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► **To cite this version:**

François Fages. Information Leakage in a Music Score. The Art of Modelling Computational Systems - A Journey from Logic and Concurrency to Security and Privacy - Essays Dedicated to Catuscia Palamidessi on the Occasion of Her 60th Birthday, Festschrift - LNCS (11760), Springer-Verlag, 2019, Lecture Notes in Computer Science, 10.1007/978-3-030-31175-9 . hal-02365478

HAL Id: hal-02365478

<https://inria.hal.science/hal-02365478>

Submitted on 15 Nov 2019

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Information Leakage in a Music Score

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When I was invited to contribute to a Festschrift in honor of Catuscia Palamidessi, I immediately thought I should not miss the opportunity to express my friendly feelings and admiration for the research career of a good friend of 30 years.

Initially, we had some common research axes on Logic Programming and Concurrent Constraint Programming. The GULP conference on these topics in Italy was a high place where Catuscia had no equal to defend, between Pisa and Florence, what should be the true Italian pronunciation, but with too subtle arguments for a foreigner. In 1990, the ICLP conference in Jerusalem and Eilat was a memorable mark of Catuscia's passion for Concurrent Logic Programming. In 2000, our small CSE Penn State-Inria workshop on "Concurrency and Logic" was premonitory of a new life for Catuscia at Inria. In the last decade however, our research interests evolved in different directions, respectively on quantitative information flows and quantitative biology.

When reading the recent papers of Catuscia on information leakage in information flows, in the quest of finding something to write related to those topics, a music unexpectedly came to my mind, with two concurrent voices playing obsessively on some jazzy rhythm, responding each other, and producing some bits of information about a secret message subject to interpretation, as always in music.

It is my pleasure to dedicate that little piece of music, called "*Concur in C*", to Catuscia for her 60th birthday. The music score is given below¹.

But could we try to apply Catuscia's theory on information leakage in information flows to the notes of each voice, in the hope of revealing something more on the meaning of this mysterious musical message remained enigmatic to the composer?

In information flow theory, a *channel*, or a *voice* in our musical interpretation, is a triple (X, Y, C) , where X and Y are finite sets (of secret input values and produced output music notes) and the channel matrix C is an $|X| \times |Y|$ matrix giving the probability of getting output y when the input is x . Given a prior distribution π on X , the joint distribution $p(x, y) = \pi[x]C[x, y]$ on random variables $X \times Y$ is the (unique) joint distribution that gives marginal probabilities $p(x) = \sum_y p(x, y) = \pi[x]$, conditional probabilities $p(y|x) = p(x, y)/p(x) = C[x, y]$ (if $p(x)$ is nonzero), and similarly $p(y)$ and $p(x|y)$.

The marginal distribution of the music notes in a voice are given by the frequencies of the notes in that voice. In *Concur in C*, the upper and lower voices happen to play the same number of notes, 186, with slightly different

¹ "*Concur in C*" can be heard with several orchestrations (piano, flute-saxophone, flute-organ-bass, big band) on <http://lifeware.inria.fr/~fages/music/>

distributions and slightly higher Shannon's entropy ($-\sum_{i=1}^{186} p_i(y) \cdot \log_2(p_i(y))$), i.e. more information, in the upper voice:

number of occurrences	C	C# Db	D	D# Eb	E	F	F# Gb	G	G# Ab	A	A# Bb	B	total
upper voice $p^u(y)$	32	0	0	54	2	14	20	40	0	0	22	2	186
	0.17	0	0	0.29	0.01	0.07	0.11	0.22	0	0	0.12	0.01	entropy 2.56
lower voice $p^l(y)$	41	0	0	36	0	22	27	39	0	0	21	0	186
	0.22	0	0	0.19	0	0.12	0.15	0.21	0	0	0.11	0	entropy 2.53

In music, it is expected that the upper voice contains more information than the lower voice usually dedicated to accompaniment. But here, the two voices play similar melodies in counterpoint which results in similar entropy values for both voices. It would be interesting to test this approach on more elaborate scores.

Thank you Catuscia for having once again inspired me, in an unexpected fashion, this self-surprising gift with curious questions about the quantification of information in music.

There has always been something magic in you.

Happy 60th Birthday Catuscia!

Acknowledgments: special thanks go to Hubert Garavel for having improved the layout of my music score, and for his tolerance regarding my parallel fifths.

Concur in C

To Catuscia Palamidessi for her 60th birthday

F. Fages

♩ = 110

Piano

Musical notation for measures 1-2. The piece is in 4/4 time with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The right hand plays a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, while the left hand has a simple accompaniment.

Musical notation for measures 3-4. The right hand continues the melodic line with eighth notes, and the left hand provides a steady accompaniment.

Musical notation for measures 5-6. The right hand features a more complex melodic pattern with slurs and ties, while the left hand continues its accompaniment.

Musical notation for measures 7-8. The right hand has rests, and the left hand continues with a consistent accompaniment.

Musical notation for measures 9-10. The right hand resumes the melodic line, and the left hand continues its accompaniment.

13

Musical notation for measures 13 and 14. The piece is in a key with two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a 3/4 time signature. The right hand features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, while the left hand plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment.

15

Musical notation for measures 15 and 16. The right hand has a more active melodic line with slurs and accents, while the left hand continues with eighth-note accompaniment.

18

Musical notation for measures 18 and 19. The right hand plays block chords, and the left hand continues with eighth-note accompaniment.

20

Musical notation for measures 20 and 21. The right hand plays block chords, and the left hand continues with eighth-note accompaniment.

23

Musical notation for measures 23 and 24. The right hand plays block chords, and the left hand features a complex eighth-note accompaniment with triplets indicated by the number '3' above the notes.