

# NEW ENGLAND CONFERENCE OF MUSIC THEORISTS

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## TWENTIETH ANNUAL MEETING THE NEW ENGLAND CONFERENCE OF MUSIC THEORISTS UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS – AMHERST APRIL 1-2, 2005

### *Program Abstracts*

#### **Friday afternoon, April 1**

##### **Craig Cummings (Ithaca College): Compositional Techniques in Two Chamber Works by Karel Husa**

This paper explores diverse compositional techniques found in two chamber works by Karel Husa: Sonata a Tre for clarinet, violin, and piano (1981) and Variations for piano quartet (1984). Analysis and sketch study reveal interesting aspects of tone row presentation, aggregate completion, mirror symmetry, and cellular construction of cadenza-like passages.

Sonata a Tre, mvt. I features an additive and rotational pitch class presentation technique articulated through various contrapuntal procedures. Passages featuring this seven-PC grouping alternate with contrasting interjections making use of four additional PCs. Husa withholds the twelfth PC for over fifty measures; when it enters, he puts particular emphasis on it. Variations, by contrast, features different orderings of four trichords and of the PCs within them. The result is aggregate completion of a different sort.

A separate but equally interesting issue is Husa's use of symmetry. Many of his sketches and scores show a keen interest in mirror symmetry in pitch space. Unlike some symmetrical writing, where the axis is present only in the abstract, Husa brings out the axis in many symmetrical passages such that he creates pitch focus or even pitch centers. This is the case in several interesting passages from Variations and Sonata a Tre, some of which evince temporal procedures related to the Fibonacci series.

Cadenza-like sections in both works feature small motivic cells presented in various combinations and orderings. Here, rapid-fire presentation and reordering take precedence over explicit serial procedures.

##### **Catherine Costello Hirata (Belmont, MA): Celebrating Differences: Some Insights from Feldman's *Durations***

This paper explores the analytical implications of Feldman's professed desire to compose chords that are "very different [one] from the next, as if almost to erase in one's memory what happened before." Rejecting the possibility of simply using a chart to compare chords along various dimensions (timbre, register, density, etc.), I argue that with a more "in-time" approach we gain insight into both the freshness of the individual chords and the disjunction between them. An analysis of *Durations* reveals that the categories in which we perceive sounds do not remain constant, rather are in a constant state of flux. On account of this, often the point is not just that a given sound seems different from the one preceding it, but that we can't even say (hear) whether it is similar or different in the terms that the preceding sound had been compared to the sounds before it. This continual disruption of categories places unusual demands on the listener: we must be ready to frequently change our perspective, to keep an open mind. A secondary point has to do with the possibility that, somewhat paradoxically, a sound might be distinguished by its repetition of some or all aspects of a previous sound.

##### **David Riley (University of Connecticut): In a Musical Garden: The Influence of Pitch Class Sets on Form and Long-Range Structural Goals in Toru Takemitsu's *Between Tides***

Toru Takemitsu (1930-1996), one of Japan's most esteemed and prolific composers of the twentieth century, helped re-define the position and role of Western music in post-World War II Japan. Takemitsu, influenced by the music of composers such as Messiaen, Debussy, and later Cage, as well as other leading composers of the time, developed a unique musical style that combines traditional Japanese musical aesthetics with contemporary Western musical idioms. His music, though rooted in the harmonic language, scales, and pitch-

collections of Western music, displays a uniquely Japanese sensitivity towards tone color via instrumentation and instrumental effects, temporal motion and layering, and the spatial distribution of pitch materials.

While a number of analyses of Takemitsu's late music attempt to reduce his musical language to the chromatic saturation of the octatonic, the pentatonic, the whole-tone, or the hexatonic scales by added tones that fall outside the apparent referential pitch collection, these added tones play a crucial role not only in the coloration of surface level events, but also in the projection of pitch materials over the course of a piece's middle-level and deeper-level structures.

*Between Tides* (1993) for violin, cello, and piano, composed as the last piece in his "Waterscape" series, combines Takemitsu's traditional aesthetics of orchestration, timbral sensitivity, and temporal elasticity with his predilections for motivic minimalism, self-quotation, and formal liquidity. While many of the piece's surface events, both melodic and harmonic, evoke sonic references to the octatonic, whole-tone, hexatonic, and even diatonic collections; they draw their pitch materials from the larger referential set 9-3 (012345689), which, instead of appearing as a complete sonority either vertically or horizontally, emerges as the referential collection through representative subsets such as 5-13 (01248) and 6-z39 (012368) and by the non-literal complement 3-3 (014). It is these referential collections and their complements that help define long range structural goals.

