

## The *Equiton* System of Notation as a Tool for Music Analysis

How might a music theorist's analysis be affected by a different system of symbols? Writers such as Erhard Karkoschka and Kurt Stone have analyzed the changing notations in contemporary music and how they respond to the changing needs of composers and performers. Later, the Music Notation Modernization Association formed to provoke a notation revolution for the twenty-first century, and developed a scoring system to achieve this goal (1999). In this presentation, I will focus on the semiotics of composer Rodney Fawcett's notation system *Equiton* (1958), and contrast it with traditional notation. Like Karkoschka and Stone, Fawcett found traditional notation encumbered by redundant and conflicting signs. His hope with *Equiton* was to reduce ambiguity and increase reading fluency to facilitate sight-reading and analysis – the notes and harmonies would leap off the page without as much conscious effort. Examining Fawcett's choices in notational signs to retain, modify, or replace illuminates traditional notation's flaws and strengths.

Drawing on Stone's and Karkoschka's works and Nattiez's and Cole's musical semiotics, I evaluate the supposed effects of Fawcett's notation on music analysis. Next, I apply the MNMA's scoring system for notation systems to traditional notation and *Equiton*. Third, I will show analyses of sections of Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* and Bach's *Tocatta and Fugue in D minor, BWV 565* in traditional notation and in *Equiton*. Overall, this study aspires to provide a new perspective on notation's influence on the reader. Theorists need to understand the inherent flaws and strengths in notation and how they affect our field.