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Analyzing Non-Strophic Forms through the Facets Model: The Early Compositional Style and Technique of Trey Anastasio and Phish

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Analyzing Non-Strophic Forms through the Facets Model:

The Early Compositional Style and Technique of Trey Anastasio and Phish

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Honors Thesis

University of Connecticut

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Abstract

While a surprising amount of research has been conducted on the American “jam band” Phish, most academic scholarship that exists regarding the band is concerned of the cultures, rituals, and communities that surround the band and the jam band scene. Of the band’s music that has been analyzed, most analyze the band’s improvisation, leaving little to no scholarship concerning the band’s hyper-complex, fugue-like compositions, especially those composed by Trey Anastasio in the band’s early years from 1983-1989, most of which became Phish’s most popular and most performed songs in concert. This thesis will analyze the early compositional style and technique of Trey Anastasio and Phish through analyses of two of the compositions that fall within this category: “You Enjoy Myself” and “Reba.” Through these analyses, I will aim to understand Anastasio’s early compositional techniques and influences surrounding these two pieces. Implications for these analyses in music education, musicology, and performance will be discussed.

Dedicated to Sandra Eisemann, 1924-2021

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*“That thesis that you're writing is a load of ****, but I'm glad you finally finished it.”*

— “Carini” (Anastasio/Fishman/Gordon/McConnell)

Chapter I

Introduction

A surprising amount of academic work has been conducted on the music and history of the jam band Phish, a band whose prevalence on the musical scene has been central to many for almost four decades. Most research¹ has typically focused on the cultural phenomenon of the band, namely the nature of a “jam band” and the community of the fans (Dollar et al., 2019; Yeager, 2010), the identity and belonging of the fans (Yeager, 2019), ritual/the band’s and fans’ relationship to religion/prayer (Kroll-Zeldin, 2019), and setlist creation (Young, 2019). As the fans and some scholars have noted, the setlist (or lack thereof) is often a driving force of these cultures, for two reasons: the band has never played the same setlist twice, resulting in fans following the band from show to show in hopes of new musical adventures each time, and additionally, the songs, once they enter their improvisatory parts (where, quite literally, the band “jams”), differ greatly from performance to performance. Yet, the musical material connecting these improvisations stays the same.

While this body of literature has brought new meaning to particular cultural relationships around the band and its fan base, little attention has been paid to the actual musical construction of Phish’s music. Musically, there are few theoretical or textural analyses (or publicly available transcriptions) of these composed sections of the songs that allow one to further explore the pre-composed music of Phish; those few analyses that exist mostly focus on *improvised* portions rather than *composed* portions. In this thesis, I examined Trey Anastasio’s and Phish’s early

¹ From May 17-19, 2019, Oregon State University held the first Phish Studies academic conference, which provided almost all of the examples cited in this Introduction. Minimal academic research on the band exists outside of this conference - an archive of these few studies, kept by The Mockingbird Foundation, can be found here: <https://mbird.org/projects/scholarship/>

compositional style as well as the influences and context of two of the band's most popular non-strophic², complex, long-form compositions: "You Enjoy Myself" and "Reba."

Research Questions

The following questions drove the research for this study:

1. What compositional choices or devices are used to tell a story in a Phish song?
2. In what ways might a broader mode of analysis inform one's understanding of a Phish song?

Purpose of this Study

The purpose of this musicological inquiry was to analyze the music of Phish through the Facets Model designed by Barrett et al. (1997). Through this model, I examined Trey Anastasio's and Phish's early compositional style, and explored the influences and context of two of the band's most popular through-composed, long form compositions: "You Enjoy Myself" and "Reba."

² A strophic song or piece is one that has repeated musical material with changing lyrics over each verse; these two pieces by the band are both through-composed, as in they do not repeat, and their structure is not primarily built on the typical "verse and chorus" layout.

Chapter II

Literature Review

Given the nature of musicological inquiry, I found it central to document information about the jam band genre and culture in addition to background and biographical information on the band. Knowledge about jam bands and the band itself will help to contextualize Phish's music and allow for informed analysis.

What is a Jam band?

Jam bands are musical groups whose concerts and live performances often consist of songs with long improvised "jams," whereas the fan experience differs each concert by means of differing setlists, song choice, and improvisational choices. These types of concerts were popularized by The Grateful Dead in the 1960s, 70s, and 80s, and today are most notably associated with acts such as Phish, Dave Matthews Band, and The String Cheese Incident, among others. In her 2009 doctoral dissertation, "Theatre of jam bands: Performance of resistance," Christina Allaback writes,

Jam bands are known for their long, improvised, "noodling" jams during live shows, which include several genres of music. A jam band is not a jazz band, a rock band, or a bluegrass band, but at any one time, it performs one or more of these styles. (p. 2)

A particular type of culture is also associated with jam bands; this includes fans that follow the band from city to city, hoping to hear a particular song or hear their favorite piece "jammed out" for thirty minutes. Allaback (2009) continues, "Fans want more from these bands: new set lists every night, long improvised jams, and four-hour shows" (p. 5).

The term "jam band" was popularized by Dean Budnick (1998), who wrote the first book on the subject, *Jam Bands: North America's Hottest Live Groups*. One important characterizing

feature of the jam band community are “tapers” and traders: those who (sometimes illegally) record live concerts of the band playing and trade them within the community, exchanging one tape for another. These bands such as Phish were able to get their early start via these tapers, and this practice is what the bands relied on in order to increase their popularity. In other words, these bands are centered around the live act and not studio recordings. Trey Anastasio, guitarist and lead vocalist for Phish, told *Spin* in 1995,

Nobody ever comes just to hear a single...everybody is there for the same reason, including us: to get to that point where you'd kind of step through the membrane or something, and all of a sudden you're in this *wwwusshhht*—and it's so much fun to be there. (Puterbaugh, 2009, p. 16)

This feeling of transcendentalism, or “*IT*,” as some fans and scholars call it (Yeager, 2011), is connected to the fact that these live performances hold a special connection to the audience, and act as a form of participatory music making: band and audience foster a reciprocal relationship in which the band plays what the audience wants to hear at that moment, and the audience responds with energy that informs the band where to go next, whether in song choice or improvisational style. This is a defining characteristic of all jam bands.

Phish

“We’ve got it simple, cause we’ve got a band.” —“Simple”

Phish is an American rock jam band formed in 1983 in Burlington, Vermont. The band is primarily known for their long improvisations, complex and fugue-like compositions, sometimes strange experimentation, and witty, nonsensical lyrics. The band comprises Ernest “Trey” Anastasio III, guitarist and lead vocalist; Mike Gordon, bassist; Page McConnell, keyboardist; and Jon Fishman, drummer. Much more popular live than in the studio, it has played over 1,800

live concerts over thirty years, never repeating the same setlist twice, resulting in a culture of “Phans” that follow the band across the country from show to show chasing specific songs. Such chasing follows in the footsteps of the “first” jam band, the Grateful Dead. Phish’s genres are wide ranging, from classic rock to prog rock, to bluegrass to Barbershop, to jazz, and even to country.

After taking a brief hiatus in 2000, returning in 2002, and then “permanently” breaking up in 2004, the band returned in 2009, consistently continuing to sell out venues such as Madison Square Garden, where they have played over sixty times, including a sold-out thirteen-show run over seventeen days in 2017 at the venue, during which they did not repeat a single song. The band has also held ten multi-day Phish festivals, the only act being the band, with attendance upwards of 40,000, the most recent of which was in 2015; the largest ever Phish festival resulted in 85,000 fans showing up at the Big Cypress Indian Reservation in Florida on the eve of the millennium in 1999, with the band playing a seven-and-a-half-hour set from midnight to sunrise to ring in the new year. Achieving widespread touring success without commercial success in the studio or ever recording a chart-topping single, the band is one of the most popular touring acts in the country and still continually challenges the norms of what their own fans expect.

