

Daniel Harrison

*Pieces of Tradition: An Analysis of Contemporary Tonal Music*

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THE TITLE OF Daniel Harrison's remarkable monograph immediately signals to the reader a familiar ambivalence—both historical and terminological—attending the tonal music composed throughout the twentieth century and since. A question arises: are we dealing with a musical repertory bound in an unbroken line to an earlier inheritance (“pieces of *tradition*”? Or, are we confronting mere fragments of that line (“*pieces of tradition*”), the residual presence of what was previously whole? One suspects that Harrison—a writer never less than judicious in his word choice and placement of accent—has arranged this punning, rabbit/duck play of emphases quite intentionally. In the book's opening pages, he quickly draws readers into the historiographic debate surrounding our understandings of music in a key, deftly sketching the intersecting conceptual, acoustical, and psychological frameworks for what music theorists (at least since Fétis) have dubbed *tonality*. Harrison moves beyond the problematic music-historical trope of a sudden, irreversible “collapse” of tonality, sometime around 1910. Anton Webern's (1963: 36) confident 1933 declaration concerning tonality—“for the last quarter of a century major and minor haven't existed any more! Only most people still don't know” —could stand as a cryptic summary of the polarized climate of mid-century stylistic politics. As one witness of the 1960s American scene recently recalled, “Composers like Charles Wuorinen considered tonal music to be stuck in the nineteenth century, and tonal composers like Ned Rorem looked on atonality as a virtual violation of all the laws of nature. Composition departments were almost always devoted to one camp or the other” (Johnson 2014: i). Critical discourse, too, absorbed the same narrative: the metaphor of tonality's demise, in Richard Taruskin's (2010: 359) apt summary, quickly became “a standard cliché of music historiography.”

Like many in musicology, theory, and analysis, Harrison has come to the conclusion that this received story will no longer do.<sup>1</sup> Tonality, he writes,

<sup>1</sup> For revisionist perspectives on tonal tradition, see two recent edited volumes: Wörner, Scheideler, and Rupprecht 2012 and 2017.

“continued to be a fresh and artistically compelling means of musical organization” (2) in music by the likes of Poulenc, Hindemith, Britten, or Copland, and in popular song from Gershwin to Taylor Swift. The “palpable connections” to traditional tonality are obvious in all such music, and yet the D major of Prokofiev’s Flute Sonata of 1943, despite a notated key signature, triadic harmonies, and balanced phrase structure, is “theoretically dubious” (2) from the perspective of Schenkerian monotonicity or Riemannian functions. So, while tonality never died out, even a cursory perusal of the tonal processes of many recent scores confirms that something *did* change early in the last century.

In *Pieces of Tradition*, Harrison defines that change with reference to music’s pitch dimension. Broadly, he recognizes a shift away from a strictly binary distinction between consonant and dissonant sonorities, toward a “more-or-less-dissonant” scale of intervals and chord types (4). Following Paul Hindemith and Ernst Krenek, Harrison regards fluctuation among chords as a salient structural and expressive resource in tonal music of the past century. Harmonic fluctuation plays a prominent role in *Pieces of Tradition*, as a central term within a network of intersecting conceptual formulations governing pitch hierarchy, linear-melodic motion, and the coloration of bass-register tonics by chordal bands in higher registers. Harrison uses the term *overtoneality* to describe “any tonal hierarchy that relies on spectral overlap for its stability conditions” (17). The book is organized in five main chapters that interweave analytical and theoretical discourses. Harrison intends the odd-numbered chapters—“Inheritance,” “Geography,” and “Styles”—as “a human geography of contemporary tonal practice” (134). Chapters 2 and 4—“Overtoneality” and “Harmony”—give more direct focus on “compositional materials and techniques,” though, here too, analytic vignettes typically illustrate each new conceptual development.

Purposeful eclecticism is a hallmark of Harrison’s book. The sheer variety of repertory under discussion reflects his considerable brilliance as an analyst with deep insight into seemingly distant worlds of musical expression—from the restrained, meditative sonorities of Duruflé’s 1940s *Requiem* to the raunchy, groove-oriented vernacularisms of a 1970s movie score. A book of this scope deserves a wide readership within music theory: while presented as a research monograph, *Pieces of Tradition* also has much to offer classroom instructors. Harrison’s formidable expertise in the history of theory underwrites his lucid exposition of necessary conceptual abstractions. Though he assumes a reader’s familiarity with standard technical nomenclature for pitch (pc sets, interval-vector notation, e.g.), his descriptions of gesture and ambience conjure the expressive subtleties of each chosen work. The book’s prose comments are elegantly supported by the rich visual metalanguage of numerous annotated score excerpts.

