# Aspects of Rhythm and Meter

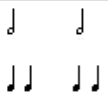
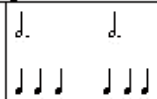
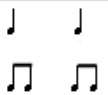
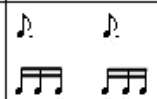
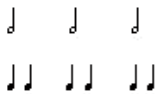
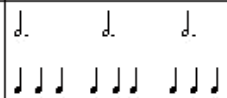
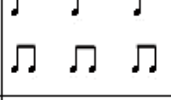
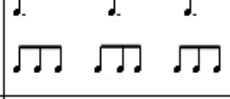
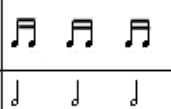
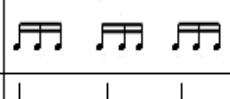
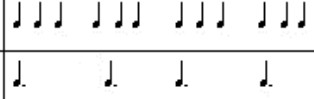
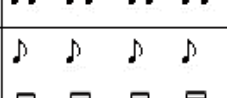
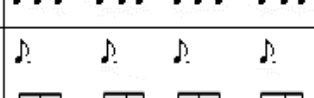
Music 254

# Regularity vs Irregularity

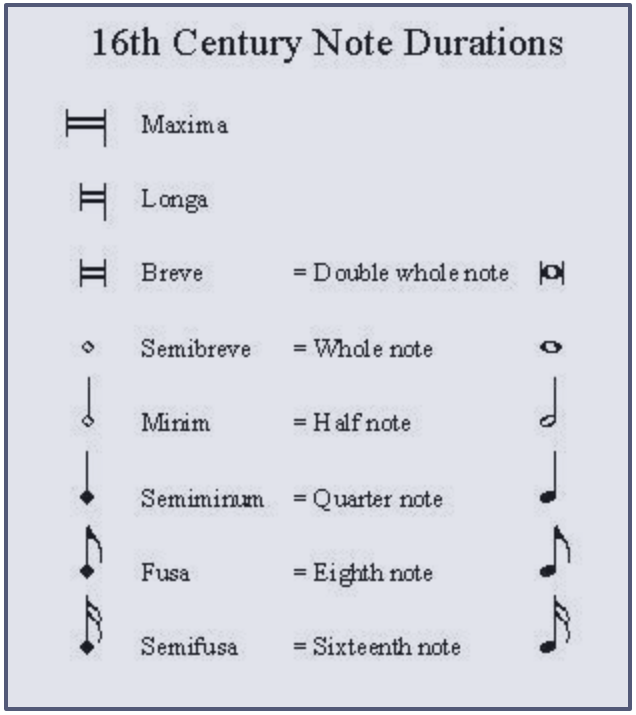
- Meter
  - Ordinary meters as notated
  - Ordinary meters as sounded/heard
  - Unmeasured music
  - Polymeter; hypermeter
- Accent
  - Prosody approach
  - Tonal inflectional
- Hierarchical aspects of rhythm
  - Melodic contributions
  - Harmonic contributions

# Meter and Accent

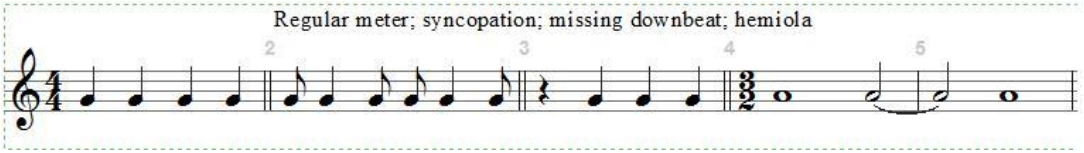
# Meter and Prolation

| | Simple (subdivision = 2) | | Compound (subdivision = 3) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Duple Meters** | 2/2 |  | 6/4 |  |
| | 2/4 |  | 6/8 |  |
| | 2/8 |  | 6/16 |  |
| **Triple Meters** | 3/2 |  | 9/4 |  |
| | 3/4 |  | 9/8 |  |
| | 3/8 |  | 9/16 |  |
| **Quadruple Meters** | 4/2 |  | 12/4 |  |
| | 4/4 |  | 12/8 |  |
| | 4/8 |  | 12/16 |  |

