

# The Harmonix Set

Beats, downbeats, and structural annotations for Western pop music

Sevag Hanssian

MUMT 621, Winter 2021

January 26, 2021

SOUND CHECK

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# The Harmonix Set

*Annotations of beats, downbeats, and functional segmentation for over 900 full tracks that covers a wide range of western popular music, to foster research that focuses on multiple retrieval tasks at once.*<sup>1, 2</sup>

- ❶ MIREX task “Audio Beat Tracking”<sup>3</sup>
- ❷ MIREX task “Audio Downbeat Estimation”<sup>4</sup>
- ❸ MIREX task “Structural Segmentation”<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Oriol Nieto et al. “The Harmonix Set: Beats, Downbeats, and Functional Segment Annotations of Western Popular Music”. In: *Proc. of the 20th International Society for Music Information Retrieval Conference (ISMIR), Delft, The Netherlands, 2019* (2019).

<sup>2</sup>urinieto/harmonixset. URL: <https://github.com/urinieto/harmonixset>.

<sup>3</sup>2006:Audio Beat Tracking. URL: [https://www.music-ir.org/mirex/wiki/2006:Audio\\_Beat\\_Tracking](https://www.music-ir.org/mirex/wiki/2006:Audio_Beat_Tracking).

<sup>4</sup>2014:Audio Downbeat Estimation. URL: [https://www.music-ir.org/mirex/wiki/2014:Audio\\_Downbeat\\_Estimation](https://www.music-ir.org/mirex/wiki/2014:Audio_Downbeat_Estimation).

<sup>5</sup>2009:Structual Segmentation. URL: [https://www.music-ir.org/mirex/wiki/2009:Structural\\_Segmentation](https://www.music-ir.org/mirex/wiki/2009:Structural_Segmentation).

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## The Harmonix Set

### └ The Harmonix Set

- Harmonix is a video game studio – created Rock Band, among others
- Goal was to use pop, dance, EDM music for a rhythm game. However, less simple (e.g. 4/4 edm) examples were also added to make HarmonixSet more challenging
- corey kereliuk introduction – foot tapping + chess

The Harmonix Set

Annotations of beats, downbeats, and functional segmentation for over 900 full tracks that covers a wide range of western popular music, to foster research that focuses on multiple retrieval tasks at once.<sup>1, 2</sup>

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# MIREX beat tracking datasets

## Summary of MIREX beat tracking datasets<sup>6</sup>

- 2006** First appearance of challenge; *the MCK dataset contains 160 30-second audio excerpts created by the MIREX team in 2006. Characterized by stable tempo, wide variety of instrumentations and musical styles. 20% of the files have non-binary meters.*
- 2009** Second dataset, Chopin Mazurkas; *the MAZ dataset contains piano recordings of 322 Chopin Mazurkas, which include tempo changes.*
- 2012** Third dataset; *consists of 217 excerpts around 40s each, majority is difficult to track (e.g. changes in meter and tempo, bad sound quality, expressive timing). It includes romantic music, film soundtracks, blues, chanson, and solo guitar*

<sup>6</sup>E. Krebs and S. Böck. MIREX 2012 AUDIO BEAT TRACKING EVALUATION : NEUROBEAT. 2012.

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## The Harmonix Set

### └ MIREX beat tracking datasets

- MCK named after McKinney? not really explained, but colloquially looks to be true
- First dataset is same dataset used in [https://www.music-ir.org/mirex/wiki/2006:Audio\\_Tempo\\_Extraction](https://www.music-ir.org/mirex/wiki/2006:Audio_Tempo_Extraction)
- musical vs. dsp difficulty

MIREX beat tracking datasets

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# MIREX downbeat estimation datasets

2014 Six different datasets from diverse geographic and stylistic sources:  
**The Beatles**<sup>7</sup>, **HJDB**<sup>8</sup> (Hardcore, Jungle, Drum and Bass)  
**Turkish**<sup>9</sup>, **Ballroom**<sup>10</sup>, **Carnatic**<sup>11</sup>, **Cretan**<sup>12</sup>

<sup>7</sup>M. Mauch et al. "OMRAS2 metadata project 2009". In: *In Late-breaking session at the 10th International Conference on Music Information Retrieval (ISMIR)*. 2009.

<sup>8</sup>Jason A. Hockman, Matthew E. P. Davies, and Ichiro Fujinaga. *One in the Jungle: Downbeat Detection in Hardcore, Jungle, and Drum and Bass*. 2012.

<sup>9</sup>Ajay Srinivasamurthy, André Holzapfel, and Xavier Serra. "In Search of Automatic Rhythm Analysis Methods for Turkish and Indian Art Music". In: *Journal of New Music Research* 43 (Mar. 2014). DOI: 10.1080/09298215.2013.879902.