In developing its conceptual framework with discussions of music by rock, Broadway, and pop artists, as well as of highbrow concert works by composers of neoclassical, minimalist, or spectralist outlook, *Pieces of Tradition* demonstrates the flexibility of music-theoretical thought. Like other recent authors, Harrison

assumes an invitingly heterodox attitude toward questions of canon formation and cultural hierarchy.<sup>2</sup> “Contemporary tonality” is his preferred designation for a diverse corpus of music composed during the past century. A simple chronological listing may give a sense of the stylistic range traversed in discussions of some three dozen works:

- Bela Bartók, No. 4, *14 Bagatelles* (1908)  
 Maurice Ravel, “Ondine,” *Gaspard de la nuit* (1908)  
 Arnold Schoenberg, No. 2, *Drei Klavierstücke*, Op. 11 (1909)  
 Igor Stravinsky, *Petrushka* (1911)  
 Ravel, *Daphnis et Chloé* (1909–12)  
 Marcel Dupré, *Prélude* in B major for organ (1912)  
 Sergei Prokofiev, Piano Sonata No. 4 (1917)  
 Darius Milhaud, “Corcovado,” *Saudades do Brasil* (1920)  
 Eubie Blake, “I’m Just Wild about Harry” (1921)  
 Germaine Tailleferre, Violin Sonata No. 1 (1923)  
 Kurt Weill, “Mackie Messer” (1928)  
 Olivier Messiaen, *Apparition de l’Église Éternelle* (1932)  
 Stravinsky, *Ave Maria* (1934)  
 Paul Hindemith, *Symphonie: Mathis der Maler* (1934); Piano Sonata No. 1 (1936);  
 Messiaen, “Louange à l’Éternité de Jésus,” *Quatuor pour la Fin du Temps* (1941)  
 Schoenberg, *Variations on a Recitative* (1941)  
 Aaron Copland, *Fanfare for the Common Man* (1942)  
 Hindemith, Interludium in E $\flat$ , *Ludus Tonalis* (1942)  
 Prokofiev, Flute Sonata (1943)  
 Frank Martin, *Petite Symphonie Concertante* (1945)  
 Maurice Duruflé, *Requiem* (1947)  
 Norman Dello Joio, Piano Sonata No. 3 (1947)  
 Dmitri Shostakovich, Prelude in E $\flat$ , Op. 87 (1951)  
 Samuel Barber, *Nocturne* (1959)  
 Leonard Bernstein, *Chichester Psalms* (1965)  
 Neil Diamond, “Cherry, Cherry” (1966)  
 Brian Wilson, “Passing By” (Beach Boys, *Friends*, 1968)  
 James Pankow, “Colour My World” (Chicago, *Chicago II*, 1970)  
 Bernstein, “Hymn and Psalm: A Simple Song,” *Mass* (1971)  
 David Shire, Theme from *The Taking of Pelham 123* (1974)  
 Gérard Grisey, *Partiels* (1975)  
 KC and Sunshine Band, “Keep it Comin’ Love” (1976)  
 Steve Reich, *Octet* (1979)  
 Jonathan Harvey, *Mortuos Plango, Vivos Voco* (1980)  
 James A. Moorer, “THX logo theme” (1982)  
 Stephen Flaherty, “Human Heart,” *Once on this Island* (1990)  
 Ebbot Lundberg/Mattias Bärjed (The Soundtrack Of Our Lives), “Sister Surround” (2001)  
 Xiaoyong Chen, “Wind, Water and Shadow,” *Diary III* (2004)

<sup>2</sup> Among signs of an eclectic turn in Anglophone analysis, see attention to jazz and classical repertory in Tymoczko 2011; analyses of Beethoven, Debussy, and Feldman in Hanninen 2012; and readings of pop and classical song in BaileyShea 2021.

