Composing the Chimera Suite
Grafting the Conventions of Extreme Metal onto a Jazz Orchestra Setting

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Abstract

The Chimera Suite is a five-movement composition for a modern jazz orchestra augmented with timbres derived from extreme metal. Each movement explores how conventions located in extreme metal can be combined with modern jazz orchestra conventions to create a unique multi-movement suite. While each movement is composed discretely and can stand on its own, the Chimera Suite is intended to be experienced in one continuous sitting, as local and global through-composed forms are used to create thematic unity across the entire suite.

Chapter 1 examines the global scenes of jazz and extreme metal, as well as the local Wellington jazz scene through Fabian Holt’s popular genre framework of ‘networks’ and ‘conventions’, and identifies the musical aesthetics that I drew from during the Chimera Suite’s compositional process. In Chapter 2, I analyse extreme metal band Between the Buried and Me’s ‘Silent Flight Parliament’ off their album The Parallax II: Future Sequence, jazz pianist Tigran Hamasyan’s ‘The Grid’ and ‘Out of The Grid’, and jazz drummer Dan Weiss’ ‘Annica’. Each of the artists’ works exhibits various musical conventions located in both jazz and extreme metal genres that I observe via the lenses of through-composed form, heaviness, and the dialectic of freedom and control. I analyse my own composition, the Chimera Suite, through the same lenses of through-composed form, heaviness, and the dialectic of freedom and control in Chapter 3, while discussing the ways in which the musical scenes identified in Chapter 1, and the musical inspirations found in Chapter 2, have impact the suite’s conception. Throughout this thesis, I discuss the unique perspectives afforded through this combination of genres that in turn, call into question the defining elements that contribute towards a genre’s identity.
Acknowledgements

The ‘extremeness’ of extreme metal has permeated many aspects of this degree. During both the process of creating this thesis and the Chimera Suite, I have experienced a somewhat ‘academised’ version of extreme metal’s sonic, discursive, bodily transgressions, pushing my research, musical, and life skills to their limits. Without the overwhelming support of my supervisors, family, friends, faculty at the Te Kōkī New Zealand School of Music, and the musicians of the Wellington jazz scene, I would never have been able to produce this level of work; now I can look forward to the many hangs and jams to come!

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INTRODUCTION

Originating in Greek mythology, the chimera is depicted as the monstrous combination of two or more disparate organisms – usually a lion, a goat, and a snake. In the realm of fantasy and science fiction, chimeric experimentations are often conducted in secluded laboratories away from the moral and ethical restrictions of society, where scientists and alchemists can perfect their abhorrent beasts through the grafting and splicing of foreign and often incompatible Deoxyribonucleic acid [DNA] (not unlike the uninhibited musical sandbox afforded by music notation software). My composition the Chimera Suite is the result of my experimentations fusing the musical organisms of jazz and extreme metal, two distinct genres whose combination often proves difficult due to the many unique and complex strands of DNA each already possesses. My research is grounded in the lineage of both genres and confronts issues around genre, musical transgression, and freedom. Throughout this exegesis I will be discussing the ‘genetic’ decisions I have made during the compositional process of this suite that allow this mutated musical organism to survive. In this introduction, I will provide succinct histories of the jazz and extreme metal genres, before discussing some existing ‘experiments’ that combine the two genres. Then, I give a brief definition of globalism and the ‘glocalisation’ process, concepts that have greatly affected how I first encountered these genres, and how I continue to participate in them. Finally, I discuss the issues and questions that I strove to answer through composing the Chimera Suite. The introduction concludes with summaries of the chapters that follow.

Lineages and Histories

The ‘official’ jazz narrative is often presented as an easy-to-follow, linear progression from what jazz historian Scott DeVeaux critically summarises as “New Orleans jazz up through the 1920s, swing in the 1930s, bebop in the 1940s, cool jazz and hard bop in the
1950s, free jazz and fusion in the 1960s.¹ This easy-to-follow progression, perpetuated by institutions and figureheads such as Jazz at the Lincoln Center and Wynton Marsalis, tracks the evolution of jazz from a form of entertainment into an autonomous art form, often being referred to as ‘America’s classical music’.² However, problems with this linear canon built from “great innovators … and recorded masterpieces,” start to manifest when considering the vast amount of jazz styles developed after the 1960s, the two areas drawing the most contention being the fusion and the avant-garde.³ This contention expanded outside of the United States as European jazz and other international narratives that are “substantially different from [their] African American counterpart” are placed on equal historiographical footing due to the rise of the New Jazz Studies in the mid-2000s.⁴

The extreme metal genre label encompasses a number of sub-genres that evolved out of thrash metal in the early 1980s. Around this period, metal started fragmenting into two distinct categories: pop or glam metal, and its counter-part, thrash or speed metal.⁵ Metal genres prior to this fragmentation are collectively referred to by the term ‘classic metal’ and a number of artists who have explored the jazz and metal crossover, discussed below, draw upon these aesthetics rather than extreme metal aesthetics (to listeners not familiar with either genre, these may sound identical). By incorporating punk’s aesthetic of ineptitude, bands such as Venom (1981, 1982), Metallica (1983) and Slayer (1983) released various albums in the early 1980s that emphasised speed and aggression over technical virtuosity.⁶ Out of thrash metal spawned what are considered the three primary sub-genres of extreme metal:

¹ Scott DeVeaux, “Constructing the Jazz Tradition,” Black American Literature Forum 25, no. 3 (Autumn, 1991), 525.
² Stuart Nicholson, Is Jazz Dead? (Or Has It Moved to a New Address) (New York: Routledge, 2005), 23-52, 53-76.
³ DeVeaux, “Constructing the Jazz Tradition,” 525.
⁶ Ibid.
death, black, and doom. Each genre possesses unique musical and social conventions distinguishing them from one another. Death metal, which was developed by bands such as Cannibal Corpse, Death, Possessed, and Morbid Angel, represented a darker, more austere version of thrash metal. Vocals were growled, riffs started exploring darker sounds and modes, and song forms became more complicated and expansive. Punk aesthetics were applied to this genre leading to the development of grindcore metal, a sub-genre that exhibits extreme speeds and songs usually under four minutes, a considerably shorter length than conventional metal forms. Radically slow tempos, somber lyrics, and vast song structures are some of the foundational elements of doom metal, which developed in tandem with death metal in the 1980s by bands like St Vitus and The Obsessed. In the 1990s, black metal received a great amount of media interest after became infamous for a number of murders, suicides and burnings which stemmed from the sub-genre’s ideals of Satanism, fascism and racism. Developed since the 1990s, the math metal and progressive metal sub-genres, both of which are generally considered under the death metal genre label, have had the most impact on the aesthetics of the *Chimera Suite*, due to their tendency towards formal, harmonic and rhythmic complexity.

Chimeric Experiments in ‘Extreme jazz’

The combination of jazz and metal music has been explored by participants of a number of global jazz scenes over over the last four decades. Since there is no definitive genre label to describe experiments fusing jazz and extreme metal, I have invented the term ‘extreme jazz’ to describe music that exhibit conventions of both genres. The combination of extreme metal and avant-garde jazz is well-traversed territory, with John Zorn’s *Naked City*, Mr. Bungle’s self-titled album, *Mr Bungle*, and The Dillinger Escape Plan’s *Calculating*

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7 Ibid., 4.
8 Ibid., 4-5.
In Chapter 2, I analyse the music of two current jazz artists that fuse extreme metal with modern jazz, Tigran Hamasyan and Dan Weiss. Both Hamasyan and Weiss draw heavily from extreme metal, citing a wide range of influences from the math metal, progressive metal, and doom metal subgenres. Another group that achieves fusion of modern jazz and modern extreme metal is the absurdist comedy band Clown Core (also spelt ClownC0re on the band’s YouTube account), which consists of drummer/keyboardist Louis Cole and saxophonist/keyboardist Sam Gendel. Although their music exhibits many of the conventions and aesthetics that I am striving for in this project, the band has limited recorded material with only two self-released EPs, both a mere 13 minutes long.

There are only a handful of large ensemble recordings available that attempt this particular genre crossover and, even then, they may only temporarily delve into extreme metal aesthetics. Darcy James Argue’s movement, ‘Construction + Deconstruction’, from the Brooklyn Babylon suite is one of these instances with a metal influenced section lasting around two minutes. Adam Neely’s suite, Angry Music for Jazz Orchestra is available as a bootlegged recording played by his band, Mass Extinction Event; however, there are only two movements available through Neely’s Bandcamp page and YouTube channel. Neely successfully replicates metal’s timbral ‘heaviness’, but due to my own focus on rhythmic difficulty and large-scale through-composed form in the Chimera Suite, I analyse other works more aligned with these ideas.

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11 Darcy James Argue, ‘Construction + Deconstruction,’ from Brooklyn Babylon, New Amsterdam Records NWAM046, 2013, CD.
Two other large ensembles with available audio recordings that operate primarily in this crossover realm are The Diablo Swing Orchestra, and John Morrison's Heavy Metal Jazz Orchestra. Both groups appear to draw upon ‘classic’ metal aesthetics and commonly utilize jazz genre tropes such as the solo swing ride-pattern found in the introduction of The Diablo Swing Orchestra’s ‘Balrog Boogie’.

The music of Swedish extreme metal band, Meshuggah, has had a vast impact on the Chimera Suite’s aural identity. I emulate Meshuggah’s complex rhythmic approach (which I expand on in Chapter 3) at various points throughout the suite. Meshuggah’s focus on imbuing and retaining a sense of ‘groove’ throughout their complex riffs is one of the qualities respected by Tigran Hamasyan and Dan Weiss (whose work I analyse in Chapter 2), that I also emulate. I also wanted to emulate an aspect of their timbral identity incorporating an eight-string guitar into the instrumentation of this suite.

A frequent theme throughout a number of these jazz and extreme metal crossovers is the use of humour by way of genre-specific tropes such as musical quotations, hyper-explicit lyrics, and theatrical costumes. While I thoroughly enjoy these types of humour when they are used tastefully, and appreciate the potential commercial appeal, I have chosen to avoid

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these clichés in the *Chimera Suite* as they do not align with my own beliefs in jazz as a form of art and the ‘seriousness’ integral to extreme metal.

**Globalism and the ‘glocalisation’ process**

Due to its development coinciding with the development of the American recording industry, jazz has been globalised from its inception.\(^{16}\) Considered a ‘hyper-genre’, jazz possesses the unique ability to be “comprehensible and alterable by all, despite any cultural and music difference,” whilst simultaneously possessing a “core inseparable from the cultural-geographical center of its relenting diffusion: America”.\(^{17}\) This dual quality is mirrored in the development of international jazz scenes, which I discuss below. Similarly, metal’s ‘core’ is traced back to the United Kingdom before diffusing into its subsequent genres through globalisation, with extreme metal manifesting in scenes as a “form of escape from … modernity”.\(^{18}\) Because of their malleability, unique dialects of both genres can be found in most local music scenes around the globe. Drawing on Roger Wallis and Krister Malm’s concept of ‘transculturation’, Stuart Nicholson uses the term ‘glocalisation’ in his 2005 book *Is Jazz Dead? Or has it Moved to a New Address* to describe the way in which a global music culture interacts with a local music culture.\(^{19}\) Nicholson argues that glocalised jazz scenes function in two ways simultaneously: (1) the globalised “classic and contemporary hegemonic American jazz styles” are retained and emulated by local musicians; and (2) a glocalised style is produced by imbuing the codes of the hegemonic American jazz styles with local significance, often drawing on elements of the area’s traditional music forms.

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\(^{16}\) Nicholson, *Is Jazz Dead?*, 168.


\(^{19}\) Nicholson, 163-194.
My first encounters with jazz and extreme metal as a teenager were through instrumental teachers who both took the same approach in introducing the two genres to me; giving a small but varied selection of international artists who were prominent parts in each genre’s canon (one of these was Between the Buried and Me, whose work I analyse in Chapter 2). Due to being under the legal age required to enter a bar, instead of interacting with the local Wellington jazz and metal scenes by going to gigs or listening to local bands, I was exclusively engaged with these genres’ global scenes through various internet resources such as YouTube, Ultimate-Guitar, and SmallsLIVE. Since then, I have become an active member of the Wellington jazz scene, completing an undergraduate jazz performance degree at Te Kōkī New Zealand School of Music [NZSM], and regularly performing around Wellington. This potentially unusual position of first being a participant of a genre’s global scene then subsequently the local scene informed the musical conventions I aligned myself with and drew from while composing the *Chimera Suite*, which I discuss in Chapter 1.

**Issues in Composing the Chimera Suite and Chapter Outline**

In taking on the task of composing this suite as well as writing this exegesis I sought to answer the following questions: What musical conventions, informed by my participation in the global jazz and extreme metal scenes and the local Wellington jazz scene, can co-exist to create a successful musical ‘chimera’ of jazz and extreme metal? What musical concepts can be found in existing musical works that align with the above conventions? How can I apply these concepts to a modern jazz orchestra composition and what subsequent considerations will I have to make?

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20 Ultimate-Guitar.com is one of the biggest databases for guitar tablature (tab), as of writing, there are currently over 1,100,100 user contributed tabs. SmallsLIVE is an online streaming and audio archive service with recordings taken from the Smalls Jazz Club in New York City.
Using the genre framework of networks and conventions developed by Fabian Holt in his book *Genre in Popular Music*, Chapter 1 begins with identifying three music scenes that inform this suite’s composition: the global jazz scene, the Wellington jazz scene, and the global extreme metal scene. Stuart Nicholson’s process of ‘glocalisation’ is also discussed with regard to how the Wellington jazz scene relates to the global jazz scene, specifically through the bebop/hard bop oriented pedagogical approaches of NZSM. I then discuss the conventional codes, values, and practices of each genre that are relevant to this composition, addressing various overlaps and differences.

Chapter 2 focuses on analysing three musical works by current artists that have greatly inspired the aesthetics used in the *Chimera Suite*. These are analysed through the lenses of through-composed form, heaviness, and the dialectic of freedom and control. For through-composed form I investigate the global multi-part polythematic cumulative form of Between the Buried and Me’s ‘Silent Flight Parliament’ and how it develops thematic unity through recapitulation of musical ideas from the preceding tracks on their 2012 concept album, *The Parallax II: Future Sequence*. I also analyse how the primary thematic idea in Tigran Hamasyan’s ‘The Grid’ and ‘Out of The Grid’ (which I label the Grid Suite, as Hamasyan identifies them as a ‘mini-suite’) is developed through complex rhythmic and harmonic devices over the suite’s duration. I explore how heaviness’ metaphorical density and size is conveyed through metric ambiguity, form and timbre in Dan Weiss’s ‘Annica’ off his 2018 album, *Starebaby*. I also observe how the global through-composed form of ‘Silent Flight Parliament’ contributes to the ‘Lay Your Ghosts to Rest riff’ section’s ‘heaviness’ by

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25 Dan Weiss, ‘Annica,’ from *Starebaby*, Pi Recordings PI74, 2018, CD.
unexpectedly recapitulating a thematic idea, specifically an ‘independent verse/chorus’, creating a large scale teleological pay-off.  

Finally, I extend Robert Walser’s notion of the dialectic of freedom and control in regards to Tigran Hamasyan’s improvised piano solo as it attempts to escape the oppressive bass ostinato through harmonic and rhythmic transgression of ‘The Grid’. The temporally ambiguous piano and guitar melody of ‘Annica’ also follows this notion, battling against the diatonic rhythms enforced by the rest of the band until the melody succumbs and withers away.

In Chapter 3, I discuss how the conventions identified in Chapter’s 1 and 2 have shaped the compositional processes of the Chimera Suite. This chapter follows the same categories as laid out in Chapter 2: through-composed form, heaviness, and the dialectic of freedom and control. I first observe the global multi-part polythematic cumulative form of the suite’s last movement, ‘Kleos’, locating the various ‘mutations’ of thematically unified ideas in the preceding movements. In Heaviness I discuss how I have emulated the timbral and rhythmic roles of various extreme metal vocal styles through use of atonal clusters organized by Bob Brookmeyer’s voice-leading approach to creating synthetic harmony. I then draw upon Calder Hannan’s notion of heaviness through rhythmic difficulty and analyse the three ways that the underlying hypermetric structure of ‘Kleos’ is approached; one inspired by the music of extreme metal band Meshuggah, one by Tigran Hamasyan’s Grid Suite, the last being my own antithetical approach to Meshuggah’s rhythmic concept. Freedom and Control examines how the constant truncation of the various melodies by the rhythm section in an

27 Robert Walser, Running with the Devil: Power, Gender, and Madness in Heavy Metal Music (Hanover: Wesleyan University, 1993), 53-54.
excerpt of the suite’s third movement, ‘Event Horizon’, reflects Olivia Lucas’ extension of Walser’s dialectic of freedom and control in her analysis of the music of Meshuggah, where the temporal freedom of a riff possessing unusual cardinality is ‘controlled’ and delineated by a hypermeter of 8, 16 or 32 bars of 4/4.29

Throughout this exegesis, I situate my own identity within both the global jazz and extreme metal scenes, and the local Wellington jazz scene. I reflect on the influence of artists, Between the Buried and Me, Tigran Hamasyan and Dan Weiss, who, in analysing their works, exhibit various conventional crossovers between jazz and extreme metal, and have ultimately inspired the creation of the Chimera Suite. I have made interesting discoveries not only about the potential for co-existence between jazz and extreme metal, but also how each genre is manifested in my own musical identity.

29 Lucas, “Loudness, Rhythm, and Environment” 5.
CHAPTER 1: GENRE CONSIDERATIONS IN EXTREME METAL AND JAZZ

One of the commonalities between jazz and extreme metal studies in the last two decades is the move towards the more ‘holistic’ genre frameworks that have been developed in popular music studies. In this chapter, I use Fabian Holt’s framework of ‘networks’ and ‘conventions’ to identify the various aspects that informed the compositional process of the Chimera Suite. Augmenting Holt’s network concept, I also discuss how Stuart Nicholson’s process of ‘glocalisation’ is at work in the Wellington jazz scene and how that process informs my own beliefs. Then I examine the three types of scenic transgressions (sonic, discursive and bodily) integral to extreme metal, as identified in Keith Kahn-Harris’s Extreme Metal: Music and Culture on the Edge. Next, I identify the musical codes and values in each genre that I have considered during this suite’s compositional process. Lastly, I discuss the relevant practices of each genre in relation to the practical considerations of performing/recording this suite. I use these approaches in order to situate my own musical identity within these genres, and frame my discussions in syncretising some of their unique aesthetics.

Networks/Scenes

The term ‘network’ describes the various social agents that contribute on some level to the creation and upkeep of a genre. Holt uses the term “center collectivities” to identify the participants who exert the most influence in a genre’s network such as musicians, record labels, fan communities and academic institutions. Because of their role as primary influencers for the rest of the collectivity, center collectivities are often responsible for the

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31 Ibid.
33 Kahn-Harris, Extreme Metal: Music and Culture on the Edge, 27-49.
34 Holt, Genre in Popular Music, 1-29.
creation and enforcement of genre boundaries as well as steering the genre’s evolutorial
direction. I draw on Holt’s ‘network’ concept, but follow jazz and metal studies scholars and
use the term ‘scene’, as it is the most common way that the primary influencers such as
musicians and critics refer to this social formation.35

As exemplified by the case studies in Metal Rules the Globe: Heavy Metal Music
around the World, studies of jazz scenes in New York in Travis A. Jackson’s Blowin’ the
Blues Away, and Alex Stewart’s Making the Scene: Contemporary New York City Big Band,
geography is a crucial component of ‘scene’.36 Various sub-genres and scenes are commonly
defined by their geographical boundaries. Examples of geographically informed jazz genre
labels include European jazz, Indian jazz, and Iranian jazz, while geographical (or national)
metal genre labels include the ‘New Wave of British Heavy Metal’ (NWOBHM) and
Norwegian black metal, among others.37

The global jazz scene

Jazz has been engaged in the globalisation process from its inception due to many
factors (including the coinciding emergence of the American recording industry) but only in
the last two decades have non-American jazz scenes been given ‘forthright attention’ in part
due to the emergence of the New Jazz Studies.38

35 Travis A. Jackson, Blowin’ the Blues Away (California: University of California Press, 2012), 55. Khan-
Harris, Extreme Metal, 13-15.
36 Aspects of metal scenes in South America, South-East Asia, the United States and others are analysed in
Metal Rules the Globe: Heavy Metal Music around the World; see also Jeremy Wallach, Harris M. Berger and
Press, 2011); Jackson, “The New York Jazz Scene in the 1990s,” in Blowin’ the Blues Away. Alex Stewart,
Making the Scene: Contemporary New York City Big Band Jazz (California: University of California Press,
2007).
37 Philip V. Bohlman and Goffredo Plastino eds., Jazz Worlds/World Jazz (Chicago: University of Chicago
Press, 2016); Andy R. Brown, Karl Spracklen, Keith Kahn-Harris, and Niall W.R. Scott eds., Global Metal
Music and Culture Current Directions in Metal Studies (New York: Routledge, 2016).
38 Nicholson, Is Jazz Dead?, 168-69. Robert G. O’Meally, Brent Hayes Edwards, and Farah Jasmine Griffin,
“Introductory Notes,” in Uptown Conversation: The New Jazz Studies, eds., Robert G. O’Meally, Brent Hayes
Drawing on the transculturation and hybridisation concepts of Roger Wallis and Krister Malm, Stuart Nicholson uses the term ‘glocalised’ to reflect the ways jazz’s “overarching hegemonic styles” interact with existing local culture and music. While Wallis and Malm argue that a scene can develop two separate ways, Nicholson argues that glocalised jazz scenes develop in both ways simultaneously: (1) The globalised “classic and contemporary hegemonic American jazz styles” are retained and emulated by local musicians; and (2) A glocalised style is produced by imbuing the codes of the hegemonic American jazz styles with local significance, often drawing on elements of the area’s traditional music forms.

Scenes that develop primarily through this second route often replace aspects of ‘American-ness’ for more national ones as their own boundaries for what constitutes a particular scene are strengthened. For example, one of the values in a Brazilian jazz scene called *música instrumental* is to “avoid contamination from the bebop paradigm” and instead draw upon established local music forms like the *chorinho* and *samba*. This allows the pursuit of “expression that is more rooted in Brazil”. The Nordic jazz scenes also exhibit movement away from certain ‘American’ conventions, in many cases preferring to integrate local melodic sensibilities that have been informed by local and/or national cultures and traditions.

