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To do justice to Arnold's enviable legacy, we should reverse the tendency towards the de-skilling of a discipline

During the contributions to Arnold Whittall's 80th birthday colloquium at King's College, London, Jonathan Cross linked two events: Arnold's appointment as the first Professor of Theory and Analysis in 1982, and later in the decade the purported expansion of musicology to incorporate issues of gender, sexuality and race, methodologies from sociology, anthropology, cultural studies and elsewhere, and greater focus on popular musics and other traditions outside of Western art music. Some of the latter phenomena are associated with the so-called 'new musicology' in the US and its slightly milder counterpart 'critical musicology' in the UK.

All of these were portrayed by Cross as a general broadening of the discipline, a welcome infusion of increased diversity of subject and methodology, a natural step forward. But an academic field now in large measure antipathetic to claims of musical autonomy seems nonetheless to claim a fair degree of autonomy for its own trajectory, in a way I find implausible and even disingenuous. There may be some common determinants underlying all these apparent broadenings of the field, and both systematic analysis and the new musicology have been opposed by conservatives such as Peter Williams. Nonetheless, the wider ideologies underlying these disparate developments can be quite antagonistic, as was certainly made clear in an important interview between Arnold and Jonathan Dunsby published in *Music Analysis* (Vol. 14, No. 2/3 (Jul. – Oct., 1995), pp. 131-139) for the former's 60th birthday.

The 'new musicology' is frequently argued to have been inaugurated with the publication of Joseph Kerman's *Contemplating Music* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985) (UK title *Musicology*). Despite being replete with factual errors, Kerman's appeal to a musicological inferiority complex, a field presented as trailing far behind other disciplines in terms of adoption of ideas from phenomenology, post-structuralism, feminism and more, not to mention his negative view of both musical modernism and historically-informed performance, as well as residual anti-German prejudice, would prove very influential.

But Kerman was also the author of the polemical 'How We Got into Analysis, and How to Get out' (*Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (Winter 1980), pp. 331-331), absolutely at odds with what Arnold was advocating and aiming for at around the same time. The contexts for these two musicologists were very different: Kerman was responding to a particular North American situation (though he was shameless in extrapolating universal pronouncements from a rather provincial perspective), with a much starker distinction between 'historians' and 'theorists' than in the UK. In the US, a heavily mediated rendition of Schenker's work had flowered since 1931 through his student Hans Weisse, and in the early post-war era through other students Felix Salzer and Oswald Jonas, whilst other intense analytical approaches had been developed by Rudolph Réti, Milton Babbitt, Allen Forte, George Perle, David Lewin and others. In the UK, on the other hand, as Arnold would note in a 1980 article ('Musicology in Great Britain since 1945. III. Analysis', *Acta Musicologica*, Vol. 52, Fasc. 1 (Jan. – Jun. 1980), pp. 57-62), systematic analysis had made little advance, despite a gauntlet having been set down by Ian Bent's advocacy at the Congress of the International Musicological Society in 1972. What did exist – through some interest in Réti's work, the 'functional analysis' of Hans Keller, and a smattering of other work from Alan Walker, David Osmond Smith and a few others - was occasional and patchy, and this was undoubtedly a major factor in Arnold's co-

founding, in 1982, the journal *Music Analysis* together with Jonathan Dunsby, with whom he would author what remains the leading general textbook on analysis in English six years later. The subject has continued to grow and develop, with excellent work from UK academics, such as Matthew Riley's studies on Haydn and Mozart, Michael Spitzer's work on the affective function of gesture, Nicholas Cook on analysis and performance, or Allan Moore's work on rock, but it is difficult in 2015 to see analysis as having attained a central position in musicology as might have seemed possible in 1982. Various musicologists who assumed prominent positions from the 1990s onwards have made no secret of their disdain for this sub-discipline, sometimes inspired by American writings of a similar ideological persuasion.

Assumptions of autonomous development of the discipline in the 1980s and 1990s are belied by issues such as the wider politics of education from the Thatcher years onwards. These entailed cuts in musical provision in schools, the 1992 removal of the formal distinction between universities and polytechnics, and then expansion of student numbers. After a doubling of the number of students (in all subjects) between 1963 and 1970 following the Robbins Report, numbers remained static until the late 1980s, when during a period of around a decade student numbers practically doubled from 17% in 1987 to 33% in 1997, then rose steadily to peak at 49% in 2011. This move from an elite to a mass educational system occurred in parallel with attempts to erase the very real differences in preparedness and background amongst students at different types of institutions, with a net levelling effect upon many.

Much of the new embrace of popular music had less to do with genuine diversification than an enforced denial of very real differences of various forms of musical production's relationship to the marketplace. One of Thatcher's neoliberal mantras, 'There Is No Alternative' (TINA) was echoed by many a musicologist scornful of any possible value in state-subsidised musical activity thus able to operate with a degree of autonomy from short-term market utility. As subsidy is rare or minimal in the US, this ideology was convenient for American musicologists eager to claim some radical credentials through valorisation of the commercial whilst still appearing patriotic; it was disappointing to see so much of this ideology imported wholesale in the UK, a country with a modest level of subsidy for music compared to its continental European counterparts.

I had always thought of music, at a tertiary level, as a highly skilled discipline for those who have already developed and refined musicianship prior to entering university. This belief may reflect a background in a specialist music school in which, if nothing else, the teaching of fundamental musical skills was rigorous and thorough. Nonetheless, the importance of not allowing music slip to become a 'soft' subject requiring only nominal prior skills (and, as with much work in the realm of cultural studies, not requiring any particular artistic disciplinary expertise or extended knowledge) is to me self-evident. But with declining primary and secondary musical educational provision, frequently the extent of such prior skills amongst students can be quite elementary.

Furthermore, following the trebling of tuition fees in 2012 and other measures removing caps on recruitment, higher education has become a more ruthlessly competitive market with institutions fighting to attract and keep students. This is the context from which we should view the growth in many departments of types of popular music studies, film music studies, cultural studies, and some varieties of ethnomusicology, in which engagement with sounding music is a secondary or even non-existent concern. Such focus enables the

production of modules which can be undertaken by those students with limited prior skills, but militates against musical analysis in particular.

We now have a situation, unthinkable a few decades ago, where some senior academics – even at professorial level - have no ability to read any type of musical notation. These academics (not to mention some of their students who will go onto teach at primary and secondary levels) may only perpetuate and exacerbate this situation for their own students. Similarly, a number of sub-disciplines of academic music can now be undertaken without linguistic skills, or much background in history, literature, the visual arts, philosophy and so on. Students have always had uneven or patchy backgrounds in these respects, but the will to help them improve upon this has also declined in various institutions. Expansion of musical study to encompass wider ranges of music and disciplinary approaches is certainly to be welcomed when this entails the cultivation of equal degrees of expertise and methodological refinement and critical acumen, but not necessarily when these are simply a means for attracting and holding onto less able students.

In short, these developments in musical higher education have seen a well-meaning liberal quest for inclusivity amount in practice to a pseudo-egalitarian de-skilling of a profession. In order to build upon the legacy bequeathed above all by Arnold for the support of specialised and rigorous analytical skills, we cannot ignore this issue any longer.

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