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EM CIÊNCIA E TECNOLOGIA DAS ARTES

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Porto International Conference on
Musical Gesture as Creative Interface

Porto, Portugal, March 17–19, 2016

PROGRAM

and

ABSTRACTS

2016 Porto International Conference on *Musical Gesture as Creative Interface*

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	Miguel Ribeiro-Pereira ESMAE–Instituto Politécnico do Porto & CITAR–Universidade Católica Portuguesa, PT
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***Harmonic Dissonance as Musical Gesture:
Quiet yet Dynamic***

Curiously — nay, symptomatically! — the words “movement” and “moment,” meaning radically different phenomena, derive from the same etymology, Latin *movimentum*. Now, the question is, which of them comes actually first? And how to account for movement in music in the first place, for tones do not actually move; they remain in place, then fade or “die” away: *soni pereunt*, wrote Saint Isidore of Seville. In tonal music, particularly, what is the cognitive process that

allows us to perceive certain harmonic progressions not only as movement, but as directed motion? This *will* to move is imaginary — intentional, that is — something we hear *in* real sounds, a gesture imprinted on our full being's experience of tonal music.

I shall focus on the phenomenon of *dissonance*, an essentially musical concept with major cognitive and cultural resonances, which reflects the sensibility of human society and the historical evolution of our consciousness — prophetic, indeed, claims French economist Jacques Attali. Following in “giant steps” the main stages of its theoretical and aesthetical progress all the way through its eventual “emancipation,” I will first set forth a *modulatory* paradigm for tonal syntax based on a growing, relentless dissonant context up to the final cadence — a plastic, dynamic Gestalt — then concentrate on the musical analysis of two instances from nineteenth-century Romanticism: Schumann's lied “Auf einer Burg” and Wagner's opening of the prelude to *Tristan und Isolde*. In them both, at the motivic as well as formal level, gesture is foremost expressive of a new stage of our evolving *consciousness*.

Miguel Ribeiro-Pereira is Professor and Head of the postgraduate Music Theory program at the Higher School of Music and the Performing Arts (ESMAE/ Instituto Politécnico do Porto); integrated researcher and associate director of the *Theory of the Arts Journal* at the Research Center for Science and Technology of the Arts (CITAR/ Universidade Católica Portuguesa); author of the book *A Theory of Harmonic Modulation* (Politema, 2005).

His main research interests include the development and application of a new *modulatory paradigm* of music cognition defined as a transformative process of “harmonic plasticity”; a *holistic approach* to musical analysis which advances a gradual interiorization by means of “meditative listening”; an *evolutionary understanding* of modern Western culture manifested in, and homologous with, our “tonal consciousness”.

He studied law at the University of Coimbra (Portugal), and philosophy at the University of Paris VIII-Vincennes, along with music (organ diploma, M.C. Braga; B.A. in music, U. Paris VIII); was awarded a *Premier Prix* in musical analysis by the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique de Paris; has received his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in music theory from Columbia University in the City of New York; was appointed a visiting scholar to the Music Department at Yale University. *E-mail: miguel.rp@me.com*