Scenes that exhibit the first path of development commonly adopt the codes, values and practices of the “bebop–hard bop style of the 1950s and 1960s”. To use the Wellington jazz scene as an example, these traditional jazz conventions usually materialise as what

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40 Ibid., xii-xiii.
42 Nicholson, 197-98.
43 Ibid., 100.
George Lewis calls “bebop-based, virtuosity-oriented litmus tests” within local educational institutions as well as social events such as jam sessions and gigs. These tests can serve as rites of passage—in Wellington and, as Lewis recognizes, in many scenes around the world—to establish oneself as an ‘authentic’ member of a local jazz scene. Interestingly, jazz’s malleability and chameleon-like qualities are reflected in the practices of musicians in the Wellington jazz scene, with performers often able, and encouraged, to work in a number of styles, both inside and outside of the jazz sphere. I frequently perform around Wellington on acoustic, electric and synth bass in a number of different musical settings including traditional, contemporary, and Latin jazz, RnB, funk, and pop. All of these styles, in some way or another, have made an impact on my musical tastes and individual sound as a jazz performer and composer.

The global extreme metal scene

Keith Kahn-Harris’ Extreme Metal: Music and Culture on the Edge establishes the extreme metal scene as a global music scene that encompasses various local scenes that overlap with one another through both musical and social aspects. Because of the substantial overlap between the sub-genres and local scenes of extreme metal, musical codes can be identified generally and then discussed in greater depth within the context of each sub-genre. The three main sub-genres that the majority of extreme metal music falls under are: death metal, black metal and doom metal. As a way of separating extreme metal from other genres of music and other forms of metal, Kahn-Harris examines the extreme metal scene through the lenses of sonic, bodily, and discursive transgressions.

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45 Ibid., 103.
46 Kahn-Harris, Extreme Metal, 22.
48 Kahn-Harris, Extreme Metal, 27-49.
is transmitted through non-musical sources of media (lyrics, band and song names, record sleeves) and is often the most direct way of articulating values and specific ideologies; for example the themes of Satanism, paganism, fascism, or neo-Nazism found in black metal, or the depressive and oppressive narrative themes explored through doom metal vocals. Kahn-Harris argues that bodily transgression often exists in a dichotomy of extreme values and practices. On one hand, illicit drugs, alcohol, and expressions of sexuality may be heavily indulged in by scene participants who have embraced the genre’s inherited self-destructive behaviour and on the other, some members may resist these indulgences and prefer to follow ideologies of “personal empowerment, independence and self-control”. The physical activities of metal audiences also exist as another extreme dichotomy. Participants exercise their freedom and power through moshing, headbanging, and stagediving to fight for their place in the mosh-pit. Compare this behaviour to the “silent men” exercising their ability to cross their arms, or metal nerds who prefer to mentally embrace the immaculately reproduced virtuosity of the band, comparing every second to the recordings branded time and time again into their minds. Out of the three categories of transgression that Kahn-Harris identifies, ‘sonic transgression’ is the most relevant in regards to the Chimera Suite and this exegesis, as it defines the majority of musical codes, values, and practices within extreme metal.

**Conventions**

Participants at all levels in a scene interact and communicate through discrete conventions, which Holt splits into three key concepts: codes, values, and practices. Similar to its use in structural linguistics, code implies a signification by musical elements in relation

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49 Ibid., 35-43.
50 Ibid., 43-46.
to a genre. The most obvious and relevant example would be the specific distorted guitar
timbres that frequently situate a song within a metal context. The values of a genre are often
formed or adjusted when the center collectivities (musicians, record labels, fan communities
and academic institutions) of a genre are established or transformed. Holt identifies the Great
Migration, in which six million African-Americans moved north out of the Southern United
States, as one of the key historical events in defining the ideological values in traditional
forms of jazz in what is now referred to as the “blues aesthetic”. Lastly, practices look at
the processes of how music is “created, performed, and perceived.” For example, the
unmoving stature in which death metal guitarists showcase their virtuosity plays an important
part in how the audience perceives and reacts to the music. The centre collectivities of each
scene generally dictate what codes, values and practices are accepted and rejected.

While this framework affords a generic, surface-level discussion of the
networks/scenes and conventions within a genre, it must be supplemented with more specific
genre frameworks that can accurately reflect its intricacies and complexities, which I do in
the next section.

Codes in extreme metal

In this section I identify and examine extreme metal codes using a modified version
of the categories presented by Keith Khan-Harris in his discussion of sonic transgressions:
timbre, harmony and modes, rhythm, solos and loudness. The codes identified reflect the

53 Distorted guitar timbres are the main focus of a number of metal studies. See: Robert Walser, *Running with
the Devil*, 41-44. Berger, *Metal, Rock, and Jazz*, 58. Harris M. Berger and Cornelia Fales, “‘Heaviness’ in the
Perception of Heavy Metal Guitar Timbres: The Match of Perceptual and Acoustic Features over Time,” in
*Wired for Sound: Engineering and Technologies in Sonic Cultures*, eds., Paul D. Greene and Thomas Porcello
Analysing Contemporary Metal Production,” in *Global Metal Music and Culture Current Directions in Metal


55 Khan-Harris, Extreme Metal, 45.

56 Ibid., 30-34.
general conventions within the extreme metal scene, but when applicable, I will expand on their roles within the sub-genres of death, black and doom metal.

In order to “communicate a sense of considerable physical effort and aggression,” through their timbres, extreme metal vocalists exhibit a range of transgressive vocal techniques that include growling, screaming, shrieking, whispering, and shouting.\textsuperscript{57} Lyrics are almost unintelligible without the aid of a lyric sheet, and often eschew any discernable note or pitch. As a result, transforms the vocals from the primarily melodic role found in most popular musics, into a more rhythmic/percussive one.\textsuperscript{58} The timbral range in which distorted vocals are performed can signify what sub-genre a song is situated within. For example, shrieked, high-pitched vocals (coinciding with high-pitched distorted guitar timbres) are a core component of the black metal aesthetic, while guttural or growled vocal timbres generally belong to doom and death metal.\textsuperscript{59} These timbres are not genre-exclusive as shown by the common practice of overdubbing clean or distorted vocals with multiple vocal layers in combinations of different timbres for example, low growls and mid screams, low growls and high shrieks.\textsuperscript{60}

The distorted guitar timbres found in extreme metal are one of the genre’s key signifiers and are directly related to metal’s aesthetic of power\textsuperscript{61}. Different types of distortion such as overdrive and fuzz are also used to create a timbral identity, which can be used to situate the music within specific genres; for example, black metal often exhibits a scratchy, high frequency guitar sound. Techniques such as palm muting, tremolo picking, tapping, and sweeping can also serve as timbral signifiers due to their ability to convey metal’s aesthetics

\textsuperscript{57} Mynett, “The Distortion Paradox: Analyzing Contemporary Metal Production,” 77.
\textsuperscript{58} Kahn-Harris, Extreme Metal, 32.
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{60} Michael Lessard, “3 ways to use screaming vocals w/ Michael Lessard of The Contortionist,” YouTube video, 8:35, posted by ‘URM Academy’, August 25, 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tIEYOz_e1ZU.
\textsuperscript{61} Robert Walser, Running with the Devil, 41-43.
of heaviness, virtuosity and power. Extended-range guitars have become increasingly common in the last two decades due in part to the “quest for heaviness” which I discuss below, as well as developments in amplification technologies allowing note definition to be retained at lower pitches.\textsuperscript{62} The timbral qualities of extreme metal bass are largely similar to those related to guitar, especially because the pitch possibilities of extended-range guitar stretch into the range of the bass. To ensure intelligibility and pitch definition, bass distortion and appropriate equalisation is applied to emphasise its high frequencies, allowing both rhythm guitar and bass to coexist sonically.\textsuperscript{63}

While extreme metal drum kits generally consist of the same basic setup as other styles of music (kick drum, toms, snare, and cymbals including high-hat, crash and ride), specific timbral adjustments must be made in order convey the clarity and therefore the heaviness required to function within the genre.\textsuperscript{64} Mynett uses the term ‘punchiness’ to refer to the “high level of energy, density, weight, and power within a particular duration of time” necessary for the kick, toms and snare to cut through the distorted guitar’s ‘sonic blanket,’ with rhythmic subdivisions dictating the aforementioned temporal parameter.\textsuperscript{65} As a result, drum sounds are markedly less resonant or ‘thin’ when performing faster subdivisions for example, a 400bpm black metal blast beat, compared to grooves utilising slower subdivisions such as doom metal grooves where tempos frequently sit around 60bpm. Cymbals with different timbral qualities are used for specific functions such as marking the start of a new song section/segment or accenting rhythmic, registral and/or contoural attacks made by other members of the band.\textsuperscript{66}

\textsuperscript{62} Mynett, “The Distortion Paradox,” 78.
\textsuperscript{63} Ibid., 77.
\textsuperscript{64} Mark Mynett, “Sound At Source: The Creative Practice Of Re-Heading, Dampening And Drum Tuning For The Contemporary Metal Genre,” \textit{The Journal on the Art of Record Production}, 5 (2011), DOI: http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/id/eprint/9903
\textsuperscript{65} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{66} Lucas, “Loudness, Rhythm, and Environment,” 93.
In terms of harmony and mode, extreme metal musicians have developed a complex harmonic palette in which emotions common in the genre, such as aggression, austerity and moroseness, can be signified and explored. Rooted in the vocabulary of minor chord progressions of classic heavy metal genres, extreme metal transgresses functional harmony through experimentation with atonality, synthetic scales, and modal approaches. Due to its emphasis on virtuosic playing and technical competency, the death metal sub-genre often contains a high level of harmonic and rhythmic complexity; some of the main aspects that initially drew me to extreme metal and that served as inspiration in composing the *Chimera Suite*. A modal approach is favoured by extreme metal musicians, in part due to the systematic way modes can categorise and signify certain tonal colours and emotions, as well as its pedagogical utility in understanding the genre’s harmony. The darkest sounding modes derived from the major scale (Aeolian, Phrygian, and Locrian) are used extensively throughout metal, and possess intervallic significations derived from the tritone and the minor second intervals that are associated with devilry and oppression. Often attributed to jazz influences, death metal harmony has shown increased experimentation with more ‘exotic’ modes derived from melodic minor, harmonic minor/major and double harmonic minor/major scales and can be seen in compositions by bands such as Animals as Leaders, The Contortionist, and Between the Buried and Me. So-called ‘power chords’, built from

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68 Khan-Harris, *Extreme Metal*, 3.
the root and fifth, are often shifted through these modes via parallel harmonic motions\textsuperscript{71}. Symmetrical diminished and whole-tone scales are used for their power to “obscure the tonal center” while atonality marks complete departure from tonal functional harmony.\textsuperscript{72}

The rhythms of extreme metal have developed exponentially increasing complexity, in part due to the emergence of sub-genres such as math-metal and contemporary grind-core, which commonly use rhythmic conventions such as meters with unusual cardinality, metric modulations, and polymeters.\textsuperscript{73} Kahn-Harris argues that the tempos of extreme metal represent the transgressive nature of this music, for example, ‘blast beat’ drum grooves are commonly played at 300-400 BPM and above while black metal guitarists perform “tremolo riffs of 500-600 bpm”.\textsuperscript{74} On the other extreme of this, doom metal can often exhibit almost glacial tempos of around 60bpm or lower.

Guitar solos are rare in extreme metal music and when they do occur, they are usually brief in length\textsuperscript{75}. Virtuosic guitar techniques that include fast-paced shredding, sweep-picking, and tapping are commonly utilised within a guitar solo as an expression of agency which Robert Walser describes as the dialectic of freedom and control, an aesthetic I will be discussing in greater detail later on.\textsuperscript{76}

Most apparent in live concerts, extreme metal’s ‘loudness’ overwhelms the body and mind with shows commonly played at a volume of around 120db. Combined with extreme metal’s low frequencies being exuded from the down-tuned/extended-range guitars and basses, alongside the double-bass kick drum, loudness becomes a physical sensation that is felt as well as heard, and is often metaphorically described as a ‘wall of sound’.\textsuperscript{77}

\textsuperscript{71} Berger, Metal, Rock, and Jazz, 62.
\textsuperscript{72} Ibid., 58.
\textsuperscript{74} Kahn-Harris, Extreme Metal, 32-33.
\textsuperscript{75} Ibid., 31.
\textsuperscript{76} Walser, Running with the Devil, 53-54.
\textsuperscript{77} Not to be confused with Phil Spector’s music production formula, also labelled ‘Wall of Sound’ or ‘Spector Sound’. Mynett, “The Distortion Paradox”, 78. Lucas, “Loudness, Rhythm, and Environment,” 181.
Codes in jazz

My foundational understanding of the codes found in ‘hegemonic styles’ styles of jazz are informed by the time spent studying the bebop and hard bop conventions emphasised in the undergraduate jazz program at NZSM. These foundations have since been influenced by various artists from a wide range of scenic and cultural backgrounds such as Shai Maestro and Gilad Hekselman (Israel), Reinier Baas (Holland), Aaron Parks and Ambrose Akinmusire (United States), as well as Tigran Hamasyan (Armenia) and Dan Weiss (United States), whose music I will analyse in the following chapter. My aim in this section, then, is not to create a comprehensive list of conventions in jazz, but rather to identify those that have informed the composition of this suite. Although small and large ensemble jazz follow similar practices, whenever there is a discrepancy between conventions, I will be referring to the latter, as the Chimera Suite was specifically composed for a modern jazz orchestra instrumentation. I also discuss jazz’s relevant codes of harmony and modes, rhythm, solos, and form in both small and large ensemble settings.

The instrumentation found in most modern jazz orchestras serves as a corpus of common timbres found in jazz. Given the expanding timbral palettes of modern jazz orchestra, composers such as Maria Schneider, Darcy James Argue, and Jim McNeely often demand instrumentation beyond the traditional big band norms.

Alongside the usual assortment of alto, tenor and baritone saxophones, members of the saxophone section are often required to play other instruments inside the woodwind family. Members of the trumpet section often play flugelhorn as well as possess an array of

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79 Alex Stewart, Making the Scene, 33.
80 Ibid., 33-39.
81 Ibid., 36.
mutes that include: cup, straight, harmon, bucket, pixie, and plunger mutes. Mutes are also a common feature for the trombone section and, as shown in Figure 1.1 below, members are sometimes required to play the lower end of the brass family such as the euphonium and tuba, a role sometimes shared by the bass player.

**INSTRUMENTATION**

Wind 1: piccolo, flute, alto flute, soprano sax, alto sax, electronic effects  
Wind 2: flute, clarinet, soprano sax, alto sax  
Wind 3: clarinet, tenor sax  
Wind 4: clarinet, bass clarinet, tenor sax  
Wind 5: clarinet, bass clarinet, contrabass clarinet, baritone sax  

Trumpet | Flugelhorn 1-5  
Trumpet 5 w/electronic effects  

Trombone 1 | Euphonium  
Trombone 2  
Trombone 3 | Tuba  
Bass Trombone | Tuba  

Acoustic Guitar | Electric Guitar  
Piano | Electric Piano | Accordion or Melodica  
Contrabass | Electric Bass | Woodblock  
Drum Set | Tapan | Cajón

*Figure 1.1 (Instrumentation from Darcy James Argue’s 2013 *Brooklyn Babylon* suite for jazz orchestra)*

Common guitar timbres in a big band/jazz orchestra include; traditional hollow-body guitars popularised in big bands by Count Basie guitarist, Freddie Green; distorted electric guitars that come from the jazz-fusion era, and nylon-string guitars that are often used in compositions that have Brazilian or Spanish influences. Effect pedals can also be used, offering an even greater variety of timbral possibilities. While pianists traditionally play

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82 Ibid., 97.  
acoustic piano in jazz orchestras, they can also select from a broad range of timbres such as electric organs, electric keyboards, and synthesizers. These timbres can also be played simultaneously through patch configurations or physical layout of multiple keyboards.

Vibraphones, melodicas, and accordions are also sometimes utilized in a jazz orchestra/big band context. Acoustic and electric basses are the most frequently used types of bass in a big band/jazz orchestra setting however, synth-bass timbres are becoming more common place and are achieved either through a monophonic synthesizer like the Minimoog Model D, or synth effect-pedals. Drum kit configurations depend on the sub-genre of jazz being played but will at least include the ride, crash, and hi-hat cymbals, along with a snare and kick drum. Drumstick choices offer other timbral possibilities, styles including: wood, multi-rod, brushes, brooms and mallets. Auxiliary percussion can be employed in tandem to fit stylistic requirement such as cowbells, shakers, timbales and woodblocks however, some jazz orchestra composers prefer to eschew the drum kit altogether, and instead utilise percussion instruments like the congas or cajón.

In most tertiary jazz programs, the modes of the major and melodic minor scale are used to explain common jazz chord progressions, while the creation of melodies ‘outside’ of the harmony are explained through the superimposition of these various modes or through reharmonisation techniques like the tritone substitution. Jazz orchestra composers such as Bob Brookmeyer and Thad Jones, and their protégés, Maria Schneider and Darcy James Argue, utilise dense chord structures usually containing six or more different pitch classes

84 Hammond and Leslie are two of the most common electric organ brands. Fender Rhodes, Wurlizer, and Clavinet’s are common electric keyboards, and Moog synthesizers, David Smith Instrument’s Prophet series, the Roland Juno and Jupiter series are among the most common synthesizer keyboards, however virtual synthesizers can also be used in conjunction with a computer and midi-controller.


86 Darcy James Argue’s Secret Society, ‘Jacobin Club,’ from Infernal Machines.
that are often voiced using structures that can often be attributed to specific composers/arrangers, an aspect I will discuss later in this chapter.  

Adeptness with metric modulations and non-isochronous meters have become a crucial part of the modern jazz performer’s rhythmic vocabulary. The ability to perceive, and weave in and out of, different rates of subdivision can also be an important requirement in some styles of jazz. To pass the “bebop-based, virtuosity-oriented litmus tests” of mainstream jazz, performers must display proficiency in playing an extreme range of tempos, with ballads sometimes played around 60 BPM and up-tempo tunes with a swing feel played at 400 BPM or higher.

Soloists in a modern jazz orchestra will commonly construct their solos using thematic material of the composition in striving to match the mood or direction of the piece. Minimal information is usually given to soloist, often a general tonality (such as A Phrygian-ish) or performance directions as exemplified by Maria Schnieder’s instructions to guitarist Ben Monder in her piece Wyrgly “‘D-’ ish WILD OVER THE TOP”. This approach both allows each instrumentalist’s musical personality to shine and avoids burdening the soloist with needless information.

The 32-bar AABA popular song form and twelve-bar blues are the two most common musical forms found in traditional jazz repertoire since the 1930s, with performances predominantly structured in the ‘head-solos-head’ format. Traditional jazz orchestra compositions primarily utilise these structures; however, through-composed forms, which I

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87 Stewart, Making the Scene, 137.
90 Lewis, foreword to Jazz Worlds/World Jazz, xx.
91 Stewart, Making the Scene, 133.
92 Ibid., 141.
93 Ibid., 132.
Values in jazz

As shown in Travis Jackson’s *Blowin’ the Blues Away* and Ingrid Monson’s *Saying Something*, the value that is often held in the highest regard by jazz musicians is the development of an individual sound, a value that is key component of the ‘blues aesthetic’ that informs much of mainstream jazz. While immediately correlated with timbre, an individual sound can also be developed through unique approaches to the other musical elements. Unique voicing structures and harmonies in dense chords can signify what ‘school’ of composition a modern jazz orchestra composer is drawing from.

Two of the main schools of large jazz ensemble composition taught in tertiary education originate with the music of Thad Jones or Bob Brookmeyer. An example of the Thad Jones approach is having sectional groups fulfilling specific harmonic functions, in which the trombones often play chord tones, trumpets play melodic triads with the inner voices targeting upper chord extensions, while the saxophones are “written to make a complete sound among themselves,” playing chord tones in combination with one or two upper-chord extensions. On the other hand, a common approach in Bob Brookmeyer’s ‘school’ is to voice harmonies in extremely dense clusters that span less than an octave and to embrace structures that use minor 2nd and minor 9th intervals, which are usually undesirable.

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*94 Ibid., 295-6.
96 Rayburn Wright, *Inside the Score*, 49-53.*
due to their strong dissonance. Brookmeyer often employs synthetic harmony in his compositions, which Rayburn Wright defines as “harmony that is not identifiable as an idiomatic jazz chord”. Wright attributes strong voice leading as the main reason why synthetic harmonies can “work so well,” a strategy that I employ at various points throughout the *Chimera Suite*, especially in the ‘vocal’ sections (see Chapter 3).

Another common approach to developing an individual sound is for musicians and composers to reflect on their cultural background. In order to “say somethin’” in traditional jazz styles, performers must show a grounding in the “cultural foundations of the music” namely the deep connection with blues music and African-American performance sensibilities. However, as jazz has become increasingly globalised, musicians from outside of the United States often possess different values that are informed by their ‘glocalised’ scenes. In Nicholson’s investigation of the jazz scene in Scandinavia, he identifies the ‘Nordic tone’ as a different set of codes, values and practices to those found in traditional American jazz. Musicians focus on “tone, space and intensity”, instead of “the patterns, the favourite licks, the quotations, and extroverted technical display of much (contemporary) jazz”. In Nicholson’s conversations with members of the Esborn Svenssön Trio, they discuss the importance of being open to and drawing from a wide variety of musics, which, in their case, includes popular bands such as Radiohead and Black Sabbath. Both Tigran Hamasyan, and Dan Weiss, whose music I will analyse in Chapter 2, cite ‘heavy’ influences from metal and Indian classical music.

The swing rhythm is one of the key signifiers of the ‘hegemonic styles’ of traditional jazz and is still at the center of one of the classic ongoing jazz debates. Traditional jazz

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97 Ibid., 118-123.
98 Ibid.
101 Ibid., 198.
pedagogies offer the “explainable, analyzable, categorizable and do-able” definition of swing as an emphasis on the ternary subdivision of a compound time feel.\textsuperscript{102} While this may serve as a tangible and teachable definition, I prefer the of concept of ‘groove’ as it not only encompasses the nebulous ‘swing feel’ that traditional jazz is defined by, but also includes the various the other rhythmic conventions, such as the backbeat found in jazz fusion and later styles.\textsuperscript{103} Groove describes the music’s “motoric experience, its steady pulse,” as well as the rhythmic ‘forward motion’ that invoke psychological and bodily involvement from listeners.\textsuperscript{104} While emphasis on groove is less important in extreme metal, it is one of the aesthetics that has drawn many jazz musicians like Tigran Hamasyan and Dan Weiss, as well myself, to the music of Meshuggah\textsuperscript{105}.

In composing this suite, I have primarily used backbeat grooves as I feel that grooves with a swing feel, when combined with extreme metal conventions, often detract from the seriousness of the music. There are however, small rhythmic phrases that I employ throughout the Chimera Suite, usually when the rhythmic meter is in compound time, that suggest the rhythmic vocabulary of a traditional jazz orchestra.

