

Sonic Allegory in Thomas Adès's *The Exterminating Angel* (2015)

Music Theory Southeast
Keynote Address (3.30.2019)

Figure 1a. Narrative reading of Adès's music

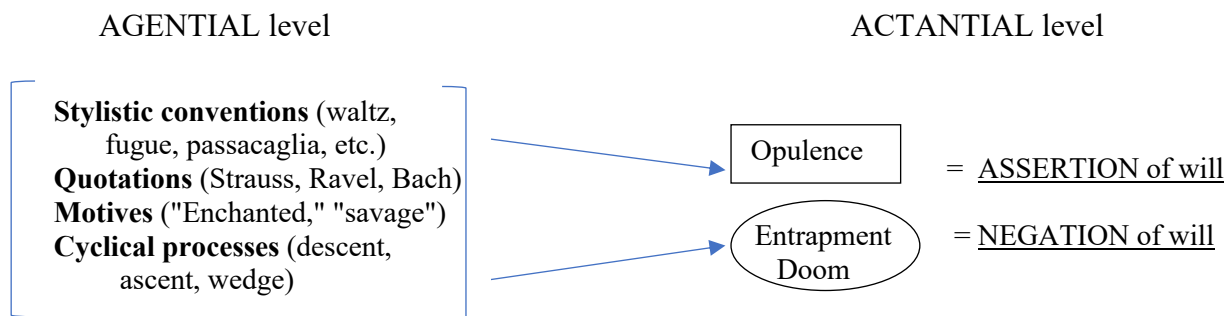
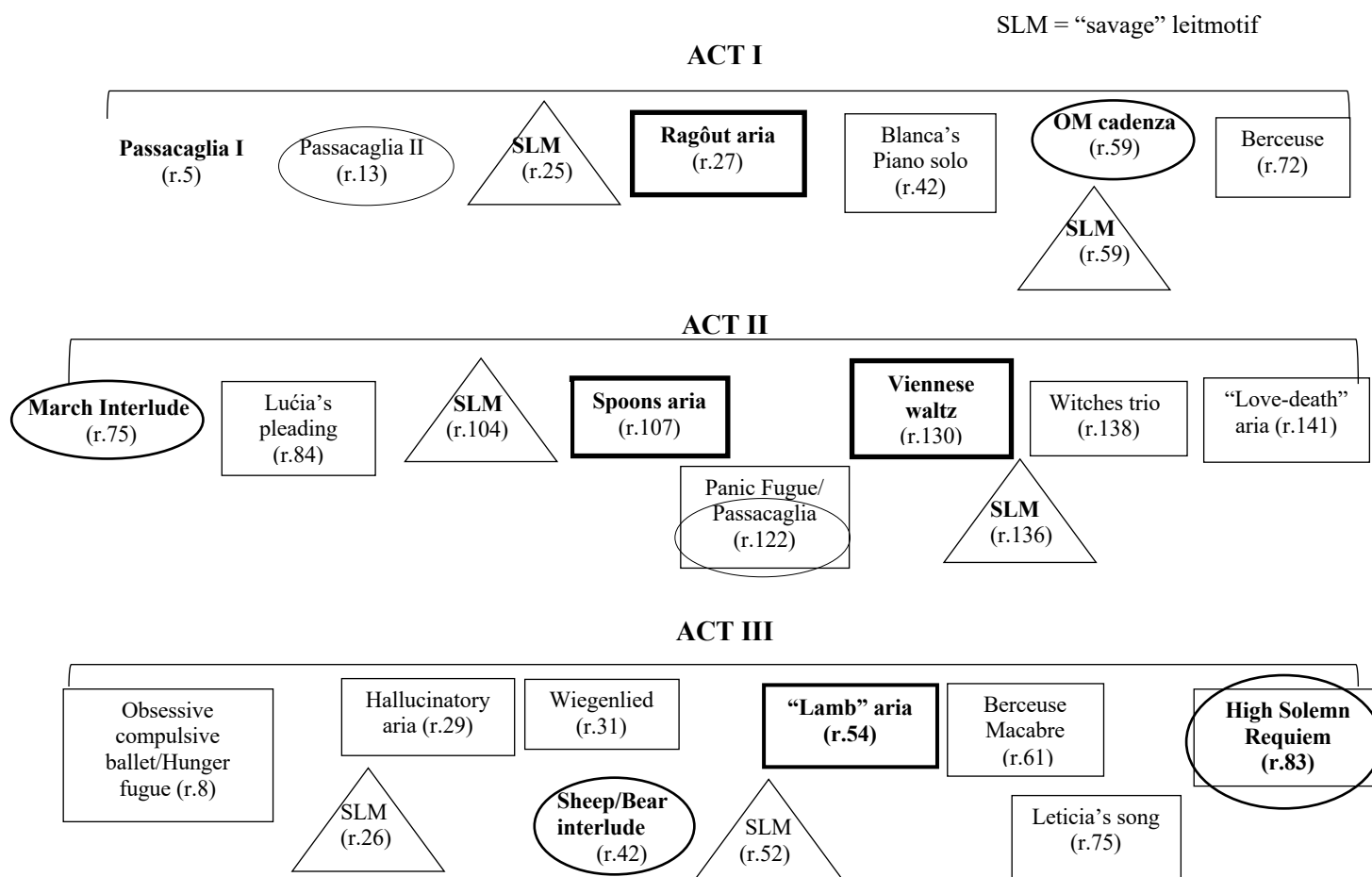


