

RMSMT Abstracts 2023

[Friday, 3/31, 9:30–11:30, Session 1: New Approaches to Analysis](#)

Compositional Design and Pitch-Class Consciousness in Long-Duration Acoustic Music of Éliane Radigue

Jon Forshee (University of Colorado-Colorado Springs)

Music of long duration, frequently referred to as drone music, occupies an increasingly prolific field of compositional activity in the 21st-century, and offers fresh vistas of inquiry to the music analyst. However, analytic and interpretive practices available for articulating the compositional designs and musical experiences of these works are still evolving. Additional strategies for analysis include concepts drawn from the set-theoretic literature, including Paul Lansky's text "Pitch-Class Consciousness" (1975) and Michael L. Friedmann's "A Methodology for the Discussion of Contour: Its Application to Schoenberg's Music" (1985), as well as languages and perspectives indigenous to both the listeners' and to the performer's experiences of this music.

In this paper, the recent acoustic works of French composer Éliane Radigue offer vibrant opportunities for the engagement of analytic approaches indigenous to music of long duration. The notions of temporal scale, of pitch-class design and of timbre contour are explored in this paper as enticing, palpable dimensions of this work, and are highlighted as formal design features of much of this music. Radigue's concept of 'scaffolding', as it pertains to compositional design, illustrates the strategy around and rationing of these three overarching lines of inquiry in her and others' music. Two of the composer's recent acoustic works, *Occam Delta X* (2018) and *Occam Hepta 1* (2018), are engaged through analysis, and are demonstrated to provide dynamic instances of recent 'long duration' musical thought in and through which to engage the developing conceptual frameworks of this rich and many-layered compositional practice.

Revisiting the Tonality of Dukas's Rameau Variations: A Metamorphosis of Chromatic to Diatonic Pitches

Seulki Susie Yoo (Independent Scholar)

Piano repertoires from the Fin-de-siècle era, including those of Paul Dukas, are increasing analytical interest. In particular, Dukas's *Variation, Interlude, et Finale sur un Thème de Rameau* is recognized as an embodiment of the French spirit, garnering praise for being "genuinely French" and demonstrating "French lucid principles of balance and logic."

Recent scholarship by Taavola on Dukas's *Rameau Variations* has proposed a new analytical strategy that utilizes the Duboisian lens to understand the untraditional harmonic idiom of Dukas's work and other Fin-de-siècle repertoire.

The proposed research expands on this analytical approach by implementing a broader perspective focused on the motivic, harmonic, and structural interrelationship. Background graphs provide coherence lacking in the previous microscopic approach due to the untraditional harmonic idiom, dense polyphonic texture, and extreme chromaticism.

Specifically, this analysis involves reexamining local chromatic pitches as tonally functioning tones at the global level, which are functionally similar to traditional voice-leading practice. This includes metamorphosis of nonresolving nonharmonic to diatonic tones, chromatic passing tones to predominant substitution, and nonfunctioning harmonic progression to goal-directed continuation.

Additionally, this study emphasizes how intervallic relationships anticipate higher structural levels of tonal foreshadowing in later variations.

Consequently, the Rameau Variations become more distinguished from atonally designed music, highlighting the tonal foundation that institutes Dukas's harmonic language and solidifying their place as an important and unique contribution to the musical canon, which is a testament to his genius.

Analyzing Displacement Techniques and Their Uncanny Effect in Prokofiev's Music

Evan Tanovich (University of Toronto)

This paper posits a theory of general displacement in the music of Sergei Prokofiev. I investigate various techniques such as chromatic, rhythmic, diatonic, octave, motivic, and harmonic displacement by comparing a completed composition to a common practice prototype. Through this theoretical lens, under-analyzed concepts in Prokofiev's compositions are revealed. Whereas irony or sarcasm are conventional explanations for instances where an otherwise standard composition has been "Prokofievized" or displaced, I posit that a darker, more psychologically involved reading of musical uncanniness might better reflect a piece's effect.

Firstly, I canvas existing attempts to codify 'wrong notes' in Prokofiev's music, such as Richard Bass's theory of chromatic displacement, and expand on them introducing a new lexicon of terminology related to displacement techniques of various types. Secondly, I reveal the numerous displacement techniques Prokofiev employs through an analysis of excerpts from his ballets *Romeo and Juliet* (Op. 64) and *Cinderella* (Op. 87); his *Fourth Symphony* (first version Op. 47); and a sketch from his sixth thematic notebook (McAllister 2020). Revealing these techniques not only offers insights into Prokofiev's compositional process and "hypothetical original version[s] of the music lurking beneath the surface" (Kramer 1998, 518) but opens the hermeneutic window such that an analyst may read themes of irony and especially uncanniness into the music.

