

Eighth Annual Meeting of the

❧ **MUSIC THEORY SOCIETY OF THE MID-ATLANTIC** ❧

*Penn State University in University Park, Pennsylvania
Friday and Saturday March 26–27, 2010*

ABSTRACTS

FRIDAY, MARCH 26

1:00–2:00 Cadential Successes and Failures

Eric McKee, Penn State University, Chair

Winner of the Dorothy Payne Award for Best Student Paper

Improvisational Memory, Formula, and the Pedagogy of Extemporized Binary-Form Dance Movements

Michael Callahan, Eastman School of Music

In this paper, I combine cognitive-psychological accounts of expert behavior with historical accounts of memory to develop a model of improvisational learning for the Baroque keyboardist. The linchpin of this model is a flexible, hierarchically organized memory of musical formulas and generating principles that enables a skilled improviser to assemble and apply these patterns within the real-time environment of improvisation. The model restores memoria—which had been central to ancient accounts of rhetoric, but then almost entirely absent from the *musica poetica* tradition of the Baroque—thereby aligning the rhetorical conception of Baroque keyboard music with the memory-centric skill of improvisation.

I then report on a pedagogical application of this model that I have put into practice in my teaching at the Eastman Community Music School. Working with advanced pianists, I use it as a basis for teaching the extemporization of suite movements such as Minuets and Allemandes. Students learn patterns on three hierarchical levels—long-range trajectories (*dispositio*), local generating principles and skeletal frameworks (*elaboratio*), and diminution strategies to apply to these frameworks (*decoratio*). Sample improvisations are presented alongside model pieces from the literature.

The Consequences of Cadential Failure and Virtuosity Rhetoric in Liszt's B-Minor Sonata

Kale Good, Boyer College of Music and Dance, Temple University

This paper argues that Liszt's Sonata in B minor uses rhetorical devices rather than cadences as the primary means for opening thematic areas. Current hermeneutic models for sonata form consider the cadence to be the marker for thematic success and the lack of a cadence to be the sign of failure (Hepokoski/Darcy 2006). Resisting this convention, Liszt's sonata includes many themes that simply fail to reach a cadence; nonetheless, the sonata concludes with a transcendent coda that denies the many thematic failures of the work. Applying Kofi Agawu's beginning-

middle-end paradigm (2008) to uncover the various thematic “beginnings,” the paper shows that the various openings are unprepared (by a prior cadence) and that the endings rarely reach a syntactic close. Instead, beginnings are made explicit by a high degree of virtuosity, and only in retrospect is the listener aware that the previous theme has concluded. Hepokoski/Darcy emphasize the ability of rhetorical elements to function as structural markers. In this way, the absence of closing cadences suggests that the rhetoric of virtuosity becomes the primary means of determining the sonata's structure. With this premise, this analysis provides a precise outline of the exposition, closing, recapitulation, and coda of a sonata that has been the focus of literally dozens of different structural analyses (many of them conflicting). Particular focus will be placed on the interplay of what Hepokoski/Darcy call “para-generic spaces,” formal sections that occur before, after, and occasionally inside the sonata-proper.

2:15–3:45 Mathematical Music Theory

Richard Randall, Carnegie Mellon University, Chair

The Anomalous PPVLs: A Transformational Oversight

Peter Leibensperger, CUNY Graduate Center

Music theory has long been interested in a particular kind of voice leading among trichords in which one voice moves while the remaining voices are sustained, resulting in a member of the same set class. This type of voice leading (parsimonious set-class-preserving voice leading, or PPVL) is defined by both its *destination* (the starting and ending chords must be of the same set class), and its *pathway* (two tones must be held fixed while the third moves). In recent years, neo-Riemannian theory has represented PPVLs with contextual inversions that have identical destinations but different pathways (i.e., transformational voice leadings). Most trichords have the potential to create only three different PPVLs, which may be represented by L, P, and R. Trichords containing a tritone, however, have the potential to create two additional PPVLs (i.e., “anomalous PPVLs”) that cannot be represented by L, P, and R, and thus, cannot be realized by neo-Riemannian models of parsimonious voice leading (e.g., (016), (026), and (036) *tonnetze*). In order to create voice-leading spaces that are able to represent *all* potential PPVLs, two additional contextual transformations must be employed. Once complete PPVL spaces are constructed, they are superimposed and aligned such that maximally-smooth parsimonious voice leading (MSPVL) connects members of different set classes that share a tritone. In this way, an (06) Hyperspace is created that can be used to track voice leading in trichordal music that features tritonal abundance.

