

Abstracts, Rocky Mountain Chapter of the Society for Music Theory

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Friday, March 1

Session 1: 9-10:30 am

Breaking Bonds: Transformational Networks and Musical Metaphor in the Score to *Foxcatcher*, Steven Rahn (University of Texas at Austin)

Contemporary film scoring is often described in terms of its emphasis on secondary compositional parameters over traditional thematic processes characteristic of classical Hollywood. Nicholas Reyland (2015) coins the terms “corporate classicism” and the “metaphysical style” to define two trends in contemporary scoring that he claims “[privilege] affect and style topical connotation over musical structures developing thematic or harmonic symbolism.” Frank Lehman (2018) argues that modern film music is more triadic and less diatonically beholden than scores of classical Hollywood. This paper uses neo-Riemannian theory to highlight the metaphorical dimension of a recent film score that fits Reyland’s notion of the “metaphysical style,” and that also conforms to the non-diatonic triadicism of much contemporary film music. Sparsely scored, *Foxcatcher* (2014) features harmonic networks whose shift in orientation mirrors the transformation of relationships among the film’s characters. I argue how nodes of triadic networks map onto specific characters, and that this metaphor of character nodes emerges as a result of how diatonically close or distant the harmonies appear in relation to one another, thereby reflecting the emotional proximity of characters at different points in the film. The precariousness of bonds and how bonds can shift is an important theme of the film, and the harmonic relationships in the score contribute significantly to how *Foxcatcher* frames this issue. Overall, I suggest that recent scoring trends do not necessarily strip away the extra-semiotic dimension of classical scoring, but may rather symbolically interact with film narratives through musical processes that deviate from teleological leitmotivic discourse.

Comma-Modified UTT Space: Segmentation and Closure in UTT Generated Voice-Leading Spaces, Lauren Hartburg (Florida State University)

Uniform Triadic Transformations (Hook 2002) may be used to generate three dimensional voice-leading spaces that accommodate Debussy’s harmonic language when tonal and hexatonic systems fall short. Similar in structure to the multi-aggregate (3,4)-cycle (Gollin 2007), UTT $\langle -,3,4 \rangle$ space cannot close prior to the completion of two aggregates of triadic roots and the iteration of all twenty-four consonant triads. While this cycle is inclusive, progressions often remain within smaller subsets of UTT $\langle -,3,4 \rangle$ space that cannot close without commas— minute differences necessary to close musical systems. This study extends the application of the comma in order to create eight- and fourteen-triad sub-cycles of UTT $\langle -,3,4 \rangle$ space that accommodate several new triadic transformations and reveal meaningful tonal and post-tonal relationships in Debussy’s “General Lavine Eccentric.”

Pairing every-other triad in UTT $\langle -,3,4 \rangle$ space with its modal inverse 1) gives structure to a voice-leading graph and 2) creates commas to close eight- or fourteen-triad sub-cycles of the space that are more suitable for use as voice-leading networks (Lewin 1987). The fourteen-triad comma-modified UTT space accounts for motion by $\langle -,3,4 \rangle$, $\langle -4,3 \rangle$, fifth, SLIDE, and several new “substitute” transformations. These transformations are used to create a voice-leading network of the opening of Debussy’s “General Lavine Eccentric” that reveals the arrival of the F pitch center

as not only tonally anticipated, but also the completion of a comma-modified UTT space. This concluding analysis illustrates the functionality of comma-modified UTT spaces and the substitute transformations they afford.

Exploring the Structure of German Folksong, Andrew Brinkman (The Ohio State University)

In an attempt to uncover the relationship between music and cultural groups, scholars like Ling (1997), Eerola et al. (2001), and many others have found that the defining musics of larger cultural groups (e.g. national groups typically defined by geopolitical divisions) contain features that make them distinctly different from one another. Although scholarly interest in the field of cultural music analysis (or “folk music” as it is more commonly encountered) has increased considerably over the past decade, in Europe however, study of the folk music is plainly lacking. This study aims to address the above problem in two parts, by identifying influential musical features of German folksong and by providing a working definition of German folksong structure based on features present across geographical divisions.