Phish: The Early Years

Formed at the University of Vermont in Burlington, VT, Phish got its start in 1983 when then nineteen-year-old guitarist and songwriter Trey Anastasio met fellow student and drummer Jon Fishman (known by the band and fans colloquially as “Fish,” not to be confused with the band’s name); the two instantly clicked as a duo. Fishman recounts: “As soon as I heard him play guitar, and then soon after I’d heard some of the songs he’d written, I was like, ‘Ah, this is it. I’ll play drums to this guy’s music’” (Puterbaugh, 2009, p. 23).

Anastasio and Fishman would jam with Trey's friend, fellow guitarist, and fellow student, Jeff Holdsworth. The three then searched for a bass player via handmade advertisements hung around the dormitories, which engineering major Mike Gordon found and answered. Anastasio said of his first time playing with Gordon, "The first time Mike and I played together was pretty groundbreaking. I remember it, every note of it. We were in a little room and we were playing, and we just connected" (Puterbaugh, 2009, p. 23-24). The four members—Anastasio, Holdsworth, Gordon, and Fishman—played their first gig together as a band on December 2, 1983, billed as "Blackwood Convention," playing mostly covers of bands like the Grateful Dead and The Doors. The gig did not go as planned, with the venue blasting Michael Jackson's *Thriller* over their second set, yet they would keep playing gigs, slowly improving as a band.

In 1984, the band took a brief hiatus, as Anastasio was suspended from UVM for a prank;³ coincidentally, Anastasio's childhood friend Tom Marshall had also been kicked out of school, and the two reunited at Mercer County Community College in New Jersey. There, they formed a songwriting partnership that would last for decades, with over 400 songs credited to their names; Marshall became the band's primary external lyricist, writing the lyrics to some of the band's most well-known songs—such as "The Squirming Coil," "Maze," and "Wilson"—and wrote or co-wrote most of the songs on the band's studio albums, such as *Rift* and *Billy Breathes*.

Anastasio returned to UVM and the band for the fall 1984 semester playing more original repertoire, and Holdsworth's role began to diminish, as he was more interested in the band's cover playing. It should be noted, though, that two of Phish's most popular songs, "Camel Walk" and "Possum," are credited to Holdsworth, and the latter is the second-most-performed Phish

³ Anastasio stole a human hand and heart from the university's anatomy laboratory and mailed it to a friend in Colorado with the note attached that read, "I've got to hand it to you, you've got heart" (Puterbaugh, 2009, p. 26).

song in concert. (The Mockingbird Foundation, 2021) At the same time that Holdsworth's artistic vision was beginning to differ from that of the rest of the band, Phish met Page McConnell, a student and keyboardist at the experimental Goddard College in Vermont, in 1985. McConnell had enlisted the band to play a festival at Goddard and subsequently convinced its members to let him join, bringing the total compliment to five. Anastasio protested initially ("Phish is a two-guitar band"), but was shortly convinced. (Puterbaugh, 2009, p. 46) McConnell then persuaded Anastasio and Fishman to transfer to Goddard, where Trey could pursue the study of composition in a less restrictive environment than that of UVM. The band lasted as a five-piece until March 1986 at the latest, when Holdsworth left. According to Anastasio, "You Enjoy Myself"—now the band's most popular song with multiple sections, fugue-like composition, and an experimental vocal jam—was the piece that sparked Holdsworth's departure, as he was interested in conventional types of playing. The remaining members—Trey, Mike, Page, and Fishman—became what is still Phish today. As for the band's name, it was decided in 1984:

They first mused about calling themselves Phshhhh (without a vowel), based on the sound that brushes make on a snare drum. Someone even came up with a poster that had *Phshhhh* on it, but the lack of a vowel ultimately presented problems...and so Phshhhh became Phish. (Puterbaugh, 2009, p. 41)

Although not actually named because of the name of the band's drummer, Jon Fishman, Anastasio has (perhaps jokingly) stated previously, "The band is called Phish, because Fish is the drummer.... If I went and saw Phish, I'd be watching Fish" (Puterbaugh, 2009, p. 42).

Phish's Musical Philosophy

Phish continued to grow both musically and in popularity in Burlington and the surrounding community, in part because of the musical sandbox in which the band could experiment there. They often played at a bar called Nectar's, a venue so crucial to the band's development that it was the namesake for the band's third studio album, *A Picture of Nectar*. Parke Puterbaugh (2009) writes in *Phish: The Biography*,

The emphasis on Nectar's also has to do with the fact it was Phish's laboratory and playpen. There was no compulsion to be "professional," just entertaining, and that came naturally. They treated the Nectar's shows like open band rehearsals, with false starts, abandoned tangents, between-song chatter about what to do next, good-natured banter with the audience, gags and laughter, and ever more adventurous jams. This freedom gave Phish confidence to experiment and progress as they learned what did and didn't work before a crowd. What they found out was surprising: *The more risks they took, the more people liked them*. While honing their act at Nectar's and other local venues, they discovered a sizable audience in Burlington with an appetite for musical adventure. What they couldn't have imagined was how widespread that hunger would turn out to be. (p. 61)

This experimentation, laughter, interaction with the audience, and "un-self-consciousness" (Rykman, 2011) as Anastasio puts it, became a defining feature of the band that is still at play today. For example, Fishman has worn a dress on stage for most performances in the band's long career, of which he remarks, "You cannot put that thing on and go on stage and take yourself seriously. It's over. The only thing I can possibly be there for is the music. I'm not gonna look good, like Bowie" (Turner et al., 2017). The band has played chess matches with the audience,

performed one-minute gag songs by Fishman like “Ass Handed” one minute (Lyrics: “You get your ass handed to you every day”... ad nauseum), and then a forty-minute “Tweezer” the next minute; “Tweezer” is a popular Phish song that often functions as a fifteen-plus-minute jam vehicle. The band played a New Year’s Eve show for which they flew in on a giant hot dog, and often performs songs and occasionally even narrations from a musical called “The Man Who Stepped Into Yesterday,” Anastasio’s senior thesis at UVM, which spawned some of the band’s most popular songs. Yet, at the end of the day, one can find peaks of musicality and transcendentalism that reverberate with every fan within a packed 22,000-person arena. This feeling—again, what “Phans” (or, fans of Phish) know as “*IT*” (also the name of Phish’s 2003 festival with an attendance of over 70,000)—is the reason why Phish still sells out shows thirty-eight years after its beginning, and is the reason why the band continues to perform, too: one never knows what might happen at a Phish show, and neither do the band members themselves. As Anastasio remarks,

Ten minutes before we walk on stage, I rip [the setlist] (comprised of twenty to thirty songs the band *might* play) up and throw it out... When I walk on stage, I pretty much train myself to go completely blank, until I step up, I pick up my guitar, I look at the people in the audience, and I know what to play. (Fink, 2019)

This connection between the band and audience is central to Phish as a whole, and it is the band’s defining essence. In *Phish: The Biography* (2009), Puterbaugh concludes:

The Phish experience, in its purest terms, stems from the symbiotic energy from the band and audience. Performing without a net in real time, Phish in concert yields visceral peaks that can’t be matched by sound waves emanating from a CD player. In other words, you have to be there to really “get it.” (p. 16)

Chapter III

Method

This study focused on musicological analysis of Trey Anastasio's and Phish's early compositional style and technique within two of their most popular non-strophic, long-form pieces. Two questions drove the research for this study:

1. What compositional choices or devices are used to tell a story in a Phish song?
2. In what ways might a broader mode of analysis inform one's understanding of a Phish song?

In order to explore the research questions, I engaged in an analysis of two prominent Phish songs, "You Enjoy Myself," and "Reba." I limited my analysis to these two songs because of the length of these pre-composed works, in addition to the fact that these two pieces can easily be considered a microcosm of Anastasio's style within his early compositions as a whole.

