



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS
JOURNALS + DIGITAL PUBLISHING

AMS AMERICAN
MUSICOLOGICAL
SOCIETY

The Rhythms of Tonal Music by Joel Lester

Review by: William E. Caplin

Journal of the American Musicological Society, Vol. 41, No. 2 (Summer, 1988), pp. 382-392

Published by: [University of California Press](http://www.ucpress.edu) on behalf of the [American Musicological Society](http://www.ams-musicological.org)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/831441>

Accessed: 25/12/2013 01:10

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at
<http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



University of California Press and American Musicological Society are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Journal of the American Musicological Society*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

with line drawings that illustrate the anatomical aspects of the subject. William Waterhouse's coverage of the bassoon shows him to be a worthy successor of the late Lydnesay Langwill.

Mark Lindley has produced a major article about temperaments, including an important warning about the confusion that has been wrought "by the neglect of some scholars to distinguish adequately between the tunings actually used by a Werckmeister or a Neidhardt and theoretical schemes that represent experimental models or merely speculative calculations." Related entries include equal temperament, just intonation, mean-tone, pitch, Pythagorean intonation, and tuning. One only wonders why American high pitch, the standard for American military and town bands at the turn of the century (A=440 became the norm only at the end of World War I), continues to be such a well-kept secret.

An occasional photograph is dreadful. The beautiful division viol by Barak Norman (London, 1692) at the Royal College of Music in London (2:775), a cello by Domenico Montagnana (Venice, 1710) from an unidentified private collection (2:685), and a husla (Slavic, 19th century) from the Musikhistorisk Museum in Copenhagen (2:264) are among the worst offenders. For the most part, however, the illustrative materials are first-rate and the reproduction is good. Photographs of instruments always help obviate misunderstandings caused by differences in terminology, inadequate translations, and so on, and one can only wish that there had been room for even more.

To many reviewers, the present one included, the *NGDMI* will seem far from perfect. But the world is filled with differing perceptions, and a work as extensive as the *New Grove Dictionary of Musical Instruments* will never be free of controversy. The important thing is that it exists at all. Its publication marks an important commitment by Macmillan Press to the study of musical instruments. In certain areas, the achievement is already a great one, and one looks forward to subsequent editions in future years.

ANDRÉ P. LARSON
University of South Dakota

Joel Lester. *The Rhythms of Tonal Music*. Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1986. x, 285 pp.

MUSIC THEORY TODAY MAY SEEM TO MANY historical musicologists, and to some theorists as well, overly preoccupied with a single dimension of the musical experience—pitch relations. Complaints are regularly voiced that the "theory establishment" is interested primarily in Schenkerian analysis for the tonal repertoire and set-theoretical analysis for nontonal idioms. Running counter to this view is the overwhelming evidence of intensive research into another dimension of music—the temporal.¹ The theory of rhythm has been the subject of investigation, at one time or another, by most of North America's leading theorists. Although the results of their inquiries have not

¹See Jonathan D. Kramer, "Studies of Time and Music: A Bibliography," *Music Theory Spectrum* 7 (1985): 72–106, for a listing of some 850 items.

yet led to a consensus about a number of fundamental issues, the many problems of rhythmic theory and the range of their possible solutions have, by now, been well explored.

Joel Lester's *The Rhythms of Tonal Music* now offers an excellent introduction to and summary of the fruits of this new research, at least for music of the "common practice period." Lester's goal is to survey the existing literature and to provide a more comprehensive approach than that normally undertaken in specialized studies. He is quick to point out, though, that his treatment of such topics as meter, hypermeter, phrase rhythm, texture, and style is informed by a new theory of accent; novel, too, is his interest in the relationship between rhythm and form.

His very title reveals a theoretical, one might even say aesthetic, attitude that pervades his entire book. Music projects not just rhythm, but a multiplicity of rhythms originating in a wide variety of musical relationships. A successful analysis will uncover these diversities and emphasize interactions among the manifold sources of rhythm. Lester is suspicious of theories (and analyses) that are reductionist in nature. It is indeed refreshing to find him bucking the prevailing obsession of many theorists with "unity" (which so often becomes confused with "uniformity"), reveling instead in the competing rhythmic forces at play within a musical work. This attitude is reflected not only in his specific analyses, but also in the general approach he takes to some of the fundamental issues of rhythmic theory: accent, meter, levels of activity, and musical continuity.

