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THE NEW ENGLAND CONFERENCE OF MUSIC THEORISTS

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THIRTY-THIRD ANNUAL MEETING
THE NEW ENGLAND CONFERENCE OF MUSIC THEORISTS
UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST
FRIDAY & SATURDAY, APRIL 7–8, 2017

PROGRAM & ABSTRACTS

Friday afternoon, April 7, 2017
UMass Campus Center - Lower Level Room 165

12:30 pm   **Registration & Coffee**

1:30 pm – 3:30 pm   *Movement and Space:* **Christopher White (UMass Amherst), chair**

- Analyzing Improvised Music–Dance Interactions (1:30 pm)
    Chris Stover (The New School)

- Process and Reality: Discovering a Virtual World in Rudolph Reti's Thematic Processs (2:10 pm)
    Eric Elder (Brandeis University)

- Generalized Trichordal and Tetrachordal *Tonnetze*: Geometry and Analytical Applications (2:50 pm)
    Jason Yust (Boston University)

4:00 pm – 5:20 pm   *Altered States:* **Matthew McDonald (Northeastern University), chair**

- Death By Tchaikovsky: The Metric Spell of a Metadiegetic Sorcerer (4:00 pm)
    Táhirih Motazedian (Vassar College)

- Madness, Psychedelia, and Physical Space in Pink Floyd's *The Piper at the Gates of Dawn* (4:40 pm)
    Michèle Duguay (CUNY Graduate Center)

6:00 pm   **Conference Dinner (online pre-payment required)**
                         Johnny's Tavern, 30 Boltwood Walk, Amherst MA 01002

Saturday morning, April 8, 2017
Integrated Learning Center (ILC) – Room S211

8:30 am   **Registration, Coffee & Breakfast**

9:00 am – 10:20am   *Making and Breaking Conventions:* **Janet Bourne (Bates College), chair**

- An Intra-Album Dialogic Approach to Adele's 25 (9:00 am)
    Timothy R. Mastic (CUNY Graduate Center)

- Uses and Abuses of Galant Schemata in Stravinsky's Neoclassicism (9:40 am)
    Sarah Iker (Notre Dame)

10:40 am – 12:00 pm   *Verticalities:* **William O'Hara (Harvard University), chair**

- Applying Diatonic Set Theory to 13th-Century Verticalities: An Evolved Mod7 Approach to Perotin's *Alleluya Nativitas* (10:40 am)
  Jessica Fulkerson (Brandeis University)

- Confident Chromaticism in Satie's *Nocturnes* as Determined by Hindemith's Harmonic Fluctuation (11:20 am)
  Alexander Amato (Stephen F. Austin State University)

12:00 pm – 1:30pm   **LUNCH**

Saturday afternoon, April 8, 2017
Integrated Learning Center (ILC) – Room S211

1:30 pm – 2:45 pm   *Lightning talks:* **Suzannah Clark (Harvard University), chair**

- Metrical Dissonance and the Lullaby Topic (1:30 pm)
  Jacob Gran (Louisiana State University)
- Meter in French and Italian Opera, 1809–1859 (1:55 pm)
  Nicholas Shea (University of Massachusetts Amherst)
- Recursive Properties of *srdc* Structures in Golden Age Musical Theater Songs (2:20)
  Morgan Markel (University of Massachusetts Amherst)

2:45 pm – 3:30 pm   **Coffee**

3:30 pm – 4:30 pm   *Keynote Address*
  Nicole Biamonte (McGill University)
  "Jimi Hendrix and the *Star-Spangled Banner*"

4:30 pm – 5:15 pm   **Business Meeting**

5:15 pm – 6:15 pm   **Reception**
  hosted by **University of Massachusetts Amherst Department of Music**

ABSTRACTS

Friday afternoon, April 7, 2017

Movement and Space

Analyzing Improvised Music–Dance Interactions

Chris Stover (The New School)

