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TWENTY-EIGHTH ANNUAL MEETING
THE NEW ENGLAND CONFERENCE OF MUSIC THEORISTS
TUFTS UNIVERSITY
APRIL 12-13, 2013

Abstracts

Friday afternoon, April 12
1:30 pm – 3:30 pm   Rhythm and Meter:
                      Jason Yust (Boston University), chair

- Expressive and Formal Functions of Rhythm in the Ars subtilior
      Timothy Chenette (University of Massachusetts Amherst)

In the music of the 14th-century *ars subtilior*, "the texture is highly polyphonic," and "although regular pulses are fleetingly evident in these works, the surface rhythms change rapidly and irregularly"—words used by John Roeder to describe Schoenberg's middle-period works. In fact, Roeder's technique of pulse-stream analysis is remarkably well-suited to this repertoire, with a few stylistically-appropriate extensions. Drawing on the work of Roeder, and Christopher Hasty's concepts of determining and determined durations, this presentation will demonstrate both expressive and form-defining functions of rhythm in selected pieces by Johannes Ciconia (*Sus une fontayne*), Anthonello da Caserta (*Beauté parfaite*), and Filippotto da Caserta (*En attendant*).

Analyses of these three pieces will reveal consistent approaches to formal articulation and a range of aesthetic effects. Formally, repetition and fixed states tend to mark beginnings and section-ending (though not necessarily interior) cadences. Dissipation, in turn, occurs in the middles of sections and especially in contrasting sections. Aesthetically, a common theme of this repertoire is yearning and affected artifice, but these three composers convey these ideas in different ways: Anthonello very seldom lets fixed states totally dissipate; Filippotto moves quickly back and forth between stability and instability; and Ciconia characterizes whole sections by one rhythmic approach or another. In each case, the use of an analytical technique designed for the music of the early twentieth century—pulse stream analysis—contributes valuable insight into the alternation between establishment and dissipation, helping us hear this complex repertoire in the sophisticated manner it deserves.

- Meter as Agency: Performing Metrical Manipulations in Chamber Music
    Edward Klorman (The Juilliard School)

    This study presents a new model for analyzing metrical manipulations in chamber music in relation to performers' actions and agency. Taking as a point of departure the traditional metaphor of chamber music as a musical "conversation," this study regards the individual instrumental parts as characters or personas (Cone 1974). This perspective of *multiple agency* (Klorman 2011) directs analytical attention to the metrical interplay enacted by the players within the ensemble (cf. Lewin's "transformational attitude"). Instead of examining metrical events as they are experienced by outside listeners, the focus is on metrical manipulations as they are created, in performance, by multiple personas.
    As the self-determining authors of their own utterances, the personas possess agency to trigger metrical preference rules (Lerdahl/Jackendoff 1983) that either support or oppose the prevailing meter—as well as one another. Metrical manipulations can thus arise not only from neutral conflicts among inanimate musical elements but from the purposive actions of musical personas. This study examines passages by Mozart and other composers in which the characters apply their agency toward opposing ends, in order to surprise, dispute, or tease one another in a lively metrical interplay. This method—which reveals some metrical manipulations that are masked by traditional, unitary perspectives—suggests performance nuances that are consistent with some eighteenth-century performance treatises and may inspire more dynamic performances.

- Analyzing Music and Dance: Tchaikovsky and Balanchine
    Kara Yoo Leaman (Yale University)

    George Balanchine (1904-83), one of the most prolific and influential choreographers of the twentieth century and a highly trained musician from the St. Petersburg Conservatory, created ballets that epitomized the partnership of music and dance on the stage. His famous motto, "See the music; hear the dance," encapsulates both the musicality Balanchine aspired to in his choreography as well as the ideal merging of music and dance he hoped to present to his audience in the multimedia ballet performance. While dancers, musicians, and critics have long discussed the musicality of these works, their analysis has largely eluded both dance and music scholarship.
    In this paper I propose a method for transcribing rhythmic elements of dance steps onto a musical score that enables the analysis of "choreomusical" interactions. Using excerpts from one of the best-known Tchaikovsky-Balanchine ballets, *Tschaikovsky Pas de Deux*, I will show how this music-based notation system can afford both an in-depth look at specific moments as well as larger views of metric processes. The analysis will shed light on how Balanchine controls the intersection and divergence of media over the course of a work, beginning by closely coordinating multiple parameters, gradually loosening them, building a crescendo of divergent activity that closes with a satisfying resolution, all the while keeping music and dance tied together by the shared pulse.