## Conventional meters today



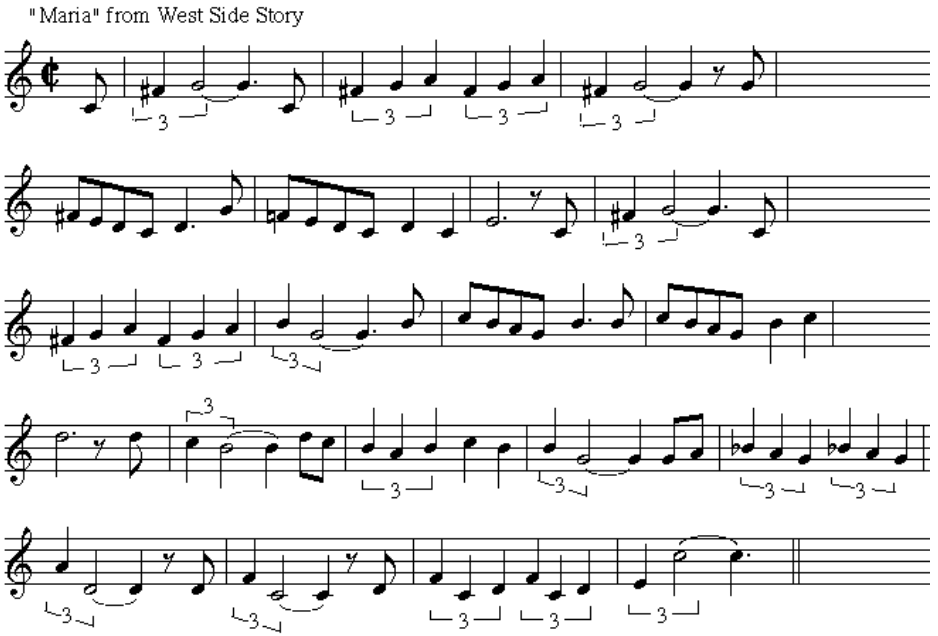
# Metrical ambiguity




West Side Story (Bernstein)

