

## ONE-DAY WORKSHOP

### **Creative Approaches to Blending in Music: theoretical, empirical and computational perspectives**

Tuesday, 6 October 2015

Organised by the Department of Music Studies, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

Conceptual Blending Theory (CBT) is a cognitive theory developed by Fauconnier and Turner (2002, 2014) whereby elements from diverse, but structurally related, mental spaces are “blended” giving rise to new conceptual spaces. These spaces often possess new powerful interpretative properties allowing for better understanding of known concepts or the emergence of novel concepts altogether. Conceptual blending is a process that allows the construction of meaning by correlating elements and structures of diverse conceptual spaces. It relates directly to Boden’s notion of combinational creativity (as opposed to exploratory and transformational creativity – Boden 2009).

With regards to music, conceptual blending has been theorized mainly at three levels: as the cross-domain integration of musical and extra-musical domains such as text or image (e.g. Zbikowski 2002 & 2008; Cook 2001; Moore 2012), as a mapping between music structures and physical / gestural / embodied / emotional schemata (e.g., Antovic, 2011; Zbikowski, 2010; Koelsch 2013), and, as structural integration between formal musical categories (e.g. Spitzer, 2003; Cambouropoulos et al., 2014).

Most studies on conceptual blending in music rely on retrospective analyses of concepts once these have already been formed. A musico-analytical methodology is commonly applied in these cases, to expose processes of structural and semantic integration between musical and textual rhythms, verbal and musical meaning, musical structures and physical gestures, and so on, in existing compositions, scores, films or recordings. Hence, even though Fauconnier and Turner have theorised blending in relation to concept *formation*, emergence and invention are largely studied by looking at concepts as the already formed products of blending processes, rather than by setting up creative processes that may lead to new concepts. As Schorlemmer *et al.* (2014) note, CBT is “silent on issues that are relevant if conceptual blending is to be used as a mechanism for designing creative systems... [It] does not specify *how* novel blends are constructed” (2014, p.2).

This workshop aims to explore conceptual blending processes in music giving emphasis to creative, bottom-up, contextual, multi-level, collaborative and interactive aspects. Topics to be addressed include:

- What is a music concept? What is a music blend?
- Theories of musical meaning construction in relation to conceptual blending
- Distinction between different types of blending, e.g. conceptual vs structural blending (Goguen, 2003)
- Blending as an emergent / dynamic / bottom-up / context-sensitive process
- Collaborative and interactive processes in music blend / concept formation
- Theoretical and formal descriptions of the Input, Generic and Blend Spaces of CBT
- Conceptual blending as a mechanism for designing creative computational systems
- Conceptual blending in non-musical domains that share common features with music, such as temporality or abstract referentiality (e.g. poetry & various performing arts).

## References

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