



**THIRTY-SEVENTH MEETING
THE NORTHEAST CONFERENCE OF MUSIC THEORISTS**

**WILLIAMS COLLEGE
THE MUSIC DEPARTMENT
WILLIAMSTOWN, MA**

**FRIDAY & SATURDAY, APRIL 4-5, 2025
PROGRAM & ABSTRACTS**

Friday, April 4, 2025

Bernhard Music Center: Presser Rehearsal Room
54 Chapin Hall Drive
Williamstown, MA 01267

Noon: **Registration**

1:00pm–2:00pm ***Inspirations and Improvisations: Ben Geyer (Mt. Holyoke College), chair***

- “Hearing Hybridity: Jason Moran's Version of Brahms's Intermezzo Op. 118, no. 2”
Jonathon Crompton (Columbia University)
- “Earle Brown and Charlotte Moorman's ‘Realization Vocabulary’: Theorizing Improvisation in the 1960s Avant-Garde”
Drake Andersen (Central Connecticut State University)

2:00pm–2:30pm **Break**

2:30pm–4:00pm ***History and/of Music Theory: Giulia Accornero (Yale University), chair***

- “Listening to *le Règle: Le tempérament ordinaire* and Elisabeth Jacquet de La Guerre's Suite No. 3 in A minor”
Stephen Tian-You Ai (Harvard University)
- “*Arte de Música*: Negotiating Humanism and Scholasticism in Early Modern Portuguese Music Theory”
Juan Patricio Saenz (Harvard University)
- “The Historical Minute in the Undergraduate Theory Core”
Benjamin Wadsworth (Kennesaw State University)

4:00pm–5:00pm ***Analysis of Slow 20th Century Music: Daniel Harrison (Yale University), chair***

- “Chamber Music Ecosystems: Revisiting Organi(ci)sm through Contemporary Music”
Sam Reenan (Miami University)
- “Of Microtones and Mondegreens”
Will Mason (Wheaton College)

5:00pm–5:15pm **Break**

5:15pm–6:30pm **Keynote: *Sensory and Suprasensory Sound in Theosophical Discourse and Modernist Practice*
Anna Gawboy (The Ohio State University)**

6:30pm **Dinner at Spice Root Indian Restaurant
23 Spring St., Williamstown**

Saturday, April 5, 2025

Bernhard Music Center: Presser Rehearsal Room
54 Chapin Hall Drive
Williamstown, MA 01267

8:30am

Registration

9:00am–10:30am

Schemas, Categories, and Affordances: Maeve Sterbenz (Smith College), chair

- “Pedal Schemas: A Harp-Centric Mode of Analysis”
McKenna Sheeley-Jennings (University of Western Ontario)
- “The Major-Minor Gambit: A Compositional Schema in Jazz Standards”
Kevin Costello (Independent Scholar)
- “Three Melodies Walk Backwards Into a Bar: Enigmatic Music Notation in BWV 1087 and its Antecedents”
Renée Barbre (Yale University)

10:30am–11:00am

Break

11:00am–12:30pm

Material Agency: Catrina Kim (UMass Amherst), chair

- “‘To Err is Digital’: Audio Glitches in Game Boy Pokémon Games as Illuminations of Material Agency”
Victor Arul (Harvard University)
- “Entangled Intertextual Webs: How Social Media, Machine Learning Algorithms, and Network Time Have Radically Altered Intertextual Relationships”
Devin Chaloux (Independent Scholar)
- “Samples as Textural Voices”
Benjamin Court (UMass Amherst)

12:30 pm – 2:00pm

Lunch

2:00pm–3:30pm

Flat-Sides and Flat Sevens: David Kopp (Boston University), chair

- “Three Ways of Looking at a Maj7b9 Chord”
Mark Micchelli (University of Pittsburgh)
- “Flat Scale Degree Seven and Lost Love in Lili Boulanger's *Clairières dans le ciel*”
Matthew Bilik (The Ohio State University)
- “The Applied Subdominant: Reconceptualizing Functional Retrogression in Contemporary Popular Music”
Kyle Hutchinson (Colgate University)

3:30pm–3:45pm

Break

3:45pm–4:45pm ***J-pop*: Liam Hynes-Tawa (Harvard University), chair**

- “Accent Profile as Formal Delineation in Popular Music”
Jason Mile (Western University)
- “Resilience Voices: Black Vocality and Female Authorship in J-pop”
Tamyka Jordon-Conlin (Vassar College) and Yiqing Ma (University of Michigan)

4:45pm–5:00pm **Break**

5:00pm–5:30pm **Business Meeting**

6:00-8:00pm **Reception at 2nd floor lobby, Bernhard Music Center**

Program committee:

Brent Auerbach (UMass Amherst, chair)
Giulia Accornero (Yale), Liam Hynes-Tawa (Harvard),
Christopher White (UMass Amherst, ex officio)

Local arrangements chair: Edward Gollin (Williams College)

ABSTRACTS

Inspirations and Improvisations

Jonathon Crompton (Columbia University)

Hearing Hybridity: Jason Moran's Version of Brahms's Intermezzo Op. 118, no. 2

Occasionally, jazz musicians dialogue with European classical music, enacting a form of genre hybridism. But the challenges of characterizing genre hybridity in music theoretic terms are manifold. How might we describe the relationships between the two worlds that comprise these hybrids? Which perceptual features or properties of the music might be heard to be common with both worlds, and which as different? How might we articulate such hearings?

This paper proposes an approach for analyses of genre hybridity. Inspired by philosophical literature from the late twentieth century concerning music perception, especially the work of Mark DeBellis (1995) and Christopher Peacocke (1992), I synthesize work on theoretic hearing (concepts) with work on non-conceptual contents, arriving at a unified approach. A *concept* is generalizable; it has predictive, explanatory power, and points recurring properties in a piece or pieces of music. *Non-conceptual contents* of musical experience, conversely, can only be described on a local, ad hoc basis. Importantly, this approach views concepts as potentially nested phenomena—some concepts arise out of the combination of other concepts and/or non-conceptual contents. Proceeding from these simple axioms, I might examine properties of the music that I hear having valency in multiple genres, and, in cases where such features may be conceptualized differently in these genres, I can unpack these different concepts into their sub-concepts and non-conceptual contents to articulate what elements these two different conceptions share.

I demonstrate this approach with an exploration of Jason Moran's version of Brahms's intermezzo op. 118, no. 2, in which I consider Moran's improvised introduction and his trio's improvised solo section, as well as the intermezzo itself, through two analytic vignettes centered on sites of potential multi-genre valency.

The first centers on the intermezzo's harmony in mm. 31–34, containing Brahms's use of the “D–F#–A–B chord,” which is repeated by Moran's trio into an anthem-like solo section. I argue that this harmony, a root position subdominant with an added sixth, has features in common with Rameau's ‘chord of the larger sixth’ and with jazz's tonic-sixth-chord concept. I unpack both these conceptions of sixth chords into their sub-elements and demonstrate the ways in which Brahms's use of the chord, while not quite exemplifying either concept, is ripe for an intervention from a jazz perspective.

