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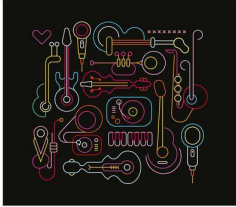
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Expanding Approaches



Edited by Ciro Scotto, Kenneth Smith, and John Brackett

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Unending Eruptions

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26

UNENDING ERUPTIONS

White-Collar Metal Appropriations of
Classical Complexity, Experimentation,
Elitism, and Cultural Legitimization*Eric Smialek and Méi-Ra St-Laurent*¹

Since the 1980s, with a few exceptions, English-language scholarship on heavy metal has overwhelmingly described metal fans as working class or blue collar.² Significantly, this assessment changes with scholarship on audiences outside of the U.K. and English-speaking North America such as those found in Puerto Rico, France, Germany, Slovenia, Indonesia, Malta, and Nepal.³ Rather than describe fans in these locations as working class, authors writing about metal outside of English-speaking countries generally characterize metal as a cultural practice of the educated and upwardly mobile middle-class. In addition to global economic differences, other factors contribute to metal scholars' fascination with the working class. Origin stories about blue-collar frustrations in Birmingham factories fuel mythologies about precarious factory workers venting their frustrations through metal music—and these mythologies are sometimes misattributed to contexts outside the deindustrialized environments where those ideas are most relevant. Genre, too, is a factor since different subgenres will attract a variety of audiences with varying aesthetic priorities. Also, as Andy R. Brown has shown, changes in heavy metal's class demographics have correlated with varying levels of chart success and visibility.⁴ With changing subgenres, and changing levels of commercial visibility, the class demographics of metal audiences also change, discouraging us from adopting a single, archetypal view of metal fans.

Our chapter addresses social class not in terms of income, and only partially in terms of education, but rather in terms of beliefs and taste values, drawing implicitly on Bourdieu's theories of cultural legitimation and explicitly on Keir Keightley's work on opposing ideals of rock authenticity. Keir Keightley's distinction between "romantic" and "modernist" authenticities is a useful conceptual tool since genres of popular music, including various metal subgenres, tend to align neatly to one category or the other.⁵ In terms of social class, roughly speaking, one can match his romantic authenticity column in Table 26.1 with values that have traditionally been associated with the working class: "action, toughness, physical competence, and group solidarity."⁶ Our study focuses on metal that idealizes the other column, modernist authenticity. Using case studies on the music of Meshuggah, Gorguts, Septicflesh, and Unexpect, we argue that blue-collar aesthetic values are not as ubiquitous in metal fandom as existing writings imply. The converse, what we might call "white-collar

Table 26.1 Keightley's tendencies for romantic authenticity and modernist authenticity in rock

Romantic authenticity tends to be found more in tradition and continuity with the past	Modernist authenticity tends to be found more in experimentation and progress
roots	avant gardes
sense of community	status of artist
populism	elitism
belief in a core or essential rock sound	openness regarding rock sounds
folk, blues, country, rock'n'roll styles	classical, art music, soul, pop styles
gradual stylistic change	radical or sudden stylistic change
sincerity, directness	irony, sarcasm, obliqueness
"liveness"	"recorded-ness"
"natural" sounds	"shocking" sounds
hiding musical technology	celebrating technology

aesthetics," can be found in a great deal of post-millennial, extreme metal music in a variety of analytically demonstrable ways.

Meshuggah: Real-Time Spontaneity versus Compositional Deliberation

We're not about playing instruments. We don't give a fuck about being instrumentalists ... [being a good instrumentalist for us] is a side effect. Our philosophy is that if you're an instrumentalist first and a songwriter second ... fuck it. I wouldn't do this; I would quit straight away. It's okay for other people to do it but that's not why we play music. We play music to write music—we're composers.

(Mårten Hagström, guitarist for Meshuggah)⁷

In this interview statement, Meshuggah guitarist Mårten Hagström distinguishes between being an instrumentalist or a songwriter, a "composer" in his words. Is it possible, through analytical observations, to tell the difference between music written with one of these priorities or the other? Our first analytical examples investigate this possibility by asking how different musicians might have approached three comparable compositional situations. Figures 26.1a–c display three separate instances where, in each case, the music appears to have been guided by a similar generative principle or creative strategy. The guitar riff from Pantera's "A New Level" (1992), for instance, moves gradually further along the fretboard in a series of stepwise ascents so that, each time the riff ascends, it moves one fret further than it had previously (Figure 26.1a). This kind of riff seems likely to have been written at the guitar since it moves comfortably along the fretboard and because its organizing principle—adding one new fret with each chromatic ascent—involves intuitive shifts of hand position idiomatic to guitar playing. That is, the riff uses a simple rule to derive the melodic and rhythmic variations that make it sound interesting. For a guitarist, it is easy to memorize and was most likely created through the spontaneous act of playing an instrument. The second figure (Figure 26.2a), an excerpt from the third movement of Mahler's Third Symphony, uses a similar generative principle. This time, the harp plays a series of descending arpeggios that subtract

Dropped D
 ⑥ = D ⑤ = A ④ = D ③ = G ② = B ① = E

Chromatic cell → Transposition → Extension

Fretboard Pattern

Figure 26.1a The main riff from Pantera’s “A New Level” (1992). Brackets above the staff show how a brief, chromatic cell is varied to create musical interest. Brackets below the tablature shows how the intuitive fretboard pattern gradually expands

Harp

Horn

Figure 26.1b Mahler’s Third Symphony, movement III, mm. 543–56. The upper system shows the harp passage with a numerically ordered sequence of rhythmic “-tuplets.” The bottom system shows how that numbering continues as a countdown to the next section at rehearsal number 32

one note with each new measure. Unlike the Pantera example, it is obvious that Mahler did not compose this while sitting at the harp. This can be argued not only because of what is known about Mahler’s compositional practices but also because of the musical context with respect to sectional boundaries. If one continues the counting process initiated by the numbers written above each harp “-tuplet” (i.e. 15, 14, 13, 12, etc.), a pattern emerges whereby the numbers act as a countdown to the next section of music that begins at Rehearsal 32. One might say that Mahler’s creative process involved a kind of calculation or strategic planning independent of spontaneous, real-time music making at an instrument. In terms of Keightley’s romantic/modernist dichotomy, this more abstract form of creativity seems to align more with modernist experimentation and even the celebration of technology (implicit in strategizing). The Pantera riff’s idiomatic simplicity aligns more with the pursuit of tradition and all things “natural” characteristic of romantic authenticity.⁸

Figure 26.1c, an excerpt from Meshuggah’s *I* (2004), blurs this distinction. Although it is not as entirely clear to what extent the members of Meshuggah wrote it spontaneously at the guitar or more reflexively, away from their instruments, we want to argue that the latter approach likely played an important role and that this is evident in the music. Like the two passages discussed above, Figure 26.1c is governed entirely by ordered repetitions, in this case a chromatic ascent in a stuttering, unpredictable rhythm that does not occur

Figure 26.1c An excerpt from Meshuggah’s *I* (13:15–14:07). Snare attacks are indicated with circled numbers as a reference in place of measure numbers

within a regular meter. Recalling the myth of Sisyphus, each guitar ascent returns to its starting pitch on F# (made possible through downtuned 8-string guitars), and occasionally A natural, whenever it is interrupted by the snare drum, beginning its climb again. Using numbered snare attacks in Figure 26.1c as reference points, one can observe some curious patterns that raise questions about how the passage may have been written. From the beginning of the passage until snare attack 4, each chromatic ascent ends one semitone lower than the previous ascent. A descending pattern emerges with the last note of each ascent: B, A#, A, G#. Between snare attacks 9–12, a similar descending pattern occurs, this time by subtracting one note at the end of each ascent. In this way, this process bookends the beginning and ending of the first half (A section) of this excerpt, the binary form of which is also demarcated by a pause (the “cadential rest” in the example) and a return to the opening melody as the B section begins.

