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MTO 27.2 Examples: Donaldson, Melody on the Threshold in Spectral Music

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

<https://mtosmt.org/issues/mto.21.27.2/mto.21.27.2.donaldson.html>

Example 1. List of pairs discussed in terms of liminal or differential thinking across writers variously associated with spectral music

Axis	Example(s) in the writings of figures associated with the spectral movement
Sound—Noise	Kaija Saariaho: “In an abstract and atonal sense the sound/noise axis may be substituted for the notion of consonance/dissonance...I wanted to understand how composition could be influenced by an idea based on the notion of transition and the multi-dimensional system” (Saariaho 1987, 94, 105).
Timbre—Harmony ⁸	Gérard Grisey: “We come to create a hybrid being in our perception, a sound which, without yet being a timbre, is still not yet a chord, rather a sort of mutant” (Grisey 2008 [1982], 50–51). Tristan Murail: “there is a harmony–timbre continuum...a harmony is created by adding timbres together...there is theoretically no difference between the two concepts” (Murail 2005a, 138).
Pitch—Rhythm ⁹	Murail: “since one may descend on the frequency scale until beating occurs” (Murail 2005a, 138). Jean-Luc Nancy: “even a simple monotone sustained contains rhythm and timbre” (Nancy 2007, 40). ¹⁰
Noise—Language	Peter Ablinger: “Music may also be noise or language. Or, as with phonorealism, it may be said to exist somewhere in between” (Barrett 2009, 158).
Rhythm—Duration	Grisey: “Renovation—over time—of a supple metric and the exploration of the thresholds between rhythms and durations” (Grisey 1998b, 3).
Mental Logic— Physical Expression	Jonathan Harvey: “A good quartet, playing tonal music, will clearly ‘breathe’ in and out of both mathematical beauty and physical-emotional gesture, according to the forms in the score...the mental/physical ambiguity in music has also become emphatic in another, rather important dimension: timbre or color” (Harvey 1999, 34).

Example 2. Opening of Grisey, *Prologue*



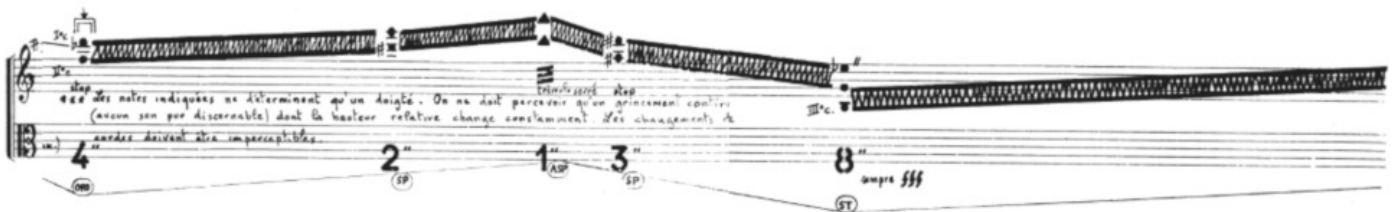
Example 3a. Extract from Grisey, *Prologue*, showing disintegration of melodic characteristics, page 3, system 5



Example 3b. Extract from Grisey, *Prologue*, showing disintegration of melodic characteristics, page 3, system 7



Example 4. Grisey, *Prologue*, showing complete disintegration of melodic characteristics, page 3, system 8



Example 5. Vivier, Zipangu, mm.1-18

The musical score is for Example 5, Vivier, Zipangu, mm.1-18. It is written for Violins 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and Contrabass. The score is divided into three systems.

System 1 (Measures 1-6):

- Violins 1 & 2:** Measure 1 starts with a tempo marking of $\text{♩} = 72$ and the instruction "senza vibrato". Measures 2-6 show complex rhythmic patterns with various accidentals and slurs.
- Violins 3 & 4:** Measure 1 starts with a dynamic marking of f and the instruction "senza vibrato". Measures 2-6 show complex rhythmic patterns with various accidentals and slurs.
- Violins 5 & 6:** Measure 1 starts with a dynamic marking of f . Measures 2-6 show complex rhythmic patterns with various accidentals and slurs.
- Violins 7 & Contrabass:** Measure 1 starts with a dynamic marking of mf and the instruction "norm. → p → norm. individuale i lento :". Measures 2-6 show complex rhythmic patterns with various accidentals and slurs.