Figure 1b. Overview of Ensemble Numbers



Example 2. Aligned Interval Cycle analysis of Adès's Piano Quintet (Stoecker 2016, 196)

$\langle 10, 8, 9, 1 \rangle$

[047]	[047]	[056]	[056]	[047]	[047]	[035]	[023]	[001]	[001]	[023]	[035]
A#	G	E	C#	Bb	G	E	C#	Bb	G	E	C#
F#	D	Bb	F#	D	Bb	F#	D	Bb	F#	D	A#
C#	B	A	G	F	Eb	C#	B	A	G	F	D#

Example 3a. The First Guests' entry (Act I, sc.3, mm. 65-76)

Passacaglia rhythm (Venn 2017, 37):

Passacaglia (P) wedge cycle (reduced in register):

AIC: $\langle 2, 11 \rangle$

Example 3b. The First Guests' entry (continued)

96

Lcia: *Blan-ca Del-ga - do. Colo-nel Ál-va-ro Gó-mez. And of course her hus-band, Maes-tro* etc.

Col: *COLONEL En - chant - ed.* etc.

Rus: *RUSSELL En - chan - ted. 5th descent (A - D) ROC cantab. En - chan - ted.*

mf pp mp mf pp

A+ F#+ Ab+ (F+)

(C-A-G)

“Enchanted” sequence:

9 $C^{10} B^{11} A^{10} G^{\#}$ 9 $C^{\#}$

T₉

9 $C^{10} B^b^{11} A^{10} G$ 9 C

T₉

P cycles:

$A^{11} G^{\#11} G^{11} F^{\#11} F^{11} E$
 $C^{\#2} D^{\#2} F^6 B^2 C^{\#1} D$

$A^{b11} G^{11} G^{b11} F^{11} E^{11} D^{\#}$
 $C^2 D^2 E^6 A^2 B^2 C^{\#}$

T₁₁

Example 4. March Interlude (End of Act I, mm. 907-920)

INTERLUDE

75 $\text{♩} = 78-88$

907 *ben f, molto con forza* (massed drums offstage) *cresc.*

“Enchanted” motif

A+ F#+ (rhythm disintegrates)

T₉

914 *più f* *sim. sempre*

Ab+ F+ (rhythm disintegrates)

T₉

T₁₁

Example 5. “Ragôut” aria from *The Exterminating Angels* (Act I, Sc. 4)

M6 upbeat (x 3)

Lucia

is served as an hors d'oeuvre, be-cause it is said to sti-mu-late the ap-pe-tite.

poco accel. brillante

giusto

Ab E Ab

360

Li-ver, ho-ney and al-monds.

29

D Ab

Example 6. Distorted Quotation of a Viennese waltz (Act II, mm.1579-85; mm.1616-20)

Raúl

You led us in - to this trap! We are the vic - tims of this twis-ted joke be -

(ff) espr. cantab.

violente

D: Db:

phrase A phrase B

G: I ii⁷ i^{6/4} V⁷

Johann Strauss, *Die Fledermaus* waltz

1616

Ed-man-do is right, Ra-ul

colla voce

rit. - - - molto

f *ff*

Ab: (ii⁷)

1621 (colla voce) poch. (colla parte (rit. - -))

You are an i-di-ot. If you weren't a wo-man.

ff

(colla voce) poch. (colla parte (rit. - -))

(V⁷) I

Example 7. "Spoons" Aria (Act II, Reh. 107)

1304 *p* *sempre* *esitando* $\text{♩} \approx \text{c.54}$ *poco rit.* *cresc.*

For - give me, Lu - ci - a, but there are no cof - fee - spoons.

107 $\text{♩} \approx \text{c.54}$ *esitando* *colla voce* *pp* *Oct_{2,3}* *poco rit* *Oct_{1,2}*

1308 *a tempo* *cresc.*

These spoons are tea - spoons. These spoons are too

a tempo *tr* *rinf.*

1311 *large.* *tr*

I can't stir my cof - fee with a

etc.