Process of Analysis: The Facets Model

The Facets model is an analytical tool used to evaluate and explore relationships and "facets" of an artistic work. The model was designed and outlined by Barrett, McCoy, and Veblen in their 1997 book *Sound Ways of Knowing: Music in the Interdisciplinary Curriculum*. This model investigates the "multifaceted nature of art forms" and uses the questions that represent the facets to make connections between the different aspects of a musical work or other piece of art (p. 77). The model was "designed to promote the comprehensive study of a musical work and enhancement of students' musical understanding and performance." (Cortright & Dick, n.d., pg. 2)

The Facets are listed in the following order: "Who created it?" "When and where was it created?" "Why and for whom was it created?" "What is its subject?" "What is being

expressed?” “What techniques did its creator use to help us understand what is being expressed?” “What kind of structure or form does it have?” “What does it sound or look like?” These eight questions, which explore facets of the work, are divided into subcategories: “The Context of a Work,” “The Expressive Meanings of a Work,” “Relating the Composer’s Craft to the Entire Work,” and “The Musical Elements and Form of a Work.”

Three of the eight facets involve “The Context of the Work.” The first facet is “Who created it?” This facet addresses the contextual origins of the work and provides important information about the composer’s life and work. The next facet, “When and where was it created,” involves researching what traditions the composer drew upon in order to create the work and whether those traditions were historical, cultural, or both. The last contextual facet is “Why and for whom was it created?” This facet aims to highlight the composer’s artistic influences. Were there specific inspirations that influenced the composer to create the work? Or was it commissioned/written for a specific event?

The next two facets involve the “Expressive Meanings of the Work.” The first facet is “What is [the work’s] subject?” Questions answered include, “Does it depict a subject, theme, or have an overall inspiration? Is it programmatic, or is it absolute music?” These questions and answers seek to describe how the music is manipulated. The authors of *Sound Ways of Knowing* point out that discovering the subject of a piece may seem apparent sometimes, but hidden other times. When describing the subject of music with no lyrics, Barrett et al. (1997) write, “What is the subject of a music that doesn’t have lyrics? Sometimes a subject is implied through the use of...a title or description that accompanies the work...the title predisposes us to hear the extramusical associations in the music” (pg. 87).

The second facet in the subcategory is “What is being expressed?” How do composers, listeners, and performers interpret the work, and what meanings are associated with these interpretations? This facet can sometimes be more ambiguous and is related to the next facet and subcategory.

The penultimate subcategory involves “Relating the Composer’s Craft to the Entire Work.” The only facet in this subcategory asks, “What techniques did its curator use to help us understand what is being expressed?” Barrett et al. specify that this facet is *pivotal* to the understanding of a musical work: “If students can describe how the composer’s decisions convey expressive meanings and reflect the time and place in which the work was written, they will demonstrate their abilities to integrate what they know about the work.”

The final subcategory involves the “Musical Elements and Form of a Work.” The question governing the first facet, “What does it sound or look like,” aims to take inventory of the work’s elements: “How does the piece sound and what makes it distinctive?” Through this facet, the composer’s “building blocks” of rhythm, melody, harmony, and dynamics will be analyzed. The final facet of the model and the subcategory is “What kind of structure or form does [the work] have?” This facet seeks to determine the overall structure and organization of a piece, and how elements are put together into a whole. Barrett et al. (1997) write, “Bits of raw material do not become art until they are manipulated and combined with other bits in a meaningful way to create a coherent, expressive whole” (p. 94). In this facet, the texture and micro and macro forms of the piece will be analyzed, in addition to motifs as a compositional device.

Chapter IV

“You Enjoy Myself”

“...because at this point in time I would give up [anything] to play [You Enjoy Myself] five times in a row every day until I die.” - Trey Anastasio in 2008, prior to Phish’s 2009 reunion

Who created it?

“You Enjoy Myself”—often termed “YEM”—is composed by Trey Anastasio, guitarist and lead vocalist for Phish. Its first known performance and recording was on February 3rd, 1986 at the now defunct Hunt’s, which was a marquee music venue in Burlington, VT from 1977-87. There are technically two studio recordings of “YEM”—the first being a fifty-five-second demo a cappella version recorded by Trey Anastasio and Tom Marshall on *The White Tape*, an early Phish demo album released in 1983. The composition and jam as it’s known today was more formally featured as a studio track on Phish’s debut album, *Junta*, released in 1989. Out of the 900+ songs ever played by Phish in concert and over 280 original songs, “You Enjoy Myself” is the band’s most performed song, featured in over 600 of their 1,800+ shows over thirty-eight years. (The Mockingbird Foundation, 2021) Dubbed “The National Anthem of Phish” (Hitz & Osiris Media, 2021) by Anastasio himself, the piece is a fan-favorite that helped define the band by the early 1990s and continues to be a staple of their repertoire ever since its first performance in 1986.

When and where was it created?/Why and for whom was it created?

In the Summer of 1985, Phish was taking a brief hiatus from playing, and so Trey, Jon Fishman, and Pete Cottone (one of Anastasio’s friends from New Jersey) “bummed across Europe,” busking in various cities across England, Belgium, and Italy, to name a few countries.

During a recent interview, Anastasio remarked, “We didn’t sleep in a bed for...it was amazing. We were buskers” (Fink, 2018, 0:10).

Anastasio was a prolific composer at this time, and so he was still writing music for Phish even while in Europe, specifically writing the bits and pieces to “You Enjoy Myself” while in Italy. The three of them, still college students, would busk often on the streets of whatever country they happened to be in—this resulted in them playing short segments of Trey’s compositions whenever someone walked by. This approach to performing very clearly contributed to the extremely sectionalized nature of “YEM.” (Notably, this time spent busking in Europe resulted in the composition of another staple in Phish’s repertoire, “Harry Hood”). When someone would walk by for only a minute, they would play a short segment of the beginning of the song, then when someone else would walk by, play some other section, and so on. What resulted was a through-composed piece of music that transitions from section to section without much transition at all. As for the piece’s title, Anastasio recounts,

There was this guy we hung out with...we met him on the street, we would just hang out for hours. He was Italian, he barely spoke English at all...but we were laughing, me and Fish and this guy...and one day we were laughing, and he had one arm around me and one around Fish. He said, “You know, when I’m with you, you enjoy myself!” And that was the name of the song! (Fink, 2018, 0:58-1:25)

Although the piece was “composed”—or created—in Italy in 1986, the piece went through many alterations in its infancy before it eventually became a song every Phish fan can hum without thinking. However, contrary to a typical modification process, the song was developed and modified during each and every *live* performance in its first few years. A main reason for this was the environment that Phish used as their musical breeding grounds in their

early years: Burlington, Vermont. The city was the perfect place for the band to develop, as they didn't have to compete with commercial-minded acts; as a result, they could experiment each and every performance with the sound of a song like "YEM," seeing how crowds reacted and evaluating what felt good to play. "At that point in their history, there was a lot of public experimentation, small supportive atmospheres they cultivated...they could do anything they wanted any given night and had crowds supportive of that" (Hitz & Osiris Media, 2021).

What is its Subject?

"YEM" does not depict a subject or theme through its lyrics (of which there are few), nor is it programmatic. It is more likely to be considered "absolute music" as there is no story/program to accompany the piece. When analyzing this facet, Barrett et al. (1997) also asks if "...the title predisposes us to hear the extramusical associations in the music," which could potentially reveal a few clues about the composition. In the case of "You Enjoy Myself," the title could be associated with the frequent use of major keys (commonly associated with 'happy' moods) throughout the piece and the uplifting and cathartic peaks. In terms of lyrics, there is not much material to analyze; there are only two "sentences" in the piece.

