

*The Music Theory Society at  
Florida State University*

*presents*

*The Thirty-Seventh Annual  
Music Theory Forum*



*January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020  
Longmire Room 201*

## Schedule of Events

**9:30 Registration and Light Breakfast (Beth Moore Lounge)**

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**10:15 Opening Remarks (Longmire 201)**

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**Prof. Jane Piper Clendinning (Florida State University)**

**10:20 Session 1: Rhythm, Meter, and Schenker** **Chandler Blount, Chair**

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**Samantha Waddell (Michigan State University)**

Metric Disruption as a Text-Expressive Device in Three Songs by the Beatles

**Barak Schossberger (Eastman School of Music)**

Re-examining Schenkerian Concepts as a Strategy for Expanding the Theory: Unsynchronized Unfolding and Distortion in Shostakovich's String Quartet No. 3

**Ian Guthrie (Florida State University)**

Rhythm as Function: Labeling the Other Progression

**12:00 Lunch**

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Restaurant suggestions are at the end of your program. Groups will depart from the Beth Moore Lounge to various locations.

**1:30 Session 2: Expanding the Canon** **Jenn Harding, Chair**

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**Kayla Shaeffer (Florida State University)**

Beheaded: Motivic Analyses of Power Complexes in Libby Larsen's *Try Me, Good King*

**Neal Endicott (Michigan State University)**

Mamlok on Day One: Strategies for Incorporating Recent Music Throughout the Undergraduate Music Theory Curriculum

**2:30 Coffee Break (Beth Moore Lounge)**

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**2:45 Session 3: Approaches to Form** **Jordan Lenchitz, Chair**

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**Stephanie George (Temple University)**

The Symptom in Chopin's Second Piano Sonata, First Movement

**Michael Dekovich (University of Oregon)**

Bridges to Free-Standing Bridges, or the Mutable Modular Model of Metal Music

**3:45 Coffee Break (Beth Moore Lounge)**

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**4:00 Keynote Address**

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**Nicole Biamonte (McGill University)**

Unpacking Formal Functions in Pop-Rock Music

**6:00 Dinner: Masa**

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Directions on back page

### Unpacking Formal Functions in Pop-Rock Music

Nicole Biamonte (McGill University)

#### Abstract

A perennial problem in analyzing form in popular music is how to best interpret sections that do not conform to conventional categories. This lecture begins with an overview of formal structures (strophic, AABA, verse-chorus) and song section types (verse, refrain, chorus, bridge, prechorus, postchorus) in Anglophone pop-rock music, and a consideration of their formal functions and normative characteristics. Sections whose formal type is ambiguous or that have characteristics of more than one type have been described as blends or conversions. But another approach to analyzing such sections is to begin from the perspective of function rather than section identity, decoupling conventional syntactic formal markers such as the title text and melodic hook from their normative section types (chorus or refrain), and taking statistical parameters such as texture and dynamics (setup, buildup or riser, climax, drop) into consideration. This bottom-up analytical perspective sheds light on the roles of unconventional song sections, as well as to the changing functions of formal section types over time.

#### Biography

Nicole Biamonte earned a PhD in music theory from Yale University and is currently associate professor of music theory at McGill University in Montreal. Her publications include articles and book chapters on pitch structures, form, and meter and rhythm in popular music; exoticism in the music of Rush; musical representation in the video games *Guitar Hero* and *Rock Band* in her own edited collection, *Pop-Culture Pedagogy in the Music Classroom*; and historicist aspects of 19th-century art music. She recently is a past editor of *Music Theory Online* and currently serves on the boards of *Popular Music* and *Indiana Theory Review*.

### Metric Disruption as a Text-Expressive Device in Three Songs by the Beatles

Samantha Waddell (Michigan State University)

In rock music, metric dissonance often articulates formal sections (Biamonte 2014). While this observation holds across the discography of the Beatles, metric dissonance also serves as an important text-expressive device. This dual role is especially pronounced in “She Said She Said,” “I Want You (She’s So Heavy)” and “Happiness Is A Warm Gun,” where metric dissonance portrays the protagonists’ inner thoughts. I account for these dissonance-producing metric disruptions using Lerdahl and Jackendoff’s (1983) Metrical Preference Rules (MPRs) and Metrical Well-Formedness Rules (MWFRs), Temperley’s (2001) modifications to these rules, and Krebs’ (1999) theory of metrical dissonance.

These songs feature three specific kinds of text-expressive metric disruption: (1) manipulation of the hypermeasure through the subtraction of weak beats, or (2) through the addition of weak beats before the next anticipated strong beat, and (3) grouping dissonances between interpretive layers. In the song “She Said She Said,” manipulation of the hypermeasure conveys the protagonist longing for the simpler times of childhood—the singer abruptly begins to reminisce, cueing the change of meter, with the rests between each statement of “Everything was right,” conveying his recollection of childhood memories. Then, in the song “I Want You,” the manipulation of the hypermetrical phrase through the addition of beats, delaying the vocal entrance, conveys the protagonist’s mind being preoccupied, and it also builds tension—the listener is now anxiously awaiting the entrance of the voice, and this parallels the sexual tension between the protagonist and the woman he desires. Finally, both of the former techniques, in addition to an instance of Krebs’ (1999) grouping dissonance between interpretive layers, occur in the song “Happiness Is A Warm Gun,” conveying the protagonists’ euphoric state while immersed in a sexual fantasy.