Values in metal

A number of metal scholars argue that ‘heaviness’ is the defining aesthetic of the metal genre and primarily associate the term with distorted guitar timbres. Harris Berger and Cornelia Fales’ classic study, “Heaviness’ in the Perception of Heavy Metal Guitar Timbres: The Match of Perceptual and Acoustic Features over Time”, asserts that any use of the term

\hspace{0.4em} 102 Ibid., 100.
\hspace{0.4em} 103 Ibid., 100-101. Monson, \textit{Saying Something: Jazz Improvisation and Interaction}, 93.
\hspace{0.4em} 104 Levy, “Swinging in Balkan Mode,” 85-6.
‘heavy’ to describe musical characteristics outside of timbre (they give the examples of melodic motifs and harmonic approaches) is a metaphorical extension of its timbral definition. In response to this, Calder Hannan, Mark Mynett and Zachary Wallmark all argue that heaviness is a “material metaphor” that conveys “the music’s perceived size, weight and density” and that timbral ‘heaviness’ is actually derived from this, not the other way around. Berger and Fales concluded that timbral heaviness in guitar tones is achieved through ‘more noise’, sustain, strengthened upper harmonics and perceived resultant tones achieved through harmonic distortion. Distortion’s side-effect of compressing a signal into a flatter envelope also allows the signal to be sustained indefinitely which Walser argues as exemplifying metal’s “extreme power and intense expression”.

Hannan argues that heaviness can be created and augmented through various compositional approaches, not just through melodic and harmonic approaches as posited by Berger and Fales, such as texture and rhythmic difficulty as showcased in his analysis of the music of Meshuggah and The Dillinger Escape Plan. Berger also references this potential for heaviness in other musical elements, stating metal bands from the late 80s and onwards have strived for harmonic heaviness by expanding their harmonic palette and deliberately obscuring the tonal center. He also attributes the use of extreme tempos and ‘stiff’ grooves as part of the ‘quest for heaviness’, an idea backed up by Mynett and Hannan who state that, “performance precision and overall tightness”, as well as the “band’s control of their

108 Berger and Fales, “‘Heaviness’ in the Perception of Heavy Metal Guitar Timbres,” 181-197.
109 Walser, Running with the Devil, 42.
111 Berger, Metal, Rock, and Jazz, 58.
instruments through difficult grooves” are displays of power, virtuosity, and therefore heaviness. Hannan also argues that use of what he terms ‘polymetric cadences’ signify heaviness in Meshuggah’s music by displaying this virtuosic rhythmic precision as well as conveying heaviness’s metaphorical ‘size’ through awe-inspiring and unfathomable song/song sections.

In the same way that rhythmic difficulty can augment timbral, melodic, harmonic and temporal heaviness, I argue in Chapters 2 and 3, that large-scale forms (specifically through-composed forms) can also offer this potential. The recapitulation of a heavy riff or song section, especially when placed after a section that exhibits contrasting melodic, harmonic, textural and rhythmic elements, can reinforce and amplify the “morose or aggressive emotions” that the thematic material conveys, often in an oppressive, inevitable manner.

In Running with the Devil: Power Gender and Madness in Heavy Metal Music, Walser asserts that one of the core aesthetics of metal is the metaphor for freedom and control which he exemplifies with the dialectical relationship between the guitar solo and the oppressive rigidity of the rhythm section. The guitar solo, in its attempt to ‘escape’, can be “supported, defended or threatened” by the groove supplied by the rhythm section. Olivia Lucas argues that the ‘habitual truncation’ by the 4/4 hypermeter of the looped riffs in Meshuggah’s music is also derived from this aesthetic. Indeed, the ‘lurching sensation’ created through polymetric cadences, is a physical representation of the brutal enforcement enacted by the ‘control’. Idelber Avelar also locates this aesthetic in the drums in his essay on the music of Sepultura. In rhythmically difficult extreme metal, the drummer is often required to maintain a steady pulse through cymbal strikes while the kick drum and

113 Ibid., 445, 455.
114 Walser, Running with the Devil, 53-54.
occasionally the snare drum and less resonant cymbals ‘escape’ this pulse by operating within the same metric framework as the guitar and the bass. I argue that this aesthetic can also be located sonically, through the need for vocals and other instruments to ‘escape’ from or ‘punch/cut through’ the ‘sonically dense blanket’ of spectral energy created by the distortion of the guitar and bass.\textsuperscript{117} As an example of this, the potential for discursive transgression would be unable to be explored if the vocals were sonically unintelligible or ‘buried’ in the mix.

Shared values in jazz and extreme metal

One of the elements that initially drew me to both jazz and extreme metal is ephemerality, either exhibited through improvisation, or the use of various through-compositional forms. In contrast to early big band’s emphasis on sounding improvisatory and spontaneous, contemporary jazz orchestra composers such as Maria Schneider, Bob Brookmeyer, and Darcy James Argue often compose multi-movement suites that feature major melodic transformations and developments.\textsuperscript{118} Because of the heavy motivic/thematic development required, emphasis is placed on pre-composed material and solo sections are instead used to “enhance and serve (the) compositions,” although in some cases the role of thematic development is placed on performers as in Carla Bley’s \textit{Cages} and Jim McNeely’s \textit{Sticks}.\textsuperscript{119} Soloists often utilise thematic materials presented by the composition to the extent that the solo can be indistinguishable from the pre-composed material.

\textsuperscript{117} Mynett, “The Distortion Paradox,” 68.
\textsuperscript{119} Brake, “Developmental Devices Used to Create Coherence,” 4; Stewart, \textit{Making the Scene}, 144-173.
As identified in the conventions of extreme metal, through-composed forms are a common songwriting technique in the genre, and often employ a one-part polythematic form (the different types of through compositional forms will be identified in the next chapter). However, a ‘concept album’ is a common media format in extreme metal that often exhibits various types of through-composition. For an album to be classified as a concept album, all tracks are often informed by a extra-musical ideas, generally by way of a narrative. Indeed, this is true for a large amount of Between the Buried and Me's discography with Colors, The Parallax: Hypersleep Dialogues, The Parallax II: Future Sequence, Coma Ecliptic, Automata I and Automata II all being concept albums, some of which are linked by recurring narrative characters. In the next chapter I will be analysing some of these polythematic through compositional forms found in The Parallax II: Future Sequence.

Dealing with Conflicting Practices in Jazz and Extreme Metal

One issue that I grappled with in composing the Chimera Suite was how to deal with notating the guitar part. Due to the large amount of varying musical environments and emphasis on the ability to sight-read other composer’s scores, jazz guitarists primarily use conventional music notation. The guitar’s physical layout (middle C can be played in five different positions on a standard six string guitar) often means that only the most meticulous of composers and arrangers write out complex guitar parts with classical guitar notation that includes information such as fret positions and voice layers. Metal guitarists, on the other hand, primarily use guitar tablature (shortened to tab) due to the logical layout and numbering system that denotes what string and fret to play. The main drawback of this system is the lack

120 Kahn-Harris, Extreme Metal, 33; Brad Osborn, “Understanding Through-Composition in Post-Rock” Music Theory Online 17, no 3. (October 2011).
122 Between the Buried and Me, The Guide to The Parallax II: Future Sequence (unknown publisher), limited release.
of rhythmic information; however, metal guitarists rarely find themselves in a position where sight-reading is required and existing audio recordings are unavailable. Guitar tablature’s pedagogical utility is also a key factor, with websites such as ultimate-guitar.com and songsterr.com offering over one million user-contributed tabs. Published rock and metal guitar books often include both styles of notation; however, in my experience the tablature often receives more meticulous attention. The *Chimera Suite’s* guitar part is written out using both standard classical guitar notation and guitar tablature, in part due to the physical complexity of the eight-string guitar’s extended range (around five octaves depending on the tuning) as well as the lack of eight-string jazz guitarists in Wellington (and likely most other places), which may mean hiring a metal guitarist who will likely utilise the tabulated part. Another potential benefit of this dual notation system is showing that the part is actually playable by mortals. Due to the majority of my undergraduate study focusing on jazz and classical guitar, I have written out both forms of notation to a fairly meticulously level.

Another issue that I grappled with was how to provide frameworks for improvisation in my written scores. When showing a number of colleagues the MIDI representations of the *Chimera Suite*, a common remark was “I wouldn’t even know how to begin playing over that!” While this concern is potentially rooted in the ‘bebop/hard bop’ sensibilities instilled by tertiary jazz training, there are a number existing examples including the avant-garde approaches of John Zorn’s *Naked City*, the tenor sax and trombone solos off *Construction + Destruction* in Darcy James Argue’s *Brooklyn Babylon* suite, timbral and atonal approach in Dan Weiss’s album *Starebaby*, and the Coltrane-esqe sheets of sound approach by Clown

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123 Tipping, “Outside In,” 103.
Core saxophonist, Sam Gendel. The *Chimera Suite* is thematically rich enough that soloists can draw upon the pre-written material as well.

In this chapter, I have identified and gathered the genetic material found in jazz and extreme metal that I use to construct my analysis in the next two chapters. All three works analysed in the next chapter possess various combinations of the conventions identified above and serve as existing ‘experiments’ from which I have gleaned a number of compositional approaches in order to create the *Chimera Suite*.

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CHAPTER 2: Through-composed form, heaviness, and the dialectic of freedom and control in the music of Between the Buried and Me, Tigran Hamasyan, and Dan Weiss

This chapter analyses three works that exhibit a range of jazz and extreme metal conventions identified in the previous chapter: Between the Buried and Me’s ‘Silent Flight Parliament’, Tigran Hamasyan’s Grid Suite, and Dan Weiss’ ‘Annica’. After briefly defining the relevant musical concepts in this introduction, I use the following categories to frame my analyses of these three works according to the conventions they demonstrate: (1) through-compositional form, (2) heaviness and (3) the dialectic of freedom and control. In some instances, pieces exhibit more than one of these conventions, and I address this crossover. As each musical work appears in the analysis, I will provide a brief background and discography of each artist along with some of the surrounding context of the work.

Types of through-composed forms

In nineteenth-century music, the general term ‘through-composition’ is used to describe a work with non-repeating, consecutive movements. This concept was further explored throughout the 1960s and 70s by both minimalist composers and ‘prog-rock’ artists and more recently by bands in the ‘post-millenial rock genre’. In his article ‘Understanding Through-Composition in Post-Rock, Math-Metal, and other Post-Millennial Rock Genres,’ Brad Osborn categorises through-composed forms using two determining factors: the existence or non-existence of thematic unity, and the existence or non-existence of large multi-sectional units. Osborn defines these large multi-sectional units as ‘section groups’,

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125 All figures (transcriptions, spectrograms, tables), aside from the purchased score of Dan Weiss’ ‘Annica’ (Figure 2.20), are my own. The transcription of guitar parts in the analysis of Between the Buried and Me’s music were informed by the band’s self-published guitar sheet music book; however, I have corrected a number of notational errors to match the band’s audio recordings.
127 Radiohead is one of the most popular post-millenial rock bands that commonly uses this type of form. See: Brad Osborn, Everything in its Right Place: Analyzing Radiohead (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).
which are built from song sections that display shared musical characteristics such as timbre, texture, harmony and rhythm.

While Osborn identifies four discrete types of through-composed forms, I will only be discussing (Type 3) one-part polythematic forms, and (Type 4) multi-part polythematic forms, since both types are common conventions of extreme metal and multi-part polythematic forms are common in modern jazz orchestra composition. All three works analysed in this chapter, as well as all five movements of the *Chimera Suite*, also make use of one or other of these forms. Exemplified in Osborn’s article by contemporary grindcore band The Dillinger Escape Plan, one-part polythematic (Type 3) through-composed forms are largely responsible for extreme metal’s aural manifestation as a ‘collection of tenuously connected riffs’.

Individual sections in a one-part polythematic form share no thematic unity with one another, and therefore do not consist of any section groups. Sections will often move from one another at a brisk and jagged pace in extreme metal, creating a chaotic formal structure as a type of sonic transgression.

Multi-part polythematic forms (Type 4) are widely used in a number of modern jazz orchestra compositions due to their inherent ability to recapitulate thematic ideas in a large-scale piece. Sections and section groups in a multi-part polythematic form rely on creating coherency outside of the main thematic material through other salient musical parameters such as rhythm, harmony, meter, timbre, or lyrics. In the music of Between the Buried and Me, pieces are often presented with the conventionally ‘tenuous’ aesthetics of a one-part

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129 Osborn analyses The Dillinger Escape Plan’s ‘Sugar Coated Sour’ for this particular type of form, see, Osborn, “Understanding Through-Composition in Post-Rock,” 21-22.

polythematic form but are later revealed (often through the recapitulation of a ‘chorus-like’ section) to be a multi-part polythematic form.

As I will show in this chapter with regard to Between the Buried and Me’s ‘Silent Flight Parliament’, as well as in the next chapter with the final movement of the *Chimera Suite*, ‘Kleos’, a musical work can possess multiple types of through-compositional forms that operate at a local (for example, movement, song) and global (such as, suite, album) level. In the context of a suite or ‘concept’ album (a format commonly found in extreme metal), a movement/song can derive its musical material from the global work to establish a greater sense of coherency. Between the Buried and Me amplifies this format even further through a global cumulative form. In cumulative form, the completed theme is foreshadowed by thematic fragmentation and development prior to its final presentation. In Between the Buried and Me’s *The Parallax II: Future Sequence*, this foreshadowing occurs throughout the album and crystallises in ‘Silent Flight Parliament’.

In outlining conventions of multi-part polythematic through-composed forms, Osborn discusses how some sections may replicate the function of a verse or chorus found in other popular formal structures by exhibiting verse- or chorus-like characteristics. These sections are typically non-recurrent hence Osborn’s labels ‘independent verse’ and ‘independent chorus’. However, due to the global through-composed form in Between the Buried and Me’s ‘Silent Flight Parliament’, both an ‘independent’ verse and chorus are recapitulations from the ‘independent’ sections of the album’s second track ‘Astral Body’ (I discuss this further below). In Chapter 3, I discuss the challenge of conveying the aesthetics of an ‘independent chorus’ in the *Chimera Suite’s* last movement, ‘Kleos’, without the aid of a vocalist, who would typically be responsible for enacting the verse- or chorus-like characteristics.

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131 The majority of Between the Buried and Me’s discography are concept albums which I identify in their short biography in this chapter.

Rhythmic concepts

I draw from Maury Yeston and Harald Krebs’ concepts of rhythmic dissonance where the cardinality of one layer of a rhythmic strata is not an integer multiple of another. The order of layers of shortest to largest longest rhythmic strata I use are as follows: tactus, beat, meter, and hypermeter. William Rothstein hypothesises that the hypermetric level can be further divided into a ‘surface hypermeter’ and an even larger ‘underlying hypermeter’; this higher level of structure occurs in Tigran Hamasyan’s ‘The Grid’ as well as in the ‘Fury Spawn’ and ‘Kleos’ movements of the Chimera Suite, where meters of unusual cardinality are placed inside a surface hypermeter (usually only one or two bars long) which is then repeated in integers of two to create an underlying hypermeter.

The sense of rhythmic difficulty and rhythmic ambiguity in the following three analyses, as well as in the Chimera Suite, is often created through means of metric malleability and metric modulation. Discussed in Chapter 1, contemporary jazz musicians often utilise these two concepts by modulating to, or implying, different levels of rhythmic subdivision, forcing the listener to reconstrue the meter or resist, trying to anticipate the rhythmic dissonance’s resolution; a similar musical ‘traps’ are enjoyed by fans of technical death metal.

Another way that these three artists (and I, in my own work) convey rhythmic difficulty is through the closely related concepts of Euclidean distribution, maximal evenness,
maximal individuation and diatonic rhythms. Meters of unusual cardinality are a common
convention of extreme metal and most often reflect a Euclidean distribution where the
meter’s cardinality is divided as evenly as possible by a number of onsets, usually tactus
groups of two or three. To convey rhythmic difficulty, these tactus groupings are outlined
through a riff’s various accents or, in the case of ‘The Grid’, the drum part. Derived from this
concept, Osborn distinguishes maximal evenness from Euclidean distribution as having
onsets spaced as far apart from one another.\textsuperscript{137} Maximal evenness is one of two aspects that
make up a ‘diatonic rhythm’; the other is maximal individuation, where an attack point’s
surrounding rhythmic groups are unique to itself.\textsuperscript{138} The term ‘diatonic rhythm’ is derived
from the diatonic scale’s ability to identify the tonic, and diatonic rhythms combine maximal
evenness and maximal individuation giving the rhythm an ‘enigmatic quality’ of ‘twisting or
tunnelling through time’.\textsuperscript{139} These components are all prevalent in the primary theme of Dan
Weiss’ ‘Annica’, which uses an 11/8 diatonic rhythm, and as such will be expanded upon
later in this chapter (See Figures 2.20 and 2.21).

\textbf{Through-composed Form}

Between the Buried and Me

Between the Buried and Me (also referred to by fans as BTBAM) emerged from the
North Carolina metal scene and have released nine studio albums and one EP since their
inception in 2001. Their 2007 concept album, \textit{Colors}, marked an evolution from their death-
metal and math-metal roots and presented a “65 minute opus of non-stop pummelling
beautiful music” in what the band self-categorises themselves as “adult contemporary

\textsuperscript{137} Brad Osborn, “Kid Algebra: Radiohead’s Euclidean and Maximally Even Rhythms,” \textit{Perspectives of New

\textsuperscript{138} Jeffrey Pressing, “Some Cognitive Isomorphisms between Pitch and Rhythm in World Musics: West Africa,

\textsuperscript{139} Brad Osborn, “Pyramid Song,” in \textit{Everything in its Right Place}. 
progressive death metal”.\textsuperscript{140} Since the release of \textit{Colors}, Between the Buried and Me have cultivated their unique sound through a number of recent album releases: \textit{The Great Misdirect} (2009); two-part concept EP and studio album \textit{The Parallax: Hypersleep Dialogues} (2011) and \textit{The Parallax II: Future Sequence} (2012); \textit{Coma Ecliptic} (2015), and \textit{Automata I and II} (2018). Each album showcases their ability to construct epic narratives, weaving in and out of genres both within the extreme metal realm, and externally through jazz, blues, country and many more.

Continuing the narrative of their 2011 EP, \textit{The Parallax: Hypersleep Dialogues, The Parallax II: Future Sequence} is a concept album that follows the story of the two main protagonists from the EP, and also builds on previous songs in their discography. The album’s narrative is presented in a non-linear fashion with the first track “beginning at the end,” where one protagonist is forced to watch as the other chooses to end humanity by towing a planet into the Sun, ending the universe.\textsuperscript{141}

Taking my cues from Osborn, my analysis will denote section groups using Roman numerals while individual section labels will be derived from their thematic material, usually the lyrics. I denote sections that are recapitulated or developed using a tally system, in contrast to Osborn’s use of the prime symbol as there are some instances where sections are recapitulated as many as nine times. If two sections in a section group are linked through various musical characteristics but are also different enough to warrant categorising as another section, I use consecutive letters (A, B, C) to denote this.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{141} Between the Buried and Me, \textit{The Guide to The Parallax II: Future Sequence} (self-published, limited release).
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
'Silent Flight Parliament'

The penultimate track on *The Parallax II: Future Sequence*, ‘Silent Flight Parliament’, possesses ‘local’ and ‘global’ Type 4 multi-part polythematic forms; thematic ideas from both within the song and from the greater album are recapitulated and developed. While I will be focusing on the ‘Jet Propulsion riff’ with regard to the local through-composed form and the globally-linked ‘independent’ verse and chorus from ‘Astral Body’, Figure 2.1 below shows the vast amount of subtle and overt connections I have identified within ‘Silent Flight Parliament’. For example, there are two iterations of the ‘Telos riff’ in Section Group V whose thematic material is derived from the eighth track off *The Parallax II: Future Sequence*, ‘Telos’. Investigation of these connections is a common occurrence on the band’s dedicated Reddit page, providing a clear example of the listening practices of extreme metal audiences.\(^{142}\) I have deliberately excluded a number of small fill/transitional sections from this table as they are often too thematically brief to convincingly identify a connection and are usually just thematic fragments of the surrounding sections.

