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‘Conoscere e riconoscere’: Fragmentation, Repetition, and Formal Process in Sciarrino’s Instrumental Music

Antares Boyle (University of British Columbia)

Salvatore Sciarrino’s music often features obsessive, non-developmental repetition of distinct yet subtly varied motivic figures, resulting in a fragmented texture that seems to prioritize local nuance over larger formal processes and directed motion. My paper explores the unique temporalities resulting from such repetitions in three of Sciarrino’s recent large-scale instrumental works: String Quartets No. 7 and 8 and *Shadow of Sound*. I first show how Sciarrino’s repetitions, which are often transparent at the local level and opaque at higher levels, engross the listener in a sensuous, moment-to-moment experience while tantalizing with hints of a larger design. I then demonstrate that such fragmented repetitions can nevertheless shape longer durations through subtly directed processes or recontextualization of repeated material. My approach to form and temporality in Sciarrino’s work coordinates aspects of Hasty’s (1981; 1984; 1986) work on phrase formation with Hanninen’s (2012; 2003) theories of segmentation, association, and recontextualization. Recent theoretical writings evince a broad interest in repetition’s role in the perception and analysis of musical coherence and structure (Margulis 2014; Hanninen 2012; Ockelford 2005). More specifically, Leydon (2002) considers the varied effects of “obstinate repetition” in minimalism, calling on analysts to further explore and codify the variety of possible “repetition strategies.” My paper extends these inquiries through analysis of Sciarrino’s music, which reiterates material “obstinately,” but with a non-minimalist approach to variation and process that provides a fresh outlook on repetition strategies and their effects.

How Cage Misreads Webern

Jeffrey Perry (Louisiana State University)

This presentation explores questions of influence and misreading that connect John Cage to Anton Webern during the critical years of this connection, 1948-51, and Cage’s subsequent disengagement from Webern. What initially attracted Cage to Webern was the evident presence, in works such as the latter’s Op. 11 and Op. 21, of an autonomous rhythmic framework within which sounds can unfold without the interference of imposed syntax or developmental processes.

Cage’s analyses of works by Satie suggest ways of reconstructing his hearing of Webern. Analyses of the *Little Pieces* Op. 11 from a gestural standpoint, and of the Symphony Op. 21 in terms of Cage’s own gamut procedure, connect Cage, Satie, and Webern. Although it is difficult to adapt Cage’s narrative of durational ebb and flow in Satie to Webern’s music, a similar gestural segmentation connects Webern’s Op. 11/1, and Cage’s own works, to one another and to his creative misreading of Satie.

To conclude, I suggest five main reasons that Cage parted ways with Webern: (1) Cage’s own transcendence of notions of rhythmic structure and the freedom/law dichotomy that propelled his musical development before 1951. (2) Webern’s involvement with Germanic music history; (3) Webern’s adoption by the postwar European *avant garde*, and Cage’s parting of the ways with them in the ‘50s. (4) the syntactic rigor of Webern’s music. (5) Webern’s lyricism. Historical memory, syntax and lyricism, in particular, are features that Cage had wrestled with and rejected in his own music by the time he composed *Music of Changes*.

Between Reality and Imagination: Listening to Claude Vivier's *Lonely Child*

Christopher Gainey (University of British Columbia)

Broadly speaking, there are at least two ways of cognitively processing music: 1) a “holistic” listening strategy in which one attends primarily to a work’s emergent timbral qualities by privileging the perceptual fusion of complex sonorities and 2) an “atomistic” listening strategy in which one attends primarily to a work’s component parts by privileging the perceptual dissolution of complex sonorities. In this analytical study, I explore an excerpt from Vivier’s *Lonely Child* in a way that accounts for both extremes of perceptual priority. First, I describe the ten timbre-harmonies from the excerpt in detail from both pitch/harmonic and frequential/timbral perspectives. Next, I shift my analytical attention to differences between the timbre-harmonies and describe the emergence of sensations that engender the perception of a hierarchical timbral/harmonic progression. Then, I compare pitch- and frequency-based analytical accounts with an ear towards how listeners’ might weigh the benefits of holistic and atomistic listening in their own perceptions of the work’s dramatic structure. Finally, having thoroughly explored the notes, I consider how idiosyncrasies of Vivier’s orchestration affect one’s perceptions of the work’s underlying timbral-harmonic structure.