<sup>10</sup>F. Krebs, S. Böck, and G. Widmer. "Rhythmic Pattern Modeling for Beat and Downbeat Tracking in Musical Audio". In: *ISMIR*. 2013.

<sup>11</sup>Ajay Srinivasamurthy and Xavier Serra. "A supervised approach to hierarchical metrical cycle tracking from audio music recordings". In: *ICASSP, IEEE International Conference on Acoustics, Speech and Signal Processing - Proceedings*. May 2014, pp. 5217–5221. ISBN: 978-1-4799-2893-4. DOI: 10.1109/ICASSP.2014.6854598.

<sup>12</sup>Andre Holzapfel, Florian Krebs, and Ajay Srinivasamurthy. *Tracking the "odd": meter inference in a culturally diverse music corpus*. Oct. 2014.

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## The Harmonix Set

### └ MIREX downbeat estimation datasets

- beatles, later known as the **Isophonics Dataset** with more than just The Beatles
- Interesting trend, in beat tracking, MIREX supplied the dataset
- In downbeat estimation, the datasets are gathered from BYO-dataset per paper

MIREX downbeat estimation datasets

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# MIREX structural segmentation datasets

MIREX initial dataset included **The Beatles** and a subset of **RWC**<sup>13</sup>

Traits of structural segmentation:

- 1 Ambiguous – more than one valid annotation for a given track
- 2 Subjective – different listeners can perceive different segments

Solutions: SALAMI<sup>14</sup>, SPAM<sup>15</sup> include multiple annotations per track by different experts

<sup>13</sup>Masataka Goto et al. "RWC Music Database: Popular, Classical, and Jazz Music Databases". In: *ISMIR 2002, 3rd International Conference on Music Information Retrieval, Paris, France, October 13-17, 2002, Proceedings*. Jan. 2002.

<sup>14</sup>Jordan Smith et al. "Design and creation of a large-scale database of structural annotations.". In: *Proceedings of the 12th International Society for Music Information Retrieval Conference, ISMIR 2011, Miami, Florida, USA*. Oct. 2011, pp. 555–560.

<sup>15</sup>Oriol Nieto and Juan Pablo Bello. "Systematic Exploration of Computational Music Structure Research.". In: *Proceedings of the 17th International Society for Music Information Retrieval Conference (New York City, United States)*. New York City, United States: ISMIR, Aug. 2016, pp. 547–553. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.1417661.

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### └ MIREX structural segmentation datasets

- same as beat/downbeat Beatles dataset
- Difference from beat/downbeat annotations: cannot have excerpts, need whole song
- Mirex 2016 for segmentation = partial SALAMI
- Hierarchical vs flat segments
- It should be noted that none of the evaluation measures cares about the true labels of the sections: they only denote the clustering. This means that it does not matter if the systems produce true labels such as "chorus" and "verse", or arbitrary labels such as "A" and "B".

MIREX structural segmentation datasets

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# Traits of datasets

## MIREX datasets:

- MIREX datasets can have multiple annotators, a single annotator, or even semi-automated annotations using algorithm outputs
- Post-processing of first-pass, raw annotations involves iterative adjustment until annotators are satisfied
- Selection of songs for style-specificity (either targeting a specific style, or including diverse styles), to adjust western/non-western bias, or based on perceived difficulty (on a musical or signal processing level)

## HarmonixSet:

- Songs were annotated by trained professional musicians who regularly work in music production environments (using DAW + MIDI)
- Mix of genres were chosen to be typical of ones used in the rhythm-action games, tendency to pop/EDM for dancing
- Tend to have a very stable tempo and a 4/4 time signature, however some atypical songs (classic rock, country, metal) were included with less stable tempo and which may deviate from a strict 4/4 meter

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## The Harmonix Set

### └ Traits of datasets

- tricky – need to ensure human curation of algorithm output, since these are meant for evaluating algorithms in the first place

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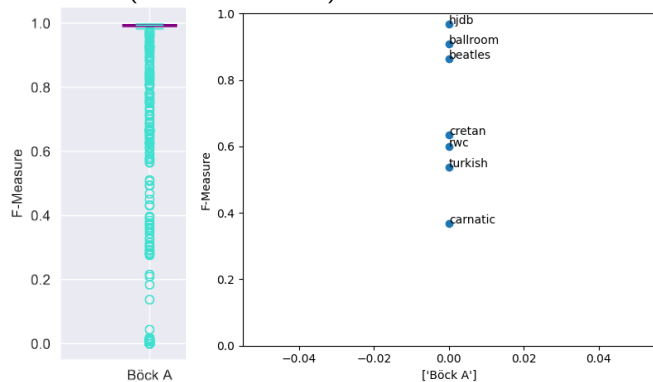
# MIREX vs. HarmonixSet result – single case study

