

**THE MUSIC THEORY SOCIETY
AT FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY**

presents

**THE 27TH ANNUAL
MUSIC THEORY FORUM**

**JANUARY 16, 2010
DOHANÁNYI RECITAL HALL**

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

8:30 Light Breakfast

9:05 Opening Remarks

9:15 Session 1: Explorations in Keyboard Literature
Judith Ofcarcik, chair

Samantha Inman (Eastman School of Music) – “Dueling Dissonances:
The Quest for Tonal and Rhythmic Resolution in the First
Movement of Robert Schumann's Piano Sonata No. 2, Op. 22”

Fabrice Curtis (Florida State University) – “A Schenkerian Approach to
Shostakovich’s Fugue No. 2 in A Minor from *24 Preludes and
Fugues*, Op. 87”

10:30 Session 2: 20th-century Instrumental Forms
Andrew Gades, chair

Cecilia Taher (University of Arkansas) – “Elasticity in Boris Blacher's
Duet for Flute and Piano”

Sarah Gaskins (Florida State University) – “Disrupted Form in Rebecca
Clarke's Viola Sonata”

11:30 Lunch

1:30 Session 3: Analysis of Popular Music
Greg McCandless, chair

David Settle (Florida State University) – “Feedback as a Compositional
Tool in Rock Music”

Tyler Roe (Florida State University) – “From Stylistic to Cultural
Competency: Levels of Humor in *Flight of the Conchords*”

2:45 Session 4: Song and Meaning

Greg Decker, chair

Sarah Sarver (Florida State University) – “Chromatic Parentheses: An Exploration of Their Structural and Narrative Implications in Select Songs from Richard Strauss's *Brentano Lieder*, op. 68”

Sacha Peiser (Louisiana State University) – “Forever Seeking a Dream: Meandering Motive and Tonality in Debussy's "De Rêve”

Alan Theisen (Florida State University) – “Elliott Carter's Reading of Ungaretti in *Tempo e Temp?*”

4:30 Keynote Address

Frank Samarotto (Indiana University, Bloomington) – “What’s the Use of Outmoded Theories? Rehearing Brahms’s Third Symphony”

Please join us at 6:30pm for dinner following the Forum.

Essence of India
1105 Apalachee Parkway

Directions from FSU – Turn right onto Tennessee St. and then right onto Monroe St. Turn right onto Apalachee Parkway. It will be on the right in about one mile (same shopping center as Olive Garden).

ABSTRACTS

“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

This paper examines the relationship of large-scale pitch and rhythmic processes in the first movement of Robert Schumann’s Piano Sonata No. 2, Op. 22 in G minor. Given the largely classical structure of this movement, the form is discussed using Sonata Theory terminology developed by James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy. Investigation of the rhythmic structure of the work centers on metrical 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.

While Krebs has observed that metric dissonance and pitch dissonance often occur in the same passages of music, the opening movement of Schumann’s 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. Intense rhythmic tension 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.

“A Schenkerian Approach to Shostakovich’s Fugue No. 2 in A Minor from *24 Preludes and Fugues*, Op. 87”

Fabrice Curtis
Florida State University

The use of Schenkerian techniques in analyzing fugues presents a paradox. Whereas Schenker’s concept of tonal structure conceptualizes the melody, inner voices, and bass as having distinct functions and content, a fugue usually contains three or more polyphonic lines that are of equal importance. However, Schenker’s writings show that

he particularly valued J.S. Bach's fugues and the connections between their structural layers. William Renwick has made great strides in advancing a Schenkerian approach in the analysis of fugues.

Few have undertaken a Schenkerian approach to the music of Shostakovich. One explanation for this may be due to the fact that Shostakovich's music is often more accurately described as centric rather than tonal, and many times includes pitch material that cannot be explained by a traditional voice-leading sketch. However, the linear techniques and orientation toward tonal listeners found in Shostakovich's *24 Preludes and Fugues*, Op. 87 are characteristics that make a quasi-Schenkerian approach a valid option.

This paper provides a convincing analysis of a Shostakovich fugue using a Schenkerian perspective. Although on the surface, some of Shostakovich's music may appear outside the scope of Schenkerian theory, his reliance on linear techniques and his tonal orientation make a Schenkerian approach effective. By beginning to develop a systematic framework for analyzing Shostakovich's fugues via a Schenkerian approach, an informed listener will be able to gain a better understanding of Shostakovich's fugal output.