Tracing Compositional Development through Dvořák's Early Symphonies

Andrew Brinkman (Independent Scholar)

Antonín Dvořák's *First Symphony in C Minor* (B. 9) and *Second Symphony in Bb Major* (Op. 4, B. 12) are relatively unknown pieces in the composer's oeuvre. Generally considered to be juvenile works, these two symphonies have been greatly overshadowed by symphonic masterpieces like his *Ninth*, *Eighth*, and *Seventh* symphonies. However, these two symphonies do provide great insight into Dvořák's development as a growing composer, showcasing his early experimentation with form and thematic writing. This paper places a magnifying glass over the first movements of each symphony, drawing attention to interesting formal structures throughout and musing on the seeds of Dvořák's later compositional style. Understanding the foundation of the composer's compositional technique, as established and improved upon in his early symphonies, helps provide a clearer picture of what eventually made Dvořák the musical master we know him as today.

For both symphonies, an approach mixing elements of two well-respected theories on form (Caplin 1998; Hepokoski & Darcy, 2006) is used. While both theories focus primarily on the 18th-century sonata, examining the ways in which Dvořák varies this structure, on the large and small scale, can be exceptionally informative regarding the unique style of his middle and late period (Zhang 2019). With a number of seemingly incomplete or unresolved primary and secondary

themes, motifs that run rampant throughout the entire work, and oddly constructed major sonata sections there is no shortage of interesting details in these first two major symphonic works by this great composer.

Friday, 3/31, 1:30–3, Session 2: Film Music

A Corpus of Corpses: Murder and Modernism in the Crime Films of Max Steiner

Brent Yorgason (Brigham Young University)

It is commonly observed that the Classic Hollywood style owes a debt to Romanticism for its tonal language. However, David Neumeier and others have noted that this “supposedly late romantic musical style” is far more eclectic in nature, incorporating a variety of styles to suit the genre and the dramatic situation. The genre of the crime film, for instance, often demands a more dissonant and modern musical style. This corpus study examines 94 scenes involving murder or violent death in 36 films in the crime genre. All have music by Max Steiner, spanning the time period from *Thirteen Women* in 1932 to *The FBI Story* in 1959. In order to examine harmonic content in detail, Steiner’s own original sketches have been used. The study finds that scenes involving murder and violent death were far more likely to feature tone clusters, polychords, whole-tone chords, quartal chords, and other sonorities best analyzed using pitch class sets. Other common compositional features include unstable tonality, chromatic parallelism, dissonant basses, complex layering, ostinati, tritone oscillation, fragmentation, and the use of non-diatonic collections. At least two-thirds of the scenes in the corpus used some of these modern techniques. In connection with these findings, I examine how the nature of the death (murder, suicide, accident, etc.) and the type of character dying (hero, villain, innocent secondary character, etc.) affects the compositional handling of the scene and the way in which leitmotifs might be transformed in response to that character’s death.

Metadiagesis in Recorded Music and Film

Ryan Galik (Michigan State University)

This paper identifies and explores the phenomenon of musical metadiagesis, or the containment of one musical persona within another within a work, much as *Hamlet* contains a play within a play, or *The Truman Show* contains a show within a film. Previously regarded by Claudia Gorbman (1987) as sound “pertaining to a secondary narrator,” I aim to broaden to what metadiagesis refers, and how examples can be identified in both visual (filmic) and non-visual media. Following an account of relevant scholarly works on musical diegeses, this paper explores how musical works can establish hierarchically ordered diegetic settings in a musical work and the implications that follow. Referencing recent research on expectation, musical persona, lyrical address, and narrativity, I propose three frames that comprise cues to inform a work’s diegetic scope, encompassing coded audio effects, narrative signifiers, and expectations made by listeners broadly. I apply these frameworks to a varied catalogue of music, identifying metadiegetic elements in twentieth-century piano works, pop and rock songs, Broadway musical numbers, children’s songs, and various film scores, among others. I conclude my research with further avenues of study this paper reveals, and ways in which it serves as a compatible addition to the rich field of research already established in narrative studies.