The second vignette unpacks the concept of a voice exchange, which I argue may be heard as constitutive of the intermezzo's opening period. I show how Moran, in his improvised introduction, while opting not to employ any voice exchanges, enacts genre hybridity by employing one of the voice exchange's sub-concepts: the stepwise third. I highlight Brahms's use of the stepwise third *aside* from those occurring in his voice exchanges, noting how their employment must be described in non-conceptual terms. I then show the parallels between his use of them and Moran's, evincing Moran's canny sensitivity to the original in his enacting of hybridity.

Ultimately, while no linguistic description of music is ever complete, this paper offers a beginning towards theorizing this under-theorized hybrid repertoire.

Drake Andersen (Central Connecticut State University)

Earle Brown and Charlotte Moorman's ‘Realization Vocabulary’: Theorizing Improvisation in the 1960s Avant-Garde

In late spring 1963, the composer Earle Brown and the cellist Charlotte Moorman gathered in New York City to discuss Brown's *Music for Cello and Piano* (1955), which Moorman had recently performed. However, archival evidence from this session suggests that instead of focusing on matters of interpretation, Brown and Moorman spent their time together developing a systematic approach to improvisation. This system, which they termed a “realization vocabulary,” bears numerous threads of influence, including elements of Brown's compositional technique, Moorman's interpretive approach at the time, and aesthetic concerns associated with avant-garde art music more generally including serialism, parametrization of sound, and randomness.

However, because Brown and Moorman's work was ultimately oriented towards improvisation—a contentious subject within their community—this system offers a unique perspective through which to understand the deployment and theorization of improvisation in the 1960s art music avant-garde.

In this paper, I reconstruct Brown and Moorman's realization vocabulary and evaluate how their system functioned as a site in which the conflicting aesthetic priorities of avant-garde improvisation and composition were negotiated. As writers across music studies including Lewis (2008), Piekut (2011), Iverson (2018), and Cohen (2022) have observed, avant-garde composers of art music frequently dismissed the artistic validity of improvisation, even as they sought ways to recapture the spontaneity of improvised expression in their work. Brown and Moorman's system presents a case study in how aesthetic concerns associated with the composition of art music could be integrated in an improvisational context. In this presentation, I focus on how musical details and interpretive choices apparent in sketch materials and Moorman's recordings can be linked to these theoretical preoccupations.

My reconstruction and analysis draw on unpublished sketch materials, performance scores, and correspondence accessed through the Charlotte Moorman Archive at the Charles Deering McCormick Library of Special Collections (Northwestern University) and the Earle Brown Collection at the Paul Sacher Stiftung, as well as both commercial and archival audio recordings. The materials suggest that Brown used the score for *Music for Cello and Piano* as a starting point for training Moorman to improvise in his preferred style, deconstructing the score into categories of sonic materials that Moorman would draw on systematically in her subsequent interpretations of Brown's graphic scores from *Folio and Four Systems* (1952–54). At the same time, it appears that the specifics of the musical language of the realization vocabulary emerged in dialogue with Moorman's personal abilities as a cellist.

I conclude my presentation by reflecting on Brown and Moorman's relationships with improvised jazz—the most important influence on their respective understandings of improvisation. While both musicians expressed enthusiasm for jazz, the art form played an uncertain role in their creative imaginations, and both would ultimately remain committed to avant-garde art music. Key encounters such as Brown's experimental sessions with Charles Mingus, Edgard Varèse, and others (Cohen 2022) or Moorman's 1963 performance of Ornette Coleman's *City Minds and Country Hearts* (Rothfuss 2014) offer additional context to the development of their system.

History and/of Music Theory

Stephen Tian-You Ai (Harvard University)

Listening to *le Règle: Le tempérament ordinaire* and Élisabeth Jacquet de La Guerre's Suite No. 3 in A minor

This paper proposes that the unevenly tempered pitch terrain engendered by the family of meantone-derived temperaments—*les tempéraments ordinaires* (Chaumont 1695; Rameau 1727; d'Alembert/Rousseau 1752/68)—provides structural rationales for permitting or restricting certain harmonic motions within a key in 17th-century keyboard music. These temperaments contain two features of interest (Fig. 1). First, *les tempéraments ordinaires* situate the out-of-tune wolf fifth at the “meantone enharmonic seam” of G♯–E♭ (Yamamoto 2015), a boundary that renders intervals that include this fifth out-of-tune. The second is the “French flat side,” a feature where the flat side of the circle of fifths is noticeably more out-of-tune than the sharp side (Beebe 2020).

Pulling from two frameworks, schema theory and intonation theory, I elucidate an interplay between the partially independent axes of *dissonance*—the aural roughness stemming from entrained hearings of harmony—and *discordance*—the acoustic roughness resulting from beating. If students trained in thoroughbass were expected to learn and internalize “stock musical phrases” (Gjerdingen 2007) in many major and minor keys, then it seems that the students were also internalizing the characteristics of each of those keys under given temperaments. In the case of the French *le règle de l'octave* (Fig. 2), which assiduously traces the contours of stability and instability of scale degrees in a given key, repeated practicing highlights the pitch-based exigencies of a temperament, providing schematic heuristics for the available paths through selected keys (Grazzini 2014).

I demonstrate the utility of such a perspective through Élisabeth Jacquet de La Guerre's Suite No. 3 in A minor (1687), employing a method of visualizing changes in out-of-tuneness over time by quantifying

and plotting triadic events by the total deviation from pure by cents of each constituent interval. First, I reconstruct a listening of Campion's *règle de l'octave* (1716) under Chaumont's *tempérament ordinaire*, graphing the flux of discordance in various keys. Then, I delineate the temperamental profile of A minor's "tender and plaintive [*tendre & plaintif*]" character (Charpentier c.1700), noting especially the out-of-tune landmine of D#, which appears as a leading tone to the related key of E (Fig. 4). I present two analytical vignettes from the suite—the allemande and the *prélude non mesuré*—and show how both the "meantone enharmonic seam" and the "French flat side" of *les tempéraments ordinaires* exerts a structural force. On one hand, the allemande avoids the wolf's territory by charting a path of least resistance through A minor by presenting the normative harmonizations of *le règle* of all scale degrees except the discordant harmonization of ⑥ (Fig. 3), thus avoiding the wolf. On the other hand, the *prélude non mesuré* transgresses the wolf by confirming E major by way of *cadenza semplice*, which includes the offending D# (Fig. 5). This moment of discordance catalyzes a retreat from the wolf's territory that flees sharp-ward through a Fonte and a Comma towards a concordant C major Prinmer (Fig. 6). In these vignettes, tuning presents both an expressive opportunity and a boundary, enlivening progressions that may appear anodyne when considering pitches only in equal temperament.