There are several reasons to believe that this passage was not entirely written and memorized at an instrument the way that the Pantera riff likely had been. For one, we know from interviews that the members of Meshuggah wrote their most complex music, the *I* EP (2004) and *Catch Thirtythr33* (2005), by jamming in a studio and by trading computer files with one another.⁹ Drummer Tomas Haake has explained that the unpredictability of *I* arose from establishing an idea while jamming and straying from it continuously, later mapping those changes with schematic guides.¹⁰ Although the members of Meshuggah do not seem to have collaborated by file-trading until the following year with *Catch Thirtythr33*, their studio jamming for *I* seems to have involved similar collaborative editing without memorizing what they had written. Such a practice encourages different band members to create unpredictable variations on a basic musical idea by trimming or extending the length of riff patterns, just as one finds in the chromatic ascents of Figure 26.1c. We also know that Meshuggah has never performed *I* live. In interviews, they have stated that the music was never intended to be memorized and performed so the band never prioritized the kind of efficient, intuitive riff writing that governed the Pantera example above.¹¹ One can thus imagine how the end of the section could have been consciously edited for a rhetorical effect: a band member may have decided to shorten each chromatic ascent between snare attacks 27 and 33 to create suspense and contrast for the longest ascent at snare attack 33. A similar effect could be intuitively created in real time but it would require performers to memorize an irregular sequence of changing melody lengths complicated by two counterintuitive moments where a single note repeats within an ascent. Lastly, the F# to which the passage so frequently returns is not the lowest open string on Meshuggah's guitars. Although it normally would be the lowest open string for an eight-string guitar in standard tuning, Meshuggah tune their eight-string guitars a half-step down so that the lowest open string sounds an F-natural. Either Meshuggah's guitarists used a different tuning for this passage than the rest of the song or they wrote the passage in a way that would never involve the open lowest string—a decision that would be very counterintuitive for a guitarist. Either way, the compositional process is much more reminiscent of a composer pondering over written music than an oral transmission of musical ideas within a rehearsal studio.¹²

This distinction between writing music at an instrument and composing away from one is worth noting because scholars and metal fans alike sometimes resist acknowledging the degree to which the latter process governs metal song writing. Following Guy Capuzzo's presentation on Meshuggah at the 2014 Society for Music Theory annual meeting, the audience responded with laughter when Capuzzo remarked that he did not think Meshuggah had drawn their complex rhythmic ideas from studying Messiaen.¹³ Undoubtedly, this reaction was influenced by the interview video that Capuzzo played where band members held themselves with aloof, informal mannerisms suggestive of rock stars rather than institutionally sanctioned composers. However, as Smialek has argued at length, this posture acts as a necessary survival mechanism for professional musicians aware of metal fans' divided attitudes between those who revel in modernist complexity and those who seek authenticity in tradition and directness. Coming from the university town of Umeå, Sweden, Meshuggah has almost certainly benefitted indirectly from the kinds of institutional and government funding for the arts that encourages local musicians to explore Messiaen-like ideas.¹⁴ Despite the band's instance that none of its music is "calculated," formal compositional attitudes can be said to govern Meshuggah's music and much more metal song writing than is currently acknowledged.

Gorguts: Experimental Death Metal Out of the Classical Conservatory

“For me, *Pleiades’ Dust* is chamber music played by electric instruments and percussion.” Fucking brutal chamber music.

(Luc Lemay of Gorguts, quoted by journalist Dominic Tardif)¹⁵

In an interview with Sam Dunn, Luc Lemay, the vocalist-guitarist and only remaining original member of Gorguts, spoke passionately about his interest in classical music and his conservatory training. As an adult in his early twenties, Lemay decided to take violin lessons after developing an interest in baroque music, especially Vivaldi. However, unlike many other metal guitarists, Lemay’s interests in classical music were not focused on baroque virtuosity.¹⁶ Rather than being drawn to displays of individual skill, Lemay found himself exploring the music department’s collection of scores in a nearby college in Sherbrooke, Quebec. He became curious, “obsessed” in his own words, with how the interweaving contrapuntal parts in Schubert’s *Death and the Maiden* quartet worked together. Soon, Lemay found himself much more interested in composition than in violin playing. After one semester playing viola at l’école de musique Vincent d’Indy in Montréal, Lemay decided to further pursue the informal composition tutoring that he had received at the college in two-voice counterpoint and four-voice harmony. Using a string quartet that he had written on his own, Lemay applied and successfully enrolled at the Conservatoire de musique du Québec à Montréal.

Lemay’s decision to take violin lessons and, soon after, composition lessons corresponds to stylistic changes in the discography of Gorguts. Although the band’s second album *Erosion of Sanity* (1993) was more complex than *Considered Dead* (1991), Gorguts’ third album *Obscura* (1998) represented a significant jump in complexity. On this record, one can hear guitars, panned to opposite channels, playing unrelated chromatic riffs. While this approach to guitar playing is not entirely uncommon in death metal, the guitars on *Obscura* also produce unusual sounds that make the record’s overall aesthetic more experimental than most death metal or even technical death metal.¹⁷ For instance, the guitars use a wide assortment of intervals where most death metal guitarists would play power chords. In place of power chords, Gorguts play dyads consisting of minor sixths, tritones, and major thirds. Notes on the fifth string sometimes combine with the open sixth string to produce other unusual sonorities and the guitars frequently play quartal harmonies, achieved by barring one finger across all six strings. More than speed or heaviness, the overall impression of *Obscura*’s riffs is that they are jarring, filled with unpredictable, syncopated accents on the guitar’s higher strings.

Gorguts’ unusual sounds on *Obscura* were partially due to the introduction of guitarist Steeve Hurdle on that album, who, according to Lemay, “would always look for new sounds and textures on the guitar.”¹⁸ They were also related to Lemay’s beliefs about death metal’s capacity for experimentation, which he describes using the language of accredited composition: “even the weirdest idea could be welcomed [in death metal] if it’s placed in the picture with taste and smart arranging, I think. And you can do whatever you want in [death metal].” For Lemay, death metal is extreme not only for its aggression but also for its strangeness.