The Ignored Modal Mixture—The Chromatic Submediant in Minor Keys

Xiao Yun (University of North Texas)

When introducing the concept of modal mixture, traditional textbooks focus mostly on borrowed chords in major keys. Meanwhile, mixture in minor keys, especially the chromatic submediant chords —flat vi and sharp vi, receives little attention despite their frequent occurrences. While the current scholarship mostly examines these chords using Neo-Riemannian approach, this paper suggests a functional reading of these chords in certain circumstances as an alternative—similar to how mixture in major-key music is normally interpreted. Drawing examples from *Captain America: Civil War*, *Frozen II*, *Avatar*, and a French musical *Notre Dame de Paris*, the analyses demonstrate minor-key music adopting chromatic submediant chords in gestures parallel to their counterparts in major keys (flat VI and sharp VI)—adding color but not affecting the functions, or serving as remote key areas for modulation. This functional interpretation not only benefits us with a different comprehension of film music but also broadens our overall understanding of functional harmony.

Friday, 3/31, 3:15–4:45, Session 3: Musical Meaning

Re-Approaching Crumb's "Strong Deliveress"

Robert Cook (Independent Scholar)

"Approach Strong Deliveress," the fifth movement and fourth song of George Crumb's *Apparition* (1979) on text from Walt Whitman's "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd," is the bravura show-piece of the cycle, with the vocal part's widest ambitus and loudest dynamics. The song is neither the narrative nor indeed musical culmination of *Apparition*, however; that status belongs to the fifth song, "Come Lovely and Soothing Death." In this paper, I interpret "Approach" as exactly what its title says it is: the approach of Death ("strong deliveress" is one of Whitman's several epithets for death personified), preparing but not enacting Death's arrival in "Come Lovely." My analysis shows how "Approach" gathers some—though not all—musical ideas and poetic themes from the preceding four movements, then leaves their promise unfulfilled, to be taken up in "Come Lovely" by the joined voices of bird and human. I find openness where existing literature on the song seeks unity and structural coherence (Bass 2002, Szutor 1994, and others), and in so doing, I enrich our understanding of Crumb's *Apparition* with respect to Whitman's "Lilacs," the role of a voice of Nature, musical engagement in mourning, and the enduring grip of the Civil War's fraught legacy on American consciousness.

Focalization in Musical Narrative: A Lesson from Berlioz

Ian Gerg (Southeastern Oklahoma State University)

First theorized by Gérard Genette (1980) and further developed by Mieke Bal (1985), focalization refers to the positioning of the subjectivity through which a story is understood by a reader. Focalization distinguishes itself from narration with the former relating to perspective and the latter referring to the linguistic act of storytelling. In literary texts, focalization and narration are typically two sides of the same coin because, in telling a story, a narrator reveals characteristics of its own subjectivity (e.g., identity, point of view, thoughts, feelings). Yet, Bal identifies several literary examples in which the focalizer and narrator are distinct agencies, with one seeing and the other speaking.

Early skepticism of the narrating voice in music (Nattiez 1987, Abbate 1991) has led scholars to largely abandon their theorizing of a commonplace narrator on the grounds that music *imitates* the subjects and events of its discourse rather than *speaking about* them. While I concede the narrative voice, I venture to recover its counterpart—the focalizer—which scholarship has mostly neglected. In what follows, I revisit Edward T. Cone's (1974) early work on virtual agency and his musings about Berlioz's *Harold in Italy*. I explore the second movement of the symphony-concerto and examine how the music posits a foregrounded agency that maintains a distinct identity and acts as a lens through which the musical narrative is filtered for the listener.

Hypermeter as Character Development in Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*

Lev Roshal (Indiana University)

A question that is frequently posed in literary discussions of Pushkin's novel in verse, *Eugene Onegin*, is that of the nature of the relationship between the title character and Tatiana