3:45 pm – 5:00 pm   Music without Form?
                         Patrick McCreless (Yale University), chair

- Rhetorical Synthesis in the First Movement of Mendelssohn's Organ Sonata no. 1
  Alexandra Lee (Converse College)

    Few scholars apply rhetorical analysis to music from the nineteenth century, because by then the heyday of rhetorical pedagogy and music-rhetorical theory had long passed. Among the scholarly analytical literature, only one paragraph uses rhetorical terms to describe the music of Felix Mendelssohn. Yet Mendelssohn's aesthetic of music as communicating content to move listeners suggests that his music is especially appropriate for rhetorical analysis. A music-rhetorical understanding is particularly valuable for the first movement of Mendelssohn's Organ Sonata No. 1, because the movement's structure is not modeled easily and clearly by any standard form or genre. A particular problem is convincingly modeling how the chorale material interacts in the piece, for it enters admidst disruption but is later combined with the primary theme.

    This paper begins by critically examining how previously proposed models describe the movement's structure. I then apply rhetorical analysis to the movement's structure to show how rhetorical principles explain how and why this movement works. I demonstrate how classical rhetorical form more closely describes the movement, how argumentative strategies of contrast and synthesis govern the movement's structure, and how rhetorical principles explain both the role of the chorale and the linking role of the inverted subject between the chorale and the primary, fugal subject. After discussing how the movement's synthesis of genres serves a rhetorical purpose, I conclude by discussing the relationship between rhetorical analysis and understanding musical content, and by contextualizing this movement's employment of rhetorical principles with Mendelssohn's rhetorical aesthetic.

- Puccini: Honorary German?
  Deborah Burton (Boston University)

    Puccini was never admitted to Heinrich Schenker's Pantheon of German composers, as was Chopin, who gained entrance because his works were directly indebted to "Germanity." Nevertheless, in his own country, Puccini was often brutally attacked for his closeness with Germans and Austrians and his lack of *italianità*. I contend that, despite the "outer" appearance of imported Modernism, Puccini's "inner" Italian schemata are actually closely related to Schenker's structural models, such as linear intervallic patterns, and tonic or dominant prolongations. Traditional and progressive structures are layered in Puccini's music by what I term *direct* and *indirect conflation*, the former synchronic (different musical strata combined simultaneously), the latter diachronic (contrasting material inserted parenthetically into larger-scale musical backgrounds). This paper will focus on these elements as seen in Puccini's last, unfinished opera, *Turandot*, and present newly discovered supporting documentary evidence.

9:00 am – 10:20 am   20th-century American Composers
                      Margaret Thomas (Connecticut College), chair

- Disruption and Development: Pitch Processes in the Music of Ellen Taaffe Zwilich
        Jessica Rudman (CUNY Graduate Center)

        Writings on Ellen Taaffe Zwilich's music focus on three main elements: organic melodic development, continuous variation, and orchestration. Though the first two of these issues are of prime importance, the last has been discussed most frequently in the existing literature, and none of the existing studies offer any clear insight into how Zwilich creates the unified, yet unpredictable structures that characterize her style. Her idiosyncratic construction of strongly directional, yet varied lines is rarely explored and remains little understood.
        The present study will examine the ways Zwilich employs two groups of characteristic transformations to create, disrupt, and ultimately resolve pitch processes: retrograde inversional chains (or RICHes) and the familiar neo-Riemannian L, P, R, and S. Such transformations are often constructed as chains, which Zwilich then interrupts, diverts, or dissolves to build forward motion and increase continuity. Drawing on examples from across her career, this paper will show that Zwilich's distinctive melodies often appear to strive toward a goal, encounter obstacles and detours, and eventually reach a satisfying conclusion. The transformational approach taken here will not only offer a technical account of the pitch organization of Zwilich's distinctive melodies, but also provide a basis for such dramatic interpretation.

