

METRONOMIC PRECISION OF ›TEUTONIC METAL‹ A METHODOLOGICAL CHALLENGE FOR RHYTHM AND PERFORMANCE RESEARCH

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Abstract

Performance and rhythm research has been slow to incorporate the popular music canon. This article takes this into account by pursuing three objectives: Firstly, to explore how modern music production software can support the analysis of recorded popular music performances, for which an analytical toolkit is proposed. Secondly, to raise awareness of the role of music production and sound quality in rhythm research, highlighting challenges of analysing rhythmically fast genres, especially metal with its sonically dense arrangements. Thirdly, to apply the analytical toolkit to the study of micro-rhythm and quantisation in metal music before 2000 by comparing performances of German (›Teutonic‹), British, and American artists. This study builds on previous research on Teutonic metal, which found that it corresponds to stereotypical notions of German music, being metronomically precise, rigid, and synchronised. The findings confirm the challenges of performance research in investigating metal music due to the genre's production aesthetic that fundamentally differs from other genres studied, such as the slower and sonically less dense soul and rhythm and blues. The toolkit was found to extend established methods of rhythm research. It made analysis easier and more accurate but did not replace human attention to detail. The cultural differences between the three countries were most evident in the German performances which tended to be more metronomic, synchronised, and aligned than the American and British performances.