Juan Patricio Saenz (Harvard University)

Arte de Música: Negotiating Humanism and Scholasticism in Early Modern Portuguese Music Theory

The growing interest in global histories of music theory has led to a more nuanced understanding of the circulation of music-theoretical ideas and texts across the vast expanse of the Spanish colonial project during the early modern era. However, the contemporary—and equally expansive—music-theoretical tradition of the neighboring Portuguese empire remains largely uncharted and is often relegated to a mere footnote to Spain. This epistemic erasure can be, at least partially, attributed to the events that occurred on the morning of All Saints' Day in 1755, when a devastating earthquake struck the city of Lisbon producing a tsunami and widespread urban fires. During this cataclysmic event, the royal musical library established by King João IV in 1640 burned to the ground, in the process destroying most music-theoretical treatises in Portuguese, which were still predominantly stored in manuscript form rather than widely circulated in print.

In this paper, I offer a partial reconstruction of the contents of João IV's legendary library and trace how an individuated Lusophone music theory consolidated over the course of the seventeenth century, both facilitated and constrained by the empire's intellectual, diplomatic, and institutional structures. Through a series of vignettes examining the surviving treatises of Talésio (1618), Fernandes (1626), João IV (c. 1650), Alvares Frouvo (1662), and Nunes da Sylva (1685), I outline the parallel development of two theoretical traditions shaped by the interests, needs, and ideologies of the institutions that supported them: (1) the "practical" and somewhat conservative branch of Talésio and Fernandes, closely connected with the Catholic Church and the Jesuit-run University of Coimbra, which consisted of compact plainchant manuals with pedagogical purposes that circulated widely in quartobarb format, and (2) the "speculative" and somewhat secretive branch of João IV and his circle—grounded in the vast contents of his royal musical library—which fostered the production of original theoretical works deploying erudite citational webs. However, traversing both traditions is a persistent philosophical negotiation concerning the epistemic status of music, ranging from the Aristotelian natural philosophy promulgated by scholastic *auctoritas* to the humanist revival of Neo-Platonic and Pythagorean arithmology.

Benjamin Wadsworth (Kennesaw State University)

The Historical Minute in the Undergraduate Theory Core

There have been isolated attempts (Wason 2018, Clendinning and Marvin 2016) to integrate historical theorists, their works, and approaches into undergraduate written theory curricula. As detailed by Wason (2018), a history-infused curriculum was taught to first-semester students at the Eastman School of Music in 1999 and 2000. It complemented a skills-based exploration of rudiments taught in labs by graduate students with lectures given by faculty within a liberal arts tradition on historical thinkers and their practices; however, the relation of the historical lectures and skill-based theory labs remained undefined. How might one integrate historical content within an undergraduate written curriculum without sacrificing the development of practical skills? Building on pedagogies of language translation (Carreras, Noriega-Sánchez, and Calduch 2018; Gutiérrez 2021, Colina 2021), which promote translation within a multilingual classroom, I propose the method of the *historical minute*, an aside placed at the end of a skills-based chapter that compares and contrasts

the approach of a historical thinker with the contemporary one of the textbook. This aside sketches the biography of that thinker (Step #1), summarizes their approach (#2), asks students to translate that approach (L2 or the new language) into their class's prevailing one (L1) (#3), has students discuss similarities and differences between the methods (#4), then has them critique each method's purpose, societal context, and validity (#5). This aside is placed two to three classes after the introduction to a new topic in L1; depending on that topic, it may bring to the fore either opposition or agreement between L1 and L2; nevertheless, it is distinct from L1, allowing instructors to teach skills (scales, intervals, etc.) as they see fit. Using this method, a teacher can address students' doubts about theory study: how many of us have faced questions like "did Beethoven really think about Roman numerals?" The historical minute method helps students build empathy for historical theorists, composers from those time eras, and their peers from around the world. They also gain a heightened appreciation for the historical rootedness and contingency of analytical claims. With this approach, historical content can play a vital role in undergraduate theory without sacrificing students' skill development.

Analysis of Slow 20th Century Music

Sam Reenan (Miami University)

Chamber Music Ecosystems: Revisiting Organi(ci)sm through Contemporary Music

This paper analyzes four string chamber works of the last half century to examine contemporary epistemological relationships between chamber music and the natural world. Scholars have previously imagined how chamber music reflects social interactions. Writers often analyze the genre within the frameworks of human discourse, conversation, or interaction (Cusick 1994, Daverio 2003, Notley 2003, Agawu 2009, Klorman 2016). Performers, instruments, and musical events contribute to actions aimed at collective musical goals within a virtual musical world (Graybill 2011, Monahan 2013, Hatten 2018). While music-theoretical discourse has prioritized agency and metaphorical human interactions, some contemporary composers propose alternative conceptions of chamber music as representative of the natural world. In this project, I theorize three nodes along a spectrum of representational relationships between the chamber ensemble and organic life: I term these nodes *iconic representation*, *enacted representation*, and *realization*.

Caroline Shaw (b. 1982) describes her string quartet, *Valencia* (2012), as "an untethered embrace of the architecture of the common Valencia orange." Through *iconic representation* (Pierce [1867] 1984), Shaw's *Valencia* shares audible (physical) resemblances to the shape, texture, and bright quality of its signified. The work's static narrative teleology is reflected in Shaw's remark that the piece enacts a "celebration of awareness" of the availability of natural foods. Henri Dutilleux's (1916–2013) first string quartet, *Ainsi la Nuit* (1976), epitomizes his notion of "progressive growth," in which "there are small cells which develop bit by bit." (Nichols and Dutilleux 1994). The growth, development, and metamorphosis of Dutilleux's musical objects represent organic life by undergoing the very processes that *enact* that life. The metaphor of progressive growth extends beyond iconic resemblance and indexicality: musical objects—like living beings—are imbued with the ability to predict (musical) futures and contemplate (musical) pasts.

Anna Thorvaldsdottir's (b. 1977) *Spectra* (2017) and *Enigma* (2019) involve a provocatively different conceptual relationship between chamber music and the natural world: "My music is written *as an ecosystem of materials* that are carried from one performer—or performers—to the next throughout the process of the work." In chamber music ecosystems, the chamber ensemble goes beyond metaphor entirely to *realize* a real-world relationship of the natural world. The chamber music ecosystem involves the integration of musical and nonmusical components, energy transfer into and out of the (eco)system, equilibria and disturbances, indeterminacy, and nonlinearity, all of which contribute to fluctuating states of interaction (Moran 1990, Titon 2020). The ecosystem concept synthesizes the conventional social view of chamber music with models of musical forces (Larson 2012) and both historical and contemporary considerations of musical organicism (Daverio 1993, Neubauer 2009, Watkins 2017, Li 2023). The second half of this paper analyzes Thorvaldsdottir's chamber music ecosystems. I account for musical, physical, and metaphorical energy transfers as they produce varying states of (im)balance between musical sounds and their human producers, revealing how the chamber music genre can represent not just social interactions, but those between a species and its environment.

