

Call for Papers

24th Annual Congress of the Association of German-speaking Music Theory (GMTH): Music Theory in Transition

Brandenburg Technical University Cottbus-Senftenberg, Institute for Instrumental and Vocal Pedagogy, 04–06 October 2024

The Institute for Instrumental and Vocal Pedagogy at the Brandenburg Technical University Cottbus-Senftenberg is delighted to be the venue for the next annual congress of the Association of German-speaking Music Theory (GMTH). The city of Cottbus and its surroundings are well worth a visit: located approximately 130 km south-east of Berlin, not far from the Polish border and surrounded by numerous recreational areas, such as the Spreewald or Lake Senftenberg, it presents itself as an up-and-coming cultural and scientific centre of a region undergoing structural change – from an industrial and lignite mining area to a science and tourist centre as well as a location for innovative and sustainable energies.

Cottbus city centre has undergone major changes in recent years. In addition to the attractive market square, the Spremberg Tower, and other sights, the central campus of Cottbus University offers a nationally recognised architectural highlight: the IKMZ (Information, Communication, and Media Centre) was awarded the German Architecture Prize in 2007. Cottbus Central Station, Station of the Year 2021, has been renovated and expanded with good connections from all directions. The nearest airports are in Berlin (BER), Dresden (DRS), and Leipzig/Halle (LEJ).

The theme of this year’s conference is therefore to be taken literally: “Music Theory in Transition” not only describes current changes within the discipline, but also this year’s GMTH annual conference as an event in itself, which transports the discourse on the subject into a rapidly changing region with its own cultural self-image. Four thematically predetermined sections as well as a section for free contributions offer plenty of room for a broad spectrum of contributions as the basis for thought-provoking discussions involving current questions about, problems related to, and diverse perspectives on music theory.

Session I: Then and Now: Upheavals in Music Theory Discourse

It has already been more than two decades since the first annual meeting of the German Music Theory Society (GMTH) was organized at the Dresden University of Music in 2001. At that time the main contention concerned “historic vs. systematic music theory”. Today we ask to what extent the discourse on this always current and central topic has advanced as well as which further developments, trends, and tendencies – perhaps even now established self-evident facts – have arisen in German and international music theory since the beginning of the new millennium.

Among others, the following questions will be discussed in detail. What are the consequences of the “historic turn” that has been going on for quite some years now? Are its known resources finite? Will all sources soon be rediscovered, researched, and published in outstanding

scientifically or rather pedagogically edited editions? And what comes next? Or has an “afterwards” already begun?

Contributions to the status quo of current research projects and workshops as well as to their relevance with regard to the above-mentioned aspects are just as welcome as contributions in perspective, critical contributions, and those regarding university/conservatory politics. Also the session is not limited to current upheavals in music theory, but rather also includes considerations of, new insights toward, and contextualization of historical situations of upheaval.

Session II: The post-Pandemic Era, Internationalization, and Digitalization: Challenges of Music Theory in Current Research and Teaching

Not only the global pandemic of the last few years, but also fundamental changes in international professional discourse, in particular its internationalization as well as the closely related phenomenon of digitalization, have presented music theory research and teaching with ever new challenges in recent decades. This applies not only to research and teaching at universities, conservatories, and similar institutions, but also to music theory training at music schools as well as music lessons in the public school system.

This session addresses projects such as online learning platforms, databases, the use of artificial intelligence, and much more, as well as current discourses about, for instance international cooperation or the general state/status of (changed) music theory after the pandemic. Substantive or conceptual discussions about Open Educational Resources (OER) will also take place. Furthermore, this session will explore the question of the extent to which the concentrated study of Western music still makes sense against the background of discussions about Eurocentrism and Germanocentrism and accordingly which adaptations and expansions of the repertoire relevant to music theory might be appropriate for the times.

Session III: Music Theory in the Late Nineteenth/Early Twentieth Centuries

The time period from the middle of the nineteenth century to approximately 1914 can be regarded as the epitome of stylistic pluralism. These decades also include the late works of Johannes Brahms (1833–1897) and Anton Bruckner (1824–1896), whose bicentennial birthday will be celebrated in 2024, as well as important compositions by Claude Debussy (1862–1918), Aleksandr Scriabin (1872–1915), Karol Szymanowski (1882–1937), and Arnold Schoenberg (1874–1951), to name but a few.

