MTSE 2022 CONFERENCE ABSTRACTS

SESSION 1: METRIC DISRUPTION AND AMBIGUITY

Storytelling Through Metric Manipulation in Popular Music
Samantha Waddell, Indiana University

In this paper, I argue that metric manipulations in the music of Sabrina Carpenter, Billie Eilish, Taylor Swift, and Olivia Rodrigo are used as text-expressive, storytelling devices to evoke lyrical themes of separation and disjunction. I discuss three types of manipulations: (1) displacement-dissonance inducing buildup introductions (Attas 2015), (2) direct and indirect grouping dissonance (Krebs 1999) in asymmetrical meters, and (3) mid-song indirect grouping dissonances. Using the methodologies and hierarchy notation of Lerdahl & Jackendoff (1989) with Temperley's (2001) revisions and expansions, and Krebs' theories of metrical dissonance (1999) with Biamonte's (2014, 2019) extensions to pop/rock music, I show how metric dissonance influences the listening experience, in turn embodying lyrical meaning.

"Love is Insane": The Musical Portrayal of Mental Illness in *Next to Normal*
Zachary Lloyd, Florida State University

Kitt and Yorkey's musical *Next to Normal* (2008) centers around Diana Goodman, a mother struggling with ever-worsening bipolar depression and the toll it takes on her family. The musical offers an artistic exploration of mental illness, expressed not solely through the book or lyrics, but also conveyed through the musical score of the work. In this talk, the musical portrayal of mental illness is highlighted through the analysis of several numbers from the show. I focus on the rhythmic, metrical, and harmonic vocabulary that acts as an auditory depiction of the Goodman family's mental instability. The instability of the music underscoring the lives of these characters directly relates to their inherent psychological volatility. By drawing connections between the musical portrayal of Diana's mental illness and the other characters' scoring, I argue that Diana is not the only character struggling to cope with their mental health.

Short Notes on Strong Beats: Case Studies in African and Afro-Diasporic Meter
Lina Tabak, CUNY Graduate Center

Many scholars of Sub-Saharan repertoires often cite the ostensible metrical malleability of the music they study, without acknowledging that enculturated listeners usually only understand one metrical orientation to be correct. In this paper, I observe that short note values in certain Sub-Saharan and Afro-Diasporic repertoires seem just as likely to lie on a beat onset as their longer counterparts. This may be a source of metrical confusion to some, as Lerdahl and Jackendoff (1983) claim that listeners tend to hear long durations as carrying metrical strength in what they term "Metrical Preference Rule 5a" (MPR5a). Although some listeners may perceive metrical ambiguity when short note values fall on strong beats, I argue that this may simply be a structure different from that with which they are accustomed. Indeed, meter perception seems to be, above all, a learned behavior.

SESSION 2: NEW PERSPECTIVES ON MODERNISM

Crossing Over: Musical Ideograms in Luigi Dallapiccola's *Cinque Canti*
Joe Argentino, Memorial University of Newfoundland

Luigi Dallapiccola's *Cinque Canti* is a five-movement work based on a setting of Italian translations of ancient Greek texts. The core of *Cinque Canti*—based on a text setting of Licimnios's *Acheronte* (God of the river that borders the mortal world and the underworld)—contains a fivefold appearance of the cross drawn out with notes. Although scholarly studies of this composition include a wide range of topics such as octatonicism (Alegant 2010) or text and symmetry (Bassart 1960; Fearn 2003; Wildberger 1959), *all studies* of this work reference the cross ideograms within the central movement. Unfortunately, the references to these alluring ideograms are generally where the analyses conclude, even though the third movement contains some of Dallapiccola's richest serial transformations, musical expression, and text interconnectedness. In particular, Dallapiccola's manipulation of ic1 dyads from internal to external order positions musically represent the movement between the mortal and underworld of *Acheronte*.