Larina. After initially and rightfully rejecting her advances at their country estates, Onegin, upon reuniting with a now-married Tatiana many years later, suddenly pursued her. In Pushkin's original, it is impossible to state definitely whether Onegin's newly-professed feelings are genuine, or whether they are nothing more than a typical societal intrigue. In this paper, using an original hypermetrical analysis, I discuss Tchaikovsky's interpretation of this romantic relationship, as seen through the lens of his opera of the same name. My analysis draws a distinction between traditionally Western two-bar hypermetrical units and ubiquitously Russian three-bar ones. I demonstrate how the metrical properties of the Russian language seep into Tchaikovsky's hypermetrical patterning. In turn, the distinctions between passages of two- and three-bar hypermeter correspond directly to the operatic characters' emotional states. My analyses focus on three scenes – Tatiana's Letter Scene, Onegin's Response, and the Grand Finale. In each of these, Pushkin's original text is recreated exactly in the libretto. Due to Pushkin's metric regularity, all changes in hypermeter can be inferred to stem from musical, not textual, considerations – thus providing an insight into Tchaikovsky's reading of Pushkin.

Saturday, 4/1, 9–10:30 AM, Session 4: Choral Music

Diversifying Repertoire: A Case for Choral Music

Meghan Hatfield (Utah State University)

Choirs are an integral part of music departments and schools, particularly at institutions with large choral education programs. Despite this, choral music is nearly absent from music theory textbooks. Perhaps as a result, research has shown that high school choir directors struggle with harmonic score study and the use of many theoretical concepts, and, anecdotally, choir students and teachers are slighted for their understanding of music theory.

This presentation describes a method for incorporating choral music into a music theory course while balancing institutional priorities, accreditation standards, and course objectives. I will demonstrate the method through a case study that integrates choral music through the outline and syllabus of a music theory elective on the analysis of contemporary choral music, but can be applied to any attempt to diversify repertoire. Following the idea of backwards design, the procedure described in this method begins with deciding objectives based on the NASM handbook for accreditation and institutional goals, followed by assessment design, and finalized through the selection of music based on interesting characteristics and characteristics unique to the repertoire, like text painting. This presentation will include several examples of pieces that can be applied to any music theory course. Choral music is an important repertoire to many who choose to study music, and incorporating it has the added benefit of a diverse set of peoples and musics within the repertoire. By diversifying examples, both in composer and repertoire, students will be better equipped to apply music theory beyond the college classroom.

Tonic and Topic: A Study of Key Selection and Affect in American Hymnody

Jennifer Shafer England (Montana State University)

The tantalizing and mysterious idea of key affect has existed since ancient times, gradually developing into a long-lasting tradition of key characteristics. The sharp-flat principle (Steblyn 2002) and development of tuning practices both likely played a role in the development of this phenomenon, but the phenomenon continues to wield influence in a variety of settings, including both popular music and more traditional academic settings. Studies of affect focus largely on mode and tempo, and studies of specific key selection are uncommon and often focus on instrumental music, thus overlooking the potential mutual influence of text and affect. This study takes as its point of departure the notion that the tradition of key characteristics has been historically common: If the purported characteristics were psychologically based, this could influence key selection. The two-part empirical corpus study will examine key selection in American hymnals; this corpus was selected because of its size and the possibility of studying key signature selection and textual influences.

Preliminary results indicate significant differences in the prevalence of flat vs. sharp key signatures and examines factors such as chronology and denomination within these categories. Influence of text topics on key selection has also been examined and early results suggest that the topics addressed in the text have some connection to the “flatness” or “sharpness” of the music. This study has the potential to contribute to understanding of psychological influence of key characteristics within additional contexts of chronology, religious denomination, and text topics.

The Black Amen: Plagal Cadences in Contemporary Gospel Music

Richard Desinord (Michigan State University)

Lacking the perceived finality of an authentic cadence, the plagal cadence is seldom heard in common practice music and is generally treated as a weaker alternative for harmonic closure. However, in contemporary Black church music IV-I cadences abound in singular compositions, notably at critical formal junctures where a more traditionally definitive V-I ending is expected. The presence of these gospel cadential gestures challenge the conventional avoidance of the ostensibly feeble ascending 5th bass motion as an interval of closure and necessitates a reconsideration of its power as a “proper” harmonic ending.

Building on Temperley’s (2011) notion of sectional cadences in rock music, I introduce the concept of the “inner-plagal,” a cadential gesture that occurs at the end of verse-chorus units in contemporary black gospel. Such placements most often follow an authentic cadence, similar to Caplin’s (2000) and Rohrmeier and Neuwirth’s (2015) assertion of plagal cadences functioning as post-codetta progressions. Yet its consistent presence between major sections in gospel suggests a role more significant than a mere tag. In this sense, I also contend that inner-plagals function as rhetorical gestures. If we take the plagal cadence’s most well-known association with the word “Amen,” I argue that its role as a form-defining sign of closure has migrated from the very end of a hymn, where it typically harmonizes “Amen,” to the ends of sections within a song. In this context, I demonstrate how it can function as a harmonic replacement for the idiomatic shouts of “Amen” in Black communities that express agreement with a particular line from a pastor or other speaker.

