



Cross-Disciplinary Interplay  
between the Humanities,  
Technology and Musical  
Practice

**Thursday,  
November 10, 2011.  
2:15-4 p.m. in U73.**

Guest lecture in the seminar  
series

**Topics in the Aesthetics  
of Music and Sound,**

<http://soundmusicresearch.org/seminarsfall2011.html>.

## **The Cognitive Semantics of Musical Tension**

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**Abstract:** Our mental ability to connect musical events over time is often described in terms of tension-release patterns. But why do we experience music in that way? Why do musical grammars emerge with the phenomenal quality of tension? I have recently advanced a semantic account of musical tension, arguing that tension patterns in music rely on mental schemas related to interacting forces (as initially discussed by linguist Leonard Talmy).

In this presentation, I will present a listening study demonstrating different force semantic patterns in listeners' real-time response to music. I will also discuss the origins of these dynamic schemas in the earliest sound communication between human infants and their mothers. This generic human musicality - I will argue - is essential in understanding how meaningful behavior emerges in human life.

**ALL ARE WELCOME!**