John Koslovsky

Tristan und Isolde *at the Margins of Music-Analytical Discourse: A Dialogic Perspective*

Abstract

Whether or not the Prelude to Richard Wagner's 1859 music drama *Tristan und Isolde* is the most analyzed piece in the history of Western music, owing to its ongoing canonical status, it behooves us to consider how it has affected the field of music analysis over the past 150 years. More than any other piece, Wagner's Prelude is able to expose the many conflicts that arise between analytical approaches: while it can demonstrate the limits of one particular approach vis-à-vis another, it may also reveal new potentialities that divergent analyses offer when seen from an intertextual point of view.

As a test case, this article will position three contemporaneous analyses of the opening measures of the Prelude against one another: Horst Scharschuch's post-Riemannian harmonic analysis and Jacques Chailley's style-historical analysis, both from 1963, and William Mitchell's Schenkerian analysis of 1967. Drawing on Mikhail Bakhtin's concepts of "dialogism" and "heteroglossia," I will trace a broader historiographical and intertextual network surrounding the history of analyzing *Tristan*, with the goal of refocusing our analytical priorities around this work and penetrating the continuities and discontinuities between competing analyses. In this way, the article aims at opening up a further dialogic space in music analysis, both in our historical considerations and in the way we approach analysis as an intertext—that is, by traversing the fissures in the reified verities of a "unified" analysis and the multiple interpretative transpositions underlying our deciphering of analytical texts. It will conclude by offering yet another interpretation of Wagner's famous chord.

Keywords

Richard Wagner; Mikhail Bakhtin; Tristan und Isolde; intertextuality; history of music analysis

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Like professionals in just about any discipline, music analysts take part in a fragmented discourse. When choosing their body of knowledge, analysts must go through a complex operation of including, excluding, precluding, implying, anticipating, and reacting to a host of other analytical positions and assumptions. Often an interlocutor, faced with what we might call "analytical aporia," will disregard the irresolvability of a particular problem and choose instead to treat his or her own solution as the "correct" one, or at least the best one on offer to date. One does this, of course, at the risk of overlooking another viewpoint, or of failing to see the contingencies of one's own position. Given this problem in the history of music theory, authors such as Nicholas Cook have suggested that analysts focus more on the performative qualities of their métier, not only as a way of navigating the inherent "epistemological slippage" that underpins music-theoretical discourse, but also with the aim of allowing a freer play of perspectives across the discipline and its history.[1]

Taking such a performative attitude as a point of departure, one could consider how an analysis might trigger a wider music-analytical intertext for the reader: by positioning one analysis against another, by contrasting it with many others, or by holding it up to the entire history of analysis. Just like music theory and analysis, intertextual discourse is rich in its use of language, terminology, codes, and symbols in describing a "text," whether that text be literary, poetic, or musical. In a very basic way, intertextual modes of engagement enable us to consider how a written or oral utterance can take part in a vast interplay of texts, thereby raising our awareness of the many meanings such an utterance can sustain, whether considered synchronically (at one given point in time), diachronical-

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1 Nicholas Cook, "Epistemologies of Music Theory," in *The Cambridge History of Western Music Theory*, ed. Thomas Christensen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, https://doi.org/10.1017/chol9780521623711.005), 78–105, at 79 and 91ff.

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ly (how it evolves over time), or what one might call "trans-chronically" (across disparate spans of time).

In this spirit, I will take my cue from two key concepts introduced by a pioneer in intertextual thinking from the early twentieth century, the Russian literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin.[2] The first of these terms, familiar to anyone steeped in intertextual thinking, is the notion of *dialogism*. In contrast to monologism, in which a text aspires to maintain a singular, sustained, and authoritative voice, dialogism refers to the way in which every human utterance that has ever been made, will be made, or could be made is never made in isolation. An utterance participates in an unending dialogue with other utterances, constantly readapting itself to an ever-changing social, cultural, and political landscape.[3] The second term that I will employ is *heteroglossia*. Closely related to dialogism, heteroglossia points to the multitude of voices that come to occupy a text and in this way draw attention to a dialectical relationship between "dominant" and "marginal" discourses; it also stresses the way in which an utterance can bear traces of other utterances, whether in the past or in the future. As Bakhtin expresses it in his 1940 essay, "From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse":

> I imagine [a unified] whole to be something like an immense novel, multi-generic, multi-styled, mercilessly critical, soberly mocking, reflecting in all its fullness the heteroglossia and multiple voices of a given culture, people and epoch. In this huge novel—in this mirror of constantly evolving heteroglossia—any direct word and especially that of the dominant discourse is reflected as something more or less bounded, typical and characteristic of a particular era, aging, dying, ripe for change and renewal.[4]

Adapting the terminologies and methodologies of theorists such as Bakhtin is nothing new to music scholarship: many authors have found them useful in their analytical and sociological inquiries. Kevin Korsyn, for instance, has shown how Bakhtin's ideas may be brought to bear on musical discourse: rather than seeking unity between the heteroge-

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2 The term "intertextuality" was coined in the 1960s by Julia Kristeva, a scholar with a deep investment in Bakhtin's writings. For a general discussion of Bakhtin's and Kristeva's theories, as well as an accessible digest of intertextual approaches, see Graham Allen, *Intertextuality* (New York: Routledge, 2000, https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203131039).

3 For the readers of this journal, it is important not to conflate Bakhtin's notion of dialogism with the "dialogic" approach to musical form as adopted by James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy in their *Elements of Sonata Theory* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2006, https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195146400.001.0001). Hepokoski explains the "dialogic" approach to form (as a contrast to "conformational" and "generative" approaches) more explicitly in his essay "Sonata Theory and Dialogic Form," in *Musical Form, Forms, and Formenlehre: Three Methodological Reflections*, ed. Pieter Bergé (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2009), 71–89. Though inspired by literary theory and phenomenology, Hepokoski's understanding of dialogic form is primarily diachronic in outlook—"form in dialogue with historically conditioned compositional options" (Hepokoski, "Sonata Theory and Dialogic Form," 71–72). Bakhtin's notion of dialogism has far more radical consequences in our reading of a "text," musical or otherwise.

4 Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 60.

nous ways a piece of music plays with our historical and analytical sensibilities, Korsyn advocates an approach that investigates the margins at which unity and heterogeneity meet. In Korsyn's words, "Dialogic analysis [...] would reverse the priorities of traditional music analysis. Rather than reducing difference to sameness, in an attempt to secure the boundaries of an autonomous, self-identical text, dialogic analysis would begin from this apparent unity, this *unity-effect*, but would move towards heterogeneity, activating and releasing the voices of a musical heteroglossia."[5]

1. ANALYZING THE "TRISTAN (AND ISOLDE) CHORD": THREE APPROACHES

In charting a course through the history of music-analytical discourse from a dialogic perspective, few pieces of music seem more apposite for investigation than the Prelude to Richard Wagner's 1859 music drama, *Tristan und Isolde*. This piece has occupied the minds of thousands of analysts and has filled the theoretical literature with thousands more pages of verbal commentary and symbolic illustration. Its analytical interlocutors have included thinkers of virtually every theoretical persuasion: the so-called "Tristan chord" (a name I will alter to the "Tristan-Isolde chord," or TIC)[6] alone has received a bewildering

5 Kevin Korsyn, "Beyond Privileged Contexts: Intertextuality, Influence, and Dialogue," in *Rethinking Music*, ed. Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 64–65; Korsyn's italics. For a study exploring the relationship between music theory and intertextuality more broadly, see Michael Klein, *Intertextuality in Western Art Music* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005).

6 In the spirit of Bakhtin's notion of heteroglossia, it is worth mentioning how theorists still refer ubiquitously to the opening sonority of the opera as the "Tristan chord" (TC). Presumably, the reference is made for the sake of brevity, and since Wagner's title begins with the name of the male, not female, protagonist, Tristan's name alone has unquestioningly come to occupy the label of this chord. It is a small but no less crucial reminder of the lingering effects of dominant versus marginal discourses, in this case set out along gender lines. I would like to thank Sarvenaz Safari of the Hochschule für Musik und Theater Leipzig for pointing out the gender bias inherent in the historical labelling of this chord.

As it happens, the first full-scale reference to the opening of the Prelude in the drama proper—that is, with the chord and progression in their original transposition and coupled with the "Avowal" and "Desire" motives—occurs in Act I, Scene 2 (mm. 310-17), when Isolde sings her famous line "Mir erkoren, mir verloren, hehr und heil, kühn und feig!" (specifically at mm. 313-17). While one might be tempted on this basis to label the chord the "Isolde chord" (IC), a more contextually sensitive reading of these measures and other key moments in Act I (mm. 353-55, 1038-45, and 1266-73) would suggest that the musical material is actually a symbol of the intertwining of the lovers and the suffering they both endure in their impossible longing for one another. It also signals their collective desire to die, as the subsequent line in mm. 318-24 ("Todgeweihtes Haupt! Todgeweihtes Herz!") and later implicit couplings of the chord with the *Todestrank* make clear ("Kennst du der Mutter Künste nicht," mm. 1039-41 and 1267-69). The words sung by Isolde at mm. 310ff are the clearest indication of this intertwining (she's singing about Tristan, after all), but Wagner's stage directions directly preceding these words also reinforce the interpretation ("Isolde, whose gaze immediately falls on Tristan, and who remains coldly fixated on him, [sings] to herself in a hollow voice"). The dramatic build-up of the chord and the opening progression culminates in Act I, Scene 5 (mm. 1756ff.), when Tristan and Isolde drink the *Liebestrank* (instead of the *Todestrank*, of course!) and thereby seal their tragic fate. Thus, a more musically and dramatically appropriate designation for the chord would be the "Tristan-Isolde chord" (TIC), which I adopt in this essay.

