

# NEW ENGLAND CONFERENCE OF MUSIC THEORISTS

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**TWENTY-SEVENTH ANNUAL MEETING  
THE NEW ENGLAND CONFERENCE OF MUSIC THEORISTS  
CONNECTICUT COLLEGE  
APRIL 20-21, 2012**

*Abstracts*

**Friday afternoon, April 20**

**1:30 pm – 3:30 pm**

***Music as Temporal Art***

Christopher Hasty (Harvard University), chair

- Hypermetrical Conflict in the *Heiliger Dankgesang* of Beethoven's String Quartet, Op. 132  
Drew F. Nobile (CUNY Graduate Center)

In the summer of 1825, Beethoven completed his String Quartet Op. 132 after recovering from an illness that he had not expected to survive. At the center of this five-movement work Beethoven placed the famous *Heiliger Dankgesang*, the full title of which translates to "A Convalescent's Holy Song of Thanksgiving to the Divinity in the Lydian Mode." The obvious autobiographical nature of the title suggests narrative possibilities; while scholars such as William Kinderman and Kevin Korsyn have focused on the *formal* opposition between the *molto adagio* (sickness) and *Neue Kraft* ("new strength") sections, the narrative that I will present instead traces a *hypermetrical* opposition throughout the three *molto adagio* sections. The two melodic ideas presented in the first *molto adagio*—the "quarter-note idea" and the "chorale phrase"—project conflicting hypermetrical structures:  $4/4$  in the former and  $3/2$  in the latter. Throughout the movement, these two melodies and their hypermeters are opposed, combined, and finally reconciled at the end of the third *molto adagio*. The moment of reconciliation occurs as the two melodic ideas as well as the two hypermeters are merged into one. In this way, we can consider the hypermetrical conflict to represent the passage from sickness (conflict) to health (reconciliation).

- Melodic Contour, Musical Diachrony, and the Paradigmatic/Syntagmatic Divide in Frédéric Chopin's Waltz in B Minor  
Rob Schultz (University of Massachusetts, Amherst)

It is widely acknowledged that music is a temporal art. Yet many theoretical and analytical methodologies implicitly rely upon a static, atemporal conception thereof. Constructs such as harmonic reduction and voice-leading graphs, formal diagrams, and pitch-class sets, among others, operate from an underlying *synchronic* perspective in which the musical phenomena being described are treated as though fully and simultaneously present before the listener/analyst. In their real-time musical manifestation, however, these phenomena simply do not behave in this manner; rather, they only gradually emerge as the music unfolds in a fundamentally *diachronic* process of becoming.

In this paper, I propose a system of melodic contour relations that is founded upon this diachronic process. After fleshing out the methodology in sufficient detail, I then deploy it in a motivic analysis of three variant source texts of Frédéric Chopin's Waltz in B minor. The analysis reveals an intriguing correlation between two phenomenologically salient types of contour relations and the work's paradigmatically and syntagmatically related motives. I conclude by briefly contextualizing these findings within Chopin's broader compositional and performance practices. By drawing connections to the sketch for the *Berceuse*, Op. 57, as well as Chopin's penchant for ornamental melodic variation and the blending of musical genres, I ultimately assert that the diachronic and proximal melodic contour relationships at work in the B minor Waltz reveal a nascent proclivity for these important hallmarks of Chopin's mature style.

- “Le vertige de la durée pure”: Time and Harmony in Gérard Grisey's *Vortex Temporum*  
Robert Hasegawa (Eastman School of Music)

Though issues of timbre and harmony often take center stage in analyses of spectral music, Gérard Grisey repeatedly drew attention to the central role of time in his work: “For me, spectral music has a temporal origin.” In his compositions, spectrally derived harmonies are a vehicle for the exploration of new kinds of temporal experience. This paper examines the connections between Grisey's approach to musical time and his harmonic language in *Vortex Temporum* (1994-96). Grisey's program note describes the work's use of three different types of spectrum (harmonic, stretched, and compressed) and three analogous types of time (ordinary, dilated, and contracted). While previous studies have primarily focused on what Grisey called the “skeleton of time” (the abstract precompositional scheme that underlies a work), this paper uses detailed harmonic analysis to engage the “flesh of time”: the way that the work's deployment of spectral pitch materials informs and shapes temporal perception.

**3:40 pm – 5:00 pm**

***Chromaticism***

Daniel Harrison (Yale University), chair

- Failure and Success as Narrative Process in Vaughan Williams's *Phantasy Quintet*  
Sacha Peiser (University of Connecticut, Storrs)

Ralph Vaughan Williams composed his *Phantasy Quintet* for strings in 1912 to fulfill a commission by the amateur violinist and arts benefactor Walter William Cobbett. His task was to compose a *Phantasy Quintet*: a brief single-movement work with distinct, separate sections and a unifying central theme. Notwithstanding these compositional constraints, Vaughan Williams embedded his own, different compositional story in the *Phantasy Quintet*. The work unfolds a multivalent narrative of failure and success hinging on longer-scale thematic transformation, the specific combination of the pitches D, F, and A, and their chromatic alterations.