System 2 (Measures 7-10):

- Violins 1 & 2:** Measure 7 starts with a dynamic marking of ff and the instruction "p subito". Measures 8-10 show complex rhythmic patterns with various accidentals and slurs.
- Violins 3 & 4:** Measure 7 starts with a dynamic marking of ff and the instruction "p subito". Measures 8-10 show complex rhythmic patterns with various accidentals and slurs.
- Violins 5 & 6:** Measure 7 starts with a dynamic marking of ff and the instruction "p subito". Measures 8-10 show complex rhythmic patterns with various accidentals and slurs.
- Violins 7 & Contrabass:** Measure 7 starts with a dynamic marking of f . Measures 8-10 show complex rhythmic patterns with various accidentals and slurs.

System 3 (Measures 11-14):

- Violins 1 & 2:** Measure 11 starts with a dynamic marking of p sub. Measures 12-14 show complex rhythmic patterns with various accidentals and slurs.
- Violins 3 & 4:** Measure 11 starts with a dynamic marking of p sub. Measures 12-14 show complex rhythmic patterns with various accidentals and slurs.
- Violins 5 & 6:** Measure 11 starts with a dynamic marking of p sub. Measures 12-14 show complex rhythmic patterns with various accidentals and slurs.
- Violins 7 & Contrabass:** Measure 11 starts with a dynamic marking of p sub. Measures 12-14 show complex rhythmic patterns with various accidentals and slurs.

Example 6. Derivation of x and y three-note cells from overtone series in Vivier's *Zipangu*

The image displays musical notation illustrating the derivation of three-note cells 'x' and 'y' from an overtone series. The main notation is a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) with 13 numbered positions (1-13) along the bottom. The notes are as follows:

- Position 1: Treble clef, F#4 (first line)
- Position 2: Bass clef, C3 (two lines below staff)
- Position 3: Bass clef, C4 (first line)
- Position 4: Bass clef, E4 (first line)
- Position 5: Bass clef, G4 (first line)
- Position 6: Bass clef, B4 (first line)
- Position 7: Treble clef, D5 (second line)
- Position 8: Treble clef, E5 (second space)
- Position 9: Treble clef, F#5 (third line)
- Position 10: Treble clef, G#5 (third space)
- Position 11: Treble clef, A#5 (third space)
- Position 12: Treble clef, B5 (third space)
- Position 13: Treble clef, C6 (fourth line)

Two three-note cells are identified:

- Cell x:** Indicated by a dashed box containing notes at positions 1, 2, and 3 (F#4, C3, C4).
- Cell y:** Indicated by a solid box containing notes at positions 7, 8, and 9 (D5, E5, F#5).

A second set of notation at the top left shows the relationship between these cells:

- A dashed box labeled 'x' contains notes at positions 1, 2, and 3.
- A solid box labeled 'y' contains notes at positions 7, 8, and 9.
- A third solid box labeled '(x)' contains notes at positions 1, 2, and 3.

An arrow points from the 'y' cell in the main notation to the 'y' cell in the top-left notation.

Example 7. Haas, *de terrae fine*. Gradual emergence of melody from *Sprachmelodien* and pitch towards m. 174, marked “wie aus einer anderen Welt kommend”

The image displays a musical score for Haas's *de terrae fine*, illustrating the gradual emergence of melody from *Sprachmelodien* and pitch towards measure 174. The score is divided into two main sections: *Sprachmelodie* (top) and *Pitch* (bottom), both of which contribute to the overall melodic development.