Will Mason (Wheaton College)
Of Microtones and Mondegreens

The writer Sylvia Wright coined the term “mondegreen” to describe creative mishearings. (She misheard the line “and laid him on the green” from Percy’s *Reliques* as “and Lady Mondegreen.”) Scholars have written about mondegreens from the perspective of semantic processing and language acquisition, in music and elsewhere (Connor 2009, Kentner 2015, West 2023). My paper uses the concept of the mondegreen as a metaphor for considering creative mishearings of pitch, interval, and harmony in microtonal music.

My aims in doing so are as follows: First, the vast preponderance of music-theoretic writing about microtonal music is concerned with “fact of the matter” claims: this pitch *is* X and it *is* derived from a certain just intonation ratio or partial of the harmonic series or spectral analysis. But this has relatively limited value in trying to explain musico-poetics or aesthetic or rhetorical narratives in a wide range of works. Second, and relatedly, my own experience as both a composer and listener of microtonal music is one of mishearings, almosts, nearlys. I would like to explore this aspect of my listening (and my enjoyment) honestly in my analyses. Third, there are many composers working in microtonality who do not expect their audience to have the ability to hear and recognize microtonal intervals, and so part of the task of explaining how their work *works* is to consider the moments of ambiguity they’ve created along the axis of pitch. Fourth, music theory’s turn toward phenomenology and listening has at times made space for using mishearings or alternate acceptable hearings (Lewin 1986, Dubiel 2004) but there is more room for the discipline to consider the ways that the ambiguity of misattribution may be central to understanding a work.

I explore the mondegreen metaphor via an analysis of Georg Friedrich Haas’ 2010 composition *limited approximations*, for six microtonally retuned grand pianos and orchestra. The composition is in 72-tone equal temperament, which is a superset that contains as subsets traditional 12-tone equal temperament, 24-tone equal temperament (quarter tones), 36-tone equal temperament (sixth tones) and the pitches of the harmonic series up to the 12th partial. Haas exploits the theoretical properties of 72TET move between tempered and justly-intoned pitch systems (what Hasegawa 2015 has called “clashing” systems), but also to blur the line between those systems. In one passage Haas sets a cascade of C-G perfect fifths across the six microtonal pianos in shifting registers. The result is to take a sacrosanct interval (the perfect fifth) and refract it as through a funhouse mirror. In another passage, Haas uses a common technique in tonal music (including tonal microtonal music): the enharmonically reinterpreted tone. But he offsets each pitch by 1/12th or 1/6th of a tone, producing wildly different fundamental pitches. My paper will draw attention to other moments in this composition that rely on similar fuzzy mistranslations of precise pitches.

limited approximations is a composition that hinges on the same particular kind of ambiguity as the mondegreen. It is an ambiguity that begins as a certainty: I hear a perfect fifth. I hear a 3rd about to be re-interpreted as a 7th. It is not enough to say that these are instances of expectations that were subverted, because that implies that composer and listener were on the same page to begin with. It *wasn’t* just a perfect fifth, it was a perfect fifth that was 1/12th of a tone higher than normal. It *wasn’t* a major 3rd, it was two neighboring steps of 72-tone equal temperament sounding simultaneously. I am hopeful that considering the near-inevitability of these kinds of creative mishearings in the context of Haas’s piece (which was all but tailor-made to facilitate them) may allow music theorists to consider the interplay between expectations, categorical perception, and productive mishearings in a range of musics.

Keynote

Anna Gawboy (Ohio State University)
Sensory and Suprasensory Sound in Theosophical Discourse and Modernist Practice

A small, yet growing number of scholars have documented Theosophy’s popularity among twentieth-century musicians (e.g., Gallope 2024, Gawboy 2023, Scheer 2018, Huckvale 2013, Oja 2000), but less attention has been paid to the musical theories and philosophies of sound disseminated by Theosophy. I begin by examining the dissonance between Theosophy’s revival of a premodern tradition of Pythagorean/Platonic musical cosmology (Rubøg 2010) and its appropriation of concepts drawn from two modern musical discourses, post-Enlightenment acoustic science and colonial musicology in India. While musical cosmology in the Pythagorean/Platonic tradition was based upon a discrete set of fixed pitches derived through integer

ratios, empirical acoustic research revealed sound to consist of a continuous spectrum of vibrational frequencies stretching beyond the limits of human perception (Helmholtz 1863). Meanwhile, Orientalist musicology and the revival of Indian performance traditions by organizations such as the Puna Gayan Samaj provided Euro-American Theosophists with access to unprecedented amount of information regarding the theory and practice of Indian music. Theosophists introduced the novel argument that modern acoustic science confirmed the principles of Indian music theory: suprasensory vibrational realms theorized in Sanskrit texts could be accessed and empirically verified through acoustic science as well as occult listening practices derived from American Spiritualism.

Despite the Theosophists' cultivation of sonic manifestations and suprasensory clairaudience, movement leaders lacked the practical musical training to develop their theories fully (Scheer 2018), resulting in a conceptually-rich but musically-incoherent bricolage. I argue that Theosophy's flawed musical metaphysics served as both an inspiration and a provocation for modernist musicians attempting to put these ideas into practice. For example, while the Theosophist-composer Cyril Scott used a Pythagorean paradigm to incorrectly predict that "the music of the near future will tend to become more harmonious" (Scott 1933), others such as Ruth Crawford Seeger, Dane Rudhyar, and Henry Cowell followed Theosophical theories of sound to their logical conclusion, building dissonant musical structures modeled on the upper partials of the overtone series. Their music served as a sounding analogue to these suprasensory sounds, extending the range of human spiritual hearing while also offending conservative Theosophical aesthetic sensibilities.

Schemas, Categories, and Affordances

McKenna Sheeley-Jennings (University of Western Ontario) Pedal Schemas: A Harp-Centric Mode of Analysis

The physical layout of harp pedals exerts a profound, yet often veiled influence on chromatic harp repertoire. The harmonies and pitch collections in chromatic harp music are shaped by the idiomatic affordances and constraints of the pedal system. My paper proposes an original theoretical framework specifically developed to unveil hidden pedaling patterns in harp music. Pedal schema analysis provides a novel approach for analyzing harp repertoire, illuminated by my embodied knowledge as a harpist.