\(^{142}\) This table is also partly dedicated to the r/BetweenTheBuriedAndMe subreddit, providing a comprehensive list for fans (like myself) who have an affinity for figuring out this band’s complex music. See: Between the Buried and Me’s Reddit page, accessed February 6, 2019, https://www.reddit.com/r/BetweenTheBuriedAndMe/. 
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section Group</th>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Jet Propulsion riff</td>
<td>0:01</td>
<td>Guitar riff arpeggiates C# minor, E+, D°, G#7(b9), G#7(b9)/F#. Piano plays quarter note triads on top. Drums play tom backbeat groove.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jet Propulsion riff</td>
<td>0:32</td>
<td>Drums play backbeat with cymbal on all quarter notes. Bass plays counterpoint melody</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jet Propulsion riff</td>
<td>0:48</td>
<td>Piano and drums both play compound time – no backbeat. Guitar lead line enters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jet Propulsion riff</td>
<td>1:04</td>
<td>Guitar leads line harmonized. Drum’s double kick plays sixteenth notes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jet Propulsion transition</td>
<td>1:20</td>
<td>A major, F# minor, G° arpeggios.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>Goodbye chords</td>
<td>1:30</td>
<td>Chord progression taken from the ‘chorus’ of Telos (5:32).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Goodbye chords</td>
<td>1:50</td>
<td>Tremolo bass plays roots of Goodbye chords.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>Astral Body riff</td>
<td>2:07</td>
<td>Minor version of Astral Body verse riff (1:37).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Night Owl transition</td>
<td>2:18</td>
<td>Descending arpeggiated riff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Astral Body riff</td>
<td>2:20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Night Owl</td>
<td>2:33</td>
<td>Dominant version of the minor Astral Body riff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Night Owl transition</td>
<td>2:44</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Astral Body rif</td>
<td>2:47</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>I See All chords</td>
<td>2:58</td>
<td>E minor to C major progression.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>LYGTR rhythm</td>
<td>3:05</td>
<td>Rhythm from Lay Your Ghosts to Rest (0:01).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LYGTR rhythm B</td>
<td>3:20</td>
<td>Transposed down a minor third. Rhythm developed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Telos transition</td>
<td>2:29</td>
<td>Transition lick from Telos (0:25).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LYGTR rhythm</td>
<td>3:30</td>
<td>Harmonised 3rds guitar lead line played over ‘LYGTR’ rhythm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LYGTR rhythm B</td>
<td>3:45</td>
<td>Sustained harmonised guitar over top</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Telos transition</td>
<td>3:54</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>Telos riff</td>
<td>3:57</td>
<td>Arpeggiated guitar riff from Telos (2:04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Over and Over riff</td>
<td>4:11</td>
<td>(This is the only section I couldn’t identify a connection)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Over and Over transitions</td>
<td>4:20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Telos riff</td>
<td>4:23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Over and Over riff</td>
<td>4:38</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LYGTR rhythm</td>
<td>4:50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>I See All chords</td>
<td>4:58</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Night Owl transition</td>
<td>5:05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII</td>
<td>Astral Body chorus</td>
<td>5:13</td>
<td>Chorus from Astral Body (3:52)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Astral Body chorus</td>
<td>5:37</td>
<td>Drums shift to ride cymbal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>Telos rhythm</td>
<td>6:02</td>
<td>Rhythmic pattern from Telos (0:01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seek The Day transition</td>
<td>6:08</td>
<td>Mixolydian transition lick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What Is He riff</td>
<td>6:09</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seek the day transition</td>
<td>6:24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Event Description</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:26</td>
<td>Guitar riff from <em>Lay Your Ghosts to Rest</em> (5:35).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:41</td>
<td>What Is He riff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:55</td>
<td>Seek The Day transition</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6:57</td>
<td>LYGTR riff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IX Night Owl riff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IX Night Owl transition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:11</td>
<td>Creep In chords</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:39</td>
<td>Creep In chords</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:03</td>
<td>Vocals enter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:19</td>
<td>Open The Valve chords</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:35</td>
<td>Bass and drums enter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:06</td>
<td>Open The Valve chords</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:26</td>
<td>Seek The Day chords</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:47</td>
<td>Seek The Day riff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:05</td>
<td>Seek The Day riff B</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:23</td>
<td>Seek The Day riff B</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:32</td>
<td>Seek The Day riff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:50</td>
<td>Seek The Day riff B</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:59</td>
<td>Lead line with guitar still soloing.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seek The Day transition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:24</td>
<td>Seek The Day chords</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:35</td>
<td>Seek The Day chords</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:45</td>
<td>Seek The Day chords</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:07</td>
<td>Second vocal line added</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:28</td>
<td>Screamed vocals enter. Played in power chords</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:37</td>
<td>Drums busier</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:46</td>
<td>Lick repeated multiple times</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:57</td>
<td>Strings/harp enter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13:13</td>
<td>Vocals enter. Bass line added</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13:29</td>
<td>Original guitar riff enters.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:01</td>
<td>Vocals harmonised. Drums play quarter note on cymbals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:17</td>
<td>Drums busier - cymbals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:33</td>
<td>Guitar lead line enters. Screamed vocals enter. Double kick sixteenth notes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:49</td>
<td>Guitar lead line harmonised. Drum plays cymbals on every 8th note</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:03</td>
<td>Transposed triplet idea</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 2.1** (Through-composed form in ‘Silent Flight Parliament’)

Reflecting the symmetrical nature of the album’s overarching narrative, what I call the ‘Jet Propulsion riff’ (Figure 2.2) both opens and closes the ‘Silent Flight Parliament’ track and is the most salient aspect identifying its local multi-part polythematic form. Each sixteen-
bar section repeats the primary theme, a melancholic arpeggiated guitar riff, twice before
developing through-compositional layering of melodies, rhythms and textures.

![Guitar 2](image)

**Figure 2.2** (‘Silent Flight Parliament’ – Jet Propulsion riff)

The introduction of ‘Silent Flight Parliament’ (Section Group I, see Figure 2.1)
consists of four of these sixteen-bar sections; when compared to the brisk pace which Type 3
or 4 through-composed sections are usually played in this album and extreme metal in
general, this imbues a sense of teleology that is augmented even further in the final section
group.

In Section Group I, both guitars and bass begin by playing the riff in unison while
drums play a cymbal-less backbeat with continuous sixteenth-note tom fills. There are also
no vocals for the entirety of this section group, which is one of the main differences between
this section group and its reflection at the end. The drum groove developed in Jet Propulsion
riff\(^\text{II}\) gives the impression of going 'half time' by marking out the quarter note pulse with
cymbal strikes and abandoning the sixteenth note fills for a standard rock backbeat. The only
other development in this section is in the bass line, which plays a contrapuntal melody to the
guitar riff which also continues for the rest of the section group (see Figure 2.3 below).

The Jet Propulsion riff’s potential for metric malleability is shown in Figure 2.3
through the change of pulse from duple time to compound time. This is accomplished by
accenting the first four dotted quarter notes in the guitar and bass riffs as well as in the hi-
hat shuffle groove of the drums. Because of this accent pattern, listeners will likely interpret the meter here as two bars of 6/8 and one bar of 2/4, rather than the previous 4/4 meter. The guitar lead line is also introduced here, which is then re-harmonised in thirds in the final section. The final and 'complete' Jet Propulsion riff has the drums return to playing sixteenth-note subdivisions, this time on the kick drum, along with playing the aforementioned accents on the crash instead of the hi-hats, increasing the intensity for this section group’s final iteration of the riff.
Abruptly and unexpectedly changing from an extended transitional riff (Section Group XIV), the Jet Propulsion riff’s chord progression is recapitulated by strings, with the vocal hook entering in the next section, singing: “Jet propulsion disengage. Dancing towards our future. A future of nothing, a future towards nothing.” Narratively, this marks Prospect 1’s (the main protagonist) realisation and acceptance of the inevitable end of all life at the hands Prospect 2 (the other main protagonist). The entire band enters in Jet Propulsion with both guitars playing the original riff and vocals singing the new melody.
line up an octave (see Figure 2.4). The drums play a combination of the grooves from Jet Propulsion riff\(^1\) and\(^\,\)\(^2\); a half-time backbeat with tom fills and cymbal strikes that mark the half-note pulse. Apart from the addition of a harmonised vocal line, development in Jet Propulsion riffs \(^{\#\#\#}\) and \(^{\#\#\#\#}\) is primarily through the drum groove as it abandons the half time snare backbeat. The kick drum plays a steady eighth-note pulse with quarter-note cymbal strikes, then combines elements from the grooves of Jet Propulsion \(^{\#\#}\) and \(^{\#\#\#}\): a dotted quarter-note hemiola played in the cymbals and continuous sixteenth-note kick drums (Figure 2.4).

The final two sections, Jet Propulsion riff \(^{\#\#\#\#\#}\) and \(^{\#\#\#\#\#\#}\) (Figure 2.5), abandons the clean vocals for a growled, “goodbye to everything,” as well as temporarily reintroducing the snare backbeat in the first repeat.

By layering additional elements after each sixteen-bar section, the band avoids musical stagnation; this is especially important in extreme metal where sections/section groups come and go at a rapid pace. Layering in a multi-part polythematic form also allows for new combinations of elements taken from previous iterations of sections; for example, the drum groove in Jet Propulsion \(^{\#\#\#\#}\) is a combination of the tom fills in Jet Propulsion riff\(^1\) while the half time backbeat is an element from Jet Propulsion \(^2\). Taking inspiration from BTBAM, I extensively utilise sectional layering in the Chimera Suite, especially if a thematic idea is dwelt on for an extensive amount of time such as the layered section of the ‘Event Horizon’ movement, which I discuss in the next chapter.
Figure 2.4 (‘Silent Flight Parliament’ – Jet Propulsion riff, 14:17-14:33)
Figure 2.5 ('Silent Flight Parliament' – Jet Propulsion riff, 14:49-15:09)

**Linked independent verse and chorus of ‘Astral Body’**

When considering ‘Silent Flight Parliament’ locally (as a single track/composition), Section Groups III and VII are respectively an independent verse and an independent chorus. However, when observed through a global (album-level) lens, these two sections are actually derived from the independent verse and chorus of ‘Astral Body’, the second track of the album. I have termed this global connection a, 'linked independent verse/chorus'.

As shown by Figure 2.6, narrative textual development, screamed vocals, busy contrapuntal instrumental parts and metric turbulence through non-isochronous meters, all
imbue the ‘Silent Flight Parliament’ Section Group III with verse-like qualities. The two-bar phrases of the guitar riff will often end with a short guitar fill played in sixteenth notes in a sort of call and response with the vocal part, which conveys equal importance in both instrumental and vocal parts; a contrast to chorus-like structures where importance is weighted towards the vocals.

Comparing the ‘Silent Flight Parliament’ ‘Astral Body’ verse (Figure 2.6) to the original ‘Astral Body’ verse (Figure 2.7), the most apparent contrast between the two linked independent verses is in their tonality; the ‘Astral Body' riff is based in B major while ‘Silent Flight Parliament' is in B minor. Both the metric structure and drum groove (sixteenth note kick drum backbeat) are almost identical, in addition to the vocal phrasing being very similar between the two. The polyphonic texture of the ‘Astral Body’ verse, on the other hand, is one of the aspects that makes this global connection rather covert and likely to be missed by first (or even fiftieth!) time listeners. Being the highest in pitch, Guitar 2 holds the lead-like melody while the ‘Astral Body’ riff, played by Guitar 1, is played in the background as a rhythm guitar part. The 'response' fills played between each iteration of the main riff also differs between the two songs. Fills in ‘Silent Flight Parliament’ are likely derived from other material throughout the album, but due to their briefness any connections I could try make would be purely speculative.

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Figure 2.6 (‘Silent Flight Parliament’ – ‘Astral Body’ independent verse excerpt 2:26-2:32)
Figure 2.7 (‘Astral Body’ – ‘Astral Body’ independent verse excerpt, 1:30-1:53)
Both choruses found in ‘Astral Body’ and ‘Silent Flight Parliament’ are preceded by sections that exhibit some of the 'verse' characteristics described above: narrative textual development, screamed vocals, and equal instrumental and vocal importance. The verse to chorus 'release' commonly found in popular music forms is created through the change from harmonic, textural and metric 'turbulence' to 'stability'. Astral Body's preceding section (3:40-3:52, Appendix A) is constructed from the F whole-half diminished scale, whose symmetrical characteristics obscure the tonal center, while the preceding section in ‘Silent Flight Parliament’ (5:04-5:13, Appendix B) is based in the Phrygian Dominant mode, which functions as a large scale V chord, and is then resolved with the ‘Astral Body’ chorus's entry.

Both choruses operate within the key of F# minor and utilise functional tonal harmony, in contrast to the majority of the songs from the album, which are usually modal or harmonically ambiguous. Along with 'clean' vocals, this is one of the key signifiers of an independent chorus in Between the Buried and Me's music. Both guitars play rhythm guitar parts with power and bar chords allowing the focus to be on the vocals. To me, the most interesting point of comparison between these two choruses is in the vocal part. The second half of ‘Astral Body's’ chorus (see Appendix A) introduces an additional vocal line; a fragmented version of ‘Silent Flight Parliament's’ (see Appendix B) vocal line that foreshadows Prospect II's decision to end humanity.

While these examples are only two of the various themes recapitulated in ‘Silent Flight Parliament’, they show how Between the Buried and Me uses both global and local Type 4 multi-part polythematic cumulative forms to give attentive listeners seventy-two-minute climactic telos which only gets amplified with additional listenings and extra-musical investigations through books, blogs, and Reddit threads. Their intricate weaving of these musical ‘traps’ is one of the main inspirations for composing the Chimera Suite and, as such, I explore this approach throughout all five movements, with themes cumulating towards the
last movement, ‘Kleos’. A specific aspect that I draw upon, found in both the narrative
timeline and global and local through-composed forms of *The Parallax II: Future Sequence*,
is how the work ‘begins at the end’; a common convention of pieces that utilise a cumulative
form. Robert Morgan and Mark Spicer discuss this sense of inevitability, observing that
“temporal forms are ‘organic,’ possessing an evolutionary character that makes their every
movement a consequence of the preceding one, with the entire structure unfolding toward a
final, predetermined conclusion” and that “the resultant effect in such songs, at least to my
ears, is usually as if these separate melodies were somehow always destined to fit together,
and once this has been achieved then musically the song has nowhere else to go.”
In a way, this notion is mirrored in my growing up listening to Between the Buried and Me; as one of
the first metal bands I was exposed to, it was inevitable that they have become an integral
part of my musical identity and individual voice.

Tigran Hamasyan and the Grid Suite

Recognised primarily for his incorporation of Armenian folk music into his
compositions and improvisations, Tigran Hamasyan’s individual voice is an amalgamation of
influences from jazz, electronic music, extreme metal and classical music, among others. He
engages with a complex tapestry of styles, which he seamlessly weaves in and out of.
Hamasyan has released eight studio albums and three EPs of varying instrumentations.
Notably, Hamasyan also won first prize in the 2006 Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz
International Piano Competition.

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Hamasyan identifies the final two compositions off his 2015 album Mockroot, ‘The Grid’ and ‘Out of The Grid’, as a mini-suite (as such, I will refer to these two compositions collectively as the Grid Suite). ‘The Grid’ refers to the rhythmic pattern that forms the foundational element of the whole suite and ‘Out of The Grid’ signifies an attempted departure from this pattern. Hamasyan plays piano with overdubbed synthesisers throughout the two pieces (in various YouTube videos, he solely uses piano). He is joined by Sam Minaie on electric bass (often with an octave down effect), and Arthur Hnatek on drums and live electronics.

As seen in Figure 2.8 and Figure 2.9 below, all sections of the Grid Suite are derived from the thematic material presented in Introduction from Song Section I, which I have labelled the ‘Grid riff’; while this may hint at a (Type 2) multi-part monothematic through-composed form (only consists of one theme), there are a number of thematically unrelated melodies played over the harmonic and rhythmic material derived from the Grid riff, situating the suite as a multi-part polythematic through-composed form instead. I have separated the Grid riff into three distinct thematic elements: chords/arpeggios, bass line and rhythm. ‘Grid arpeggios’, which only exist when the Introduction’s various sections are recapitulated, include the other two thematic elements as the rhythm is implied from the arpeggio’s contoural accents as well as the bass line being derived from the root notes of each arpeggio. The ‘Grid bass line’ always utilises the same pitch pattern (G E♭ B G F C) however, its rhythmic pattern doesn’t always precisely reflect the rhythmic pattern derived from the attack points of the Grid arpeggios (5 5 7 5 5 5) and instead follows their duration relationships which can be verbalised as: short, short, long, short, short, short. The third element, the ‘Grid rhythm’, displays metric malleability as well as possessing a Euclidean distribution of tactus groupings.
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Section</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>0:01</td>
<td>‘Grid arpeggios’ played by solo piano.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>0:07</td>
<td>Drums and bass enter playing ‘Grid bass line’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>Melody 1a</td>
<td>0:35</td>
<td>G Phrygian Dominant melody played by solo piano over ‘Grid rhythm’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Melody 1b</td>
<td>0:50</td>
<td>Drums and bass enter with Grid bass line. piano plays G pedal and chord stabs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Melody 1a</td>
<td>1:05</td>
<td>Melody 1 recapitulated with drums and bass playing Grid bass line.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Melody 1b</td>
<td>1:20</td>
<td>Identical to Melody 1b.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1:34</td>
<td>Grid arpeggios played by solo piano and synth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1:49</td>
<td>Drums and bass enter with Grid bass line. Grid arpeggios are now descending.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>Melody 2</td>
<td>2:17</td>
<td>Developed Grid bass line played in unison by piano and bass.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Melody 2</td>
<td>2:32</td>
<td>Additional melody with chords played by piano.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Melody 2</td>
<td>2:46</td>
<td>Piano melody transposed diatonically up a 6th.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Melody 2</td>
<td>2:54</td>
<td>Piano melody transposed back to original pitches except played an octave higher. Drums play 4/4 time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>Solo</td>
<td>3:00</td>
<td>Sub-octave bass plays Grid bass line.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Solo</td>
<td>3:08</td>
<td>Piano solo over Grid bass line.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Solo</td>
<td>3:47</td>
<td>Piano left hand plays Grid bass line in unison.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>Melody 3</td>
<td>5:10</td>
<td>Metric modulation from 5/16 = dotted quarter (get graphics. Melody is played over a modulated Grid bass line. Final phrases of the melody play unmodulated Grid arpeggios.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>5:25</td>
<td>Grid arpeggios from Melody 3 used to modulate from dotted quarter back to 5/16. New arpeggiated chord progression played over the Grid rhythm.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Figure 2.8** (Through-composed form in ‘The Grid’)

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<tr>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>Melody 4</td>
<td>0:01</td>
<td>E Dorian melody played by solo piano.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX</td>
<td>Melody 5</td>
<td>0:15</td>
<td>Drums and bass enter. Piano and bass melody play melody over Grid rhythm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Melody 5</td>
<td>0:30</td>
<td>Addition synth melody added.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>Melody 6</td>
<td>0:47</td>
<td>Piano and bass play melody with piano arpeggiating sixteenth note subdivisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grid Rhythm</td>
<td>0:53</td>
<td>Chords played with fragment of Grid rhythm. Drums play a backbeat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Melody 6</td>
<td>0:54</td>
<td>Identical to Melody 6 section</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grid Rhythm</td>
<td>1:00</td>
<td>Chords played with fragment of Grid rhythm. Drums play a backbeat. Each ‘Grid’ Rhythm section is linked by a five sixteenth note piano fill</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Grid Rhythm</td>
<td>1:04</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:09</td>
<td>Grid Rhythm I</td>
<td>Harmonically modulated to original Grid bass line with no rhythmic fragmentation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:11</td>
<td>Grid Rhythm II</td>
<td>Grid arpeggios played in compound meter</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1:19</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Grid arpeggios played in compound meter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:35</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Drums only play the start of each grouping</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:43</td>
<td>Polymeter</td>
<td>Metric modulation from 5/16 to half note. Two polyrhythms, A and B</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:00</td>
<td>Polymeter</td>
<td>Melody starts at the temporal ending of polyrhythm B</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:09</td>
<td>Melody 7</td>
<td>Phrygian harmonic melody played in unison</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:25</td>
<td>‘Grid’ Bass line</td>
<td>Grid bass line played in unison with a drum backbeat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:56</td>
<td>Melody 8</td>
<td>Metric modulation back from half-note back to 5/16.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:14</td>
<td>Melody 8</td>
<td>Drums and bass enter playing a fragmented Grid bass line</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:27</td>
<td>Melody 8</td>
<td>Complete Grid bass line played</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:45</td>
<td>‘Grid’ Pedal rhythm</td>
<td>G bass pedal played with a developed Grid rhythm.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:00</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Grid arpeggios played over developed Grid rhythm.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:14</td>
<td>Melody 9</td>
<td>Melody played in unison over Grid rhythm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:30</td>
<td>‘Grid’ Pedal rhythm</td>
<td>Developed Grid rhythm recapitulated with drums fills.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Figure 2.9 (Through-composed form in ‘Out of The Grid’) |

In the track notes from the album, Hamasyan hints at how the rhythmic elements of the ‘Grid riff’ can be assigned to the different levels of rhythmic strata: “It’s based around a grid-like rhythmic pattern, which is two bars of 4/4 that is grouped in 5, 5, 7, 5, 5, 5/16 notes”. Following Hamasyan (and shown in Figure 2.10), the tactus is felt in a sixteenth-note subdivision, the non-isochronous (NI) meters are determined by the attack points of their respective groupings and the surface hypermeter is felt as two bars of 4/4 or thirty-two sixteenth notes, the sum of the various meters. Not discussed by Hamasyan, however, is the underlying hypermeter that, the various section groups are built from: either two, four, eight or sixteen repetitions of the surface hypermeter.

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147 Hamaysan’s ‘beatbox’ style vocals can be heard throughout his discography and signify the pulse of the tactus.  
Each NI meter in the Grid riff is built from the combination of tactus groupings of either two or three sixteenth-notes. Because tactus groupings cannot be extrapolated from the Grid arpeggios below the metrical level due to the lack of contoural accents, the drum groove reveals this information instead. Indicated by the various cymbal strikes shown in Figure 2.11, each NI-meter is divided into groups of three sixteenth notes then either one or two groups of two sixteenth-notes.

Discussed in this chapter’s introduction, the tactus groupings in the Grid riff exhibit a Euclidean distribution of the 32 sixteenth-notes over 13 onsets, creating the following pattern: $3 \ 2 \ 3 \ 2 \ 3 \ 2 \ 2 + 3 \ 2 \ 3 \ 2 \ 3 \ 2$. A sense of rhythmic difficulty, and subsequent ‘heaviness’ (which I discuss in the next chapter section), as well as metric ambiguity, is conveyed to the listener by having the drums state these groupings. This sense is augmented even further when it is retrospectively revealed to the listener that the metric layout of the Grid riff fits into a surface hypermeter of two bars of 4/4.

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149 Lerdahl and Jackendoff, A Generative Theory of Tonal Music, 69.
One similarity between the Grid riff and the music of Meshuggah, of which Hamasyan is a fan, is that listeners can hear a single riff in multiple ways, which may also change with subsequent listenings. First time listeners will likely be unaware of the hypermeter’s presence in the opening three minutes of ‘The Grid’, however, following section Melody 2 \( \| \) (2:46, Figure 2.12), Melody 2 \( \| \) (2:56, Figure 2.13) is the first time the two 4/4 bar hypermeter is explicitly revealed and can retrospectively inform the listeners of the two listening strategies (two bars of 4/4 or 5 5 7 5 5 sixteenth-notes).

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Figure 2.12 (‘The Grid’ - Melody 2\textsuperscript{II}, 2:46-2:54)
Comparing the above figures to Figure 2.14 below, we can observe that the original Grid bass line has been developed slightly. The bass line in Melody 2 || and || still retains the pitch pattern of G Eb B G F C however, the order of meters have been rotated from 5 5 7 5 5 5 to 5 7 5 5 5 5, still retaining Euclidian distribution. This new pattern can be observed in the attack points in the drum part played on the kick and snare drums. In both versions of Melody 2, the B in bar three and G in bar four now have a descending sixteenth-note preceding them. By creating this large contoural and therefore rhythmic accent, the syncopation that is created by overlaying the 4/4 hypermeter become much stronger as the bass line no longer has to rely on the drum groove as a rhythmic reference for syncopation. A possible reason for changing
‘The Grid’ rhythm’s metric layout to 5 7 5 5 5 is that the third attack point coincides with beat 4 of the new 4/4 meter; if it were in the original rhythmic layout, the third attack point would land on the weaker beat of ‘3 and’.

![Image of 'The Grid' rhythm's metric layout]

Figure 2.14 ('The Grid' – original 'Grid' bass line)

Out of ‘The Grid’s’ Section Group XI presents yet another rhythmic framework for the Grid riff to exist within; one that implies a compound groove. Both the piano arpeggios and bass line are identical to the original presentation of the Grid riff which means the drums are solely responsible for instigating this metric malleability, as shown in Figure 2.15 below:
Instead of dividing the thirty-two sixteenth-note hypermeter (two bars of 4/4) by thirteen onsets into the initial tactus groupings of $3 2 3 2 3 2 2 + 3 2 3 2 3 2$, the compound groove is created from assigning all but one of ten onsets as groups of three sixteenth-notes: $3 3 3 3 2 3 3 3 3$. As overlaid in Figure 2.15, the new attack points imbue the Grid riff with another set of syncopations and accents creating yet another listening strategy. It seems to me that by placing the recapitulation of the Grid riff after multiple sections/section groups that exhibit hefty metric ‘turbulence’, Hamasyan uses the inherent metric ‘stability’ of this compound-based groove to instill a sense of telos and signify a ‘return’ to the rhythmic ‘grid’ he was escaping from.