This paper analyzes improvisational interactions between musicians and dancers in three performance scenarios: a Cuban rumba guaguancó performance, a Brazilian candomblé ritual, and a drum–dance performance from Ghana. Its analytic focus is on the way in which participants develop simple gestures into more elaborate expressions through the course of a complex multi-directional dialogue. While this can unfold in a great many directions, certain part-specific performance constraints help determine ranges of expected behaviors; therefore there is a high degree of expectation inherent in any given performance. These expectations may be fulfilled or denied, and their successful navigation is an important indicator, for insiders, of the quality of the performance. Across the three excerpts analyzed, three themes are foregrounded: (1) how the extemporaneous call–response dialogue between lead drummer and male dancer in rumba guaguancó unfolds, and how it grounds other improvisation interactions across the ensemble; (2) how a four-part dialogue between dancer and three drummers in candomblé animates tempo entrainment; especially group decisions to speed up the tempo; and (3) how a number of improvised performance decisions contribute to different kinds of beat orientations—laying back or pushing ahead, for example—in Ghanaian drum–dance music.

Process and Reality: Discovering a Virtual World in Rudolph Reti's Thematic Processs

Eric Elder (Brandeis University)

To say that Rudolph Reti's 1951 book, *The Thematic Process in Music*, has "enjoyed" a long reception history would be decidedly inaccurate. While the book continues to be cited in scholarly works, it has yet to be treated in a manner suggesting any substantial depth or meaningful affinity with past or present trends in musico-theoretical understanding. Along the way, Reti has assumed the role of ready straw man, becoming a veritable "foot-notorious" figure among scholars. But Reti, who acknowledged the novelty and crudeness of his study, provided well-placed cues for locating the work in its own intellectual context, namely, the speculative cosmology of the English mathematician and philosopher, Alfred North Whitehead.

Using common criticisms of the *The Thematic Process in Music* as points of departure, this paper explores Reti's prominent references to Whitehead. A direct comparison of Reti's words and analytical observations to the fundamental elements and principles of Whitehead's process philosophy suggests a theory of surprising depth—particularly given the work's reception history—and lends new significance to aspects of the theory routinely dismissed as arbitrary. Additionally, extending the Whitehead/Reti parallel to its logical end reveals an important facet of Reti's theory of thematic process unrecognized to date: the presence of an active, virtual musical environment. Through the "reality" in which his thematic process exists, Reti's theory is placed in surprisingly sympathetic dialogue with the work of Robert Hatten, Steve Larson, and other more recent music theorists.

Generalized Trichordal and Tetrachordal *Tonnetze*: Geometry and Analytical Applications

Jason Yust (Boston University)

Some recent work on generalized *Tonnetze* has examined the topologies resulting from Richard Cohn's common-tone based formulation, while other work has reformulated the *Tonnetz* as a network of voice-leading relationships and investigated the resulting geometries. This paper considers the original common-tone based formulation and takes a geometrical approach, showing that *Tonnetze* can always be realized in toroidal spaces, and that the resulting spaces always correspond to one of the possible Fourier phase spaces. We can optimize the given *Tonnetz* to the space (or vice-versa) using the DFT. I interpret two-dimensional *Tonnetze* as simplicial decompositions of the 2-torus into regions associated with the representatives of a single Forte set class. I therefore propose simplicial decompositions of the 3-torus as the three-dimensional generalization. A three-dimensional *Tonnetz* is then, in the general case, a network of three tetrachord-types related by shared trichordal subsets. Essential to constructing the three-dimensional *Tonnetz* is the duplication of interval classes with distinguishable intervallic axes. I illustrate one possible three-dimensional *Tonnetz*, whose duplicated ic3s can be enharmonically distinguished as minor thirds or augmented seconds, in an analysis of Brahms' Sarabande WoO 5/1 and its reuse in the Op. 88 Quintet. Duplicated intervals in other three-dimensional *Tonnetze* may be understood through Hauptmannian or tuning-theory based distinctions or distinctions between chordal and non-chordal intervals.

Altered States

Death By Tchaikovsky: The Metric Spell of a Metadiegetic Sorcerer

Táhirih Motazedian (Vassar College)

Swan Lake concludes, the audience bursts into applause, and the houselights go up to reveal the prima ballerina dying in a pool of blood, with a satisfied smile on her face. On the surface, this ending of Black Swan (2010) may suggest little to implicate Tchaikovsky in the demise of this young woman. But close analysis of the film's music reveals Tchaikovsky's strange role in her death.