After the central theme is heard, the compositional thesis/crisis is stated: a jarring hexatonic pole between F major and D-flat minor. What ensues over the course of the piece is a quest to transform the hexatonic pole and lead from F major to D major, the final sonorities of the composition. The first three sections (Prélude, Scherzo, alla Sarabanda) will fail to achieve transformation on multiple levels. It is the Burlesca's task to unify several previous compositional strategies, the combination of which will enable the shift from an F-centric tonal landscape to D.

Drawing on recent work on musical narrative by Klein, Almén, and Tarasti, my analysis will elucidate the process of transformational failure in the first three movements by interpreting thematic, formal and pitch-structural events through a narrative lens, and success in the final movement leading to its triumphant D-major conclusion.

- “I’m gonna do another detour”: Modeling Chromatic Harmony in Fiona Apple’s Pop-rock  
Brian Robison (Northeastern University)

In the early twenty-first century, the pop-rock mainstream maintains an essentially conventional tonal syntax; recording artists may position themselves off-center through unusual cosmetics, wardrobe, or instrumental timbres, but an air of sensitivity and sincerity is typically conveyed through adherence to classical harmonic grammar, updated principally through the spare use (or even outright avoidance) of the authentic cadence. The American singer-songwriter Fiona Apple stands out as an exception; although her 1996 debut album *Tidal* demonstrates a thorough grounding in diatonic idioms, her subsequent releases *When the Pawn ...* (1999) and *Extraordinary Machine* (2005) feature more pervasive chromatic relations that seldom conform to textbook chromatic harmony or conventional popular chord progressions.

The present study focuses on some of the more complex instances of chromatic harmony in her work. While a few passages lend themselves to modeling via neo-Riemannian operations, as proposed and demonstrated by Guy Capuzzo for the analysis of chromatic progressions in other pop-rock music, Dmitri Tymoczko’s four-dimensional tetrahedral prism model of four-note chord space offers a more comprehensive account of voice-leading in Apple’s chromatic harmony, particularly with regard to her free mixture of triads and seventh chords.

## **Saturday morning, April 21**

**9:00 am – 10:20 am**

### ***Time Across Cultures***

Edward Gollin (Williams College), chair

- Folk Rhizomes and Odd-Meter Ostinatos: Ruth Crawford-Seeger Meets the Dave Brubeck Quartet  
Peter Evans (Longy School of Music)

Though seemingly disparate, the worlds of twentieth-century American jazz and classical musics can be rhizomatically interconnected. An example of such a connection exists, and can be traced, between Ruth Crawford-Seeger and the Dave Brubeck Quartet. Both were interested in exploring odd-meter time signatures, often in conjunction with the use of ostinato patterns. Both also sought to align their musical practices with aspects of American folk music, finding material that confirms their respective areas of experimentation. Brubeck defended the use of unusual time signatures by saying that “musicologists have recorded field hollers in 5/4,” while Seeger herself transcribed one such holler, “Drop ‘Em Down.” Furthermore, this paper adds another connection by demonstrating parallels in rhythmic development and ostinato mutation in the second movement of Seeger’s *Sonata for Violin and Piano* and Joe Morello’s drum solo from “Take Five.”

- Declamatory Schemas in Three Song Traditions  
Yonatan Malin (Wesleyan University)

A new method of declamatory analysis introduced in Malin 2010 tracks the placement of accented syllables and poetic lines in musical meters. The rhythms of accented syllable placement form *declamatory schemas*. The present paper explores declamatory schemas in three song traditions: German Lieder (extending Malin 2010); Israeli cabaret-style songs in Hebrew; and Jewish sacred poems/songs (*piyutim*), also in Hebrew. I show that there is overlap in the declamatory schemas of the three traditions and unique schema types that result from the differing poetic and musical styles. At a more basic level, I show that declamatory schemas are effective tools for analysis both within and outside of the canonic German Lied repertoire. The

paper thus provides a practical contribution to debates about methodology in the analysis of world music traditions.

The paper also compares the method of declamatory schema analysis with methods developed by Herald Krebs (2010) and Naphtali Wagner (2005). Krebs and Wagner each present default, “normal” rhythms of declamation, and they track “distortions” (Krebs) or “realizations” (Wagner) that differ from these norms. In comparison, Malin’s declamatory schema analysis reveals common and less common patterns, but does not distinguish a priori between “normal” and “distorted” settings. Individual analyses will focus on Robert Schumann’s “Ihre Stimme” op. 96, no. 3 (in dialogue with an analysis by Krebs), Sasha Argov’s “Panas Boded” (in dialogue with an analysis by Wagner), and “Ashir Lach Eretz Chemda” (a Moroccan *piyut* as performed and taught by Maimon Cohen in Israel).