Table 1: A few interpretations of the Tristan-Isolde chord

G# as chord tone		A as chord tone	
Kistler (1879)	VII°7 of A	Riemann (1909) Arend (1901) Lorenz (1926)	"Subdominant" chord (with added 6)
Jadassohn (1899) Bass (1996)	VII°7 of F#	D'Indy (1912)	IV
Bailey (1985)	Aug 6 chord on G#	Louis en Thuille (1907)	II
Martin (2008)	Aug 6 chord on F	Mayrberger (1881) Schenker (1906)	II of A; V of E ("II + V")
Chailley (1963)	"V" (see article)	Tiersch (1868) Cone (1962) DeVoto (1995) Hill (1984) Salzer (1952)	"French" Aug 4/3
Erpf (1927) Scharschuch (1963)	"Doppelleitonklang" (see article)	Capellen (1902) Schreyer (1905) Ergo (1912) Kurth (1920)	V 4/3 of V (with lowered fifth)
Mitchell (1967)	"Neighbor" °4/2 chord (see article)	Rothgeb (1996)	"Neighbor chord"
Schoenberg (1911)	II°7 of Eb? ("vagrant")	Schering (1935)	IV6 (as part of an evolved Phrygian HC)
Distler (1951)	Doppel-Dom 6/5 of A Dom 9/4 of Eb Dom 9/7 of Sp of E		
Hindemith (1937)	Chord group IIb2		
Boretz (1972)	pc-set 0369		
Forte (1988)	pc-set 0258		

array of interpretations, a situation that serves only to point out the heterogeneous nature of this musical enigma. Though far from exhaustive, Table 1 offers a basic overview of some of the many labels that have been bestowed on the TIC, dividing interpretations into those that take G♯ as opposed to those that take A♮ as a chord tone (the basic dividing line between interpretations). All told, the table identifies twenty different ways of analyzing the TIC (and I imagine still more labels that could be added to the list). The TIC, and interpretations of it, provide an ideal entry into a dialogic form of analysis.

However, in this article I will not examine the Bakhtinian qualities inherent in the music per se (for instance, by comparing the TIC to other uses of the chord across music history);[7] nor will I attempt to recover and compare the multitude of traditions and sub-traditions that feed into analytical interpretations of the chord (a study far beyond

7 A historical account of the TIC can be found in Mark DeVoto, "The Strategic Half-Diminished Seventh Chord and the Emblematic Tristan Chord: A Survey from Beethoven to Berg," *International Journal of Musicology* 4 (1995), 139–53.

the scope of a single essay).[8] Instead, I will explore the ramifications of dialogic thinking in the writings of a small subset of music analysts dealing with the TIC and the Prelude around the same time. In this way, I excavate the intertextual consequences of a very small corpus of analytical "works" and the manifold "texts" they invite.

Three studies form the core of the discussion, all of which come from the 1960s: a monograph from 1963 entitled *Gesamtanalyse der Harmonik von Richard Wagners Musikdrama "Tristan und Isolde,"* by the German scholar Horst Scharschuch;[9] a second monograph from 1963 (republished in 1972), entitled *Tristan et Isolde de Richard Wagner*, by the French musicologist Jacques Chailley;[10] and an extended article from 1967, "The Tristan Prelude: Techniques and Structure," by the American music theorist William Mitchell.[11] As far as I am able to ascertain (in full awareness that other analyses beyond my linguistic reach may exist), Scharschuch's, Chailley's, and Mitchell's published writings represent three of the most expansive and detailed treatments of the Prelude from the 1960s, a decade in which formalist music analysis and structuralist thinking generally held sway over music-theoretical discourse.[12]

That said, each of these authors nonetheless takes his cue from a different scholarly tradition and culture, in which the roles of "music analysis" and "music theory" with respect to the broader discipline of musicology and intellectual thought more generally varied greatly (and still do). Thus, an added benefit to a comparison of Scharschuch, Chailley, and Mitchell is that (as far as I can tell) they knew nothing of each other's analyses, which allows us to suspend issues of direct influence and invite a freer play of compar-

8 For an overview of historical approaches to the TIC, see Martin Vogel, *Der Tristan-Akkord und die Krise der modernen Harmonie-Lehre* (Dusseldorf: Gesellschaft zur Förderung der systematischen Musikwissenschaft, 1962); Jean-Jacques Nattiez, "The Concepts of Plot and Seriation Process in Music Analysis," *Music Analysis* 4/1–2 (1985), 107–18, https://doi.org/10.2307/854238; Hermann Danuser, "Tristanakkord," in Laurenz Lütteken (ed.), *MGG Online* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2016), https://mgg-online.com/article?id=mgg16166&v=1.0&rs=mgg16166; Thomas Grey, "Magnificent Obsession: *Tristan* as the Object of Musical Analysis," in *Music, Theatre and Politics in Germany, 1848 to the Third Reich*, ed. Nikolaus Bacht (London: Ashgate, 2006), 51–78; and Nathan Martin, "The Tristan Chord Resolved," *Intersections: Canadian Journal of Music* 28/2 (2008), 6–30, https://doi.org/10.7202/029953ar. For a discussion that problematizes traditional functional approaches to the chord, see Ludwig Holtmeier, "Der Tristanakkord und die Neue Funktionstheorie," *Musiktheorie* 17/4 (2002), 361–65.

9 Horst Scharschuch, *Gesamtanalyse der Harmonik von Richard Wagners Musikdrama "Tristan und Isolde"* (Regensburg: Gustav Bosse, 1963).

10 Jacques Chailley, *Tristan et Isolde de Richard Wagner: Au dela des notes; Collection d'explication de texts musicaux*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Alphonse Leduc, 1972).

11 William Mitchell, "The Tristan Prelude: Techniques and Structure," *Music Forum* 1 (1967), 162–203.

12 An important article that lays out the history of German music theory after 1945 is Ludwig Holtmeier, "From 'Musiktheorie' to 'Tonsatz': National Socialism and German Music Theory after 1945," *Music Analysis* 23/2–3 (2004), 245–66, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0262-5245.2004.00203.x. For an extended overview of French music analysis in the twentieth century, see Rémy Campo, "L'Analyse musicale en France au XXe siècle: Discours, techniques et usages," in *L'Analyse musicale: Une pratique et son histoire*, ed. Rémy Campo and Nicholas Donin (Geneva: Droz, 2009), 353–452. For an overview of "Schenkerian Theory in the United States," see David Carson Berry's essay of this title in *Zeitschrift für Musiktheorie* 2/2–3 (2005, https://doi.org/10.31751/206), 101–37.

ison between them. But their physical and intellectual separation notwithstanding, the ambition and scope of each of these scholars' analyses far exceeded most previous efforts to take on either the Prelude or the TIC. And as we will see, the depths of their respective formalisms even lead to some strikingly similar analytical results, depending on how we interpret the motivations behind their analyses. To find out what those motivations might be, I first offer a brief account of each author's work for contextualization, after which I focus on each of their analyses of the opening measures of the Prelude to Act I.

Horst Scharschuch and the "Doppelleittonklang"

I begin with the most obscure of our three authors, Horst Scharschuch (1902–[?]).[13] A violinist by training, Scharschuch took up studies in musicology in 1946 under Thrasybulos Georgiades in Heidelberg and went on to complete a doctorate in musicology at the University of Münster in 1955 under Werner Korte.[14] His dissertation, "Über die Leittonklangtechnik in der Musik zwischen 1780 und 1930" ("On the Leading-Tone Technique in Music between 1780 and 1930"), became the basis for his first book, *Analyse zu Igor Strawinsky's "Sacre du Printemps"* (1960), as well as for his book on *Tristan und Isolde*, published three years later.[15] Despite its title, Scharschuch's book on Stravinsky was actually an attempt to understand the broader development of harmonic principles from the fourteenth to the twentieth century using the so-called leading-tone chord (*Leittonklang*) technique,[16] which has obvious origins in Hugo Riemann's *Leittonwechselklang*. As Scharschuch defines it, the leading-tone chord is "a chord that, within a tonal cadence, either discharges into its corresponding fundamental sonority [*Grundklang*], emanates from it, or replaces it as an unresolved sonority or function."[17]

While showing the development of the *Leittonklang* across the history of Western music, the Stravinsky book also provided the groundwork for the methodology Scharschuch was to apply with full force to his book on *Tristan und Isolde*, which involved a radical re-adaption of Riemannian principles, as inspired by Riemann's pupil Hermann Erpf.[18]

13 As of this writing, I have been unable to identify the year of Scharschuch's death.

14 Following his studies, Scharschuch worked mainly as a freelance music teacher and at one point was commissioned by the city of Mannheim to process documents related to the Mannheim school. This information comes from the biographical note Scharschuch included with his article "Johann Stamitz," *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft* 33/3 (1976), 240, https://doi.org/10.2307/930865. It is thus clear that Scharschuch did not enjoy the kind of scholarly career that many other musicologists did and therefore represents a marginal voice in German musicology.

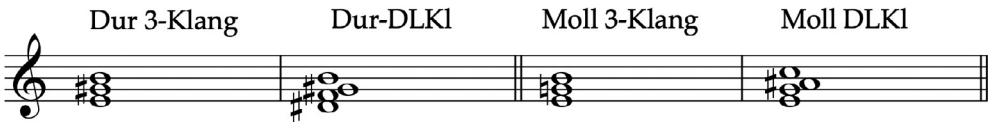
15 Horst Scharschuch, "Über die Leittonklangtechnik in der Musik zwischen 1780 und 1930" (PhD thesis, University of Münster, 1955); Scharschuch, *Analyse zu Igor Strawinsky's "Sacre du Printemps"* (Regensburg: Gustav Bosse, 1960).