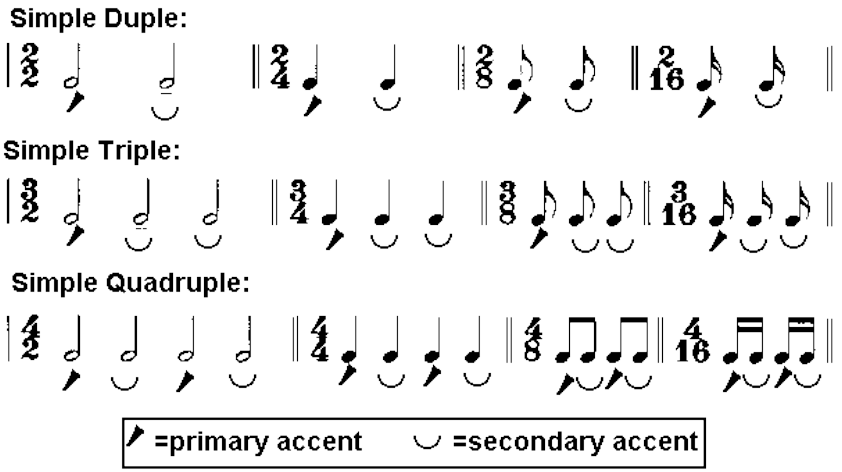
Common presentations

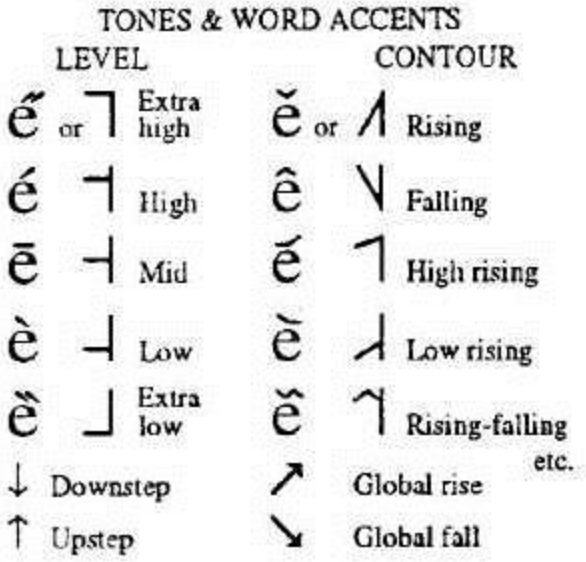
- Marches
- Jazz
- Dance rhythms
- 16th-century music

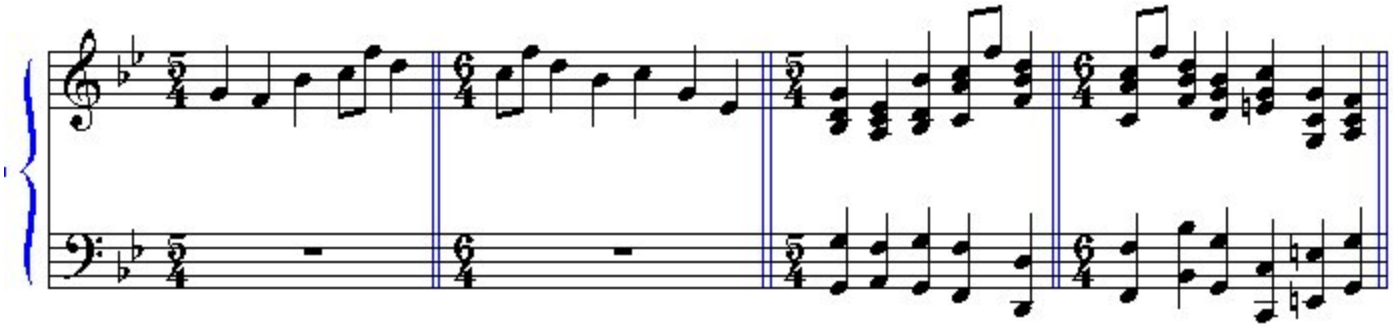
# Accent (music with lyrics)