Lester's theory of accent exemplifies well his general theoretical outlook, for at issue is the variety of means by which accent is created. Factors such as longer durations, denser textures, louder dynamics, pattern beginnings, and changes in pitch, harmony, and contour can impart a sense of "initiation" to a given point in time, thus accenting that point. The varying patterns of accents arising from these many sources contribute much to the character of a given passage. Lester often speaks of how a particular combination of accents is largely responsible for the "rhythmic dynamism" or melodic "suppleness" projected by the music. And he asks his readers to observe the "weaker profile," or "stilted" phrasing that results if the accent structure is altered.

Following a long tradition, Lester understands meter as the organization (or grouping) of accented and unaccented pulses (or beats) at a variety of levels in the structural hierarchy of a work. Unlike some recent theorists, who see a regular alternation of accented and unaccented beats as essential to meter in tonal music,² Lester recognizes the frequent occurrence of irregularities in accent organization and never suggests that such situations are nonmetric in any respect. Faithful to his general outlook, he is tolerant of diverse modes of hearing meter, particularly in contexts of metric ambiguity or of actual metric change. If a passage exhibits equivocal metric interpretations, he urges that the conflicting patterns of accentuation be identified clearly and acknowledged as valid. He concedes that a metric ambiguity may resolve itself upon repeated hearings, but emphasizes that "the aspects that

²See, for example, Fred Lerdahl and Ray Jackendoff, *A Generative Theory of Tonal Music* (Cambridge, Mass., 1983), 69.

gave rise to the ambiguity do not evaporate. They remain as a part of the rhythm of the passage—rhythm here used in its broadest sense” (p. 102).³

The ways in which meter is established and maintained make up a major topic in Lester’s study. Since meter involves the “grouping of pulses,” the music must provide both the pulses at one level of structure and some means for grouping them at a higher, slower-paced level. In order to fulfill this second condition, Lester appeals to his theory of accent:

Pulses are grouped on a given level by accentual factors that occur at a slower pace than the pulse itself. Harmonic change is the strongest accentual factor capable of establishing a metric grouping of a pulse. (p. 58)

Where harmonic changes occur too rapidly or too slowly to group a given pulse, durational and textural accents are the factors that most convincingly provide metric groupings. (p. 61)

Lester’s emphasis on the actual, perceived musical relationships involved in the creation of meter is most laudable. Whereas many theorists ultimately rely on the mechanics of notation (the time signature and bar lines) for determining a metric interpretation, Lester wisely points out that the forces creating meter must ultimately reside “in the music” itself, and that the analyst should not resort to the notated meter for resolving ambiguous situations:

Listeners may hear the harmonic rhythm, the durational accents, textural accents, patterns of repetition, the context, and other factors that can create a meter. But without a score, they cannot hear the metric notation. If the musical structure cannot project a meter to the listener, the notation cannot do so either. (pp. 122–23)

Among Lester’s many insightful discussions, the one likely to prove of greatest interest to music historians concerns the realization of meter at different hierarchical levels within a composition. Building upon ideas suggested by Edward T. Cone,⁴ Lester shows how works of various style periods display a characteristic interaction of metric levels. Music of the high baroque (Bach), for example, generally exhibits “multiple levels of essential activity” (p. 128), both at fast, foreground levels and at slower, middleground ones.⁵ In contrast, romantic composers (Schubert, Schumann, Wagner) typically employ fewer, and generally slower-paced, levels of essential activity, with the faster-paced ones usually serving an accompanimental role. Finally, works by late nineteenth-century composers (Brahms, Mahler) often contain “unsynchronized” and “disparate” levels of metric activity. To be

³Given Lester’s generally liberal views on metric ambiguity, he is curiously rigid regarding some passages by Brahms, a composer particularly fond of creating conflicts with the notated meter, and insists that the manifest cross accentuations create no metric ambiguity (see his Examples 3–30, 3–34, and 3–35). Surely, there will be some listeners, who, unfamiliar with the score, will perceive the meter other than as notated.

⁴*Musical Form and Musical Performance* (New York, 1968), 57–87.