The first and only set of lyrics (not including the vocal jam) immediately follows the composed section; "Boy, Man, God, Shit", immediately followed by "Wash uffize [sic] drive me to firenze." The lyrics themselves do not hold much meaning, but this is somewhat intentional design by Anastasio. In general, most Phish lyrics, often penned by Anastasio and/or Marshall, are not cohesive in terms of meaning and are quite ambiguous (though it should be noted that the band does carry songs in their repertoire and discography with more 'common' lyrics, especially in their newer catalog). For example, "Reba", heard on the band's 1990 sophomore album *Lawn Boy*, begins "Reba sink a boulder in the water/Reba tie a cable to a tree/Reba stuck in a game of

lipstick perfume flypaper/Reba press a razor to a slide cross a needle with a prune” (Anastasio, 1990). Or, most infamously, in *Fluffhead* also off of *Junta*; “Topsy fuddled boozy groggy elevated/Prime did edit her/Hellborn elfchild roadhog mountain fortune hunter/Man beheaded her” (Anastasio, 1989).

The above lyrics align with Anastasio’s (and the band’s) philosophy when it comes to writing, as Anastasio remarked in 1993,

We always had a philosophy that the kind of lyrics that we were doing—if you want to just dismiss them as meaning nothing, then you can. But if you want to use your imagination and make them mean something in your own head, kind of make up a meaning for them—it’s kind of giving more creative power to the listener...I love to think that people are using their own creative power in some way and not being spoon-fed stuff. (Caudy, 2016)

The lyrics of “You Enjoy Myself” are whatever the listener wants them to be—maybe they mean nothing to one fan, but they reveal the meaning of life to another. In the same interview Anastasio is asked “What’s the [band’s] message?” to which he replies, “One man’s trash is another man’s treasure” (Caudy, 2016).

What is Being Expressed?

“YEM” is a piece all about tension and release, gradually getting more and more intense as the song continues, leading up to one ultimate tense segment that evolves into a final release, sending the band into the improvisatory section. This compositional strategy will be discussed further in the techniques section below.

What Kind of Structure or Form Does it Have?

Through my listening analysis, “You Enjoy Myself” contains a three-part structure:

Section 1: Through-composed (0:00-6:10 on *A Live One [ALO]*)

This section consists of a non-repeating complex composition that “...weaves through several serene blissful melodies, before building up to a feverish peak...” (Hitz & Osiris Media, 2021).

Section 2: Instrumental Jam (6:10 - 15:10 on *ALO*)

This section is comprised of a funk groove that the band improvises over, sometimes delving into “Type II” territory, defined by fans as departing from the usual harmonic and textural structure of the jam, as opposed to “Type I” jamming, where the band stays within this usual structure.

Section 3: Vocal Jam (15:10 - 20:57 on *ALO*)

The vocal jam ends the jam, and the song itself with a gradual transition into various improvised a cappella sounds, noises, and melodies sung by the band members, via a reprisal of the only lyrics of the song. This section generally has no structure after the initial reprisal of the lyrics.

This three-part structure has remained constant since the song’s studio debut on *Junta*.

What Does it Sound or Look Like?

The following section is a theoretical and textural analysis of “You Enjoy Myself,” specifically the live version featured on Phish’s debut live album, *A Live One*. The performance was recorded in concert on December 7th, 1994, in the Spreckels Theater Building in San Diego, California.⁴ A live version of the piece was specifically chosen in contrast to the studio version on *Junta* in order to provide deeper improvisatory context for analysis. In the interest of length

⁴ Interestingly, the liner notes for *A Live One* falsely indicate that all songs on the album, including “YEM”, were recorded at Phish’s first festival, The Clifford Ball (which did not occur until 1996, two years later). This was because the band’s management could not secure recording rights to the songs played at all their Fall 1994 venues (Holland, 2015, 8).

(and time), only the composed section of the piece will be analyzed in depth in this thesis, not the jam or vocal jam sections. At the appropriate times, I provide descriptive names to anchor the reader/listener through the analysis.⁵

0:00: Opening Instrumental

This expository section introduces the piece, opening with an ostinato featuring the guitar in an eleven-beat pattern, the bass in a ten-beat pattern, the piano in a six-beat pattern, and the drums in a standard four-beat pattern, with a static harmonic rhythm. This type of polyrhythmic layering is featured often in Anastasio's compositions and will be featured again later on in "YEM." Immediately following a break in all instruments, the band's texture stays the same while the harmony is explored in multiple keys before leading to a circle of fifths progression and a half cadence leading to the minor mode.

0:42: First build

Using the same guitar rhythmic texture in the guitar (sixteenth note arpeggiation), and ascending chords, the drums drop out. An ascending chord progression is repeated and slowly crescendos, the drums are added back in, and the bass plays in homophony with the guitar triplets. There are multiple repetitions of this ascending "bitonality" (Gonzalez, 2020)—the chords being G Major, A minor, B minor, and C major imply a key of G major, but the consistent arrival on the C major chord implies tonicization of C major—it 'feels' like both G major and C major are the home key.

1:11: First arrival

⁵ Parts of this analysis are based off of the partial transcription of "YEM" found in the YouTube video, "You Enjoy Myself Transcription", uploaded by Andy Gonzalez of Benja Bloom Band, found here: <https://youtu.be/A2zcVYI4uh8>

A plagal cadence is found in G major, and polyrhythmic layering is once again employed as Fishman plays steadily on the off-beats in a time signature of 4/4, while the guitar, bass, and drums are in 7/4 (4+3), with the drums and bass emphasizing the tonic on quarter note hits.

1:19: Where are we going?

The band now arrives at their first opportunity for improvisation, where an ethereal, weightless texture is created. Fishman creates a steady, repetitive high-hat rhythm, while Gordon shifts the band to the minor mode, emphasizing the root and tonic. Anastasio explores the different high-pitched sounds of the guitar free of tempo, occasionally emphasizing the root of the minor mode.

2:19: The guitar and piano shift the band back to the major key, alternating on a minor sixth between B and G implying G major. The bass and drums join in, slowly building in dynamics to arrive at a drum block hit to indicate the start of the next section.

2:50: Piano solo

The band arrives in G major once again, repeating a IV-I⁶-ii⁷-I progression, a progression that could be analyzed as the inverse to the build at 0:42. During this section, the guitar keeps a steady eighth note ostinato with the drums, while the bass grounds the band in harmony leaving room for the piano to improvise over the progression. At around 3:12, the progression builds upwards leading towards a dominant pedal point - the guitar trading off with the bass, drums, and piano in rhythmic hits before leading to a perfect authentic cadence in G major.

3:34: Bass solo

Major departure from previous harmony, with two rhythmic hits on an Em / Bm chord, then resting on an Am⁹ chord. The guitar, drums, and piano repeat the two syncopated rhythmic hits four times over eight bars, while the bass often pushes the boundaries of all harmony that has

been previewed so far in "YEM". The bass segues into a triplet rhythm, leading the band into the next section.

3:53: Rhythmic tension

The band previews the next section's chord progression while stuck in a temporary four-bar rhythmic fluctuation - the guitar, bass, and piano all play the progression in quarter note triplets in homophony, while the drums plays eighth note triplets, creating a 3:2 polyrhythm.

4:02: Waltz

The rhythmic tension is released with two quick hits in a 2/4 bar before transitioning into a joyous mixolydian waltz with the same chord progression as the previous section, with a 2/4 bar at the end of each six bar phrase. Fishman keeps on the ride cymbal while the piano and bass improvise in E mixolydian.

4:24: Plunge into darkness, unsettling rhythms

Where the listener expects another 2/4 bar at the end of the phrase, the waltz continues as the chord progression descends further and further, with a piano glissando that leads and firmly places the band into a 4/4 E phrygian funk groove. The band alternates between E minor and Fmaj7b5 chords every two bars. This section is twelve bars of "4/4," except for two minor variations; the fourth bar of the section is in 7/8, and the eighth bar of the section is in 9/8. To the listener, it simply sounds as if the band has entered the fifth bar a second too early, and entered the ninth bar a second too late. In the twelfth bar, the band builds up chromatically and dynamically to the next section.

