

Calligraphic Listening: Making Sense of Hosokawa's Vertical Time
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This file includes the abstract, keyword list, bibliography, and related material for the video essay, “Calligraphic Listening: Making Sense of Hosokawa’s Vertical Time” by Joon Park. This video-essay may be found at <https://vimeo.com/societymusictheory/smtv121park>

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Abstract for
Calligraphic Listening: Making Sense of Hosokawa's Vertical Time
by Joon Park, SMT-V12.1

This video introduces an interpretive strategy for Toshio Hosokawa's *Vertical Time Study I* by drawing on the Japanese composer's remarks about blank space in Japanese calligraphy. This interpretation treats composite sounds as sonic brushstrokes and the silence between them as a blank space where these strokes' preparatory gestures take place. In calligraphy, the gestures above the paper, in the vertical space, condition the stroke's shape. Likewise, in Hosokawa's music, silence can be heard as expressing the vertical space where the preparation or completion of an acoustic event occurs.

This interpretive strategy regards the composite sound as the primary unit of meaning (rather than pitches or instruments) and describes the whole sound in correspondence with different attributes of a brushstroke by foregrounding various parameters. For example, parameters such as a brush's light or heavy pressure on the paper, the stroke's smooth or jagged shape, and the ink's thinness or thickness can be used to describe musical sound. The video quotes other East Asian composers, such as Toru Takemitsu and Wen-Chung Chou, to argue that the calligraphic listening strategy, such as the flow, merging of ink and water, and the way it gives meaning to blank space, reflects broader East Asian aesthetic concepts.

Short Keyword List

East Asian Music, Calligraphy, Toshio Hosokawa, Vertical Time Study, Chou Wen-chung, Tōru Takemitsu

Extensive Keyword List

Post-tonal music, Isang Yun, post-1950 compositions, emergence, Manuel DeLanda, Chaotic mapping, possibility space, Judy Lochhead, oppositional pairing, conceptual metaphor, creative interpretation, Hauptton Technique

About the Author

Joon Park is an Associate Professor of Music Theory at the University of Illinois Chicago. His research spans a wide range of topics, including [Arnold Schoenberg's wartime compositions](#), [an interview between Korean composer Isang Yun and Japanese composer Akira Nishimura](#), [jazz analysis](#), and [the concept of “terminal opening” in English-language popular music](#). He previously taught at the University of Arkansas.

Video Credits and Discography

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