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### Re-examining Schenkerian Concepts as a Strategy for Expanding the Theory: Unsynchronized Unfolding and Disruption in Shostakovich’s String Quartet No. 3

Barak Schossberger (Eastman School of Music)

In this paper I offer a model for extending Schenkerian theory beyond its originally intended domain of common practice tonal music by describing a process that I call an “organic expansion.”

I show that some of the premises underlying some basic Schenkerian theoretical concepts privilege certain musical styles, and therefore perpetuate interim musical conventions or trends. I argue that these should be reconsidered, with the goal of

redefining the theoretical concepts in a more inclusive way, such that the old formulation is understood as a specific case of the newly devised one. As a result, the concepts' explanatory range is expanded to include wider repertoire. I show how this is possible without compromising the original concepts' theoretical rigor and therefore this process could be understood as “organically expanding” Schenkerian theory.

Taking Shostakovich's String Quartet No. 3 as a case study, I examine William Rothstein's concept of rhythmic displacement and show that, when re-defined more inclusively, it explains some passages from the quartet that previously seemed to be breaking the rules of tonality or project atonal elements.

I then turn to demonstrate this process in reverse: I focus on one specific idiosyncratic element in Shostakovich's style that I call distortion, and trace the possible chain of conceptual influences, the accrued tradition that made this innovation possible. My point is to show how personal compositional characteristics could also be theoretically understood to grow out of the tonal tradition organically.

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### **Rhythm as Function: Labeling the Other Progression**

Ian Guthrie (Florida State University)

Recent scholarship has explored the role of rhythmic “cells” that complement or replace the standard harmonic phrase models in modal, tonal, and post-tonal Western music. Donald Wilson (“Metric Modulation,” 1965) adopts Cowell's divisive notation to represent borrowed rhythms, and although the system primarily represents vertical and horizontal proportions within music, it is perhaps the best source from which to adapt for post-tonal rhythmic analysis. While the symbology of Christopher Hasty (*Meter as Rhythm*, 1997) distinguishes “beginning” and “continuing” rhythmic perceptions in periodicity, it does not delineate specific rhythmic cells nor how they may specifically relate to particular harmonic functions. Conversely, the system utilized by Joseph Swain (*Harmonic Rhythm*, 2002) addresses contextual harmonic progressions and rhythms in tandem but fails to assign independent functional roles to the rhythmic cells. The new system proposed in this paper synthesizes these models to provide a workable analytical system that identifies and categorizes harmonic function, exemplified through analyses of Chopin, Ravel, Berg, and Lassus. Categorizing rhythmic cells according to their contextual metrical dissonance and harmonic association reveals fascinating correlations between harmony, rhythm, and meter. This approach also suggests how certain composers of different periods chose rhythmic variety based on their use of chromaticism within any given work, how functional rhythmic cells can shape our impression of non-functional and post-tonal repertoire, and how this approach can illuminate supportive areas such as performance practice and composition.

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### **Beheaded: Motivic Analysis of Power Complexes**

in Libby Larsen's *Try Me, Good King*

Kayla Shaeffer (Florida State University)

Divorced. Beheaded. Died. Divorced. Beheaded. Survived. This children's rhyme is how most come to know the six wives of King Henry VIII and is all they ever learn about them. Larsen's song cycle, *Try Me, Good King*, works to expand that basic knowledge of the fates of Henry's first five wives by setting their final words and bringing to life the power dynamics that ruled their lives as both queens and domestic abuse victims.

Of interest to this talk is the final song in the cycle, “Katherine Howard.” Howard was Henry's fifth wife for a little more than a year, and the second to be beheaded after being charged with treason on the grounds of committing adultery with Thomas Culpeper. Like Brenda Ravenscroft's (2016) and Rosemary Killam's (1993) earlier analyses of Larsen's other works, text setting in “Katherine Howard” is of primary interest to me, particularly how motives depict the characters' multitude of relationships. However, I move beyond these authors by also considering how Larsen's quotation of John Dowland's “In Darkness Let Me Dwell” further enriches the text setting to better illustrate Howard's position as both Queen of England and domestic abuse victim.

The “In darkness...” motive points to a shared lack of power between Dowland's speaker and Katherine Howard as they both powerlessly await death. A powerful bell toll motive then juxtaposes against the agentless “In darkness...” motive as Howard looks beyond her death and attempts to reclaim her lost power. These two motives illustrate the nuances of Howard's power as she narrates her final moments and lead to a greater understanding of her predicament beyond the simple fact of her beheading.