Having earlier surveyed some ways in which Meshuggah’s extended tracks reflect a composer’s approach, it is notable that Lemay cites Meshuggah’s *I* as a source of inspiration

for *Pleiades' Dust* (2016), a thirty-three-minute song.¹⁹ Like the members of Meshuggah, in their use of file trading to exchange ideas, Lemay and his band mates needed to look beyond the conventions of real-time jamming in order to develop enough musical ideas to fill an extended track. Lemay's band mates, who share his interest in technical vocabulary and modernist composers, facilitated this, allowing the group to be more ambitious in track length and complexity than was possible with the band's previous lineups. Lemay explains,

When we work on arrangements together, we can go into very micro-detail, like in doing composition on a sheet of paper, and we can understand each other's minds and very specific ideas in words by using an academic vocabulary. [Bassist and producer] Colin [Marston]'s a big fan of those very modern American composers, like Elliot Carter, which is super complex music, and he listens to that like every day. It's the first time that I have [with me] someone writing extreme music and death metal, and we can share on Bartók and appreciate it.²⁰

Both bassist Colin Marston, whose modernist tastes Lemay describes here, and guitarist Kevin Hufnagel have experience playing in progressive rock/metal bands. Marston, like Lemay, has formal training in music, having graduated with a BA in music technology from New York University. Formal training not only provided Gorguts with strategic tools to make complex music; it also provided a cultural impetus to do so. That is, formal, conservatory-style training provided a social precedent for the members of Gorguts to work out their ideas on sheets of paper and speak about those ideas with detailed, technical vocabulary. To a similar extent, a shared interest in progressive rock, rather than a more blue-collar tradition like punk, explains how the members of Gorguts could take for granted the value of musical complexity as an aesthetic goal.

Table 26.2 summarizes several compositional approaches that were directly or indirectly facilitated by Gorguts' background in progressive rock and the conservatory. One such approach extends the length of a section of music by adding new material rather than simply repeating

Table 26.2 Compositional techniques reflective of conservatory training and an interest in progressive rock

<i>Technique</i>	<i>Example(s)</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Riff extensions	11:03, 12:36	A riff repeated four times may have the last iteration of the riff extended by new material.
Frequent, brief, instrumental interludes	3:49, 4:04, 6:15, 7:12	These sections add variety and unpredictability.
Longer, ambient interludes	8:50, 18:03	These sections explore sparse textures, quiet dynamics, and novel sounds.
Polyphony	6:15	The texture gradually thickens as instrumental layers are added with different timbres and prominence in the mix.
Overlapping formal boundaries	30:49	Guitar feedback from the previous section dovetails with tom-toms from the next section.
Frequent time-signature changes		This happens primarily in movement III.

Figure 26.2 Gorguts' *Pleiades' Dust* (10:45–11:10), six-string bass part. The riff plays three times before its fourth iteration is extended by new material

a riff four times (Figure 26.2; “Riff Extensions” in Table 26.2).²¹ Adding new material at the end of a hypermetric cycle can have an especially jarring effect since a listener’s anticipation is likely heightened at this moment. At the end of a riff cycle, the last iteration is usually felt as a hypermetrical anacrusis to the next section so it can feel surprising and pleurably disorienting to have the hypermeter extended by an interjection of new material. Another strategy for writing long songs involves periodically adding instrumental interludes between vocal sections. Interludes such as those found at 3:49 and 4:04 give the music a through-composed feel by interjecting new musical material that adds variety and unpredictability. When sections like these occur, the musical narrative seems to twist and turn, extending the song and departing from the conventions of repeated sections in verse-chorus form. The longest of these sections, such as those from 8:50–10:24 and 18:03–21:14, provide enough time to explore textures and dynamics that do not ordinarily occur throughout the song. Quiet, ambient sections with sparse instrumentation offer a rest from the more aggressive parts of *Pleiades' Dust* and lend it a contemplative feel reminiscent of progressive rock. Recalling not only progressive rock but also Lemay’s background in composition, these sections explore novel sounds like natural harmonics, volume swells, lead melodies played by the bass guitar, and bass-guitar strums. Live performances reveal the members of the band focused and still during these sections, Lemay carefully standing over a volume pedal to create gradual volume swells and the bassist fret tapping with multiple fingers as he holds his pick in his mouth. Such concentration during performance reflects not only the difficulty and complexity of the music but also an ambivalence to, or at least deprioritizing of, flashy showmanship in favour of audio fidelity to the original composition. In this way, the demeanors of the band members on stage match those of most progressive rock bands, classical ensembles, or self-consciously serious jazz ensembles like the Modern Jazz Quartet.²² This self-conscious seriousness seems at least partly responsible for why music critics, such as the one quoted in the epigraph above, have described the music of Gorguts as “chamber music” (Table 26.2).

Other features of *Pleiades' Dust* can occasionally be found in popular music more generally but still indicate a valorization of experimentation and complexity. The interlude at 6:15, for instance, involves a gradually thickening, polyphonic texture as multiple instrumental layers enter. Although studio overdubbing makes this kind of passage not entirely


uncommon in metal music or rock more generally, it seems likely that Lemay's fascination with counterpoint at the conservatory, as well as his habit of writing down musical ideas, facilitated sections such as these. Similarly, it is common for popular music to introduce two musical ideas in separate parts of a song and later combine them in counterpoint.²³ This occurs in *Pleiades' Dust* at 4:51 as two melodies that previously appeared separately (at 3:49 and 4:04) are combined. Compositional deliberation and attention to detail is also indicated by the elided boundaries that sometimes occur between separate formal sections. Between 30:49–31:10, for instance, guitar feedback from a previous section overlaps with tom-toms from the next, momentarily mixing the music of two sections. In most circumstances, the blurring of formal boundaries this way might be attributable to a record producer rather than the band itself. However, the producer for *Pleiades' Dust*, Colin Marston, is also a member of the band. Marston, whom Lemay described as being influenced by American modernist composers, serves as both the producer and bassist on the EP. Regardless of whose idea it was to overlap the formal sections this way, it appears likely that this aesthetic decision has at least an indirect connection to institutionally sanctioned music traditions like American modernist composition.

Lastly, it seems clearest that a taste for experimentation and musical modernism has inspired the unpredictable changes of metrical groupings that frequently occur in *Pleiades' Dust's* third movement (Lemay includes movement divisions and a programmatic narrative in the liner notes). Table 26.3 outlines the movement's organization using shading and boldface to highlight moments of hypermetrical complexity and pleasurable disorientation. These are the moments that will likely thwart a listener's attempts to predict when changes occur in the music. A reader can get a vivid impression of this disorientation by conducting along with the recording (without the aid of Table 26.3).

The shaded regions in the section we've called Stanza 1 represent a thwarting of expectations similar to the "riff extensions" in Table 26.2. Here, the call-and-response alternation between voice and guitar creates an expectation that the last "response" thwarts. Rather than simply repeat the first call (A) and response (B), an ABAB structure, the last response recalls material from earlier in the track (from 6:15), creating an ABAC pattern. What makes this disorienting is not merely that a change occurs at the end but that it involves two shifts in metrical boundaries. In addition to changing its riff content, the last response is truncated so that it spans only three measures instead of the previous four. Essentially, an anacrusis immediately following (i.e. an anacrusis that leads to Stanza 2) completes the missing measure. However, the anacrusis lasts for only one measure before being interrupted and that brief anacrusis momentarily occurs in 4/4, a meter that occurs nowhere else in the movement. As a result, the music seems to shift rapidly and unpredictably between new subsections, right when expectations are highest for a call-and-response pattern to conclude.