Layers of Dissonance Within the First Piece of Johanna Beyer's *Dissonant Counterpoint*
Julianna Willson, Eastman School of Music

The musical career of Johanna Beyer (1888–1944) remained mostly overlooked throughout her lifetime and amongst her earliest known compositions is the suite of eight solo piano pieces, *Dissonant Counterpoint* (c. 1930). Beyer left no known description of her method of dissonant counterpoint within the suite, and no detailed analysis has been published on the set. Beal (2015) has documented Charles Seeger's influence on Beyer's compositional development, and Lumsden (2017) has shown how Beyer implemented elements from Seeger's concept of dissonant counterpoint in her String Quartet No. 2 (1936). I demonstrate how Beyer's techniques within the first piece of the suite are connected to Seeger's theory by detailing how Beyer's free serialism blends with Seeger's transformation of neumes, how her rhythmic structure creates layers of dissonance, and how she includes tonal associations to create a nuanced texture of dissonance.

SESSION 3: PLAYING WITH FORM AND FORMAL FUNCTION IN POP, RAGTIME, AND MUSICALS

When Does This Song Begin? The Pre-Introduction's Formal and Narratological Qualities
David Falterman, Eastman School of Music

The introduction's function of establishing the basic materials of a song is generally acknowledged, but the question of when the introduction *itself* begins is not always obvious. In this paper, I develop the idea of a before-the-beginning span I call the *pre-intro* based on three criteria: First, it can be defined negatively as any formal unit that comes before the introduction but does not establish the song's main musical materials. Second, it can be defined in terms of its sonic properties, which tend towards noise and metric/harmonic ambiguity. Last, pre-intros can imply either an interior or an exterior *narratological* space. After describing several relatively simple examples, the remainder of this paper nuances this concept and showcases its analytic potential at both the song

and album level through analyses of Billie Eilish's "all the good girls go to hell," Björk's "Aeroplane," and David Bowie's *1. Outside*.

Formal Function and Harmonic Syntax in the Piano Rags of Scott Joplin
Alan Elkins, Florida State University

While much has been written about the life of Scott Joplin and the history of ragtime music in general, music-theoretical scholarship has only begun to explore his output. Previous work on Joplin's music has focused on rhythmic features (Cohn 2016, Floyd and Reisser 1984), motivic unity (Massey 2001), and basic formal considerations (Berlin 1994, Floyd and Reisser 1984, Harer 1997). Less has been said, however, about formal function and harmonic syntax in Joplin's music on a phrase-structural level and its interaction with large-scale form.

In this paper, I will discuss ways in which harmony expresses formal function in Joplin's piano rags, both at the level of the sixteen-measure reprise and in the overall form of the work. I will begin by briefly reviewing the common templates for large-scale form in Joplin's piano rags; then, I will discuss the most typical harmonic paradigms found in Joplin's music and their form-functional roles at small-scale and large-scale structural levels. I will also address the ways in which the opening four-measure progression of a reprise is often predictive of the harmonic syntax of the following twelve measures.

Broadway Quodlibets as Hybrid Music
Spencer Martin, University of South Carolina

Quodlibets are an important facet of the language of musical theater and exhibit musical hybridity, mixing two or more musical elements. Bruno Alcalde's framework—including mixture strategies of clash, coexistence, distortion, and trajectory—is the basis of this discussion, revealing more about the music itself and how the music contributes to the dramatic narrative of each musical scene. Examples of Broadway quodlibets illustrate the relevant mixture strategies: "Lida Rose/Will I Ever Tell You" from *The Music Man*, "96,000" from *In the Heights*, "I Still Believe" from *Miss Saigon*, and "Dancin'" from *Xanadu*. Investigating Broadway quodlibets is a fruitful area of research, and Alcalde's theory of musical hybridity is well-suited to further understanding songs in this category.

SESSION 4: WORDS AND MUSIC

Identity, Gender Expression, and Semiotic Resistance in Kate Soper's "Only the Words Themselves Mean What They Say"
Scott Miller, CUNY Graduate Center

Kate Soper is a composer, soprano, and writer known for her work with Wet Ink Ensemble, of which she is a founding member. I analyze "Only the Words Themselves Mean What They Say" for soprano and flute, the second movement of Soper's *Ipsa Dixit*, a 90-minute composition for soprano in various chamber music settings. A semiotic reading of the work reveals how Soper's score and embodied performance amplify signs in Lydia Davis's text that combine with paralinguistic vocalizations (like "Ah" and "huh") to collapse and synthesize gendered binaries. The

resultant layered identity retains a female-gendered perspective as it disidentifies with the essentialized, unmarked, and masculinized idea of composer. As an explication of one powerful way for marginalized composers to claim their identity, my hearing of "Only the Words" identifies musical agency as a means of self-expression and resistance to hegemonic cultural forces.

