

DISTINGUISHED RESIDENCY IN MUSIC THEORY

“Rhythm and Meter in Pop-Rock Music”

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Monday, October 1, 7:30 p.m.

419 Music Practice Building

Free and open to the public.



BIO

Nicole Biamonte is Associate Professor of Music Theory at McGill University in Montreal. She has an undergraduate degree in piano from the State University of New York at Purchase, and a PhD in music theory from Yale University. She has published articles and book chapters on pitch structures, form, and rhythm and meter in popular music; on musical historicism in the 19th century; and an edited collection, *Pop-Culture Pedagogy in the Music Classroom*. Her current work focuses on rhythmic patterns in pop and rock music. She recently completed a 3-year term as the editor of the open-access journal *Music Theory Online*.

ABSTRACT:

This paper surveys theories of rhythm and meter that have been developed for Western art music and applied to pop-rock music, as well as more recent theories developed specifically for popular music. I also consider several broader temporal issues as they relate to popular music: the relationship between rhythm and meter in music with an explicit pulse layer, the apparent “binary default” demonstrated by the overwhelming prevalence of rock music in 4/4, and the role of the widespread drum backbeat and its common variants. I conclude with sample analyses demonstrating my own theories of rhythmic and metric function in pop-rock music.