In order to address the relevant questions of this study, the researcher examined some 6,000 German folksongs systematically (using the Humdrum Toolkit; Huron, 1994), looking for, and tallying instances of, nearly 20 musical features (e.g. pitch content, note-to-note transitions, and rhythmic variability) and tested for correlation of these features to longitudinal coordinates spanning North and South Germany. Some of the most prevalent features include presence of large leap intervals, scale degree transitions outside of the expected norm, and varying levels of tonal stability. As a whole, the results suggest that there are unique differences in folksong features on the regional, or subnational, scale, implying that geographical location plays a substantial role in the cultural development of music.

Session 2: 10:40-12:10 am

Quasi una Fantasia: Virtual Agency in a Chopin Nocturne, Ian Gerg (Chestnut Hill College)

Chopin’s Nocturne in F-sharp minor, Op. 48, no. 2 has posed an analytical and interpretive problem for musicians since its publication in 1842. On the surface, the extended lyricism of the work’s outer sections expresses “purity and simplicity” (Lennox Berkeley) with a “gracefully descending melody over a swaying accompaniment” (Victor Lederer). However, the fragmented character of the contrasting middle section has been an aberration for many scholars and performers. Biographer Herbert Weinstock once lamented that “[e]ven extremely able pianists cannot avoid making it sound a little like one piece interrupted halfway for the interpolation of another.”

In this paper, I reconcile the problematic discontinuity of the middle section by approaching the nocturne as a psychological drama of oppositional thoughts and emotions. Notably, I characterize the thematic gesture that begins in m. 3 as the pensive gaze of a *virtual agent*, a type of fictive persona or character within the musical discourse. Building upon the structural analyses of William Rothstein and Alison Hood, I draw out this virtual agent’s mounting anxiety which is revealed in the subtle mixture of meter and mode within the A section. These musical oppositions become fleshed out more fully in the starkly contrasting B section, which interestingly bears a resemblance to Chopin’s later Polonaise-Fantasia. I argue that this intrusion into the ongoing musical discourse represents an altered state of consciousness, a dreamlike or fantasy space in which time is warped and musical motives appear overtly foreign yet curiously familiar.

The "Reprise Codetta" in Selected Piano Works of Debussy, Michael Oravitz (University of Northern Colorado)

Select scholars, including Roy Howat (1986), James Hepokoski (2011), and Boyd Pomery (2003), have commented on the unfortunate tendency to oversimplify Debussy's formal designs as basic ternary ABA' forms, based on the fact that the opening material appears to close out the work. A contributing factor to these problematic ABA' construals, one often overlooked, has to do with the equivocal status of the returning A' material as a conventional "reprise." Debussy, at times, situates returning opening material nearer to the end of a number of works than what is normally expected of a full-fledged reprise, lending that material more of a codetta function than that of the thematic-presentation function more commonly found in a standard reprise. These "reprise-codettas," as I call them, are replete with a number of traits conventionally associated with codettas, such as a recessive dynamic, a general stasis around the tonic harmony, and/or a brevity better suited for a codetta rather than a thematic presentation (see Caplin, 1998). In addition to late-appearing thematic reprises, late-appearing tonal reprises can produce a similar codetta effect.

Aesthetically, Debussy may have sought to avoid the proportions of the common ternary designs of nineteenth-century character pieces, or to avoid the "heroic" overtones that were, at times, associated with moments of reprise in sonata forms (Spitzer, 2006). Ultimately, the reprise-codettas serve to redefine the point of reprise as a moment of subtle recollection rather than a full-fledged "return" of opening ideas.

Musical Time-Images: A Study of Narrativity in Debussy's Late Style, Matt Ambrosio (University of Wisconsin-Madison)

Scholars finding the non-teleological nature of Claude Debussy's late repertoire elusive under analysis have turned to another artistic medium to inform their study, *film*. While drawing parallels between compositional and cinematic practices can suggest influences in either direction, such demonstrations often overlook a more fundamental similarity: the ways in which both Debussy's late works and modern film practices subvert the teleological narrative structures of their respective earlier periods.