4:52: "Catharsis-explosion" #1

The band firmly lands on a G major chord on the 2nd beat with Trey most often landing on a high B, blissfully improvising in the key, providing the listener and audience catharsis after

the most tense moments of the piece so far. The piano, guitar, and drums play homophonic hits on the bVII and bVI chords in between each return to the first beat throughout the sixteen bars.

5:14: Plunge into darkness, #2

Following the song's highest peak yet, the band jumps back into E phrygian, but adding another source of tension, converting a section that used to be in a simple time signature into an odd time signature, 7/8. Furthermore, Trey specifically adjusts the way the 7/8 rhythm is "felt" every four bars. The first four bars of the section are subdivided in a 2+2+3 groove, the second four bars being felt in 3+2+2, and the third four bars being subdivided as 2+3+2. This rhythmic feeling is clearly pronounced by the band's accents on the first eighth note of each subdivision; for example, in the first groove, "1212123." In addition to the complex rhythm that is already present, Anastasio will often further confuse the listener by staying in the 2+2+3 groove *the entire twelve bars*, even while the band has moved on to the other subdivisions of 7/8. While not present in the version from *A Live One*, one of many examples of this particular ornamentation can be found in the "You Enjoy Myself" from January 2nd, 2016, played at Madison Square Garden in New York, NY.

5:38: "Catharsis-explosion" #2

After coming off of the most rhythmically intense portion of the song, the band once again triumphantly returns to G major, with Anastasio soaring above the other instruments, holding a B5 for all twelve bars of the section while the other members accompany.

5:52: Last build and arrival

The previous section abruptly ends and the listener is introduced to a new texture - all instruments engage in a march-like rhythm, with rising chromatic minor chords and dynamics gradually becoming louder, reaching a peak at the end of eleven bars with the four members

screaming into the microphone before arriving in a G minor funk groove, and Anastasio (and the audience) yelling the lyric, “Boy!”.

6:10: Cowfunk

The band finally arrives in a 4/4 funk groove, alternating between Gm7 and Cm9 every two bars. The term “cowfunk” was coined by Anastasio himself: “What we’re doing now is really more about groove than funk. Good funk, real funk, is not played by four white guys from Vermont. If anything, you could call what we’re doing cow funk or something” (Gehr & Phish, 1998, p. 97).

The piece’s first and only lyrics are sung here, interspersed every four bars - “Boy...Man... God... Shit.” Following this lyric is the song’s second and last lyric, “Wash uffize [sic] drive me to Firenze”, sung every two bars until the next section. This section commences the official start of the ‘improvisatory’ section of the piece, and the end of the through-composed section. Although each performance of “YEM” is different in terms of the improvisatory section, there are a few important sections below that are crucial to the song’s form and foundation for the band to improvise from.

7:24: Piano solo #1

This eight bar section departs from the usual chord progression and includes a piano solo, but most noticeably, alternates between 7/8 and 4/4 every bar, before eventually returning to the standard 4/4 funk groove at 7:42.

7:42: Cowfunk, continued

The band reprises the “Wash uffize drive me to Firenze” lyric four times over eight bars and the standard funk groove.

8:00: Piano solo #2

The section echoes the first piano solo, alternating 7/8 and 4/4 every bar for eight bars before returning back to the standard funk groove.

8:19: Jam

At this point in the piece, there is nothing else in terms of form that the band must attend to, and they are free to bring the piece to wherever they feel like on any particular night. In the *A Live One* recording, the jam peaks dynamically and texturally at around 12:40. “You Enjoy Myself” tends to hover around twenty minutes long during live performance, with some performances as long as thirty minutes. The longest live performance of “YEM” was on 10/31/1995: forty minutes, thirty-three seconds long. (The Mockingbird Foundation, 2021)

13:34: Bass and Drums

In most versions of “YEM”, the band will transition to a short segment with just Gordon and Fishman jamming over the same funk groove. This section serves as a landmark for the band to ground itself before heading into the piece’s final section.

15:10: Vocal Jam

Typically, the bass and drums will agree at a cutoff, before the entire band enters a cappella, “Wash uffize drive me to Firenze,” followed by a combination of beatboxing, tapping, vocalizing, screaming, talking, and allusions to other songs, in a multi-minute a cappella vocal jam. This section of the piece is a defining characteristic of “YEM,” and one that has remained constant throughout the years.

What Techniques Did its Curator Use to Help Us Understand What is Being Expressed?

Anastasio’s early catalog of songs written for Phish is filled to the brim with the same few techniques used in different ways throughout the repertoire. One common thread that stays constant throughout his through-composed music especially is his usage of complex rhythms and

textures that look complicated on paper, but are sing-able to the average Phish fan. Don Hart, an arranger and composer who has been a frequent collaborator and orchestrator for Anastasio, said of Trey writing “David Bowie”, another long-form non-strophic piece, “Trey wanted to see how complex he could make music while people danced to it....the eyes say it’s complicated, but the ears say it’s not” (Hitz & Osiris Media, 2021).

In “You Enjoy Myself,” Anastasio mostly uses these complex rhythms and textures to create *tension*. As mentioned before, “YEM” is built upon the foundation of tension and release, of which Phish has mastered the art of over thirty-five years, both in their improvising and compositions. *Polyrhythmic layering* and usage of *odd meters* are two techniques that Anastasio takes from his musical toolbox constantly, not only in “YEM” but in many of his other non-strophic, through-composed pieces. Polyrhythmic layering can be found in the Opening Introduction, the First Arrival, Rhythmic Tension, and Second Plunge sections. He often combines this technique with his usage of odd meters, as he does in the “Second Plunge”; the section is in 7/8, and the band subdivides the seven eighth notes in three different ways during the 12 bars (2+2+3, 3+2+2, 2+3+2), while Anastasio usually continues to play in the first method of subdivision (2+2+3), creating a jarring effect for the listener - almost sounding like it is unintentionally out of time. Similar uses of polyrhythmic layering can be found in “Fluffhead” and “Harry Hood”.

Writing in odd meter is almost natural to Anastasio, and when looking at his influences as a composer it is clear-cut how some of the sections in “YEM” came to be. While Anastasio’s musical influences were extremely varied while in college, two classical composers were at the forefront of Trey’s mind when composing: Maurice Ravel and Igor Stravinsky. Anastasio is an

unapologetic fan of the classical genre, and orchestral music has influenced him even since college. Anastasio remarked in 2013,

...these large scale pieces were modeled after an orchestral style of music...When I was in college, listening to Ravel and Stravinsky and ‘the standard stuff’, and I would write these large scale pieces modeled on *Firebird*, or a piece like that... (Brown, 2013)

Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971) was one of the most influential composers of the twentieth century. A pianist and conductor, the Russian composer’s major early works like *The Firebird* (1910) and *The Rite of Spring* (1913) broke ground in terms of their structure and composition, due to their unusual extended techniques and highly rhythmic sections, in addition to extremely dissonant harmonies and sonorities, let alone the then-controversial choreography and staging of the two pieces in their original form as ballets. Stravinsky often expressed musically “Cubist” elements by employing highly fragmented rhythmic structures within each individual section, in addition to the macro-structure of many of his pieces being extremely sectionalized, utilizing sudden textural changes between sections, rather than smooth transitions. Combined with “YEM’s” origin story of busking on the streets of Europe and composing section by section, Stravinsky’s use of sectionalism and “Cubist” structures likely both contributed to the highly-sectionalized nature of “YEM.” Stravinsky also enjoyed writing in odd time signatures and irregular rhythmic patterns, which likely had an influence on Anastasio’s obsession with irregular time signatures. Additionally, it has been noted that both Anastasio and Fishman were very engaged with “Indian rhythmic patterns”, specifically patterns of 7 in combinations of 2s and 3s. (Hitz & Osiris Media, 2021)

Anastasio’s use of *extreme dynamic changes*, often combined with *chromaticism*, is another technique he draws on constantly to create and release tension. The band’s use of these

dynamic changes is one that made them stand out, and their early shows in small venues allowed them to make the most use of dynamics:

“You Enjoy Myself” is some of [the band’s] earliest explorations with extreme dynamic contrast...there are different spots where they would really explore the softs...something that most young rock bands are missing is exploring the lower dynamic register, like playing softly. This was one of the first pieces where they really started to explore [dynamics]. (Hitz & Osiris Media, 2021)

Combined with chromaticism, Anastasio uses both techniques in the *last build* to create a strong sense of tension, in addition to the builds to both “*catharsis-explosions.*”

Chapter V

“Reba”

“...To many fans, ‘Reba’ simply is Phish. The song’s whimsical lyrics, unpredictable changes and soaring end-jam embody everything magical and alluring about the band’s music. If music were a religion, Phish would be the hippiest church in town, and ‘Reba’ (almost) everyone’s favorite Sunday sermon.” - Grant Calof and Tim Wade, “The Phish Companion”

Who created it?

