

Operator Theory: Advances and Applications

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Editors

Tanja Eisner
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Wuppertal, Germany

André Ran
Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam
Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Hans Zwart
Department of Applied Mathematics
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Contents

Preface	vii
<i>D.Z. Arov</i>	
My Way in Mathematics: From Ergodic Theory Through Scattering to J -inner Matrix Functions and Passive Linear Systems Theory	1
<i>L. Batzke, Ch. Mehl, A.C.M. Ran and L. Rodman</i>	
Generic rank- k Perturbations of Structured Matrices	27
<i>J. Behrndt, F. Gesztesy, T. Micheler and M. Mitrea</i>	
The Krein–von Neumann Realization of Perturbed Laplacians on Bounded Lipschitz Domains	49
<i>C. Bennewitz, B.M. Brown and R. Weikard</i>	
The Spectral Problem for the Dispersionless Camassa–Holm Equation	67
<i>A. Böttcher, H. Langenau and H. Widom</i>	
Schatten Class Integral Operators Occurring in Markov-type Inequalities	91
<i>H. Dym</i>	
Twenty Years After	105
<i>A. Grinshpan, D.S. Kaliuzhnyi-Verbovetskyi, V. Vinnikov and H.J. Woerdeman</i>	
Matrix-valued Hermitian Positivstellensatz, Lurking Contractions, and Contractive Determinantal Representations of Stable Polynomials ...	123
<i>M. Haase</i>	
Form Inequalities for Symmetric Contraction Semigroups	137
<i>G. Salomon and O.M. Shalit</i>	
The Isomorphism Problem for Complete Pick Algebras: A Survey ...	167
<i>O.J. Staffans</i>	
The Stationary State/Signal Systems Story	199
<i>C. Wyss</i>	
Dichotomy, Spectral Subspaces and Unbounded Projections	221

Preface

The IWOTA conference in 2014 was held in Amsterdam from July 14 to 18 at the Vrije Universiteit. This was the second time the IWOTA conference was held there, the first one being in 1985. It was also the fourth time an IWOTA conference was held in The Netherlands. The conference was an intensive week, filled with exciting lectures, a visit to the Rijksmuseum on Wednesday, and a well-attended conference dinner. There were five plenary lectures, twenty semi-plenary ones, and many special sessions. More than 280 participants from all over the world attended the conference.

The book you hold in your hands is the Proceedings of the IWOTA 2014 conference.

The year 2014 marked two special occasions: it was the 80th birthday of Damir Arov, and the 65th birthday of Leiba Rodman. The latter two events were celebrated at the conference on Tuesday and Thursday, respectively, with special session dedicated to their work. Several contributions to these proceedings are the result of these special sessions.

Both Arov and Rodman were born in the Soviet Union at a time when contact with mathematicians from the west was difficult to say the least. Although their lives went on divergent paths, they both worked in the tradition of the Krein school of mathematics.

Arov was a close collaborator of Krein, and stayed and worked in Odessa from his days as a graduate student. His master thesis is concerned with a topic in probability theory, but later on he moved to operator theory with great success. Only after 1989 it was possible for him to get in contact with mathematicians in Western Europe and Israel, and from those days on he worked closely with groups in Amsterdam at the Vrije Universiteit, The Weizmann Institute in Rehovot and in Finland, the Abo Academy in Helsinki. Arov's work focusses on the interplay between operator theory, function theory and systems and control theory, resulting in an ever increasing number of papers: currently MathSciNet gives 117 hits including two books. A description of his mathematical work can be found further on in these proceedings.

Being born 15 years later, Rodman's life took a different turn altogether. His family left for Israel when Leiba was still young, so he finished his studies at Tel Aviv University, graduating also on a topic in the area of probability theory. When Israel Gohberg came to Tel Aviv in the mid seventies, Leiba Rodman was

his first PhD student in Israel. After spending a year in Canada, Leiba returned to Israel, but moved in the mid eighties to the USA, first to Arizona, but shortly afterwards to the college of William and Mary in Williamsburg. Leiba's work is very diverse: operator theory, linear algebra and systems and control theory are all well represented in his work. Currently, MathSciNet lists more than 335 hits including 10 books. Leiba was a frequent and welcome visitor at many places, including Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and Technische Universität Berlin, where he had close collaborators. Despite never having had any PhD student, he influenced many of his collaborators in a profound way. Leiba was also a vice president of the IWOTA Steering Committee; he organized two IWOTA meetings (one in Tempe Arizona, and one in Williamsburg).

When the IWOTA meeting was held in Amsterdam Leiba was full of optimism and plans for future work, hoping his battle with cancer was at least under control. Sadly this turned out not to be the case, and he passed away on March 2, 2015. The IWOTA community has lost one of its leading figures, a person of great personal integrity, boundless energy, and great talent. He will be remembered with fondness by those who were fortunate enough to know him well.

January 2016

Tanja Eisner, Birgit Jacob,
André Ran, Hans Zwart