⁵In addition to using the expression “essential activity,” Lester also speaks of a level receiving the “focus of attention” or of one containing “functionally meaningful harmonic motion” (p. 130). Lester never strictly defines “essential activity,” but the reader comes to understand the gist of his idea from analyses of selected musical examples.

sure, these conclusions about rhythm and style are highly general; yet they can surely provide the starting points for more detailed investigations into the common rhythmic traits displayed by works of a given style period, or perhaps even of an individual composer.⁶

Throughout the history of rhythmic theory, the understanding of “hypermeter,” i.e., meter above the level of the notated measure, has generated more contention than any other issue. For decades, the battle was fought on one side by Hugo Riemann and his supporters, who claimed that the even-numbered measures of an eight-measure phrase were metrically accented in relation to the odd-numbered measures; the opposing view was championed by Theodor Wihmayer and Heinrich Schenker, among others, who saw the odd-numbered measures as metrically strong. The influence of both positions can still be observed in the writings of theorists today.⁷

In line with his general theoretical outlook, Lester refuses to prescribe a rigid model for the metric organization of the phrase and disdains those who do. In fact, he is more skeptical about higher-level meter than most other theorists. He maintains that if the meter-producing factors are not present at these levels—if there are neither the pulses nor the various accentual forces to group them—then meter, in the sense in which it functions within the measure, cannot even be said to exist. He also argues that the conventional organization of accents within a single measure does not constitute a satisfactory model for how measures are metrically weighted within a phrase. And he disputes any claims for the inherent metrical strength or weakness of cadences. Lester does not automatically rule out the presence of regular hypermeters but finds them more prevalent in transitional, developmental, and closing sections than in thematic passages featuring strong cadential closure.

Issues of hypermeter continue to dominate when the author examines how various models of linear analysis relate to rhythm. After discussing Schenker’s own use of rhythmic notation in his analyses, Lester considers more recent theories by Arthur Komar, Peter Westergaard, and Carl Schachter. Once again, the author plays the skeptic. In a statement sure to displease many, he casts doubt on the ability of linear analysis to resolve many of the difficult problems of rhythmic theory:

. . . a given theorist’s linear analyses will reflect that theorist’s attitudes [toward higher-level meter] to the extent that he or she wishes to incorporate metric notations in those analyses. The same is true of other rhythmic issues, whether they be the definition of accent or the role of rhythmic continuity and motives. The application of linear analysis per se will not lead directly to a solution of these issues. (p. 216)

⁶Curiously, Lester refrains from generalizing about music of the classical style; but his analyses of some passages from Mozart and Beethoven suggest that levels of essential activity tend to shift up and down the metric hierarchy within the course of the work. Something like the idea of shifting levels of activity is also discussed by Cone, *Musical Form*, p. 73 and Charles Rosen, *The Classical Style: Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven* (New York, 1972), p. 60.

⁷In North America, elements of Riemann’s position (particularly his insistence upon the metrical strength of cadential arrival) have found sympathy among composers and theorists associated with Princeton University, such as Roger Sessions, Edward T. Cone, Arthur Komar, and Robert P. Morgan. The position of Wihmayer and Schenker continues to be promulgated by Wallace Berry and Carl Schachter.

Lester's attitude towards linear models is not entirely negative. He acknowledges that they can convey much about the "rhythms" of a work, such as the ordering of events, their relationships at various levels of structure, patterns of repetition, and the location of structural goals. Nevertheless, he questions whether linear analyses can reveal many other components of rhythm, especially accent, meter, and hypermeter, issues that concern him greatly.

The final two chapters are devoted to topics rarely discussed in theories of rhythm—the relationships of rhythm to form and polyphony. The chapter devoted exclusively to polyphony seems somewhat superfluous, since most of the issues treated there could have been integrated with materials appearing earlier in the book. But the chapter on form includes an important discussion on the role of rhythm in creating "musical continuity," the sense of flow that transcends the boundaries of formal units. Lester's views on sonata form, and especially the organization of phrases within the "second-theme group," are most illuminating and suggestive of further research. A strong feature of the book as a whole is the treatment of rhythm in a variety of phrase-structural situations, rather than the symmetrical, eight-measure period form, which has traditionally dominated so many discussions of phrase rhythm.