### **Brenda Ravenscroft (Queen's University): Translating Pitch Into Time: Rhythmic Innovation in America**

The well-documented changes and innovations that took place in the realm of pitch organization in the early twentieth century were paralleled by developments of a similar magnitude in the organization of rhythm, where composers sought alternatives to the regular metric framework that had controlled musical rhythm for the past few centuries. Henry Cowell stands out as one of the most important early figures: his radical ideas about music helped to develop a distinctive American compositional voice, and his ideas continue to inspire American composers to this day.

In this paper I focus my attention on what I consider to be Cowell's most significant contribution to the realm of twentieth-century innovation: his system for translating pitch to into time. Starting with his physical experiments, I present Cowell's theory for deriving aspects of rhythm—surface rhythmic durations, meter and tempo—from the ratios for pitch intervals in the harmonic series, and examine the pieces he composed to illustrate his theory. I then trace his influence on compositional practice in the United States over the past seventy years, demonstrating how his successors have adopted and adapted his system of organizing rhythm to explore new ways of relating pitch and time.

### **Saturday morning, April 2**

### **David Pacun (Ithaca College): Abstract Plots: A Transformational Approach to Variation Sets of Beethoven and Brahms**

This paper explores a dimension often omitted in past analyses of variation sets, a component I will term 'abstract plot.' Derived from theories of William Caplan and David Lewin, abstract plots portray how motives articulate voice-leading structures. Similar to flow charts, they shift attention away from the material itself (the literal plot) onto the transformational path that surface motives trace. The paper divides into two parts. Part one elucidates the abstract plot model through a brief analysis of Beethoven's 32 Variations on a Theme in C Minor, WoO 80. Here, the abstract plot analysis reveals how Beethoven imparts a different dramatic shape to several variations, all the while retaining the structural voice leading. Part two then explores subtle deviations in abstract plot as found in the variation movement from Brahms's Piano Trio in C Major, opus 87. The analysis explores specifically how patterns of return (both abstract and literal) evoke a sense of reversal around variation 3. It is hoped that abstract plots enable analysts to better capture the dynamic components of both theme and variations and ultimately to arrive at more exacting representations of how variation sets proceed on the large-scale.

**Eva Sze (The Graduate Center of the City University of New York): Continuous Exposition vs. Two-Part Exposition: Formal Conflicts in the First Movement of Mozart's Piano Concerto in F Major, K. 459**

Recent writings on Sonata Theory by James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy differentiate between two types of sonata expositions in late-eighteenth-century instrumental works: the *two-part exposition* and the *continuous exposition*. Required of the two-part exposition is the *medial caesura*, which ends the transition zone and opens up the secondary-theme zone. The continuous exposition, by contrast, contains no medial caesura and therefore no secondary theme. In the first movements of Mozart's piano concertos, the two-part exposition is the norm for both the opening ritornello and the solo exposition. The F-major Concerto, K. 459, is unique in that both types of expositions can be found; thus, its form deserves further exploration from the perspective of Sonata Theory. The first section of this paper claims that the opening ritornello is continuous and the solo exposition two-part. As well, it addresses issues associated with the coexistence of both types of sonata expositions. The second section compares the Sonata-Theory interpretation to a reading derived from Caplinian formal functions. The two analytical approaches produce different analytical results, from which the paper concludes by proposing a hermeneutic interpretation of the movement's formal organization.

**Yonatan Malin (Wesleyan University): Modeling Complex Hemiolas: Applications for Richard Cohn's "Ski-Hill" Graphs**

Richard Cohn has recently developed a method for modeling metric "spaces" and hemiola-type conflicts at multiple levels of the metric hierarchy. The present paper offers applications and extensions of Cohn's method, drawing on songs by Robert Schumann, Josephine Lang, and Johannes Brahms. Pairs of metric states which appear distant in Cohn's graphs are shown to be isographic, and hence metrically analogous. The shift from one such state to another models a recurrent feature of Brahms's rhythmic practice: his use of meter and rhythm to notate changes of tempo. Cohn's metric graphs are also used to show how a triple grouping can "shadow" a purely duple meter at multiple levels, and the reverse. Finally, the metric graphs illustrate conflicting metric interpretations of oscillatory patterns in songs by Lang and Schumann.