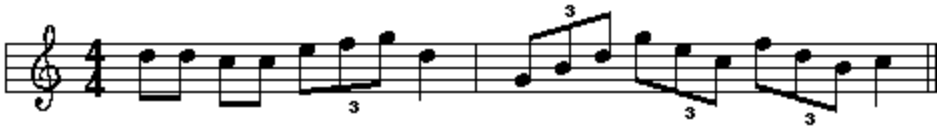
## Prosody models



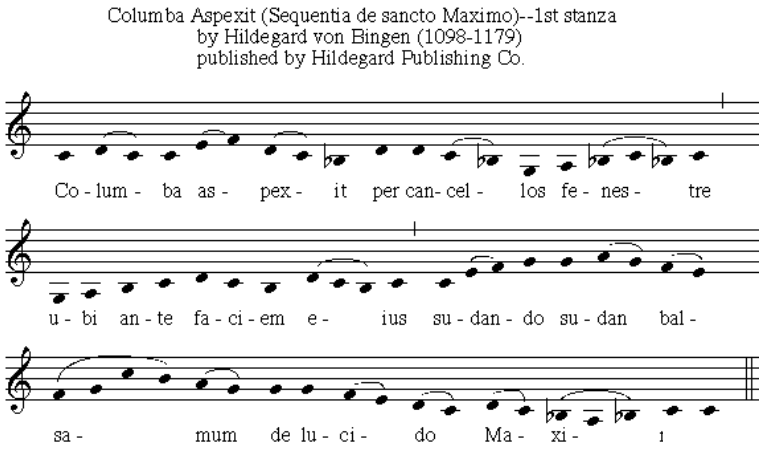



# Irregularity, varying meters



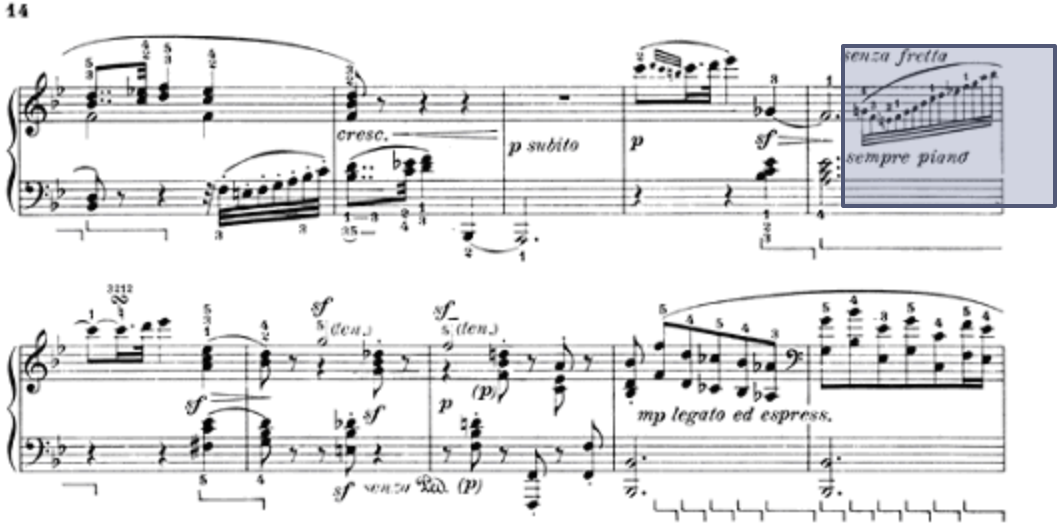


# Unmeasured music




(Auftakt?)

Suspended meter

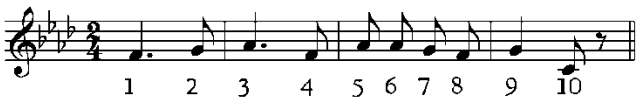


# Approaches to Rhythmic Analysis

# Metric pattern modules

## Continuous information

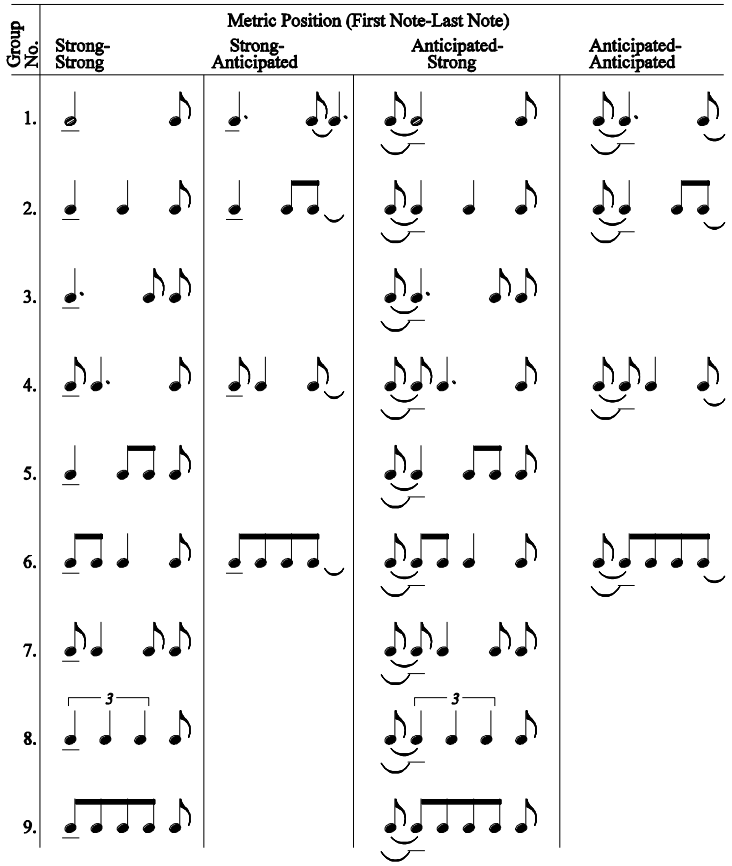
- Durational change "intervals"
- Accentual values/weights