Collating a century of tonality post-1910, Harrison provides ample evidence of the continuity of music composed “in a key . . . when it was no longer compulsory to do so.” The last-quoted phrase is from the book’s dust jacket, but questions of cultural expectation and convention are, for Harrison, a fruitful preoccupation throughout *Pieces of Tradition*. He is sophisticated about the institutional and social life of musical concepts. The so-called common practice of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century tonal musics, in Walter Piston’s original formulation of 1941—as he argues in chapter 1—was an empirical category that assumed more reified conceptual-historical proportions (the “common-practice period”). In theoretical texts from Rameau to Schenker, meanwhile, concepts of chord root, harmonic function, and prolongation had acquired analytic utility and a proto-universal “perdurability of their own” (8).<sup>3</sup> Invoking Edward Hall’s (1976) anthropological notion of art making as a “high-context” form of communication (qtd. 8n13)—marked by notable cohesion and slow historical change—Harrison sees the rule-based transmission of contrapuntal and harmonic knowledge (enshrined in textbooks) as a potential restraint on harmonic innovation. If the tonal-“collapse” narrative has a conceptual core, after all, we might locate it in a sudden loss of faith in previously accepted teachings. Tonicity after 1910, Harrison notes, was for composers (and listeners) “a choice, not a given” (9). He thus acknowledges a paradigm shift after 1910, while refocusing the story of twentieth-century music away from the revolutionary rhetoric of early-century modernism, or the prestige of a later atonal avant-garde.

The case for an overarching “common value system about pitch relations before, during, and after the so-called Common Practice era” (5) is strong, Harrison notes (footnoting at this point Dmitri Tymoczko’s notion of an “extended common practice”). Perhaps unsurprisingly, given his attention to *longue-durée* historicizing, Harrison explicitly renounces closer interest in any singular music-historical “event,” circa 1910: “fussy caviling” (5) about a historical divide between traditional and contemporary tonality is unnecessary, he claims. Throughout *Pieces of Tradition*, even so, he will frequently treat a so-called common practice as a foil to later “contemporary” practice. Harrison is aware of the historiographic tensions attending this position but seeks distance from talk of disintegration and fragmentation: “I find these words overloaded with tragic loss and destruction. I prefer to understand the immediate fate of common-practice harmony as the decoupling and subsequent independent treatment of its elements” (10).

In chapter 2, Harrison tackles head-on the historical and conceptual frameworks pertaining to a central notion of *overtoneality*. Tonality is posited as the product of interacting pitch and event hierarchies, most commonly in relation to the physical overtone series, construed as an underlying cognitive archetype. Harrison distinguishes relatively simple *dronality* (root plus fifth) from the more elaborate hierarchy of five upper partials (2, 3, 4, 5 and 6) he calls *bugleity* (Copland’s *Fanfare for the Common Man* is the vivid example). With 1970s spectralism,

3 On the interplay of theoretic concepts and analytic practice, see Damschroder 2008: viii.

he briefly notes, composers explored a fuzzy conceptual space between perceived harmonic fusion and “generally atonal” soundscapes of higher-numbered partials (23). Reviewing theoretical accounts, Harrison makes some persuasive conceptual differentiations: Carol Krumhansl’s 1980s empirical work proposes a rank-ordered model of overtones above a C tonic, pitch-class zero: <0 7 4 2 5 9 B A, 3, 6, 8, 1 >. To summarize data for listeners’ intuitions about how well pitches “fit” above a tonic (following Krumhansl 1990), he observes, is not yet to produce a fully fledged model of tonal function: musical listeners trace a perspectival sense of relative intervallic distance that exceeds mere single-pitch precedence. To move beyond ambient tonality—“a kind of sonic emulsion in which J. S. Bach, Stevie Wonder, Igor Stravinsky and Mother Goose are suspended” (29)—Harrison seeks an account of tonal function attuned to cognition. In Fred Lerdahl’s diatonic pitch space, he notes, roots are differentiated from overtone and triadic layers in a model adjudicating finer scale-degree hierarchy against a chromatic background. The hierarchy in Hindemith’s “Series 1” promotes A (9) before E (4) while conflating major and minor modes, but in “overtone essentials” (33) broadly resembles Krumhansl’s experimental model.