In a way, the anacrusis becomes a focal point for this movement. Notably, Stanza 2 slightly varies the anacrusis, which adds complexity to the composition by varying its component parts. The pleurably disorienting moment discussed above also occurs in Stanza 2, but no extra beat occurs during the anacrusis. The easiest approach to writing this passage might be to simply repeat the music from Stanza 1. However, the members of Gorguts have either subtracted a beat to create this variation or composed it first and written an extra beat for the previous anacrusis. A deliberate variation process seems likely, especially given that Stanza 3 once again varies the anacrusis. Here, the anacrusis is not interrupted as it had been with each previous stanza; instead, repeats of the single-measure riff fragment that began all the previous anacruses generate the fourth and final stanza. To clarify how this happens, Table 26.3 assigns

Table 26.3 A formal diagram of the third movement of *Pleiades' Dust* emphasizing moments where an aesthetic favoring complexity is most obvious

Timing	Section		Description	Meter
7:12	Interlude		Palm muting	$\frac{3}{4}$ 4 mm
			String bending	2 x 4 mm
7:26	Stanza 1		Call:Vocals	4 mm
			Response (Guitar)	4 mm
			Call:Vocals	4 mm
			Response [Return of material from 6:15]	3 mm
		α	Anacrusis	$\frac{4}{4}$ 1 m
		β	Interruption	$\frac{3}{4}$ 2 mm
		α	Anacrusis	2 mm
7:49	Stanza 2		Call:Vocals	4 mm
			Response (Guitar)	4 mm
			Call:Vocals	4 mm
			Response [Return of Material from 6:15]	3 mm
		α	Anacrusis (no meter change)	1 m
		β	Interruption	2 mm
		α	Anacrusis [8:10]	2 mm
8:12	Stanza 3		Call:Vocals	4 mm
			Response (Guitar)	4 mm
			Call:Vocals	4 mm
			Response [Return of Material from 6:15]	3 mm
		α	Anacrusis	1 m
		α	Anacrusis	1 m
8:32	Stanza 4 [Extension of anacrusis material]	β	Vocals [Return of β]	2 mm
		α	Return of α	2 mm
		β	Vocals [Return of β]	2 mm
		α	Return of α	2 mm
		β	Vocals [Return of β]	2 mm
		α	Return of α	2 mm
		β	Vocals [Return of β]	2 mm
		α	Return of α	2 mm
8:50	Extended interlude			

Greek letters to the anacrusis material (α) and the music that interrupts it (β) in Stanzas 1 and 2. The reoccurrence of these symbols in Stanza 4 reveals how the anacrusis (α) and “interruption” (β) material returns to take on a new importance in the movement’s final stanza. In sum, this movement exemplifies the modernist emphasis on complexity that one finds in Gorguts’ interviews through its sometimes-unpredictable metrical groupings, variations, and its renewal and extension of previously occurring musical material.

Septicflesh: The Orchestra as a Band Member, but Not Just Another Guitar

The music of Septicflesh, a Greek band that mixes symphonic metal and death metal, comprises several references to classical music and film music. For their eighth album, *The Great Mass* (2011), Septicflesh commissioned the participation of the City of Prague Philharmonic orchestra and choir, a group consisting of 150 musicians known for their participation in film and videogame soundtracks. Septicflesh's interest in the Prague Philharmonic is supported by the academic background of guitarist Christos Antoniou who completed a master's degree in composition and orchestration at the London College of Music in 2006. According to members of the band, the orchestra not only plays alongside traditional rock instruments, it acts as the fifth member of Septicflesh (Lefteris 2011). In various interviews, Antoniou explains that Stravinsky (and the *Rite of Spring* specifically) remains his biggest musical influence, and that this composer led him to study music (Matthijssens 2011, Atkinson 2014). It is not surprising, then, that Stravinsky's musical idiom, especially traits from his *Rite of Spring* period (ca. 1913), can be heard in Septicflesh's recordings.

Within *The Great Mass*, Stravinsky's influence is perhaps most evident in the song "Mad Architect," specifically during its orchestral interlude (2:03–2:37).²⁴ Perhaps the most obvious feature that is common to both the interlude of "Mad Architect" and the "Dance of the Adolescent Girls" is their common treatment of rhythmic accents. It is striking how the end of the two-measure ostinato in Figure 26.3 corresponds with the syncopated accents in the "Dance of the Adolescent Girls." This pattern of organization, whereby a series of repeated basic ideas is followed by a modification at the end, is extremely common in metal (as in other music more generally). A "terminal modification structure," as Aaron van Valkenburg terms it, not only provides some musical variation at the moment of closure (the "terminal modification"), it also creates a localized climax at the end of the repeating pattern when the rhythmic accents accelerate at the end. Metal fans sometimes voice their appreciation of these features when listening to the *Rite of Spring*. Whenever the *Rite* has come up in conversation with musicologists or students aware of our interests in metal music, the people we talk to comment on how the *Rite* sounds to them like metal; moreover, they sometimes do so by nodding as though head-banging according to the pattern of accents that we describe above.

Beyond the correspondence of regular accents and their terminal modification, Septicflesh shares Stravinsky's emphasis on varying the accents in unpredictable ways. During the orchestral interlude of "Mad Architect" (Figure 26.4), Septicflesh modifies the accent pattern in the ostinato. The flute and bassoon join the violin ostinato 2:08 playing the same figure, but the new instruments begin on the second beat instead of the first, so that the woodwind ostinato metrically conflicts with the ostinato played by the strings. As a result, the overall texture is



Figure 26.3 "Mad Architect," orchestral interlude (ca. 2:03)

Figure 26.4 “Mad Architect,” orchestral interlude (ca. 2:08)

denser and more complex and the accents that were audible when the ostinato first appeared only in the violins (ca. 2:03) are much less salient. The resulting rhythmic pattern is substantially more difficult to follow in a way that dramatizes the sense of disorientation within the song’s narrative.²⁵

A different kind of rhythmic complexity occurs at a later moment in the “Mad Architect” interlude. Indeed, during the entire segment, and especially around 2:23 (Figure 26.5), the brass and the percussion variously accent the second, third or fourth beats of the bar, without following a recurring pattern. At the same time, a clear sense of meter can still be heard as a result of the continuous ostinato played by the upper woodwinds and strings. The total effect becomes a thickening of the overall texture by treating the brass and percussion as orchestral “filler.” That is, the brass and percussion entries occur at separate metrical beats, thereby alternating contrapuntally in a pointillistic fashion. Adding to the sense that these entries function as surface ornamentation, or filler, is their apparent arbitrariness with respect to hypermeter because they occur only briefly on hypermetric off beats. While this treatment could be compared to any number of composers beside Stravinsky—the late romantics or the second Viennese school, for instance—Septicflesh’s orchestral treatment is unusual in its idiomatic fidelity to the compositional techniques of professional orchestral writing. The work seems more like traditional concert music than a metal band writing for orchestra or even film music in its obsessive use of an ostinato, its sometimes-unpredictable accents, and its use of contrapuntal filler.