"Bigger, Longer & Uncut": Classifying Additions of Text in Broadway Musicals
Chandler Blount, Florida State University

This paper considers how musical and textual structure interact at the phrase level in Broadway musicals by examining places where composers write passages of text that are too "big" to fit into an 8- or 16-bar phrase, focusing particularly on musicals by Matt Stone and Trey Parker (of *South Park* fame). In addition to developing a taxonomy to classify these text additions, I examine how the musical circumstances surrounding their appearances can reinforce their meaning.

SESSION 5: SONATA FORM

The EEC Complex in Classical Sonata Forms
Matthew Poon, University of Toronto

Although Hepokoski and Darcy's "essential" closure describes the most crucial element in a sonata form's trajectory, there has been little critical discussion on what one looks like. My "EEC complex" posits such a definition using a four-step model similar to Hepokoski and Darcy's own medial caesura. In an EEC complex, the first step is destabilization by means of a re-opened continuation, the second step is building momentum, the third is an "expanded cadential progression," and the final is the PAC arrival itself. Although the EEC complex is not a catch-all category, I present it as a way to better discuss this critical juncture in sonata forms. It can illuminate expansions or ambiguities, and explain situations where we might distinguish between a new secondary theme, a form-functional closing section, or even a closing theme that straddles the two.

Polyphonicized Recapitulation in Rachmaninoff's Second Piano Concerto
Ellen Bakulina, University of North Texas

This paper seeks to renew a theoretical interest in texture by suggesting that textural changes across large spans of time can serve as an important form-building strategy. I offer the concept of a *polyphonicized recapitulation*, a large-scale thematic return where the original theme is counterpointed by a prominent different melody. The countermelody to the main theme may (1) be entirely new, (2) be the result of a gradual thematic development (teleological recapitulation), or (3) have existed independently in an earlier section prior to the recap. Relevant concepts include statistical parameters of music (Leonard Meyer) and the apotheosis (Edward T. Cone). I then analyze an extreme example of a teleological polyphonic recapitulation—movement 1 of Rachmaninoff's Second Piano Concerto. There, the countermelody is a fully-fledged *telos* in James Hepokoski's (1993) sense—the endpoint of a lengthy thematic generation of a goal theme—and additionally a powerful expressive climax of the movement.

SESSION 6: EMBODIMENT, RHYTHM, AND REGISTER

Mega Tubes: Moon Hooch's Pursuit of the Saxophone's Lowest Note
John Heilig, Indiana University

The genre-bending "cave music" of the three-piece band Moon Hooch (comprised of two saxophonists and a drummer) has repeatedly been described as sounding and feeling like a sort of non-electronic EDM. In this paper, I argue that this sound can be directly attributed to acoustic properties of the saxophone itself, and that fostering an understanding of the saxophone as a "compositional instrument" (as described by De Souza) can provide unique insight into Moon Hooch's compositional decisions and musical vocabulary. All but one of the tracks on Moon Hooch's self-titled first album (2013) prominently feature the lowest note playable on most saxophones (written as B-flat 3). I suggest that it is specifically the quality of B-flat 3 as the richest, fullest, and most visceral note playable on the saxophone that directly shapes the group's compositional decisions regarding form, key schemes, and bassline structure.