Readers seeking a lucid guide to the pitch-hierarchy literature will appreciate Harrison’s compact but learned survey. His defense of Hindemith is a welcome response to criticisms voiced originally in a mid-century climate of avant-garde intolerance of any hint of traditional tonal rhetoric. His commonsensical synthesis affirms the heavy concentration of overtone partials 1–4 (root, octave, upper fifth, upper major third) in determinations of pitch hierarchy, and the bandwidth defining acceptable tunings for minor and major thirds (37). Stepping back a moment, one might recall with the literary critic Caroline Levine the overdetermined interweaving of affordances defining all abstract forms—binarism, network, or hierarchy. A “hierarchy will always afford inequality,” but the resulting constraints never operate in any simple fashion: “Each constraint will encounter many other, different organizing principles, and its power to impose order will itself be constrained, and at times unsettled, by other forms” (Levine 2015: 7). In speaking of tonality, theorists and analysts do well, then, to engage abstract, transhistorical models, on the one hand, and material, situational, and social contexts, on the other.

Harrison’s chapter 3 explores harmonic fluctuation in detail, through critical review of writings by Krenek (1940) and Hindemith (1942), followed by original analyses of music by Stravinsky, Dello Joio, Bernstein, Tailleferre, Messiaen, Neil Diamond, Schoenberg, and Hindemith. Harrison observes that traditional notions of intervallic tension and release were uncoupled by the later nineteenth century from a syntax of chord-root definition: what remained was a looser sense of fluctuating chord qualities. Reading an excerpt from Dello Joio’s Piano Sonata No. 3 (1947), Harrison reproduces a graph of intervallic tension by Ludmila Ulehla (1966: 449):<sup>4</sup> while richly voiced tetrachords undulate,

4 Dello Joio’s bass-register dyads (Ab–Db, G–C) are misprinted in Harrison’s fig. 3.4, mm. 8–9.

cadential motion is attenuated.<sup>5</sup> A wider theory of fluctuation, Harrison finds, has proved elusive. In Krenek's system, trichords are sorted into a scale from maximally consonant (major, minor, or augmented triads, prime forms [037] or [048]) to sharpest dissonance (forms of [012]). Krenek characterizes the tritone (ic6) as a neutral interval—neither consonant nor dissonant—and distinguishes chords lacking or containing or a tritone (“A” or “B” chords). Hindemith's more elaborate taxonomy includes four- and five-pitch sonorities. His intervallic categories are “lumpier,” though the traditional triad embodies an “apex of perfection” (57). Hindemith, too, discerns an A/B binary vis-à-vis tritones. Building on such precedents, Harrison proposes his own catalog of trichord and tetrachord voicings, arranged on a sharp-to-dull scale, mapping ic1- or ic2-based possibilities (Figures. 3.10 and 3.11, 61–62).

Analyzing Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms* (1965), Harrison briefly observes the timing of sharp or mild intervallic dissonances at the opening (one might parse rhythmic elasticity as a rhetorical factor here, too). The chapter's most telling insights on fluctuation come in the sustained analysis of a complete movement, Messiaen's “Louange à l'Éternité de Jésus” (63–68). Pitch-interval densities are traced within the piano chords, and between this tenor-register layer and the soaring cello cantilena. The density of i[2] seconds opens out into i[10] or i[14] sonorities. Messiaen avoids actual clusters, Harrison notes: ic1 is “only realized as i[11]” (65). Close-position i[6] tritones, a “contrastive agent” in the thicker chords of mm. 17–24, eventually reach “a new low-tension equilibrious state” whose wider voicings depict “heavenly bliss” (65, 67). Although Harrison briefly cites the tension of the arrival six-four (m. 27) in relation to “overtonally clear” root-position tonics, his fluctuation analysis downplays traditional tonal-rhetorical signs. Messiaen's Chopinesque half-cadence at m. 12, for instance, is gently countered by the next bar's A major triad; the half-diminished coloration of m. 21 echoes Wagnerian syntax, recontextualized by the octatonic palette.