This paper reframes the relationship between Debussy's music and film to suggest that narrative similarities exist at the level of experienced temporality. Using Gilles Deleuze's concept of *time-image* introduced in *Cinema 2*, I address the narrative effects of musical return in Debussy's late sonatas and develop a methodology to approach music that eludes teleologically-biased music-analytical practices. *Time-images*, the philosopher asserts, "falsif[y] purely 'chronic' narrative" and challenge the linear "clock-time" temporality of earlier cinema. Deleuze's taxonomy of *time-image* signs relates closely to his model of temporality introduced in his earlier writings (*Difference and Repetition*, *Bergsonism*, and *The Logic of Sense*), suggesting a deep connection between perception of time and narrative. Using Deleuze's study of *time-image* as a model for how to address non-teleological narrativity I find musical return in Debussy's sonatas suggests a narrativity that repositions the listener in a productive narrative role, redefining music's temporal capabilities.

Session 3: 2-4 pm

Quotation as Actor in Christopher Rouse's Symphony No. 1: Balancing Narrative within Lyric, Mike Morey (University of North Texas)

Christopher Rouse's Symphony No. 1 not only helped secure his position as one of

America's more prominent composers, but it also helped to elevate the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra's reputation as a welcoming venue to performances of challenging new works. Cast in the form of a single movement adagio, it was meant to pay homage to those Rouse admired as composers of adagios – Shostakovich, Sibelius, Hartmann, Pettersson, and Schuman. However, only one composer's music is recognizably quoted (the famous opening theme from the second movement of Bruckner's Symphony No. 7, which is performed in Rouse's Symphony by a quartet of Wagner Tubas). While Rouse's Symphony is cast in the lyric mode of the adagio, it is the cumulative quotation procedure that provides the catalyst for the work's narrative listening potential.

The lyric context offers analytical advantages to adagios as stand-alone movements. It is my intention to apply portions of Karol Berger's lyric theory to Rouse's Symphony No. 1, noting how the specific categories often associated with adagio rhetoric such as color and timbre, a sense of atemporality, and melodic expansion and contraction intersect with more traditional narrative-like properties such as the carefully prepared climaxes, periodicity, and the return of various materials at critical formal junctures. I conclude by noting that while the adagio rhetoric is present throughout most of Rouse's Symphony, the potency and referential content of the Bruckner quotation acts as the critical point of departure that counterbalances the lyric with narrative modes of perception.

Ossianism, Narrative, and Nineteenth-Century American Aesthetics in Dvořák's New World Symphony, Janice Dickensheets (University of Northern Colorado)

Fueled by Enlightenment fascination with knowledge derived from ancient cultures, James Macpherson's Ossianic poetry exploded upon the western world. Though plagued by continual controversy surrounding their authenticity, these poems inspired Romantic-period works of literature, theatre, and music throughout Europe and America, and helped give birth to the bardic style in music—a style that conjures the ancient realms of epic poetry through narrative techniques that mirror those of Macpherson.

A central Ossianic image is the evocation of the “cultured primitive,” Macpherson's view of Celtic society, which aligned well with Jean-Jacques Rousseau's “noble savage,” thus creating a fascination with exiled heroes and loss of paradise. In America, a growing movement toward “primitivism” emphasized the organic unity between man and nature, an idea that aligned with Transcendentalist values, suggesting that Ossian's appearance in the New World may very well have impacted nineteenth-century American artistic aesthetics.

Dvořák's ninth symphony embraces a particularly American-style Ossianism. As a whole, the work epitomizes the bardic style, rendered with Indianist sensibilities. Stylistic and narrative analysis uncovers a buried formal structure within the standard sonata cycle that mirrors Ossianic imagery and form. Framed by melancholic otherworldly chords signifying the voice of the bard, heroic characters fight valiantly and die in battle. The work also features a story within the story: a story of lost or forbidden love, the cultured primitive set amid the tempest of battle or storm, surrounded by melancholy, and death—Ossianic imagery rendered in an Indianist manner, a common voice in nineteenth-century American artistic aesthetics.

Virtual Agency and Internal Focalization in BBC's 1995 *Pride and Prejudice*, Julissa Shinsky (University of Texas at Austin)

Building upon his work on musical topics in Beethoven, Robert Hatten's *A Theory of Virtual Agency in Western Art Music* (Hatten, 2018) provides analytical tools for interpreting music as possessing agency, subjectivity and narrative arcs. In television and film, virtual agency is used to represent affect and emotional statues of characters, particularly in the nondiegetic realm.