With respect to our sociological arguments about white-collar aesthetics, these observations matter because the band’s use of complex orchestral writing has impacted the music’s reception. Although other bands may use orchestral sounds from a keyboard, or even a full orchestra on occasion, Septicflesh’s use of the orchestra seems to have an attitude of self-conscious seriousness behind it that is reflected in journalists’ references to Antoniou as a “masterful composer”²⁶ or “creative genius”²⁷ and in statements like the following: “You do not ‘listen’ to a Septicflesh album; you study it!”²⁸ Genre plays a role in this reception, making their use of the orchestra a more prominent part of Septicflesh’s identity as a band. They use the orchestra much more consistently and idiomatically than most extreme metal bands. Full orchestras are very uncommon within death metal, usually making a brief cameo during the introduction of a song.²⁹ Even within symphonic black metal, orchestras are not usually used as extensively throughout a song as they are by Septicflesh, and keyboard synthesizers usually imitate orchestras. As a result, Septicflesh’s use of the orchestra represents an institutionalized prestige associated with formal musical literacy and the classical tradition that one typically

Figure 26.5 “Mad Architect,” orchestral interlude (ca. 2:23)

finds with the high-production values, instrumental virtuosity, and operatic singing of symphonic metal music bands such as Nightwish, Within Temptation, and Epica.³⁰

Unexpected: The Pleasures of Surprise, Genre Mixing, and the Avant-Garde

Rapid genre mixing is a different kind of complexity that has found a niche in the work of certain extreme metal bands such as System of a Down, Crotchduster, and Unexpected. These groups incorporate disparate musical genres not normally associated with metal music, shifting between them sometimes at a rapid pace. In some instances, such as with Crotchduster,

humour serves as a central motivation for juxtaposing genres like death metal, electronic dance music, and polka. In others, like System of a Down, the combination of swing drumming with carnival music in a nu metal context serves a different function, acting as a marker of transgression for shock value.³¹ With Unexpect, as with Crotchduster, part of the appeal for fans lies in participating in genre connoisseurship. That is, much like the pleasures of contemporary mash-up music, part of the experience of listening to avant-garde metal that frequently switches between genres involves recognizing the identity of each genre—both in terms of its musical characteristics and in terms of its social connotations.³² Fans of this kind of genre mixing are not acting as musical omnivores, embracing a wide range of musics with a postmodern indifference to boundaries. Rather, the boundaries are meant to be jarring and aggressive. Like the fast tempos, ensemble virtuosity, and guttural vocals that one ordinarily finds in extreme metal, the virtuosic crossing of genre boundaries becomes part of what makes this kind of extreme metal seem extreme. To demonstrate how this kind of collage-based music works in practice, the remainder of our discussion will focus on a single song by the Québécois avant-garde/progressive metal band Unexpect.

Unexpect's debut album *Utopia* (1999) involved traces of symphonic metal, so the group's progressive aesthetic partly overlaps with symphonic metal's celebration of grandiosity, which can be partly seen in Unexpect's expanded instrumentation. In addition to the standard rock ensemble, they add a violin soloist, and the bassist performs on a custom nine-string bass, a choice that not only expands the bass' range, it also visually signifies a willingness to stretch rock conventions in a way comparable to the keyboard stacks, giant drum kits, and triple guitars of progressive rock. Moreover, the members of Unexpect communicate a progressive seriousness and grandiosity through quotations of classical music. "Vespers Gold" (1999), the first track from the band's first album, begins and ends with extended quotes from Beethoven, immediately positioning the group in a self-consciously classical tradition of progressive rock and metal exemplified by Emerson, Lake and Palmer and Yngwie Malmsteen.³³ From 2003 onwards, Unexpect's grandiosity took a more experimental turn, focusing on genre fragments and fusions of different metal subgenres (black metal, death metal, metalcore, symphonic metal, gothic metal, and progressive metal) combined with classical music, electronic dance music, jazz, and circus music.

Unexpect's penchant for experimentation also involves using musical surprises as a strategy for depicting an elaborate narrative. Unexpect's "When the Joyful Dead Are Dancing" (2011) epitomized the creative strategy of using a lyrical storyline as inspiration for musical experiments (and vice versa). In this song, the band's avant-garde theatricality manifests itself not only in the integration of sounds distant from metal, but also in the band's unorthodox lyrics and their elaborate dramatizations of them. At times, the lyrics almost seem like a prompt to explore musical genres that would ordinarily be unusual in metal. A lyrical reference to a "disgusting samba," for example, sung in a low, sultry male voice, seems to comment on its own campy, horror setting à la "Monster Mash" (1962) by Bobby "Boris" Pickett and the Crypt-Keepers. Its Latin rhythms, shown in Figure 26.6, sound in unison



Figure 26.6 Unexpect, "When the Joyful Dead Are Dancing," Verse C (0:35), samba rhythm played by keyboard (rotary organ setting)

with a keyboard accompaniment that uses a Hammond organ setting to connote popular novelty songs from the 1960s.

“When the Joyful Dead Are Dancing” tells a humorous story about the marriage of an undead couple with most of its verses enacting a dialogue between the zombie lovers. In accordance with the unusual subject matter, the song form is equally strange and fragmented, divided into numerous verses that represent different narrative segments, each given a different musical context. Observing the timings in Table 26.4, it becomes clear how quickly the narrative segments alternate. These changes are especially quick at the beginning of the song—four narrative segments appear within the first minute—maximizing the shock effect of hearing rapid juxtapositions of different musical settings right away. When one verse changes to the next, the musical contrast between sections is often made more dramatic by the introduction of a new key, sudden changes of rhythm, or even a change of musical genre.

Some examples from the first two verses of the song will demonstrate how the members of Unexpect maintain a relentless, unpredictable feel to their music by, for instance, using brief, fragmented riffs with pauses, alternating between intensity and silence. Both the keyboard and guitar transcriptions in Figures 26.6 and 26.7 do this with short musical fragments that have a stuttering, “choppy” effect. The keyboard vamp that begins Verse A (Figure 26.7) lurches forward with a very regular, square rhythm that lends itself to head-banging through its two-note repetition and brief pauses. The riff in Figure 26.6 retains this stuttering quality by repeating a small fragment broken with pauses. At the same time, its length and metric alignment differ enough from Figure 26.7 to make the contrast immediately noticeable at the moment of formal boundary (0:20 in Table 26.1 above). Another technique involves juxtaposing starkly contrasting sections. The change from Verse A to Verse B, for example, involves a modulation from A minor to the distant key of B-flat minor (Figure 26.8). The unexpected entrance of Leilindel’s voice makes the contrast that much more startling as does the manner in which she continues to sing. As Figure 26.8 shows, at times her voice swoops downwards (“Look” m. 1), jumps to a much high register (“meditation” m. 6), and