Contour Vector Space

Rob Schultz, University of Massachusetts Amherst

Upon first glance, contour space (c-space) appears to be a decidedly impoverished musical habitat. Indeed, “a pitch-space consisting of elements arranged from low to high disregarding the exact intervals between the elements” (Morris 1987, 340) inherently lacks many of the defining features that make music recognizable as such. A significant corpus of theoretical and analytical studies, however, has nevertheless emerged, proving the study of musical contour to exhibit a surprising degree of sophistication and complexity.

The bulk of this research has focused primarily on equivalence-class and similarity relations, thus yielding a multitude of compelling methods for relating two or more contours with one another, but no concrete means of situating them within a larger c-space framework. The various contour vectors introduced by Michael Friedmann (1985), however, in fact provide fertile ground for developing the tools with which to do so. The goal of this paper is to execute this task. First, it applies concepts and tools from musical transformation theory Friedmann's contour vectors to generate *contour vector spaces* (*cv-spaces*) of various cardinalities. It then cites two crucial weaknesses of the methodology—its inability to account for repeated notes and the lack of inter-cardinality communication—and constructs new cv-spaces that fully rectify these points. Finally, it deploys these new spaces in analyses of the main secondary theme from the first movement of Johannes Brahms's *String Sextet in B-flat*, Op. 18 in order to illustrate how cv-space can inform and enhance our understanding of this, and no doubt various other musical passages.

Scalar Transposition, Fractional Pitch-Classes, and Harmonic Sequences

Jason Yust, University of Alabama

A crucial feature of geometrical music theory, as represented by the work of Dmitri Tymoczko and others on voice-leading spaces, is the treatment of pitch as a continuum rather than a discrete set. The original reason for using continuous spaces was to represent the notion of distance accurately, but it also introduces the possibility of fractional, non-integer, pitch-class values. In this paper I show how fractional pitch-class values can be useful and meaningful—without necessarily looking to music with an extended pitch gamut—in the context of a treatment of the voice-leading patterns of harmonic sequences.

Certain common harmonic sequences involve the repeated application of a single efficient voice-leading pattern to a single chord-type. The rotation in position (or scalar transposition) induced by the voice leading determines the length of the sequence. Common sequences that involve chords of similar, but not precisely equivalent types, can be represented by a voice leading or a single underlying set-class type by using fractional pitch-class values and rounding each to the nearest semitone. Values in sevenths of a semitone define various diatonic sequences, or diatonic sequences with shades of chromaticism. Aspects of late tonal and early non-tonal practice, such as Liszt's sequences and Messiaen's modal progressions, suggest patterns using halves or thirds of semitones, or irrational values. The approach is closely related to recent work of Jack Douthett on filtered point symmetry.

4:00–5:00 Studies in Meter

Daniel Zimmerman, University of Maryland, Chair

Dueling Dissonances: The Quest for Tonal and Rhythmic Resolution in the First Movement of Robert Schumann's Piano Sonata no. 2, op. 22

Samantha Inman, Eastman School of Music

While Harald Krebs has rightly observed that metric dissonance and pitch dissonance often occur in the same passages of music, the musical drama of the opening movement of Schumann's Piano Sonata No. 2 in G minor, Op. 22 actually revolves around an inverse relationship between tonal and rhythmic dissonance. Tonally stable passages are typically the most rhythmically

unstable, and vice versa. The tonal tension of this movement largely arises through procedures essential to sonata form compounded by an anomalous avoidance of conventional cadential gestures at the end of the exposition. This lack of a conclusive cadence at the completion of the exposition problematizes the path toward achieving tonal resolution at the end of the movement. Meanwhile, the intense rhythmic tension of the movement arises through vacillation between rhythmically stable sections characterized by regularity in groupings, metric consonance, and consistent duple hypermeter, and rhythmically unstable sections containing prominent phrase contractions or extensions, metric dissonance, and hypermetric shifts. The interaction of these tonal and rhythmic devices generates the impetus of the work, and only their simultaneous resolution brings the movement to its true structural close.