16 Scharschuch's analysis of *Le Sacre* is only a short chapter at the end of the book.

17 "Der ein- oder mehrfache Leittonklang ist ein Akkord, der innerhalb einer tonalen Kadenz in den zu ihm gehörigen Grundklang einmündet, von ihm ausgeht, oder ihn unaufgelöst klanglich und funktionell vertritt"; Scharschuch, *Analyse zu Igor Strawinsky's "Sacre du Printemps,"* 23.

18 Hermann Erpf, *Studien zur Harmonie und Klangtechnik der neueren Musik* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1927), 51–52.

Example 1: Horst Scharschuch's *Doppelleittonklang* (DLKl)



That adaptation leaned heavily on Erpf's concept of the *Doppelleittonklang* ("double leading-tone chord," or DLKl). This technique generalizes further about the nature of semitonal voice leading and the subsequent functional equivalence that can be attained between disparate chords. In its simplest form, the DLKl transformation involves splitting the root of a major chord or the fifth of a minor chord by means of their two surrounding semitones. As shown in Example 1, the chord using the notes E–G♯–B is transformed into D♯–F–G♯–B (*Dur DLKl*), while a chord using E–G–B transforms into E–G–A♯–C (*Moll DLKl*). These chords are intended to substitute for the main chord, though without losing a sense of the latter's functional significance. Other possibilities arise when we add more notes such as sevenths or ninths, and/or when we perform the DLKl operation to multiple tones simultaneously.[19] The constructions and functional ramifications are thus manifold, since any two notes can be considered as a leading-tone replacement for another.

For Scharschuch, the DLKl was the key to understanding the development of Western music from the late eighteenth century onwards. Scharschuch's basic idea in fact hinges on the role of the augmented sixth chord: while in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries its occasional appearance enhanced the effect of the Phrygian cadence, the chord eventually gave way to the augmented $\frac{6}{5}$ chord (as an altered secondary dominant) and finally to the DLKl (which can replace any chord by means of semitonal displacement of root or fifth). Scharschuch even used it as a way of wildly positing a historical link between tonal music and twelve-tone music, with Wagner taking center stage: "[The DLKl] offers the foundation for the theoretical pervasion [*Durchdringung*] of the beginnings of the twelve-tone technique, which in no way represents a 'break' with so-called 'tonal' music, but rather demonstrates a thoroughly logical and meaningful development of the previous epochs along a consistent path."[20] To accommodate this broad historiographic agenda, Scharschuch largely did away with standard Riemannian functional symbols

19 Erpf, for instance, gives the example where all four notes of a chord are elided by their two leading tones, producing an entirely different chord altogether.

20 "Es bietet also die Grundlage zur theoretischen Durchdringung der Anfänge der 12 Ton-Technik, die absolut keinen 'Bruch' mit der damals so genannten 'tonalen' Musik, sondern ein langsam voranschreitendes, sich durchaus logisch und sinnvoll entwickelndes Weitergehen auf dem sich gleichbleibenden Wege der voraufgegangenen Epoche bedeutet"; Scharschuch, *Gesamtanalyse der Harmonik*, 10.

and replaced them with his own (some of which will be discussed below). And, in offering a comprehensive, measure-by-measure analysis of *Tristan und Isolde* with his system, Scharschuch ultimately aimed to show that Wagner's harmonic language is in no way the end to tonal music, but rather a crucial juncture in a much longer historical development. The DLKl provided Scharschuch with the key to pursuing that historiographic agenda.[21]

Jacques Chailley and the Appoggiatura

There could hardly be an author who offers us a greater contrast to Horst Scharschuch than Jacques Chailley (1910–1999). A historian, composer, and music analyst who worked at the Sorbonne and the Schola Cantorum in Paris, Chailley was one of the giants of the French musicological establishment. His work spanned almost the entirety of Western music history, from the music of antiquity to Wagner.[22]

Placing Chailley's 1963 monograph on *Tristan und Isolde* next to Scharschuch's reveals immediately how radically different the approaches of two scholars to the Prelude could be at this moment in history—in the very same year, in fact. Chailley was, by all accounts, a firm opponent of atonal and twelve-tone music, and he was equally opposed to music-historical or analytical accounts that attempted to view works such as *Tristan und Isolde* as paving the way for atonality. In his efforts to prove Wagner's deep indebtedness to the

21 In his 1963 review of Scharschuch's book on Stravinsky, Carl Dahlhaus raises serious doubts about Scharschuch's attempt to apply the DLKl across Western music and to ground his thesis historically in the augmented sixth and augmented $\frac{6}{5}$ chords; he points to numerous examples which could be understood more persuasively from other points of view. Dahlhaus further points to the tenuousness of Scharschuch's logic: "Scharschuch supports his thesis on a fragile syllogism: on the one hand, a dominant sonority has to follow from the augmented $\frac{6}{5}$ chord when the latter functions as a secondary dominant; on the other hand, that [augmented $\frac{6}{5}$] chord can only obtain the function of a secondary dominant when viewed as an altered chord; thus, when a dominant chord does not follow from it, it is not an altered chord, and has to be explained as a 'Double Leading-Tone Chord'" ("Sch[arschuch] stützt seine These auf einen brüchigen Syllogismus: Einerseits müsse dem übermäßigen Quintsextakkord, wenn er als Doppeldominante wirken solle, ein Dominantakkord folgen; andererseits könne er einzig in der Funktion einer Doppeldominante als alterierter Akkord gelten; also sei er, wenn ihm kein Dominantakkord folge, kein alterierter Akkord und müsse als 'Doppelleittonklang' erklärt werden"); Carl Dahlhaus, review of Horst Scharschuch, *Analyse zu Igor Strawinskys "Sacre du Printemps," Die Musikforschung* 16/1 (1963), 97.

22 For a discussion of Chailley's work on Wagner, see Christian Merlin, "Jacques Chailley et Wagner," *Musurgia* 19/1 (2012), 155–69, https://doi.org/10.3917/musur.121.0155. See also the 2012 special issue of *Musurgia* (vol. 19), which is devoted to Chailley and includes articles on virtually all aspects of his work as a historian, analyst, and theorist. Chailley has also been a figure of controversy in light of his possible anti-Semitic actions while serving under the director Henri Rabaud of the Paris Conservatory during the Second World War. See Jean Gribenski, "L'Exclusion des juifs du Conservatoire (1940–1942)," in *La musique sous Vichy*, ed. Myriam Chimènes (Bruselles: Ed. Complexe, 2001), 143–56; Jean-Marc Warszawski, "Le Conservatoire National sous l'Occupation: Jacques Chailley, l'histoire et la mémoire" (musicologie.org, 19 May 2011), https://www.musicologie.org/publirem/le_conservatoire_national_sous_l_occupation.html; Michèle Alten, "Le Conservatoire de musique et d'art dramatique: Une institution culturelle publique dans la guerre (1940–1942)," leducation-musicale.com, 2012, https://web.archive.org/web/20120311133649/http://www.leducation-musicale.com/conservatoire.pdf. See also Gribenski's further response in "L'Antisémitisme au Conservatoire: Du recensement des élèves juifs à leur exclusion (1940–1942)," *Revue d'histoire de la Shoah* 198 (2013), 363–81, https://doi.org/10.3917/rhsho.198.0363.

past, Chailley bases his analytical argument on the composer's use of the appoggiatura, which is what gives the music its feeling of ever-forward striving; underneath the tension of the appoggiatura, however, lies a simple harmonic structure, one not very different from that of other eighteenth- and nineteenth-century musical works. As we will see in more detail below, the appoggiatura becomes Chailley's way of showing the firmness with which Wagner sticks to the tonal tradition, which for Chailley has nothing to do with atonality. As he writes:

> The chromaticism of Tristan, based on appoggiaturas and passing tones, and without any attenuation of tonality, represents technically and spiritually speaking the *apogee of tension*. I continue to fail to understand how, under the authority of Schoenberg, the absurd idea is able to spread that it forms a prototype for *atonality* based on the *destruction of all tension*, to the point that Alban Berg cites the opening measures of *Tristan* in his *Lyric Suite* as a means of paying homage to the precursor of atonality![23]

Chailley's monograph presents in roughly one hundred pages the most essential information concerning the compositional history of the opera, the history of the Tristan legend, the various *Leitmotiven* employed by Wagner, and the use of harmony and form. Chailley pays particular attention to analytical aspects of the Prelude and of the TIC. He even provides a complete harmonic and metrical reduction of the Prelude, removing virtually all non-harmonic tones and reducing the meter to 4/4 (discussed below). To be sure, Chailley's outlook is far less formalistic than Scharschuch's, and his analysis relies on simple functional descriptions and roman numerals. His main aim, as he claims, is to represent the perceptual "realities" of the musical surface. As we'll see, however, Chailley makes some fairly bold analytical claims.

William Mitchell and Transformational Counterpoint

The third and last author I shall discuss is William Mitchell (1906–1971), an American musicologist and theorist who for the better part of his career worked at Columbia University in New York City. Today, Mitchell is known mostly for his research on Schenkerian theory and analysis, as well as his collaboration with Felix Salzer on the journal *The Music Forum*. Like Scharschuch and Chailley, Mitchell was concerned with questions of history, in his case the history of chromatic harmony.

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23 "Le chromatisme de Tristan, à base d'appoggiatures et de notes de passage, représente donc, techniquement et spirituellement, sans aucune atteinte à la tonalité, l'*apogée de la tension*. Je ne suis pas encore parvenu à comprendre comment avait pu se répandre, sous l'autorité de Schönberg, l'idée saugrenue d'en faire le prototype d'une *atonalité* basée sur la *destruction de toute tension* au point qu'Alban Berg citera les premières mesures de *Tristan* dans sa *Suite Lyrique* à titre d'hommage au précurseur de l'atonalité!"; Chailley, *Tristan et Isolde*, 23.

