

# The Revolutionary Conception of Harmony by Heinrich Schenker: Eastman Studies in Music 163

Heinrich Schenker, a prominent music theorist of the twentieth century, presented a ground-breaking conception of harmony that has paved the way for modern music analysis. His theories and teachings have been encapsulated in the book "Eastman Studies in Music 163." In this article, we will dive into the realm of Schenker's revolutionary ideas, exploring his unique perspective on harmony and its implications for music composition, theory, and analysis.

## Understanding Schenker's Conception of Harmony

Heinrich Schenker posited that harmony is not merely a collection of chords or progressions but a hierarchical structure that underlies the entire composition. According to his conception, harmony is the backbone of music, with each note and chord serving a specific purpose within the larger context.

Schenker's approach to harmony can be likened to the construction of a pyramid, with the fundamental bass at the base, followed by the middle stratum and the uppermost level, which represents the melodic line. The individual chords and progressions can then be seen as the building blocks that form this intricate hierarchical structure. This conception of harmony provides a holistic and unified approach to music analysis.

### Heinrich Schenker's Conception of Harmony (Eastman Studies in Music Book 163)

by Margaret Kent (Abridged Edition, Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.3 out of 5

Language : English



File size	: 20456 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 523 pages



## The Eastman Studies in Music 163: A Comprehensive Exploration

The book "Eastman Studies in Music 163" delves deep into Schenker's theories, encompassing an extensive analysis and reinterpretation of his ideas. It investigates how Schenker's revolutionary conception of harmony can be applied to a wide range of musical genres and styles, shedding new light on the inner workings of classical compositions, jazz standards, and even contemporary pop songs.

The authors, experts in the field of music theory, employ Schenker's ideas to dissect various musical examples, illustrating the hierarchical structure embedded within each piece. Through meticulous analysis, they reveal how Schenker's methodology can uncover hidden connections and motives, leading to a richer understanding of musical compositions.

Furthermore, "Eastman Studies in Music 163" explores the implications of Schenker's conception of harmony on music composition and theory. It provides guidance on how composers can leverage Schenker's ideas to enhance their creative processes, encouraging a more nuanced and layered approach to harmonic progression.

## **The Influence of Schenker's Conception of Harmony**

Schenker's conception of harmony has had a lasting impact on music theory and analysis. His innovative approach challenged traditional perspectives on harmony and opened up new avenues for exploration and interpretation. Scholars and musicians continue to draw inspiration from Schenker's ideas, incorporating his principles into their own work.

Through the revolutionary conception of harmony put forth by Schenker, music analysis has evolved into a discipline that seeks to uncover the underlying structure and hierarchical relationships within a composition. By examining harmony through a Schenkerian lens, music theorists can reveal the intricate layers that form the basis of a piece, unraveling its hidden complexities.

Heinrich Schenker's conception of harmony, as explored in the book "Eastman Studies in Music 163," has revolutionized the way we perceive and analyze music. His hierarchical approach provides a comprehensive and unified framework for understanding the complex interplay of notes, chords, and progressions.

The book serves as a comprehensive guide to Schenker's theories, offering both practical applications and critical analysis. It is a must-read for music theorists, composers, and anyone with a keen interest in understanding the fundamental structure underlying all forms of music.

By embracing Schenker's conception of harmony, we can gain a deeper appreciation for the countless hours composers spend crafting their compositions, and unlock new dimensions of interpretation and insight into the rich tapestry of musical expression.



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What makes the compositions of Handel, Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, Chopin, and Brahms stand out as great works of art? Heinrich Schenker (1868-1935) set out to answer this question in a series of treatises, beginning with a strikingly original work with the deceptive title *Harmonielehre* (roughly: *Treatise on Harmony*, 1906).

Whereas other treatises of the period associated harmony with the abstract principles governing chords and chord progressions, Schenker's treated it as the conceptual glue that allowed the individual elements of a work (melodies, motives, chords, counterpoint, etc.) to work together locally and globally. Yet this book, though renowned and much cited, has never been studied systematically and in close detail.

Heinrich Schenker's *Conception of Harmony* approaches Schenker's 1906 treatise as a synthesis of ancient ideas and very new ones. It translates, for the first time, two preparatory essays for *Harmonielehre* and describes his later views of harmony and the ways in which they influenced and also were ignored by the

1954 edition and translation, entitled simply Harmony. Though problematic, Harmony was the first published translation of a major work by Schenker, inaugurating the study of his writings in postwar America and Britain, where they continue to be highly influential.

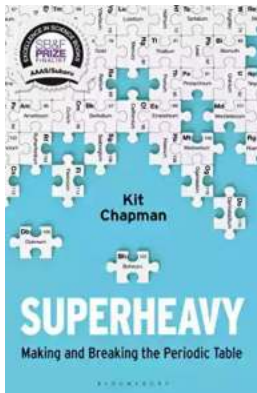
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