



Tuning, Timbre, Spectrum, Scale

William A. Sethares

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Tuning, Timbre, Spectrum, Scale focuses on perceptions of consonance and dissonance, and how these are dependent on timbre. This also relates to musical scale: certain timbres sound more consonant in some scales than others. Sensory consonance and the ability to measure it have important implications for the design of audio devices and for musical theory and analysis. Applications include methods of adapting sounds for arbitrary scales, ways to specify scales for nonharmonic sounds, and techniques of sound manipulation based on maximizing (or minimizing) consonance. Special consideration is given here to a new method of adaptive tuning that can automatically adjust the tuning of a piece based its timbral character so as to minimize dissonance. Audio examples illustrating the ideas presented are provided on an accompanying CD. This unique analysis of sound and scale will be of interest to physicists and engineers working in acoustics, as well as to musicians and psychologists.

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