In this paper, I examine the BBC's 1995 miniseries production of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* from this standpoint. This miniseries utilizes period music, usually in diegetic performance, and it has a nondiegetic score composed by Carl Davis. As is common in novels, Jane Austen uses the narrator to relate internal subjective states of her characters, what narratologists call "focalization." The basic techniques of narrative film and television, however, do not lend themselves easily to focalization except as special effects such as voiceover narration or point of view editing. Historically, rendering such focalization has been one of the primary functions of nondiegetic music, which though an "unrealistic" element is generally less intrusive and less definite than either voiceover or point of view editing. One effective device in the miniseries is the use of diegetic music that articulates a definite image of virtual agency, which is then carried into the nondiegetic score where it seems to be appropriated by and ultimately embodied by the characters. Through the use of virtual agency and the shift of diegetic score to nondiegetic, we can ascertain focalized information about Austen's story world and characters adapted from literature to screen

Saturday, March 2

Session 4: 9-10:30 am

Rachmaninov's Challenge to Monotony: The D-major Complex, Boyd Pomeroy (University of Arizona)

Like some other composers, Rachmaninov's tonal language exhibits distinctive tonal habits/topics associated with specific key choices or prolonged chords/tonal areas within keys. This paper explores one of these: a notable penchant for overlaying the D-major tonic triad/scalar system with chromatic elements (added or substituted), especially B-flat (^flat-6), E-flat (^flat-2), and C natural (^flat-7). As well as featuring prominently in many pieces/movements in this key, the complex also frequently appears in the context of the tonicized dominant of G minor.

The scale-degree additions contribute to the D-major tonic's projection as a kind of static tonal field or arabesque (this as a distinctly modernist aspect of Rachmaninov's tonality, inviting comparison with Debussy and others). They have a propensity to undermine tonic stability, especially the Phrygian ^2 and ^flat-6 in a major-mode context—the latter addition producing Rimsky-Korsakov's "harmonic major" scale; from another perspective, Peter Smith's "tragic tonic major." One effect of this is to lend the tonic D a strong dominant pull towards its subdominant G.

The complex thus challenges monotony in a novel way—neither from without (as in directional tonality) nor via the oscillating saturation of dual-tonic "mutability," but from an inner tension, the threatened collapse of the tonic's structurally preeminent status.

Three examples will illustrate varied forms of the complex's tonal-structural implications: "reverse tonicization" (Prelude in G minor), the secondary theme "frozen" on the dominant chord (Cello Sonata/i), and a plagal pull towards a central subdominant in the role of the piece's "real" inner tonic (Etude-Tableau in D).

Form-Generating Elements in Anton Webern's String Quartet (1905), David Orvek (The Ohio State University)

This paper takes as its starting point Sebastian Wedler's suggestion in his 2015 article,

“Thus Spoke the Early Modernist: *Zarathustra* and Rotational Form in Webern’s String Quartet (1905)” that Anton Webern’s 1905 string quartet might be profitably examined through the lens of sonata form—particularly the theories of Hepokoski and Darcy. Even a cursory examination of the work, however, reveals that such an interpretation is fraught with perils. Indeed, anyone attempting to understand the quartet from this perspective is forced to wrestle with significant formal deformations that strike at the very heart of a sonata’s fundamental structure and rhetorical power—the conflict between the tonal centers of the primary and secondary thematic areas. Where Welder is content to merely label this work as some sort of vague “*dialogue* with the sonata paradigm” and continue on to a discussion of the quartet’s place within the philosophical *Zeitgeist* of the early-twentieth century, the present paper seeks, instead, to investigate the implications of such deformations on Webern’s later music, the music of Schoenberg, and the development of atonal composition as a whole. Specifically, this paper finds that the quartet relies heavily upon inversional symmetry and the composing out of a fundamental motive—both highly important techniques in later atonal music—for the generation of form.

