

Dance as Music in George Balanchine's' *Concerto Barocco*

***SMT-V* 7.2 (February 2021)**

Society for Music Theory: Videocast Journal

Kara Yoo Leaman (Oberlin College)

ISSN 2689-5471 DOI: <http://doi.org/10.30535/smtv.7.2>

Editor: L. Poundie Burstein

Associate Editor: Seth Monahan

This file includes the abstract, and extensive keyword list, bibliography, and related material for the video essay, "Dance as Music in George Balanchine's' *Concerto Barocco*" by Kara Yoo Leaman. This video- essay may be found at: <https://vimeo.com/societymusictheory/smtv072leaman> or <https://smt-v.org>

SMT-V is the open-access, peer-reviewed video journal of the Society for Music Theory. Founded in 2014, *SMT-V* publishes video essays that showcase the latest research in music theory in a dynamic, audiovisual format. The journal features a supportive and collaborative production process, and publishes three to four videos per year. The videos may be found at www.smt-v.org.

SMT-V is overseen by an Editor who organizes the vetting of the videos, along with an Associate Editor who aids with the technical details. Members of the editorial board help to vet submitted videos. Those wishing to publish a video on *SMT-V* should first submit a written proposal summarizing the proposed project. If the proposed project is deemed appropriate, the author will be invited to submit a draft of a storyboard or script. Upon acceptance of the script, the author will be invited to produce a full video in conjunction with guidance and assessment from selected members of the Editorial Board. Details regarding the submission process are found at https://societymusictheory.org/smt-v/submission_guidelines.

Abstract for
“Dance as Music in George Balanchine’s’ *Concerto Barocco*”
by Kara Yoo Leaman, *SMT-V* 7.2

George Balanchine was a choreographer and a musician. He studied musical scores from the perspective of a Western-European conservatory-trained musician before setting them to dance. Sometimes, Balanchine designed dance to follow musical patterns closely. Most of the time, however, he designed dance that relates to its music more loosely. In *Concerto Barocco*, a neoclassical ballet choreographed in 1941 to J. S. Bach’s Concerto in D Minor for Two Violins (BWV 1043), there is a memorable passage in which ten dancers hop on pointe while creating surprising visual accents against the music and against each other. The off-beat accents reflect the jazzy character of the ballet. The choreographic accent pattern seems to derive from of a metrically dissonant rhythmic motive in Bach’s score. Using music-analytic terms in the analysis of dance can help viewers appreciate the musical artistry in Balanchine’s choreography.

Short Keyword List

J. S. Bach, George Balanchine, dance, ballet, choreomusical, audiovisual

Extensive Keyword List

intermedia analysis, cross-domain mapping, metric dissonance, hemiola, Eddie South, Stéphane Grappelli, Django Reinhardt, swinging the classics, anacrusis, neoclassical ballet, choreomusical notation, Johann Sebastian Bach, hops on point, choreographer, choreography, iconic passage, tendu à la seconde, demi-plié, “suck the thumb of delight”

About the Author

Kara Yoo Leaman, author, narrator:

Kara Yoo Leaman is an Assistant Professor of Music Theory and Aural Skills at Oberlin College Conservatory and a co-founder of the Dance and Music Interest Group of the Society for Music Theory. She was the 2019–20 Fellow for the Study of Russia and Ballet at The Center for Ballet and the Arts at New York University, a joint fellowship with NYU's Jordan Center for the Advanced Study of Russia.

Performances/Recordings

“Concerto Barocco (1966) Farrell, Morris, Ludlow.” 2016. YouTube video, 19:39. Posted by John Clifford, September 3. <https://youtu.be/pbNvhuiKo7A>

“Django Reinhardt, Stéphane Grappelli and Eddie South Improvise on Bach (1937).” 2009. YouTube video, 2:31. Posted by HQMatt, February 16. <https://youtu.be/gQZw3nema0Q>

Special thanks to

- The New York City Ballet for permission to use video clips from *Concerto Barocco*.
- The Center for Ballet and the Arts at New York University (CBA) for supporting my research; Director Jennifer Homans, the CBA staff, and CBA alumna Heather Watts for their input on an earlier version of this work; the 2019–20 Fellows cohort, especially Kim Brandstrup and Jared Angle, for their input on this project and on my Balanchine research.
- Oberlin Conservatory for granting a leave of absence in 2019–20 to take the CBA Fellowship; Dean Quillen and my colleagues in the Theory Division for their support.
- Richard Cohn, Stephanie Jordan, and Patrick McCreless for their ongoing support of my research on dance and music.

Bibliography

“Balanchine Foundation Interview: Marie-Jeanne and John Taras Concerto Barocco.” 2016. YouTube video, 8:23. Posted by George Balanchine Foundation, April 7.

https://youtu.be/c5k9p_2f9kc

Balanchine, George. 1954. *Balanchine's Complete Stories of the Great Ballets*. Edited by Francis Mason. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1954.

Butterfield, Matthew W. 2016. “The Power of Anacrusis: Engendered Feeling in Groove-Based Musics.” *Music Theory Online* 12/4.

Cox, Arnie. 2016. *Music and Embodied Cognition: Listening, Moving, Feeling, and Thinking*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

D'Amboise, Jacques. 2011. *I Was a Dancer*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Gottschild, Brenda Dixon. 1996. *Digging the Africanist Presence in American Performance: Dance and Other Contexts*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Guttman, Sharon E., Lee A. Gilroy, and Randolph Blake. 2005. “Hearing What the Eyes See: Auditory Encoding of Visual Temporal Sequences.” *Psychological Science* 16/3 228–235.

Hutchinson, Ann. 1963. *Concerto Barocco*. Labanotation score. Music by Johann Sebastian Bach. Choreography by George Balanchine. As taught by Una Kai. New York: Dance Notation Bureau.

Jordan, Stephanie. 2000. *Moving Music: Dialogues with Music in Twentieth-Century Ballet*. London: Dance Books.

Leaman, Kara Yoo. 2016. “Analyzing Music and Dance: Balanchine's Choreography to Tchaikovsky and the Choreomusical Score.” Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University.

———. 2021 (forthcoming). “Musical Techniques in Balanchine's Jazzy Bach Ballet.” *Journal of Music Theory* 65/1.

Matjias, Christian and Tina Curran. Undated. *Concerto Barocco*. Vol. 1 of *George Balanchine Critical Editions*. Unpublished.

Rotman, Leslie K. 1985. *Concerto Barocco*. Labanotation score. Music by Johann Sebastian Bach. Choreography by George Balanchine. As taught by Victoria Simon. New York: Dance Notation Bureau.

Steichen, James. 2018. "Balanchine's 'Bach Ballet' and the Dances of Rodgers and Hart's *On Your Toes*." *Journal of Musicology* 35/2: 267–93.

Zbikowski, Lawrence. 2002. *Conceptualizing Music: Cognitive Structure, Theory, and Analysis*. New York: Oxford University Press.