“Elasticity in Boris Blacher's Duet for Flute and Piano”

Cecilia Taher

University of Arkansas

This paper proposes a theorization of the concept of form present in late compositions by Boris Blacher, by means of analyzing his *Duet for Flute and Piano* (1972). In 1950, Blacher began to use systematically varying metric units to provide logic to the apparently arbitrary rhythm of modern music. This practice led the few scholars who have studied his compositions to concentrate on the mathematical organization of metrical units, underestimating the other musical elements. This study suggests that the technique of expansion and contraction that becomes evident in the metrical organization is also present in the disposition of durations at other hierarchical levels and in the pitch structure. Blacher's techniques provide a unique sense of movement to his compositions, the aural effect of an “elastically developing music.” This idea is also applied in simultaneity to the registral and textural development. The *Duet's* elasticity results from the horizontal (durational) and vertical (registral) contraction and expansion of musical elements at different levels. This broader conception of the musical structure aims to describe the evolution of the music as a process rather than its objective definition, entailing analytical aspects that extend beyond the traditional study of form. Blacher's *Duet* is here presented as a practical manifestation of a conceptual change from the traditional notion of form to a new idea of constantly

moving, elastic shape. The organization of musical elements in the horizontal and vertical dimensions becomes a unique principle of formal definition, the elastic development of the musical content itself.

“Disrupted Form in Rebecca Clarke's Viola Sonata”

Sarah Gaskins

Florida State University

Rebecca Clarke's *Sonata for Viola and Piano* is one of the two pieces from her considerable output that she composed in what can be described as sonata form. Although it gained much notoriety upon its premiere at the 1919 Berkshire Festival of Chamber Music Competition, the piece was almost forgotten until its rediscovery just over thirty years ago. Clarke not only shows her command of the large form in the first movement, but also expands it into an over-arching multi-movement sonata form. Only a few scholars have discussed the formal structure of the piece but none have considered a formal scheme that spans all three movements. I show how Clarke created a unique sonata within a sonata, a design that I am calling a “disrupted” sonata form.

“Feedback as a Compositional Tool in Rock Music”

David Settle

Florida State University

This paper discusses the creation of feedback and possible functions of it in rock music. Examples are provided from studio recordings (as opposed to live ones) of bands belonging to many different sub-genres of rock to show how feedback can be used as a compositional tool by a variety of musicians. Three main types of the effect are proposed for use in music analysis: anticipatory (that which builds, or has a sense of building, towards a different section of a song or the entry of an instrument), residual (that which is created by the decay of the instrument), and soloistic feedback (that which is used in place of exact pitches in the solo section of a song). These terms are put to use to show how feedback can be used to support the affect of desire in both Weezer's “Falling For You” and The Thermals' “A Stare Like Yours.” Instances of feedback are analyzed in their connection to form and lyrical content in both songs, and it is shown how the guitar tones in each are shaped with feedback in mind, especially when compared to how the instrument sounds in other songs from their respective CDs. It is my hope that the exploration of feedback in rock music can result in a discussion of ways to analyze timbral characteristics of popular music.

“From Stylistic to Cultural Competency:
Levels of Humor in *Flight of the Conchords*”

Tyler Roe

Florida State University

In a pair of articles discussing the music of Spinal Tap and the Rutles, Jonathan Covach explores musical humor in terms of stylistic competency of the music being parodied. These articles build upon existing theories of both musical and non-musical humor as outlined by earlier scholars such as Roger Scruton’s writings on caricature and John Morreall’s Incongruity Theory to explore how parody bands achieve musical humor. Covach ultimately concludes that, because so many traditional theories of humor rely upon manipulation of audience expectations, a true appreciation of musical comedic parody requires a stylistic competency of the music in order to create the expectations necessary to create incongruous humor.

This paper expands upon this concept of stylistic competency by applying it to the musical comedy of New Zealand comedy duo Flight of the Conchords. Through their live comedy act, studio albums, and an HBO series, Flight of the Conchords has successfully brought their brand of musical comedy to the public mainstream. While many analyses of comedy presented by Covach and earlier scholars are still applicable to the music of Flight of the Conchords, the band’s repertoire presents parodies of a much wider range of musical styles than those discussed in these earlier analyses.

Furthermore, Flight of the Conchords consistently make extramusical references in their music which require existing knowledge of the popular culture in which the music is created in addition to knowledge of specific musical styles. For these reasons, this paper aims to use the music of Flight of the Conchords to demonstrate a shift in current musical comedy towards broad cultural associations which requires not simply a stylistic competency of the music being parodied, but a broad cultural competency of the culture in which the music is created in order to truly understand its humor.

“Chromatic Parentheses: An Exploration of Their Structural and
Narrative Implications in Select Songs from
Richard Strauss's *Brentano Lieder*, op. 68”

Sarah Sarver

Florida State University

Chromatic digressions in tonal music never fail to pique our analytical interests, especially when such tangential excursions deviate from what we believe to be

normative. Coming to terms with such “purple patches” can be quite slippery, especially when motivated by multifarious departures from musical expectation. The purpose of the present study is to examine certain kinds of digressions that I call chromatic parentheses.