Table 26.4 Narrative segments in Unexpect’s “When the Joyful Dead Are Dancing”

<i>Timing</i>	<i>Section</i>	<i>Narrative Segment</i>
0:03	Verse A	Marriage proposal
0:20	Verse B	Dead bouquet of flowers gathered in the sewer
0:35	Verse C	Making the wedding cake
0:48	Verse A'	Writing a love poem
1:11	Verse B'	Reciting the love poem
1:30	Interlude 1	
2:03	Verse D	Grievances from the community of living dead
2:32	Interlude 2	
2:59	Verse B''	Reciting the love poem
3:14	Interlude 3	
3:52	Verse E	The undead prepare the marriage ceremony
4:25	Outro	



Figure 26.7 Unexpect, “When the Joyful Dead Are Dancing,” Verse A (0:03). Piano transcription. The brackets indicate two-note repetitions and the breath marks indicate brief pauses between attack points



Figure 26.8 Verse B (0:20). Vocal transcription, male (bottom staff) and female (top staff) voices. Although the male voice involves unpitched death metal vocals, the instrumental accompaniment lends it an approximate sense of pitch

sustains unstable pitches such as the leading tone arrived at by a major-7th leap (“some flowers,” mm. 2–3). Adding to the chaotic feel of this setting is the use of two death-metal voices as an instrumental accompaniment. That is, in rhythmic unison with the guitar, bass, and keyboard, two simultaneous death-metal vocals are treated as a short, repeating riff. Adding the voice this way creates a hypnotic, mantra effect made especially mysterious by the words they utter: “Snongioj son semâ,” “let us combine our souls” written backwards in the band’s native French. This hidden message not only adds a cult-like atmosphere to the song’s narrative, it also reflects Unexpect’s appeal to connoisseurship. Unexpect creates a cipher in the spirit of centuries of cryptic music puzzles—Shostakovich’s DSCH melody, Bach’s name motif, retrograde canons in the Renaissance and Baroque, and Cordier’s heart-shaped rondeaux about love.³⁴

Once more, the educational backgrounds and artistic influences of the performers suggest the sociological significance of these compositional practices and stylistic features.

In an interview with *avant-garde-metal.com*, Unexpect vocalist and guitarist Eryk “Syriak” Chapados discussed how surrealism impacted his thinking:

The surrealism movement has been part of my life for a long time and a forever favorite. I use the automatic writing technique quite often [...]. I’m an art graduate so I got to digest a lot of visuals and ideas from that movement in my time.³⁵

The incredulity with which scholars reacted towards Messiaen as a possible influence on Meshuggah is counterbalanced by Syriak’s awareness of surrealism, an awareness gained through an accredited educational institution. Syriak studied classical music at age seven and two of his former bandmates, Stéphane “Exod” Primeau and Charles “Le Bateleur” Crépeau, were classmates with him. He also enrolled in jazz classes for a year alongside bassist Frédérick “ChaotH” Filiatrault. Similarly, vocalist Roxanne “Leïlindel” Hegyesy’s unique stage presence can be connected to her training as a professional contemporary dancer.³⁶ Such an institutionally sanctioned setting for learning creative techniques suggests comparisons to the art school traditions of British progressive rock and all the class connotations that accompany the art school tradition.³⁷

At the very least, it suggests an interest in so-called literate traditions of music and art, impacting the band’s approach to song writing and likely meaning that they were motivated by intellectual curiosity as much as the desire for catharsis. In class-based terms, one can make the case that social privilege impacts the metal aesthetics of bands like Unexpect. Secure social networks that provide students with stable families and finances—to say nothing in this limited space of the racial dynamics that impact university enrolment—facilitate, if not make possible altogether in some instances, attending institutions of higher learning. The presence of avant-garde compositional techniques, obtained through formal training at an institution of higher learning, is an indication that privileged social conditions are partly responsible for making possible some of the most self-consciously complex aesthetics in metal. This is the “white-collar” aspect of metal that we have been referring to.

Conclusion

Returning to Keir Keightley’s theoretical division between romantic and modernist ideals of rock authenticity, one can see how music analysis can contribute to ongoing discussions about class demographics in metal. Keightley’s two-part aesthetic division reveals how the aesthetic strategies of musicians and musical preferences of fans correspond with social categories related to class. By focusing on modernist authenticity, our chapter provided a sampling of what we might call “white-collar” aesthetics in metal. With Meshuggah, we offered some contrasting approaches to composing with real-time spontaneity at the instrument versus strategically with a generative, compositional principle. We showed some ways in which the members of Gorguts have taken their creative strategies and technical vocabulary from formally studying at accredited institutions. This demonstrated some ways in which death metal musicians have self-consciously explored musical complexity and modernist experimentation. Septicflesh similarly draw from conservatory training. Our analysis of “Mad Architect” revealed how the band’s interest in Stravinsky manifests itself in idiomatic orchestral writing beyond the synthesized orchestral accompaniments so often found in metal. We also showed some ways in which Unexpect draws from the avant-garde with rapid genre mixing. Unexpect’s interest in the avant-garde derives at least partially from the band

members' formal education, which exposed them to institutionally consecrated movements in art and music. If modernist authenticity has an imperfect relationship with the upwardly mobile middle class and white-collar identities, at the very least it seems at odds with blue-collar ideals. We have limited ourselves to four case studies but extreme metal abounds with further instances of modernist authenticity. To name a few: the inspiration that black-metal vocalist Ihsahn draws from Diamanda Galás, the extended tunings of djent that highlight the subgenre's rhythmic and metric adventurousness, and the self-conscious complexity of technical death metal like Cannibal Corpse and Blotted Science. Ultimately, we argue that middle-class identities in metal deserve more emphasis, and they can be better understood by exploring the many ways that metal manifests aesthetic values traditionally linked with class privilege.