Results from MIREX 2016:

[https://www.music-ir.org/mirex/wiki/2016:MIREX2016\\_Results](https://www.music-ir.org/mirex/wiki/2016:MIREX2016_Results)

## F-measure for downbeat estimation

“Böck A” (in HarmonixSet), “BK4” in MIREX<sup>16</sup>

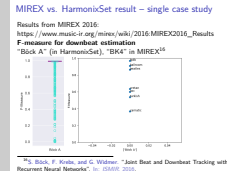


<sup>16</sup>S. Böck, F. Krebs, and G. Widmer. “Joint Beat and Downbeat Tracking with Recurrent Neural Networks”. In: *ISMIR. 2016*.

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## The Harmonix Set

└ MIREX vs. HarmonixSet result – single case study



- Selected 2016 as its the only recent year that had submissions and evaluations for all 3 challenges
- Adapted the harmonixset plotting code to plot mirex results for BK4
- My kneejerk reaction was “HarmonixSet is too easy”, not the case for BK4
- Labor-intensive to repeat this for each challenge, each algorithm – only one

# Gangnam style – HarmonixSet annotations

## ① # dataset/beats\_and\_downbeats/0388\_gangnamstyle.txt

0.079	1	1	
0.54	2	1	
1.017	3	1	
1.494	4	1	
1.92	1	2	
2.374545		2	2
2.82909	3	2	
3.283635		4	2

## ② # dataset/segments/0388\_gangnamstyle.txt

0.079	intro
6.010905	chorus
14.64726	verse

## ③ [https://github.com/uriniето/harmonixset/blob/master/dataset/jams/0388\\_gangnamstyle.jams](https://github.com/uriniето/harmonixset/blob/master/dataset/jams/0388_gangnamstyle.jams)<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup>Eric Humphrey et al. "JAMS: A JSON Annotated Music Specification for Reproducible MIR Research". In: Oct. 2014.

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## The Harmonix Set

### └─ Gangnam style – HarmonixSet annotations

Gangnam style – HarmonixSet annotations

```
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0.079 1 1
0.54 2 1
1.017 3 1
1.494 4 1
1.92 1 2
2.374545 2 2
2.82909 3 2
3.283635 4 2

# dataset/segments/0388_gangnamstyle.txt
0.079 intro
6.010905 chorus
14.64726 verse

https://github.com/uriniето/harmonixset/blob/master/dataset/jams/0388_gangnamstyle.jams17
```

<sup>17</sup>Eric Humphrey et al. "JAMS: A JSON Annotated Music Specification for Reproducible MIR Research". In: Oct. 2014.



# Gangnam style results – beats

Beat time output<sup>18</sup>

beat times: [ 0.09 0.55 1. 1.46 1.91 2.37 2.82 3.28 ... ]

vs. HarmonixSet ground truth

0.079	1	1	
0.54	2	1	
1.017	3	1	
1.494	4	1	
1.92	1	2	
2.374545		2	2
2.82909	3	2	
3.283635		4	2

Clicks: BEAT CLICKS

<sup>18</sup>*madmom.features.beats.* URL:  
<https://madmom.readthedocs.io/en/latest/modules/features/beats.html>.

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└─Gangnam style results – beats

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Clicks: BEAT CLICKS

<sup>18</sup>*madmom.features.beats.* URL:  
<https://madmom.readthedocs.io/en/latest/modules/features/beats.html>.

# Gangnam style results – downbeats

Downbeat time output<sup>19</sup>

downbeat times: [1.0, 2.82, 4.64, 6.46, ...]

vs. HarmonixSet ground truth

```
# awk '{ if ($2 == 3) { print } }' \
# dataset/beats_and_downbeats/0388_gangnamstyle.txt
1.017    3        1
2.82909  3        2
4.64727  3        3
6.46545  3        4
...
```

Clicks: DOWNBEAT CLICKS

<sup>19</sup>*madmom.features.downbeats*. URL:

<https://madmom.readthedocs.io/en/latest/modules/features/downbeats.html>.