Chromatic parentheses are analogous to parentheses found in prose—they are asides that temporarily interrupt an otherwise continuous idea. The interpolated musical material can create a strongly disorienting aural effect. This disturbance arises when the interjected material seems out of place given its musical context. I will discuss two specific kinds of musical parentheses that occur in Richard Strauss’s *Brentano Lieder*, op. 68. The first features a disrupting passage of complex dissonances that occurs within the context of consonant triadic sonorities. The second kind of parenthesis is created when musical expectation is thwarted—specifically the expectation of closure.

In my talk, I will explore the structural and narrative implications of these chromatic parentheses. In doing so, I will describe how various chromatic parentheses interact with their surrounding musical material, focusing both on voice leading and the relative strength of the structural rupture. The narrative aspect of each parenthesis is shaped by its relationship to the song’s text.

“Forever Seeking a Dream: Meandering Motive and
Tonality in Debussy's "De Rêve”

Sacha Peiser

Louisiana State University

The *Proses Lyriques* (1895) is a unique set of songs in Claude Debussy’s compositional output. They are among his few songs set to free verse and prose, written in preparation for and anticipation of his opera *Pelléas et Mélisande*. More importantly, they are the only complete, published songs with both music and text by the composer. As such, they provide a rich opportunity for the examination of Debussy’s intertwining of words and music. The first song of the set, “De Rêve,” is a complex symbolist poem about the yearning for an ancient dream. This presentation will delve into Debussy’s musical representation of that dream by exploring his use of motives and ambiguous tonality. Debussy’s use of these compositional devices relates to the main themes of the poem: time, degradation of an ideal, and closure or realization.

“Elliott Carter's Reading of Ungaretti in *Tempo e Tempi*”

Alan Theisen

Florida State University

Befitting a contemporary composer of such international stature, Elliott Carter's music has been the focus of much theoretical, analytical, and historical research. Several studies have particularly investigated (1) the combinatoric properties and intervallic makeup of Carter's compositional materials and their realization in later instrumental miniatures and (2) his attention to text-music relationships in vocal works from before 1990. However, there has been a relative lacuna in scholarship on Carter's "late-late style" compositions with text. This seems somewhat surprising considering the composer's academic background in (and continued fascination with) the field of literature. My paper provides a close analysis of two complete songs from Carter's 1999 cycle *Tempo e Tempi* - "Segreto del Poeta" and "Una Colomba" (both settings of poems by Italian modernist Giuseppe Ungaretti). I hope to shed light on how Carter simultaneously interprets the structures of Ungaretti's intricately symbolic poetry and underscores their narratives with his recent compositional language. My analysis will incorporate Carter's favored pcset materials such as all-interval tetrachords (AITs) and all-triad hexachords (ATHs) with text painting, aggregate completion, moments of intertextuality, and Michael Riffaterre's concept of poetic "ungrammaticality."

Keynote Address:

“What’s the Use of Outmoded Theories?
Rehearing Brahms’s Third Symphony”

Frank Samarotto

Indiana University, Bloomington

Do music theories really become outmoded? If not, what use is to be made of them? This talk will begin by briefly considering the “outmodedness” of scientific theories—sometimes paradoxical—and then contrast that with the situation of music theory. Keeping some salutary cautions in mind, I will recount some past uses of older music theories, good and bad, in order to consider which uses are foundationally legitimate. With this as preface I will then turn to a perspective that permeated theoretical language of the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, that known as energetics. In current thinking, energetics is downplayed as vague and ungrounded, but I will argue that concepts we associate with Kurth are indispensable to Schenkerian analysis and even to Riemann’s metric analysis. This will be extensively demonstrated in a close reading of that most energetic work, the first movement of Brahms’s Third Symphony.

Frank Samarotto is Associate Professor of Music Theory at Indiana University Bloomington, teaching there since 2001, and was previously at the College-Conservatory of Music at the University of Cincinnati. He was a workshop leader at the Mannes Institute for Advanced Studies in Music Theory Summer Institute in Schenkerian Theory and Analysis in 2002, a workshop leader and invited presenter at the first conferences in Germany devoted to Schenkerian theory and analysis held in Berlin, Saue, and Mannheim in June of 2004, and gave a week of lectures on voice-leading and musical time at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki in 2007. He has served as a visiting scholar at Emory University, the Penn State School of Music, Bowling Green State University, Notre Dame and McGill University, and was an invited participant at the Third International Conference on Music Theory, Tallinn, Estonia in 2001. His publications have appeared in *Schenker Studies II*, the *Beethoven Forum*, *Theory and Practice*, *Music Theory Spectrum*, *Music Theory Online*, *Integral* and in conference proceedings, as well as a festschrift for Carl Schachter and a recent anthology on sonata form edited by Gordon Sly. He is currently working on a book on Schenkerian theory and analysis.

