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Valuing the Surplus: Perspectives on Julian Horton's Article 'On the Musicological Necessity of Music Analysis', *Musical Quarterly*, 3/i–ii, pp. 62–104.

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## Introduction

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This Critical Forum has been developed from a round table discussion of Julian Horton's 2020 article. The original discussion was convened by Ian Pace to conclude the *Music in the University* conference held at City, University of London in 2022. Representing different perspectives and preoccupations, yet sharing some common concerns, the original participants are joined here by Kofi Agawu and Gurminder Bhogal. It has been my privilege to collate these materials, aiming to retain something of the informal yet considered character of the original event. Together, these reflective pieces offer a multi-faceted response to Horton's seminal contribution, as is appropriate given that – just as in a Picasso cubist realisation, say *The Girl with the Mandolin* (1910) – there can be no single or simple view taken of the many issues he raises.

This forum commences with a synopsis of the original article by Ian Pace (approved by Horton), followed by the seven commissioned responses. Horton then responds to those contributions, and Jonathan Dunsby, the chair of the conference round table and founding editor of this journal, has the last word. *Music Analysis* has a distinguished history of debate through Letters to the Editor. Readers are encouraged to add their views to those expressed here.

## Synopsis

IAN PACE

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Julian Horton's article continues a long-standing debate in musicology (Kerman 1980 and Agawu 2004). If in 1996 Tim Howell could delineate the field into 'the three S's: Schenker, Semiology and Set-Theory' (Howell 1996), already by 2004, as noted by Kofi Agawu in his response to Joseph Kerman's polemic,

a range of other subdisciplines had emerged in the United States, including neo-Riemannian theory, new *Formenlehre*, further developments in Schenkerian theory, work on cognition, perception and rhythm and the application of analysis to a wider range of repertoire than the Western Classical tradition. Writing sixteen years later, and inevitably reflecting the priorities of a UK rather than US theorist/analyst, Horton surveys further expansion and diversification of the field of musical analysis and the growth of institutions and events devoted to the subject.

But the heart of Horton's article deals with strong criticisms of analysis per se from other musicologists, which, he argues, frequently take one of two forms: *historicist*, by which close reading of music is self-confirming and relatively meaningless without wider history and historical evidence and that analysis itself can be a manifestation of a particular set of historical priorities and to elevate a particular repertoire (Tomlinson 2003, Abbate 2004 and Smart 2008); and *performative* (inaugurated by Small 1998), by which analysis fetishises musical scores over music as actions in time.

In response to historicist critics, Horton criticises an over-reified portrayal of two centuries of analysis and assumptions of its always having constituted an end in itself, as well as of its being necessarily equated with value judgement. He also notes the omission by some historicist critics of work by such theorists as William Caplin (1998), James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy (2006) and Robert Gjerdingen (2007), and maintains that the new *Formenlehre* does not exhibit many of the tendencies bemoaned by older criticisms of 'formalism'. He questions whether historical research is any less vulnerable than analysis to charges of solipsism and notes historical evidence pointing to the importance of analytical/theoretical concerns in different times and places. The performative critique, which received its most sustained exposition from Nicholas Cook (1999, in sharp distinction to Schmalfeldt 1985, Narmour 1988 and Berry 1989) and (2013), as well as Carolyn Abbate (2004), presents an oppositional dichotomy between analysis and performance, especially when the former is alleged to exert a hegemonic influence over the latter. Small and Cook seek to decentre musical 'texts' and even the very idea of 'music' as an object rather than a series of actions. Abbate, mirroring arguments made elsewhere by Cook, seeks to present analysis as a type of theoretical imposition, compared unfavourably with the supposed immediacy of the untutored listener. Horton argues for a broader view of the value of analysis and questions the primacy afforded by some scholars to the 'immediacy' of performance, suggesting via an example that Abbate's view can only produce trivial results. He also urges wider consideration of the ways by which performance and experience of it are themselves mediated by musical knowledge, including analytical knowledge, denying that the type of listener idealised by Abbate really exists.

Horton situates these musicological developments in the context of neoliberal and postmodern thought (citing Jameson 1991 and Habermas 1984 and 1996 on the confluence of the two), links postmodern attacks on formalism to neoliberal

ones on socialism, notes how various forms of analysis are rooted in historical theories and practices known by many composers and questions whether a musicology which eschews analysis and replaces it with valorisation by cultural context can offer a meaningful alternative to large-scale instrumentalisation and marketisation of culture and knowledge, also referencing the ‘end of history’ narrative (Fukuyama 1989 and 1992) as reflected by Richard Taruskin (2005). He draws on Karol Berger (2000) – as well as Adorno (1982) on artistic *surplus* and Popper and Eccles (1983) – to argue for a type of relative *technical autonomy* of music (the loss of which is registered with concern in Bourdieu 1998), linking this to Habermas (1984) as part of a critique of *instrumentalised rationality*, maintaining that analytical propositions can equally constitute *communicative understanding* which can be discursively contested, neglect of which informs antiformalist claims of hegemony. Noting various elements of music which remain invariant regardless of performance, Horton fleshes these arguments out through analytical examples from works of Henry Purcell and J. S. Bach, challenging one to account for its intricacies in purely historical and/or performative terms, without recourse to technical autonomy, which he associates with *critical resistance* to utility. He concludes that the viability of analysis relates to a range of different disciplinary imperatives – *historical* (in terms of pedagogical traditions), *ontological* (especially relating to the score), *systemic* (relating to models), *discursive* (facilitating specialised discourse), *phenomenological* (identifying foundational characteristics of musical experience) and *political* (to reveal and critique cultural-political hegemony), and makes the case for its necessity in terms of each.

## Music Analysis Beyond the Classroom

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I find myself responding to Julian Horton’s thought-provoking article from an unusual perspective. To give some context: I grew up in the UK, so I have a good sense of the institutional framework in relation to which Horton makes his observations about the necessity of music analysis for music scholarship and pedagogy. After I completed my doctoral education in the US, opportunities to find a job in the UK were scarce, and I was fortunate to begin my career at an elite liberal arts college in Boston. The viewpoints I share here are purely my own and based on my experience of teaching at this small institution of approximately 2,400 undergraduate students over the past seventeen years or so. Many of my students are double majors: a STEM major<sup>1</sup> is often completed alongside their music major. Students choose which courses they want to take in our small, shrinking department, and we try to accommodate their preferences. We have music majors who do not read scores with confidence and