With harmonic fluctuation established as a core element of overtoneality, later chapter 3 analyses consider two crucial syntactic dimensions, meter and linearity. In the stripped-down three-chord vocabulary of 1960s rock (here, Diamond's “Cherry, Cherry”) a double-plagal riff on E (E-A-D-A) yields to an A-rooted variant. In dance-oriented textures, chord relations fall under the control of a layered metric hierarchy. By a stylistic about-face, Harrison unpacks interwoven pitch- and metrical continuities in Schoenberg's organ *Variations*. Turning to the question of musical line, Harrison sidesteps familiar scale-type parsings—major/minor, whole-tone, hexatonic, octatonic—with an original tripartition for lines according to “increasing attachment” to overtone foundations (84). For simple pitch adjacency (including glissandi), he speaks of “K- (Kurth) lines”; of greater moment are directed step progressions (H- or Hindemith-lines) and lines that horizontalize a “tonality frame” (S- or Schenker-lines). A graph of

5 Cadences are not entirely “missing,” however: I hear Dello Joio's motion to D♭ (m. 10) as a deceptive bVI after the clear V ending m. 9.

the opening of Hindemith's Piano Sonata No. 1 reveals intricate melodic patterning but—except for local shapes—Harrison eschews prolongation as a “license” for middle-ground reductions (90). The chapter ends with brief comments on the tonality-features of Tymoczko's model—conjunct melody, acoustic consonance, harmonic consistency, limited macroharmony, and centrality. In such a model, he argues, the accent is on tonality as “psychological sensation”; his own project consciously places greater emphasis on music's “historical and cultural grooving” (94).

Chapter 4 (“Harmony”) introduces the most compelling formulations of Harrison's theoretical position. Where Anglophone music theory of recent decades has favored a discourse of pitch-class relations, Harrisonian analysis pays close attention to pitches in specific registral locations. Bass pitches inhabit a *root space* (below C3), over which meaningfully fused harmonic masses move in *chord space* (C3–C6); above this, pitches activate the upper realms of *overtone space*. Harrison offers welcome precision on the proximity conditions governing chord perception—stacking of intervals closer than  $i[3]$  will tend toward cluster effects—and on registral distributions conducive to pitch isolates or polychords (the latter briefly analyzed in Milhaud's *Saudades do Brasil*). The conceptual distinction between overtone tonics sounding an interplay of structural and ornamental pitches—colored triads, polychords, or chords with root “representatives”—and more integrated formations (major-seventh tonics in jazz, e.g.) is a fruitful one mapped out quite swiftly. One envisages much potential for future analytic exploration of these tonal categories.

Harrison's schematic mapping (fig. 4.12, p. 116) of potential coloring agents (added sixths or sevenths, e.g.) within “amplified-tonic” chords represents the conceptual core of the enterprise. With a defined notational shorthand, stages of amplification are distinguished: traditional major (**M**) or minor (**m**) modal coloring; tetrachords (triads with added sixth, or sevenths, **M+** or **m+**); larger penta- or hexachordal formations (**++** or **+++**, respectively). Analyzing the “subtle, low-energy means” (121) by which Duruflé, in the *Requiem* Introit, animates exquisite coloristic fluctuation over D and F roots, Harrison illustrates the flexibility of overtone analysis. Remarking on the retrospective clarification of Fmaj7 as an amplified tonic in Pankow's “Colour My World” (after its initially tensed effect), he reveals the subtlety—structural and hermeneutic—his system affords analysts with an ear for pitch-registral detail.

Chapter 5 (“Styles”), continuing an eclectic roster of analytic case studies, demonstrates the versatility of register-specific overtone models of chord and line already developed. The chapter is prefaced by broader reflections on the social and institutional conditions attending tonal composition. Particularly for “Class of 1890” composers—Martinu, Hindemith, Prokofiev, Milhaud, or Frank Martin, among others—Harrison detects psychological pressures in the face of the innovations of Debussy, Stravinsky, and Schoenberg. “Common overtoneality,” he posits, “didn't so much ‘exhaust’ itself as became overly explicit in the hands of pedagogues, and thus boring to its most imaginative students” (136).

The guild-transmission of a high-context art was superseded, in the late nineteenth century, by conservatoire pedagogy. Why then would institutionalized tonality survive, given bold new possibilities of atonal, polytonal, serial, or electronic composition? Harrison observes the “deep loyalty” (137) among musicians toward a “standard” tonal repertory. Here is that “piety” (Kenneth Burke’s term) within a culture toward the acquisition and ritualized performance of core symbolic values. Amid so much stylistic choice, Harrison detects contrasting attitudes toward an older common practice—the “wrong-note irony” of a Prokofiev, or the “sincere,” systematized choices of a Hindemith. One wonders if he will develop the point further to engage historians who do continue to insist on an “emancipation of the dissonance” as a singular *event*. In the “reactive modernism” of later composers like Schnittke or Poulenc, or in the “Lieber Augustin” episode in Schoenberg’s Op. 10 String Quartet (1907–8), as J. P. E. Harper-Scott (2019: 163) argues, “a kind of broken tonality . . . returns again and again to the traumatic loss of wholeness that pre-modernist music was able to rely on.”