“So Complete in Beautiful Deformity:” Hearing the Rhythms of Meshuggah’s *obZen*

Olivia Lucas (Harvard University)

The music of the Swedish death metal band Meshuggah is known for combining a rigid 4/4-based song structure with looping riffs in a variety of meters (See Pieslak, 2007 and Capuzzo, SMT 2014). Some riffs, however, further complicate this structure by seeming to begin *in media res*. In this paper, focusing on two songs from the 2008 album *obZen*, I examine this previously overlooked compositional technique in which rhythmic patterns can only be heard to cohere retrospectively and with repetition. In my analyses, I move between conventional transcriptions and spectrograms, with an eye (and ear) toward questioning what each can tell us about musical events. In studying Meshuggah’s music, spectrograms open up a revealing perspective on rhythmic structures, particularly with regard to visualizing event onsets, groupings and repetition of groupings. Using spectrograms in this way focuses on readily apparent clusters and gaps of visual material that indicate rhythmic patterns – groupings that often align with the aural experience of the music. This study demonstrates the importance of grouping structure for understanding Meshuggah’s polyrhythmic style. In the context of a musical style that pits riffs against the 4/4-based structure, riffs that emerge as if in the middle of some much longer process destabilize this relationship. With song lyrics often centered on the desire for radical freedom or enlightenment, and musical patterns that ritualize the suppression of elements that break the “order” of 4/4, I suggest that Meshuggah’s use of repetition and variation explores ideas of freedom and rigid control, liveliness and predictability.

“Aber auf einmal...”: Dynamic Discourse in Lyric Poetry and Song

Matt BaileyShea (Eastman School of Music)

Song analysts have long recognized vital connections between music and poetry. Countless papers have been published identifying relationships between vocal rhythms and poetic rhythms, song structure and poetic form, and musical expression and poetic meaning. There are, however, some crucial aspects of lyric poetry that have received far less attention. This paper, in particular, focuses on changing modes of discourse, moments when we recognize a distinct shift in the speaker/addressee relationship (e.g., when a third--person narrative suddenly becomes a direct address to a particular individual). Such moments can be powerfully expressive in poetry, and composers frequently respond to such changes in dramatic ways. I will begin with foundational theoretical concerns drawn from a corpus study of three hundred art songs and will conclude with analyses of three selected songs.

Circularidade: Theorizing Temporality in Afro-Brazilian Popular Song

Christopher Stover (The New School)

When we think about circularity in (Afro-)Brazilian music, many images and activities come to mind. There is the *roda* of samba, capoeira, and candomblé; *No princípio, era a roda* (“in the beginning, there was the circle”) is the title of a monograph by Roberto Moura, and Barbara Browning describes the relationships between these three evocations of embodied circularity. Time is conceived as circular in many African cosmologies, and circles unfolding different temporal spans are thought to nest in and at least partially codetermine one another, as Anku, Thompson, and others have described. There are many circular spatial motions aligned with instrumental performance practices, and likewise the ebb and flow of the metric cycle (Zuckermandl’s away-from and back-again) suggests a certain way of engaging a circular temporal orientation. In samba, for example, there are at least three levels of opposing gravitational forces at work at any given time, all of which inflect and influence one another. I examine six iconic Brazilian songs in order to thematize how circularity is embodied in them. By comparing these songs, a taxonomy of *circularidade* will be introduced. The themes include elided or extended harmonic progressions, repetitions and rhymes that spill across barlines and phrase groupings, non-alignments of harmonic and melodic groupings, superimpositions of metric strata, and harnessing circularity to evoke the infinite. I conclude by briefly theorizing some connections between circularity at the microrhythmic level, the metric and hypermetric levels, and extrapolations into cultural considerations of time and meaning and music’s role in articulating them.

Mendelssohn’s Formal Frames: Multi-Stage and Recurring Introductions

Catrina Kim (Eastman School of Music)

Beginning with Beethoven’s recurring introductions, composers began blurring the boundary between the framing device and the genuinely formal—Felix Mendelssohn’s Op. 13 string quartet, which openly references Beethoven’s Op. 132, exemplifies this ambiguity through its multiple failed attempts to begin. But while the multi-stage introduction blurs initial boundaries between “before the beginning” and “beginning,” it does not necessarily disrupt the formal processes of the sonata that follows. The *recurrence* of an introduction invariably does: with each intrusion into the sonata the introduction loses its essential quality of “preparation,” while gaining thematic status. Mendelssohn’s concert overtures often combine these two introduction types.