Figure 2.15 (‘Out of The Grid’ – compound groove, Section Group XI, 1:19-1:43)
By presenting the three listening strategies discussed above (NI meters, 4/4, and compound) throughout the *Grid Suite*, Hamasyan lays a musical ‘trap’ for listeners, instilling the penultimate section (Introduction ||||, 1:35) to the suite’s climax with rhythmic vagueness and therefore expectation.\footnote{Justin London argues that ‘metric vagueness’ occurs when the listener is unable to construe any ‘particular metrical organisation’, compared to ‘metric ambiguity’ where listeners may construe any one of multiple metrical organisations, influenced by the passage’s context. London, *Hearing in Time*, 85-86.} In the Introduction |||| section (Figure 2.16, 1:35), the drum part abandons all of the previous Euclidian rhythms and instead only plays the onsets of each meter, which, combined with the lack of dynamic or contoural accents of the piano arpeggios, provides a ‘blank’ rhythmic canvas for the next section’s metric modulation to be overlaid (I discuss this section at the end of this chapter with regard to heaviness through form).

Another rhythmic approach that Hamasyan utilises to develop the thematic material in the ‘Grid Suite’ is changing the pulse through metric modulation. Section Group VI (5:10-5:25) introduces the first instance of this where the duration of the 5/16 meter forms the new meter’s dotted quarter-note pulse. The tactus subdivision also subsequently changes into eighth notes although, as shown in Figure 2.17, the original tactus rate is played as a sixteenth-note quintuplet at the end of the phrase as a means to modulate back to the original pulse. The following spectrogram and table (Figure 2.18 and Figure 2.19) serve as a visualization of how the interonset intervals (IOI) stay the same while the tactus modulates.
Figure 2.16 (‘Out of The Grid’ - Intro, 1:35-1:43)
Figure 2.17 (‘The Grid’ – modulation, Section Group VI, 5:10-5:25)
Figure 2.18 (‘The Grid’ – modulation spectrogram, 5:05-5:20)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attack Number</th>
<th>IOI (seconds)</th>
<th>Attack #</th>
<th>IOI</th>
<th>Attack #</th>
<th>IOI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0.57</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 (new section)</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2.19 (Inter-onset intervals of Figure 2.14)\textsuperscript{152}

Similar to how Hamasyan offsets metric ‘turbulence’ through a metrically ‘stable’ recapitulation, this instance of metric modulation is used to dissipate the tension built from the preceding solo section (which I discuss later in this chapter with regard to the notion of freedom and control). Both instances of metric modulation in the ‘Grid Suite’ that I discuss in

\textsuperscript{152} These IOI’s were calculated from the timestamps of each marker overlaid using Pierre Couprie’s EAnalysis software. Due to human error and visually ambiguous note beginnings, marker placements are approximate and as such, the IOI’s will occasionally deviate from the expected durations, although these deviations are marginal.
this chapter slow down the pulse radically and create a sensation akin to the ‘breakdown’ sections found in thrash metal and death metal. Hamasyan combines rhythmically difficult aesthetics of extreme metal with aspects of improvisation, harmony, and timbre derived from jazz and Armenian folk music to loudly convey his individual voice as a performer and a composer.

**Heaviness**

As identified in Chapter 1, heaviness is considered as one the defining aesthetics of metal. Originally attributed to metal’s timbral extremes, the term ‘heaviness’ is used here to describe musical aspects that metaphorically convey its connotations of density, weightiness and unwieldiness. Building on Calder Hannan’s argument that rhythmic difficulty augments heaviness (I explore this aspect found in the *Chimera Suite* in Chapter 3), I argue that ‘heaviness’ can be ‘amplified’/’re-amplified’ with subsequent recapitulations and developments of a section found in through compositional forms. In an argument I believe is extended by large-scale through-composed form, Robert Fink relates the teleological “arcs of tension and release” over extended periods of time to the sexual orgasm, where the longer the timescale, the greater the musical payoff. Here, I use the examples of the recapitulating diatonic rhythmic pattern in Dan Weiss’s ‘Annica’, the ‘Lay Your Ghosts to Rest’ riff in Between the Buried and Me’s ‘Silent Flight Parliament’, and the polymetric climax of Tigran Hamasyan’s ‘Out of The Grid’, to show how heaviness can develop over time.

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154 See the list provided in FN 107.
Dan Weiss and ‘Annica’

Dan Weiss is a world-renowned jazz drummer and tabla player. While still playing jazz and Indian music, Weiss joined doom metal band Bloody Panda during 2006-2007, which became the catalyst for the release of his 2018 album, Starebaby. Joined by other jazz musicians with proclivities for metal, Ben Monder (guitar), Craig Taborn (synth), Matt Mitchell (synth) and Trevor Dunn (bass), Starebaby is a fusion of jazz, metal and electronic music with influences including “everything from jazz to classical Indian music to Xenakis and Stockhausen to Autechre to Badalamenti to High on Fire to Meshuggah and beyond”.157

Inspired by artists High on Fire, Bernard Parmegiani and the soundtrack from season 3 of television series Twin Peaks (2017), ‘Annica’ is a lethargic and ominous track that explores heaviness through timbre, dissonance and through-composed form.158 ‘Annica’ is largely pre-composed, though some sections have been left open for improvisation (see section B in Figure 2.20).159

One of the contributing elements to Weiss’ desired ‘OMINOUS’ performance direction (Figure 2.20) is the recurring diatonic rhythmic theme. Annica’s main rhythmic motif is an 11-pulse rhythm that is ‘maximally even’, dividing it by four onsets into groups of 2 3 3 3. Each onset is also ‘maximally individuated’, meaning that the surrounding notes are unique to that onset. This can be seen in Figure 2.21. As discussed in this chapter’s introduction, the combination of these two elements, maximal evenness and maximal individuation, combine to form a diatonic rhythm whose ‘enigmatic character’ is well within

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158 Dan Weiss, email message to author, December 5, 2018.
159 On the recorded track, the ‘25:22’ bars of section C are ‘opened up’ indefinitely for the pianist repeat non-metrically on the second repeat of the form.
‘Annica’s’ ‘OMINOUS’ aesthetics.\textsuperscript{160} Although there are some discrepancies between Weiss’s score and the recorded version on Starebaby, ‘Annica’s’ form remains largely the same and is repeated twice (the second time stays on section C until the end).\textsuperscript{161} The first six minutes of the tune gradually increase in intensity and in volume through layering of textures and timbres (this can be seen in the spectrogram of Figure 2.22). The first A A’ B A is played by the pianos and guitar with pause marks as indicated on the score; the drums and bass enter partway through the form in the second A’ section. Contrary to the form indicated on the score (A A’ B A A’ C), I perceive A as an introductory section and A’ as the start of the form due to the bar of rest at the end of the A section, which is filled with a drum break. As shown in Figure 2.22 below, the durations between the recapitulation of the A’ sections aren’t normative, giving the listener the impression there is no underlying hypermeter, another contributing factor to the ominous, enigmatic mood set by this piece.

\textsuperscript{160} Brad Osborn, “Pyramid Song,” in \textit{Everything in its Right Place}.  
\textsuperscript{161} Weiss’s score indicates an extra ‘A’ section, which is absent from the recording. There are also some rhythmic discrepancies that aren’t reflected in the recording either such as tempo and note placements.
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Figure 2.20 (‘Annica’ complete score)\textsuperscript{162}

\begin{verbatim}
\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{annica_complete_score.png}
\end{center}
\end{verbatim}

(3), 2, (3) (2), 3, (3) (3), 3, (3) (3), 3, (2)

Figure 2.21 (‘Annica’ – diatonic rhythm)

\textsuperscript{162} This score was purchased from Dan Weiss; subsequent figures feature my own transcriptions and representations.
Figure 2.22 also shows how each subsequent A’ section after A’ 1 marks an increase in intensity brought on by the layering of the drum groove. The drum groove in A’ 1 is sparse compared to the drum groove at A’ 2, which begins accenting melodic figures using ‘ghosted’ snare hits, as well as the groove at A’ 3, which plays an open high-hat eighth-note pulse. The combination of the diatonic rhythmic motif and the absence of a discernable hypermetric structure gives the feeling of “tunnelling through time” towards section C, the longest, lowest in pitch, and most metrically stable section in the form.\(^{163}\)

After the anti-climactic descent into the 90-second, non-metrical atonal solo piano section, the diatonic rhythm from section C is recapitulated eight times at full volume, a complete contrast to the preceding section. The term ‘a wall of sound’ is commonly used to describe extreme metal’s propensity for loudness and can be related to heaviness’s metaphorical relationship to “size, weight and density.”\(^ {164}\) By contrasting the rugged incline of intensity and loudness in first six minutes as well as the sparse preceding piano section, the

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sudden and unexpected apparition of Section C’s ‘wall of sound’ created by the distorted bass, synth, and guitar timbres (Figure 2.23) overwhelms the listener and doesn’t relent for almost two minutes, which is by far the longest sectional duration of the piece.

The second movement from the Chimera Suite, ‘Aergia’ is largely inspired by ‘Annica’, roughly emulating the accumulated momentum in ‘Annica’s’ first six minutes, then dropping in intensity with a non-metrical piano melody, and finally recapitulating the work’s primary rhythmic motif at full intensity. By analysing this piece and subsequently composing a movement inspired by it, I hoped to investigate and emulate how ‘heaviness’ can be developed using a slowly unravelling through-composed form, a contrast to the brisk-paced through-composed forms used by Between the Buried and Me, and the other movements of the Chimera Suite.

Figure 2.23 (‘Annica’ – Section C ‘wall of sound’, 6:49 – 8:10)

‘Lay Your Ghosts to Rest’ riff in ‘Silent Flight Parliament’

The reintroduction of the ‘Lay Your Ghosts to Rest’ riff at Section Group IV in ‘Silent Flight Parliament’ (Figure 2.24) is one of the main climactic moments that stands out to me in The Parallax II: Future Sequence. On first listen, this riff’s heaviness would likely
be perceived by listeners from the contrast to previous sections which are fast-paced, vocal-oriented, and constantly changing harmonically and rhythmically. However, upon listeners’ realisation of the interconnectedness of the riff (and others) to the rest of the album through repeated listenings, the teleological payoff is greater due to its epic timescale and relevance to the narrative. The elapsed time between the riff’s exposition on the second track of the album, ‘Lay Your Ghosts to Rest’ (from which the section’s title is derived, Figure 2.25), and its recapitulation in ‘Silent Flight Parliament’ is a total of 51 minutes and 24 seconds.

The lyrics leading into this section, “I see all, I hear all”, inform the listener that the ‘Night Owls’, the supreme beings who created this universe, have been in control the entire time. When retrospectively considering ‘Silent Flight Parliament’s’ global multi-part polythematic cumulative form and how there are musical links to almost every track of the album, the revelation of an album-wide conspiracy augments this moment, adding a level of emotional weight not possible in shorter pieces.

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165 One could liken the Night Owls to the members of Between the Buried and Me, who have constructed this ‘expanded musical universe’ and control everything that occurs within it.
Figure 2.24 (‘Silent Flight Parliament’ – Lay Your Ghosts to Rest riff, 3:04)
The Grid Suite

Section Group XII is one of the main climactic points in ‘Out of The Grid’ and arguably the entire Grid Suite. Due to the metric modulation of this section, where the pulse is dramatically reduced, this section is akin to a ‘breakdown’ section commonly found in deathcore and ‘tech’ metal that often causes audience members to headbang. Derived from the thematic material of the ‘Grid riff’, two concurrent riffs (riff A and riff B, Appendix C) are played as a polymeter at this new pulse in order to create rhythmic dissonance. Both riffs in this section play the Grid bass line/chords however, due to their rhythmic groupings, they go in and out of phase with each other; because they are essentially identical, no sense of

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hierarchy can be perceived between the two riffs. Overlaid in Figure 2.26, the red markers denote riff A’s attack points which retain the durational relationship of ‘short–short–long–short–short–short’ from the ‘Grid rhythm’ (see Figure 2.27 for durations), while the blue markers denote riff B, which plays a constant 5/8 hemiola at this section’s new tempo (see Figure 2.28 for durations).

Figure 2.26 (‘Out of The Grid’ – spectrogram of Section Group XII polymeter, 1:43–1:52)
Riff A repeats the Grid chords four times before starting a new melody; because there is no perceived hierarchy between the riffs, listeners can either interpret this melody as a new section, or an anacrusis to the next section. Riff B’s hemiola resolves at the beginning of the new section.

The way that ‘heaviness’ is amplified through the recapitulation subsequent modification of thematic ideas have shaped a number of the ‘climaxes’ found in the *Chimera Suite*. The climax for the first movement, ‘REgenesis’, is heavily based on the ‘breakdown’ aesthetic that is found in the above section of ‘Out of The Grid’, where the pulse is modulated, creating a sense of rhythmic difficulty for listeners. The ‘Lay Your Ghosts to Rest’ riff of ‘Silent Flight Parliament’ not only creates heaviness through its large scale recapitulation but also through the ‘chugging’ on a single note or chord, two strategies that appear in the Chimera Suite’s final movement, ‘Kleos’.

The dialectic between freedom and control, as identified by Robert Walser in *Running with the Devil*, is one of the key aspects of the metal aesthetic. Walser explains that the guitar
solo, a common feature in heavy metal but less so in extreme metal, signifies freedom from the ‘oppressive’ power of the rhythm section. While the rhythm section’s role is to “rigidly organize and control time”, the soloist ‘escapes’ this through virtuosic soloing that utilises complex techniques such as sweeping or tapping and that is often separate from the groove. Olivia Lucas expands on this idea in her analysis of Meshuggah’s music stating that their “use of looping riffs that are consistently cut off by a rigid 4/4-based hypermetric structure enacts a ritual of freedom and control”.

By identifying and analysing this notion in the piano solo of Tigran Hamasyan’s ‘The Grid’, (which is primarily considered a jazz recording), I have gleaned some compositional approaches and insights from this existing example of a jazz and extreme metal crossover. While I cannot decide how players will solo in the Chimera Suite, a number of the ‘controlled’ grooves use ostinatos or elongated modal harmony, inspired by ‘The Grid’s’ solo section, for soloists to attempt escape from.

Tigran Hamasyan’s piano solo in Section Group V of ‘The Grid’ exemplifies the dialectic of freedom and control, not only through the idea of the soloist being pitted against the rhythm section, but also through its harmonic and rhythmic elements. Hamasyan explores this idea through the use of superimposed harmony and parallel chord movements as well as simultaneously instigating rhythmic dissonance through arrhythmic patterns.

The bass, drums and later the left hand of the piano, all lay out the harmonic and rhythmic canvas of the solo using the ‘Grid bass line’ subsequent rhythm introduced earlier in the piece. Because the bass line is constructed using only five notes (G, Eb, B, F and C), this allows Hamasyan to explore modal variations by altering the unused degrees of the scale; in the first half of the solo, Hamasyan navigates through three distinct modes: Phrygian, Phrygian Dominant and Mixolydian with a lowered second scale degree.

The second half of the piano solo starts (Figure 2.29) by utilising pitches from the $E_b$ minor pentatonic scale. This is a temporary departure from the home key that draws a parallel to the idea of freedom and control, the ‘control’ being the original key of G minor and the ‘freedom’ being the new, distantly-related key of $E_b$ minor, a harmonic space in which only the right-hand piano exists. While the harmony might be ‘free’, the rhythmic ideas while exploring this space are still confined to the main rhythmic pattern. After eventually ‘resolving’ back to G Phrygian Dominant, Hamasyan this time attempts to break free of the rhythmic pattern by superimposing a quarter-note hemiola that starts on the second sixteenth-note of the first bar (3:57, Figure 2.30). By playing a quarter-note hemiola on top of the irregular rhythmic pattern, the two pulses occasionally converge to create a rhythmic accent that aligns with the onsets of each grouping.
Figure 2.29 (‘The Grid’ – excerpt from second half of piano solo, 3:47-3:54)
This hemiola also sets up the next rhythmic idea by also displacing its beginning by a sixteenth note. This new pattern, shown in Figure 2.31, consists of a five-note cell, which is repeated four times, each time with a different durational length.
Figure 2.31 (‘The Grid’ – variable duration motif, 4:01-4:08)
Analysing this in terms of freedom and control, each iteration of the cell can be thought of as an attempt to escape from the oppressive bass line, with Hamasyan trying a number of rhythmic strategies before ultimately resolving to the downbeat of the next hypermeter, once again being ‘controlled’. Failing this rhythmic ‘escape’, Hamasyan once again resorts to superimposing a blues-based Eb minor pentatonic idea (Figure 2.32), where the rhythm is pushed and pulled while imitating blues microtonality through ornamentation. This to me represents a synergy between metal and jazz, two of Hamasyan’s influences, the ‘math metal’ bass line and metric structure, paired with traditional jazz/blues vocabulary.
Figure 2.32 (‘The Grid’ – Piano solo blues licks, 4:09-4:19)
Conclusion

All three pieces analysed in this chapter; Between the Buried and Me’s ‘Silent Flight Parliament’, Tigran Hamasyan’s *Grid Suite*, and Dan Weiss’ ‘Annica’, exhibit aspects of through-composition, heaviness and the notion of freedom and control. These three concepts serve as the foundation for the *Chimera Suite*. The global multi-part polythematic form of *The Parallax II: Future Sequence*, eventually cumulating in ‘Silent Flight Parliament’ inspired the formal structure of the whole suite with thematic ideas cumulating toward the final movement, ‘Kleos’. Tigran Hamasyan’s *Grid Suite* greatly informed the various rhythmic approaches to recapitulating thematic ideas through metric malleability and metric modulation. The thematic ideas from the *Chimera Suite* undergo various ‘mutations’ that often draw upon these conventions. Another aspect of the *Grid Suite* that informs my approach to using meters of odd cardinality is highlighting the onsets of Euclidean tactus grouping in order to create rhythmic ambiguity but still inform the listener of the rhythm’s regularity. Finally, the inspiration from Dan Weiss’ ‘Annica’ is especially salient in the suite’s second movement, ‘Aergia’, derived from the slow but impending momentum created by ‘Annica’s’ lethargic tempo and gradual layering of musical elements.

One of the recurring ideas in these three pieces as well as the *Chimera Suite* is the need for repeated listening to discover and ‘unlock’ the various musical connections in order to escape from the musical ‘traps’ laid out by the composer. A testament to the depth all three of these compositions, is that after the countless hours I have spent both casually listening and analysing them over the course of this research, I still find these pieces riveting and feel like there is plenty left to discover. As a composer, I strove to instill this level of depth to the *Chimera Suite* in my composing.
CHAPTER 3: ANALYSING THE CHIMERA SUITE: through-composed form, heaviness, and the dialectic of freedom and control

One of the values of jazz that I identified in Chapter 1 is the pursuit to possess an ‘individual voice’ or unique musical identity. Performers and composers often achieve this through incorporating elements of national identity into their music. One relevant example of this is how Tigran Hamasyan draws upon Armenian folk music and poetry in his 2015 album, Mockroot.\textsuperscript{168} In the case of the Wellington jazz scene, Nick Tipping’s ethnographic study found that one of the recurring elements in most New Zealand jazz identities is the freedom to “borrow freely from, imitate, or immerse themselves in jazz from other cultural contexts,” without the “kind of angst” other international scenes might feel when playing in jazz’s hegemonic American styles.\textsuperscript{169} Tipping goes on to discuss that while Wellington jazz musicians often evade “tortured attitudes towards authenticity,” some still show respect to the culture and meanings behind the music they are “trying to emulate” through intimate study of its history.\textsuperscript{170} As discussed in Chapter 1, my own musical identity is primarily formed by my interactions with the global jazz and extreme metal scenes, as well as the local Wellington jazz scene. While still paying respect to the lineages of both jazz and extreme metal, the Chimera Suite is my attempt to syncretise these musical identities together to express my own ‘chimeric identity’ and distill my own individual voice as a composer.

Each of the five movements of the Chimera Suite has been composed to exist as a stand-alone piece, each possessing its own sonic palette. However, due to interweaving of thematic ideas discussed below, this suite is primarily meant to be enjoyed in one continuous sitting to ensure the experience of the long-term teleological payoffs in the suite’s fifth and

\textsuperscript{170} Tipping discusses the Richter City Rebels as one of these cases, a ‘New Orleans’ style marching band who openly present both their New Zealand and ‘emulated’ identities. See, Tipping, “Outside In,” 158-163.
final movement, ‘Kleos’. In this chapter I use my analysis of ‘Kleos’ to show the sheer quantity of connections and that almost every aspect of this movement connects to discrete elements of the Chimera Suite in some way. While ‘Kleos’ was the most appropriate choice for this analysis due to the cumulative aspect of its form, the other four movements are also deeply connected with one another. As most of the elements I have strived for in creating this suite crystallise in Kleos, the majority of my discussions will begin with this final movement, then trace elements chronologically from the beginning of the suite. The order of movements is as follows: ‘REgenesis’, ‘Aergia’, ‘Event Horizon’, ‘Fury Spawn’, ‘Kleos’.

In this chapter, I first briefly discuss some of the practical considerations I have taken in composing this suite. I then spend the bulk of the chapter analysing the ‘Kleos’ movement with regard to the key elements I discussed in Chapter 2: through-composed form, heaviness, and the dialectic of freedom and control. With regard to through-composed form, I focus on the global multi-part polythematic cumulative through-composed form of ‘Kleos’ and the ‘mini-movements’ it contains: ‘Kleos One’, ‘Kleos Two’, and ‘Kleos Three’, tracing back its thematic ‘mutations’ found throughout the suite. I also discuss how I imbue the final mini-movement of ‘Kleos’, ‘Kleos Three’, with the aesthetic qualities of an ‘independent chorus’, a formal structure unique to through-composition.\(^{171}\) Next, I discuss three aspects of heaviness I have explored extensively in this suite: timbral, rhythmic and formal. I do this through first explaining my approach in emulating the vocal styles and functions of extreme metal vocalists using the horn section using a combination of atonal clusters and Bob Brookmeyer’s approach to synthetic harmony.\(^{172}\) I then also discuss my exploration of heaviness through rhythmic difficulty, observing how all three rhythmic approaches found in ‘Kleos’ possess an underlying hypermetrical structure, creating a musical ‘trap’ for listeners.