Investigation of the rhythmic structure of the work centers on metrical consonance and dissonance, adopting terminology from Harald Krebs' book *Fantasy Pieces*, as well as phrase rhythm, as explicated in *Phrase Rhythm in Tonal Music* by William Rothstein. Given the largely classical structure of this movement, the form is discussed using Sonata Theory terminology developed by James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy.

Tenuto Ostinato? Listening Strategies for Ligeti's *Fanfares*
Philip Duker, University of Delaware

Few things in music provide listeners with a more consistent set of expectations than the ostinato. From *microcanons* to passacaglias, Ligeti seems to have been fascinated with repetitive textures throughout his career, yet he often uses ostinati to set up conflicting expectations and metric tensions between different musical strata. A crystalized example of this can be found in his piano etude *Fanfares* which can persuasively be understood as a compendium on how to destabilize the metric structure of an ostinato. Through a series of techniques that question the cyclic nature of this figure, Ligeti creates an intriguing question for listeners: which, if any, metric layer is primary? In addition to examining the interaction of conflicting rhythmic layers in *Fanfares*, this paper develops Andrew Imbrie's categories of listening strategies using a scheme to describe a historian's attitude towards political change. These new categories not only distinguish the general attitude towards emergent metrical structures (whether a listener is willing to let go of the previous meter), but also clarify the relative duration that an alternative metric layer need be present before a listener makes the switch. In conclusion, my paper demonstrates how these categories are not only useful in evaluating some of the metric play in *Fanfares*, but can also be applied to other works.

SATURDAY, MARCH 27

9:00–10:30 Composers at Work After 1945

Taylor Greer, Penn State University, Chair

The Hidden Serial Structures of Luciano Berio: Analysis, Aesthetics, and Practice
Irna Priore, University of North Carolina Greensboro

Evident in Luciano Berio's writings after 1967 is an overt rebellion against the practice of serialism. Several times, he openly spoke of serialism as an artificial device, a practice void of musical meaning. Although Berio disliked the connotations brought along by the label "serial," he used the system throughout his life. This paper takes a look of some of Berio's sketches in order to observe the hidden serial structures of his late compositions. As we carefully study Berio's works and contextualize his written statements, a new insight and understanding of his serial aesthetics emerge. To him, composition was to be distinct from organization, although organization did take place in composition at a deep structural level or at the early stages of the process.

In this paper, I present a revisionist view on Berio's aesthetics regarding serialism and his use of it. I will examine formal texts, analyze some of the sketches of works written from the 1970s to the late 1980s, and show that Berio did still use serial techniques for the basis of his works. I will also demonstrate that it is possible to reconcile his written statements with the type of serialism he wrote. I will conclude that if his statements seemed conflicting at first, this is not so after careful examination. I will end my illustrations with an analysis of the sketch of *Requies*, a work composed in 1984 written in memory of Cathy Berberian.

Shapey's Mother Lode Worksheet as Compositional Space
Christian Carey, Westminster Choir College of Rider University

From 1981 until his death in 2002, Ralph Shapey repeatedly employed serial procedures in his works. Shapey's Mother Lode worksheet contains precompositional elements found in nearly all of the works that date from this time period. Although Shapey based the Mother Lode's array on a twelve-tone row, he described the worksheet in hierarchical, harmonic terms, often with a quite traditional sense of voice-leading between verticals. Thus, it displays aspects of both tonal and post-tonal grammars. This paper evaluates the worksheet using Robert Morris' theory of compositional spaces, examining Mother Lode deployments found in several late works: String Quartets Nine and Ten, Piano Quintet (2002), and *Millennium Designs*.

Augmented Canons and Eternal Time in the Music of Steve Reich
Sean Atkinson, University of Texas at Arlington

Steve Reich's use of augmented canons in his most recent compositions, as evidenced by their use in *Three Tales* (2003), can be traced back to his first major composition involving the human voice, *Tehillim* (1981). Augmented canons in Reich are typically presented as repetitions of previously heard canons that have been stretched into longer durations, and have several key features that distinguish it as a unique compositional technique. First, the elongated notes are often not stretched by equal amounts. Second, while strict adherence to the pitch-classes of the

previous material does not always occur, often a defining melodic contour will emerge. Finally, in Reich's later works, recorded speech is subjected to the same processes, though in these cases the contour and the pitch level remain the same. In the last part of *Tehillim*, as described by Gretchen Horlacher, smaller, more local canons represent a kind of human time, while augmented, larger-scale versions represent an eternal time, not completely accessible to earthly beings. *Three Tales*, a video opera in three acts, uses as its subject three significant technological events of the twentieth century. However, as supposed to *Tehillim*'s biblical text that evokes a heavenly eternal, the tragic and morally questionable events presented in *Three Tales* paint timelessness with a dramatically different meaning. This paper unpacks and explores the technique behind Reich's use of augmented canons in both *Tehillim* and *Three Tales*, as well as examines their implications for engendered meaning.