The music and lyrics to “Reba” were both composed by Trey Anastasio in the late 1980s, first performed and recorded on October 1st, 1989, at another now defunct music venue in Burlington, The Front. As opposed to “You Enjoy Myself” being featured on *The White Tape* (an early demo album), this concert contained “Reba’s” premiere as a piece altogether; however, its form differed considerably from how listeners hear the song today. The studio version of the song, containing the same structure and form that the band keeps today, is featured on the band’s sophomore album *Lawn Boy*, released in 1990. Reba is also one of Phish’s most popular and most requested songs; it has been played, on average, once every 4.1 shows since its debut—almost 400 times in total.

When and where was it created?

Written in the late 1980s, Anastasio composed Reba “as a direct result of working with Ernie Stires” (Calof et al., 2000, p. 163-164). Ernie Stires (1925-2008) was Anastasio’s first composition teacher and mentor, whom Trey studied with for five to six years starting in 1983. Notably, Stires was the cousin of celebrated twentieth century composer Samuel Barber⁶. Anastasio sought out Stires after he was frustrated with the university’s composition program

⁶ Barber is most known for his composition “Adagio for Strings” (1936). He is one of the most celebrated American composers ever.

after only one year as a Music major at the University of Vermont. His early training with Stires was varied, but heavily focused on fugal compositions similar to the final composed section of “Reba.” Stires’ specific influence on the composition of Reba will be discussed further in the sections below.

In terms of its feature on the band’s 1990 album *Lawn Boy*, it is a departure from the style of the rest of the album as the only long-form multi-sectioned piece on the album. Whereas with the album *Junta*, almost all of the songs besides “Fee” and “Golgi Apparatus” are in a similar style; long-form and multi-sectioned (the prime examples being “The Divided Sky” and “Fluffhead/Fluff’s Travels”, in addition to “YEM” itself).

Why and for whom was it created?

As mentioned above, Anastasio was heavily influenced by Stires, specifically in his experience writing fugues and long-form pieces in his training. At this point in their brief history, Phish had already had four years of experience composing and playing intricate compositions live, like “YEM,” “Fluffhead,” “Divided Sky,” “Foam,” and more. It is likely at this point that Trey was ready to take his compositions to another level; “Trey wrote ‘Reba’ as an exercise to create a cohesive piece of music that never repeats itself and never develops” (Calof et al., 2000, p. 163-164). Anastasio has remarked in the past that he continually challenged himself to break the norms of composition; or, as he described, norms that were likely restricting him in his university classes:

For quite some time, I was doing anything possible to destroy any concept of formula, every way that I could possibly think of to screw it up. I think [in] some of those early, long form [pieces like] Fluffhead, I was hell-bent that if you gave me a rule, I was gonna break it. And I remember, actually being in music school at the time...if they said, ‘Don’t

use parallel fifths”, then it was like ‘Okay, I’m only gonna use parallel fifths, but I’m gonna do it in six different time signatures, and it’s gonna go through all twelve keys, and all four band members are gonna be playing in four different time signatures at once...like any way possible to rebel against what was popular at the time. If you want it to be short, then it’s gonna be long. (Rykman, 2011)

This sentiment can be clearly heard throughout the band’s early discography, and in their sound on stage from the very beginning; songs like “The Divided Sky” and “Fluffhead” on *Junta*, and live performances of songs never recorded in the studio⁷ like “Harry Hood” are prime examples of Anastasio’s desire to break from traditional compositional strategies and employ drastic key changes and sudden textural shifts with almost comedic-like polyrhythms. Stires was instrumental in helping Anastasio break out of these restraints held on him by the university’s composition program, and enabled Trey to be the odd one out; Anastasio remarked in 1993, “My whole goal was [to be] as different as possible...Ernie was helping to emanciate [sic] the beauty inherent in dissonance in my ear” (Caudy, 2016).

In their first lessons, Stires gave Anastasio a copy of Johann Sebastian Bach’s *Well-Tempered Clavier* (Book I, 1722; Book II, 1742), a famous set of preludes and fugues in all twelve major and minor keys. Anastasio’s first assignment was to pick his way through the entire collection on piano; “Start at page one, sit down, and start playing this, even if you have to go one measure every ten minutes...pick your way through it, pick out all the notes, all the chords...then go to book two” (Caudy, 2016). It should be noted that this collection of pieces for keyboard is not easy to sight-read or play immediately, especially considering Anastasio was not

⁷ Many of Phish’s most popular songs (“Mike’s Song”, “Halley’s Comet”, “NICU”, “Tube”) have never been recorded in the studio/released to the public.

a pianist by any means. Soon after, Stires assigned Trey to start writing two-part inventions and theme and variations for piano, which Anastasio greatly enjoyed:

It was writing right away, I went back home so excited. I came back [with the assignment] and he said ‘This is terrible, you’ve done all these mistakes, parallel fifths all over the place, but nice ideas...if you really want to hear how it’s done, listen to this’, then he’d play me Bach, or something... (Caudy, 2016)

As a result of their training, Anastasio was instantly transferring material learned from Stires over to the band, resulting in pieces like “Reba” with fugal sections a la Bach.

What is Its Subject?

Although “Reba” contains two verses and a chorus, contrary to “YEM’s” lack of lyrics, the piece’s perceived subject is similar to “YEM’s,” in that it is quite ambiguous. The first verse’s lyrics, for example, contain non-sequiturs and nonsense sentences:

Knee deep in the motel tub
Reba dangle ladle form her lip
dip
sip
Reba babble to the nag with the lipstick perfume
mutter to a farmer in a truck (Anastasio, 1990)

As mentioned in the analysis of “YEM,” this sort of nonsensical lyric writing is extremely common in Anastasio’s compositions. Tom Marshall, Phish’s primary external lyricist since the band’s beginnings, has spoken on record about him and Anastasio writing music before lyrics, specifically writing lyrics that fit the melody. The following quote is from a paraphrased conversation between Marshall and Mike Gordon, the band’s bassist;

Gordon: “There’s something really interesting that happens when someone’s just yelling or humming before the lyrics become lyrics, so the melody can exist on its own...taking the humming and sort of mimicking it with lyrics sometimes, because there was something so pure, or so natural about the humming.” (Marshall & Osiris Media, 2019)

Marshall: “Yeah, that’s the way that Trey often [wrote]...just sort of ‘blah, blah, blah’, [singing] garbage into the microphone, and later we pieced words onto that.” (Marshall & Osiris Media, 2021)

It is likely that through this method of performing a melody with gibberish lyrics that Anastasio composed many of “Reba’s” words, in addition to the lyrics of countless other Phish songs. As mentioned in the “YEM” analysis, the band’s lyrical philosophy is geared towards the fans having their own interpretations of whatever the lyrics could mean, and “giving creative power to the listener” (Caudy, 2016).

