

Simultaneous Distinct Headbanging Patterns in Heavy Metal

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This file includes the abstract, keyword list, bibliography, and related material for the video essay, “Simultaneous Distinct Headbanging Patterns in Heavy Metal” by Guy Capuzzo. This video-essay may be found at <https://vimeo.com/societymusictheory/smtv104capuzzo>.

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**Abstract for
Simultaneous Distinct Headbanging Patterns in Heavy Metal**

by Guy Capuzzo, *SMT-V10.4*

Heavy metal fans and performers headbang for many reasons, one of which involves entrainment and musical meter. Our impulse to entrain to meter, and to other people's periodic movements, is so strong that one rarely sees headbangers moving their bodies in different ways at the same time. So how might we make sense of such moments involving performers?

This video-essay studies performances by the bands Meshuggah and Animals as Leaders to gain purchase on this question. In Meshuggah's "Perpetual Black Second," the band members choreograph a struggle between freedom and control that is central to the heavy metal aesthetic. In the same band's "Rational Gaze," the vocalist's headbanging pattern, which moves at a different speed than the pattern of the remaining band members, represents the element of power fundamental to the heavy metal value system. Finally, in Animals as Leaders' "Wave of Babies," the relation of an asymmetrical guitar riff to an isochronous stream of cymbal attacks encourages one performer to entrain to the onbeat pulses and another performer to the offbeat ones.

Short Keyword List

Heavy metal, headbanging, entrainment, rhythm, meter, Meshuggah, Animals as Leaders

Extensive Keyword List

Heavy metal, headbanging, headbanging patterns, entrainment, rhythm, meter, hypermeter, metrical interpretation, Meshuggah, Animals as Leaders, heavy metal aesthetics, heavy metal value systems, heavy metal culture, heavy metal fans, heavy metal performers

About the Author

Guy Capuzzo (Ph.D., Eastman), Professor at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, is the author of *Elliott Carter's What Next?: Communication, Cooperation, and Separation* (University of Rochester Press, 2012). He is a former Associate Editor of *Music Theory Spectrum* and a Co-Editor of *Elliott Carter Studies Online*. His writings appear in *Journal of Music Theory Pedagogy*, *Music Theory Spectrum*, *Journal of Music Theory*, *Music Theory Online*, *Intégral*, *Theory and Practice*, *Tempo*, and *Guitar Review*. Capuzzo's talks include presentations to the Society for Music Theory and invited lectures at Yale University, the University of South Carolina, the University of Minnesota, and Youngstown State University. Active as an electric guitarist, he performs and records with the Lorena Guillén Tango Ensemble.

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Image

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