- Intentional Schenkerian, Pc-set, and Serial Principles in Bill Evans' "Displacement"
        Yung-Ching Yu (University of Kentucky)

        The composition "Displacement" appeared on Bill Evans' 1956 inaugural trio album, New Jazz Conception. Appearing a year after Evans had enrolled as graduate student in composition at the Mannes School of Music, this album, his work in New York City, and his enrollment at Mannes coalesced to form the beginning of Evans' professional life. While at Mannes it is likely that Evans was introduced to Schenkerian analysis, which had been incorporated into instruction there as early as 1931. There is conjecture that Evans was influenced by Schenker's theory, especially the notion of fundamental structure, as well as by other analytical and compositional techniques he was exposed to at Mannes. This paper investigates the apparent influence of Mannes on Evans' musical thought as evidenced in "Displacement."
        I explore the compositional and performance aspects of the head and first improvisational chorus of "Displacement" via David Schroeder's four approaches—formal, rhythmic, intervallic, and psychological—to improvisation. These approaches frame a more detailed consideration of the harmonic patterns, rhythmic displacements, pitch-class sets, serial presentations, and Schenkerian structural levels apparent in the piece. Finally, noting Evans' own later statements regarding his process of finding a piece's "fundamental structure" and then working "from there," I suggest that Evans

likely proceeded from a Schenkerian background-level structural conception toward his actualized performance of "Displacement."

10:30 am – 11:50 am Tuning and Temperament
Edward Gollin (Williams College), chair

- "The Essence and Meaning of the Intervals": Just Intonation and the "Dubious Fifth" in Nineteenth-Century Harmonic Theory
  William O'Hara (Harvard University)

   Moritz Hauptmann and Simon Sechter, both of whom published significant treatises in 1853, enjoy radically different reputations: Hauptmann as an abstract theorist who speculated about the dialectical underpinnings of tonality, and Sechter as a paragon of pedagogy who eschewing string lengths and ratios in favor of practical matters. This presentation explores an aspect of Sechter's treatise that rivals Hauptmann's in its abstraction from musical practice: his system of tuning, which has far-reaching implications for his theory. Sechter mirrors Hauptmann by generating the diatonic gamut through just intonation (JI)—an opening gambit deeply indebted to the speculative tradition. He cautions readers about JI's characteristic out-of-tune fifth (between 2 and 6), calling it "dubious" (*bedenkliche*) and demanding that it be prepared and resolved like a dissonance, even though it is written as a perfect fifth..
   Sechter's commitment to JI is uncharacteristically impractical, since by 1853, equal temperament was nearly universal. Hauptmann makes much of this condition, crafting a metaphysics of listening in which justly-tuned intervals are the hidden "meaning" of equally-tempered sounds, but we can also detect metaphysical traces in Sechter: even as he admits that JI is rarely practiced, he insists on voice-leading constraints that honor its intonational shortcomings. This presentation explores Sechter's tuning theory, critiques its absence from his reception history, and problematizes his enshrined position on one side of the speculative/practical continuum by exposing the roles played by acoustics, intonation, and his nascent, speculative theory of hearing, in a treatise that so vehemently denies their importance.