Timorous and fragile, Nina (Natalie Portman) struggles hopelessly with the dark, passionate Black Swan role. She is harshly enjoined by her director to "lose herself" to the role, but unable to summon the necessary courage, Nina enlists Tchaikovsky to take her reins. She allows her identity to dissociate such that he is responsible for the shocking behavior of her Black Swan persona. Each stage of her metamorphosis is orchestrated by three specific Swan Lake selections which never appear diegetically in the film. These selections are initially perceived as nondiegetic, but using metric and harmonic analysis (as well as psychiatric evidence from the DSM-V handbook), I will demonstrate this music is metadiegetically emanating from Nina's fractured psychological state. During these dissociative episodes, Tchaikovsky operates Nina's marionette strings, turning her life into a phantasmagorical meta-ballet. She casts herself under Tchaikovsky's metadiegetic metric spell and "loses herself" to his libretto.

Madness, Psychedelia, and Physical Space in Pink Floyd's *The Piper at the Gates of Dawn*

Michèle Duguay (CUNY Graduate Center)

From the 1940s to the late 1960s, associations between madness and psychedelia were common in spheres ranging from scholarly studies to the popular press. The connection between the two states

has been acknowledged in the field of psychiatry but its implications for psychedelic music remain unexplored. For instance, previous studies on Pink Floyd, strongly associated with psychedelia in the late 1960s, either address their association with madness or the psychedelic features of their music. This paper bridges the gap by exploring how Pink Floyd's debut album The Piper at the Gates of Dawn (1967) testifies to the fluid boundary between madness and psychedelia.

I preface my analysis by providing an overview of contemporary ideas about madness and the ways in which they interact with conceptualizations of psychedelia. Proponents of the anti-psychiatry movement such as R.D. Laing, well known amongst Pink Floyd's entourage, saw schizophrenia as an inner journey towards self-discovery, a notion that resonated with psychedelic ideals. Pink Floyd's interest in projecting an 'inner space' through their music is apparent in interviews and in the all-encompassing sensory experience of their live performances. With the aid of sound-box analyses, I describe how the stereo version of Piper, through its projection of a non-normative space, invites an idiosyncratic listening experience that causes the listener to access a space evoking both madness and psychedelia. This immersive experience occurs through the disruption of the mix's stability, the disembodied location of instruments, and conflicting musical cues emanating from various places in the sound-box.

Saturday morning, April 8, 2017

Making and Breaking Conventions

An Intra-Album Dialogic Approach to Adele's 25

Timothy R. Mastic (CUNY Graduate Center)

Scholars have long studied how individual pop songs are in dialogue with the generic norms of a larger corpus. I propose that an album can also establish its own norms with which its individual songs can be in dialogue. The way individual songs conform to or depart from these album-specific norms can give rise to a set of fulfilled or thwarted expectations that carry hermeneutic implications. By releasing 25 only as a complete album, thus subverting the status quo of shuffle-based streaming services, Adele created a work exceptionally qualified for discussion of intra-album norms.

I show that album-wide norms concerning melodic contour, texture, and form—most strongly established in the opening song—are radically subverted in "Water Under The Bridge," making it the most deformational and thus most expressive song on 25. In this album, various musical parameters (including melodic contour and texture) generally ascend and accumulate over the course of each song. The ways in which individual songs either conform to or depart from this norm in some parameters can impact expectations about other parameters, reverberating in the formal structure and even the narrative of the song.

Shifting the scale of normativity from genre to album allows us to focus on specific song-to-song relationships, and the recalibration of expectations causes different musical features to fall into relief. While the patterns found within Adele's 25 are album-specific, I argue that such an intra-album dialogic approach can be used productively to provide analytical insight into the formal organization of other albums.

