

## DISTINGUISHED LECTURE IN MUSIC THEORY

# Schenker and Roman-Numeral Analysis

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#### BIO:

William Rothstein is Professor of Music Theory at The Graduate Center and Queens College of the City University of New York. He writes on music and music theory of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. He is author of the books *Phrase Rhythm in Tonal Music* and (with Charles Burkhart) *Anthology for Musical Analysis*. His articles appear in *Journal of Music Theory*, *Music Theory Online*, *19th-Century Music*, *Intégral*, and *Verdi Forum* (US), *Music Analysis* (UK), *Rivista di analisi e teoria musicale* (Italy), *Ostinato rigore* (France), *Quodlibet* (Spain), and *Tijdschrift voor Muziektheorie* (Netherlands), and in books including *Communication in Eighteenth-Century Music*, *The Practice of Performance*, *Beethoven's "Tempest" Sonata*, *Beethoven Forum 4*, *Essays from the Third International Schenker Symposium*, and *Music Theory in Concept and Practice*. He is nearing completion of a book entitled *The Musical Language of Italian Opera, 1813-1859*.



#### ABSTRACT:

In the practice of Schenkerian analysis, the use of Roman numerals remains an area of considerable uncertainty, especially among students. One reason for this uncertainty stems from Schenker: his ideas about harmony form a moving target; they continued to evolve even in his last years and never found a definitive form. A second reason stems from the American pedagogical tradition, in which the meaning of Roman numerals varies from one textbook to another and from one teacher to another. Not only does American undergraduate pedagogy disagree with Schenker; it disagrees with itself, and Schenker disagrees with himself. The result is a perfect storm of miscommunication. This paper leaves American pedagogy to one side and seeks to explain Schenker's evolving ideas in relation to the Viennese tradition that helped to inspire him.