Mitchell's interest in chromatic harmony and Schenkerian theory inevitably led him to a detailed analysis of the Prelude to *Tristan und Isolde*, which was published in volume 1 of *The Music Forum* in 1967. As befitting the Schenkerian approach, counterpoint becomes a central force in understanding the nature of harmony and form, on both local and global levels. Indeed, Mitchell's analysis of the Prelude is unlike any analysis to come before it, as it places a strong emphasis on the contrapuntal exigencies of the music, both "elementary" and "prolonged." And, although Mitchell does not go too deeply into questions of historiography, he nonetheless makes clear his conviction that Wagner's music is embedded within the tonal tradition, a tradition that can be uncovered through a close examination of the musical structure. In one sense, Mitchell's level of analytical detail resonates with Scharschuch's formalisms, in that any historical assertion is made through a closer look at a deeper formal structure. In another, more historiographical sense, Mitchell is implicitly more aligned with Chailley, in that he sees Wagner as firmly wedded to the tonal tradition, and not as a precursor to atonal or twelve-tone music. In a departure from both Scharschuch and Chailley, Mitchell does not consider Wagner's Prelude a completed piece of music as it exists in the opera. To understand the Prelude on its own terms, Mitchell relies on Wagner's concert ending of 1859, which closes the music firmly in the key of A major.[24] In this way, Mitchell isolates the *Tristan* Prelude entirely from its dramatic significance, transforming it into a piece of purely instrumental music.

2. COMPARING SCHARSCHUCH, CHAILLEY, AND MITCHELL

Measure 1

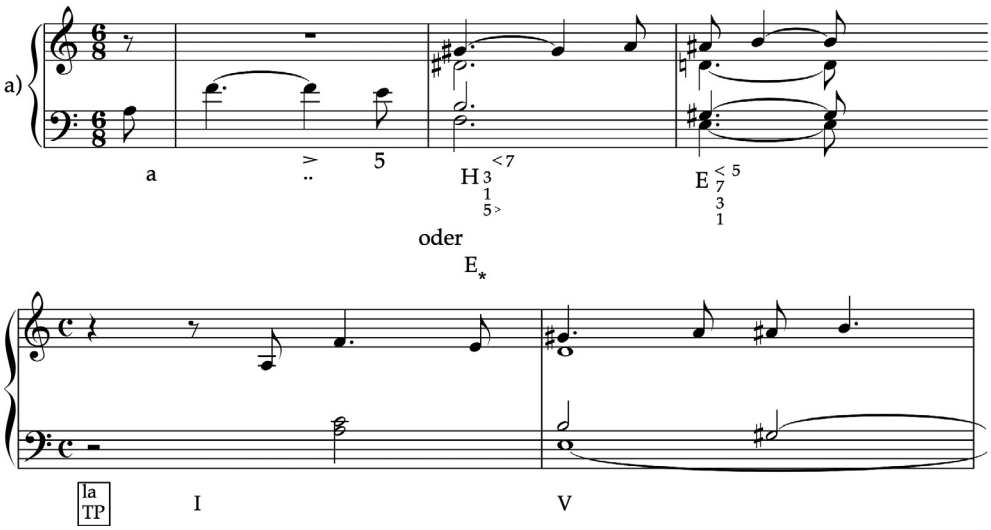
In comparing these three scholars there is no better place to start than the opening of the Prelude. One could even begin with the very first "chord"—not the one in m. 2, but the supposed chord of m. 1. It might seem rather strange to begin here, but in fact it provides a good way of understanding their respective approaches and how we may interpret them with respect to one another.

Is it merely pointing out the obvious to say that the implied chord of m. 1 (including its upbeat) is a "tonic" sonority, a first degree ("I"), or even just an A minor chord? In fact, this is not how many earlier analysts thought about it. Karl Mayrberger (1881), who published the first extended analysis of Wagner's Prelude, analyzed two chords within this space: an A chord on the upbeat followed by a D chord in m. 1.[25] Others might interpret

24 For more on Wagner's concert ending, see Robert Bailey, ed., *Wagner: Prelude and Transfiguration from "Tristan and Isolde"* (New York: Norton, 1985), 12–35.

25 Karl Mayrberger, *Die Harmonik Richard Wagner's an den Leitmotiven aus "Tristan und Isolde" erläutert* (Bayreuth: Bayreuther Patronatverein, 1881), 7–33. Mayrberger's analysis of the TIC can also be found in translation in Ian Bent (ed.), *Music Analysis in the Nineteenth Century*, vol. 1, *Fugue, Form and Style* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 228.

Example 2: Scharschuch's (2a) and Jacques Chailley's (2b) analyses of mm. 1–3 of the Prelude from Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*



the entirety of m. 1 with upbeat as simply a D chord, and label it IV in A. Some might even deny the chordal status of this moment entirely. In any case, even this first measure could be a source of disagreement.

Though they were not the first to do so, Scharschuch, Chailley, and Mitchell all analyze the opening measure unproblematically as an A minor chord.[26] However, they go about it in slightly different ways. Example 2 reproduces Scharschuch's and Chailley's analyses of mm. 1–3. In Scharschuch's analysis (Example 2a),[27] the tonic A minor chord is expressed as an "upper half-tone suspension" on F leading towards the fifth E on the last beat of the measure—the ">" symbol indicates F's role as an upper leading tone, while the ".." indicates the continuance of an underlying A minor chord.[28] Chailley similarly indicates a tonic chord in m. 1 of his harmonic reduction (shown in Example 2b) and describes the F in his text as a "long appoggiatura" to E; he even adds an imagined root and third in the bass staff.[29]

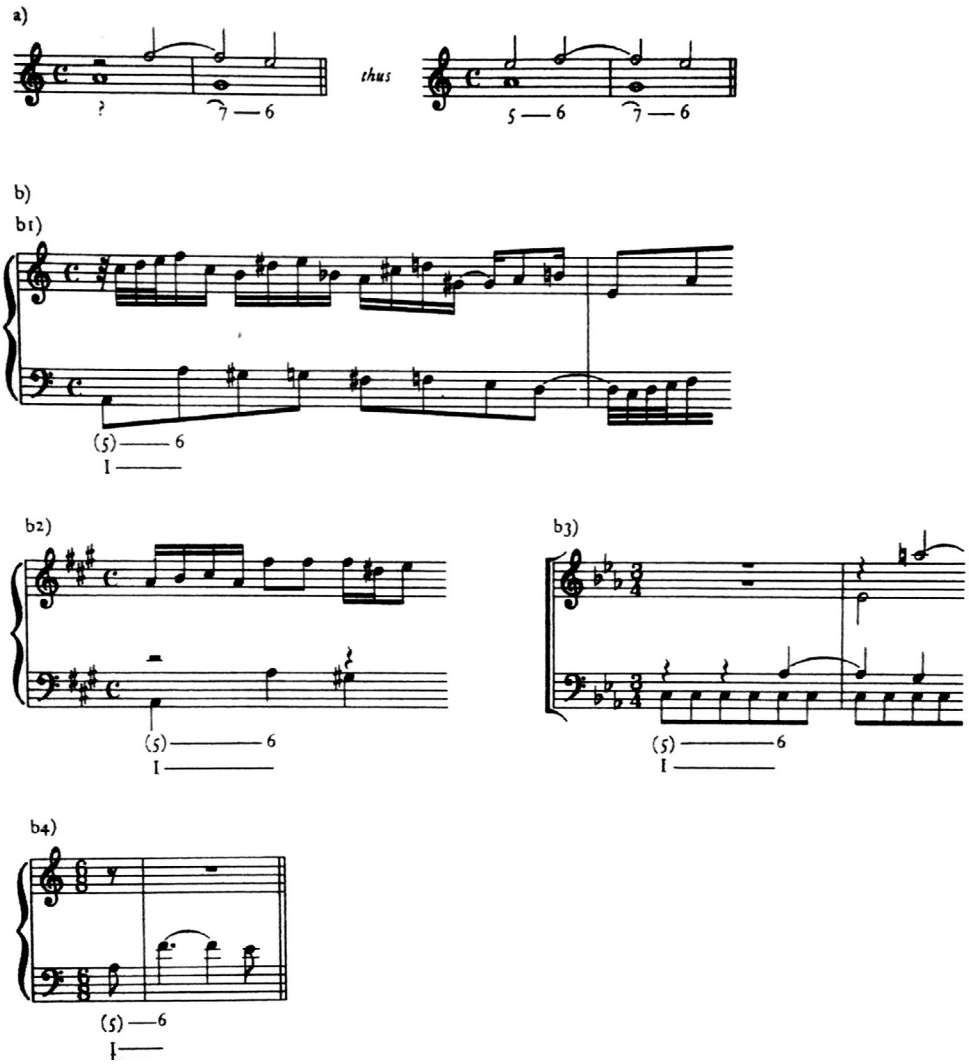
26 In fact, Alfred Lorenz argued for this interpretation in his 1926 book, *Das Geheimnis der Form bei Richard Wagner*, vol. 2, *Der musikalische Aufbau von Richard Wagners "Tristan und Isolde"* (cited in Bailey, *Wagner: Prelude and Transfiguration from Tristan and Isolde*, 206–7).

27 This example is reproduced from Scharschuch, *Analyse zu Strawinskys "Sacre du Printemps,"* Example 173.

28 In his 1963 book Scharschuch explains the measure as an "A minor tonic with an upper semitone suspension of five eighth notes in length, to the fifth E" ("T [moll-Tonika] a mit 5 Achtel langem, oberen Hablton-V[orhalt] zur 5 [kwint] e"; Scharschuch, *Gesamtanalyse der Harmonik*, 25).