The Making of *Tarab*: Emotion as Temporal Disruption in Umm Kulthūm's "Alf Leila wa Leila"
Issa Aji, University of Texas at Austin

In discussing music of the Arab world, the term *tarab* is used to describe the aesthetic phenomenon by which music produces intense musical emotions. In practice, the cultivation of *tarab* relies, in part, on rhythmic flexibility and variety to create aesthetically pleasing moments of disruption to the orderly temporal flow of the music. This paper provides a model that seeks to elucidate these expressive implications by tracking the movement between rhythmic modes (*īqā'āt*) in Umm Kulthūm's "Alf Leila wa Lelia" (1969) using Toussaint's (2013) method of mapping cyclical rhythms and De Souza's (2017) notion of consistency and displacement. Then, by drawing on theories of phenomenology (Husserl 1990), temporality (Shannon 2006), and emotion (Juslin 2019), I suggest that larger degrees of displacement between rhythmic modes lead to the types of temporal disruptions and embodied interactions that are so critical for the expressivity and production of *tarab* in Arab music.

SESSION 7: TIMBRAL DIRECTIONS

The Crooked Timbre of Phenomenology
Avinoam Foonberg, University of Cincinnati

Many music theorists have taken interest in timbre and perceptual studies. Yet, one pioneering perceptual approach is David Lewin's perceptual model, henceforward P-model, which analyzes how different musical perceptions can be formed and related to one another. However, this methodology has been widely criticized and its application to timbre has not been explored. My paper argues that by combining David Lewin's P-model with timbral perceptions grounded in current cognitive science research, we can overcome many of the criticisms against the P-model and develop a methodology that critically analyzes timbre. My methodology is built from David Lewin's P-model but replaces its emphasis on pitch with an emphasis on timbral perceptions that is used to explore various timbral transformations. This paper demonstrates that timbral perceptions can be critically analyzed and that

such analyses yield analytical, aesthetic, and even structural significance to the way timbre contributes to our musical understanding and experiences.

"Now Let's Play It Backwards": Musique Concrète and the Psychedelic as Topical Field in the Beatles' Mid-1960s Songs
Emily Vanchella, Texas A&M International University

"Psychedelic" is a common descriptor for several mid-1960s Beatles songs (Echard 2017). However, which *musical* characteristics would provoke this description, and how? Topic theory may provide some insight. Building on the concept of topical field and how it applies to psychedelic music (Hatten 1994, Echard 2017), I argue that the Beatles' use of musique concrète's compositional techniques forges a meaningful link between those techniques and images of the psychedelic. Through lyrical examination of songs such as "Strawberry Fields Forever" and "Yellow Submarine," a specific association reveals itself: musique concrète signifies altered or alternative states of reality and/or consciousness. The Beatles' music, in contrast to other 1960s psychedelic rock, sets up both a consistent signifier (musique concrète) *and* a consistent association that the signifier evokes. Both this consistency over time, and their intensification over time, play a key role in supporting the psychedelic as a topical field.

SESSION 8: PEDAGOGY AND PUBLIC MUSIC THEORY

Heavenly Music as Public Music Theory
J. Daniel Jenkins, University of South Carolina

This paper considers the MGM film *Heavenly Music*, winner of the 1944 Academy Award for Best Short Film, as an example of public music theory. In one way, *Heavenly Music* represents the "music appreciation" strain of public music theory, meant to educate the audience about what "good" music is. At the same time, the film requires the audience to question received knowledge about greatness. *Heavenly Music* invites a number of interpretations, engaging issues that remain relevant to music theory today.

World Musics and Decolonial Pedagogy in the Music Theory Classroom
Molly Reid, Florida State University

Many have called for North American music theory curricula to include musics beyond the Western art music canon, but there is not yet a clear consensus on how to proceed. First, I show the benefit of situating such discussions within the "decolonial option" (Mignolo 2011). Then, I offer decolonial pedagogical techniques for integrating "world musics" into the theory classroom. Drawing on Mohanty (2003) and Hess (2015), I explore three models in which "Other" subject material is engaged in women's studies and elementary music education, and adapt the models to music theory pedagogy. Decolonial pedagogy aligns most with the Comparative Musics Model in which all musics are understood relationally and as dependent on local context. The other models are more tokenistic and have been utilized in situations where ground-up curricular change is not immediately possible. I conclude by proposing decolonial pedagogical strategies for these situations derived from the Comparative Musics Model.