I analyze three of these works, *Ein Sommernachtstraum*, Op. 21, *Die schöne Melusine*, Op. 32, and *Athalie*, Op. 74, from the perspectives of Hepokoski and Darcy’s Sonata Theory (2006) and Caplin’s theory of classical form (1998); I also employ Schmalfeldt’s (2011) and Martin & Vande Moortele’s (2014) specifically *Romantic* formal concepts to better elucidate Mendelssohn’s introductory strategies within their historical-stylistic contexts. Several commonalities emerge. First, the introduction recurs just prior to the recapitulation, while some portion of the primary theme fails to appear; in some cases, this strategy poses the possibility that the introduction becomes so formally involved that it *replaces* the primary theme. Second, *Ein Sommernachtstraum* and *Athalie* employ codas that reverse their multiple introductory modules. Thus, Mendelssohn’s use of the multi-stage introduction results in a truly idiosyncratic formal structure—one which simultaneously employs and works against the sonata’s order-dependent principle of rotation.

Bartók’s Sonata-Rondo: Semiotics and Narrative in the *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion*

Emma James (Eastman School of Music)

A semiotic approach to the third movement of Bartók’s *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion*, developed into a dialogic narrative reading provides an original perspective on the significance of sonata-rondo form in Bartók’s oeuvre and the music of his era. Part I demonstrates a Peircean-based semiotic analysis of musical signs, situated with respect to Sonata Theory, since the sonata is a form to which composers continued to refer in the modern period. Semiotics establishes the recognizable qualities which allow us to speak meaningfully of sonata-rondo form in this primarily non-classical and only quasi-tonal

musical idiom. Part II traces contrast—semiotic “oppositions”—as the main impetus for dialogic narrative. I analyze chromatic, symmetrical, and theme-transforming processes as agents undermining the tonal and teleological trajectories of this composition. The narrative culminates in the final refrain, which enforces tonal closure by a corrective motion—a cadence in C—that barely curtails the unraveling forces at work throughout the piece. Bartók’s treatment of sonata-rondo, representing classicism, imbues the old form with new meaning, self consciously validating the continued reimagining of classical form as an ironic foil in the twentieth century.

Between the Signposts: Thematic Interpolation and Structural Defamiliarization in Prokofiev’s Sonata Process

Rebecca Perry (Yale University)

Implicit in most thematically oriented theories of sonata form is the claim that the central drama of the sonata occurs at the “signposts.” By this line of thinking, structural normativity is measured by the presence of certain generically mandated landmarks (Primary Theme, Transition, etc), and formal nonconformity is measured by the degree to which a sonata obscures, omits, delays, reorders, or otherwise modifies these landmarks. While such paradigms have produced much insightful analytical work, they tend to give insufficient emphasis to rich thematic unorthodoxies—interpolations, displacements, superimpositions, etc—that occur *between* traditional theme-initiating signposts. Such theoretical paradigms become particularly problematic when applied to so-called neoclassical sonata repertoires—especially the early works of Prokofiev—in which putatively unremarkable thematic discontinuities between predictably situated sonata milestones often prove to have far-reaching structural ramifications.

My paper explores the manner in which one branch of these thematic eccentricities—namely Prokofiev’s strategy of interpolating motivically unrelated material in the middle of a traditional theme-space—defamiliarizes and ultimately unhinges a seemingly normative sonata process in the first movement of his Second Piano Sonata (1912), rendering it an empty frame from which the expected motivic and thematic contents have been hollowed out and replaced. I invoke Russian Formalist Boris Tomashevsky’s concept of “bound” and “free” motifs—in conjunction with Viktor Shklovsky’s larger notion of *fabula* (story) and *syuzhet* (emplotment)—as a framework for clarifying and contextualizing the subversive, ironizing function of Prokofiev’s interpolations within his larger sonata text.

Lost in Translation: Exoticism as Transculturation in Saint-Saëns’s *Africa*

Toru Momii (Columbia University)

While studies in musical exoticism have become commonplace in musicology and cultural theory, music theorists have remained distant from inquiries into Western art music with non-Western influences. To address this gap, Shay Loya (2011) has proposed a mode of analysis based on the concept of *transculturation*, a process of cultural interaction originating in Latin American postcolonial discourse (Ortiz [1940] 1995). A transcultural analysis examines the interplay between Western and non-Western elements within the musical structure, accounting for not only the audible musical devices commonly associated with exoticism but also less salient forms of cultural influence that permeate the harmonic and modal parameters. Presenting Saint-Saëns’s *Africa*, op. 89 (1891) as a case study, I suggest that a transcultural approach allows us to engage with exoticism outside the domain of representation, offering a framework for evaluating cultural transmission within a music-theoretical discourse.

