

## "Process and Projection in Abrahamsen's Schnee"

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Hans Abrahamsen's *Schnee* has become one of the few classic works of the early 21st century. Yet despite its similarity to American minimalism in its orientation towards process, its fine gradations of triplets challenge many analytical tools. Although theories of rhythm and meter can be adapted by finding a greatest common denominator, the resultant quantum is imperceptibly small (24 subdivisions per eighth-note), confounding analytical applications.

In this paper, I argue for the relevance of orchestration and compositional process to the perception of metric projection. In particular, I present analyses of the first and last pairs of canons of *Schnee* in which I compare underlying compositional processes to the details of rhythm and orchestration at the musical surface, to establish the interconnectedness of these factors. In Canons 5a and 5b, different aspects of instrumentation separately highlight compositional aspects of pitch processes and perceptual aspects of rhythmic processes, justifying the relevance of orchestration to both perception and intent. By extending metric projection to encompass intervals with slight offsets, as in Lewin 1981, I show that in Canons 1a and 1b, orchestration highlights specific interonset intervals through which one might understand other projected durations.

Beyond *Schnee*, this work suggests some more general observations on listening to music with a strong element of compositional process. Although perceiving basic precompositional structure is seldom the end-goal of either listening or analysis, it can provide a useful lens through which to interpret other aspects of hearing.