The nineteenth century patent for the double-action pedal harp allowed harpists to participate in an ever-evolving musical world with increasing chromaticism. While the string layout of the harp remained diatonic in this patent, the seven pedals with their three notches each hybridized the harp. The layout of this modern harp lies in the junction between chromaticism and diatonicism, generating a unique set of strengths, constraints, and harmonic idioms. The agency the pedal layout exerts onto the harpist and composer shapes both the harmonic language in the score and the dance of motion in the performer's feet in a recursive loop. This loop often results in striking harmonic changes and non-tonal pitch collections that may appear unrelated, their patterns lying outside conventional theoretical frameworks.

Pedal schemas are embodied patterns of horizontal and vertical motion on the left and right sides of the pedal layout. Through a detailed case study of "Fire Dance" from David Watkins' *Petite Suite* (1961), my paper demonstrates the power of pedal schema analysis in revealing hidden structural logic in harp music. "Fire Dance" features an array of tonal, modal, and non-tonal pitch collections. While these changes may appear unsystematic and disparate, all harmonic shifts in the piece adhere to a single, recurring pedal schema. It is this embodied motif of motion that governs the harmonic structure of "Fire Dance."

The analytical approach in this paper draws from schema theory, set theory, and musical affordances to bridge the needlessly rended gap between the physical knowledge of the performer and the theoretical knowledge traditionally used in musical analysis. By gleaned theoretical knowledge from the harpist's embodied patterns of motion, this analytical approach subverts standard paradigms and reevaluates the importance of the embodied nature of musical performance and music theory.

During my paper presentation, I will illustrate the pedal schema at work in "Fire Dance," performing excerpts of the work with the harp pedals facing the audience. I will also display pedal diagrams I have specifically adapted to be comprehensible to theorists and musicians with no harp experience. The proposed presentation will underscore the value of instrument-specific frames of analysis, while contributing to the field of musical affordances and embodiment with research on a niche instrument.

By applying this embodied analytical framework, this paper offers a fresh perspective on chromatic harp music and demonstrates the power of pedal schemas as a tool for analysis. Beyond harp repertoire, this research contributes to broader discussions about embodiment, musical affordances, and what actions and perspectives constitute musical analysis in the academy.

Kevin Costello (Independent Scholar)
The Major-Minor Gambit: A Compositional Schema in Jazz Standards

How High the Moon, a composition by Morgan Lewis with lyrics from Nancy Hamilton, was originally performed in the 1940 revue *Two for the Show*. Halfway through Act I, the piece is set to a blackout in London during the Second World War. The lyrics long for peace amidst a state of uncertainty, aware of love's existence through its present absence.

*Somewhere there's music
How faint the tune
Somewhere there's heaven
How high the moon
There is no moon above
When love is far away too
Until it comes true
That you love me as I love you*

Despite the reservations, the song is hopeful in the face of adversity. Matching this conflict between hope and uncertainty, the harmony shifts between a major and minor tonality of the same tonic throughout. From the onset, this modal tension is brought to the forefront through an opening progression from I7 to i7 and a melody that places an emphasis from # → f#, a motif further solidified as it is immediately repeated alongside a modulation to fVII. These opening measures place the listener into a state of unrest, mirroring the lyrical context of the piece.

This schema, which I will hereafter refer to as the **major-minor gambit**, likely did not originate from *How High the Moon*, but the tune perhaps played a part in publicizing the schema amongst jazz compositions of the day. A diverse array of jazz compositions, ranging from swing era standards of the 1940s to Antônio Carlos Jobim's bossa nova works of the 1960s, employ the major-minor gambit in a variety of ways, yet many share similarities in how the schema appears in the score and functions in the overall context of the piece. In this paper, I outline a methodology for analyzing jazz compositions with schemata, building on prior work from Sean Smither and Stefan Love to propose a new approach to schema-based investigations of jazz tunes. I use the major-minor gambit as an example and discuss a variety of lead sheets to justify the existence of the schema, showing its presence amongst the jazz repertoire and in jazz-influenced forms of popular music. From there, I turn from lead sheets to performances, showing how the schema remains present even as performers create wild, nearly unrecognizable interpretations of *How High the Moon*.

Renée Barbre (Yale University)
Three Melodies Walk Backwards Into a Bar: Enigmatic Music Notation in BWV 1087 and its Antecedents

No fair copy of BWV 1087 exists, and J.S. Bach's manuscript is enigmatically notated. For example, the first two of the *Fourteen Canons* feature backward clefs, key signatures, and time signatures, indicating that a second part should perform a simultaneous retrograde reading of a single written melody. Modern editions clear away this confusing shorthand by spelling it out in standard music notation. However, Bach's puzzling manuscript should not be overlooked as a mere idiosyncrasy.

Building on Schiltz and Blackburn (2015) and Zazulia (2021), this paper situates BWV 1087 within a long tradition of enigmatically notated canons. In this context, a canon consists of a systematic transformation of a source melody. Performers are instructed to read the notated music in some unconventional way. By creating multiple readings of a single written melody, composers could generate an abundance of organically related musical materials. Although confusing to read, enigmatic notation had several advantages. It was concise; furthermore, it communicated a piece's formal logic in addition to its notes

and rhythms. Finally, the elegant complexity of such techniques appealed to clever musicians, who used canons to display their wit and skill.

Examples of enigmatic notation like those in BWV 1087 are relatively common among 15th c. Franco-Burgundians, as in Jacob Obrecht's *Missa Gregorum* (c. 1490) and in the *Missa Pour quelque paine/Pourquoy* (mid-1400s, variously attributed to Cornelius Heyn or Johannes Ockeghem). The legacy of this early canonic tradition was preserved in German-speaking lands via treatises disseminated as textbooks in Lutheran church schools, such as Hermann Finck's *Practica musica* (1556). While other scholars have traced the antecedents of BWV 1087 to the 16th c. (Crean 2009; Collins 1993), this paper expands that horizon by foregrounding the visual aspect of the *Fourteen Canons* rather than their sonic aspect. Bach's masterful canons sound unique, yet his practices of enigmatic music notation conform to a broader pattern than has previously been recognized.

Material Agency

Victor Arul (Harvard University)

‘To Err is Digital’: Audio Glitches in Game Boy Pokémon Games as Illuminations of Material Agency”

This presentation develops a new framework for studying the sonic material agency of technology. The theoretical attitude towards analyzing video game music and sound has largely involved positioning interactivity as primarily catalyzed by player input (Oliva 2024; Collins 2013; Summers 2016; Sallade 2024) and recognizing game environment as ‘containers’ of audio modules (Medina-Gray 2019; Reale 2014). However, such models for theorizing video game sound are limiting as they infer an incomplete taxonomic distinction between ‘human agent’ and ‘deterministically-respondent game environment’. I argue that analyses of sound in video games should reframe agency as emerging from interactive assemblages of both technological and human actors. In this paper, I contend that audio glitches disrupt the agential causality of the player and reveal a technological material agency.