Uses and Abuses of Galant Schemata in Stravinsky's Neoclassicism

Sarah Iker (Notre Dame)

Henri Prunières once called Igor Stravinsky's Pulcinella (1920), "Pergolesi's music, flavored by Stravinsky's tartar sauce." The suggestion that Stravinsky slathers music and styles he borrows with a condiment illuminates an analytical possibility. In this paper, I argue that using Robert Gjerdingen's archetypes for galant schemata as an analytical tool can reveal how Stravinsky's manipulations of recognizable patterns occur and affect listeners' experiences.

What, then, is Stravinsky's "tartar sauce"? Analyzing the difference between the musical sources and their manifestations in Pulcinella reveals that Stravinsky alters schematic patterns in consistent ways that do not disrupt the essential nature of the chained schemata. Yet, as this paper shows, Stravinsky does not limit himself to "tartar sauce" in other neoclassical works. "Tartar sauce" is less appropriate as a metric for the Piano Concerto (1924), which was described as a "travesty of Bach." Using James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy's notion of deformation, I show that, while at times, patterns remain recognizable in the Concerto, the implied schematic patterns are often difficult or impossible to reconstruct.

Between these two extremes falls most of Stravinsky's work—music that is neither "tartar sauce" nor "travesty," which employs schematic patterns in non-traditional ways that influences listeners' experiences. Through analysis of selections from Apollo (1928) and The Rake's Progress (1951), I conclude by suggesting a categorization system by which we can sort the various degrees and kinds of schematic deformations in Stravinsky's neoclassicism.

Verticalities

Applying Diatonic Set Theory to 13th-Century Verticalities: An Evolved Mod7 Approach to Perotin's *Alleluya Nativitas*

Jessica Fulkerson (Brandeis)

This paper presents an evolved system of notation for diatonic ("modulo 7," "mod7") set theory, as well as a new method for dissonance analysis, and applies these analytical tools to Perotin's *Alleluya Nativitas gloriose virginis*. The paucity of "pre-tonal" harmonic analysis is largely due to the limitations of our current analytical systems. Mod7 set theory is the best candidate, over Roman numerals or chromatic set theory, for vertical analysis because it provides a means of labeling non-tertian sonorities and also equates sets that are transposed diatonically.

However, the present system of mod7 can be misleading because the same set might represent two sonorities that are strikingly different – aurally, functionally, or both. It is desirable, then, for a system to show the similarity in contour (step-class content) between sonorities, but also to differentiate their color (exact intervallic content). To meet these criteria, I propose an evolved system of mod7 notation, utilizing simple symbols ("interval symbols") to indicate exact intervals between the adjacent step-classes within a set: as a result, it can show that sonorities are similar, but not the same. I also propose a system to calculate "dissonance values," which easily chart the change in relative stability as the music progresses.

Although this paper will focus on one Perotin Alleluya, both evolved mod7 and dissonance values can be applied to any number of medieval polyphonic genres, offering new insights and ultimately providing a deeper, more nuanced understanding of these works in terms of both individual and shared aspects of construction.

Confident Chromaticism in Satie's *Nocturnes* as Determined by Hindemith's Harmonic Fluctuation

Alexander Amato (Stephen F. Austin State University)

To accommodate the elaborations of harmony and tonality that characterized many twentieth-century musical styles, Paul Hindemith (1895–1963) stated that it is not the scalar context of chord roots that initiate tonality, but rather the juxtaposition of the chords' constituent intervals (Hindemith 1942). As part of his compositional practice, he devised a system of measuring dissonance and tonal force in harmonies, classifying them by intervallic content into six groups of graduating dissonance while discounting the scalar context of the chords' roots. He coined the term *harmonic fluctuation* for varying levels of dissonance between adjacent harmonies. Recent analyses employing harmonic fluctuation (Harrison 2016) show that it can be an important component, if not the main component in the analysis of many post-tonal styles, being adaptable to many musical contexts.

Intervals also played a key role in Erik Satie's composition of his *Nocturnes* (1919) for solo piano. Satie departed from his practice of parodying earlier styles and shifted to a more serious compositional style in the *Nocturnes* by largely abandoning functional harmony and systematically using intervals as the basis for his harmonic language, and this is evident in the works' sketches. Taking into account the favoring of intervals in both Hindemith's and Satie's construction methods, this study will trace the evolution of Satie's use of chromaticism and obscured tonality in his *Nocturnes* by utilizing harmonic fluctuation.

