MTO 20.1 Examples: Koozin, Evolving Content and Design

(Note: audio, video, and other interactive examples are only available online)


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Richard C. Littlefield*

The Silence of the Frames

KEYWORDS: aesthetics, analysis, context, semiotics, silence, frame, Cone, Kant, Derrida

ABSTRACT: This essay concerns the edges of musical works, and how those edges are made possible by various frames, especially that of silence. Silence as musical frame is viewed as an index of the more general issue of aesthetic framing. I approach that issue via a reading of Edward Cone's theory of framing silence, as viewed through the aesthetic theories of Immanuel Kant and Jacques Derrida. From that reading I derive a typology of silence as musical frame. That typology is used to effect a reversal of hierarchy in some commonly accepted aesthetic oppositions (such as sound/silence and work/non-work).

Elizabeth P. Sayrs

Narrative, Metaphor, and Conceptual Blending in “The Hanging Tree”

KEYWORDS: film music, cognitive linguistics, metaphor, narrative

ABSTRACT: Using traditional analytic techniques as well as methods drawn from narrative theory and cognitive linguistics, this paper explores the relationships between the song “The Hanging Tree” (performed by Marty Robbins), its original use in the 1959 Western of the same name (scored by Max Steiner), and the novella on which the movie is based by Dorothy Johnson. Lakoff and Johnson’s “Location Event Structure Metaphor” allows Zerewitz’s conceptual metaphor PITCH RELATIONSHIPS ARE RELATIONSHIPS IN VERTICAL SPACE to engage concepts of time, events, and narrative. This context reveals a contradiction in the cross-domain mapping between music and text in the song. The seventh scale degree is “left hanging” in the body of the song, pointing to the imminent event of hanging. Yet after the hanging is averted, the leading tone is prominently regained in the same register and resolved. Two possibilities are considered: 1) Conventional tonal metaphors rather than locally-defined metaphors have priority at various moments in a particular genre. 2) The receptor is musically transformed through “frame-shifting” to create a new conceptual blend. Finally, the re-arrangement of the song in the movie causes this shift to occur differently, raising issues concerning the role of the singer as cinematic narrator.

Submission received July 2002

Richard Cohn

A Tetrahedral Graph of Tetrachordal Voice-Leading Space

For Robert Morris

KEYWORDS: voice leading, tetrachord, simplex, atonality, P relation, transpositional combination

ABSTRACT: A tetrahedral graph models voice leading among the 29 T/I-type tetrachord classes. Transpositional combination plays a crucial role in the structure of the tetrahedron. A dipyramid, fusing two tetrahedra, models similar relations among the 42 T-type 4R classes. The two graphs generalize to n-dimensional simplexes for relations among n + 1 classes, in modulo 12 and in other universes of even cardinality. A peculiarity is that the symmetrical graphs are a bit too large to hold the asymmetrical collection of abstract objects that they are designed to contain. A handful of set-class duplications serve as bubble wrap; the article devotes considerable attention to investigating their status.

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Example 1f. John Covach, “To MOOC or Not To MOOC” (2013)

To MOOC or Not To MOOC?
John Covach

KEYWORDS: MOOC, online course, distance learning, Rock music, music history, Coursera

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[1] At colleges and universities across North America, online education is a topic that has generated a significant amount of discussion in the past year or so. In many ways, the idea of online education is only the most recent version of something that got its start in the nineteenth century: the correspondence course. The development of radio and television in the twentieth century, and then the rise of the internet over the last twenty years, has made it possible to conduct courses with far less time lag than was present in the early days of distance learning, when lessons and assignments were carried by surface mail. Each issue of the Chronicle of Higher Education seems to bring word of some new development or wrinkle in the rapid development of online courses, and perhaps no topic is more controversial than MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses). While many embrace the idea that MOOCs make college-level learning available to thousands who would otherwise not have pragmatic access to it, others worry that MOOCs threaten to put traditional college courses out of business.