29 The boxed text in Example 2b refers to both the local key (using fixed-do solmization symbols) and its relation to the overall tonality of A minor. In this case, "la" represents the local key of A minor, and "TP" stands for *ton principal* ("principal key").

Example 3: William Mitchell's contrapuntal derivation of m. 1 of the Prelude



Mitchell also adopts a reading of the opening A minor chord as a tonic; however, he does not take this A chord for granted, as Scharschuch and Chailley do. In fact, he makes a point of demonstrating the historical derivation of the technique at work, a "5–6 contrapuntal shift" between a "bass" A and an "upper-voice" motion from an implied E to F, all of which is expressed by the single line in the celli. Example 3 reproduces Mitchell's synopsis of the situation (his Example 8). At Example 3a is a typical fourth-species counterpoint progression, and Example 3b demonstrates how it is worked out in two examples from Bach's *Wohltemperiertes Clavier* (Examples 3b1 and 3b2), the opening of Mozart's

"Dissonance" Quartet (Example 3b3), and finally the opening of Wagner's Prelude (Example 3b4). In each case the initial fifth is implied at the very outset: as Mitchell describes it, Wagner invokes a compositional "license" that "clarifies [...] the meaning of f^2 as a motion away from e^2, rather than as a direct vertical offspring of the *cantus firmus* tone, a^1."[30] Adding to Mitchell's account is the fact that Wagner, in his first draft of the Prelude, used the note B, not A, for the upbeat to m. 1, thus forming a tritone as opposed to a minor sixth.[31] The fact that the composer ultimately changed this note to A is further proof for Mitchell that Wagner thought of the piece in the key of A, hence as beginning with an undisputable structural "tonic" sonority.

Reflecting back on Scharschuch and Chailley's examples, we can see that the implicit rationale for their decisions stands at odds with Mitchell's. Chailley, for instance, does not consider the first A of the piece a bass note, hence his addition of A–C in the bass clef in the harmonic reduction of Example 2b. He also sees nothing of contrapuntal derivation here and insists instead on the surface embellishing nature of the F. For his part, Scharschuch regards the F as a suspension to the E, putting him somewhere in between Mitchell and Chailley. But he is in fact more concerned with the fact that F leads by half step, which forms the very first leading-tone motion in the opera.

With this small example in mind, upon a closer look we see that, although their conclusions are the same, Scharschuch, Chailley, and Mitchell arrived at them in different ways and put forth slightly different terminologies and epistemic strategies for understanding the first chord of the piece. Referring back to the terms I introduced earlier, this could be seen as a rudimentary form of dialogic analysis, because although there is a degree of unity between these analyses, they result nonetheless in an irreducible heterogeneity.

Measure 2 (and Beyond)

As one might imagine, matters become far more complicated as we move into m. 2 of the Prelude. After all, analysts have split more ink on the TIC than on any other single chord in Western music: it is the intertextual moment of music analysis *par excellence*. Coincidence or not, it is remarkable to note at the outset that Scharschuch, Chailley, and Mitchell come more or less to the same opinion as to the status of the TIC, though for entirely different reasons. In his Stravinsky book of 1960, Scharschuch shows two different ways of looking at the chord (see Example 2a above): as a type of B^7 chord with lowered fifth and upward-leaning suspension to A (a nod to Ernst Kurth's interpretation of the chord),

30 Mitchell, "The Tristan Prelude," 177–78.

31 See Bailey, *Wagner: Prelude and Transfiguration*, 131ff.

and as a DLKl of E major (represented by "E$_*$").[32] On the basis of this dual interpretation, he concludes that

> [t]he best solution probably is to assume that this sonority represents a *transitional stage*. On the one hand, one strongly hears a dominant function, but on the other hand it shows how a suspension can be treated by emphasizing the elements of a new sonority: the *DLKl*. Without a doubt, the sonority stands on the border of both perceptions: it is a proto-form of the *DLKl*, in which either the secondary or the primary dominant can be clearly heard.[33]

Scharschuch continues his thoughts on the TIC in his 1963 book. He still acknowledges that the chord can function as a secondary dominant with lowered fifth, but he goes on to explain that one can also conceive of the chord as a "minor 6th chord formed of the lower fifth" (*Moll-Unterdominant-Sextakkord*) based on A♭/G♯.[34] But, because the chord occurs so often in the opera, one will inevitably hear the G♯ as a chord tone and conclude that its essence lies in the DLKl. Further, Scharschuch stresses how the D♯ of m. 2 leads downwards to D each time we hear the TIC, and because of this the listener comes to expect parallel (enharmonic) sevenths F/D♯–E/D, which contributes to the "strongly dissonant effect" of the passage.[35]

Realizing that this view will have consequences for traditional forms of listening, Scharschuch writes:

> Heard from a modern point of view, a result of the change in function of the G♯ from a lower half-tone suspension of A to the third of an E major chord, a change in function of the entire sonority takes place here, in which it transforms from a secondary dominant to a primary dominant in A. This change in function carries with it a depletion of the cadence and a blurring of harmonic-functional awareness, since the secondary dominant is replaced by the double-leading-tone chord. [...] Heard in a traditional way the progression is: secondary dominant followed by a primary dominant; heard from a modern point of view it sounds as follows: minor tonic, primary dominant as double-leading-tone chord, primary dominant in A minor.[36]

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32 In his text, Scharschuch also entertains the idea (put forward by Paul Hindemith and George Dyson) that the chord could be seen as an E^7 chord with an upper suspension of a ninth and a temporary chromatic displacement of the minor seventh as a major seventh (D♯ instead of D♮). But, possibly because this view comes close to his (and Erpf's) view of the TIC based on the DLKl, he omits it from further discussion.

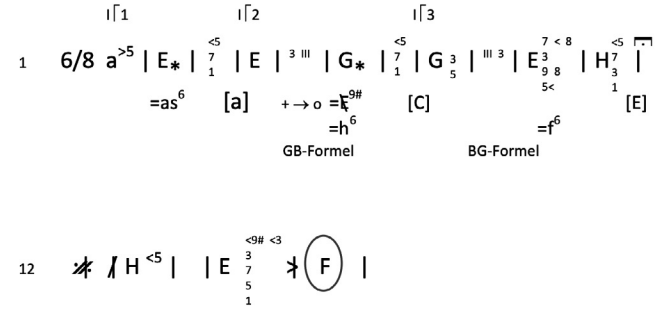
33 "Die beste Lösung ist wahrscheinlich die, anzunehmen, dass dieser Klang ein *Übergangsstadium* darstellt: man hört einerseits stark eine der dom Funktionen, andrerseits zeigt er, wie ein Vorhalt durch die Betonung zum Bestandteil eines neuen Klanges = Dur-DLKl werden kann. Sicher steht der Klang an der Grenze zwischen beiden Auffassungen: er ist eine Vorform des DLKles, in dem die 2. oder die 1. Dom noch deutlich zu hören ist"; Scharschuch, *Analyse zu Igor Strawinsky's "Sacre du Printemps,"* 94–95.

34 Scharschuch, *Gesamtanalyse zur Harmonik*, 25.

35 Ibid.

36 "Es findet hier, vom modernen Standpunkt gehört, infolge der Funktionsänderung des Tones Gis aus dem unteren Halbton-Vorhalt zu A in die 3 Gis von E-dur eine Funktionsänderung des gesamten Klanges statt, der von einer 2.

Example 4: Scharschuch's 1963 harmonic analysis of mm. 1–17



Legend:
arabic numbers = intervals above the root of the prevailing chord
> = leading-tone downwards
< = leading-tone upwards
3 = major third
III = minor third
+→o = major chord becomes minor
* = Doppelleitonklang
\ = chordal root missing
GB-Formel / BG-Formel = minor third root relation
>= deceptive cadence
[a], [G], [E] = implied tonics

In studying Scharschuch's analysis of the opening seventeen measures (Example 4), one notices that this E chord continues to play a role throughout the entire phrase. In the "second sequence," for instance (mm. 4–7), Scharschuch interprets the G DLKl of m. 6 as both an E^9 chord and as an added-sixth chord on B, and he indicates a minor-third transformation from E to G using the expression "GB Formel."[37] In his text, he evens explains how this second sequence is "functionless" with respect to the whole.[38] Finally, in the "third sequence" (mm. 8ff.) Scharschuch indicates "BG Formel," thus reversing the minor-third transformation back down from G to E, and in doing so reinstates the continued presence of the dominant E chord at m. 10 [!]. After the excursion to B^7 at mm. 11–15 (the "second upper dominant" to A), E^7 returns to initiate the first deceptive motion of the piece. For Scharschuch, then, the

Dominante zur 1. Dominante in A wird. Diese Funktionsänderung bringt eine Verarmung der Kadenz und eine Verwischung des Funktionsbewußtseins mit sich, weil ja die 2. Dominante durch den Doppelleittonklang von E ersetzt wird. [...] Nach der alten Hörweise hieß es: Molltonika, 2. Dominante, 1. Dominante in a-moll. Nach der neuen muß es lauten: Moll-tonika, 1. Dominante als Doppelleittonklang, 1. Dominante in a-moll"; ibid., 25.

37 The "GB Formel" is a generic way of drawing significance to upward motion by minor third ("B" meaning B♭, of course). The inversion of GB is "BG," meaning a motion down by minor third.

38 Scharschuch, *Gesamtanalyse zur Harmonik*, 26.

opening seventeen measures begin on the tonic, move through an expanded primary dominant (with excursion to the second upper dominant), and conclude on a deceptive cadence.