This presentation examines audio glitches within Pokémon Yellow Version: Special Pikachu Edition (1998). Through an analysis of sequencing, timbre, and pitch in connection to stochasticity, I construct a post-humanist orientation for analyzing sonic environments in video games, drawing upon actor-network theory (Latour 2005; Law 2002) and Jane Bennett's vibrant matter (2010). I apply this philosophical lens to expand upon Kevin R. Burke's conceptions of “soft possibility” in early consoles (2024), and Mark Grimshaw-Aagaard's notion of “ambiguity and vagueness” in video game sound (2024).

I begin by explicating how methods of video game audio analysis orienting predominantly on player agency are particularly widespread in the ludo-musicological literature (Atkinson 2024, Collins 2008). These frameworks generalize sound in video game environments as sonic objects which are activated by the player. However, when identifying interactivity, these models assert the player as the preeminent agential force dictating parameters of sound, such as pacing and style (Alten 2014), upon a static game design (Garner 2024). To problematize these models, I analyze the structure of Pokémon Yellow Version's ‘Pokémon battles’, which are events that players must face numerous times over the course of the game. Initially, I demonstrate how particular musical and sonic effects are organized and realized in these battles, and how these are designed to be contingent upon player input. Then, I illustrate that this design-based analytic framework, delineating causation only from player input upon a deterministic computer program, is not able to recognize all sonic phenomena of the game environment. To accomplish this, I analyze three audio glitches within the scope of Pokémon battles, the “Red bar glitch” and the encounters of two glitch Pokémon, “MissingNo.” and “C1”. Through my analysis, I highlight two non-exclusive qualities of sound phenomena which reveal technological material agency: those which are emergently complex, and those which are untraceable to a deterministic computer environment. Both qualities indicate a material agency by demonstrating non-replicable phenomena within the ludo-sonic environment, exceeding beyond the purview of a humanist agency.

By highlighting non-replicable audio phenomena in Pokémon Yellow Version, I offer a possible approach for extending music theory's understanding of agency in video games to technological platforms.

Devin Chaloux (Independent Scholar)
**Entangled Intertextual Webs: How Social Media, Machine Learning Algorithms, and
Network Time Have Radically Altered Intertextual Relationships**

Intertextuality has long been central in creating musical meaning, offering ways to trace influences and connections across musicians and their works over time. However, traditional analyses often rely on linear, chronological frameworks. In the digital age, this approach fails to capture the fragmented, nonlinear ways audiences encounter music and form intertextual relationships. Media theorist Robert Hassan's concept of network time—the digitally compressed, accelerated temporality of the digital age, which disrupts traditional temporal relationships—provides a lens to understand this shift.

Network time allows listeners to experience music and its intertextual connections in nonlinear, multidirectional ways. Platforms like Spotify and YouTube, governed by machine learning algorithms, revolutionize music discovery by introducing audiences to texts through pathways shaped by suggestions, social trends, and exploration rather than historical sequence. This paper introduces the concept of entangled intertextual webs to describe these complex relationships facilitated by digital networks.

As an illustrative case study, this paper will examine the entangled intertextual web of Imogen Heap's 2005 hit "Hide and Seek." The song gained cultural significance with its debut in the Season 2 finale of the teen soap opera, *The O.C.* However, the viral 2007 SNL digital short *Dear Sister*, which satirizes the song's melodramatic use in *The O.C.*, transformed this previously acclaimed scene into a meme, showcasing how network time enables texts to adopt new meanings as they circulate across media and time.

The intertextual web of "Hide and Seek" expanded further with Jason Derulo's 2009 hit "Whatcha Say" which sampled the song's iconic vocoder line. TikTok creator Jarred Jermaine highlighted this sample in a 2022 video, prompting highly-liked comments like, "I thought this was a Jason Derulo original" (@bizounce99) and "I was today years old when I found out 'Whatcha Say' is a sample" (@iamkarljamesjr). These comments illustrate how audiences discover intertextual relationships nonlinearly. Other comments on social media posts highlight additional intertexts and metatexts, further expanding "Hide and Seek's" entangled intertextual web.

Finally, algorithms themselves contribute to these entangled intertextual webs. On Spotify, "Hide and Seek" is algorithmically linked with Laurie Anderson's "O Superman," another work known for its prominent use of the vocoder. Such recommendations forge unexpected parallels, reshaping how listeners contextualize both works. These algorithmic pathways epitomize how network time disrupts traditional, linear intertextual analysis.

Through these examples, "Hide and Seek" demonstrates the ways digital media create entangled intertextual webs, where texts evolve through their contexts, audiences, and algorithmic curation and discovery. This paper argues that music theory must embrace nonlinear perspectives to fully engage with the realities of network time, proposing a new analytical methodology to explore how music functions as a dynamic purveyor of meaning in the digital age.

Benjamin Court (UMass Amherst)
Samples as Textural Voices

Within certain textures, a close listener can identify multiple types and instances of musical samples. In this presentation, I argue that some samples are either overdetermined to the point where musical subjects identify a sample qua sample (*samplification*) or where musical subjects negate, disidentify, or do not recognize these samples as such and assign a different role to the textural voice (*desamplification*). This project addresses the origins of sampling as a technique and how different people – musicians, historians, theorists, and other scholars – describe the history of its development. As we examine these histories, we find that the overlapping and competing narratives that describe these origins reveal not only differing definitions of "sampling" as a technique, but also its related object, the "sample."

I begin with an historiography of sampling in order to understand how musical subjects – the category that includes (but is not limited to) composers, performers, listeners, engineers, dancers, and DJs – might identify some sound as a sample or not. While there are nuanced distinctions in any historical retelling, and most historians incorporate aspects of more than one narrative in their scholarship, I identify four predominant narratives: One, the history of sampling stretches back deep into music history to the earliest forms of musical quotation. Two, the history of sampling begins with recorded sound and the various uses of recorded sound as a musical instrument (e.g. the modernist compositional style of *musique concrète*) since

the late 19th century. Three, the history of sampling developed largely from DJing techniques in predominantly African American musical cultures such as disco and hip hop. And four, the history of sampling begins with the development of digital audio sampling, first with the invention of Pulse Code Modulation in the 1930s and later with digital samplers (as musical instruments) after 1979. Through this historiography, I describe how these distinct genealogies have produced complementary ontological distinctions.

In the analytical portion of my presentation, I offer supplements to previous analyses of sample-based works of contemporary classical, experimental, pop, electronic, and hip-hop, including Butler (2006), Davies (1996), Fink (2005), Gaunt (2006), Holm-Hudson (1997), Katz (2004), Metzger (2018), Miller (2003), Schloss (2014), Sewell (2013), and Williams (2014). By examining the textural voices in these analyses, I demonstrate how certain sounds have been amplified or desampled. I conclude with an original analysis of a landmark recording in the history of sampling: “I Feel For You” (1984) by Chaka Khan. The producers of the song not only used a state-of-the-art AMS DMX digital sampler to create unique sonic effects, they also drew upon established methods of analog tape looping and manipulation. These multiple instances of distinct sampling methods signify both aesthetic and cultural connections to each of the four sampling genealogies in my historiography. Through a comprehensive textural analysis of “I Feel For You,” I aim to provide a model for music theorists who seek an historically-informed, materialist method of describing musical samples.

