

ONLINE PUBLICATION: REFLECTIONS ON THE RECENT PAST, POSSIBILITIES FOR THE NEAR FUTURE

BY WILLIAM M. MARVIN

IN JANUARY 2016, I was invited to serve as co-editor of the *Journal of Music Theory Pedagogy*. At the time, it was impossible for me to know that the following year, I would be the sole editor of the journal, collaborating with colleagues on the transition from hard-copy volumes to an open-access, online delivery system. Also unexpected was the subsequent merging of two publications: the formerly-print journal, with its own editorial board and procedures, and the electronic *Journal of Music Theory Pedagogy Online*. Presumably it is this experience which led the editors of *Intégral* to invite my participation in this inaugural issue of their new online platform for the journal.

In this brief essay, my goals are to examine some of the advantages, opportunities, and challenges presented by online publication in recent years, as exemplified by articles in *Music Theory Online*, *Engaging Students*, and the *Journal of Music Theory Pedagogy*. Attractive online graphics, animated or video examples, embedded sound files, and ever-improving technologies are just a few of the obvious advantages that an online platform offers in comparison to print media. And yet, rapid technological change can render online delivery obsolete quite quickly, presenting problems that require frequent updates in order to maintain functionality for researchers. I also offer observations on future research possibilities that an online platform delivers more effectively than print media. Some of these advantages have been fully embraced in all currently available refereed and self-published online platforms, while others remain possibilities for the near future.

1. MUSIC THEORY ONLINE (MTO)

The initial volume of *Music Theory Online* (Volume 0, Number 1) was published in February 1993 and features a single article by David Neumeyer.¹ The earliest issues of MTO were distributed via listserv, and they were retrofitted for web delivery at a later date. Today, the journal has embraced both HTML and PDF formatting for all articles, which allows readers either the advantages of printed and savable copies from the PDF, or the freedom to follow hyperlinks and visually re-size charts and examples in a web browser through HTML. The journal has also embraced improved image quality, animated images, and embedded sound files as these technologies became available, allowing authors to take advantage of these possibilities.² In brief, MTO's dual formatting offers the best of both worlds for readers and scholars: the online HTML and on-screen PDF formats both support fully searchable text (a boon for researchers) and hyperlinks to other online citations.

2. ENGAGING STUDENTS

Engaging Students: Essays in Music Pedagogy emerged in 2013, and six volumes have been issued to date. (The term “volume” itself is a vestige of print-origin publication within our field, despite the fact that neither *Engaging Students* nor MTO were ever available in printed format). Kris Shaffer and Bryn Hughes are listed as the “coordinators”

¹ For retrospective analyses of the early history of MTO, see Rothfarb 2014 and Isaacson 2014. The editor's introduction to MTO 0.1 is currently (November 2019) inaccessible due to a broken link.

² Dodson 2012 showcases all of these technologies.

of the initial volume, and the journal has marketed itself as presenting “short essays on the subject of student-centered learning,” and serving “as an open-access, web-based resource for those teaching college-level classes in music” (<http://flipcamp.org/engagingstudents/>).

From the beginning, *Engaging Students* embraced web delivery rather than print-based presentation; while readers can choose to print articles from the web pages, and they seem to maintain their format reasonably well when printed (certainly better than articles or recipes from, e.g., *The New York Times*), the power of *Engaging Students* lies in the elegant use of embedded hyperlinks and attractive graphics, features exclusive to the online format. Bibliographies are cumulative for the annual volume, rather than attached directly to each individual essay, and thus a printed version of the article loses some referential utility for the reader. Unfortunately, due to the notorious instability of web address locations, many of the links embedded in the articles result in dead ends for the reader. Here I include most of the references to *Journal of Music Theory Pedagogy* articles, the history of whose online presence will be discussed below. While many of these links could be updated and repaired, it is fully understandable that the volunteer staffing of most academic publications renders the time and effort required for such an ongoing effort a low priority. That said, the non-functionality of hyperlinks creates a serious problem for researchers, who rely on this electronic version of chasing footnotes to verify research claims and gain command of prior research within a defined topic. I would urge the editorial staffs of online journals to find ways of addressing this problem in an ongoing way. Adopting the DOI protocol for stable web addresses provides one way to move forward successfully with these initiatives.

3. JOURNAL OF MUSIC THEORY PEDAGOGY (JMTP) AND “MUSIC THEORY PEDAGOGY ONLINE” (MTPO): MERGING AND REDESIGN

The *Journal of Music Theory Pedagogy* first appeared as a peer-reviewed print journal in 1987; it was and continues to be a publication of the Gail Boyd de Stwolinski Center for Music Theory Pedagogy.³ The first five volumes of the journal were biannual publications; thereafter the journal moved to a single volume per year. The online presence of *Journal of Music Theory Pedagogy*, alluded to above, reveals a complicated history. The website “Music Theory Pedagogy Online” first appeared in September 2012, housed on a server at the University of Oklahoma. The site was available via subscription, which provided users with access to

all back issues of the print *Journal of Music Theory Pedagogy* as well as fresh content related to the new e-journal, which posted its initial articles in 2013. Steven Laitz served both as editor of the print journal and as executive editor of the e-journal.⁴ In 2013, Jennifer Snodgrass oversaw a major initiative on behalf of the Center: a migration of the website from its server at the University of Oklahoma to its current home at Appalachian State University. A second migration, resulting in another change of web addresses for all materials, took place within Appalachian State from one server to another in June 2018. Shortly after the first migration, a major change in the operations of the journal was instituted: the new website became an open-access portal to all content, and every past and current issue of *JMTP* has been available at no charge since 2015.