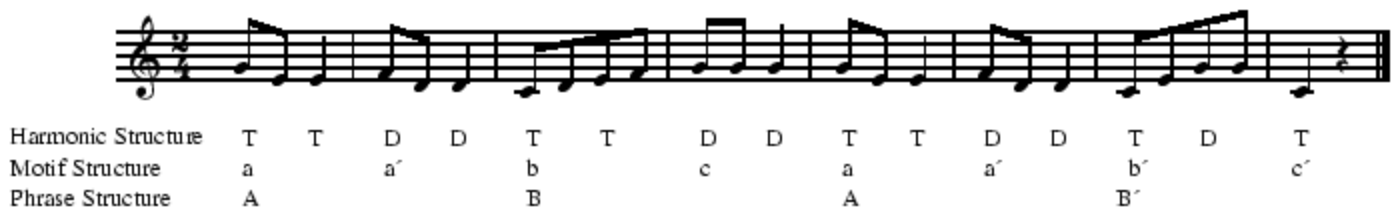

(a) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(b) 1 1 2- 2 0 1- 1- 1 4-
(c) 1 4 1 4 1 2 3 4 1 3
(d) + - + - + - + - +

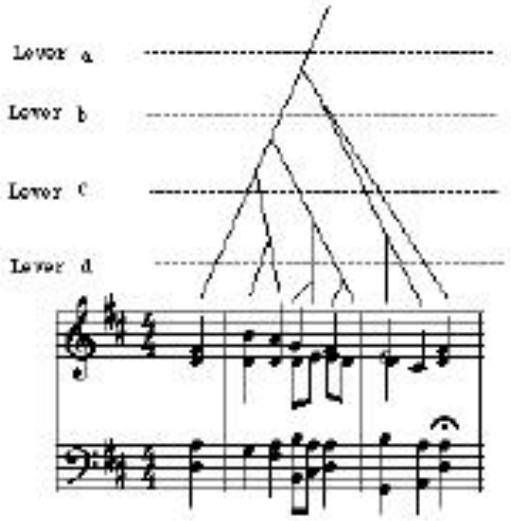
- Hauptmann (1853)
- Zarhipov (1965)
- Leppig (1987)

## Rhythmic patterns in blues



# Accentual values, weights



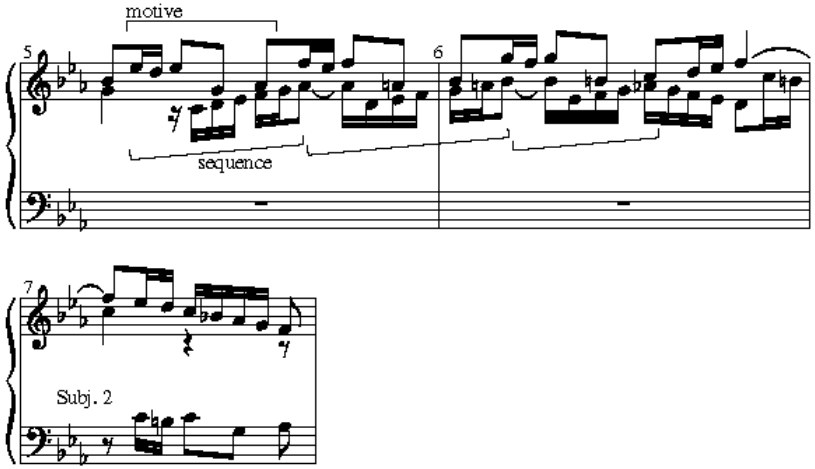




- **Lerdahl/Jackendoff (GTTM)**
- **Temperley**
- **Camberoupolous**
- Singer
- **Volk**
- **Narmour**
- **Jones**

# Pitch accents

## "Melodic" vs. "rhythmic" accent

- First, last pitches in phrase
- Highest, lowest pitches in phrase
- Various combinations of these in judgments of melodic similarity