Notes

- 1 The authors wish to thank Mathieu Dumont for having transcribed the instrumental interlude of the song "Mad Architect" from Septicflesh and for allowing us to publish some of these extracts in this chapter.
- 2 See Jason Arnett, *Metalheads: Heavy Metal Music and Adolescent Alienation* (New York: Westview Press, 1996), Karen Halnon, "Inside Shock Music Carnival: Spectacle as Contested Terrain," *Critical Sociology* 30 (2004): 743–79, *idem*, "Heavy Metal Carnival and Dis-alienation: The Politics of Grotesque Realism," *Symbolic Interaction* 29, no. 1 (2006): 33–48, and Eric Smialek, "Rethinking Metal Aesthetics: Complexity, Authenticity, and Audience in Meshuggah's *I and Catch Thirtythr33*," MA thesis, McGill University, 2008. Literature reviews of this scholarship on metal and class demographics can be found in *ibid.*, 21–31 and Andy R. Brown, "Un(su)Stained Class? Figuring out the Identity Politics of Heavy Metal's Class Demographics," in *Global Metal Music and Culture*, ed. Andy R. Brown et al. (New York: Routledge, 2016), 190–98 and *passim*.
- 3 Several other examples are cited in Brown, "Un(su)Stained Class?" 192. On class relations of metal fans that do not fit a blue-collar archetype, see for Puerto Rico, Nelson Varas-Díaz et al, "Predictors of Communal Formation in a Small Heavy Metal Scene: Puerto Rico as a Case Study," *Metal Music Studies* 1, no. 1 (2015): 93; for France, Fabien Hein, *Hard rock, heavy metal, metal: histoire, culture et pratiquants* (Paris: IRMA; Nantes: Mélanie Sèteun, 2003), 228 as well as Christophe Guibert and G r me Guibert, "The Social Characteristics of the Contemporary Metalhead: The Hellfest Survey," in *Global Metal Music and Culture: Current Directions in Metal Studies*, ed. Andy R. Brown, Karl Spracklen, Keith Kahn-Harris, and Niall Scott (New York: Routledge, 2016), 171–72; for Germany, Bettina Roccor, *Heavy Metal: Kunst. Kommerz. Ketzerei* (Berlin: Iron Pages, 1998), 149; for Slovenia, Rajko Mur i , "Noisy Crossroads: Metal Scenes in Slovenia," *Metal Rules the Globe: Heavy Metal Music around the World*, ed. Jeremy Wallach et al (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 306–7; for Indonesia, Emma Baulch, "Gesturing Elsewhere: The Politics of the Balinese Death/Thrash Metal Scene," *Popular Music* 22, no. 2 (2003): 199; for Malta, Albert Bell, "Metal in a Micro Island State: An Insider's Perspective," in *Metal Rules the Globe*, 281; and for Nepal, Paul D. Greene, "Electronic and Effective Overdrive: Tropes of Transgression in Nepal's Heavy Metal Scene," in *Metal Rules the Globe*, 116. Craig Lockard is an exception, citing "frustrated urban blue-collar workers and unemployed youth" in 1990s Malaysia (*Dance of Life: Popular Music and Politics in Southeast Asia*, Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 1998, 256–57 cited in Jeremy Wallach, "Distortion Drenched Dystopias: Metal and Modernity in Southeast Asia," in *The Metal Void: First Gatherings*, ed. Niall W. R. Scott and Imke Von Helden [Oxford: Inter-Disciplinary Press, 2010, 359]) as is Deena Weinstein who argues that "metal [throughout the world] is a symbolic rebellion of a compromised class, proletarian internationalism" ("The Globalization of Metal," in *Metal Rules the Globe*, 57).
- 4 Brown, "Un(su)Stained Class?" 196 and 200.
- 5 Keir Keightley, "Reconsidering Rock." In *The Cambridge Companion to Rock and Pop*, ed. Simon Frith, Will Straw, and John Street (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 137.

- 6 Brown, “Un(su)Stained Class?” 201. These traits are not Brown’s assessment of the working class. Rather, Brown attributes these traits to researchers attempting to explain the musical tastes of lower-working class students.
- 7 Mårten Hagström, June 2005 interview, www.toazted.com/download.php?interview=875 (accessed 29 August 2008).
- 8 Even if Pantera’s guitarist, “Dimebag” Darrell Abbott had consciously thought about (i.e. calculated) the riff’s effects of rhythm and phrase structure, his interviews downplay that kind of thinking in a way that strongly aligns with romantic authenticity: “I tried to take lessons once, and the dude was really good and he tried to teach me theory and all that shit, but none of it made any sense to me. [...] There’s a certain amount of spontaneity that goes on whenever I’m jamming, and I don’t think that part of my playing would be there if I did learn all that shit” (Abbott cited in Joshua Gropp, “Dimebag Darrell: Regular People,” *Guitar World* [December 8, 2009] www.guitarworld.com/artists/dimebag-darrell-regular-people [accessed 29 November 2017]).
- 9 “With *Catch Thirtythr33* we’ve gone back to sitting down in front of the computer, programming drums, playing guitar over it and basically finishing a song without vocals in Cubase, sending mp3s over the internet...Musically, we sit down and do these file-swapping things and it helps us get the snowball rolling [...] *Catch Thirtythr33* is going to be some of the file-swapping parts and some of the stuff we’ve come up with together in the studio...the rest of it we’re going to do mostly in the studio but on the computer so that everyone sits, perhaps at separate workstations...with no time pressure, just letting it flow” (Hagström, June 2005 interview, www.toazted.com/download.php?interview=563 [accessed 29 August 2008]).
- 10 “With the *I* EP, Fredrick and I went to a jam room and we would [j]ust play. When we would find something that we liked, like a pattern or a riff, on the drums, we would do takes of ten to fifteen minutes of me playing that part. Since we jammed them I would stray from the pattern and keep going. We would take a chunk of that and add it to the next part. [...] When we had to record the guitars and bass, we had to draw schematics for the whole thing. Not notations, but simple guides to where all the hits w[ere] because it was all random” (Tomas Haake, 2005 interview, www.fourteeng.net/meshuggah.html [accessed 8 June 2008]).
- 11 “Most likely we never will [play *I* live] ’cause that whole track is all random. No one knows how *I* goes” (“Meshuggah ‘ i ’ (live) – The Truth About it,” [unattributed YouTube interview with Meshuggah drummer Tomas Haake] www.youtube.com/watch?v=gq8HosavQpI [accessed 1 January 2017]). For a critique of Haake’s claims that the music on *I* is “random,” see Smialek, “Rethinking Metal Aesthetics,” 44–71.
- 12 An even more striking example of pattern generation with symmetrical fretboard patterns can be found in Meshuggah’s “In Death – Is Death” from *Catch Thirtythr33*. For an in-depth analysis of this passage and its implications for Meshuggah’s song writing practices, see Smialek, “Rethinking Metal Aesthetics,” 63–71 and *idem.*, “Rethinking Class Relations in Metal: Conflicting Aesthetics in Meshuggah’s *Catch Thirtythr33*,” working paper.
- 13 Guy Capuzzo, “A Cyclic Approach to Rhythm and Meter in the Music of Meshuggah,” paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society for Music Theory, 6–9 November 2014.
- 14 Kahn-Harris has written about the productivity and stability of the Swedish metal scene, partially owing to Sweden’s supportive infrastructure for music education: “Music education [in Sweden], both in schools and municipal music schools is strongly supported financially by the state. [...] [B]ands [...] benefit from subsidised rehearsal space, musical instruments and courses [...] [resulting in] an exceptionally musically literate population with many opportunities for musicians to develop to a professional standard” (Keith Kahn-Harris, *Extreme Metal: Music and Culture on the Edge*. [Oxford: Berg, 2007], 108). These remarks parallel a recent keynote address at the 2016 Metal in Strange Places conference in Dayton, Ohio. During his keynote, Children of Bodom bassist Henkka Seppala spoke of a similar infrastructure in Finland and its benefits on Finnish metal music (Henkka Seppala, “Playing Metal for a Living and Studying Human Capital: The Music Scene, Scholar System, and their Future in Finland,” keynote address, Metal in Strange Places Conference, Dayton, Ohio, October 20–22, 2016). See also Matthieu Metzger’s discussion of jazz influences on Meshuggah guitarist Fredrik Thordendal, specifically the