Tempo as Form: Orchestral Recordings from 1910–1940 in Light of Earlier Sources, Nathan Pell (The Graduate Center (CUNY))

The belief is widespread amongst modern scholars and practicing musicians that the pervasive flexibility of tempo heard on early recordings constitutes a “liberty” of Romantic performance practice, originating with Wagner and Liszt (Rosenblum 1994) and unforeseen by earlier composers (Bowen 1993). This view, however, sits at odds with an abundance of sources from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (Brown 2004), which demonstrate not only that such rubato predated Wagner by several decades, but that composers even *expected* the tempo to fluctuate in certain well-defined situations, which I enumerate. Working from these expectations, I argue, composers *wrote tempo fluctuations into their music* through the notes they chose, in striking alignment with their formal layouts.

Building on work by Philip (1992), I show that the rubato described in early nineteenth-century treatises is exemplified in pre-WWII orchestral recordings (where tempo practices are clearer than in solo or chamber music), using tapping data I collected from ~350 recordings of around 40 Classical and Romantic sonata movements. And I note ways in which the familiar features of sonata form might encode changes in tempo, identifying the norms of typical sonata-form tempo design and passages that flout these customs.

These conclusions require us to expand our notions about what constitutes form. If the tempo practices on early recordings indeed have their roots in the early nineteenth century, then they are as much a part of the music’s form as its harmonies and phrase structures. In other words, I consider tempo a form-defining parameter.

Session 5: 1:40-3:10 pm

Audio Timelines Across the Curriculum, Judith Ofcarcik (Fort Hays State University)

As a theory professor at a small state university I regularly encounter challenges related to the school’s limited budget and enrollment. I am always searching for low-cost resources that support both in-class and out-of-class learning. Audio Timeliner (AT) is a free downloadable program that addresses many problems faced by instructors at similar institutions, as well as any instructor who wishes to develop students’ listening skills. In this presentation I will discuss five key

problems that AT helps to solve, give tips and tricks for using the software, and provide sample lesson plans and assignments.

Inter-University Peer Learning: Increasing Motivation and Retention through a Long-Term, Collaborative Final Project, Brian Edward Jarvis (University of Texas at El Paso)

John Peterson (James Madison University)

We regularly encounter variations of these scenarios: (1) students forget well-established concepts from earlier topics revisited later in the semester; (2) students turn to their peers first, not the instructor, for help outside of class; and (3) most students initially participate in class, but only a handful continue to do so voluntarily by midsemester. In this presentation, we share two strategies to address these issues in an inter-university, co-taught Form and Analysis course: (1) a cyclic quizzing strategy that fosters long-term retention and gradual accumulation of skill in a manner similar to how musicians learn new repertoire, and (2) a final project that leverages peer learning to maintain student motivation and participation throughout the semester.

For their final projects, students became teachers by creating a video analysis of a piece. These videos were evaluated by students from a different institution's Form & Analysis course, one taught using materials co-designed by the instructors of both courses. The evaluating students completed an assignment made and graded by the student teacher. This peer-evaluation model motivated the student teachers to ensure they thoroughly understood course content so they could positively represent themselves and their institutions to others.

Quizzes deployed through our institutions' Learning Management Systems helped students continually practice key concepts. We scaffolded and repeated content in various quiz formats, both aural and written. The results of this approach yielded a notable increase in student engagement, performance, and retention, and we will demonstrate how these approaches can be utilized in a variety of courses.

Core Music Theory Courses Online: Pedagogical Challenges and Course Implementation, Gillian Robertson (University of North Texas)

As online teaching initiatives become more prevalent in conversations regarding 21st-century post-secondary school curricula, music students and faculty are likely to see new online courses becoming more readily available in their institution's music course catalogue. In this presentation, I will explore the unique pedagogical challenges that have arisen during the process of developing and implementing advanced core music theory classes in an online format, specifically at the sophomore-level (Theory III and IV). Among some of the challenges that I will discuss are: re-conceiving or re-evaluating content presentation and assessment types and formatting, providing sufficient practice and feedback for students, and how to uphold student-to-student and student-to-instructor discussions and communications that occur in an in-person core music theory class. With regards to technologies and software programs, I would like to focus on two programs that may be less familiar to the music theory community: Panopto (a lecture capture software program) and Zoom (a video conferencing program). Finally, using a combination of the actual Canvas courses (live demonstration) and screenshots I will address issues of communication for an online class, how to infuse student interaction and engagement within course content and assessments, and how to incorporate musical creativity, particularly in the form of collaborative final projects.