The Stwolinski Center continued to publish printed copies of *JMTP* through Volume 29 (2015). One unforeseen aspect of the web migrations is that neither of the earlier sites for *MTPO* provided online redirection to the newer sites; as a result, any older embedded hyperlinks or printed URLs citing either journal result in broken links for users. While there were additional bumps in the road as a result of all of these infrastructure changes, the move to open access has been overwhelmingly positive, as measured in site visits, downloads, citations of *JMTP* articles, as well as quality and number of submissions to the journal.

It quickly became obvious that the distinction between the formerly-printed *JMTP* and the online *JMTP E-journal* had become artificial and confusing for contributors, readers, and editors alike. Thus, Steven Laitz, Jennifer Snodgrass, and I decided that the 2017 volumes would mark the final year in which the two journals functioned as separate publications and planned a merger for the 2018 volume of the combined journals. We also determined that the formatting of the print journal was no longer suitable for online delivery, and the Center authorized me to contract Christopher Winders as the new Production Manager for the online publication. The new design of the journal was unveiled with Volume 31 (2017); in addition to formatting that is more appropriate to online viewing (yet maintains printer-friendly options), embedded web links are now a regular feature of articles and bibliographical citations. The merger of the two journals was achieved as planned, with *JMTP E-journal* content situated in Volume 32 of *JMTP* under the heading “Pedagogy into Practice.”⁵

³ Hosted by Appalachian State University in Boone, NC, and formerly hosted by the University of Oklahoma in Norman, OK.

⁴ The citation of e-journal articles has been a source of confusion over the years. Articles have been cited variously as *Journal of Music Theory Pedagogy E-journal*, *Journal of Music Theory Pedagogy Online*, and *Music Theory Pedagogy Online*.

⁵ In future issues we have decided on a more seamless merging of journal content, treating *JMTP* as a single unified publication platform.

HOPES FOR THE FUTURE

In the realm of pedagogical scholarship, we are currently in the midst of a deeply self-reflective period, where the most basic aspects of what types of music theory and repertoire should be part of the curriculum are being questioned. In tandem with this, modes of delivery and reflection on student learning outcomes are being examined more critically than ever before. (In many ways, music theory has arrived at this moment far later than other disciplines: musicology underwent similar self-examination in the 1980s and 1990s, as did literary criticism in the 1960s and 1970s). The online format offers new and exciting options for instructors who have developed digital modes of delivery in their classroom, with PowerPoint or Keynote presentations showcasing embedded graphics and sound files now being a regular feature of many instructors' lesson plans.⁶ Such elements are already appearing in conference presentations, and it will soon be much easier for authors to convert presentations to publications, given that the limitations of print publication no longer apply.

Thus far, *JMTP* has been relatively modest in its embrace of the newer possibilities available through online delivery. Perhaps the most notable examples to date are Edward Pearsall's (2017) use of animated examples with sound, which model the stages of building a successful Schenkerian analysis, and an essay by Robert Wason (2018), which is published both in a traditional text version (with color images) and also as a PowerPoint lecture/slide show with embedded voice-over audio. The forthcoming issue of *JMTP* will feature articles that include embedded/linked video as well as more color images and embedded links. From this brief listing, it is clear that *JMTP*'s origin as a print journal continues to affect how contributors view suitable content for submission, but we expect this to change over the next several volumes.

Hints from elsewhere in academic publishing offer a number of ideas for scholars to incorporate into future submissions. University press publishers offer online supplements to published monographs and textbooks that provide fertile ground for scholars' imaginations in recasting the published article. An especially successful example of this is Edward Klorman's award-winning *Mozart's Music of Friends: Social Interplay in the Chamber Works*. In addition to a brief introductory video in which the author speaks about his book, Cambridge's comprehensive supplemental website offers high-quality color images reproduced in black and white within the text, primary source documents referred to in the text, and annotated scores with recordings by the author and other artists for the works analyzed in

the text.⁷ All of these would simply be impossible to deliver within the confines of print media. More specifically to the issue of recordings: given the nature of music analysis, it is clear that recorded examples of works analyzed, or of analytic demonstrations themselves, will soon become a regular feature in published articles, as they have become in textbooks. (Sound files have long been an ancillary element of textbooks, which featured supplementary LPs, cassettes, and compact discs before online sound-file delivery through a password-protected website became today's model).⁸

Bibliographical sources offer additional possibilities for future online publication. The ongoing "Schenker Documents Online" project is a model for scholars interested in creating searchable databases related to primary source documents and translations, and the interface should offer ideas for scholars in the history of theory, corpus studies, and other applications.⁹ Turning to print bibliographies, it should be obvious to anyone who has ever relied on them that the onward march of scholarly productivity renders them out of date upon publication; an online database with hyperlinks could be continuously updated in a far more cost-effective and user-friendly manner than newly updated printed editions.¹⁰

Intégral now joins the growing number of publications moving away from print formatting to an exclusively online presence. My best wishes to the editorial staff as they initiate this new chapter in the ongoing history of this journal.

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⁷ Klorman 2016. Embedded musical performances are also found in Klorman 2018, to select one example among many. Jeffrey Swinkin references Klorman's videos as an inspiration for his own foray into animated scores in his article in this volume of *Intégral*.

⁸ For two examples of textbook sound file delivery, see Clendinning and Marvin 2016 and Laitz 2016 and their associated publisher's websites.

⁹ For a review of "Schenker Documents Online," see Marvin 2017.

¹⁰ Marvin (2006, 135–136) expressed a similar wish, but with the now quaint-sounding hope that future bibliographies would be published as searchable CD-ROMs.

⁶ Seth Monahan's ongoing series of self-published YouTube videos provide an impressive model for the possibilities suggested here.

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