- An Enactment of Vicentino's Provocative Suggestion: From Chromatic to Enharmonic, in Two Madrigals
  Jon Wild (McGill University)

   In his 1555 treatise *L'antica musica ridotta alla moderna prattica* Vicentino develops a theory of composition using thirty-one tones per octave, in an extension of quarter-comma meantone tuning. The several musical passages he provides in this enharmonic system are designed, he says, to be performed with or without the chromatic accidentals and enharmonic inflections, for pedagogical purposes. He follows with the provocative suggestion that the works of other composers may be improved by adding enharmonic inflections in a similar way. In this paper I take Vicentino's suggestion seriously, and give an account of my attempt to use the relevant portions of *L'antica musica* as a practical manual for editorial "enharmonisation" of two chromatic madrigals by the slightly later composer at the

Ferrara court, Luzzasco Luzzaschi: *Se parti i' moro* (from Book 5) and *Itene, mie querele* (Bk 6).

For an adequate understanding of the results, the 21st-century musician will need to hear, as faithfully as possible, the startling effect of a shift by a fifth-tone (one thirty-first of an octave). My presentation therefore makes illustrative use of a performance recorded by a professional early music vocal group, retuned in post-production to Vicentino's system, allowing a naturalistic rendering with reliable intonation.

Important stylistic data about Vicentino's own use of these new compositional resources is found through an analysis of his surviving enharmonic passages; we may use this to fill in some gaps in the explanations of the treatise. The paper also demonstrates a modern transformational approach to triadic successions in a pitch-class universe of 31 tones.

Saturday afternoon, April 13
1:30 pm – 2:45 pm   Empirical Studies
                      Olaf Post (Harvard University), chair

- Perception of the Tritone Paradox among Cantonese and Mandarin-Speakers
        Joseph Siu (Eastman School of Music)

        The phenomenon of the tritone paradox has been known as the first ever demonstration of how music perception was influenced by the language experience of listeners (Deutsch, 1991). When presented with Shepard tones that are separated by the interval of a tritone, listeners from different language backgrounds would perceive the direction of the tritone pair differently. It was found that these tritone pairs were perceived consistently along the pitch-class circle, thus giving rise to the hypothesis that language would affect the orientation of the listener's internal pitch-class template. Besides this pitch class effect, Repp (1997) also argued that the perception of the tritone paradox was also heavily influenced by the position of the spectral envelopes of the tritone pairs. This paper investigates the effects of pitch-class and the position of spectral envelopes on the perception of tritone paradox among Cantonese and Mandarin-speakers. My experimental data shows that Cantonese and Mandarin speakers demonstrate two distinct pitch-class template orientations. Cantonese speakers from Hong Kong, who also learned British English at a young age, show an affinity to the pitch-class orientation of British English speakers. Also, the effect of spectral-envelope position is found in all subjects, but Mandarin speakers have shown a stronger resistance to the effect of spectral envelope than Cantonese speakers. Moreover, subjects with absolute pitch show no advantage in the consistency of perceiving the tritone paradox, suggesting that the effect of spectral envelope might be stronger than the effect of pitch-class in perceiving the tritone paradox.

- Expanding Notions of Harmonic Function Through a Corpus Analysis of the Bach Chorales
  Chris White and Ian Quinn (Yale University)

In order to interrogate the concept of harmonic function, we develop a Hidden Markov Model (HMM) – a procedure designed to find contextual regularities within streams of data – that identifies syntactic chord classes within musical corpora. As linguists have used HMMs to unearth syntactic categories within written languages for some time, we reason that this algorithm might similarly identify functional categories within music. A comprehensive computational study of the Bach chorales suggests that both three- and thirteen-function models make sense of this corpus.

While we do not intend to argue that a thirteen-function model is somehow better than the traditional three-function model, this study throws into relief several questionable assumptions of traditional notions of harmonic function: (1) that all passing chords have a unitary "passing" function of lesser significance than the three main functions; (2) that non-tertian sonorities do not have significant harmonic function; and (3) that the tonic, predominant, and dominant functions are homogeneous, unrefinable categories. The 13-function model produced by our study complicates these assumptions, while also indicating that applied chords can potentially have their own functions on the same structural level as the surrounding chords.

We end by highlighting the advantages of defining functions flexibly on the basis of specific stylistic features of particular corpora, as well as on the desired precision of the analysis. We also discuss the shortcomings of this model, specifically several unintuitive byproducts (for instance "predominant" V triads).