**10:30 am – 12:00 pm**

***Perspectives on Contemporary Composition***

Suzannah Clark (Harvard University), chair

- The Expression Parameter in the Music of Sofia Gubaidulina  
Philip Ewell (Hunter College, CUNY)

The music of Sofia Gubaidulina (b. 1931) is powerful yet serene, enigmatic yet familiar. This highly spiritual Russian composer has wowed audiences around the world with her unique sounds, inspired by folk idioms and religious texts. Though her compositions are widely performed, little analytic work has been done on her music. Roughly twenty years ago her friend and colleague, Valentina Kholopova, devised a system for analyzing Gubaidulina's music in order to aid in performance. Kholopova has shown that, unbeknown to the composer, Gubaidulina usually groups together five expression parameters (EP): Articulation and Methods of Pitch Derivation; Melody; Rhythm; Texture; and Compositional Writing. Further, each of these parameters can exist in one of two functions: as a consonant EP or a dissonant EP. So, an example of a consonant articulation would be a “legato” marking, while a contrasting dissonant articulation EP would be “staccato.” Rarely does Gubaidulina mix the consonant and dissonant functions. These ten parameters, five EPs functioning as either dissonant or consonant expressions, form what Kholopova calls the Parameter Complex in Gubaidulina’s music. This complex is a powerful aid in performing her music. In this paper I will examine the EP, first using Gubaidulina’s *Concordanza* and then the Ten Preludes for Solo Cello as examples. As a cellist, I will display certain aspects of the EP by demonstrating them on the cello.

- Maximizing the Mundane: The Crafting of Moment in *Szene am Bahnhof* from György Kurtág’s *Kafka-Fragmente*, Op. 24  
Christian Gentry (Brandeis University)

*Die Zuschauer erstarren, wenn der Zug vorbeifährt.* (Franz Kafka)

The onlookers freeze as the train goes past.

In *Szene am Bahnhof* (Teil 1, No. 10) György Kurtág crafts a moment that relies on the dramatization of a particularly quotidian phenomenon: the experience of watching a train pass. Kurtág objectifies this event through a compositional approach that appropriately engages the text as an extraordinary drama hewn from a seemingly ordinary moment. This maximizing of the mundane, in a twist of wry irony relies on restraint and asceticism; namely that of dyadic harmony and melody that fit within a tightly bound binary form. Furthermore its length of 17 seconds suggests even a tighter adherence to the moment explicated by the text. Through neo-Schenkerian and neo-Riemannian analyses I show how Kurtág relies on these compositional devices. Neo-Schenkerian methods illustrate local and global voice-leading connections, including register transfers and implied prolongations. Neo-Riemannian analysis reveals implied

functionality of chords, specifically the perfect fifth dyad. Marrying the two reductive components of linearity and functionality results in a peculiar reading of the piece: Kurtág's maximized moment of the train passing is one of coherence not chaos, in turn, elevating it to a compelling mini-drama.

### **Saturday afternoon, April 21**

**1:45 pm – 3:15 pm**

#### ***Play and Interplay***

Deborah Stein (New England Conservatory), chair

- Musical Agency in Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro*  
Ji Young Kim (Cornell University)

In “Musical Analysis as Stage Direction”, David Lewin offers an analysis of a passage from Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro* that reads concrete musical means of dramatic portrayal to yield insight into the psychology of the characters. This paper extends Lewin's approach in his analysis of the first act trio, “Cosa sento!”, to the second act trio, “Susanna or via sortite”, the only other trio in the opera, also involving the Count and Susanna. A prevalent concern in the study of opera is an oft-perceived friction between musical form and dramaturgy. In opera numbers that draw on sonata form, the repetition of thematic material may not lend itself to the depiction of theatrical progression. The friction between music and drama is even more palpably felt in the fact that Susanna remains silent throughout this scene of the Beaumarchais play, her part in the opera number being an addition by Mozart and Da Ponte. This paper addresses the above issues and offers a close reading of the trio that illuminates the shifting balance of power between Count and Countess, and Susanna's role—not as a mere observer but an active musical participant.

- Music Analysis as Play  
William O'Hara (Harvard University)

Music and play share deep affinities, from the terminological (the notion of “playing” music) to the hedonistic (the pleasure taken in music). However, playful aspects of music do not stop simply at its sounding, but are manifold in its reception, analysis, and criticism as well. This essay argues that notions of play and playfulness are often significant structural devices in music-analytical discourse, drawing on influential theories of play of Johan Huizinga, who analyzed the ubiquity of play in culture and society, and Roger Caillois, who extended Huizinga's work by separating acts of play into the categories of *agon* (competition), *alea* (chance), *mimesis* (performance/imitation), and *ilinx* (vertigo). Gottfried Weber's famous analysis of Mozart's “Dissonance Quartet” acts as an initial case study, demonstrating several aspects of play. First, Weber *performs* an act of listening, inviting the reader to step into his shoes and hear the music from his perspective. His notion of *Mehrdeutigkeit* (multiple meaning) demonstrates *ilinx* by taking pleasure in ambiguous, perpetually-reconsidered harmonic relationships, and his continual oppositions of music against listener, and hearing ear against perceiving subject, infuse his listening with a series of *antagonisms*. This thorough study of Weber's analysis is supported by reference to articles by David Lewin, Fred Maus, Kevin Korsyn, and others. Re-conceiving analysis as a kind of play reveals it to be a unique form of musical experience, characterized by the uneven distribution of attention and the breaking open of the “work concept” into something more malleable and non-linear.