Harrison hears a dialectic of ironic or sincere tonality in piano preludes by Shostakovich and Hindemith. With linear reductions, and graphic notations for amplified-tonic colorations and fluctuation (in fig. 5.6, 146), these are revealing analyses. Shostakovich’s irony pits a mock-solemn chorale against “imp”-like horn-fifth figures. Harrison’s sensitivity to shadings of atmosphere is evident in highly varied stylistic or geographic settings. The rock-inspired “Simple Song” in Bernstein’s *Mass* (1972), he shows, is music of intense sincerity and linear-motivic elegance. In Brian Wilson’s pop record “Passing By” (1968), the amplified-tonic vocabulary (**M+** and **m+**, major- and minor-seventh tetrachords, respectively) sets a rhetorically prominent augmented sixth into quotational relief, an art-musical touch before the “irreversibly saddened” coda (159). Harrison hears pentatonicism as an Asian signifier in Chen’s “Wind, Water, and Shadow” (2004), but treats Martin’s *Petite Symphonie Concertante* (1945) as an overtly “abstracted” form of neoclassicism (174). The “heavily colored overtone on G” (166) confines chord mass to the fourth octave, with a “conspicuous void” isolating contrabass pedal points from upper registers. Here, and analyzing Barber’s *Nocturne* and Shire’s *Taking of Pelham 123* movie theme, Harrison pursues aggregate-completion schemes (“twelve-tone” technique, i.e.) in obviously centric tonal settings. He is wise to unceremoniously deconstruct a critical binary—tonal/atonal—that does not capture the compositional practice of many mid-century musicians.

While accepting the historically bounded notion of an eighteenth- and nineteenth-century common practice, *Pieces of Tradition* refrains from tracing any “development” of post-1910 tonal practices. Rather than propose a causal or temporal sequence spanning, say, Ravel to Reich, Harrison views the contemporary tonal field in spatial-metaphorical terms: “The common-practice community, like a modernizing city, spread out into new neighborhoods, villages, and suburbs” (9). The image of newer tonal settlements encircling an older, common-practice “downtown” resurfaces throughout: Harrison thus sidesteps



familiar linguistic metaphors (of musical syntax, vocabulary) while alluding to historical change only sketchily. Yet the big chronological questions deserve further articulation. If a common practice really does preface later developments in a strong historical sense, one might expect more on its “quotational” survival in a range of stylistic contexts, from the overtly triadic Stravinsky of *Pulcinella* to *The Rake's Progress* through 1960s collage or 1980s post-minimalism. What can we make, for example, of our present-day chronological distance—some 130 years—from, say, Debussy's *Arabesques* (1891), a historical interval matching Debussy's own belatedness in relation to Haydn or Rameau? The thought experiment is inconclusive; but in framing music history and its theories as a shared cultural archive—or *inheritance*, to recall Harrison's term—we may ask if historical memory (still) operates as a meaningful constraint on stylistic conventions for tonal composers.

Favoring a concept-driven scheme, Harrison's account of overtoneality downplays stylistic-national continuities, jump-cutting from Messiaen to Neil Diamond, or Reich. Even so, reviewing his chosen corpus as a chronology (see above), one glimpses the outlines of a post-1910 “history of tonal styles.” A French line, from Debussy forward to Honegger, Messiaen, Poulenc, Murail, or Connesson; a Russian line, post-Prokofiev and Shostakovich, to Schnittke, Gubaidulina, and Silvestrov. The imagined community of nation is mediated by the twinned canons—of concert performance, and academic-institutional pedagogy—forming musical tastes and invented traditions. In analyses of Hindemith and Prokofiev, Harrison skillfully maps one facet of a European-American 1930s–40s mainstream. With Stravinsky as a more limited presence—in brief comments on phrases of *Petrushka* and the *Ave Maria*—the book understates the vast influence of that composer, during and after a half-century-long career. A fuller account of neoclassical overtoneality might have cited Stravinsky's fertile reinterpretation of *triads*—as chordal units, and markers of tonal function—within octatonic or bi-quintal spheres.<sup>6</sup> Harrisonian overtone analysis would illuminate salient technical perspectives on other figures absent from *Pieces of Tradition*: in Debussy, the subtle oscillation between amplified-tonic sonorities; in Bartók (briefly noted for coloring of triads), chromatically tense but assertive centricity; in Poulenc or Vaughan Williams, progressions among triads governed by symmetrical hexatonic and asymmetrical diatonic macroharmonies.<sup>7</sup>