\(^{172}\) Rayburn Wright, *Inside the Score*, 49-53.
to enjoy and overcome. I close the chapter with a discussion of Robert Walser’s notion of the dialectic of freedom and control in an excerpt of the suite’s third movement, ‘Event Horizon’, and how I extend that notion by composing a number of temporally unique melodies which eventually get truncated by the rhythm section’s hypermetric authority.\footnote{Robert Walser, \textit{Running with the Devil}, 53-54.}

\textbf{Considerations in Composing the Chimera Suite}

In approaching the creation of an aural identity for this suite that can be perceived as both jazz and extreme metal, I considered the various issues with regard to genre as discussed in Chapter 1, such as timbre, harmonic and rhythmic approaches, and form. As discussed in the introduction to this thesis, the most common way for artists to achieve this balance is through the use of genre tropes such as the swing ride pattern in the opening of The Diablo Swing Orchestra’s ‘Balrog Boogie’ or the satirical II-V-I melodic outline in Clown Core’s \textit{Toilet}. All of the musical elements in the \textit{Chimera Suite} maintain an aesthetic ‘balance’ between jazz and extreme metal, often augmenting an aspect from one genre with conventions (identified in Chapter 1) from the other. The most immediate example of this is augmenting the instrumentation of a modern jazz orchestra with an eight-string guitar and a six-string bass, both key timbral identifiers of the extreme metal genre. Other conscious decisions include: voicing structures derived from the Thad Jones and Bob Brookmeyer compositional schools, alluding to the ‘triplet’ swing feel, incorporating solos for specific instruments in unique musical environments, and the insistence on ‘groove’, a value that extreme metal band Meshuggah also shares.\footnote{Brad Angle, “Interview: Meshuggah Discuss Their New Album, Koloss,” Guitar World, last modified January 4, 2013, accessed February 3, 2019, https://bit.ly/2TKgGME.} Aspects like melodic phrasing and pitch choices are also primarily informed by the contemporary jazz idiom but manifest intuitively.
Inspired by Tigran Hamasyan’s Grid Suite and Dan Weiss’ ‘Annica’, I devised a number of themes throughout the Chimera Suite that exhibit the rhythmic concepts of ‘Euclidian distribution’ and ‘maximal evenness’ (also defined in Chapter 2). I use these two concepts not only for their potential to create metric ambiguity, but also to convey extreme rhythmic difficulty and precision which is necessary to convey the extreme-metal aesthetic of ‘heaviness’ in rhythmically difficult sections.

As discussed in Chapter 1, in terms of instrumentation as related to genre, the distorted electric guitar is one of the key signifiers for all genres of metal, with bands often having two members that are assigned to the roles of lead guitar and rhythm guitar. This exploration of timbre is crucial to connecting this composition to extreme metal, since the jazz orchestra instrumentation I use is a genre convention strongly associated with jazz. Harris Berger and Cornelia Fales show that metal has become increasingly ‘heavy’ since its inception and as such, extended-range guitars exhibiting seven or more string have become increasingly common in the last two decades as a means of pursuing this heaviness.175

When I began composing this suite, I intended to capture the timbral qualities of Meshuggah and other similar bands such as Animals as Leaders and Periphery, which led to my decision to utilise an eight-string electric guitar. I decided to use only one electric guitar, usually performing in the role of a rhythm guitarist, so that I would be forced utilise other members of the band in creative and unexpected ways to emulate common functions of an extreme metal guitarist. A practical consideration in regard to writing for eight-string guitar is the inclusion of both standard notation and guitar tablature. When this suite is eventually recorded/performed it is a likely possibility that I will need to hire an extreme metal guitarist, as few jazz guitarists would be proficient on eight-string guitar. The unwieldiness and added physical complexity of an eight-string guitar lends itself to being notated using guitar

175 Harris M. Berger and Cornelia Fales, “‘Heaviness’ in the Perception of Heavy Metal Guitar Timbres,” 187.
tablature as it explicitly informs the performer where on the instrument to play the music. I have found that the majority of the guitar parts in the Chimera Suite are in a register that would be clearer if notated using a bass clef; however, after consulting a number of guitarists and composers, the general consensus was to notate parts using the traditional treble clef with a constant 8vb line underneath. I also hypothesise that since most jazz guitarists are familiar with guitar tablature, they will likely utilise both systems to supplement the various weaknesses found in each approach to notation, such as range in standard notation, and rhythm in guitar tablature.

Partway through the compositional process of this suite, I realised that the piano part was rather sparse. That is, I had only been writing piano parts in sections possessing thinner textures or quieter dynamics. My solution to this, taking inspiration from Clown Core, Tigran Hamasyan, and Dan Weiss’ Starebaby, was to have the pianist ‘double’ their instrument with a keyboard synthesizer. Not only does the synthesizer allow for extensive timbral distortion but a monophonic synthesizer can be used to fulfill both melodic lead and bass line roles, and thus can be musically active throughout the duration of the suite. Because synthesis affords unlimited timbral possibilities, one immediate notational issue was conveying the desired timbre while still allowing for the pianist to express their ‘individual voice’. I achieve this by only providing minimal timbral directions as shown in Figure 3.1:

![Timbral Directions](image)

**Figure 3.1** (piano doubling with synth)
Another way that I decided to adopt genre practices of extreme metal in this composition was by composing in such a way that the roles of each musician emulate the roles of an extreme metal band. In traditional large jazz ensembles, the melodic role is usually delegated to the horn section and the ‘timekeeping’ role is delegated to the aptly named ‘rhythm’ section. To me, this implies a sectional hierarchy where the rhythm section is often placed in a subservient role; to support the horn melody. Contrastingly, due to the absence of traditional notions of melody in extreme metal vocals and emphasis on riffs rather than melodic ideas, all members of an extreme metal band often appear to possess a more or less hierarchal status. In composing this suite, one of the primary challenges was to use the horn section in a creative way that would allow, players to frequently assume a melodic role, and yet still remain active participants when the focus is given to the rhythm section. While the roles of the guitar, bass and drums in an extreme metal band are filled by their respective counterparts in the jazz orchestra, I emulate the timbral and rhythmic properties of the vocal role with the horn section, using varying levels of dissonance to approximate the natural distortion that occurs because of the vocalist’s intense physical assertion and aggression.176 Because of the decision to utilise only one guitar, I also occasionally use the horn section to emulate the role of the second guitarist, playing sustained chords or having the baritone saxophone and bass trombone play the guitar riff in unison. For example, in the piano solo of the second movement of the suite, ‘Aergia’ (bars 48-55), the horns are used to create an ambient ‘pad’ by breathing through their instruments. This section takes inspiration from the way Between the Buried and Me often uses ambient textures to sonically fill up softer sections, such as the guitar solo section in ‘Telos’ (3:30-4:24).177

One last consideration in my compositional approach was how to deal with improvisation as an individual and collective practice common in jazz. Extended solo improvisation is a rarity throughout this suite, with most movements only having one or two solo sections. Taking an approach derived from Maria Schneider and Darcy James Argue, I often provide the soloists with only the most crucial information such as the desired mode/modal palette and appropriate performance directions such as ‘ominous’ or ‘GO BIG!’.

Unlike the practices of jazz composer such as Duke Ellington and Bob Brookmeyer where a specific musician may be given a solo due their ‘individual voice’, solo sections in the *Chimera Suite* are decided by the instrument’s qualities (timbre, technical facility, range). Unlike typical jazz orchestra/big band practices where soloists often take an ‘open’ solo where a section is repeated as many times as deemed fit by the performer or conductor, I chose to exclude these kind of sections in order to have meticulous control over the form’s pacing.

I also occasionally use the convention of collective improvisation, often found in large jazz ensembles like the Charles Mingus Big Band and Sun Ra’s Arkestra, to represent a temporary relinquishment of power from the composer’s whims allowing for textural chaos to ensue. At the end of the ‘Event Horizon’ movement, I use a strategy often employed by the Mingus Big Band to introduce collective improvisation where two soloists first trade eights, then solo simultaneously, and eventually get ‘mobbed’ by the rest of the band plunging into collective chaos. I view this as a conventional overlap between the two genres as extreme metal pushes ‘conventional musical aesthetics to the point where (the) music collapses into what is conventionally classed as noise’.

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Through-compositional form in the Chimera Suite: the ‘mutations’ of ‘Kleos’ and the ‘Aergia Ending’

The last movement of the Chimera Suite, ‘Kleos’, was inspired by the global multi-part polythematic cumulative form of Between the Buried and Me’s ‘Silent Flight Parliament’ discussed in the previous chapter. The majority of the thematic ideas in ‘Kleos’ are derived in some way from the previous movements of the suite, creating large-scale coherency and a fifty-minute teleological payoff. ‘Kleos’ is divided into three mini-movements, labelled ‘Kleos One’, ‘Kleos Two’, and ‘Kleos Three’, that each explore a rhythmic approach to an underlying hypermetric structure built from four bars of 7/4, or twenty-eight quarter-note pulses. I will be discussing this approach later in the chapter in regard to heaviness through rhythmic difficulty. Each mini-movement is ‘bookended’ by a thematic idea taken from the conclusion of the suite’s second movement, ‘Aergia’, (labelled the ‘Aergia’ Ending), which evolves after each subsequent iteration until it reaches completion at the end of the piece.

‘Kleos One’

Two riffs, Kleos riff A and Kleos riff B, are used to structure this first mini-movement’s form as A, B, B’, A. Kleos riff A (Figure 3.2) is a chromatic riff built from four pitches (B, C, Db, D) surrounding the tonal centre of C. Combined with the specific pitch pattern and dynamic accents, the durational relationships of these notes distinguish the riff with unique characteristics allowing it to be presented in various ‘mutations’ throughout the suite.179

This ‘final mutation’ of the Kleos riff A has a cardinality of six quarter-notes, creating rhythmic dissonance with the 7/4 meter occurring simultaneously; this dissonance is resolved

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through the ‘polymetric cadence’ that occurs with each repetition of the twenty-eight quarter-note underlying hypermetric structure.\textsuperscript{180}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure3.2.png}
\caption{(Kleos riff A – ‘final mutation’, bars 1-9)}
\end{figure}

As with Kleos riff A, four pitches are used to construct Kleos riff B; however, rather than being chromatic, the pitches are built from the $\hat{1}, b\frac{3}{2}, 3,$ and $5$ of the Phrygian Dominant mode. This particular modal sound is used throughout Tigran Hamasyan’s \textit{Grid Suite} and in the ‘Night Owl’ riff from Between the Buried and Me’s ‘Silent Flight Parliament’, discussed in the previous chapter. Alongside situating the riff in extreme metal styles, I use also use Phrygian Dominant’s structural qualities as the minor third leap between the $b\frac{3}{2}$ and $3$.

degrees, and the tritone interval between the♭2 and ♭5 degrees creates an extremely clear melodic contour when combined with dynamic and rhythmic accents. The ‘final mutation’ of the Kleos riff B (Figure 3.3) has a cardinality of nineteen sixteenth-notes that achieves a rhythmic ‘Euclidean distribution’ through the tactus groupings of 3, 3, 2, 2, 3, 3, 3. Because this mini-movement is informed by Meshuggah’s rhythmic concept (which will be discussed later in this chapter), this riff uses Euclidean distribution to emulate the rhythmic aesthetics commonly found in a number of their riffs.181 Again, the durational relationships, as well as the dynamic and contoural accents are the key aspects of this riff that give the following mutations thematic unity.

One of the mutations of Kleos riff B occurs directly after its first presentation in this first mini-movement. As seen in Figure 3.4, both the tactus groupings and pitch contours are retained however, the riff’s length is doubled and is constructed from the D# Ionian b9 mode; a slightly brighter sounding mode that compliments the contrast between the horns’ ‘growled vocal’ section and the subsequent melodic section played by the saxophones.

Figure 3.3 (Kleos riff B – ‘final mutation’, bars 17-24)

Figure 3.4 (Kleos riff B – ‘final mutation’, bars 65-72)
The first presentation of Kleos riff A occurs in the 5/4 ‘breakdown’ section of the suite’s first movement, ‘REgenesis’ (bars 191-212, see Figure 3.5). The tactus of this section alternates between groupings of twenty sixteenth-notes and groupings of fifteen eighth-note triplets which are first divided in bar 194 into five beats and felt in compound time. However, in bar 198, the same riff is overlaid with three evenly spaced cymbal strikes ushering in the new metric modulation from the compound 15/8 meter into three bars of five eighth-note triplets. Comparing Figure 3.5 with Figure 3.6 shows how the ‘REgenesis’ Kleos riff A ‘mutation’ is presented within this NI (nonisochronous) meter as a truncated version of the Kleos riff A’s ‘final mutation’.

Three of the four pitches from ‘Kleos’ ‘final mutation’ are used with their respective durational relationships, retaining the elements required for listeners to connect the two together.

Kleos riff B appears in mutation for the first time in two instances in bar 34 of ‘REgenesis’. Here, the riff has been ‘spliced’ with the primary thematic idea of that movement, an E minor pentatonic pattern hocketed by the saxophone section in the introduction of the piece (bars 1-17), which I will term the ‘REgenesis riff’, shown in Figure 3.7. This occurs at the end of each four bar phrase (bars 37 and 41). Similar to the ‘Grid’ bass line’s harmonic malleability discussed in Chapter 2, Kleos riff B allows the tenor saxophone
melody, shown in Figure 3.8, to operate within the double harmonic major scale, a feature of which is the chromatic cluster surrounding the root note giving the melody its unsettling, dissonant sound.

Figure 3.7 (un-hocketed REgenesis riff)

Figure 3.8 ('REgenesis' - Kleos riff B 'mutation' with saxophone melody, bars 33-41)
Figure 3.9 shows the second Kleos riff B mutation which occurs in bar 211 of ‘REgenesis’, utilising the same 15/8 triplet modulation as Kleos riff A but instead has Euclidean tactus groupings of 3 2 3 2 2 eighth-note triplets. This metric ambiguity created from the tactus modulation and Euclidian distribution, and coupled with the brisk pace with which the grooves in the breakdown section of ‘REgenesis’ change, disguises the origins of both Kleos riffs A and B, allowing listeners to retrospectively ‘discover’ these subtle connections with repeated listenings.

Mutations of Kleos riff B also occur in the third movement, ‘Event Horizon.’

Underneath the horn’s call and response ‘vocal’ section at bars 50-65, the baritone saxophone and bass trombone play a dissonantly harmonised mutation of Kleos riff B, shown below in Figure 3.10. Towards the end of this section, the guitar and bass play power chords that are built using the notes from the baritone saxophone part as root notes. Power chords moving in
parallel harmonic motion are a common convention in all genres of metal, owing to their
tonal ambiguity and the ease with which they can be played on the guitar’s fretboard.¹⁸²

Figure 3.10 (‘Event Horizon’ – Kleos riff B ‘mutation’, bars 58-65)

The ‘Fury Spawn’ movement is somewhat the antithesis of the other four movements
in this suite. Aside from the ending where the final theme from ‘Aergia’ is recapitulated
(discussed this later in the chapter), ‘Fury Spawn’ uses brighter modes such as Lydian and
Mixolydian—modes that aren’t usually incorporated into the extreme metal palette—as well

¹⁸² Nicole Biamonte, “Triadic Modal and Pentatonic Patterns in Rock Music” Music Theory Spectrum 32, no. 2
as function tonal harmony. As such, the pitches of Kleos riffs A and B are modified in this movement while still retaining the melodic contour and durational relationships.

Shown in Figure 3.11, Kleos riff A is played as a piano melody in bars 234-245 of ‘Fury Spawn’, however, it has been spread out over two phrases with chords separating the call and response. Although placed in this new harmonic environment of A♭ Lydian, the riff still retains the melodic through diatonic stepwise motion, as well as the articulations and the durational relationships of the notes.

183 Robert Walser, Running with the Devil, 46.
The recapitulation of Kleos riff B occurs at the climax of the background section in the trombone solo (bars 194-201) and is played by all of the horns aside from the soloist. As seen in Figure 3.12 below, the main contour of the first half of the riff is played by the lead trumpet and the baritone saxophone, allowing the remaining instruments to fill in the harmony, while the second half is played by the lead and fourth trumpet and harmonised by the first alto and tenor saxophones. This is another instance where Kleos riff B’s mutation might go unnoticed, especially as it is part of the horns’ background figures.
The final section of ‘Kleos One’ utilises the final theme from ‘Aergia’ as its conclusion. I will, however, discuss this section in the analysis of ‘Kleos Three’ as the final and complete ‘mutation’ of the ‘Aergia Ending’ is located there.
‘Kleos Two’

The bulk of this mini-movement’s thematic material is drawn from the fourth (and previous) movement, ‘Fury Spawn’. I will discuss the rhythmic framework with respect to rhythmic difficulty later on, however, an important thematic idea to acknowledge from ‘Fury Spawn’ is the rhythmically dissonant bass line, shown in Figure 3.13 below, that pedals on the root note of each chord as it occurs. The rhythm of the ‘Fury Spawn’ bass line is constructed using a group of three sixteenth-notes then two sixteenth-notes, creating a five-note hemiola that continues throughout the movement’s second section (bars 31-95).

![Figure 3.13 (‘Fury Spawn’ – bass line, bars 39-42)](image)

‘Kleos Two’ ‘mutation’ of this bass line creates a similar rhythmically dissonant effect by having the first half of the bass line start with two groupings of five sixteenth-notes then adding two groupings of three sixteenth-notes. The second half slightly differs from this, only adding a grouping of two sixteenth-notes at the end. The complete bass line can be seen in Figure 3.14 below. Eventually, at bar 254, the original five sixteenth-note hemiola from Fury Spawn returns and continues until the end of the section.

![Figure 3.14 (‘Kleos’ – ‘Fury Spawn’ bass line ‘mutation’, bars 110-113)](image)
The arpeggiated chords played over the bass line by the guitar are also directly ‘mutated’ from the first four chords of ‘Fury Spawn’ (Figure 3.15), but have been disguised as ‘rootless voicings’ through the use of alternate bass notes (Figure 3.16). The harmonic rhythm of ‘Kleos Two’s’ chord progression is also significantly longer, changing every 28 quarter notes (four bars of 7/4) compared to the one or two bars ‘Fury Spawn’.

Figure 3.15 (‘Fury Spawn’ – guitar chord progression, bars 1-4)

Figure 3.16 (‘Kleos Two’ – reduction of guitar chord progression, bars 110-141)

Also shown in Figure 3.16, there is also an additional note (usually an extension) at the top of each chord to disguise its origins. For example, the voicing of the second chord from the ‘Kleos’ mutation, Eb-Δ7/B, is identical to third chord in ‘Fury Spawn’, aside from the Gb which makes the chord an Eb-Δ7, a drastically darker sound and the alternate bass note, which furthers this density and complexity by turning the chord from the Eb-Δ7 into BΔ7(#9 #11) chord (which is easier to notate as Eb-Δ7/B).

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184 One of the primary harmonic function of a jazz bass player is to ‘lay down’ the root notes of a chord. Because of this, chordal players can play ‘rootless voicings’ and still convey the desired harmony.
The background ‘canvas’ behind the piano solo in ‘Kleos Two’ changes dramatically at bar 238, due to a number thematic recapitulations played by each instrumental section of the band, as well as the drum part introducing a consistent quarter-note pulse in the hi-hats, informing the listener retrospectively that this mini-movement can be interpreted in 7/4 as well. This approach, which is expanded upon later in respect to heaviness through rhythmic difficulty, is derived from Tigran Hamasyan’s ‘The Grid’, where it is eventually revealed from the drummer playing quarter-note cymbal strikes, that the 5 5 7 5 5 5 sixteenth-note attack pattern can reside within a 4/4 meter.

The guitar voicings from the start of ‘Kleos Two’ are also transferred to the saxophones at bar 238 (both commonly use drop 2 voicings, making it an easy transition). These voicings are played as rhythmically even, cascading arpeggios as shown in Figure 3.17. By following the same order of pitches, the saxophones emulate the guitar’s sustained open strings which, when played concurrently with a partially-fretted chord, usually results in an arpeggio with an unusual melodic contour. This convention of rhythmically even cascading arpeggios is also used by the complete horn section in bars 82-113 of ‘Event Horizon’, as shown in Figure 3.18 below.

The polyphonic texture of the brass in ‘Kleos Two’ is derived from the multi-layered section found in ‘Event Horizon’, bars 149-258. Comparing Figure 3.19 and Figure 3.20, the trumpet parts are shown to play similar dense, staccato clusters in the same sixteenth-note tactus groupings as the preceding section of ‘Kleos Two’: 9 7 6 6.
Figure 3.17 (‘Kleos Two’ – cascading saxophone chords, bars 238-245)
Event Horizon - Cascading chords, bars 82-89
Figure 3.18 (‘Event Horizon’ – cascading horn section chords, bars 82-89)
The trombone parts are also derived from the same multi-layered section, seen by comparing Figure 3.20 to Figure 3.21, where a predominantly descending, syncopated melodic line is also played. The ‘Kleos Two’ version also copies the rhythmic ratio between
the first two notes of each phrase; the first phrase being three beats long and the second being only two.

Similar to how Between the Buried and Me use ‘fills’ at the ends of guitar phrases in ‘Silent Flight Parliament’ to reference previous material (see Chapter 2) both ‘Fury Spawn’ and ‘REgenesis’ are thematically linked through the guitar and bass lines. For example, the constantly ascending then descending arpeggiating movement in ‘Kleos Two’ (Figure 3.22) is taken from ‘Fury Spawn’s’ trombone solo section, where the guitar and bass play a similar line (Figure 3.23).

![Figure 3.22](image1)

**Figure 3.22** (‘Kleos Two’ – arpeggiated guitar and bass lines, bars 238-241)

![Figure 3.23](image2)

**Figure 3.23** (‘Fury Spawn’ – arpeggiated guitar and bass lines, bars 120-127)
The first ‘end-of-phrase’ reference in bar 241 (refer to the above Figure 3.22), is a short fragment of ‘Fury Spawn’s’ tutti section (Figure 3.24), which has been transposed and rhythmically altered slightly.

**Figure 3.24** (‘Fury Spawn’ – tutti section melodic fragment, bars 223-224)

The second (Figure 3.25), is linked to both ‘REgenesis’ and ‘Fury Spawn’ with a syncopated angular line; the rhythm is derived from bars 71-73 of ‘REgenesis’ (Figure 3.26), and the major seventh interval is from ‘Fury Spawn’, bars 103-105 (Figure 3.27).

