

Introduction to Audio Content Analysis

Module 9.1: Introduction to Tempo & Rhythm Terminology

alexander lerch

introduction

overview

corresponding textbook section

Section 9.1

Section 9.2

■ lecture content

- terminology for rhythm detection
- perceptually motivated rhythm accuracy

■ learning objectives

- describe the terms onset, tempo, meter, bar, and rhythm
- give two examples of typical onset times for musical instruments



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temporal events

introduction

■ categorization of temporal parameters:

- *score* parameters:
structure, time signature, rhythm, ...
- *performance* parameters:
tempo, timing, ...

■ perception of temporal parameters:

- audio signal/stream is segmented into distinct events \Rightarrow *onsets* (segment start)
- humans *structure and group* these events due to position, salience, ...

temporal events

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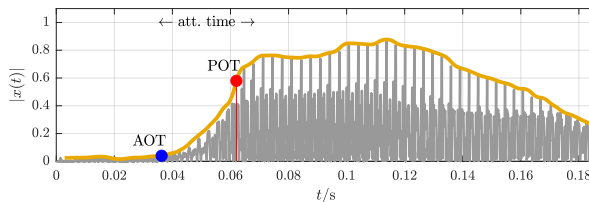
human perception of temporal events

introduction to onsets

■ **onset** is start of a musical event

■ **properties:**

- position
- strength, salience
- length?



human perception of temporal events

initial transients

■ percussive instruments:

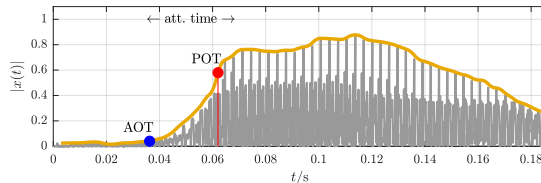
- 3-20 ms

■ woodwind instruments:

- up to 300 ms

■ typical range for majority of instruments:

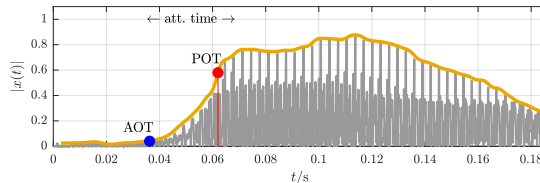
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human perception of temporal events

initial transients

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human perception of temporal events

human detection accuracy

■ *detection & discrimination* of 2 subsequent onsets

- detection $\Delta t > 2 \text{ ms}$, discrimination $\Delta t > 20 \text{ ms}$ ¹

■ *prediction* of looped monophonic instrument onsets

- IOI 600 ms: $\sigma = 12 \text{ ms}$
- IOI $< 240 \text{ ms}$: $\sigma = 10 \text{ ms}$

■ manual onset time *annotation*

- piano: mean abs. error: 4.3 ms, max: 35 ms
- various: mean abs. error: 10 ms, max: 30 ms

■ ensemble performance

- string & woodwind: deviations up to 30-50 ms
- piano: $\sigma = 14 - 38 \text{ ms}$

¹I. J. Hirsh, "Auditory Perception of Temporal Order," *JASA*, vol. 31, no. 6, p. 759, 1959.

human perception of temporal events

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¹J. W. Gordon, "Perception of Attack Transients in Musical Tones," Dissertation, Stanford University, Center for Computer Research in Music and Acoustics (CCRMA), Stanford, 1984.

²A. Friberg and J. Sundberg, "Perception of just noticeable time displacement of a tone presented in a Metrical Sequence at Different Tempos," *STL-QPSR*, vol. 33, no. 4, pp. 97-108, 1992.

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²P. Leveau, L. Daudet, and G. Richard, "Methodology and Tools for the Evaluation of Automatic Onset Detection Algorithms in Music," in *ISMIR*, Barcelona, 2004.

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¹R. A. Rasch, "Synchronization in Performed Ensemble Music," *Acustica*, vol. 43, pp. 121–131, 1979.

²L. H. Shaffer, "Timing in Solo and Duet Piano Performances," *Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology*, vol. 36A, pp. 577–595, 1984.

human perception of temporal events

offsets

what about offsets/end of notes



human perception of temporal events

offsets



what about offsets/end of notes

- **perceptually not as important** as an onset
 - offset are often ignored in rhythm perception
- **systematic difficulties:** when does a note end?
 - performer stops excitation
 - instrument stops oscillation
 - listener cannot recognize it anymore
- **practical difficulties:** hard to detect
 - low volume
 - reverberation
 - masking

human perception of temporal events

tempo, meter & rhythm

■ **tempo**: perceived equal duration pulses at a “natural” rate — tactus

- constant tempo

$$\mathfrak{T} = \frac{\mathcal{B} \cdot 60 \text{ s}}{\Delta t_s} \text{ [BPM]}$$

- dynamic tempo

$$\mathfrak{T}_{\text{local}}(j) = \frac{60 \text{ s}}{t_b(j+1) - t_b(j)} \text{ [BPM]}$$

- perceived overall tempo?
 - ▶ average, main, mode, ...

■ **meter**

- group of strong and weak musical elements/beats
- typically 3 to 7 beats (app. 5 s)

■ **rhythm**

- group length 1–8 beats
- defined by accents and time intervals

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■ **meter**

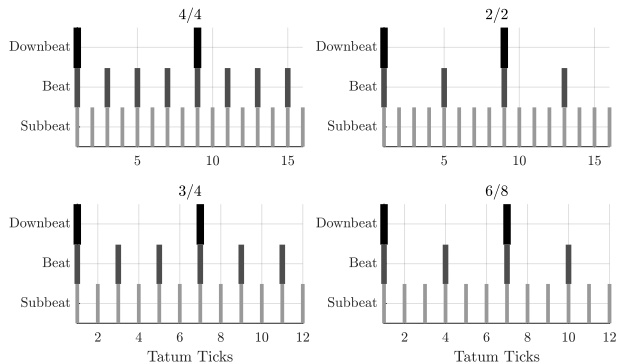
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temporal events

hierarchical structure



musical notation of temporal events

tempo, time signature, bar & note value

■ tempo

- *Largo, Adagio, Andante, Moderato, Allegro, Presto*
- *ritardando, accelerando, ...*
- modern scores: sometimes overall tempo in BPM

■ bar

- score equivalent of perceptual meter
- begin of bar is marked by a vertical line

■ time signature

- conveys length of bar

■ note value

$\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{2}{2}$



summary

lecture content

■ perceptual terms

- onset, tempo, meter, rhythm

■ musical terms

- tempo, bar, time signature, note value, rhythm

■ accuracy range of interest

- 2–300 ms