What is Being Expressed?

Although the meaning of the story may be ambiguous, for many listeners, Reba is a four-part story; an introduction with lyrics, then a wild and riveting instrumental section, a blissful and serene jam segment, and (sometimes) a return to the very beginning. Similar to “YEM,” the building blocks of Anastasio’s storytelling techniques lie within tension and release. While there is much tension and release that occurs within the micro-structure of Reba, the macro-structure of the piece has tension and release as a whole within each section. The first section’s initial fast-paced and frantic lyrics create tension, and by the end of the first section the band has found a relaxed chorus structure. The instrumental section (sections two and three in the analysis below) begins with a frantic “search for a groove” and ends with a relaxation into the following jam segment, which is the definition of a long, tension building segment.

What kind of structure or form does it have?

“Reba” contains a five-part structure, which I name and label below as:

Section 1: Introduction and lyrical content

Section 2: Through-composed

Section 3: Fugue

Section 4: Jam

Section 5: Whistling and Chorus Reprise

It should be noted that when performed live, it is common for the band to skip the fifth section, opting instead to segue into another song immediately after the end of the jam; this became common after 1992, which one can hear in many live recordings of the song. Yet, the band will go long stretches of time where they do play the fifth section more often than not, or vice versa. For example, from 2011 to 2020, “Reba” was performed in concert forty-one times, the band playing the fifth section thirty of those times, close to 75% of the time. In contrast, from the band’s reunion in March 2009 through mid-2011, “Reba” was played twenty-two times, with the band only playing the fifth section *one time* (a similar stretch occurred from 1994-1998) (The Mockingbird Foundation, 2021).

What does it sound or look like?

The following section is a theoretical and textural analysis of “Reba,” specifically of the studio recording found on *Lawn Boy* (1990). The studio version of this piece was chosen in part for two reasons, the first being that there are extreme tempo fluctuations throughout many live versions. For example, the studio version of “Reba” starts around 118 beats per minute. Most live versions, from multiple listens, hover around 130 beats per minute, sometimes starting as fast as 146 beats per minute (see the 8/11/98 version, for example), almost 30 beats per minute

faster than the studio version. Along the same lines, the studio version's tempo presented an easier version to analyze. Additionally, many live versions feature some small mistakes in the composed sections, mainly due to the piece's extreme virtuosity required to play. The full song will be analyzed below, with the focus mainly on sections two and three. At the appropriate times, I provide descriptive names to anchor the reader/listener through the analysis.

Section 1: Introduction and Lyrical Content

0:00: Opening F octaves in guitar and piano signal the start of the song. It is common for Anastasio to signal the start of Reba by playing these opening octaves without any warning.

0:08: First verse

The opening octave Fs act as the supertonic of the first section's main key, Eb major. The first verse is heavily grounded in plagal harmony, which briefly departs from the main key during a sequence at the end of the third line, "...lipstick perfume flypaper...", with the first three chords acting as the subdominant of the next chord, before returning to Bb through a chromatic mediant; Eb-Bb-Db-Ab-B-F#-A-Bb.

Beginning at "Knee deep in the motel tub", the harmony descends plagally again before descending chromatically to Gb/F#, which becomes the dominant of B major. Although it sounds like the band has finally arrived in a new key, B major becomes the first chord in another plagal progression; B-E-D-A, before moving around chromatically back to Eb; D-E-Eb-Bb-Eb.

To end the first verse, the band repeats the first plagal sequence of the verse, but instead of returning to Bb, the band arrives at F# major as the home key of the ensuing chorus.

0:45: First chorus

Now in the key of F# major, the band repeats a simple IV-I-V-I progression four times over the “Bag it, Tag it” lyrics, before repeating the IV-I progression three times in double the harmonic rhythm.

1:04: Second verse

The transition to the second verse begins with another 3x repetition of the IV-I progression while the bass walks down to C#, leading to a Perfect Authentic Cadence grounding us in the key of F# major. The second verse is much more grounded harmonically, staying in the key of F# the entire verse. The only three chords used throughout the verse are F# major, B major, and C# major; I, IV, and V in the key of F#. It should be also noted that Fishman emphasizes the off-beats on the hi-hats and plays on the rim of the snare drum, creating a much different atmosphere than the first verse, more similar to bluegrass music, a favorite genre of the band. Additionally, the background voices behind Anastasio’s sing the lyrics slightly slower, creating an echo effect that is not usually performed live, but foreshadows the fourth section of the song.

1:46: Second chorus

The second chorus is repeated three times; in between each repetition, there is a chromatic walk-up leading to C#, and ending in a PAC that starts the next repetition. Texturally, there is not much difference between the three repetitions, besides the small changes happening on the drum part. During the first playthrough, Fishman plays on a closed hi-hat, then on an open hi-hat during the first repetition, and then on the ride cymbal during the final repetition.

Section 2: Through-composed

It should be noted that as the textures rapidly change in this section, some descriptions may not have descriptive names, as some of the sections are shorter than ten seconds.

Additionally, because of the rapidly-changing textures, sections will be more broadly described in prose, rather than every description being timestamped.

2:31: The band plays one more measure of a chromatic quarter note walk-up before diving into new material.

2:34: “Search for a groove”

The guitar begins to emphasize a rising chromatic four-note riff three times, except it is played in a eighth note triplet rhythm, so that the emphasis is on a different note on the beginning of each triplet. The riff is played once, then is modulated up a major third, with the piano now adding in, playing a minor third harmony above the guitar. During these first two riffs, the bass and drums emphasize a 4/4 beat, with the bass playing quarter notes. During the final riff, the riff modulates up a major third again, and what were eighth note triplets have now been metrically modulated to sixteenth notes, with the entire band playing the riff five times consecutively before beginning the next short section.

2:41: The harmony now suddenly drops a tritone down. The piano plays a “tremolo” on the root of the chord that the bass also emphasizes, before suddenly moving up a minor third while the guitar plays a descending five note pattern. The piano tremolo then moves a half-step up, while the guitar plays the same descending modulated five note pattern into a chromatic walkup first played on two consecutive triplet rhythms, then subsequently switching to quarter notes. All the while, the bass begins to slide up and down the fretboard before the piano and guitar lock in on a riff leading to a chromatic walk-up in the guitar, and a chromatic walk-down in the bass and piano in an eighth note triplet rhythm. The guitar, piano and bass riff is repeated.

2:58: The ending of the previous section becomes the beginning of the ensuing section, with a 7-note riff that the band plays in homophony ending on a harmonic D major chord in the

guitar; this riff will be referred to as “harmonic riff”, referring to Anastasio using the technique of playing the D major chord via harmonics on the guitar. The band is now grounded in E minor at this time, subsequently playing a repeated 5/4 pattern ending in the harmonic riff. This section is structured as follows:

Harmonic riff

5/4 pattern x2

Harmonic riff

5/4 pattern x2

Homophonic eighth note triplet chromatic walkdown

5/4 pattern

Homophonic eighth note triplet chromatic walkdown (half step down)

3:12: Barbershop changes

The texture of the composition has reached its first relaxation point, as the last chord of the chromatic walkdown becomes the first chord of the next section. The drums emphasize the ride and hi-hat while the guitar plays a relaxed melody as the piano drops out. The harmony moves around the circle of fifths as the guitar part changes one note between each chord, alternating the quality of the chord, similar to harmonic changes found in Barbershop styles of singing. At 3:23, the guitar and piano lock in on a riff extremely similar to the first riffs at 2:41, with a minor third harmonization, leading to a separate riff with the guitar and bass leading up to a ii-V-i in the key of F minor, emphasizing a temporary ii-lock pedal point before delving into the next section.