Turning to Chailley, one might think based on my earlier description of his analytical outlook that he would stick to a traditional view of the TIC, whether it follows Kurth's interpretation as an altered secondary dominant or D'Indy's/Lorenz's analysis as a subdominant chord.[39] But he does no such thing. Instead, Chailley eschews giving the TIC a harmonic status at all, and he opts to read the opening two measures as a simple succession of I to V, with no intervening harmony (as shown in Example 2b, above). For him, mm. 2–3 of the score represent a single chordal moment, an E chord, which involves two kinds of embellishment: appoggiaturas on F–E and D♯–D in m. 2; and two passing tones in the melody across mm. 2–3, A–A♯.

Chailley shows the rationale for his interpretation in a five-fold breakdown of the phenomenon (see Example 5). Were Wagner to follow eighteenth-century practice, Chailley argues, he might have even used genuine appoggiatura notes (which he provides underneath).[40] Chailley then goes on to offer a number of counter examples to the TIC, which similarly demonstrate the derivational thinking at play in Chailley's work (see Example 6). For instance, Chailley shows the possibility of a diminished seventh chord (at "a"), but he argues that interpreting the bass note F as a chord tone results in the same situation as he proposes, since F is ultimately an appoggiatura to E. He also acknowledges the attempt to break up the event into two chordal moments, whereby a harmonic motion II–V (at "b") or IV–V (at "c") occurs. But here too Chailley explains that these interpretations ultimately have to acknowledge the appoggiatura-like character of the passage. The TIC, by Chailley's account, is an appoggiatura chord, and in no way a functional harmony onto itself. This confirms Chailley's notion of the "essential consonance" ("consonance de base") at play in his work: "Every page of music can be reduced to the essential consonances valid for the style of the passage studied [...] Chords thus distilled achieve for themselves a tonal sense, which any analysis will have to make visible."[41]

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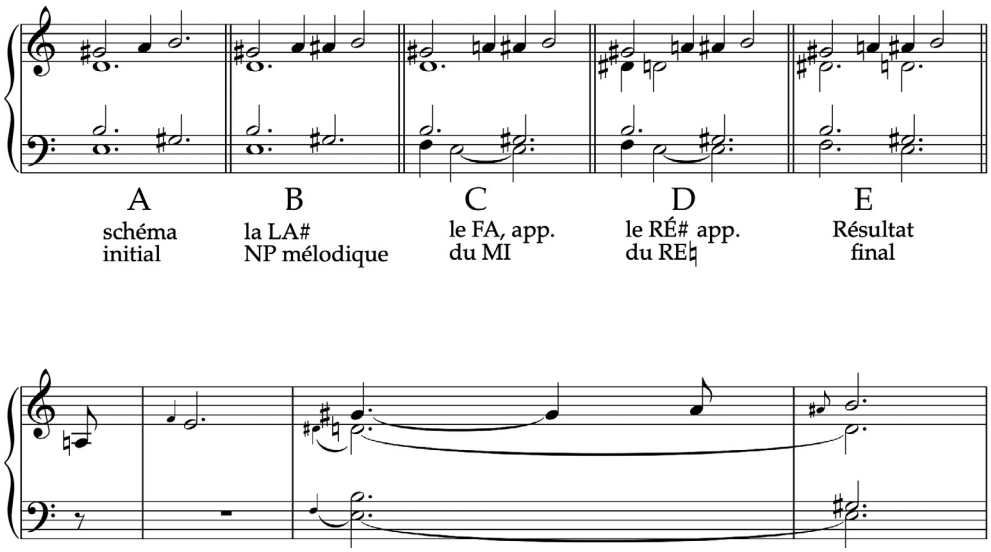
39 See also Martin, "The Tristan Chord Resolved," 12, n. 10, for a description of Chailley's harmonic reduction of the TIC as possibly a misreading of Louis and Thuille's approach to the chord.

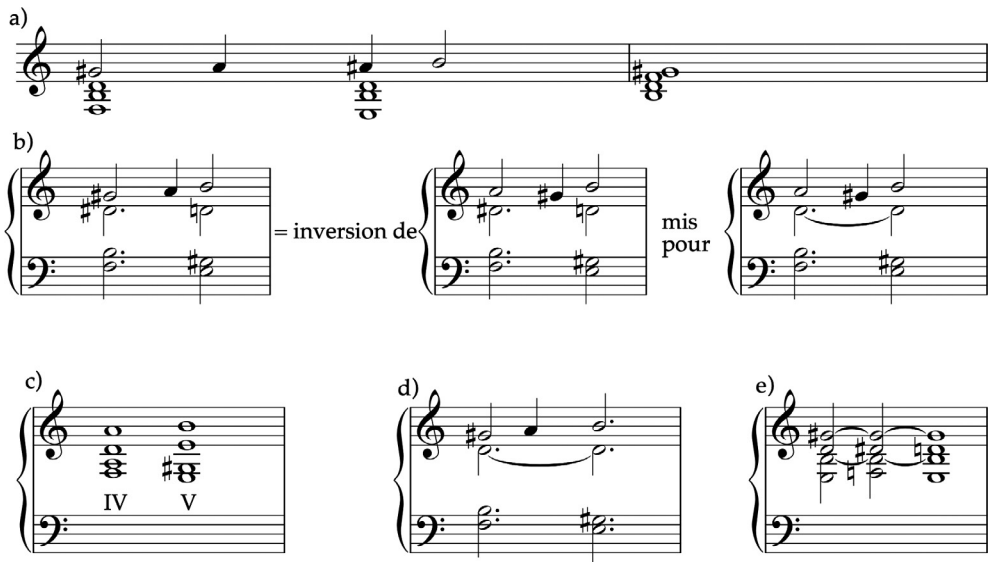
40 Though space does not permit it, a further point of comparison can be drawn between Chailley's approach to the TIC with the one discussed by John Rothgeb in 1995. See Rothgeb, "The Tristan Chord: Identity and Origin," *Music Theory Online* 1/1 (1995), https://mtosmt.org/issues/mto.95.1.1/mto.95.1.1.rothgeb.html. Nicolas Meeùs has also discussed points of correspondence between Chailley's approach to harmonic analysis and a Schenkerian approach, which is certainly evident in Chailley's understanding of the TIC; see Meeùs, "Chailley, Schoenberg, Schenker," *Musurgia* 19/1–3 (2012), 81–90, https://doi.org/10.3917/musur.121.0081.

41 "Toute page de musique peut, par simplifications successives, se ramener aux consonance de base valables pour le style du passage étudié. [...] Les accords ainsi décantés prennent d'eux mêmes un sens tonal que l'analyse devra faire apparaître"; Chailley, *Traité historique d'analyse musicale* (1951), 95, cited in Meeùs, "Chailley, Schoenberg, Schenker," 84.

Example 5: Jacques Chailley's 1963 analysis of the TIC

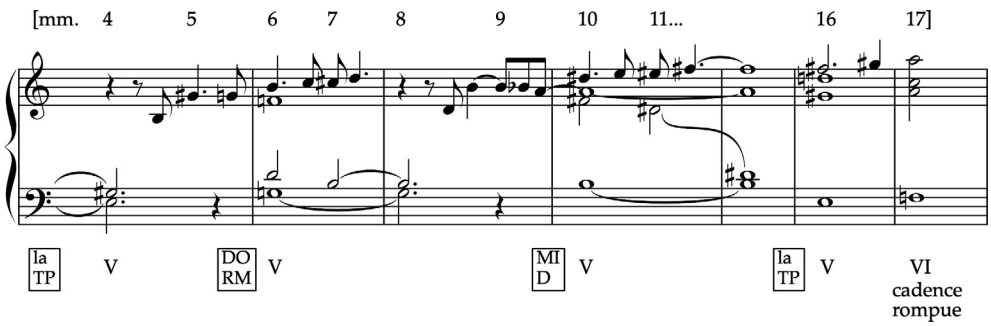


Example 6: Chailley's counter analyses of the TIC



Chailley's analysis of the rest of the opening (shown in Example 7) follows the same logic as that of mm. 2–3: the music moves through "distilled" dominant sonorities on G and B, and it concludes (predictably) with the V–VI deceptive motion at mm. 16–17 back in the principal key of A minor. While the second occurrence of the TIC (m. 6) involves the same interpretation of the respective notes involved (A♭ and F♯ as appoggiaturas in

Example 7: Chailley's analysis of mm. 4–17



the lower and middle parts, C and C♯ as passing tones in the upper part),[42] the third and final occurrence (m. 10) involves a bit of analytical gymnastics on Chailley's part. Like the previous two statements, this third one is also conceived as an expanded dominant chord, this time on B (V of E). But here Chailley must completely alter the way in which appoggiaturas and passing tones function. To do so, he transforms the rising major third of the upper voice into a minor one (starting on D♯ instead of D♮), replaces the F♮ of the score with F♯, and elides the G♯ by tying over the note A of m. 9 into m. 10 (presumably as an anticipation), all without comment.[43] In fact, only one of notes of the actual chord follows the same logic as the previous two progressions, the bass motion C–B (mm. 10–11). But the point is nonetheless clear: Chailley has deprived the TIC of any harmonic significance and reduced the essential harmonic progression of mm. 1–17 to a series of "prolonged" dominant sonorities in the local keys of A minor, C major, and E major.[44]