- influence of fusion guitarist Allan Holdsworth (Metzger, “Meshuggah: Une formation de Métal atypique; Esthétique et technique de composition,” Thesis, Université de Poitiers <http://matthieu.metzger.free.fr/memoire/titre.html> [accessed 10 December 2017], 2003, 57 and Smialek “Rethinking Metal Aesthetics,” 30–31).
- 15 “ ‘Pour moi, Pleiade’s [*sic*] Dust, c’est de la musique de chambre jouée avec des instruments électriques et des percussions.’ De la musique de chambre fucking brutal.” (Dominic Tardif, “Luc Lemay : brutale musique de chambre.” *La Tribune* [20 May 2016] www.lapresse.ca/la-tribune/actualites/chroniques/dominic-tardif/201605/20/01-4983726-luc-lemay-brutale-musique-de-chambre-.php [accessed 19 March 2017]).
 - 16 On the pervasive influence of Baroque virtuosos on heavy metal guitarists, see Robert Walser, “Eruptions: Heavy Metal Appropriations of Classical Virtuosity,” *Popular Music* 11, no. 3 (October 1992): 263–308.
 - 17 For a detailed examination of aesthetic distinctions that characterize technical death metal, see Eric Smialek, “Technical Death Metal: The Challenges and Pleasures of Disorientation” in “Genre and Expression in Extreme Metal Music, 1990–2015,” Ph.D. diss., McGill University, 2015, 168–197.
 - 18 “Exclusive Interview with Luc Lemay of Gorguts!” *Agoraphobic News* (22 April 2015) http://agoraphobicnews.com/luc_lemay_gorguts.php (accessed 12 November 2016).
 - 19 “I was always intrigued and fascinated by those one-song records, like *I* from Meshuggah or *Chaining the Katechon* from Deathspell Omega. And especially when I saw *The Incident* from Porcupine Tree live — I was really amazed and I said, ‘I’d love to write something like this one day.’ The idea stayed there and never left” (Lemay in Denise Falzon, “Gorguts Conquer New Compositional Realms with ‘Pleiades’ Dust,” *Exclaim!* [13 May 2016] http://exclaim.ca/music/article/gorguts_conquer_new_compositional_realms_with_pleiades_dust [accessed 12 November 2016]).
 - 20 Lemay in Linda Leseman, “Luc Lemay of Gorguts Talks Tibet and Intellectual Death Metal,” *The Village Voice* (21 December 2013) www.villagevoice.com/music/luc-lemay-of-gorguts-talks-tibet-and-intellectual-death-metal-6638684 (accessed 12 November 2016).
 - 21 We have chosen to illustrate this with a bass transcription because of the availability of bassist Colin Marston’s solo playthrough of *Pleiades’ Dust* available on YouTube. www.youtube.com/watch?v=mHm56uabR_4 (accessed 2 December 2017).
 - 22 Edward Macan, *Rocking the Classics: English Progressive Rock and the Counter Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 64–65.
 - 23 Examples include “The Patient” (2001) by progressive metal band Tool at 5:52, The Beatles’ “Eleanor Rigby” (1966) at 1:51, attributable to producer George Martin’s contrapuntal awareness, and Daft Punk’s “Doin’ It Right” (2013) at 2:10.
 - 24 Stravinsky’s influence can also be heard in “Babel’s Gate” (2008) (00:10–00:40) and “Persepolis” (2008) (03:24–04:15).
 - 25 The lyrics portray the delusion of a protagonist lost in a maze, increasingly aware that the maze is only a mental prison in which he is trapped due to his past mistakes.
 - 26 Graham Hartmann, “Septicflesh’s Christos Antoniou on ‘Titan,’ Composing for the Prague Philharmonic + More,” *Loudwire* (July 11, 2014) <http://loudwire.com/septicflesh-christos-antoniou-titan-composing-for-prague-philharmonic-more/> (accessed 29 November 2016).
 - 27 Michael Klioumis, “Christos Antoniou, the Creative Genius behind Septicflesh and Chaostar Talks to Greektv.com. Uncensored,” *Greek TV* (February 11, 2016) <http://greektv.com/gothic-maestro-christos-antoniou-the-creative-genius-behind-the-legendary-septicflesh-and-chaostar-talks-to-greektv-com-uncensored/> (accessed 29 November 2016).
 - 28 Vera Matthijssens, “Septicflesh” *Lords of Metal* (May 2011) www.lordsofmetal.nl/en/interviews/view/id/3842 (accessed 30 November 2016).
 - 29 Death metal bands occasionally use clips from film soundtracks or existing orchestral recordings as introductions to songs. See, for instance, Vital Remains’ use of Carl Orff’s “O Fortuna” from *Carmina Burana* (1937) used to introduce their album *Dechristianize* (2003).
 - 30 Symphonic metal should not be confused with symphonic *black* metal (e.g. Cradle of Filth, Dimmu Borgir, Old Man’s Child).

- 31 We refer here to Keith Kahn-Harris' discussion of the role that transgression plays in extreme metal music (Keith Kahn-Harris, *Extreme Metal*, 29–49). We also have in mind what Smialek has called “the aesthetic of affliction,” an aesthetic marketed to teenage audiences in the mid-90s. For more on this, see Smialek, *Genre and Expression in Extreme Metal*, 103–104. The example we have in mind can be heard in “Sugar” (1998) at 0:16.
- 32 On mash-ups, see Virgil Moorefield, “Modes of Appropriation: Covers, Remixes and Mash-ups in Contemporary Popular Music,” in *Recorded Music: Performance, Culture and Technology*, ed. Amanda Bayley (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 301–3 and Aram Sinnreich, *Mashed Up: Music, Technology, and the Rise of Configurable Culture* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press), 2010.
- 33 The quotations from the finale of Beethoven's Piano Sonata No. 14, op. 27, no. 2 (“Moonlight”) can be heard at 0:49 and 6:54 of “Vespers Gold.”
- 34 For a similar, enigmatic use of cryptic lyrics, compare the scrambled liner notes and song-title anagrams of the technical death metal band Demilich in their album *Nespiithe* (1993), itself an anagram for “The Spine.” See also Smialek, *Genre and Expression in Extreme Metal*, 173.
- 35 Martin Cermak, “Unexpect: *The Surreal Flying Circus... Or Better Expect The Unexpected*,” (December 13, 2008) www.avantgarde-metal.com/content/stories2.php?id=90 (accessed 20 November 2016).
- 36 Duncan Glenday, “Tales of the Unexpected – An Interview with Avant Garde Metallers unexpectT [sic],” *Sea of Tranquility* (September 27, 2006) www.seaoftranquility.org/article.php?sid=708 (accessed 7 December 2016).
- 37 See Simon Frith and Howard Horne, *Art into Pop* (London: Methuen, 1987), James H. Curtis, *Rock Eras: Interpretation of Music and Society* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1987), 180, and David Brackett, *The Pop, Rock, and Soul Reader*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford, 2009), 227.

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