



Tonality and Transformation (Oxford Studies in Music Theory)

Steven Rings

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Tonality and Transformation is a groundbreaking study in the analysis of tonal music. Focusing on the listener's experience, author Steven Rings employs transformational music theory to illuminate diverse aspects of tonal hearing - from the infusion of sounding pitches with familiar tonal qualities to sensations of directedness and attraction. In the process, Rings introduces a host of new analytical techniques for the study of the tonal repertory, demonstrating their application in vivid interpretive set pieces on music from Bach to Mahler. The analyses place the book's novel techniques in dialogue with existing tonal methodologies, such as Schenkerian theory, avoiding partisan debate in favor of a methodologically careful, pluralistic approach. Rings also engages neo-Riemannian theory-a popular branch of transformational thought focused on chromatic harmony-reanimating its basic operations with tonal dynamism and bringing them into closer rapprochement with traditional tonal concepts.

Written in a direct and engaging style, with lively prose and plain-English descriptions of all technical ideas, *Tonality and Transformation* balances theoretical substance with accessibility: it will appeal to both specialists and non-specialists. It is a particularly attractive volume for those new to transformational theory: in addition to its original theoretical content, the book offers an excellent introduction to transformational thought, including a chapter that outlines the theory's conceptual foundations and formal apparatus, as well as a glossary of common technical terms. A contribution to our understanding of tonal phenomenology and a landmark in the analytical application of transformational techniques, *Tonality and Transformation* is an indispensable work of music theory.

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