Hypermetric Declamatory Schemata in Mozart's Queen of the Night Aria

Daniel Martin (Michigan State University)

The Queen of the Night's most substantial aria from *The Magic Flute*, "Hell's Vengeance," exemplifies a dynamic and complex trajectory of declamation. The Queen's music explores hypermetric levels of declamation, unlike any other character in *The Magic Flute*. In "Hell's Vengeance," this hypermetric declamation interacts with other musical parameters to create expressive connections to formal and harmonic arrivals and areas of structure. In these connections, there is a musical narrative of correction that emerges which parallels the Queen's efforts to reinforce her "promise" to Pamina. As the aria progresses, one can begin to wonder whether it is the music "correcting" the Queen, or the Queen "correcting" the music. To accommodate the Queen's hypermetric declamations, and their differing levels, ambiguities, and dissonances, I propose a method for hypermetric declamatory analysis and schema. This method builds on Malin's standard declamatory schema as a foundation and incorporates new notational and methodological practices to incorporate hypermeter and shifts/ambiguities in hypermeter. My proposed method also accounts for partial statements, repetitions, and prolongations of a line. This close relationship between the Queen's text and music provides further evidence for Mozart's purposeful and careful consideration of libretto in *The Magic Flute*, and particular attention given to that of the Queen's music. My proposed hypermetrical declamatory schema method can work universally for other texted music where, like the Queen's music, there are multiple metric and/or hypermetric levels of declamation, and/or include dynamic shifts within those levels.

Recontextualized Motives as Narrative in Debussy's Études

Matthew Bilik (Anderson University)

This paper explores the progressive rhythmic/metrical conflict in Debussy's Piano Étude No. 5 that results from recontextualized motives. In this piece, the process of recontextualizing motives alters their established sub-metrical stress. In addition, larger-level grouping dissonance (Krebs 1999) emerges over time, becoming more severe over the course of the ternary (ABA') form until the reprise of the A section (A'), which carries the effects of this rhythmic/metrical conflict to the end. I trace motivic appearances, cognizant of changes in rhythmic grouping and metrical stress. I also draw on the work of Kramer (1996), Rings (2008), and Lerdahl/Jackendoff (1996) for methodologies of multiply-directed time, temporal polyphony, and rhythmic grouping, respectively. Utilizing their theories and motivic segmentation, I demonstrate how Debussy recasts his motives to provide a calculated and effective rhythmic/metrical narrative.

Debussy's well-known segmented forms contradict a sense of subtle musical change. Juxtaposition of separate textures and unrelated harmonies suggests an incoherent and fragmented form. This paper supplies a reconciliation, arguing that the disjointed surface contains an overarching narrative from his recontextualization of motives. For instance, although the musical form seems like patchwork (Wheeldon 2004), close analysis uncovers gradual and strategic transformations in grouping. Attending to these subtle changes offers a new understanding of his reputed sectional form.

What's Tonic in a Snare Drum Sonata?

Art Samplaski (Cornell University Department of Chemistry)

Debates in function theory continue to occur in terms of pitch-content vis-à-vis classical/chromatic tonality—hence, “harmonic function”—which constrains our thinking unnecessarily. For true breakthroughs we must consider “structural function” from deeper cognitive perspectives, and only then examine how functions can be instantiated in *multiple* ways, not limited to pitch-content, e.g., a rhythmic pattern in a snare drum piece as “tonic.” Advances in cognitive and computer science during the last 60 years—Gibson’s ecological model of visual perception, extended by Clarke to audition; virtual machine layers and operator overloading—provide the needed tools. Defining “tonic,” “dominant,” etc., in terms of more fundamental Gestalt-based functions (“provides closure,” “creates expectancy of imminent closure,” etc.) unbundled from any repertoire-specific sonic instantiations, lets us separate cultural issues about repertoire from more basic perceptual-cognitive ones about the material. This permits a cleaner, more unified approach to analytic discussion.