10:45–11:45 Performing Chopin

Eric Wen, Curtis Institute and Mannes College of Music, Chair

Instrumental Gesture in Chopin's Étude in A-flat op. 25 no. 1

Eugene Montague, The George Washington University

Recent scholarship in music and related fields has demonstrated the importance of embodiment for musical cognition and meaning. This paper builds on these insights by examining the role of instrumental gestures – the movements required to perform a piece of music – in music-making. While these gestures are often ignored as merely means to an end, I argue that they mold music and its meanings in important ways, affecting the perceptions of an audience, defining the nature of a performer, and grounding metaphoric notions of motion and emotion. I illustrate the potential of this area of study through an analysis of instrumental gesture in Chopin's Étude Op. 25 No. 1. As with many instrumental studies, this piece requires constant repetition of similar movements. Beginning from this similarity, the analysis explores the notion of a central referential gesture for the étude, defined through the physical motion of expanding the span of the hand. I show that this expansion becomes a thematic element in the piece, an element that pursues its own logic over the course of the étude. This theme joins with harmony and motive in creating musical effects; nonetheless it also maintains its conceptual independence, creating a separate narrative that reaches a gestural conclusion after the main harmonic cadence has passed.

Projected Tension in Chopin Performance

Mitch Ohriner, Indiana University

Over the past 80 years, studies of expressive timing have emphasized the communication of group structure in performance through group-spanning patterns of acceleration and deceleration. When examining multiple performances of the same piece, these approaches highlight similar projections of structure and presume that the ways in which performances differ are incidental or even accidental. Yet a pair of performances may differ to such an extent that no model of performance based on score features can predict both performances with any accuracy.

In this presentation I explore timing decisions in two highly distinct performances of Chopin's Nocturne in C Minor, Op. 48, No. 1 (Examples 1–2). I'll argue that a primary means of recognizing the difference between the two performers is their markedly different approach to musical tension, which I construe through a multi-parametric model. In performing Chopin, one may linger on moments of tension to project a sense of difficulty in continuing, or one may accelerate through such moments to project a kind of assured virtuosity. In either case, the projection of tension is a vital aspect of one's performative persona and can serve as a useful feature with which to cluster performers. By introducing an analytic method that can accommodate drastically different interpretations, it is hoped that the presentation will enable a kind of analysis that recognizes performative difference in light of the growing recognition in our discipline of performers as co-producers of musical meaning.

1:15–2:45 Keynote, Prof. Kofi Agawu, Princeton University

3:00–4:00 Sequences in Context

Kip Wile, Johns Hopkins University, Chair

Linear Fragmentation and Sequential Repetition in Rachmaninoff's Orchestral Music

Stephen Gosden, Yale University

The theoretical literature on the music of Sergei Rachmaninoff is small but slowly growing; however, its rhythmic dimension remains largely unexamined, as most authors tend to focus primarily or even exclusively on its harmonic and linear-contrapuntal features. Even those who deal with questions of form, expression, and meaning tend to neglect this crucial musical parameter. In this paper I begin to fill this methodological lacuna by exploring the interaction between pitch and rhythm in a specific hyper-rhythmic gesture that occurs in many of Rachmaninoff's early and middle-period orchestral works, a gesture that involves three complementary processes: a melodic-harmonic process of sequential repetition, a rhythmic process of fragmentation, and a formal/expressive process of intensification leading to a moment of climax. Significantly, the rhythmic fragmentation in this gesture often arises from grouping structures with successively shorter units that have a linear (e.g. 4:3:2:1) rather than exponential (e.g. 4:2:1) relationship. I discuss the ramifications of this for the question of hypermeter by drawing on the work of William Benjamin (1984), whose perspective on the interaction between meter, grouping, and accent sheds light on the expressive potential for such procedures.