Likewise, during this time music theory turns out to be very diverse. Not only further developments and adjustments of existing theoretical approaches and systems, but also fundamental innovations are to be observed. Thus arose discussion about the concept of functional tonality, the maintenance of traditional concepts for it, as well as support-giving contemporary “substitute solutions” beyond it. Moreover around 1900 music theory reacted to the musical exoticism of the time. Furthermore, the question arose as to whether music theory could still fulfill a role for introducing composition or whether its primary task consists of first

theoretically evaluating compositional products and only afterwards deducing appropriate theories from them accordingly.

The session will include contributions to the above-mentioned topics as well as other aspects relating to the late nineteenth/early twentieth centuries.

Session IV: Fryderyk Chopin and his Training in Music Theory

Although explorations of Fryderyk Chopin's relationship to music theory and especially the music theory education of the young Chopin have already been discussed in detail, blind spots remain. In particular, historically informed perspectives and approaches cast new light on Chopin as a composition and theory student, for instance by exploring the influences of his teachers Józef Elsner (1769–1854), Karol Kurpiński (1785–1857), and Wilhelm Wenzel Würfel (1790–1832), from whom the young Chopin received lessons in organ playing and counterpoint.

The session consists of contributions that shed new light on Chopin's relationship to his music theory and composition teachers as well as to the music theory of his time in different ways. This can be done, for instance, in connection with the investigation of historical sources (e.g. correspondence, contemporary textbooks or articles that Chopin knew about or that were written in his environment, etc.) or also in the context of analytical studies, for example on Chopin's personalized approach to theoretical-compositional models and other stylistic features in Chopin's compositions. Also included are contributions that focus on education at the University of Warsaw Institute of Music within the context of European music (theory) education in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Session V: Free Proposals

The congress will be held on the central campus in Cottbus city centre and on the Sachsendorf campus, the location of the Institute for Instrumental and Vocal Pedagogy.

Addresses:

Zentralcampus

Platz der Deutschen Einheit 1

03046 Cottbus

Campus Sachsendorf

Lipezker Str. 47

03048 Cottbus

Abstracts in the following formats are welcome (time slots include time for questions and discussion):

- Individual presentation (30 min)
- Presentation panel (60, 90, or 120 min)
- Workshop (60, 90, or 120 min)
- Discussion forum (60, 90, or 120 min)
- Book presentation (30 min)
- Project presentation (poster, installation etc.)

Conference languages are German and English.

The closing date for proposals is 31 May 2024.

The organisation committee members are Dr. Stephan Lewandowski, Prof. Dr. Gregor Fuhrmann, Prof. Wolfgang Glemser, Prof. Dr. Bert Greiner, Prof. Simone Schröder, Dr. Krzysztof Świtalski (all Cottbus), as well as Dr. Katarzyna Bartos (Wrocław), Dr. Charalampos Eftymiou (Graz and Vilnius), Dr. William Helmcke (Katowice), Immanuel de Gilde (Berlin and Augsburg), and Arne Lühke (Leipzig).

Registrations and submissions via ConfTool will be possible shortly.

Contact: stephan.lewandowski@b-tu.de

Current information on the congress:

<https://www.gmth.de/veranstaltungen/annual-congress-cottbus-2024.aspx>

<https://www.b-tu.de/ag-musiktheorie/forschung/jahreskongress-der-gesellschaft-fuer-musiktheorie-gmth-2024>

The events will be framed by artistic contributions and concerts. Special features this year include a specially commissioned composition for the congress by Giordano Bruno do Nascimento (1981–), whose musical roots lie in Cottbus, and a new format for the artistic competition, some of whose prize-winning entries will be performed as part of a concert by the band *Anders* at the Cottbus Gladhouse.

There will also be working group meetings, the Autumn School, and the now traditional student breakfast.

Information on hotel accommodations, restaurants, and catering will be announced at a later date.

The organisation committee is looking forward to receiving numerous suggestions for contributions and welcomes all participants to Cottbus.