In a subject as controversial as rhythmic theory, any new study is bound to provoke objections from its readers on certain topics, even as it brings insight and clarification to others. Despite the extensive treatment Lester gives to the two central concepts of accent and meter, for example, he fails to bring out a number of significant differences between them, especially as regards their structural and aesthetic functions within a musical work.

In trying to understand the relationship of accent to meter we would want first a clarification of the one expression that directly links both concepts—*metric accent*. Curiously, Lester never defines this important term, and the reader is left assuming that a metric accent is essentially the same as any other accent—e.g., durational, dynamic, textural—except that it occurs at the beginning of a metric group. According to Lester, metric accents exhibit only one additional distinguishing trait: whereas all other accents must be tied to actually sounding events, "a metric accent . . . can occur on a rest; no event need mark it off. This is because meter is, in part, a psychological phenomenon" (p. 16). I would argue, however, that metric accents differ from other accents in a number of significant ways not specifically discussed by Lester. Admittedly, some of these differences are implicit in his statements and examples, but I shall try to make them explicit in order to achieve a more complete understanding of the relationship between accent and meter.

Since accent is a relational concept, a theory of accent must not only specify what is accented, but also what is not. When Lester first defines which musical entities are accented, he addresses the question of which are unaccented as well:

Accents are . . . *points of initiation*. The beginning of a note, for example, is accented both in relation to the preceding silence or the sustained portion of the preceding note and in relation to the sustained portion of that note. (p. 16)

Likewise, the beginning of, say, a new dynamic level, a new harmony, or a new melodic pattern is accented in relation to the preceding dynamic level, harmony, or the interior of the preceding melodic pattern, and it is accented in relation to the continuation of that dynamic level, harmony, or melodic pattern. Lester observes that the unaccented state must not be located at the beginning of the preceding note (or dynamic level, etc.), for this would give rise to “ever-stronger accents in a string of repeated notes, or in nearly any passage” (p. 266, n. 9). To avoid this possibility, Lester understands the unaccented state to arise somewhere *after* the beginning of the previous event but does not specify exactly where the onset of the unaccented state occurs.

This definition of accent may seem satisfactory enough taken by itself, but if we consider our intuitions about accents in association with musical meter, the definition appears somewhat inadequate. For we do not normally think that a metrically strong moment, a downbeat, is accented in relation to some indeterminate point in time that precedes or follows it. Rather, we usually say that the unaccented state is located at a precise temporal position, at the beginning of some definite upbeat. Both metric accents *and* unaccents thus have a specific moment of onset.⁸

Once the location of the unaccents is fixed, we can see that, in a metric context, the accent relationship takes place at a precisely defined level within the durational hierarchy of a work. For example, the quarter note at the beginning of a measure notated with a 2/4 time signature is metrically accented in relation to the preceding and following quarter notes, which are unaccented. If the quarter note itself is divided into eighths, then the first eighth note is strong in relation to the preceding and following eighths. As a rule, then, every metric accent is associated with one or more unaccents at the same durational level of structure.

Within Lester’s general theory of accent, such hierarchical relationships are often unspecified and indeterminate. Consider his Example 2–8 (reproduced here as Example 1). Are all of these accents at the same level? Where exactly are the unaccented moments to which the accents relate? The same questions can be asked in connection with his Example 2–16 (Example 2 below), where every musical event is identified as a durational accent or pitch-change accent (or both).⁹ Here, none of the unaccented states is associated with any of the attack points of the actual events; rather, in compliance with the definition of accent cited above, the unaccented states would have to occur at some indefinite point during the sustained portion of these events. For this reason, Lester does not introduce here, or anywhere else in his study, a symbol for indicating the unaccented state, nor does he use any analytic notation for designating the hierarchical levels at which the accent relationship takes place.

Clearly, the concept of accent illustrated in these examples differs significantly from the concept of metric accent proposed above, in which an accent relates to a specific unaccent at a precise hierarchical level. Of course, Lester also understands that meter involves accents organized hierarchically, and at

⁸Though the term “unaccent” is not a word in standard English, it is helpful in the present discussion to have available a substantive form comparable to “accent.”

⁹Lester specifically states in the text that points of pitch change (marked with arrows in the example) create accents.

one point (while discussing the “metric hierarchy” in a piano sonata by Mozart) links an accent at one level to a definite unaccent at that same level (p. 48; see also his Example 3–5). He does not seem to realize, however, that

Example 1

Beethoven, Symphony No. 7, Op. 92, First Movement

Vivace (♩ = 104)

> indicates durational accents.

