style notation as well as a pervasive use of figured bass. One of the pedagogical benefits of Schenkerian theory, and it comes through in the Laitz, is that a series of chords can be simplified down to a single chord, which is more digestible to the student. In Laitz's book, a lot of harmonies are enveloped within the bracket of another, higher-level harmony, and I think it helps clarify the simple, underlying features of music for students.