

# Workshop

## Life-World and Musical Form – Concepts, Models, and Analogies

26 to 27 March 2021

“It is by no means certain what form in music is, and any attempt to formulate rules would provoke nothing but derision”. Despite Dahlhaus’ habitually pessimistic insight, music scholars and musicians have developed manifold concepts of form that were usually applied to more than one musical work. In doing so, they were influenced by life-world [lebensweltlich] concepts, models and analogies: in the musical rhetorical tradition, Mattheson understood musical form as the sequence of sentences (principal and subordinate clauses). Marx established an architectural model encoding the individual modules with letters. Around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Schenker and Kurth implicitly drew on evolutionary theory and theories from the field of thermodynamics for their models of musical form. In the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, after the scholarly community had come to terms with the hyper-individuality of contemporary and especially avant-garde music, Caplin initiated a new trend in musical-form analysis, which shifted the priority from the composition’s wholeness to its elements. While his approach was functional and taxonomic, Hepokoski and Darcy proposed the established dichotomy between ‘general/normative’ vs. ‘particular/deviant/innovative’ to musical form. Most recently, Greenberg, Diergarten and Neuwirth described form of the classical era as an effect of the type case or toy block principle according to which the composers combined modules more or less freely. In sum, the history of music theory points to the constitutive role that life-world experiences, visualizations and metaphors have played in the development of diverse concepts of musical form.

This workshop aims to better understand musical form in light of current theories and models by focussing on two aspects:

1. It will reconstruct the life-world models, tropes and theories that have stimulated music theorists and musicians since the late 20<sup>th</sup> century.
2. It will bring together scholars who have recently developed new approaches to musical form. In particular, it will analyze the theories with respect to their specificity and differentiation from earlier models and, as in 1., reconstruct the analogies, models and methods that have inspired them.