One need not hew to narrowly national thinking, however, in asserting stylistic or pedagogical influences. Something of the British composer George Benjamin's overtone-rich sound world reflects his 1970s studies with Messiaen. The French-led spectralism of Grisey, Murail, and the *L'itinéraire* group, meanwhile, was conditioned by awareness of Sibelius, whose shimmering orchestral sound-

6 On dominant-tonic relations from *Symphonies of Wind Instruments* (1920) through *Symphony in Three Movements* (1945), see Van den Toorn 1983: 330–71. On bi-quintal structures, see Straus 2014.

7 On *T*, *D*, and *S* tonal functions interacting with transformational models, see Harrison's (2011: 564–73) analysis of Vaughan Williams's *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis*.

sheets and dense bass-register spacings offer a contrasting pole, Julian Anderson (2004: 198) observes, to “the Franco-Russian school of orchestral resonance.” Nor was belated discovery of Sibelius only a Gallic or Nordic phenomenon, as Morton Feldman acknowledged, introducing *Coptic Light* (1985) (see Anderson 2004: 215–16).

There is a historical lineage, too, in the case of another thread of Harrison’s discourse—the ever-shifting vocabulary of vernacular idioms from Tin Pan Alley to the present, successively inflected by jazz, blues, bossa nova, or Brill Building stylings. Harrison’s engagement with pop is more selective than his coverage of concert music, and he refers only in passing to the distinctive harmonic language of jazz.<sup>8</sup> By considering Ravel, Bernstein, Reich, and Brian Wilson as contemporaries using a shared tonal language, Harrison offers a provocative counterpoint to studies asserting distinctive structural features for pop and rock tonality.<sup>9</sup> Where rock analysts often invoke statistical corpus data in defining stylistic norms, Harrison prefers close hermeneutical interpretation and a celebration of idiosyncratic gesture. That pop and rock traditions stand as ancillary to art-musical tonality bears witness to music theory’s rapid disciplinary evolution. In place of a once-hegemonic tonal/atonal binarism, one almost senses a field coming full circle—from Allen Forte’s influential 1970s codification of an *atonal* repertory characterized by “pitches in novel combinations as well as . . . familiar pitch combinations in unfamiliar environments” (Forte 1973: 1) all the way to recent views of the “complicated, contradictory” tonality in Schoenberg (Boss 2019: 1), or the “portmantontology” of euphoni-ous triads in Babbitt (Mailman 2020).

With *Pieces of Tradition*, Harrison makes several crucial contributions to the analysis of tonal musics of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries: a theoretically astute rehabilitation and extension of chord fluctuation models codified by Hindemith and others; a compelling taxonomy of chord coloration (summarized in the “amplified-tonic” chart, fig. 4.12); and a notational metalanguage for distinguishing overtone layers. Harrison’s analyses of linear motion, moreover, scrupulously map shifting horizontal and vertical expressions of tonality in a given texture. The concepts spring to life in rangy analyses of great interpretive sophistication and unflinching musicality. Beyond his insights into expression and gesture, Harrison’s frequent concern is with tonality as an institutional phenomenon—with musical sound as a social and cultural production. For anyone who has ever sought to interpret pitch materials in the music of the last century with real structural precision, *Pieces of Tradition* will serve as an essential guide, and a source of inspiration.

<sup>8</sup> On jazz tonality, see Tymoczko 2011: 352–90. For a recent case study, see Martin 2018.

<sup>9</sup> For an authoritative overview, see Biamonte 2017. Among other recent work, see Doll 2017; Temperley 2018; Stoia 2021; and Nobile 2021.

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