



SMT Statement on the Assessment of Collaborative Research and Publications

A hallmark of scholarly work in the humanities is the single-author monograph, as well as the single-author journal article or conference presentation. Increasingly, collaborative multi-author papers, projects, grants, and monographs are becoming more common in the humanities. This is due both to the interdisciplinary nature of much humanities scholarship and to a more general trend toward collaborative work which aims to be more inclusive intellectually, socially, and culturally.

The Society for Music Theory affirms the value and importance of collaborative scholarship for our discipline, whether the resulting work is primarily empirical, theoretical/speculative, analytical/applied, or some combination. Collaborative work enables larger projects to be undertaken, projects that may exceed the capacities of a single individual. These projects are important to the field, and such collaborations (as well as kinds of specialties required in order to complete them) are necessary for the continued development of music-theoretical inquiry. In this document the Society for Music Theory affirms the importance and value of collaborative practice for many music theorists and outlines best practices for attribution and assessment of authorship/contribution in collaborative research and publication.

The process of collaboration is complex; the contributions of individual collaborators can differ in degree and kind. Collaborative projects in the sciences have long dealt with this issue, as most scientific papers involve multiple authors. The key distinction to be drawn is between an *author*, who is broadly involved in a project/publication, versus a *contributor* who is only responsible for a specific element. As an example, the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors offers the following guidelines regarding authorship (ICMJE, n.d.):

1. Substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work; AND
2. Drafting the work or revising it critically for important intellectual content; AND
3. Final approval of the version to be published; AND
4. Agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

The first author of a paper usually meets the strong criteria for authorship listed above; however, the listing order of subsequent authors is not a reliable index of participation. Practices for listing authorship vary widely among disciplines: options include listing all authors alphabetically (common in mathematics); first author is “author” and those that follow do so in decreasing degrees of involvement; last author is the principal investigator (PI), and so forth.

The key for authors, as well as those assessing their work, is to make the individual contributions of each member of a multi-author work as clear as possible. Allocations of authorial credit and

responsibility should be codified in a statement that specifies the role of each listed author, perhaps as a footnote at the beginning or end of the paper if the journal can accommodate such a statement, and/or in a statement on a *curriculum vita*. For example, here is a recent statement from *Music Perception*:

Authors Polak and Jacoby contributed equally to the research. Polak led the study and Jacoby analyzed the data. Experiments were conducted by Polak, Goldberg, Fischinger, and Holzapfel. Polak and Jacoby drafted the paper, which was edited by London, Goldberg, Fischinger, and Holzapfel (Polak, et al. 2018).

Thus, with regard to collaborative scholarship, the Society for Music Theory believes that *in cases where an author meets the strong criteria for authorship outlined above, their work can/should be regarded as comparable to single-author articles or monographs*. Even in cases where one's contribution is specialized and/or more limited, that contribution needs to be taken in context, including the significance of that role and the scope and significance of the project; in many cases such authors' contributions may be comparable to that of a single-author work.