

Rhythmic Prioritisation as a Means of Compositional Organisation: Analysing Meshuggah’s “do Not Look Down”

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Abstract : Rhythmic complexity in progressive metal is a developing area of analysis, particularly the interpretation of hyper-metric time spans as hierarchically significant rhythmic units of compositional organisation (Pieslak 2007, Charupakorn 2012, Capuzzo 2018, Calder 2018, Lucas 2018, Hannan 2020). This paper adds to this developing area by considering the relationships between the concepts of tactus, metric imposition, polymeter and rhythmic parallax in the Meshuggah composition “Do Not Look Down”. By considering an architectonic rhythmic framework within “Do Not Look Down” as the controlling organisation mechanism, an exploration of the interaction between distinct rhythmic layers and the composition’s formal segmentation and harmony (as riffs), reveals a pervasive structural misalignment between these elements. By exhibiting how Meshuggah’s manipulations of rhythmic complexities deliberately blur structural boundaries, creating misalignments in a flat approach to temporal partitioning (Nieto 2014), rhythmic characteristics of Meshuggah and the genre of Djent are exposed.

Keywords : hypermeter, rhythmic parallax, meshuggah, temporal partitioning

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