"Spoons" three-part cycle: $\langle 7, 7, 10 \rangle / \langle 1, 1, 10 \rangle$

mm.1304-06:

F#: (V₇ bVI)

D: (V₇ bVI)

Bb: (V₇ bVI)

Hexatonic system:

F#+ D+ Bb+

PL PL

mm.1308-11

Eb: (V₇ bVI)

B: (V₇ bVI)

G: (V₇ bVI)

Eb+ B+ G+

PL PL

Example 8a. The Sheep and the Bear Interlude (Act III, reh. 42)

Oct_{0,1}

535

$\text{♩} = \text{c. } 116-126 \text{ sub.}$
(2+3+2)

mf pesante
sub.

Oct_{2,3}

538

Some of the GUESTS slowly close in and surround the LAMBS.

mf sub.

J. S. Bach,
"Sheep may
safely graze"

Example 8b. "Lamb" aria (Act III, reh. 54)

Rubato
(between $\text{♩} = 84 - 92$)

661

$\text{♩} = \text{c. } 84$ → $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 92$ → $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 88$ → $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 96$ → $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 92$

Bla. *De - li - cious!*

Fco. *molto rubato*
Mine's too

Raúl *putting more cello on to the fire* *molto rubato*
A lit-tle pink for me.

Roc. *lamb is per-fect-ly cooked.*

Rubato
(between $\text{♩} = 84 - 92$)

54

$\text{♩} = \text{c. } 84$ → $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 92$ → $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 88$ → $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 96$ → $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 92$ → $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 104$ *molto rit.*

ppp trem. *p* *pp* *sf* *pp* *(sempre trem.)* *sf* *ppp*

AIC: <1, 1, 1>

D¹ E^{b1} E¹ F¹ G^{b1} G¹ G^{#1} A¹ A^{#1} B¹
 F^{#1} G¹ G^{#1} A¹ B^{b1} B¹ C¹ C^{#1} D⁰ D¹
 B^{b1} B¹ C¹ D^{b1} D¹ E^{b1} E¹ F¹ F^{#1} G¹

Example 9a. High Solemn Requiem chant (Act III, m.1070 -)

1070

Ch.

OM

D - G# - G

Figure 9b. Voice leading progression in the accompanying chords (Straus 2016, 178)

D	-----	C	-----	B	
C	-----	B	-----	A#	
B ^b	-----	A	-----	F#	
A	-----	G#	-----	G	
F	-----	E	-----	C#	

*T₁₁ *T₁₁ *T₁₀

(1) (4) (5)

The same chord progression on "aeterna" repeats (x8) as the opera comes to a halt.

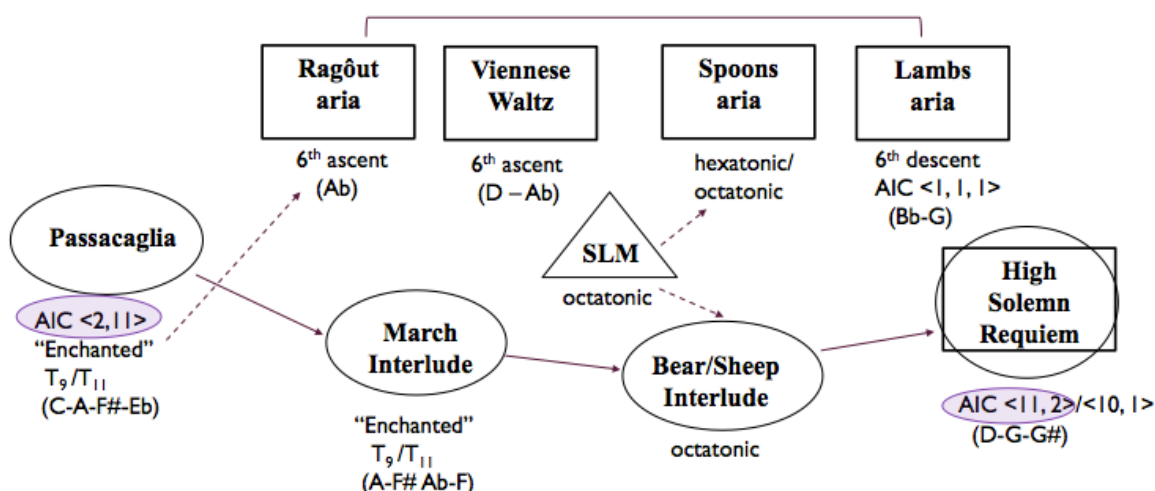
Example 9c. Ondes Martenot's triplet figurations

E₂ F#₂ G#₂ A#₂ C₁ C#₁ D₁ D#₁ E₁ E_{b1} E₁ F₁ F#₁ G₁

D#₁₁ D₁₁ C#₁₁ C₁₁ B₁₀ A₁₀ G₁₀ F₁₀ E_{b10} D_{b10} B₁₀ A₁₀ G₁₀ F₁₀

AIC: <11, 2> <10, 1> <10, 1>

Figure 10. Intersections of Cycles, Motives, and Harmonies



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