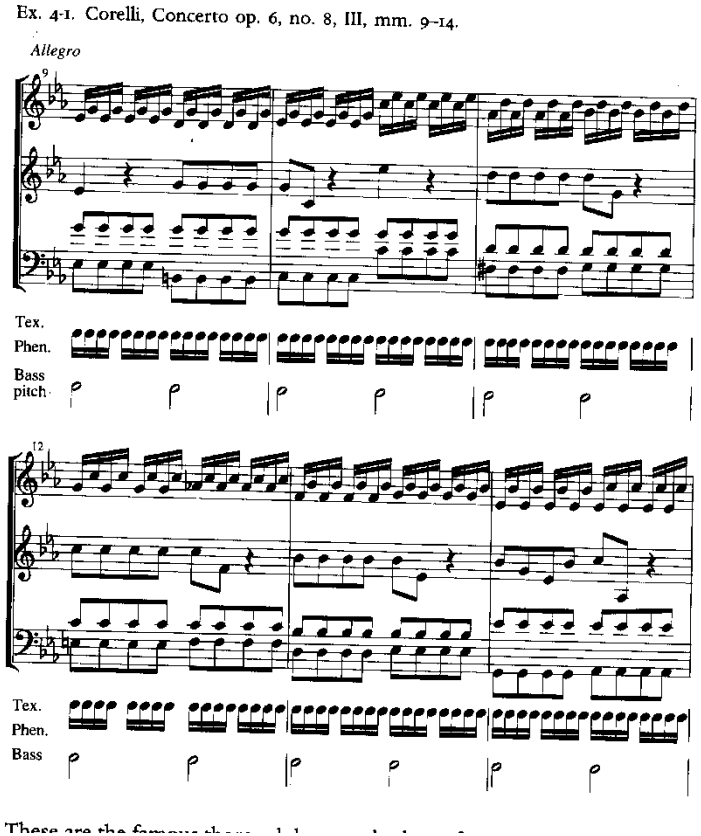



Jones and Pfordresher (2003)