My paper focuses on primarily on modal practices that derive from a syncretism between Maghrebi melodic modes (*tubū*) and Western modality, with particular emphasis on Saint-Saëns’s use of “non-major-minor modes” (Loya 2011). Synthesizing Dmitri Tymoczko’s (2011) theory of scalar transpositions and neo-Riemannian transformational theory, I demonstrate that non-major-minor modes create an alternative tonal logic that undermines the teleology of Classical monotonicity. Specifically, my analysis addresses the following points: 1) how non-major-minor modes allow for smooth modulations between tonal centers and key areas that would otherwise be distant in a major or minor context; and 2) how shifts between different modes are enacted through chromatic sequences rather than through diatonic modulations.

Analyzing Liszt's Songs: A Grundgestalt and Transformational Perspective"

Jeffrey Schaeffer (Central Michigan University)

Arnold Schoenberg's concept of *Grundgestalt* translates to "basic shape." He states that "Whatever happens in a piece of music is the endless reshaping of the basic shape ... There is nothing in a piece of music but what comes from the theme ..." In the world of music theory, *Grundgestalt* was first featured in Patricia Carpenter's seminal 1983 article, "'Grundgestalt' as Tonal Function," which uncovers melodic and harmonic relationships throughout the first movement of Beethoven's "Appassionata" Sonata, op. 57. Using Carpenter's method of analysis, complemented with tonal transformational networks and voice-leading graphs, I discuss implications of various *Grundgestalt* in two of Liszt's songs.

"Er liebte mich so sehr!" contains three elements of *Grundgestalt* within the first few measures: harmonic ambiguity through unaccompanied pitches implying several keys and scale-degree patterns, an off-tonic tonicization, and an immediate transposition of the first measure. The *Grundgestalt* behind Liszt's first setting of "S'il est un charmant gazon" (1844) includes a modally-mixed chromatic inner voice and common tones that facilitate modulations by thirds to distantly-related keys. While firmly in a major-mode home key, this descending chromatic line wavers between the major and minor modes, allowing for a major-minor duality throughout the setting.

This presentation demonstrates precisely how in these two songs, Liszt utilizes elements of harmonic and melodic *Grundgestalt* to explore distantly-related key areas. Because the harmonic implications work hand-in-hand with the text of each poem, Liszt establishes and manipulates musical elements to create a *Grundgestalt* that acts as a tonal narrative of each poem.

Motivic Analysis Reimagined in Light of Performance

Andrew Friedman (Harvard University)

In the last quarter-century, performance has steadily gained legitimacy as an agent of musical structure and meaning. Performance has been granted a voice at the analytical table. Yet, what it can say tends to be limited by standard analytical categories and methodologies. One way of breaching this impasse, I contend, is to allow performance to talk back, to challenge the terms of the discussion—in effect, to analyze theory itself. In this talk I point to one way in which attending to performance, or more accurately, our experience of performance, can effect this kind of revision of one of our discipline's central terms and techniques: motive and motivic analysis. In a comparative analysis of recordings by Mitsuko Uchida and Ludwig Semerjian of the first movement of Mozart's K. 332, I demonstrate the divergent motives and networks of motivic connections each recording fashions. Their illumination of fundamentally different motivic paths through the movements calls into question the traditional score-bound notion of motive and motivic analysis and highlights a level of motivic richness in the piece unforeseeable from the score alone. By foregrounding the gestural, articulatory qualities of a motive's performance, rather than its pitch-rhythmic constitution, and the listener rather than the score, we might develop a kind of motivic analysis that, by attending to experience, does it better to justice in turn.

Sound to Point and Line: Visualizing Music at the Bauhaus

Stephanie Probst (Harvard University)

This paper centers around three artistic approaches by Bauhaus artists Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee, and Henrik Neugeboren from the 1920s that render musical compositions visually. Each of them present their own notational system, as alternatives to staff notation, by repurposing the basic graphical elements of the point and the line. A close analysis of these visualizations reveals the artists' efforts to account for one particular aural experience of a historically situated listener.

I position these artistic and aesthetic agendas within the music theoretical debates on the appropriation of linearity as a compositional idiom which was associated with Johann Sebastian Bach's

polyphonic style on the one hand and the modernist initiative of young contemporary composers on the other. A centerpiece of these debates is Ernst Kurth's treatise *Foundations of Linear Counterpoint: Bach's Linear Polyphony* (1917), which traces musical linearity in Bach's compositions, but served as inspiration to young composers in the twentieth century. Through their notational choices, the artistic renditions at hand illustrate these different positions, and show the connections that art historians have established between Kurth's treatise and some of the artists at the Bauhaus. I discuss these relations on the basis of a shared investment in psychoacoustic writings of the time, such as Christian von Ehrenfels's cognitive studies "On Gestaltqualities" (1890 and 1922), which provide the scientific underpinning to a linear conception of melody and polyphony.