Flat-Sides and Flat Sevens

Mark Micchelli (University of Pittsburgh) Three Ways of Looking at a Maj7b9 Chord

On the subject of extensions to a major 7 chord, jazz pedagogues agree: any note is permissible except for flat 3, flat 7, and flat 9. Yet the actual jazz repertoire tells a different story. The flat 9 appears over a major 7 chord as early as 1949, and becomes increasingly common in subsequent decades. This paper examines several manifestations of the maj7b9 chord, which breaks jazz harmony’s cardinal rule of avoiding consecutive semitones by featuring scale degrees 7, 1 and b2. I propose three ways of looking at a maj7b9 chord.

First is a polychordal approach. Lennie Tristano’s 1949 composition “Wow” features a Gmaj7b9 chord, which Tristano’s collaborator Warne Marsh conceptualized as two major seventh chords a ninth apart, citing Hindemith as an influence (Ronzello 1982, 16–7). While this polychordal approach has roots in polytonal compositions by Hindemith, Bartók, Milhaud, and others, Tristano also viewed it as a logical continuation of the bebop idiom (Shim 2007), as the #15 is the next tone in the mediant-circle interval cycle contained within bebop’s quintessential maj13#11 voicing. Several other interval cycles appear throughout “Wow,” suggesting that Tristano deliberately used confluences between interval cycles and polychordality as a basis for composition.

Second is a Lydian Chromatic Concept approach, named after George Russell’s landmark music-theoretical text first published in 1953. Russell permitted all twelve chromatic notes as extensions over any chord, introducing a note ordering called the Lydian Chromatic Scale to rank each tone from “ingoing” to “outgoing”. In Russell’s conception, the b9 represents the most outgoing tone of the Lydian Chromatic Scale, best used to create verticalities that sound least rooted to a tonal center. Using this Lydian Chromatic Concept approach, I analyze excerpts from Russell’s 1972 album-length composition *Living Time*, which was inspired by Maurice Nicoll’s (1952) spiritualist text of the same name. *Living Time*’s maj7b9 chords arise from registral swaps when the maximally outgoing b9 moves from the bass voice to the highest voice, mimicking the “ray of creation/ray of evolution” dichotomy in Nicoll’s metaphysics of spacetime.

Third is a non-octavian scale approach, drawing on the scholarship of Edward Gollin (2007) and José Oliveira Martins (2015, 2019). Martins’s “Dasian space” consists of Lydian tetrachords transposed at the fifth. When conceptualized as pitches rather than pitch classes, the Dasian space becomes the Dasian scale—a 48-note scale stretching the full 7 octaves of the piano. While Tristano’s “Wow” can also be explained with Dasian scales, this section focuses on two works by contemporary big band composer Darcy James Argue. “Obsidian Flow” deploys Dasian and other non-octavian scales at climactic moments of the composition,

framing these scales as evolutions of the diatonic and acoustic collections that precede them. By contrast, “The Neighborhood” opens with a descending Dasian scale spanning almost the full range of the piano, foreshadowing the registral extremes Argue uses later on in the work.

Matthew Bilik (The Ohio State University)

Flat Scale Degree Seven and Lost Love in Lili Boulanger's *Clairières dans le ciel*

This paper investigates how multifarious recontextualizations of the subtonic in Lili Boulanger's song cycle, *Clairières dans le ciel* (1914), work with the text to symbolize a journey from joy to hopelessness and, with it, a theme of lost love. Across the cycle, we realize that the subtonic is most salient when the text speaks fondly of love and joy but is virtually absent when the text expresses pain and anguish. However, when the initial subtonic pitch, D, becomes the minor key for the final two songs, it reifies the tragic fate of the lovers. In the end, the ecstasy associated with the D subtonic—particularly the D major triad—evaporates into a grim reminder of lost love. The persistence and reinterpretation of the subtonic across the cycle not only serves to unite the overall form but shapes the meaning of Francis Jammes' text. Because the subtonic usually appears as the pitch D in an E major context, absolute pitch becomes as important for Boulanger as it does for Debussy (DeVoto 2018). I adapt ideas from Almén (2008) and Stein (1983) and their ideas of musical narrative and subdominant expansion, respectively, to show how scale degree b7 1) generates a structural narrative and 2) functions beyond a V⁷/IV role. Unpacking the presence of the subtonic in this song cycle sheds light on other contemporary French composers who employ it at structural moments in the form (such as Duparc, Fauré, and Debussy).

Kyle Hutchinson (Colgate University)

The Applied Subdominant: Reconceptualizing Functional Retrogression in Contemporary Popular Music

Recent studies of harmony in Western popular music confront, in some way, the question of influence: how proximate is popular music to antecedents in classical tonality? Doll (2017), for instance, pointedly divorces his approaches from common-practice antecedents, while Stephenson (2002) describes rock harmony as “opposed to that of the common practice.” More specifically, Carter (2005) highlights an emphasis on descending fourths to establish popular music as harmonically retrogressive, reflecting a commonly held assertion that “in Western popular musics...Plagal, and not Authentic approaches to Tonic are quite common” (Harrison 1994; de Clercq and Temperley 2011). But popular music's supposedly retrogressive plagal relationships also exist in European common-practice music (Stein 1983a/b, Kraus 1991, Benjamin 1996, Rogers 2021, Schmalfeldt 2022), evinced by passages from Schubert and Chopin. Such passages raise questions regarding whether plagal emphasis represents a distinct practice or a more focused exploration of aspects of major-minor tonality simply underrepresented in classical styles. Indeed, despite the preponderance of literature on plagal elements in common-practice music, continued anxieties surrounding the subdominant encroaching on traditionally dominant spaces appear to spur claims of retrogression in popular genres (Nobile 2016).

Offering an alternate perspective, this paper theorizes the applied subdominant: subdominants, rather than dominants, that tonicize non-tonic scale degrees. While applied subdominants have occasionally been recognized in isolation—the ubiquitous “double-plagal progression” (Everett 1999, Biamonte 2010) suggests that bVII can function as IV/IV (Example 1), and de Clercq (2021) associates ii with iv/vi—the notion of applied subdominants as an analytic category has yet to permeate music-theoretic discourses. Recognizing such a category, I argue, provides a framework for discussing popular tonality in a more dialogic relationship with classical antecedents.