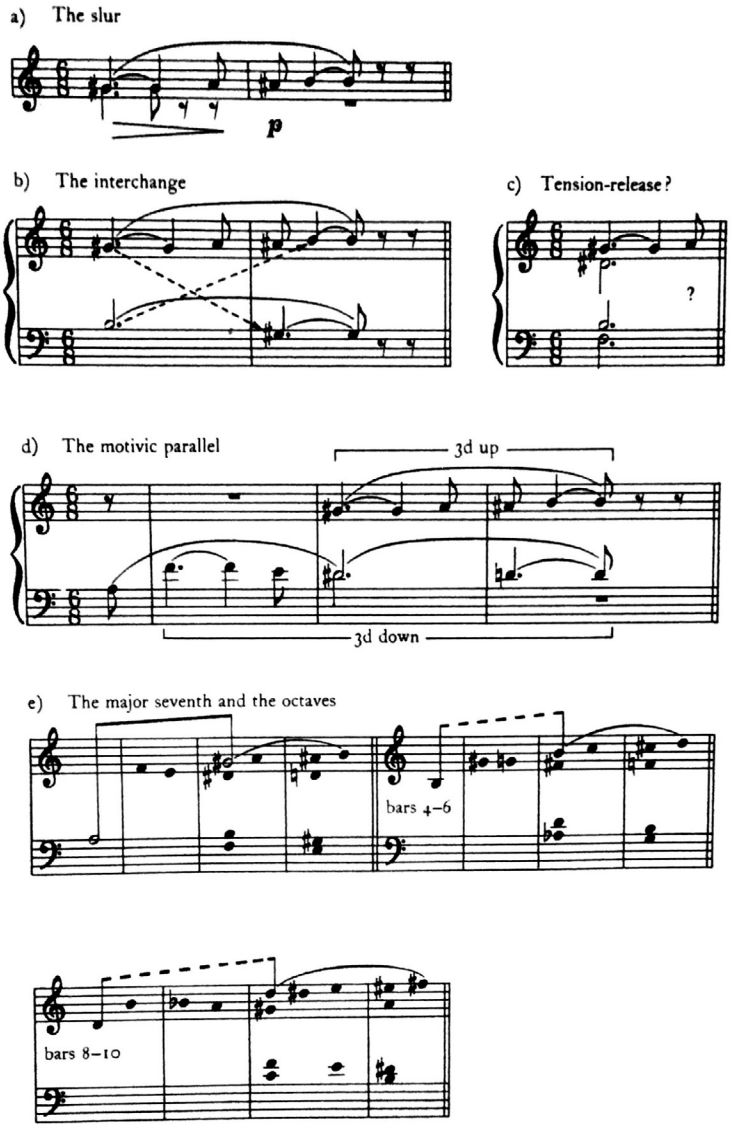
Mitchell's analysis of the TIC proceeds along lines similar to those of Scharschuch and Chailley, in that he both takes G♯ instead of A as a chord tone (not an uncommon position) and denies the TIC a distinct harmonic status (quite uncommon). To begin with, Mitchell justifies his decision to choose G♯ as a chord tone instead of A by noting a number of aspects about the opening, as illustrated in Example 8 (Mitchell's Example 6). First amongst these is the slur in the oboe line connecting G♯ to B (at "a"), which carries a different meaning than the typical two-note slur that accompanies a traditional appoggiatura figure. The sense of this composed-out minor third is then strengthened by the "inter-

42 "DO" refers to the local key of C major, and "RM" stands for *relatif majeur* (relative major), in relation to A minor.

43 In his text, Chailley simply explains that "the reprise is modified such that the phrase leads not to E♭ minor (a remote relation to the principal key) but to the [local] key of E, dominant of the principal key" ("La reprise est modifiée, de manière à mener la phrase non vers *mi bémol* [rapport tonal éloigné avec le TP] mais vers le ton de *mi*, D du TP"); Chailley, *Tristan et Isolde*, 35.

44 By "prolonged," I am not referring to the strictly Schenkerian sense of the term (as transformational layers), but rather to the word's generic meaning as extending the duration of an object (in this case, a chord).

Example 8: Mitchell's analysis of the TIC



change" that takes place between the upper and middle voices at "b": G♯–B against B–G♯. These reasons alone would question the wisdom of interpreting G♯ as a non-chord tone, but so too would the sheer sonic quality of G♯ as opposed to A above the supporting chord, the latter of which actually creates a more dissonant effect than the former (shown at "c"). Then leaning on his Schenkerian thinking, Mitchell posits a motivic association between the ascending chromatic minor third G♯–B and the descending chromatic minor third

F–D (at "d"), which begins in the celli and concludes in the English horn. And last but not least, Mitchell explains that the G♯ of m. 2 forms a deeper melodic connection with the initial upbeat A (shown at "e"), which is a way of forming a link to his graphic analysis. That analysis, as we will see below, depends greatly on the chordal status of the G♯, just as it did on the harmonic status of the note A as representing a tonic chord in m. 1.

Setting him apart from his German and French counterparts, and consistent with his rationale for assuming an A minor chord at m. 1, Mitchell uses the notion of transformational counterpoint to understand the TIC at m. 2. Since he has justified G♯ as a chord tone, Mitchell can now derive the TIC from a fully diminished seventh chord (in $^{4}_{2}$ position), whereby D♯ acts as a chromatic alteration of D♮, instead of as an appoggiatura, as Chailley reads it. As his graph shows (see Example 9, Mitchell's Example 4), the TIC has a purely contrapuntal function. The bass voice F acts as upper neighbor to E (shown at level c), the soprano and tenor voices take part in a voice exchange (level a), and the alto completes the chromatic descent by third to D, temporarily stopping on D♯ (also at level a). Thus, the TIC is imbued with contrapuntal significance, even on a local level. In other words, the only harmony at play for Mitchell in mm. 2–3 is an E chord (labeled "V" at level b), just as it is for Scharschuch and Chailley, but again for reasons that have virtually nothing to do with them.

In his text, Mitchell entertains the notion of the TIC as being derived from a chord based on II (in his view, the "prevailing contemporary analysis"),[45] but he resists this reading on the grounds of his conviction that the TIC in itself does not carry any "harmonic function" in progressing to V. "Nothing," he writes, "that Wagner does with the chord suggests such a harmonic 'functional' analysis.[46] He even justifies his decision on historical grounds, presumably thinking about the analyses of Salomon Jadassohn and Cyrill Kistler, both of whom view the TIC as an altered diminished seventh chord, albeit in different keys (see Table 1, above).[47]

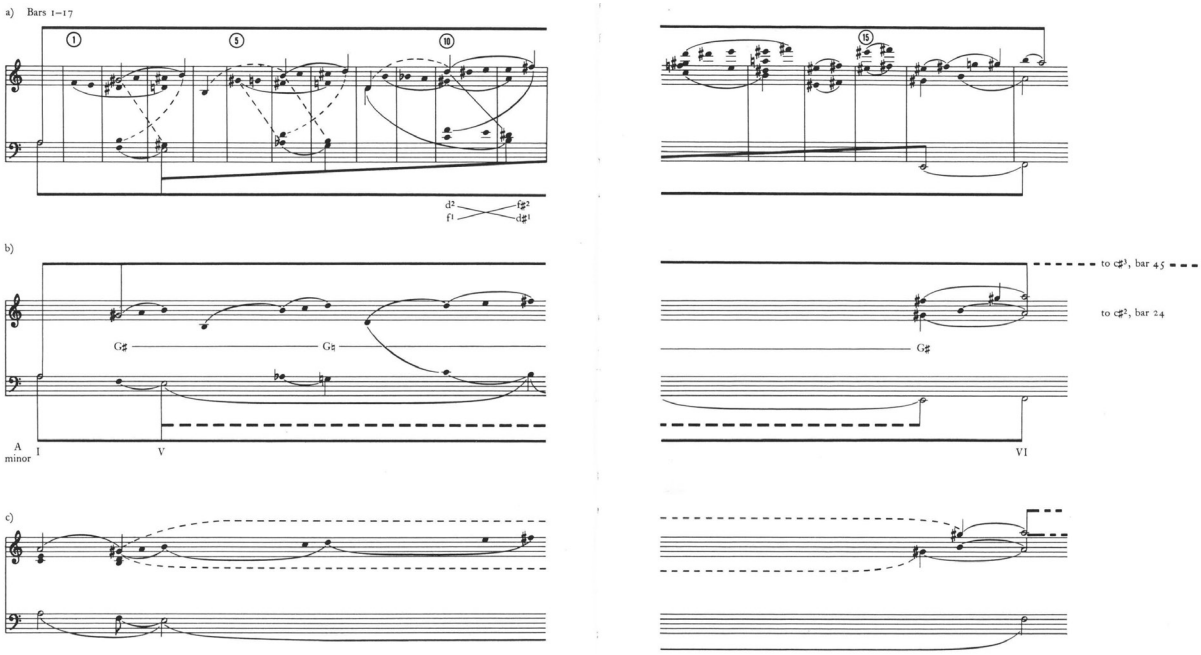
The consequences to Mitchell's reading of the TIC become even more apparent as we look further at his graph. Not only is the V chord of m. 3 read across most of the opening phrase (as an arpeggiation of an E chord involving mixture, see level b), but the accompanying upper-voice prolongation consists of a middleground ascending register transfer from g♯^{1} to g♯^{2} filled in by a stepwise line (most easily seen at level c). Thus, Mitchell's decision to interpret the G♯ of m. 2 as a chord tone goes far beyond its local harmonic

45 Mitchell, "The Tristan Prelude," 174.

46 Ibid.

47 Mitchell cites Lorenz's book, where Jadassohn, Kistler, and others are briefly discussed; the relevant passage can be found in Bailey, *Wagner: Prelude and Transfiguration from Tristan and Isolde*, 220–23.

