

DISTINGUISHED LECTURE IN MUSIC THEORY
What's in a Line?
Expressive Tensions in Popular Song

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Tuesday, March 10th, 2020
2:15pm
Cook Recital Hall
Free and open to the public.



BIO:

Matt BaileyShea is currently an Associate Professor of Music Theory in the College Music Department at the University of Rochester and the Eastman School of Music. He received his Ph.D. in Music Theory from Yale University in 2003 with a dissertation on form in the music of Wagner. His current research focuses on the analysis of song as well as topics relating to gesture and musical agency. He has presented on these and other subjects at national and international conferences and has published articles and reviews in journals such as Music Analysis, Journal of Music Theory, Music Theory Spectrum, 19th-Century Music, and Music Theory Online. He is currently working on a book for Yale University Press entitled Lines and Lyrics: An Introduction to Poetry and Song.

ABSTRACT:

Poets often create wonderful tensions by juxtaposing lines with regular, predictable patterns against lines that are far more erratic. Songwriters often create similar effects, but they manifest much differently in music than they do in poetry. Indeed, we sometimes can't even be entirely sure what constitutes a "line" in popular song. This paper considers these issues from a variety of angles, looking at examples from rock, rap, jazz, and musical theater.

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