Example 2

Mozart, Symphony No. 40, K. 550, First Movement

Allegro molto

> indicates durational accents.

↑ indicates points of pitch change.

this new formulation marks a change from his prior definition of accent, in which hierarchical considerations were of no issue. And he is far from explicit in pointing out that metric accents in particular, and not the other accent types, require this strict specification of hierarchical level and temporal location of the unaccented state.

Another distinguishing feature of metric accents emerges when we examine the various labels Lester uses to identify accent types. In the case of durational accent, textural accent, harmonic-change accent, etc., the adjectival component of the term reflects the *origin* of the accent, through differentiation in durational values, texture, and harmony. But for metric accent, the adjectival component reflects more its *function*: when one of the other accents (durational, textural, harmonic) functions to create meter (where, among other conditions, the accent must occur at a distinct hierarchical level and be related to a specific unaccent), then that durational, textural, or harmonic accent becomes a metric accent as well. The other accent types may not necessarily function metrically, of course, in which case the hierarchical specificity required for metric accent need no longer apply. Thus metric accent should not, as Lester suggests, be understood as just another type of accent, comparable to durational, textural, or harmonic accents; rather, metric accent refers to a particular way in which any of these accents can function. Accordingly, our discussion should now turn away from metric accent vs. other accent types and be directed instead to metric vs. nonmetric accents.

Because metric accents are tied so strictly to the durational hierarchy of a work, they have a *structural* function that far surpasses nonmetric accents.

Lester understands well that the metric hierarchy provides a frame of reference for structural meaning and, using an analogy whose roots extend back at least to Moritz Hauptmann in the middle of the nineteenth century, compares meter in the realm of rhythm to tonality in the realm of pitch:

For just as a pitch in tonal music receives its functional meaning from its location in relation to the prevailing tonic and the prevailing harmonic-melodic interaction, an event . . . receives part of its rhythmic meaning from its location in the grid of measures, beats, and their subdivisions. (p. 52)

Nonmetric accents, on the contrary, have more an aesthetic function than a structural one.¹⁰ They impart varying degrees of emphasis to particular events within the metric grid. Much of what is very special in a work can be traced back to the nonmetric accents, as Lester shows so well. Metric accents, however, are rarely of intrinsic aesthetic interest. Again, an analogy to pitch organization may be helpful: just as the regular progression of functional chords (pre-dominants to dominants, dominants to tonics) does not usually command our attention as we listen to a tonal work, neither do we greatly focus on the regular alternation of strong and weak beats provided by the meter.

Differentiating metric accents from nonmetric ones in an actual analysis is easy enough at lower levels of the metric hierarchy, where meter is rarely ambiguous. But at higher levels, where metric interpretations have traditionally been so controversial, the distinction is often more difficult to make. Even Lester, who is otherwise so attentive to nonmetric accentuation, seems at times to forget that accents do not always have a metric function. This confusion leads to some questionable statements about the presence and value of hypermeter.

In discussing Chopin's *Mazurka*, Op. 67, no. 3 (see Example 3 below), he notes (pp. 178–81) that because of the motivic patterning, the change of harmony at m. 5, and the new texture at the beginning of m. 9, the excerpt can certainly be perceived in a duple hypermeter, whereby each odd-numbered measure is metrically strong. Yet he believes that “this mode of hearing results in a rather singsong conception of the passage” and thus cites a number of features that “point to an accentual structure other than the alternation of strong and weak measures.” In particular he notes the presence of strong harmonic and textural accents at m. 6 (and by analogy, m. 14) as well as the absence of any meter-producing accents at m. 7. “Only a willful insistence on a duple hypermeter allows a listener to suppress the accent on measure 6 and add the ‘oomph’ to make measure 7 accentually stronger than measure 6” (p. 179).¹¹

¹⁰When comparing Lester's rewritten versions of selected passages in which the nonmetric accents have been modified or eliminated (see his Examples 2–12, 2–17, 2–28) to the original versions (Examples 2–11, 2–16, 2–27, respectively), the identity of the work generally remains intact, even if the rewritten version is rather flat. But when the metric accents are altered (as in his Example 3–7, where a passage from the first movement of Schubert's “Unfinished” Symphony is notated with a 6/8 time signature instead of the original 3/4), the meaning of the music changes significantly; it becomes quite a different piece.

