

Emotion, meaning & expression in music  
20200519

David Huron: sweet anticipation, ITPRA model

Pearsall & Almen: On Imagination, Interpretation and Analysis

Peter J. Burkholder: A Simple Model for Associative Musical Meaning



[Spotify](#)



[Youtube 1](#)



[Youtube 2](#)

David Huron

How do emotions arise?

What purposes do they serve?

What accounts for the distinctive feelings we experience?

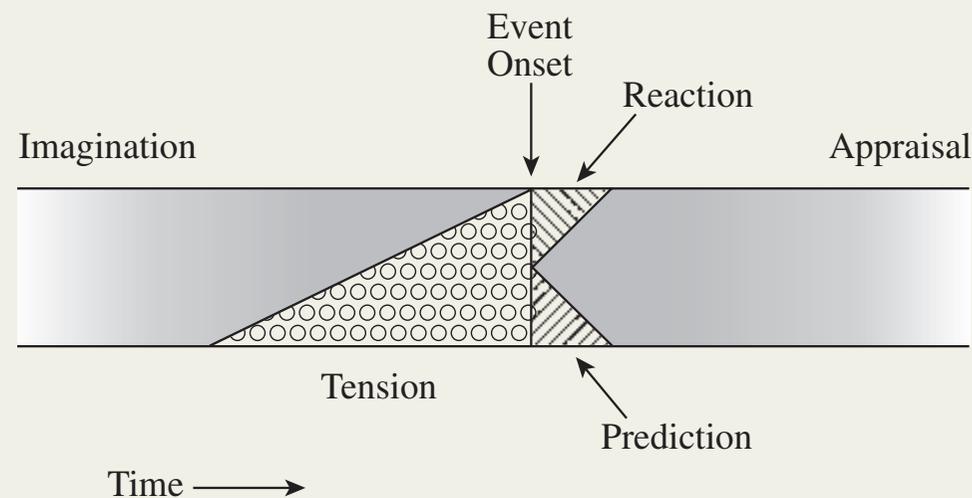
Playwrights, novelists, poets, film directors, musicians, choreographers, comedians, and theatrical magicians all have a professional interest in what distinguishes delight from boredom.

In each of the arts, codes of practice, heuristic rules of thumb and speculative theories have been passed from teacher to student across the generations

## David Huron

**Table 1.1**

Response system	Epoch	Biological function
<b>(I)</b> <i>imagination response</i>	pre-outcome	future-oriented behavioral motivation; enables deferred gratification
<b>(T)</b> <i>tension response</i>	pre-outcome	optimum arousal and attention in preparation for anticipated events
<b>(P)</b> <i>prediction response</i>	post-outcome	negative/positive reinforcement to encourage the formation of accurate expectations
<b>(R)</b> <i>reaction response</i>	post-outcome	neurologically fast responses that assume a worst-case assessment of the outcome
<b>(A)</b> <i>appraisal response</i>	post-outcome	neurologically complex assessment of the final outcome that results in negative/positive reinforcements



## “Informal ITPRA”

Informally, we might characterize the “feeling” components to these responses by posing five questions:

1. What do you think might happen, and how do you feel about that prospect?
2. Are you ready for what’s about to happen? How do the preparations make you feel?
3. Did you “place a good bet”—did you predict the outcome accurately? Are you pleased or disappointed by the accuracy of your wager?
4. Assuming the worst, how have you reacted? How does this reaction make you feel?
5. Upon reflection, how do you feel about how things have turned out?

## Burkholder A Simple Model for Associative Musical Meaning

In sum, the listener's sense of what the music means is created through a process of five steps:

1. *Recognizing familiar elements.*
2. *Recalling other music or schema that make use of those elements.*
3. *Perceiving the associations that follow from the primary associations.*
4. *Noticing what is new and how familiar elements are changed.*
5. *Interpreting what all this means.*

## Propositions

- There are several possible *analogies* between language and music
- Meaning depends upon *familiarity*

### Examples:

- Military calls as obvious/straightforward examples of (agreed upon) meaning
- Those patterns can be reused in other music, giving rise to new forms of meaning
- Ives – Decoration Day
- Copland – Fanfare for the common man
- Britten – Fanfare for St. Edmondsbury
- Mahler – first movement symphony 1
- Richard Strauss – Also sprach Zarathustra
- Mozart KV 576 first motive resembles a “fanfare” like motif, combined with contrapuntal techniques, dance character (gigue)

## Examples (continued)

- Sonata as a concept/blueprint has been used often with new adaptations:
- Brahms Symphony nr. 4: development techniques immediately after presentation of first theme, starting the development section in the home key, suggesting a repeat of the exposition, transition to the recapitulation with decreasing tension instead of increasing tension (with a prolonged dominant), disguised recapitulation of the first two motives of the first theme, and then resuming the general character of the first theme from the exposition
- Meaning as a result of quoting or borrowing from other pieces:
- R. Strauss – Abendrot at the moment of the word “death” he uses a Cb/Gb chord the most unstable version of a very remote chord; and then quotes the motif from Tod und Verklärung composed decades earlier (1890)
- D. Shostakovich symphony 15 with quotes from Rossini (William Tell) and Wagner (Twilight of the Gods)
- Examples of reusing classical music in movies:
- Samuel Barber – Adagio for Strings in Platoon

Richard Strauss:  
 Im Abendrot  
 Last of the  
 Four Last Songs  
 With quote of  
 The motif from  
 Tod und Verklärung  
 (1890)

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**G** immer langsamer

..... sind wir wan - der - mü - de - ist  
 ..... we are tired, how tir - ed! Can

ritard. sehr langsam

dies et - - wa der Tod?.....  
 this per - - haps be death?.....

**Cb/Gb** **T. u V.**

**H**

ritard. sehr langsam

**I**

Montreux, 6. Mai 1948

### Examples (continued)

- Bartok Music for strings percussion and celesta (3rd movement) in The Shining
- Ligeti – Lontano (in the same movie)
- Strauss – Also sprach Zarathustra in a Space Odyssey
  
- For quite some people watching these movies this is their first meeting with the music...

The model of Burkholder is a valuable tool for:  
Putting into words what we experience while listening:

- Recognizing
- Recalling
- Perceiving
- Noticing
- Interpreting

Comparing that with the experience of others

It can help us with the

Weaving of a web of (musical) meaning