**Figure 3.25** (‘Kleos Two’ – syncopated angular guitar and bass line, bars 244-245)

**Figure 3.26** (‘REgenesis’ – syncopated angular guitar and bass line, bars 71-73)

**Figure 3.27** (‘Fury Spawn’ – syncopated angular guitar and bass line, bars 103-105)
Comparatively subtler and briefer than the previous harmonic and rhythmic thematic ‘mutations’, the fills’ relationships with the other movements are likely to be missed by first-time hypothetical listeners. By incorporating a tapestry of these subtle connections throughout the *Chimera Suite*, active and repeated listenings are encouraged, allowing listeners to make their own discoveries and feel an intimacy with the music, connections that they may feel only they have discovered. The listening practices of death metal fans echo this sentiment, where familiarity is rewarded with the ability to evade the “twists, turns and traps” laid out by the music.\footnote{Eric Smialek, “Genre and Expression in Extreme Metal Music, ca. 1990–2015,” 153, accessed on January 21, 2019, \url{https://www.academia.edu/24562305/Genre_and_Expression_in_Extreme_Metal_Music_ca._1990_2015}.} Fans of Between the Buried and Me’s music (myself included) will recognise this aspect in the band’s compositional style, where the listener is almost ‘challenged’ to find all of the subtle connections laid out for them through repeated active listening.\footnote{I would estimate my one-sitting listenings of the full *The Parallax II: Future Sequence* album as easily upwards of one hundred sessions.}

The climax of ‘Kleos Two’, the tutti section, begins in the same way as the climactic ‘breakdown’ section of ‘REgenesis’ (bar 191-212, Figure 3.28); an ascending eighth-note triplet figure built from the first three notes of the major scale. This temporary one-beat destabilization of the tactus, shown in Figure 3.29, previously felt in sixteenth notes creates a massive release of tension accumulated from the metric turbulence and polyphonic layering of the previous section. After this, a sense of telos is created from the change in groove, the now brisk pace in which the melodies and harmonic rhythm is moving, and a number of simultaneous recapitulations of some of the main thematic ideas in the *Chimera Suite*; because these connections are reasonably overt, first time listeners will hopefully feel a familiarity with the material, even if they are unable to pinpoint its origins.
The tension created from the metrically ambiguous backbeat prior to ‘Kleos Two’s’ tutti section (bars 110-237) played in sixteenth-note groupings of 9 7 6 and 6, is dissipated by the drums part’s return to a 7/4 backbeat, a consistent pulse previously hinted at by the hi-hat in bars 238-253. The texture of the kick drum pattern coinciding with the now ‘original mutation’ of the ‘Fury Spawn’ bass line (a five sixteenth-note hemiola, Figure 3.30) links back to ‘Fury Spawn’s’ second section (bars 31-76, Figure 3.31), where a similar hi-hat-based backbeat groove is played over the bass and kick drum’s rhythmic pattern.

![Figure 3.28 ('REgenesis’ – triplet climax, bar 191)](image)

![Figure 3.29 ('Kleos Two’- triplet climax, bar 254)](image)
Figure 3.31 (‘Fury Spawn’ – bass line, bars 39-42)

Shown in Figure 3.32 below, both the guitar and piano parts play within a 5:4 polymeter, with the piano playing a displaced ‘REgenesis riff’ in octaves, which is again a connection likely to go unnoticed at first listen due to the melodic focus being on the horn section, as well as the timbral blending of the clean electric guitar and piano masking their individual melodic lines.
Bars 262-265 (Figure 3.33) simultaneously recapitulate the most salient parts of ‘Fury Spawn’: the climax of the trombone solo section, a mutated Kleos riff B; and the A♭ Lydian melody at the end of the movement and its preceding ‘tom-fill’ drum groove. Both melodies in ‘Fury Spawn’ are presented within an A♭ Lydian tonality; however, in ‘Kleos Two’, the bass line is pedaling an F, situating both melodies in the closely related mode of F Dorian.

The final section of ‘Kleos Two’, in which a slightly more complete version of the ‘Aergia’ Ending is overlaid, features an intricate drum part that plays the three most salient thematic rhythms of this section simultaneously. This is discussed later in this chapter with regard to heaviness and rhythmic difficulty.
‘Kleos Three’

In the same way that the narrative in Between the Buried and Me’s *The Parallax II: Future Sequence* begins at the end, the opening texture of ‘REgenesis’ is replicated in ‘Kleos Three’s’ first section. The ‘REgenesis riff’, an E minor pentatonic pattern, which is hocketed by the saxophone section, is played over metrically ambiguous ‘hits’ by the rhythm section.
along with the rest of the band (bars 1-16, Appendix D). It is only when the complete
REgenesis riff is transferred to the guitar and bass parts, and a consistent drum groove is
introduced, that metric stability is achieved (bars 17-33, Appendix D). The Kleos Three riff
(follows this same pattern where the complete line is first hocketed by the saxophone section
(bars 278-293, Appendix E) then transferred to the guitar part where it is played as one
continuous line (bars 294-333, Appendix E).

The metric phrasing of the Kleos Three riff is the subtlest connection I have woven
throughout this suite and is likely to result in the listener feeling a vague sense of familiarity
rather than being able to definitively pinpoint its various locations. To be understood as
‘mutation’, the metric phrase must be split into two nonisochronous meters and followed by
one meter of shorter length than the previous two meters combined. In the case of ‘Kleos
Three’, two groups of five sixteenth-notes are followed by a group of four sixteenth-notes, as
shown in Figure 3.34.

![Figure 3.34](image)

*Figure 3.34* (‘Kleos Three’ – Kleos Three riff metric phrasing)

Due to the rhythmic turbulence of the uneven phrase length, all of the following
examples are used in transition sections and are usually followed by a section of metric
stability.

The first instance of Kleos Three riff’s metric phrasing occurring in the *Chimera Suite*
is found in the transition section of the first movement, ‘REgenesis’ (bars 222-228, short
excerpt in Figure 3.35), between the movement’s ‘breakdown’ section and outro. Operating
at an eighth-note level, the 5 5 4 sixteenth-note metric phrase occurs twice here with both the
rhythm section and the saxophone section playing the accompanying riff.
The next example of this metric phrasing is in bars 18-20 (Figure 3.36) of ‘Event Horizon’, which again, is used as a transition between sections. This time, however, the isochronous meter is a bar of 4/4, or eight eighth-notes, which still fits the criteria required to be a part of this metric ‘strain’, as it is shorter in duration than the combined lengths of the non-isochronous meters. ‘Event Horizon’s’ last connection to the Kleos Three riff’s metric phrasing also occurs in bars 267-278 (Figure 3.37) and 295-298, where two groups of five eighth notes are followed by a group of nine eighth notes (which is written as 5/8 then 2/4).

Figure 3.35 (‘REgenesis’ – Kleos Three metric phrasing, bars 226-228)
Figure 3.36 ('Event Horizon' – 'Kleos Three' metric phrasing, bars 18-20)

Figure 3.37 ('Event Horizon' – 'Kleos Three' metric phrasing, bars 267-270)
‘Fury Spawn’ also contains two mutations of the Kleos Three riff’s metric phrasing found at each end of the trombone solo. The first occurrence (bars 97-102, Figure 3.38) also coincides with the tactus’ modulation from sixteenth-notes into eighth-note triplets. As with the previous examples, this mutation’s metric phrasing begins with two groups of five eighth notes followed by one isochronous meter; in this case a bar of 3/4 or six eighth notes.

The second mutation occurring in ‘Fury Spawn’ (Figure 3.39) changes the cardinality of the nonisochronous meters from two five-note groupings to two seven-note groupings, which is then followed by a bar of 2/4, or four eighth notes. This section, bars 228-245, also houses the ‘Fury Spawn’ mutation of Kleos riff A, which ushers in the metric modulation from the triplet eighth notes back into sixteenth notes.

**Figure 3.38** (‘Fury Spawn’ – ‘Kleos Three’ metric phrasing, bars 97-102)
Figure 3.39 (‘Fury Spawn’ – ‘Kleos Three’ metric phrasing, bars 234-245)

One of the features of ‘Kleos Three’ is that it has an ‘independent chorus,’ which is defined as a section that exhibits ‘chorus-like’ characteristics found in popular music forms.
(see Chapter 2). An independent chorus is identified through vocal attributes such as “narrative textual development” or a “repeated vocal hook utilizing thick textures”.187 However, as this suite is fully instrumental, these chorus-like attributes needed to be imbued in other musical ways. Some of the ways I have distinguished ‘chorus’ sections and ‘independent chorus’ sections are through rhythm and through timbral elements, among others (see Appendix F). In terms of rhythm, I emulate the metric stability created behind the vocals by rhythm section found in a typical pop ‘chorus’ by utilizing a primarily 4/4 backbeat, a contrast to the 7/4 backbeat and the warped 9 7 6 6 backbeat in ‘Kleos One’ and ‘Kleos Two’ respectively. Usually in extreme metal, one of the timbral signifiers of a chorus is frequent crash cymbal attacks, however, in the case of ‘Kleos Three’, I would argue that it is more the absence of the hi-hat timbre (a timbre usually associated with verses), that gives this section a chorus-like quality.188

The ‘vocal’ melody played by the brass in ‘Kleos Three’ (Appendix F, bars 303-333) is modelled after The Contortionist singer Michael Lessard’s ‘slurred speech’ approach, making the melody feel like it is dragging behind the pulse.189 With subsequent repetitions of the melody, another chorus-like convention, layers of ‘vocal distortion’ are added underneath, by way of dissonant harmonisation, mimicking the way various ranges of growled vocals would be overdubbed on top of clean vocals.

The ‘Aergia’ Ending in ‘Kleos One, Two and Three’

Each of the three mini-movements in ‘Kleos’ is bookended by the ‘Aergia’ Ending, named after the last section in the Chimera Suite’s second movement. After ‘Aergia’s’ ‘piano

188 Gregory McCandless, “Rhythm and Meter in the Music of Dream Theater” (PhD diss., Florida State University, 2010), 138.
solo’, this theme is presented three times, the first being fractured in half, then with each iteration ‘healing’ until the presentation of the third and completed version, which is then continued until the end of the piece. Each iteration can be seen in Figure 3.40, below.

Figure 3.40 (‘Aergia’ – complete rhythm of the ‘Aergia’ Ending)

This three-part structure is also reflected in ‘Kleos’ where the fractured themes are presented at the end of ‘Kleos One’ and ‘Kleos Two,’ and then all three mutations are presented at the end of ‘Kleos Three,’ concluding with the completed version. While the
rhythms and harmony of the ‘Aergia’ Ending in ‘Kleos’ are altered to fit the musical context, the dense synthetic harmony and similar durational relationships are identifiable elements allowing listeners to connect the themes together. Appendix G shows how the three iterations of the original Aergia Ending is reconfigured in all three mini-movements of ‘Kleos’.

One of my goals with the Chimera Suite was to create a work so replete with these kind of musical connections that listeners can go back and discover something new with every listen, creating a unique intimacy with the music. While the connections described above were very much conscious decisions, subconscious fragments of thematic ideas are littered throughout the suite, and reflecting on my own experience with Between the Buried and Me, listeners will likely create their own subconscious connections as they become increasingly familiar with the music.

Heaviness

Heaviness is a key value for the genre of extreme metal, and I use several strategies to emulate heaviness in the Chimera Suite. As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, ‘heaviness’ was initially perceived as a timbral aesthetic, but has since been expanded to include musical features that convey its connotations of size, density, and unwieldiness. While I briefly discussed emulating extreme metal’s timbral qualities in this chapter’s introduction, here, I expand on my approach of emulating the timbre and functions of an extreme metal vocalist using the horn section. Calder Hannan argues that heaviness can also be explored through rhythmic difficulty, which bands such as Meshuggah and The Dillinger Escape Plan convey through virtuosic precision and incomprehensibly large rhythmic structures.190 As such, the fifth and final movement of the Chimera Suite, ‘Kleos’, explores three different compositional approaches, one in each mini-movement, connected through a consistent underlying hypermeter but reconfiguring the lower levels of rhythmic strata: surface

190 Hannan, “Difficulty as Heaviness,” 455.
hypermeter, meter, beat, and tactus.

Emulating vocal ‘heaviness’

As discussed in this chapter’s introduction, one of my primary goals in composing this fully instrumental suite of music was to emulate the key functions and aesthetics of extreme metal vocals. Keith Khan-Harris, Ronald Bogue and Michelle Phillipov describe extreme metal vocals as being devoid of melody, and relegate the voice to “an almost exclusively percussive role”.\(^{191}\) I agree with the view that extreme metal vocals often have this rhythmic function. However, in lieu of pitched melody, the timbral contours created by the consonants and vowels give the vocals a form of melodic expressiveness.\(^{192}\) Through intense physical assertion and aggression, extreme metal vocals possess a ‘natural’ distortion, a sonic characteristic that creates a wide range of complex spectral energy.\(^{193}\) I use dense chromatic clusters as a compositional strategy to emulate this effect.

As explained by Smiałek, the spaces and shapes of the ventricular folds, the vocal tract, larynx, jaw height and lip shape all contribute to the creation of vocal formants that create timbral contours.\(^{194}\) To emulate the shifting of the various vocal formants, I employ an approach derived from jazz composer, Bob Brookmeyer, creating synthetic harmony through strong voice-leading of multiple parts.\(^{195}\) In my compositional process in these cases, I first constructed the ‘melodic’ contour and the rhythm of the vocal phrase with the instrument of the highest pitch, usually either the alto saxophone or trumpet, and then created a dense chromatic cluster underneath it. My selection of the cluster’s pitches is affected by a number

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\(^{195}\) Wright, *Inside the Score*, 118-121.
of variables including the type of vocal style I am imitating, the cluster’s location in the melodic phrase, the contour of the melodic line, and the timbral ‘brightness’ or ‘darkness’ that I desired. Each pitch in the cluster is then assigned a unique, conjunct melody, that when combined with the other pitches creates a tapestry of strong voice-leading. To ensure that the overall melodic contour derived from the highest pitch is retained, there is a balance between the subservient melodies that follow the contour and those that deviate; this is meant to emulate the uneven shift of vocal formants when vocalists change syllables or vowels. The clearest example of this approach can be found in ‘Kleos’s’ first mini-movement, Kleos One, where the full brass section is assigned the vocal role (see Appendix H).

Bars 29-65 of the Chimera Suite’s third movement, ‘Event Horizon’, emulate the three most common techniques of extreme metal vocals: guttural growls, mid-range screams, and high-pitched shrieks. While these styles can be used to inform the listener of the sub-genre of extreme metal (growls for doom metal, shrieks for black metal), I once again take inspiration from Between the Buried and Me where extreme metal vocal styles are used interchangeably as the band weaves through different sub-genres; their vocal timbre choices also often serve a narrative purpose, signifying specific characters or conveying levels of narrative adversity. The first vocal section of ‘Event Horizon’ (Appendix I) starts with the growling four-note trombone clusters built using the approach described above, which gradually gets ‘overdubbed’ with the mid-range screams of the trumpet and saxophone clusters. Immediately after this, the guttural growls of the brass section are pitted against the high-pitched shrieks of the saxophone section (Figure 3.41). This timbral battle often occurs when extreme metal bands feature guest vocalists in their tracks; a relevant example which also inspired this section can be found in Between the Buried and Me’s ‘Prequel to the
Sequel,’ from their 2007 album _Colors_, where guest vocalist Adam Fisher’s brighter timbre ‘battles’ with Tommy Rogers’ low growls at 6:53 in the piece.\footnote{Between the Buried and Me, ‘Prequel to the Sequel,’ _Colors_, Victory Records VR351, 2007, CD.}

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**Figure 3.41** (‘Event Horizon’ – horn vocal battle, bars 50-53)

Heaviness through rhythmic difficulty: three rhythmic approaches in ‘Kleos’

‘Kleos One’ is adapted from Meshuggah’s rhythmic concept in which a ‘polymetric cadence’ is created from the act of a hypermeter, built from eight, sixteen, or thirty-two measures of 4/4, truncating a metrically dissonant riff of unusual rhythmic cardinality,
forcing it to restart. Rather than utilising a hypermeter built from 4/4, the entire Kleos movement’s underlying hypermeter has a duration of twenty-eight quarter-note pulses, with the below rhythmic strata manipulated according to each movement’s rhythmic approach.

‘Kleos One’

As discussed previously in this chapter, ‘Kleos One’s’ formal structure is built from two distinct riffs, Kleos riff A and Kleos riff B, which are structured into an A, B, B|, A form. The drums play consistent quarter-note cymbal strikes often identifying the beginning or halfway point of the hypermeter with a single strike of a timbrally contrasting cymbal. The surface (and underlying) hypermeter of 28 quarter-note pulses is divided at the metric level, simply into four bars of 7/4, which can be further divided into a bar of 4/4 plus a bar of 3/4. The bass, guitar, piano and occasionally the keyboard synth, play both riffs in unison and use contoural and dynamic accents, combined with the riff’s durational relationships to enforce the riff’s metric dissonance.

The cardinality of Kleos riff A is six quarter-note pulses long and is heavily syncopated in relation to the quarter note pulse laid down by the china cymbal. As mentioned previously, riff A is built from four chromatic pitches around the tonal center of C (B, C, Db, D). The oscillating melodic contour, C-B-C-Db (shown in Figure 3.45), coincides with strong beats created by the longer durations they possess compared to the rest of the notes in the riff, an aspect that informs the listener of the riff’s beginning.

The role of the snare and kick in relation to the riff played by the rest of the rhythm section, varies between the Kleos riff A and B. The melodic accents of the guitar/bass/piano riff in Kleos riff A (Figure 3.42) coincide with the snare and kick’s attack points in the first bar of 7/4, but gradually move away as the riff is repeated. If isolated, the listener would likely hear the drum groove as clearly existing in a 7/4 framework; however, because of the

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197 Hannan, “Difficulty as Heaviness,” 442-443.
initial rhythmic unison and subsequent disassociation, a ‘truly ambiguous metric context’ is created.\(^{198}\)

The snare and kick in Kleos riff B are instead in complete rhythmic unison with the bass and guitar line, as shown by Figure 3.43, with the timbral qualities of each highlighting Phrygian Dominant’s disjunct intervals in the riff’s melody. Riff B’s cardinality is made of nineteen sixteenth-note pulses which are then divided by seven attack points using Euclidian distribution into tactus groupings of 3 3 2 2 3 3 3.

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Figure 3.43 (‘Kleos One’ – Kleos riff B ‘final mutation’, bar 1-8)

Seeing as the cymbal strikes are the now only element now conveying the 7/4 meter in the drum part, that rhythmic responsibility is taken on by the horn section in bars 25-40, articulating the first downbeat of every 7/4 bar, conveying to the listener that there is a ‘discernable regularity’ in the groove, albeit metrically ambiguous. This also sets up the brass ‘vocal’ section in which I composed the rhythmic phrases to fulfill a common rhythmic function of Meshuggah’s vocals, to delineate the meter (in their case 4/4) by using ‘typical rock-style vocal syncopations’. The vocal phrases are two bars long and rather than honing

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in on every initial 7/4 downbeat like the previous ‘melodic’ section, the ‘vocal’ rhythm relies on consistently targeting other specific beats to imply the 7/4 meter. This use of silence also allows the listener to clearly hear the cymbal strike signifying the beginning or halfway point of the hypermeter. As shown in Figure 3.44, the main recurring attack points in the first half of the vocal phrase occur on beat 3 in the first bar of 7/4 (or beat 3 in the 4/4 bar), and beat 1 and 7 of the second 7/4 bar (or beat 1 of the 4/4 bar, and beat 3 of the 3/4 bar). The rhythmic and harmonic ideas in bars 44-55 and 52-53 are also identical in order to emulate lyrical and melodic repetition that a vocalist might make. All other phrases, although related, are unique in the same way that verse-like vocals often do not repeat narrative text.

![Musical notation](image-url)
'Kleos Two'

The rhythmic approach for ‘Kleos Two’ is derived from Tigran Hamasyan’s *Grid Suite* in which the initial surface hypermeter is considerably smaller (twenty-eight sixteenth notes, or one bar of 7/4 in this instance) and is divided by tactus groupings of unusual cardinality. In the same way that the 5 5 7 5 5 5 rhythmic scheme is revealed to fit inside the 4/4 hypermeter in the *Grid Suite* by way of the drummer playing quarter-note cymbal strikes, the rhythmic groupings in ‘Kleos Two’ are eventually revealed to fit within the 7/4 surface hypermeter, first hinted at by the hi-hats, then explicitly stated by a 7/4 backbeat. Another rhythmic motif taken from the fourth movement, ‘Fury Spawn’, is also incorporated in this mini-movement, eventually culminating in a complex drum groove that simultaneously plays all three rhythmic concepts. This first section utilises three compound meters and one non-isochronous meter to create a warped compound backbeat shuffle, with metric groupings organised in two halves of 9 (3+3+3), 7 (3+2+2), then 6 (3+3), 6 (3+3) sixteenth notes. As
shown in Figure 3.45 below, these two halves actually add up to reflect the 4/4, 3/4 framework. Due to the groove being a shuffle, the high-hats emphasise the primary and ternary beats of each three-note grouping as well as all four sixteenth notes of the 2+2 grouping. This is a reference to the first drum groove of ‘Event Horizon’s’ multi-layered section (bars 149-208) where the one of the most salient aspects of the drum part is the sixteenth notes played on the high-hat. The ‘Kleos’ ‘mutation’ of the ‘Fury Spawn’ bass line, as discussed previously (Figures 3.13, 3.14, 3.30, 3.31) groups the first half of its line as 5 (3+2) 5 (3+2) 3 3 sixteenth-notes; and the second half as 5 (3+2) 5 (3+2) 2 sixteenth notes.

Figure 3.47 uses Hannan’s rhythmic reduction technique to show how the first two notes of the bass line in each hypothetical bar of 4/4 and 3/4 are congruent with the first two attack points of each bar in the drum groove, creating a metrically ambiguous but regular pattern. Read from left to right, the boxes filled with black represent significant attack points, in this case played by the electric bass and drum parts. The white circle represents a snare hit which, in this case, is displaced an eighth note later than a typical 4/4 backbeat.

The arpeggiating guitar and bass line in the background section at bars 238-253 (Figure 3.46) adds yet another layer of rhythmic complexity by reconfiguring the tactus groupings inside of the 9 7 6 6 metric framework to imply a duple groove rather than compound one.

![Figure 3.45](image-url) (‘Kleos Two’ – ‘warped’ drum groove rhythmic reduction)
The original compound framework of 9 7 6 6 is simultaneously presented as a ‘clave’ by the trumpet section; meanwhile the trombones add yet another syncopated rhythmic layer, this time operating at the eighth-note level and taking two 7/4 measures to complete. Both parts are shown below in Figure 3.47.