Saturday afternoon, April 8, 2017

Lightning talks

Metrical Dissonance and the Lullaby Topic

Jacob Gran (Louisiana State University)

Lullabies soothe their listeners in part by their melodic, harmonic, and formal simplicity, but also by their unique metrical character. Lullabies tend to feature a moderately slow tempo, a compound time signature, and simple rhythmic ostinati. Most uniquely, the lullaby is recognizable by a characteristic lilt – a rhythmical imbalance that imitates the rocking of a cradle. This is manifested partly by a weak level of metrical dissonance (Krebs, 1999). Metrical dissonance is a useful tool for measuring how a composer establishes and sustains this rocking feeling over the course of a lullaby. If there is no dissonance, the piece will come across as a topically-neutral andante or allegretto. If there is too much, we risk waking the baby.

This paper looks at several nineteenth-century art music examples of the lullaby topic in order to investigate the varied strategies used by composers to sustain the characteristic lilt of the lullaby topic. The first part of the paper establishes the weak level of dissonance that I consider to be typical of these works. The dissonance is often established in an accompanimental figuration, as in Brahms's famous *Wiegenlied* op. 49 no. 4. The second part of the paper focuses on examples with high metrical dissonance that seem to contravene the calming purpose of the lullaby. Examples of such topical troping include Chopin's Berceuse op. 57, Saint-Saen's *Berceuse* op. 38, and Brahms's *Intermezzo* op. 117 no. 1. These extreme cases test the expressive and semiotic boundaries of the lullaby topic.

Meter in French and Italian Opera, 1809–1859

Nicholas Shea (UMass Amherst)

Current and historical methods of metric analysis often assume that the first beat of a metric group is stronger than the second. This, however, is not the case in all repertoires. For example, a study by William Rothstein (2011) demonstrates that Verdi's mid-century operas often place emphasis on even-numbered beats. This paper shows this metric trend to be even more prevalent in a corpus of 200 nineteenth-century operatic excerpts, (1809-1859).

I present a formal model that classifies phrases according to anacrusis length and prosodic accent, showing where large-scale metric accents fall within a phrase. This model produces three metric types which align with Rothstein's (2011) previous work. Compositional and historical features (e.g., language, premiere date, librettist, etc.) were tracked alongside type in order to determine whether preferences for certain metric forms were more prevalent in certain contexts. This indeed was the case. For instance, use of even-emphasis meter increases over time, even though odd emphasis meter remains most common. Individual composers also show a significantly distinguishable preference toward each type of meter. These results not only confirm that the highest concentration of even-emphasis meter occurs in Verdi's mid-century operas (Rothstein 2011), but that Verdi is the primary user of this type overall. I also demonstrate that language and composer nationality do not significantly affect an excerpt's metric type: only Verdi shows distinction in these areas. With this finding, I argue against using nationalist language to identify metric types and instead propose alternatives that reflect an updated understanding of nineteenth-century metric conventions.

Recursive Properties of *srdc* Structures in Golden Age Musical Theater Songs

Morgan Markel (UMass Amherst)

The *srdc* is a four-part phrase pattern in pop and rock music consisting of four formal functions: statement (s), restatement (r), departure (d), and conclusion (c). In recent scholarship, the applicability and scope of the four-part pattern has been vigorously debated. The question of whether entire song forms, such as the AABA song form, can be labeled as a large-scale *srdc* pattern has been one of the primary topics of interest. In this paper, I seek to further the argument for the large-scale *srdc* reading of the AABA song form by demonstrating the recursive potential of *srdc* structures in Golden Age musical theater songs. To do so, I survey the characteristic properties of 8- and 16-bar *srdc* patterns and 32- and 64-bar AABA song forms as they were observed in a corpus study of 89 different songs. By highlighting the similar ways in which the *srdc*'s formal functions are expressed at multiple levels of structure within the 32- and 64-bar AABA song form, I demonstrate why the song form can be interpreted as a large-scale *srdc* pattern.