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### **Mamlok on Day One: Strategies for Incorporating Recent Music Throughout the Undergraduate Music Theory Curriculum**

Neal Endicott (Michigan State University)

This presentation offers concrete solutions to two challenges that face theory instructors seeking to better cover post-tonal music. The first of these challenges is the lack of curricular time dedicated to music since 1900 (Buchler 2017), particularly given the attitude that such topics must be left for last, so to speak. The second challenge is the attitudes frequently demonstrated by students towards topics that they prejudge to be difficult, unfamiliar, aesthetically unappealing, or entirely divorced from previous topics (Roig-Francolí 2017).

Both challenges can be partially ameliorated by early incorporation of 20th- and 21st-century examples into the music theory classroom without needing to alter overall curricular structure. This allows instructors to avoid the necessity of easing

into post-tonal repertoire upon arrival at its dedicated unit (Straus 2018), expands composers—particularly female composers, composers of color, and living composers—and styles—including underrepresented styles and instrumentations—with which students are familiar, allows for increased student familiarity with the sound of post-tonal music, makes the study of post-tonal music less daunting, and offers opportunities to engage more fully with literature utilizing even the most basic topics.

After a brief literature review, I discuss sample lessons that integrate 20<sup>th</sup>- and 21<sup>st</sup>-century works into lessons that typically fall within the first year of collegiate studies. For instance, in the teaching of pitch I utilize the theme from Ursula Mamlok's Variations for Solo Flute, which allows students not only to identify pitches but also to immediately engage analytically with a "real" composition by articulating observations of the palindromic pattern of pitch presentation in the theme. Other example lessons will offer similar opportunities for high-level engagement, while still others will present opportunities for the integration of contemporary music into speed-drill and homework exercises.

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### **The Symptom in Chopin's Second Piano Sonata, First Movement**

Stephanie George (Temple University)

This paper offers a Lacanian reading of Chopin's Piano Sonata No. 2, Op. 35, using Hepokoski and Darcy's sonata theory to determine moments where the "narrative of success" veers off track. The first movement of Chopin's Op. 35 is a Type 2 sonata by Hepokoski and Darcy's taxonomy. The first part of the paper will define the symptom in Lacanian terms (Klein, Reichardt, Schwarz). The musical symptom can change the form, alter conventional harmony, or rhythm, etc., and prompts us to interpret the music beyond the usual types of musical analysis. The symptom brings itself to our awareness when the music acts in unconventional ways. Next, I will discuss the effect of the symptom on the first movement of Chopin's second sonata, using both sonata theory and Schenkerian analysis. The symptom, which appears in the first moment of the piece (P0.1) as the opening chords, is disturbing, especially in relation to the rest of the movement. The introduction has no key or identifying markers that point to a tonal center. The symptom is transmitted to the accompaniment during P0.2, an anxious repetitive motive that will eventually overtake and dissolve the primary theme. In m. 25, the primary theme will restart, only to dissolve again (as the transition to the secondary theme). Dissolution during the primary theme is demonstrated by descents that never reach closure. The dissolving pattern repeats itself throughout the movement.

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### **Bridges to Free-Standing Bridges, or the Mutable Modular Model of Metal Music**

Michael Dekovich (University of Oregon)

Form in the heavy metal genre constitutes a dialogic practice, acknowledging the formal conventions of pop while actively subverting them. Metal's experimental departures can push beyond the normative model of compound AABA (verse-chorus-bridge) form to the point that little reference to the original structure is apparent. I contend that a metal epistemology of musical form simultaneously accounts for normative structures and formal experimentalism, from expanded or truncated rotational forms to through-composed forms. To augment earlier theory and describe metal formal functions more accurately, I introduce the "monumental bridge," a multi-sectional bridge that is treated as a teleological destination in itself, marked for its athematicism and expressive characteristics. My analyses suggest that metal musicians' generic priorities shape their approach to musical form, and that temporality is far from settled. By attending to formal modules as discrete compositional units with flexible behaviors, it is possible to appreciate the rhetorical dimension of metal form.

**Program Committee**

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Stanley Fink  
Julian Jenson  
Jordan Lenchitz  
Prof. Rachel Lumsden

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**Faculty Advisor**

Professor Jane Piper Clendinning

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The Congress of Graduate Students  
Florida State University Friends of Music  
The Music Theory Society at Florida State University*

**Nearby restaurants for lunch**

Walking distance:

Jimmy John's  
1080 West Tennessee Street

OG Subs  
444 West College Ave #112

Little Athens  
666 West Tennessee Street

Speary It  
609 West Tennessee Street

Short drive:

Panera Bread  
800 Ocala Rd (Near Publix)

Chipotle  
1801 West Tennessee Street

Taco Republik  
1122-8 Thomasville Rd

4 Rivers  
1817 Thomasville Rd #100

**Please join us at 6:00 P.M. for dinner following Forum**

Masa  
1650 N. Monroe St.  
Tallahassee, FL  
32303

Directions from FSU:

Turn right (East) on Tennessee Street, then left (North) onto North Monroe Street. Continue just past Seventh Avenue until you see Lake Ella on your right. Turn left into the Masa parking lot after passing Golden Corral.