While Harrison (1994) defines the 6-5 motion as endemic of plagal (S-T) discharge, I refine that definition: the triple voice-leading progression of two descending seconds (6-5, 4-3) combined with a common tone (1-1) in idealized voice-leading space more uniquely embodies the S-T discharge. Indeed, in functional tonality this voice-leading configuration occurs only in IV-I and I-V progressions and can therefore be said to define the S-T discharge so long as the first chord in the pair is not the global tonic. Thus, passages might at first glance elicit a sense of functional retrogression, applying this voice-leading model suggests otherwise. Reconceiving the retrogressive elements as applied subdominants on account of their functional voice-leading behaviors illuminates underlying structures more aligned with common-practice norms than a diatonic reading otherwise suggests. I then address lingering questions of diatonicism—unlike

chromatic applied dominants, many applied subdominants appear simultaneously diatonic—by situating my approach in recent scholarship on chromaticism and perception (Lewin 1986/2015, Cohn 2012, Hutchinson 2023).

I conclude that where late nineteenth-century music explores increasingly chromatic inflections of dominant harmony (Hutchinson 2022), popular music explores instead the functional possibilities afforded by extended uses of the plagal domain, a well-recognized, if classically subordinate, element of functional tonality.

J-pop

Jason Mile (Western University) Accent Profile as Formal Delineation in Popular Music

As argued by de Clercq (2017), many approaches to the study of form in popular music privilege one musical parameter over all others. Even for those which attempt to account for multiple aspects, a single parameter, be it harmony (Nobile 2020), rhythm (Biamonte 2014, 2018), or melody (Temperley 2007), is often the deciding factor in the delineation of form. In this paper, I propose a method of analysis which accounts for how the interactions between different parts of the musical texture, rather than any individual parameter, contribute to the perception of form. Following a brief summary of conventional means of formal segmentation, I will draw on theories of entrainment (London 2012), musical perception (Smith 2014), and Dynamic Attending (Jones 2019) to establish the salience of synchronization to the perception of form. In doing so, I reconceptualize accent as any timepoint which draws the listener's attention through conventional accents (dynamic, contour, agogic), as well as harmonic rhythm and changes in timbre.

Using this new understanding of accent, I adapt theories of rhythm and meter for the analysis of 20th century literature for popular music. Roeder (1994) posits that formal sections of post-tonal works have underlying “pulse-streams,” and Horlacher (1995) and Hasty (1997) conceive of meter as emergent from surface rhythm. In combining these theories, I create an “accent profile” represented by a scalar array containing the distances between each accented timepoint which serves as a pseudo-meter for a given span of music. Rather than attempting to quantify the relative strength of different accents, I identify the degree of synchronicity across different parts as a means of identifying attentional peaks. I then present cases studies of this method by analyzing a selection of recent songs from Japanese pop groups. The musical examples were chosen as the songs feature highly produced backing tracks that are rich in rhythmic information. The Japanese language also does not feature syllabic stress, which allows me to focus on strictly musical features, rather than lyrical ones. I begin by showing that changes in accent profile consistently correspond with changes in formal section as identified through conventional harmonic, melodic, and rhythmic approaches to demonstrate that this method does not radically redefine conceptions of form. In comparing the accent profiles of different sections between songs by Ryokuoshoku Shakai and Cō Shu Nie, I show that accent profiles do not necessarily exhibit predictable behaviour across songs. In comparing the verses in two songs by Creepy Nuts, I show how accent profiles vary between songs which feature highly similar beats to demonstrate how accent profile is not purely defined through drums.

To conclude, I propose that accent profiles both support current understandings of form while providing a novel means of supporting common characterizations of formal sections, such as the transitional nature of pre-choruses and the Loose-Verse/Tight-Chorus paradigm. This approach does not seek to invalidate previous scholarship on pop music form, but instead provide a means of linking previous findings to perception.

Tamyka Jordon-Conlin (Vassar College) and Yiqing Ma (University of Michigan) Resilience Voices: Black Vocality and Female Authorship in J-pop

Japanese popular music (J-pop) draws from a range of stylistic influences derived from Black music traditions, particularly hip-hop and R&B. Consequently, vocal techniques and gestures originating within Black music cultures have been adapted within J-pop. This paper examines the construction of “Blackness” within J-pop. We argue that voice functions as a symbolic and performative medium through which artists and audiences navigate and negotiate the hegemonic sonic landscapes of race, gender, and cultural identity. Through both

spectrogram analysis and affect analysis of vocal timbre, this paper explores the relationship and process between Black vocality, racial identity, and female authorship.

Constructions of racial identity in Japan differs from those in African American culture (Atkins 2001, Botz-Bornstein 2011, Sterling 2010, Yamada 2019). The timbral roughness and heightened emotional intensity that associated with and signifies “Blackness” in a Western context carry distinct cultural meanings (Eidsheim 2018, Wallmark 2021, Gómez 2024, Griffin 2004), while Japanese music regard timbral qualities of *shibui* (rough, astringent) as aesthetically elegant and profound (Kim 2016). Hereby, the loaded meanings embedded in the notion of a “Black voice” is further nuanced among Japanese audiences. Blackness in J-pop negotiates cultural and racial identity functions as a signifier of authorship and agency that create spaces for the Others (Toth 2008, 124). Female artists, in particular, use such vocal gestures to highlight their female authorship and agency (Qu 2018), criticize and challenge violence, harm, discrimination under social hegemony. Their vocality, hence, becomes an indispensable tool to identity formation and resistance.

The flexibility and instability of “Blackness” are attractive to artists and audiences who wish to engage with a framework of identity where the boundaries aren’t firmly defined. Japanese female artists draw on the multifaceted constructs of Blackness (Gilroy 1993) and “Black voice” to confront hegemonic norms, asserting their female authorship and agency. For example, ATARASHII GAKKO’s Suzuka employs vocal gestures such as growling, tongue rolls (*makijita*), and hoarse timbre in tracks like “Nainainai,” “Giri Giri,” and “Tokyo Calling”. Makijita, in particular, is a paralinguistic feature associated with a Japanese tough masculinity and gangster subculture. Comparatively, Chanmina’s voice in “BIJIN” incorporate similar gestures of roughness, signifying themes of gender transgression and female empowerment expressed in her lyrics. These works challenge ingrained gender stereotypes, societal expectation, and discrimination within the J-pop industry and culture. By adopting distinctive and disruptive voices, they rethink elements of Black vocality as tools of resistance against the gender hegemony embodied in the dominant “kawaii” voice in J-pop (Keith and Hughes 2016). This paper concludes that “Blackness” becomes a multifaceted symbol of resilience of social hegemony. However, mixed-race artists such as Aoyama Thelma, Crystal Kay, and AI further complicate the intersections of vocality and identity in J-pop. While their vocal styles often evoke associations with Blackness, they also risk being exoticized based on their appearances. Vocality, therefore, becomes a means of representing marginalized identity across racial, gendered, social spaces, meanwhile, challenging and rethinking the dominant narratives of gender and racial identity in Japanese popular culture.