**Lawrence Shuster (The Graduate Center of the City University of New York): Transformational Harmony and Voice-Leading in the Canonic Writing of Stravinsky and Webern**

The development of compositional systems capable of achieving a functional integration between the vertical and linear dimensions of musical structure in the absence of a unifying tonal center was perhaps the most significant compositional challenge encountered by the early serialists. A diverse array of compositional strategies emerged as the result of the quest for a 'unified space'. Stravinsky and Webern each developed unique and novel systems for generating harmonic structures and establishing reciprocal correspondences between them. These various systems of harmonic generation have been recognized by contemporary theory for some time now. Yet comparatively little research has been conducted that examines the explicit behavior of vertical and linear sets on the musical surface and how these sets interact to generate unified spaces.

This paper explores harmony and voice-leading in the canonic writing of Stravinsky and Webern. It adapts recent transformational theories involving Klumpenhouwer Networks (K-nets) to illustrate some ways in which these composers were able to produce a functional integration between the vertical and linear dimensions of musical structure. K-nets are employed to generate network models of linear and vertical structure that characterize isographic relations expressed between sets on the musical surface and between graphs at higher levels of recursion. A set of categories is established to define the various forms of 'diagonal' correspondence expressed between the linear and vertical networks. Analytical examples will be drawn from Stravinsky's *Double Canon* and Webern's *String Quartet*, Opus 28/2 and *Quartet*, Opus 22/1.

**Saturday afternoon, April 2**

**Deborah Burton (Florida International University): Guida e Conseguente: Padre Martini and Francesco Galeazzi on Fugue**

During the twenty-odd years that divide the publication of Galeazzi's Elementi Teorico-Practici di Musica and Martini's Esemplare, the French Revolution and the Napoleonic invasions of Italy occurred, creating a chasm between the Church and anti-clerical citizens: Martini was a member of the clergy, while Galeazzi was an Enlightenment intellectual who penned a symphony entitled "Revolution." The essential difference between the two men's perspectives can be summed up thusly: Galeazzi's aim is to serve man, while Martini's is to serve God. Yet Galeazzi thought of Martini as an "escort" while he wrote the counterpoint section of his treatise, modeling it on Martini's work.

But Martini's Esemplare does not contain the sort of rudimentary definitions and explanations that Galeazzi's does—or does it? In his opus The Study of Fugue, Mann leaves the strong impression that Martini never wrote an instructional guide to counterpoint, just an annotated series of examples for the advanced student. In fact, though, Martini did leave an extensive description of contrapuntal terms and how to apply them in the 46-page introduction to Part II of the Esemplare, which was left untranslated.

This paper will compare the two men's definitions of fugal vocabulary and procedures (with original English translations provided). Aspects to be compared include definitions of fugue, subjects, answers, countersubjects, inversion, modulation, stretto, and the organization of the fugue as a whole.

**John MacKay (Eastern Mediterranean University, Turkish North Cyprus): “Nuclei” and “Characteristic Maxima”: On Karel Janeček’s Classifications of Atonal Harmonies**

Published initially in 1947 and revised as the first three chapters of his *Foundations of Modern Harmony* (*Základy moderní harmonie*, Prague, 1965) the system of atonal chord classification of Karel Janeček (1902 – 1974) has since been extensively influential in Eastern European composition and musicology. While in his preliminaries Janeček presents the essential equivalents of normal order and prime form of “classical” pitch-class set theory, the orientation of his theory is uncompromisingly harmonic. Chords are categorized via their inclusion only of dissonant elements” (for Janeček these are not only the intervals of minor second, major second, and the tritone but also the augmented triad), leading to families of “increased” (multiple occurrences of) single dissonances elements or various “merged” or combined dissonance elements. Chord families are then organized in relation to “maxima” and “nuclei” or the chords in which the defining element or combination of elements are maximally or minimally present. As in contemporary set-theoretic research, Janeček’s rigorously intuitive structuralism encounters difficulties in distinctively characterizing larger 5- and 6-member sonorities but the Czech composer/theorist’s response to this dilemma and his further speculations on the nature of atonal chord progression and function fulfill a monumentally significant application of historical and philosophical principles to the issues of atonal harmony.