Saturday, 4/1, 3:30–5, Session 6: Perspectives on Popular Music

Emo Guitar Tunings: The Role of Guitar Tunings on Fretboard Distances

Matt Chiu (University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign) and Tyler Howie (University of Texas at Austin)

Recent research on guitar-based pop and rock musics has focused on fretboard spaces, highlighting the gestural aspects of performance, and disrupting the traditional assumption that the interval from one pitch to another is always the same (Capuzzo, 2004; Gardner and Shea, 2022; Koozin, 2011; Rockwell, 2009; Shea, 2020). While much of this research works with “standard” guitar tuning (SGT), some scholarship examines “alternate” guitar tunings (AGTs), discussing their negative effects (Rover 2006) and/or the practical affordances they provide (Kaminsky and Lyons, 2020). Alternate tunings change not only the pitches of the strings, but also the intervals between them. In some styles of American emo music, AGTs have become the “unmarked” standard to the “marked” alternative of SGT. Emo’s AGTs are, moreover, often “open,” meaning the strings are tuned to a chord, creating consonance among the open strings.

This paper examines AGT fretboard spaces in the context of a type of stylistic riff found in some emo music, nicknamed the “twinkle” schema (Howie and Chiu, 2022). First, it studies the historical role of AGTs in emo and how they relate to the genre’s stylistic, “twinkling” riffs. Then, it examines songs with different tunings, measuring the Euclidian distances between pitches in terms of 1) staff notation 2) standard guitar tuning and 3) the AGT in which each riff is performed. Finally, it uses statistical data to show how AGTs encourage accessibility in guitar performance, embodying in part the DIY (do-it-yourself) roots of American emo.

Intertextual Rhetoric in Recent Popular Music

Dickie Lee (University of Georgia)

My proposed talk musically explores Kristeva’s description of intertextuality as a “transposition of sign systems.” To unpack my reading of transposition, I extend previous theories of intertextuality in Western art music and develop Hatten’s concept of intertextually enhanced agency to create a listener-centric methodology for interpreting meaning. Songs are analyzed through strategies associated with the rhetoric of intertextuality, and those analyses are represented through referential networks that attempt to depict a listener’s intertextual competency. The resultant through-line underscores intertextuality’s significance for meaning in popular music, and the string of analyses I deliver offers a replicable, reader-response analytical technique for future exploration.

Hatten’s strategic and stylistic intertextuality serve as my theoretical departure point. Strategic intertextuality (quotation and paraphrase) and stylistic intertextuality (adoption of features without specific reference) have been explored in popular music yet recent borrowing problematizes these terms—style often overlaps conceptually with genre, and bands can evoke the styles of other artists in strategic ways. My deconstruction of this binary took the form of a literary-inspired continuum ranging from citation to implication, which accounts for the citation of a song (or artist) and allows genre to fulfil a separable role from style. Each intertext is further interpretable through strategies associated with the rhetoric of intertextuality. The result is not what the song means, but how it might mean—exploring intertextuality’s rhetoric elucidates borrowing writ-large and offers an additional way to conceptualize a term taught in first-year theory: transposition.

Sasha Flute: Instrumental Agency in Lizzo's Musical Persona

Megan Lyons (Furman University)

When Lizzo played James Madison's crystal flute on stage at her 2022 Washington DC show, she unleashed a hailstorm of critics outraged by her playing of a national artifact and subsequent twerking. While flute playing is not new to the popular music realm, there is something unique about both the way Lizzo plays her flute and her careful curation of when it is played. Agency and musical persona work in tandem to create the artist seen on stage and influence the music produced. In this paper, I argue that Lizzo's use of her flute, named Sasha Flute, and its resulting agency, adds a layer to her musical persona and provides a deeper understanding of her music.

In response to Lizzo's long-awaited release of "Rumors," Sasha Flute posted her own flute solo along with a sassy caption noting her absence from the official recording. Lizzo has yet to release an official record or song featuring Sasha Flute, however; she only plays the flute on social media or at live concerts. It is only natural to ask why Lizzo has made this musical choice, with a plausible explanation being her ongoing crafting of her musical persona. Lizzo's "Rumors" is performed with Cardi B and features lyrics both admitting to and refuting all the rumors spread about the two artists. The subtle musical ambiguity of the official recording is amplified in Sasha Flute's solo and creates an additional musical persona for Lizzo that only those on social media or attending her live concerts can experience.