¹¹Lester further claims that m. 9 is weakened as a new beginning, and thus as an accent, due to the repeated tonic harmony from the previous measure and the resumption of the melodic *E*

He summarizes his position by giving two additional analyses of the passage (his Example 6–12, reproduced here as Example 4). The time signatures and bar lines reveal these to be *metric* interpretations, yet they exhibit a number of irregularities rarely found with lower-level meter. In Example 4a, mm. 1–4 and 9–12 have different metric placements, though they contain essentially the same musical content; moreover, upon repetition of the entire passage, consecutive accents occur in m. 16 and m. 1. In Example 4b, the first four measures of each eight-measure phrase have the

Example 3

Chopin, *Mazurka*, Op. 67, no. 3, First Section

Allegretto ♩ = 144

p *rubato*

5

10 *f*

15 *poco riten.* *ff* *cresc.*

from m. 6. (Though he does not explicitly say so, m. 8 thus receives an accent by virtue of the change to tonic harmony.)

Example 4

Lester's Analyses of Chopin, *Mazurka*, Op. 67, no. 3, First Section

a. meas. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

b. meas. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

same metric position, but additional consecutive accents arise in mm. 8 and 9.¹²

But, we may ask, is it necessary for the accents at mm. 6 and 8 to function metrically? Could they not be regarded as nonmetric, yet still create moments of considerable emphasis within the passage? Such situations—where metrically weak beats are made prominent by durational, dynamic, harmonic, or textural accentuation—arise repeatedly at levels of metric organization within the measure, as Lester discusses in earlier chapters of his book. Indeed, the most emphatic moments of phrases displaying an “expressive” affect are often the weakest metrically.¹³

Lester also discusses some passages by Beethoven and Haydn in which a wide variety of accentuations “create a rhythmic dynamism” that is “more the essence of the music than any regular hypermeter” (p. 192).¹⁴ Unlike the Chopin discussion, it is not entirely clear if Lester is offering alternative *metric* analyses, but his depreciation of the hypermeter interpretation is obvious enough. He continues in the same vein when discussing the implications of hypermeter for performance:

Within a phrase . . . it is often possible to assume one or more levels of a regular duple hypermeter above the primary metric level. But in all such excerpts

¹²It is odd that Lester does not mention a third possibility, which sees mm. 6–8 and 14–16 as a $9/4$ hypermeasure; this interpretation would have eliminated the problems just cited.

¹³Emphases of this kind were frequently called “pathetic” accents by theorists in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. See, for example, Mathis Lussy, *Le rythme musical* (Paris: Librairie Fischbacher, 1883).

¹⁴See his Examples 6–17 and 6–25 respectively.

introduced in this chapter, other continuities and accentuations supersede such a hypermeter as factors creating the unique shapings of time of that individual passage—shapings that are obscured or even precluded by a singsong alternation of strong and weak measures. (p. 192)

We can surely support Lester's condemnation of performances that mechanically reinforce a regular hypermeter. But we need not, therefore, devalue the presence of hypermeter as a significant component of the passage. Here, I think Lester misunderstands somewhat the aesthetic and structural functions of accent and meter discussed above. A regular meter at any level can project a "singsong" effect, but this apparent aesthetic weakness of meter does not have to interfere with our perception of the nonmetric accentuations. A hypermeter can retain its valid structural function while the nonmetric accents imbue the passage with character and individuality.

If, on this issue, Lester has overreacted to those theorists emphasizing hypermeter to the neglect of the nonmetric accentual forces within a piece, his attempt to provide a more balanced picture of higher-level rhythm can be commended nonetheless. We can also admire how in the course of detailed analyses examining the multiplicity of factors responsible for accents (be they metric or nonmetric), he directs our attention to important details of compositional technique that are easily overlooked when employing a priori, reductionist models of metric organization. Such analyses reveal his sensitive musicianship and passionate concern for the integrity of the musical work. Indeed, these qualities are present throughout Lester's book, and, combined with the broad scope of its investigation, they help to recommend his study to all musicians interested in confronting the fascinations and perplexities of music's many rhythms.

WILLIAM E. CAPLIN
McGill University