The last piece of the rhythmic jigsaw puzzle for this section, is the quarter note pulse introduced by the pedaled high-hat which retrospectively reveals the hypermeter in which the 9 7 6 6 metric framework can reside. Figure 3.48 once again uses Hannan’s rhythmic reduction technique to show the simultaneous rhythmic layers that interact with one another. As seen below, only the trombone line doesn’t strictly adhere to the 4/4+3/4 framework, the trombones only follow that framework during the second half of their melody.
Figure 3.47 (‘Kleos Two’ – trumpet clave and trombone melody, bars 238-241)

Figure 3.48 (‘Kleos Two’ – overlapping layers, rhythmic reduction)
Interestingly, both bars of 7/4 have the same palindromic rhythm in the 3/4 bar, and I would hypothesise that this is one of the reasons the listener can still perceive rhythmic regularity despite the layers of metric dissonance and ambiguousness. By suddenly introducing multiple distinct melodies that mesh together rhythmically, immediately after a comparatively slow section, I deliberately confuse the listener and create another musical ‘trap’; one that can only be avoided through repeated listening.

The three primary rhythmic patterns in this mini-movement; the 7/4 meter divided into a bar of 3/4 and a bar of 4/4; the five-note ‘Fury Spawn’ hemiola (which has now reverted back to the original ‘Fury Spawn’ ‘mutation’); and the 9 7 6 6 compound metric framework; are all crystallised into the final drum groove, seen in Figure 3.49. This local rhythmic polythematicism, combined with the abrupt textural and harmonic reduction to the ‘chugging’ of a C pedal played by the guitar and bass, leads to what I feel is the ‘heaviest’ moment in the ‘Kleos’ movement. The metric ambiguity of the drum groove relates to heaviiness’ perceptual ‘unwieldiness’, while the low C of the distorted guitar and bass reflects the timbral aesthetics of heaviness.200

![Figure 3.49](image)

Figures 3.49 (‘Kleos Two’ – ‘polythematic drum groove’, rhythmic reduction)

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200 Hannan, “Difficulty as Heaviness,” 445, 455.
‘Kleos Three’

In ‘Kleos Three’, the surface hypermeter must conform to the riff’s cardinality, reversing the typical hierarchal roles where the surface hypermeter (8, 16, or 32 bars of 4/4 in Meshuggah’s case) often governs the guitar/bass riff of unusual metric cardinality. For extreme metal fans who are familiar with the rhythmic conventions of Meshuggah and other similar bands, I would hypothesise that the absence of a ‘polymetric cadence’ would be considered unexpected in math-metal inspired section and therefore becomes a new musical ‘trap’ for listeners to ‘evade’. This metric framework was first introduced in Fury Spawn and serves as a sort of antithesis of the ‘Meshuggah-esque’ rhythmic approach, which I feel has almost become a trope of the math-metal sub-genre.

Because of its formal structure as an ‘independent chorus’, ‘Kleos Three’s’ surface hypermeter is built primarily from the metrically stable 4/4 meter, but is then required by the cardinality of Kleos Three’s riff to conform, which it does through placing two bars of 6/4 at the end. This approach does not require the surface hypermeter to be in 4/4, for example ‘Fury Spawn’s’ second section features meters of various length that are subverted by the five-sixteenth-note hemiola played by the bass and kick drum. My aim with all three mini-movements of ‘Kleos’ was to retain the underlying hypermeter’s duration of 28 quarter-note pulses, which, because the Kleos Three riff’s tactus is at a sixteenth-note level, is divided into 112 sixteenth notes. In order for the riff to perfectly repeat itself without being truncated, the riff’s cardinality needed to be a factor of 112 that was not too long as to be incomprehensible but not too short to be rhythmically fatiguing after its many repetitions in this section. I settled on the riff having a cardinality of fourteen sixteenth notes which is then divided into two non-isochronous groupings (5/16) and one isochronous grouping (4/16), a recurring

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201 Lucas, “Loudness, Rhythm, and Environment”, 4, 8, 16.
202 Periphery, Tesseract, and Animals as Leaders are among the most popular bands of this sub-genre that commonly utilise this rhythmic aesthetic.
metric theme throughout this suite discuss earlier in this chapter (Figure 3.50). In the previous two mini-movements I composed the majority of riffs in a way that mirrors Meshuggah’s compositional approach of “find(ing) the groove and then work(ing) with the weird stuff until it makes sense”. However, with this last movement I had already set up the precedent for the riff fitting into a twenty-eight pulse underlying hypermeter then approaching it mathematically as described above. Because the rhythmic approach is calculated, it is instead the melodic aspect of this riff that allows it to feel natural and ‘groove’ through subtle harmonic changes and unusual melodic contour informed by the metric phrasing.

Kleos Three riff

![Kleos Three Riff Metric Phrasing](image)

Figure 3.50 (‘Kleos Three’ – Kleos Three riff metric phrasing)

The final section of this suite in which the ‘final mutation’ of the ‘Aergia’ Ending is overlaid, replicates the single note ‘chugging’ from ‘Kleos Two’s’ ending. This time however, the ‘Fury Spawn’ five-sixteenth-note hemiola is augmented by a further two sixteenth-notes creating a 7/16 hemiola that despite possessing some metric dissonance, fits succinctly into the 7/4 backbeat played by the drums. Especially because of its timbral, harmonic, and rhythmic relationship to the previous ending, listeners will (hopefully) be caught off guard when the hemiola is not truncated by the one bar 7/4 surface hypermeter; creating another iteration of ‘Kleos Three’s’ rhythmic concept.

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203 Brad Angle, “Interview: Meshuggah Discuss Their New Album, Koloss”.
Underlying hypermeter

All three mini-movements in ‘Kleos’ exhibit unique rhythmic agency, and may even be perceived by listeners as tenuously connected. However, upon repeated listenings a rhythmic conspiracy may be uncovered revealing that each mini-movement is still subservient to the underlying hypermeter, a movement-wide musical ‘trap’ for switched-on listeners to enjoy. In the same way that musical recapitulations in the global cumulative multi-part polythematic through-composed form of Between the Buried and Me’s ‘Silent Flight Parliament’ (analysed in Chapter 2) reflects ‘heaviness’s connotations, ‘Kleos’ overarching rhythmic conspiracy (once discovered) conveys heaviness’ perceptual unwieldiness and unfathomability. The underlying hypermeter, built from twenty-eight quarter-note pulses, is first presented unassumingly as four bars of 7/4 in ‘Kleos One’. ‘Kleos Two’ is also eventually revealed as utilising this four-bar structure, but not before confusing the listener with a warped compound groove. As detailed above, the last mini-movement, ‘Kleos Three’, divides the twenty-eight quarter note pulses into 112 sixteenth notes which is again divided by a repeating guitar riff with a cardinality of fourteen. Due to the large time scale it takes for this last approach to repeat, as well as the riff’s cardinality being grouped as 5 5 4, rather than 7 7, this metric conspiracy is well-hidden in ‘Kleos Three’.

While a conventional metal band may be able to explore this through the process of overdubbing, the instrumentation of a modern jazz orchestra provides seventeen different voices that can be manipulated in creative and unique ways to emulate extreme metal’s heaviness. Due to the sheer number of players, a high level of rhythmic difficulty and precision can be achieved by assigning multiple rhythms/melodies to create a complex tapestry meant to overwhelm listeners and challenge them to come back for more.

**Freedom and Control**

Robert Walser first presented the notion of “the dialectic of freedom and control” in
his 1993 book, *Running with the Devil* with regard to the virtuosic electric guitar solo ‘escaping’ the control of the rhythm section. Olivia Lucas extends this notion into the music of Meshuggah, where she argues that the guitar/bass riff of unusual cardinality (freedom) is consistently truncated by the 4/4 hypermeter (control).\(^{204}\) I explore this idea further ‘Event Horizon’s’ ‘layering’ section (third movement, bars 149-261) in which various combinations of instruments are prescribed a unique polymeter while the guitar, bass and drums act as literal ‘timekeepers’, delineating the various riffs with a sixteen-bar, 4/4 hypermeter. The various lines also operate on different rhythmic levels, some being played at the eighth-note tactus level, and others being played primarily at the dotted-quarter and even half-note level. The combination of rhythmic, contoural and dynamic accents across all parts accumulate into an overwhelming tapestry of sound that fit together like ‘metal’ cogs in a machine.

The sixteen-bar hypermeter in this section of Event Horizon, set up by the bass and drums, can be broken down into two, four and eight bar phrases shown in Figure 3.51, each utilizing a unique function for letting the listener know where/when in the hypermeter they are. The foundational riff is two bars long, where the first bar is heavily downbeat oriented and the second, heavily syncopated. At the four-bar and eight-bar level, a unique fill or lick is played at the end of the phrase, which helps the listener identify which four-bar section they are in. Finally, at the end the hypermeter, a two-bar fill taken from the first two bars of ‘Event Horizon’, is played to signify the end/beginning of the hypermeter.

The trumpet section is split into two parts (Figure 3.52) and utilises the two different hemiolas overlaid in the cascading arpeggio section of ‘Event Horizon’, discussed previously in this chapter; the first is seven eighth-notes long (grouped as 2 2 3) and the second is thirteen eighth-notes long (grouped as 2 2 3 2 2 2). Because of the rhythmic, harmonic and

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\(^{204}\) Lucas, “Loudness, Rhythm, and Environment”, 117-118.
timbral similarities of the two parts, a minimalist-like ‘phase’ is achieved and results in the last two bars resembling an Agogó bell-like rhythm before the two parts are truncated by an eight-bar hypermeter.

Figure 3.51 (‘Event Horizon’ – sixteen bar foundation bass and drum groove)
Also operating at an eighth-note level, the two tenor saxophones hocket an eighteen eighth-note long melody which can be broken down into three six-note phrases, each delineated from the other by having the longest duration at the end of each phrase (Figure 3.53). Unlike the trumpets, this part adheres to the sixteen-bar 4/4 hypermeter laid out by the bass, guitar and drums. Alongside the entry of this melody, the drums abandon the 4/4 high-hat groove for a five-eighth-note hemiola played on the ride cymbal; a musical reference to the upcoming Fury Spawn bass line/kick rhythm.

Out of the various riffs, the trombone melody has the longest hypermeter at twenty-four bars of 4/4, or ninety-six quarter-note pulses. The trombone melody’s cardinality is also significantly longer, taking 30 quarter note pulses to fulfill the melodic cycle (bar eight of Figure 3.54), which can be broken up even further into its three melodic phrases which last ten quarter-notes each. The initial entry, similar to the rotating riffs of Meshuggah, does not actually mark the rhythmic beginning of the line, which instead occurs at bar 205, deliberately throwing the listener off the scent. In a way, the trombone line starts with rhythmic freedom but it then trapped by the sixteen-bar hypermeter.
The final ‘cog in the machine’ is the glacially paced mutation of Kleos riff B, which is first played by the piano in octaves and later joined and harmonised by the two alto saxophones (Figure 3.55). Unlike the other three riffs/melodies, which set up this
expectation, this melody is composed so that it appears to be yet another polymeter but in reality, the second phrase of the melody is just displaced by a half-note.

Figure 3.55 (‘Event Horizon’ – Kleos riff B in alto saxophones and piano)
To mark the end of the section, the ‘time-keepers’ (guitar, bass, and drums) re-assert their temporal authority and bring the foundational riff back to the forefront of the sonic tapestry by having the guitar play the bass line in unison at the octave while the drums place cymbal strikes at specific attack points in the riff. Each melody displays a degree of temporal freedom and agency until all of the riffs are finally truncated by the time-keepers, regardless of where they are in their cycle.

Conclusion

I have used the metaphor ‘musical trap’ throughout this exegesis to describe a number of complex musical conventions that encourage listeners to actively listen and attempt to construe what is occurring in the music. This metaphor is especially apt, as it also implies that the musical trap can be sprung or avoided if the listener is adequately prepared; while the Chimera Suite may initially appear perceptually unwieldy, its genetic code can ultimately be understood and unraveled.

The Chimera Suite draws heavily on the musical works of Between the Buried and Me, Tigran Hamasyan, and Dan Weiss analysed in Chapter 2, each representing a deeply inter-connected musical universe that I have observed through the lenses of through-composition, heaviness and the dialectic of freedom and control. Even after analysis, these works (and subsequently my own) still contain a number of musical ‘traps’ and riddles yet to be discovered and overcome; a testament to the depth of these musical worlds which are manifestations of the artist’s individual (and collective) musical voice. By striving to create a large-scale composition inspired by these artists and respective genres that intentionally disorients the listener through various rhythmic, harmonic and formal ‘traps’, I hope that listeners can enjoy traversing and attempting to escape the Chimera Suite’s musical maze.
CONCLUSION

Beginning this research, one of my initial desires was to distill the key aesthetics of jazz and extreme metal to create a work that is easily identifiable with reference to both genres. However, my initial reflections on ‘what is jazz?’ and ‘what is extreme metal?’ have changed subtly in response to my research and experimentation, instead leading to and answering a different question: ‘what are these genres to me?’ A theme throughout this (global multi-part polythematic through-composed) exegesis is the concept of the ‘individual voice’ and reflecting on the various elements that construct it. Discussed in Chapter 1, my current and previous interactions with the global music scenes of jazz and extreme metal, as well as the local Wellington jazz scene, greatly informed what aesthetics and values I strove towards in composing the Chimera Suite.

Between the Buried and Me’s ‘Silent Flight Parliament’ in their album The Parallax II: Future Sequence, Tigran Hamasyan’s Grid Suite and Dan Weiss’ ‘Annica’, which I have analysed in Chapter 2, all exhibit some of extreme metal’s key aesthetics. I analyse these three works through the lenses of through-composition, heaviness and the dialectic of freedom and control; since large-scale large-ensemble compositions are fairly untraversed territory in the jazz and extreme metal crossover, these aspects found in these works informed many of the ‘genetic’ decisions in constructing this musical ‘chimera’. The global cumulative multi-part polythematic through-composed form of ‘Silent Flight Parliament’, in which various thematic ideas weaved throughout the album are crystallised in its penultimate track, informed the global and local formal structures of the Chimera Suite. The Grid Suite’s approach to conveying rhythmic difficulty and ambiguity as well as recapitulating thematic material through harmonic and rhythmic reconfigurations also informed the presentation and recapitulation of riffs and other thematic ideas in the Chimera Suite. The use of gradual textural layering in ‘Annica’ specifically influenced the Chimera Suite’s second movement,
‘Aergia’, where a lethargic and ominous through-composed form, concluding in an oppressive ‘wall of sound’, is used to exemplify the metaphorical size of metal’s aesthetic of ‘heaviness’. Lastly, I observed how the Tigran Hamasyan explores the notion of freedom and control through extended improvisation in ‘The Grid’, attempting to escape from the harmonically and rhythmically oppressive ostinato. Many of the improvisation sections in the Chimera Suite are influenced by this framework, allowing hypothetical players to also attempt escape from the oppressive musical surroundings laid out for them.

I began Chapter 3 by discussing various considerations that I had to make during the compositional process of this large-ensemble work in order to situate the Chimera Suite musically within both jazz and extreme metal. These included the instrumentation challenges of emulating the function and timbre of an extreme metal vocalist, utilising an eight-string guitar, and the challenge of creating individual and collective improvisational frameworks to allow for musical expression and creativity. I then discussed how the global through-composed form (inspired by ‘Silent Flight Parliament’) of the suite’s fifth and final movement, ‘Kleos’, and it’s final ‘independent chorus’ section, create a suite-wide, large-scale teleological pay-off that serves to satisfy the ‘active’ listening practices of death metal audiences. I also discussed how ‘Kleos’ explores metal’s aesthetic of ‘heaviness’ through rhythmic difficulty via three rhythmically difficult approaches (influenced by Tigran Hamasyan and extreme metal band Meshuggah) connected by an underlying hypermetric structure. Lastly, I analysed how the simultaneous ‘polymetric cadences’ of melodies in the suite’s third movement, ‘Event Horizon’, extend Robert Walser’s notion of the dialectic of freedom and control, creating a dense tapestry of metric ambiguity which is ultimately ‘controlled’ by the rhythm section.

In the process of amalgamating two distinct genres, new and unique perspectives can be garnered, both questioning and strengthening the salient aspects that inform the ‘genetic
code’ that make up each musical genre. Through the process of composing the *Chimera Suite*, I successfully syncretised the jazz and extreme metal aspects of my musical identity; which, until taking on this project, seemed incompatible with one another. I hope to show that through exploring ‘chimeric’ genres, one can express their musical identity, reflecting on their personal lineage while also ‘saying something’ new.
Appendices

Appendix A: ‘Astral Body’ chorus from ‘Astral Body’

(‘Astral Body’ – ‘Astral Body’ chorus and preceding sections, 3:42-4:45)
Appendix B: ‘Astral Body’ chorus from ‘Silent Flight Parliament’

(‘Silent Flight Parliament’ – ‘Astral Body’ chorus and preceding section, 5:05-6:02)
still know what

my mind tells you
to do
Appendix C: ‘Out of The Grid’ Section Group XII
Appendix D: ‘REgenisis’ riff
Appendix E: ‘Kleos Three’ riff
Appendix F: ‘Kleos Three’ vocal melody
Appendix G: ‘Aergia Ending’ in ‘Kleos Three’
Appendix H: ‘Kleos One’ vocals
Appendix I: ‘Event Horizon’ vocal section
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THE CHIMERA SUITE

Christopher Michael Beernink
THE CHIMERA SUITE

INSTRUMENTATION

Alto sax 1
Alto sax 2
Tenor sax 1
Tenor sax 2
Baritone sax

Trumpet 1
Trumpet 2
Trumpet 3
Trumpet 4

Trombone 1
Trombone 2
Trombone 3
Bass Trombone

Eight-string electric guitar
Piano | Synthesizer keyboard
Six-string electric bass
Drum Set

Christopher Michael Beernink
To: Grinding lead synth

envelope filter
ambient wailing, eventually into shredding
A. Sx. 1
A. Sx. 2
T. Sx. 1
T. Sx. 2
B. Sx.
B. Tpt. 1
B. Tpt. 2
B. Tpt. 3
B. Tpt. 4
Tbn. 1
Tbn. 2
Tbn. 3
B. Tbn.
E.Gtr.
E.B.
D. S.

Still building

[Grinding lead synth w envelope filter]
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Still building!
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<th>Piano</th>
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Ex: Grinding synth bass
Score

II. Aergia

Christopher Beernink

Alto Sax 1
Alto Sax 2
Tenor Sax 1
Tenor Sax 2
Baritone Sax
Trumpet in B1
Trumpet in B2
Trumpet in B3
Trumpet in B4
Trombone 1
Trombone 2
Trombone 3
Bass Trombone

Electric Guitar

Piano

Electric Bass

Drum Set

Low distorted warbling ambience

Notes, unstable synth lead

p
III. Event Horizon

Christopher Beernink
To: grinding synth bass
Trade eights with Trombone - battle!
Tptegenus

E.Gtr.

Phn.

E.B.

D. S.

A. Sx. 1
A. Sx. 2
T. Sx. 1
T. Sx. 2
B. Sx.
B. Tpt. 1
B. Tpt. 2
B. Tpt. 3
B.Tpt. 4
Tbn. 1
Tbn. 2
Tbn. 3
B. Tbn.
Trade eights with Tenor Saxophone - Battle

Up byg. dan.
Collective improv - gradually 'mob' soloists
Gradually descend into ambience and continue in next movement.
IV. Fury Spawn
IV. Fury Spawn
IV. Fury Spawn
IV. Fury Spawn
IV. Fury Spawn
IV. Fury Spawn
IV. Fury Spawn
IV. Fury Spawn
IV. Fury Spawn

A. Sx. 1

T. Sx. 1

T. Sx. 2

B. Sx.

B-Tpt. 1

B-Tpt. 2

B-Tpt. 3

B-Tpt. 4

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

Tbn. 3

B. Tbn.

E.Gtr.

Phn.

E.B.

D. S.
IV. Fury Spawn
IV. Fury Spawn
IV. Fury Spawn
IV. Fury Spawn

---

E.Gtr.

Phn.

E.B.

D. S.
IV. Fury Spawn

A. Sx. 1

A. Sx. 2

T. Sx. 1

T. Sx. 2

B. Sx.

B-Tpt. 1

B-Tpt. 2

B-Tpt. 3

B-Tpt. 4

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

Tbn. 3

B. Tbn.

E.Gtr.

E.B.

D. S.
IV. Fury Spawn

A. Sx. 1

A. Sx. 2

T. Sx. 1

T. Sx. 2

B. Sx.

B-Tpt. 1

B-Tpt. 2

B-Tpt. 3

B-Tpt. 4

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

Tbn. 3

B. Tbn.

E.Gtr.

Pno.

E.B.

D. S.
IV. Fury Spawn
IV. Fury Spawn
IV. Fury Spawn
IV. Fury Spawn
IV. Fury Spawn
IV. Fury Spawn

A. Sx. 1

A. Sx. 2

T. Sx. 1

T. Sx. 2

B. Sx.

B-Tpt. 1

B-Tpt. 2

B-Tpt. 3

B-Tpt. 4

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

Tbn. 3

B. Tbn.

E.Gtr.

E.B.

D. S.

Pno.
A. Sx. 1
A. Sx. 2
T. Sx. 1
T. Sx. 2
B. Sx.
B-Tpt. 1
B-Tpt. 2
B-Tpt. 3
B-Tpt. 4
Tbn. 1
Tbn. 2
Tbn. 3
B. Tbn.
E.Gtr.
Phn.
E.B.
D. S.
IV. Fury Spawn
IV. Fury Spawn
IV. Fury Spawn
I. REgenesis

Christopher Beernink

\[ \text{\textcopyright 2002 \textit{Christopher Beernink}} \]
Ambient wailing, eventually into shredding

Dphryg, don.

Still building
Still building!

Go big!

1

169
II. Aergia

Low distorted warbling ambience

Christopher Beernink

Guitar
Decay into nothing
III. Event Horizon

Christopher Beernink

Guitar

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{IV. Event Horizon} \\
\text{Christopher Beernink} \\
\text{Guitar}
\end{align*}
\]
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(8\textsuperscript{8\textcircled{w}})

mf
Join chaos!

\textit{cresc.}

\textit{X}
IV. Fury Spawn
IV. Fury Spawn
IV. Fury Spawn
IV. Fury Spawn

\(\sum \beta \sigma \)
IV. Fury Spawn
IV. Fury Spawn
IV. Fury Spawn
IV. Fury Spawn
IV. Fury Spawn
II. Aergia

Christopher Beernink

Low distorted warbling ambience

Guitar
Decay into nothing
III. Event Horizon

Christopher Beernink
IV. Fury Spawn

Christopher Beernink

Guitar
IV. Fury Spawn

\[\text{Musical notation ((sheet music)}}\]
IV. Fury Spawn
IV. Fury Spawn

[Music notation image]
IV. Fury Spawn
IV. Fury Spawn
IV. Fury Spawn