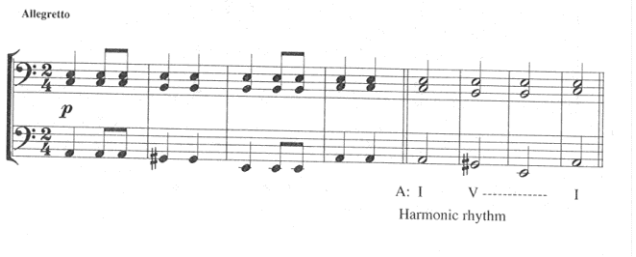
# Harmonic rhythm

Work of Joseph Swain

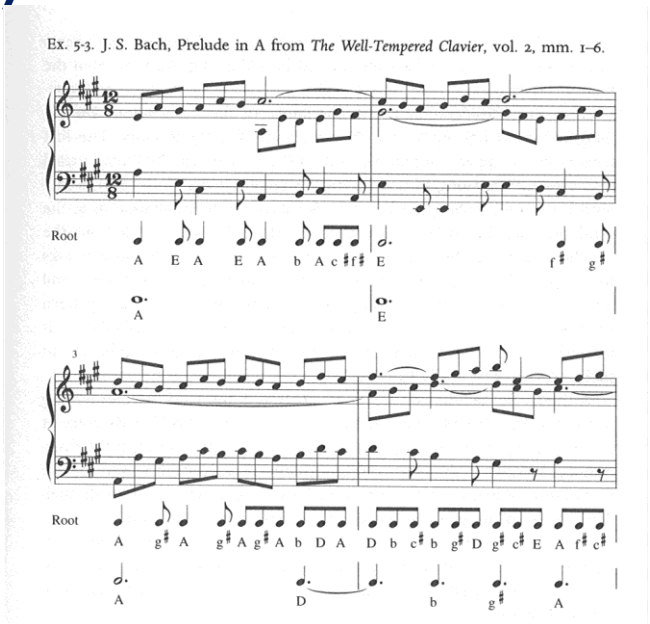
## 1. Activity levels




## 2. Rhythm of Harmonic Change

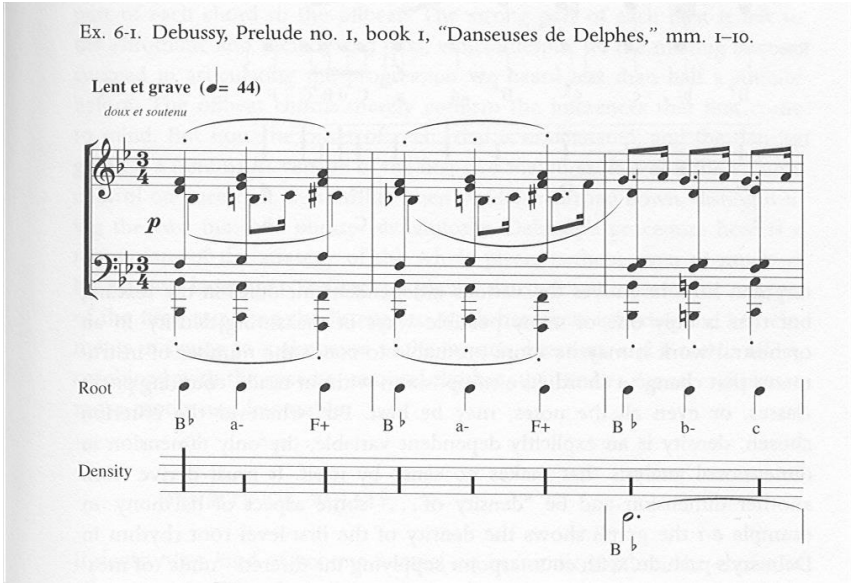



## 3. Root rhythm



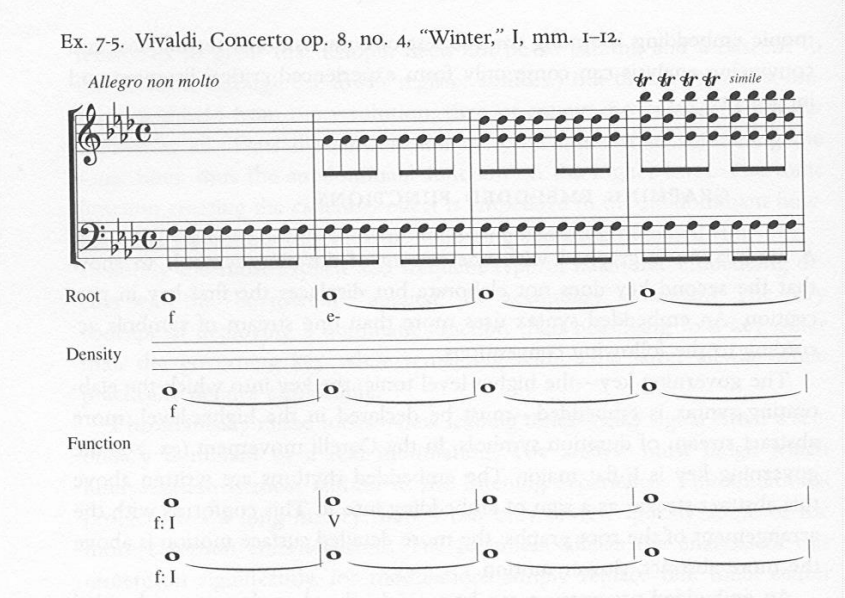
# Harmonic rhythm (2)