Furthermore, for each of my examples I discuss motivic and thematic processes that contribute to this gesture's formal and expressive trajectory.

Open or Closed? Poulenc's Major-Third Cycles of Minor Triads

David Heetderks, University of Michigan

Recent theories of chromatic tonality take a particular interest in progressions through major third-related triads. Some theories expand the universe of tonal functions in order to incorporate these progressions and allow each triad to relate to a single tonal center. Others show how the progressions make repeated applications of chromatic voice-leading maneuvers; this suggests they

are sequential and free from the pull of a tonal center. The ambiguity over whether a progression is tonally functional or chromatically sequential can play a significant role in a work's unfolding tonal drama. Francis Poulenc's late pieces frequently feature major-third related minor triads and exploit their functional ambiguity in order to create expressive formal structures.

The first movement of Poulenc's Clarinet Sonata uses third-related minor triads within phrase designs reminiscent of the classical period, suggesting that the third-related progressions replace classical tonal functions. In other pieces, modulatory sequences through major-third related minor keys project the same triadic cycles at larger time-scales. In Poulenc's Improvisation No. 13 for piano, one such sequence prolongs a diatonic background. In the final movement of the Oboe Sonata, by contrast, a similar sequence prolongs two third-related triads that emerge at the deepest structural level. The final few gestures in the work distill voice-leading components of this structural background.

These analyses demonstrate how functional ambiguity can enrich a hearing of musical structure, and show how Poulenc was able to find new potential within the tonal system while using harmonies and formal designs reminiscent of previous centuries.

4:00–5:00 Analyzing Expression: Composers and Narrators

Fred Maus, University of Virginia, Chair

Seriously Funny, or Beethoven as Humorist

Ian Wyatt Gerg, University of Texas

The changing view of musical *Affekt* is fundamental to distinguishing works of the Classical era from those of the Baroque. Early eighteenth-century theorists lauded the use of rhetoric in expressing musical *Affekt* through composition. With a carefully crafted musical discourse, the composer attempted to develop a single affection that manifested itself pervasively in a piece. Although the Classical era saw the employment of musical *Affekt* as well, its compositions contained a multiplicity of "topics," or what Leonard G. Ratner (1980: 9) described as, "subjects for musical discourse." The multifarious approach to topics in the Classical era permitted the interaction of several of these musical gestures, thus lending themselves to a semiotic approach.

The purpose of this paper is to explore comedy in music as it is achieved through topical interactions. I review several taxonomies of musical comedy that are oriented according to social class and musical presentation; then I offer a new and more revealing model that delineates comic forms by topical interaction and semantic compatibility. Central to my discussion is the simultaneous closeness and distance between conceptual poles that challenges us to rethink our perceptions of opposition. With a case study of Beethoven's Piano Sonata in E-flat, Op. 31/3, I identify four distinct processes that generate comedy in music: contrast, dissolution, exaggeration, and slippage. These mechanisms exploit similarities between seriousness and comedy, which enable interesting transitions from one state to the other.

Narrative Performance Analysis in Instrumental Classical Music

David Cosper, University of Virginia

Questions of music and narrative figure centrally in some of the most influential and lasting scholarly and critical work of the late 1980s and early 1990s. After a period of relative inactivity, the field is now seeing something of a resurgence. And yet while it remains a common pursuit to analyze musical works in terms of narrative structure, I find that such scholarship often fails to speak to questions of performance in a satisfying way.

In this work, I suggest that that narratology and post-structuralist narrative theory are promising and underused sites of potential benefit to the continuing effort to generate new and useful theoretical approaches to musical performance. This approach is shaped by two particular challenges posed by any music scholarship predicated on mimetic relationships between music and language. The first is the difficulty of leaving theoretical “space” for performance in literary models. The second challenge lies in bringing narrative-based criticism to bear on the experiences of individual listeners.

In response to these challenges, I argue for a model of *performer-as-narrator* as an often preferable alternative to more common literary conceptions of performative agency and a valuable supplement to more traditional analytical approaches. I have found this to be a flexible and rewarding analytic model for a wide variety of musical performances. This project involves detailed comparative analysis of two recordings of Franz Schubert’s “Wanderer” Fantasy in C, D 760. In the end, I hope to show that careful invocations of narrative theory can facilitate fruitful analytic conversations across boundaries of critical convention and performance practice.