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## The Harmonix Set

└─ Gangnam style results – downbeats

Gangnam style results – downbeats

Downbeat time output<sup>19</sup>

downbeat times: [1.0, 2.82, 4.64, 6.46, ...]

vs. HarmonixSet ground truth

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# awk '{ if ($2 == 3) { print } }' \
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1.017    3        1
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4.64727  3        3
6.46545  3        4
...
```

Clicks: DOWNBEAT CLICKS

<sup>19</sup>*madmom.features.downbeats*. URL:  
<https://madmom.readthedocs.io/en/latest/modules/features/downbeats.html>.

- **NB!** not first beat of bar, but consistently lands on third

# Gangnam style results – segmentation

Structural segmentation output<sup>20</sup>

```
segments: [ 0.58049887  8.08054422 11.74929705
            14.09451247 ...
```

vs. HarmonixSet ground truth

```
0.079 intro 6.010905 chorus 14.64726 verse ...
```

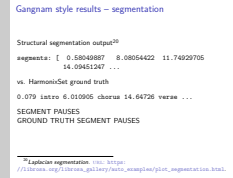
SEGMENT PAUSES  
GROUND TRUTH SEGMENT PAUSES

<sup>20</sup>*Laplacian segmentation.* URL: [https://librosa.org/librosa\\_gallery/auto\\_examples/plot\\_segmentation.html](https://librosa.org/librosa_gallery/auto_examples/plot_segmentation.html).

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## └─Gangnam style results – segmentation

- First 20 second output of the whole processed song
- Essential that whole song is used as an input. having half the song changes the nature of segmentation. self-similarity, need whole song to know full knowledge



# Audio alignment

YouTube music videos, or different file formats or recordings obtained by researchers, may have temporal differences with the original mp3 files.

Alignment data is included to

*... help align the audio in case researchers obtain audio data with different compression formats that might include certain small temporal offsets.*

Algorithms used for alignment:

- 1 Dynamic time warping<sup>21, 22</sup>
- 2 Onsets<sup>23</sup>

<sup>21</sup>Meinard Müller. “Dynamic time warping”. In: *Information Retrieval for Music and Motion 2* (Jan. 2007), pp. 69–84. DOI: 10.1007/978-3-540-74048-3\_4.

<sup>22</sup>Audio Alignment for Harmonix Set. URL: <https://github.com/urinieto/harmonixset/blob/master/notebooks/Audio%20Alignment.ipynb>.

<sup>23</sup>librosa.onset.onset\_detect. URL: [https://librosa.org/doc/main/generated/librosa.onset.onset\\_detect.html](https://librosa.org/doc/main/generated/librosa.onset.onset_detect.html).

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- DTW in a nutshell:  
*DTW has been successfully applied to automatically cope with time deformations and different speeds associated with time-dependent data.*
- Onsets don't quite solve the problem, unlike DTW. They're just timestamped information. One would have to do some manual work to compare their onsets to the harmonixset onsets and compute the temporal difference – or perhaps it can be used as an indicator to run DTW

# Dataset recreation and copyright

Data provided to allow independent recreation of dataset includes:  
Identifiers in shared music databases:

- 1 MusicBrainz ID<sup>24</sup>, open music encyclopedia including unique identifiers for recordings, releases, artists, etc.
- 2 AcoustID (<https://acoustid.org/>), open source fingerprinting service to easily match audio content associated with MusicBrainz ids
- 3 YouTube URLs, including alignment information with the original mp3 files used in the paper

Audio/DSP features:

- 1 mel spectrograms for the original mp3 files
- 2 estimated onsets for the first 30 seconds of audio from librosa

<sup>24</sup>A. Swartz. "MusicBrainz: a semantic Web service". In: *IEEE Intelligent Systems* 17.1 (2002), pp. 76–77. DOI: 10.1109/5254.988466.

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### Dataset recreation and copyright

- Original mp3 files cannot legally be distributed due to copyright
- Note that these audio features are automated (onsets and spectrograms). This allows independent recreation (aligning the direct output of librosa's onset function on my files and comparing it to their's)
- Keep in mind onsets are (most likely) essential in beat/downbeat/segmentation tracking. note onsets mark musical events, its a fact. but the raw librosa onset data isn't the opinionated "algorithm being evaluated", in this sense its used as a straight feature

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# Conclusion

Future work: meta-study to analyze

- 1 Results for algorithms across MIREX challenge datasets
- 2 Same algorithms applied to the HarmonixSet
- 3 Comparison of results to gauge the characteristics of the HarmonixSet over established datasets, e.g. in the vein of [Peter Grosche, Meinard Müller, and Craig Sapp](#). “What Makes Beat Tracking Difficult? A Case Study on Chopin Mazurkas”. In: *Proceedings of the 11th International Society for Music Information Retrieval Conference, ISMIR 2010, Utrecht, Netherlands. Aug. 2010*, pp. 649–654

Source latex and Python code for this presentation:

<https://gitlab.com/sevagh/MIR-presentations/-/tree/master/01-harmonix-set>

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## The Harmonix Set

### Conclusion

- HarmonixSet is a high-quality dataset of ground truth annotations for beats, downbeats, and segments in over 900 popular music tracks
- Stable results from a single set of annotators and techniques (unlike mixing/matching different datasets)
- Open source, clear repository structure, Jupyter notebooks, approachable and reproducible

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