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0521023920 - Music Theory and Natural Order from the Renaissance to the Early Twentieth Century

Edited by Suzannah Clark and Alexander Rehding

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Music Theory and Natural Order from the Renaissance to the Early Twentieth Century

Music theory of almost all ages has relied on nature in its attempts to explain music. The understanding of what nature is, however, is subject to cultural and historical differences. In exploring ways in which music theory has represented and employed natural order since the scientific revolution, this volume asks some fundamental questions not only about nature *in* music theory, but also about the nature *of* music theory. In an array of different approaches, ranging from physical acoustics to theology and Lacanian psychoanalysis, these essays examine how the multifarious conceptions of nature, located variously between scientific reason and divine power, are brought to bear on music theory. They probe the changing representations and functions of nature in the service of music theory and highlight the ever-changing configurations of nature and music, as mediated by the music-theoretical discourse.

Suzannah Clark is a Research Fellow at Merton College, Oxford and Alexander Rehding is a Research Fellow at Emmanuel College, Cambridge.

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Acknowledgements

The idea for this book was suggested by nature itself. On 16 August 1996, Scott Burnham took us both to a baseball game in the Philadelphia Veterans Stadium (Phillies v. San Francisco Giants). Play had to be stopped when, during sudden torrential rain, lightning struck the stadium, making it impossible for the players to continue. In the face of this powerful display of the force of nature, the idea of hosting a forum for an in-depth discussion of the use of nature in music-theoretical discourse came into our minds. This book, then, grew out of a conference, *Music Theory's Nature*, which was held at Merton College, Oxford, on 28–29 March 1998. We would like to thank all those who made the conference possible: Jeannette Hudson-Pudwell and the Staff of Merton College, the Music Faculty of Oxford University and the Society for Music Analysis. We are also grateful to John Deathridge, William Drabkin, Jonathan Dunsby and Alan Street, who chaired the sessions at the conference. Sam Thompson provided us with valuable assistance in setting the music examples for this book. We are especially indebted to Penny Souster for her advice and support, which she kindly offered throughout all stages of this project.

S. C. and A. R.