



Review

Julia Esther García Manzano, Pedro Luengo, Francisco Martín–Quintero, and Israel Sánchez López, eds. *El análisis musical actual: Marco teórico e interdisciplinariedad*. Sevilla: Libargo Editorial, 2021.

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It has famously been said that writing about music is like dancing about architecture. How does one capture in words the essence of musical sounds, their organization and meaning? This is an immemorial challenge that every music scholar sooner or later must face, and books like the one under consideration here are invaluable guides for executing what amounts to a *pas de deux* about the Chrysler Building.

This reviewer has several times noted the dramatic transformation in Spanish musicology over the past three decades. Up until the 1990s, Spanish universities did not offer doctoral programs in musicology. The closest that one could get to earning such a degree was in the discipline of philology. Now, however, there is a superabundance of superb music scholars in Spain, boasting doctorates in historical musicology and ethnomusicology not only from abroad but also from a variety of institutions of higher learning within the Iberian Peninsula. They exhibit an admirable command of languages other than Spanish, an impressive familiarity with current research trends, and a wide range of interests, both national and international.

Indeed, as the editors make clear in their introduction, music analysis embraces not only music theory but also cultural theory, and there are no longer any limits to the musical traditions one may choose to study. Music scholars now range freely from Renaissance sacred polyphony to rock 'n' roll, from the postwar avant-garde to flamenco. And just as the boundaries separating the repertoires studied by historical musicologists and ethnomusicologists have become less distinct, so have the methodological approaches associated with them. Musicologists in particular have adopted cultural-theoretical approaches grounded in ethnomusicology and anthropology. All of that is on full display here.

This collection of essays was the outgrowth of an international conference with the same title as the book, organized by Francisco Martín Quintero, Distinguished Professor of Composition, and supported by the Conservatorio Superior de Música “Manuel Castillo” in Seville. The conference took place at the Conservatory during the period November 20-22, 2019. In addition to contributions by the four editors (*coordinadores*), there are ten other chapters by a fine assortment of scholars: Hermann Danuser, Cristóbal L. García Gallardo, Antonio Grande, Josep Margarit Dalmau, Alicia Díaz de la Fuente, Carlos Blanco Ruiz, María del Carmen López Castro, Miguel Palou Espinosa, Iyán F. Ploquin, and María del Carmen Asenjo-Marrodán. All but one of the chapters are in Spanish, the sole exception (by Grande) being in English. In keeping with the vision articulated by the editors in their

introduction, there is a very wide array of topics and approaches here. Based just on the book's title, one might have expected a guide to style analysis a la Jan LaRue.¹ *Au contraire*.

The authors tackle topics ranging from the works of Francisco Guerrero to transcription and analysis of a flamenco *bulería*. Another chapter looks at the intersections between the study of music and of the visual arts. And the beat goes on: John Cage and linguistic indeterminacy; Extreme Metal; electric-guitar music; the complexities of counterpoint; an overview of music analysis and theory in Spain; the “art” of contextualization; cognitive interpretation in the formulation of theoretical systems; the role of analysis in making critical editions; the music of José Manuel López López; and the importance of texture in analyzing contemporary music. These are the fascinating subjects covered here, coverage that exhibits considerable breadth without sacrificing depth. Indeed, the book is generously illustrated with musical examples, tables, and graphs that provide a very helpful visual dimension in dealing with the recondite abstractions of performing a *zapateado* about the Alhambra. In summary, this book is indispensable reading for anyone attempting that choreography.

The volume conveniently concludes with a comprehensive bibliography, rather than providing a list of references at the end of each chapter. An index would have been helpful as well but is not available. A happy consequence of the conference was not only these proceedings but also the creation in 2020 of the Sociedad de Análisis y Teoría Musical (SATMUS), whose activities can be followed at www.satmus.org.

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¹ Jan LaRue, *Guidelines for Style Analysis*, 2d ed., Detroit Monographs in Musicology/Studies in Music, No. 12, ed. J. Bunker Clark (Warren, Michigan: Harmonie Park Press, 2001). The reviewer means no disrespect to LaRue or his book, which continues to be a very useful tool for stylistic analysis.