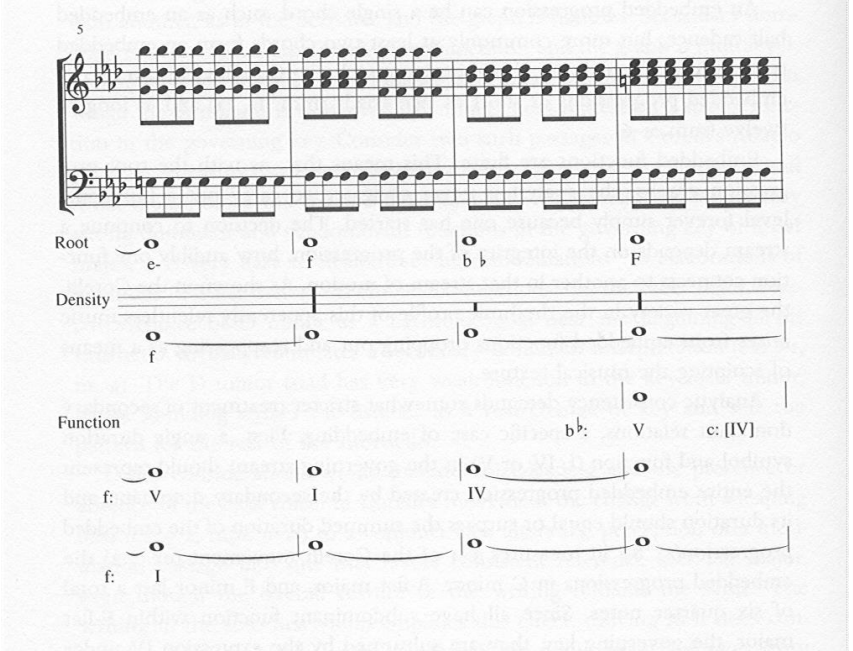
- **4. Density**



# Harmonic rhythm (3)

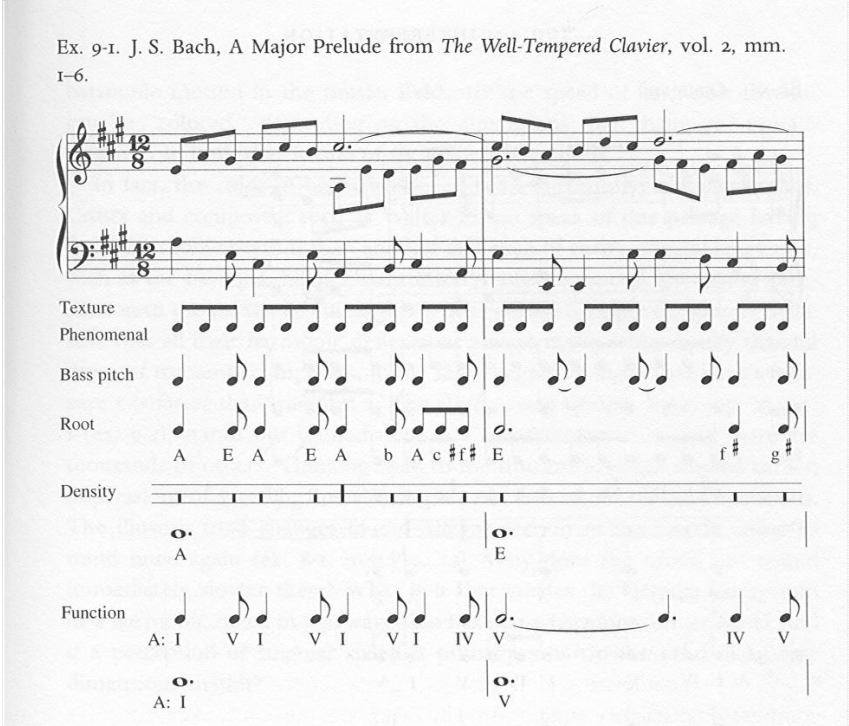
## 5a. Density + Function



# Harmonic rhythm (4)

## 6. Final tiered view



# Inner and outer metric structure

Work of Anja Fleisher Volk

- *Main premise*: coincidence of "inner" and "outer" metric structures
  renders strongest accents
- Main repertories:
  - Madrigals
  - Renaissance sacred vocal music
  - Renaissance dances
  - Bach keyboard music (WTC)
  - Brahms, Stravinsky
  - Ragtime
- Working method:
  - Differentiation of
    - Metric weight
    - Spectral weight
  - Evaluations proceed voice by voice
- Unusual constructs:
  - Metrical dissonance
- Unusual uses:
  - Genre classification