Example 9: Mitchell's middleground graph of the Prelude, mm. 1–17



significance to become part of a deeper upper-voice progression A–G♯–A spanning the entirety of the opening phrase.[48]

3. TAKING STOCK (AND ADDING YET ANOTHER INTERPRETATION OF THE TIC)

Of course, we could go much further in seeking deeper points of comparison between our authors, or by bringing in new authors. We could ask ourselves how such analyses are the same, or how they are different, but I think it is more relevant to ask what effect they have on us as readers of analysis and listeners to Wagner's opera. One way of answering this might again be to draw on a dialogic understanding: that is, to acknowledge a type of unity-effect presented by a single interpretation or through a comparison of interpretations, but then to begin to seek the heterogeneous ways in which analyses interact with one another and play with our aural and intellectual sensibilities. In the selective case presented in this article, the interest that Scharschuch, Chailley, and Mitchell shared (unbeknownst to them) in fusing mm. 2–3 into a single harmony, and the unity-effect simulated in com-

48 For a more extensive discussion of Mitchell's analysis in relation to the history of Schenkerian analyses of Wagner's Prelude, see John Koslovsky, "Schenkerizing *Tristan*, Past and Present," *Journal of Schenkerian Studies* 12 (2019), 1–54.

paring those interests, are offset by the heterogeneity of approaches and traditions they employed, as well as by the deeper analytical and historiographic consequences they drew from their respective readings.

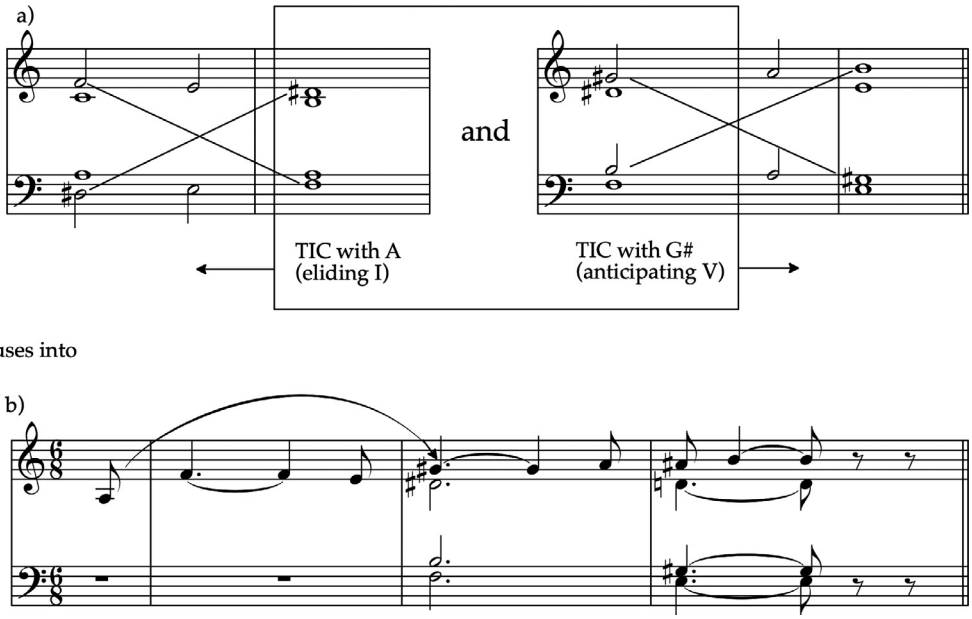
This paper has offered but a glimpse of a much larger issue, but it should at least be clear from the foregoing discussion that any analysis has the potential to be read against any other; this can be done as a way of opening up a space in which the ideas, the language, and the symbols within analytical texts can be brought into contact with one another, permitting novel ways of exploring historiography and intertextuality in music theoretical scholarship. However we wish to view the authors described above, the effect their analyses have on us needs to be seen as partly language-determinant, and partly as reflective of our own theoretical and historical outlook. Certainly, we can critique them, or prefer one over another, but only after we recognize the contingencies on which we base such critique. In doing so we begin to build a larger intertext around an analytical idea, which will always remain a kind of open door for new analytical intertexts to form. After all, music analysis is a creative and interpretive act, one in a continual process of alteration, renewal, rethinking, and development.

In examining the three analyses discussed in this paper, I imagine that many readers would conclude that Scharschuch's, Chailley's, and Mitchell's interpretations of the TIC are equally radical (and therefore misguided) in their denial of the chord's harmonic status. At the same time, I imagine that little issue would be made of the way they all interpret m. 1 + upbeat as a tonic sonority. To add my own voice to the cacophony of interpretations (and by way of closing this paper), I would like to propose a slightly different approach to the events that open Wagner's masterpiece, beginning not with m. 2 but in fact with m. 1. As I see it, analysts all too quickly assume that a piece must begin with a tonic sonority: when there is no literal sounding chord, we usually imply a tonic. But a piece need not begin on its presumed tonic (as numerous examples across the literature show)—after all, there is no reason to assume a tonic *a priori*, especially in a piece that so determinately avoids tonic function at just about every turn.[49]

Instead of a "tonic" chord at m. 1, I would entertain another possibility: that some aspect of the TIC, however faint, is already at work in this measure. That aspect, namely, is the inversion of the all-important augmented sixth F–D♯. Example 10 offers my interpretation. As the model at letter "a" shows, the TIC comes about by means of a conceptual voice exchange between D♯ and F in the outer voices. This voice exchange anticipates the more literal voice exchange that takes place in mm. 2 and 3 between G♯ and B. Important-

49 Ludwig Holtmeier also questions the assertion of tonic harmony at the opening of the Prelude. See Holtmeier, "Der Tristanakkord und die Neue Funktionstheorie," 363.

Example 10: Yet another interpretation of the TIC



ly, the upbeat A is interpreted not as a bass voice (as in Mitchell's reading), nor even as a note of a "tonic" chord, but instead as an essential inner voice that fills out the diminished third D♯–F and transfers to the upper G♯ on the downbeat of m. 2 (as shown at letter "b"). Obviously, only two of the "voices" of this opening voice exchange are literally present—if desired, the middle voice C could be left out altogether, though its removal would contradict the inevitable four-voice texture that results in m. 2. But despite its conceptual underpinning, this reading has the benefit of "hearing" the events of m. 1 (including its upbeat) as an anticipation of the TIC, thus contributing to the harmonic instability of the passage as a whole. It also privileges the idea that Wagner's opera has no discrete starting point, but rather emerges as if *in medias res*.[50]

And finally, instead of being forced to choose between G♯ or A, my reading allows both notes to exert a chordal status at m. 2, albeit on different temporal planes. On the one hand, the conceptual voice exchange in m. 1 necessitates the essential inner voice A in m. 2, lest parallel fifths occur between the tenor and soprano voices (A/E–G♯/D♯). In the spirit highlighting the emergent quality of the music, the example further shows how

50 I take my cue here in part from L. Poundie Burstein's idea that "[t]he Prelude does sound as though it starts in the midst of something and ends uncompleted"; see Burstein, "A New View of Tristan: Tonal Unity in the Prelude and Conclusion to Act I," *Theory & Practice* 8/1 (1983), 24. A more detailed discussion of Burstein's analysis can be found in Koslovsky, "Schenkerizing *Tristan*, Past and Present."

the tonic chord is elided and the TIC projected backwards, as if it had been present in some form all along. On the other hand, G♯'s role as a chord tone emerges when it is projected forward as an anticipation of the dominant sonority of m. 3.[51] This interpretation in fact partly reinforces the readings of Scharschuch, Chailley, and Mitchell, in that the E chord of m. 3 is, on some phenomenological level, already present in m. 2. Another unity-effect, perhaps, but again one imbued with an irreducible heterogeneity. And with this last tentative step into the morass of interpretations of the TIC, I hope to have further underscored the musical *and* analytical heteroglossia inherent in m. 2, and to have suggested a way to hear Wagner's chord as the intertwining of opera's two greatest lovers, Tristan *and* Isolde.

51 For simplicity's sake, I have removed the D♮ of m. 3 in the model, since it represents a transformation of the normative resolution from D♯ to E.

Abstract

Whether or not the Prelude to Richard Wagner's 1859 music drama *Tristan und Isolde* is the most analyzed piece in the history of Western music, owing to its ongoing canonical status, it behooves us to consider how it has affected the field of music analysis over the past 150 years. More than any other piece, Wagner's Prelude is able to expose the many conflicts that arise between analytical approaches: while it can demonstrate the limits of one particular approach vis-à-vis another, it may also reveal new potentialities that divergent analyses offer when seen from an intertextual point of view.

As a test case, this article will position three contemporaneous analyses of the opening measures of the Prelude against one another: Horst Scharschuch's post-Riemannian harmonic analysis and Jacques Chailley's style-historical analysis, both from 1963, and William Mitchell's Schenkerian analysis of 1967. Drawing on Mikhail Bakhtin's concepts of "dialogism" and "heteroglossia," I will trace a broader historiographical and intertextual network surrounding the history of analyzing *Tristan*, with the goal of refocusing our analytical priorities around this work and penetrating the continuities and discontinuities between competing analyses. In this way, the article aims at opening up a further dialogic space in music analysis, both in our historical considerations and in the way we approach analysis as an intertext—that is, by traversing the fissures in the reified verities of a "unified" analysis and the multiple interpretative transpositions underlying our deciphering of analytical texts. It will conclude by offering yet another interpretation of Wagner's famous chord.

About the Author

John Koslovsky is on the music theory faculty at the Conservatorium van Amsterdam and is an affiliate researcher in the humanities at Utrecht University. His research deals with the history of Schenkerian theory, music analysis, and the history of music theory more generally. He is currently co-editing (with Michiel Schuijer) a book on performance theory entitled *Researching Performance, Performing Research* and is engaged in his own book project dealing with Felix Salzer's work and its impact on post-World War II music theory. He is a member of the *Schenker Documents Online* project and the former president of the Dutch-Flemish Society for Music Theory.