

The Evolution of Syncopation in 20th-Century Popular Music

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Has popular music grown more syncopated over time? I share the preliminary results of a new musical corpus that was designed to address this question. The talk is in three parts. First, I define syncopation on the basis of lexical stress, metrical position, and other factors. Second, I briefly outline the corpus, which includes one chart-topping popular song from each year of the 20th century. Third, I use the corpus to measure syncopation growth across the century, and summarize the key findings.