Sprachmelodie Section:

- Measures 0-90:** The *Sprachmelodie* section begins with a series of rhythmic patterns and melodic fragments. The notation includes various dynamic markings such as *pp*, *f*, *mf*, and *pp*. The melodic lines are characterized by a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, often grouped in triplets.
- Measures 90-105:** The *Sprachmelodie* continues with more complex rhythmic patterns and melodic fragments. The notation includes various dynamic markings such as *pp*, *f*, *mf*, and *pp*. The melodic lines are characterized by a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, often grouped in triplets.
- Measures 105-109:** The *Sprachmelodie* continues with more complex rhythmic patterns and melodic fragments. The notation includes various dynamic markings such as *pp*, *f*, *mf*, and *pp*. The melodic lines are characterized by a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, often grouped in triplets.
- Measures 109-174:** The *Sprachmelodie* continues with more complex rhythmic patterns and melodic fragments. The notation includes various dynamic markings such as *pp*, *f*, *mf*, and *pp*. The melodic lines are characterized by a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, often grouped in triplets.

Pitch Section:

- Measures 7-60:** The *Pitch* section begins with a series of rhythmic patterns and melodic fragments. The notation includes various dynamic markings such as *pp*, *f*, *mf*, and *pp*. The melodic lines are characterized by a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, often grouped in triplets.
- Measures 60-81:** The *Pitch* section continues with more complex rhythmic patterns and melodic fragments. The notation includes various dynamic markings such as *pp*, *f*, *mf*, and *pp*. The melodic lines are characterized by a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, often grouped in triplets.
- Measures 81-174:** The *Pitch* section continues with more complex rhythmic patterns and melodic fragments. The notation includes various dynamic markings such as *pp*, *f*, *mf*, and *pp*. The melodic lines are characterized by a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, often grouped in triplets.

MELODY Section:

- Measures 174-184:** The *MELODY* section begins with a series of rhythmic patterns and melodic fragments. The notation includes various dynamic markings such as *pp*, *f*, *mf*, and *pp*. The melodic lines are characterized by a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, often grouped in triplets.
- Measures 184-194:** The *MELODY* section continues with more complex rhythmic patterns and melodic fragments. The notation includes various dynamic markings such as *pp*, *f*, *mf*, and *pp*. The melodic lines are characterized by a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, often grouped in triplets.

The score is written in a single system, with the *Sprachmelodie* and *Pitch* sections stacked vertically. The *MELODY* section is positioned below the *Pitch* section. The overall structure of the score is designed to show the gradual emergence of melody from the *Sprachmelodien* and *Pitch* sections towards measure 174, marked “wie aus einer anderen Welt kommend”.

Example 8. Haas, *de terrae fine*, mm. 326–339, showing the return of the melodic idea and dissipation into non-melodic material into possibly spectral-influenced harmony

♩ = 36
poco vibrato
die großen Terzen "rein" intonieren
rit.

326 arco *mp*

♩ = 36 5. +6.
+7. +2.

♩ = 72 *p*

330 *pp* *pizz.* 5

333 *pp* 12. +7. +4. Teilton von cis

335 *pp*

337 *pp*

Example 9. Harmonizations of cells x and y in *Zipangu*, variation two, showing frequency of (037) and (047) subsets

Example 9 displays two musical staves, each containing three chords. The top staff, labeled 'x', shows the following chord progressions: (0347), (01458), and (013479). The bottom staff, labeled 'y', shows the following chord progressions: (0347), (01458), and (013457). The chords are written in treble clef with various accidentals (sharps, flats, naturals) and are grouped by brackets.

Example 10. Vivier, *Zipangu*, opening of Variation 6

Example 10 presents a musical score for the opening of Variation 6 in *Zipangu* by Vivier. The score is written for three staves (1, 2, 3) in 3/4 time. Staff 1 contains a melodic line with various ornaments (trills, grace notes) and is annotated with "Figuration obscures melodic pitches from theme". Staff 2 contains a harmonic line, with a note "C bass undermines cells' generation from harmonic series, as theme" pointing to a specific chord. Staff 3 contains a bass line. The score includes various musical notations such as trills, grace notes, and dynamic markings. Annotations include "harmony imitated" and "Melodic pitches subsumed into harmony?".

Example 11. Saariaho, Papillon III from *Sept Papillons*, opening

clear melody
liminal melody

Calmo, con tristezza ♩ = c.48

N

N

S.P.

rit.

S.P.

A tempo

N

N

S.T.

S.P.

mp

pp

Example 12. Saariaho, Papillon V from *Sept Papillons*, opening

Lento, misterioso

N → S.P. → N → S.P. → N

(I, II)

0

mp

pp