

## Lee Rothfarb SMT Honorary Lifetime Membership

In November 1993, a member of the society informed the SMT Publications Committee that it was time to begin to prepare for something new in electronic communications. The guest, a young Harvard professor, had already guided the society into uncharted terrain. Just two years earlier, he had announced an automated mass mailing system, at a time when many music theorists were just becoming accustomed to our new email addresses. Since then, he had established an electronic bulletin board and an email searchable bibliographic database; he had convinced the society to publish an online music theory journal for which he had begun to solicit articles; he was in the process of securing a large computer for archiving; and he had stimulated the society to create a new committee, still with ad hoc status, to oversee its networking operations.

The new thing in electronic communications, our guest told us, was something called a “World Wide Web.” We nodded our heads outwardly, but scratched them inwardly. This was all new to us. The Mosaic browser had just been introduced four months earlier. The term “World Wide Web” had not yet appeared in the New York Times. He responded that this new technology would allow the electronic journal to use “hypertext, multi-media . . . with integrated text, graphics, and sound.” Again we nodded and inwardly scratched; but it was beginning to sound like a good thing for our field.

During the next three years, each of these pieces was integrated. Under Lee Rothfarb’s editorship, *Music Theory Online* hosted a home page; sprouted internal and then external links; then embedded audio files and graphic animations; and introduced audio streaming. By the mid-90’s, as the aggregated skills of a new tech-savvy generation became mobilized in the service of Lee’s vision, he modestly stepped back, ceded control, and returned to his German treatises.

When Lee Rothfarb first advanced the idea of an online journal to SMT, he pitched it as a way of keeping up with the Jones’s: “publishing in an electronic medium,” he wrote in the Newsletter, “has become commonplace in other humanistic . . . fields.” In retrospect, we now understand that Lee was prodding us to be the Jones’s. Or perhaps more accurately, he was Mr. Jones all by himself. And he was inviting us to be the family with which he willingly shared the credit. For his selfless generosity on behalf of the community, and for his magnificent vision, energy, organizational skill, and persuasive powers, the Society for Music Theory proudly presents Lee Rothfarb with an Honorary Lifetime Membership.

--Richard Cohn