Session 6: 3:20-4:50 pm

Repurposing a Paradigm: A Schenkerian View of Prolongation in the Exposition of Bach's E-Major Fugue, WTC II/9, Derek J. Myler (University of Utah)

Sarah Marlowe has recently challenged aspects of William Renwick's subject-answer paradigms as introduced in his 1995 book *Analyzing Fugue: A Schenkerian Approach*; namely, she has questioned their role within the global context of fugue. The ideological roots of Renwick's paradigms—a system of linear progressions devised to describe the essential melodic content of any subject-answer pair—can be found in Schenker's own writings on fugue, but it is Marlowe's assertion that Renwick misses a central purpose of these progressions: their function as prolongational agents in the fugal exposition.

In this presentation I explore the implications of Marlowe's observations. I introduce the notion of an explicitly defined *expositional tonic prolongation* (ETP), and, after Marlowe, apply the structural realization of the ETP as a new criterion for paradigm construction. I propose a modification to Renwick's Paradigm 5 and demonstrate how my modified paradigm addresses the tonic-prolongational potential of the subject-answer pair in expressing the ETP. Moreover, I present a normative plan for Paradigm 5 fugues and call special attention to the features that distinguish and breathe life into a rich variety of fugal-expositional designs. I then test the merit of my modified paradigm by applying it in a detailed analysis of the exposition of Bach's Fugue No. 9 in E Major from *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, Book II, ultimately graphing a foreground reading of the results. I conclude by looking toward the future of fugal pedagogy and the profitable results an organic perspective can have upon performance practice.

Approaching Humor in Music, Richard Lee (University of Georgia), Lewis Jeter (Florida State University)

Humor is an important, though often neglected, component of meaning in music. Musicians and non-musicians alike consistently recognize (non)humorous music. Identifying musical humor may be an easy task for acculturated listeners, yet little theorizing has been done about how humorous effects are actualized. We interpret humor in music by borrowing ideas from philosophy, music theory, and cognition to interpret the level of discursive value that humor holds. We investigate markedness-rank values of humorous musical situations, across a variety of genres, centered around the listener via theories of intertextuality, as a means to categorize humorous effects in music.

Philosophy teaches us how humor might arise in music. Humor has been described as: driven by the pleasure found in superiority over others; a release of tension accumulated within the subject, an act of playful relaxation, or an acknowledge of incongruity. The benign violation theory assumes incongruities are contextualized within a safe environments, aptly describing how humor can be achieved in music. Huron, for example, has described humorous effects in PDQ Bach, anticipating the benign violation theory by suggesting that humor emerges from a thwarting of musical expectations. We synthesize categories of incongruity in multiple domains: musical structures; musical allusion; lyrical content; and staging.

Since humor has not yet enjoyed a theoretical framework like intertextuality, our paper explores possibilities for how humor emerges by situating the listener as an intentioned musical agency, which exists as a subset of the analyst's agency. Intertextual networks show where listeners collect their references and normative expectations, often anachronistically, which reflects

(post)modern listening strategies by foregrounding the listening agency.

Flexible Grooves and Formal Processes in Craig Taborn's *Avenging Angel*, Antares Boyle (University of Northern Colorado)

While various scholars have analyzed how repeated grooves underscore formal processes in popular music (e.g., Spicer 2004, Attas 2015, Danielsen 2018), comparably little attention has been paid to ostinato-based pieces in contemporary jazz. In this music, grooves are sometimes treated more flexibly, and may provide formal structure, rhythmic drive, and coherence to works that shirk conventional tonal progressions or metric frameworks. To demonstrate, I discuss the role of variable ostinati in music by composer/pianist Craig Taborn on his album *Avenging Angel* (2011). While ensemble performance usually requires fairly strict groove repetition, the album's solo format allows for significant rhythmic variation and subtle processes of change. I discuss three tracks, "Avenging Angel," "The Broad Day King," and "Neverland." In each of these compositions, variable ostinati or other cyclic processes uniquely structure the work's temporal unfolding. Taborn's flexible grooves suggest that analyzing ostinati in contemporary jazz can enrich our understanding of the relationship between ostinato and meter, the role of variation and development in the forms of repetitive music, and the porous boundaries of conventional genre designations and categorical descriptions such as "groove-based."