3:30: Makeshift Mambo

While the bass plays a quarter note F pedal point, the guitar and piano play a repeated ascending F minor major seventh chord in a sixteenth-note pattern. What makes this passage peculiar is that during the five beats over which the riff is played each time, the fourth beat consists of five sixteenth notes instead of four. This particular timing can be clearly heard in the bass waiting an extra sixteenth note before playing the fifth quarter note. At the end of each riff, there is a sixteenth-note chromatic walk-down in the guitar, bass, and piano; Ab-G-Gb-F. The riff is played twice over fourteen beats, each riff lasting seven beats.

At 3:40, the entire passage is modulated up a whole step to G minor, and each riff is played another two times.

3:49: Temporary Neapolitan + Hyper-funk

One more sixteenth-note chromatic walk-down occurs to transition to the bass subsequently arpeggiating to D, and the guitar arpeggiating to a second-inversion G minor chord. Suddenly, the harmony drops a tritone again, to the bII in the key of G, Ab major. The first occasion of this harmony falls in a solitary 5/4 bar, with the band playing a hit on the “a” of 4, creating the feeling of a sudden stop. Additionally, on this hit, the bass jumps back up a tritone to the dominant root, D, while the guitar ends its phrase on Eb, creating extreme dissonance. The band returns to the Neapolitan harmony for another two bars before a chromatic walk-down to G minor, leading into a repetition of the entire phrase, starting with the arpeggiation to D in the bass.

However, during this second phrase, the 5/4 bar is played twice instead of once. At the end of the second phrase, the chromatic-walkdown is replaced by four bars of fortissimo “hyper-funk” in D minor, a tritone away from the previous temporary Neapolitan chord of Ab major. This “hyper-funk” interlude is introduced by a piano slide to the depths of the instrument’s

range, while the bass articulates syncopated slapped notes. The band returns to repeat the Neapolitan 5/4 bar twice, then two static 4/4 bars, then once more returns to the “hyper-funk”, with even more emphasis on chromatic syncopation in the piano and bass. The section ends with two more repetitions of the Neapolitan 5/4 bar and two static 4/4 bars before transitioning to the next section.

The previous section’s structure is as follows:

Sixteenth-note chromatic walkdown

Arpeggiation to tonic

Temporary Neapolitan (*one* 5/4 bar with syncopated hit, two 4/4 bars)

Sixteenth-note chromatic walkdown

Arpeggiation to tonic

Temporary Neapolitan (*two* 5/4 bars with syncopated hit, two 4/4 bars)

Hyper-funk, four bars

Temporary Neapolitan (*two* 5/4 bars with syncopated hit, two 4/4 bars)

Hyper-funk, four bars

Temporary Neapolitan (*two* 5/4 bars with syncopated hit, two 4/4 bars)

4:26: Barbershop Changes Reprise, Final Build

The Ab major chord that functioned as the Neapolitan in the key of G minor now has its function changed via mode mixture and a pivot modulation; the third of the chord is dropped to alter its quality to Ab minor. The ensuing chord is an GbMaj7 chord, voiced in the guitar shifting up to a Bb major triad while the bass shifts down to the root of Gb. After two mezzo piano hits on the Gbmaj7, the band suddenly pivots again back to Eb major, the key of the “Barbershop Changes” section found at 3:12, which is reprised.

However, there are three small, but important differences in this reprise that are not found in the first occurrence of this quasi-leitmotif (or recurring theme). The first change is in the bass; instead of shifting chords with the rest of the band, the bass holds a running sixteenth-note pedal point on Eb throughout the majority of the section. The second change is in the drums; as soon as the section starts, the drum pattern shifts to a “weightless” groove; a similar groove can be found in the “Where are we going?” section of the “YEM” analysis. This groove is characterized by a steady, repetitive sixteenth note pattern on the hi-hat, opening and closing on 1 and 3. The final, most important change comes at 4:36: the harmonic rhythm of the four actual “Barbershop Change” chords are halved, now changing every two beats instead of every beat. This change acts as a catalyst for the band to change direction to the *final build*; following the fourth chord, the bass pedal point drops down a half-step to D, acting as a dominant to G minor. As the bass holds this dominant pedal point, the piano and guitar build dynamically and chromatically, playing rising diminished chords before arriving at a falling chromatic walkdown first in quarter notes, then shifting to eighth notes; this final peak is the most dissonance found in this section, via oblique motion between the rising chromaticism in piano and guitar against the bass pedal point.

Section 3: “Smooth Atonal Sound”/Atonal Fugue

5:12: Atonal Introduction

After a fortissimo peak, the band goes silent for a beat, then re-enters with a completely different texture. Fishman rapidly articulates on only the toms while quietly closing the hi-hat on 1 and 3, while the piano and guitar enter into a wide-ranging chromatic homophonic atonal melody, mostly comprised of running sixteenth notes. During the first few bars of the piano and

guitar wildly changing key centers, the bass plays mainly syncopated rhythms with temporary tonicizations of multiple keys.

5:23: Chromatic Descent

At this point in the passage, it sounds like the band has found a resting place in B major, but suddenly the band arpeggiates a B fully diminished chord leading into a section that is centered around D as the tonal center. As the piano and guitar play a repetitive descending chromatic sixteenth-note passage, the bass starts to outline D major, ascending through the scale in eighth-note triplets, creating a 4:3 polyrhythm. This passage is repeated, now with the bass descending through the D major scale.

5:36: Temporary Neapolitan (again), Coda

The bass holds an eighth note octave pedal point on A, while the piano and guitar outline Eb and D major chords for 4 bars, notably, with displaced, off-kilter rhythms in the melody line. The band arrives in D major, before an arpeggiation through D major and Ab major to a half cadence at C# in unison.

5:47: Delayed Entry/Chaotic Harmony

The entire third section is repeated, except for one difference: the guitar starts the melody one beat delayed from the piano. This change creates extremely intense, chromatic, dissonant, and sometimes beautiful harmony. In the “Chromatic Descent” passage, the delay creates dissonance that almost sounds like a mistake on the behalf of the composer, yet the dissonance intensifies even greater in the following section, where the delay creates successive Eb major over D major chords, leading up to the arpeggiation of D major and Ab major chords at *the same time*. This is one of the most extremely difficult sections of music to play live that Phish has in their repertoire.

6:25: Transition to Jam/Mistimings

The piano arrives on a D that leads into an Eb major chord played in homophonic sixteenth hits by the band, followed by a four bar drum fill, then an F major chord played in similar fashion. The band alternates between Eb major and F major homophonic hits, while Fishman plays a drum fill in between each successive hit. However, the time signature changes every measure; 4/4, 9/8, 4/4, 5/8, 4/4, 7/8, ending with a 5/8 bar. The last homophonic hit of the transition becomes the first bar of the jam, the F major chord descending back down to Eb major, establishing the constant harmonic rhythmic ostinato that takes place throughout the jam.

Section 4: Jam

6:40: The improvised segment of “Reba,” which is typically longer than all the other sections combined, consists of two chords, over which the band improvises: Eb major and F major (or F7), the two chords heard in the transition to the jam. These chords act as the subdominant and dominant functions in the key of Bb major. There are a few noteworthy, consistent features of a typical “Reba” jam, one being that it does not usually go “Type II”; the jam’s two-chord structure seldom departs from the norm. An important aspect almost always featured is the jam ending at its textural and emotional peak - this is *always* accentuated by Fishman playing a drum fill on the toms one bar prior to the jam's abrupt end, heard in the studio recording at 10:39. While the jam on the *Lawn Boy* version of “Reba” only lasts four minutes exactly, it is not uncommon for “Reba” jams to last upwards of seven to nine minutes, seldom longer than ten minutes; the main reason for not being typically longer is the requirement of the jam being a long, slow build, ending at its peak. The longest ever “Reba” on record was performed on October 29th, 1998, at the Greek Theatre in Los Angeles, CA; twenty minutes, forty-one seconds, with the jam segment lasting about thirteen minutes in total (Type II jam).

Section 5: Whistling and Chorus Reprise (when played)

10:45: The accompaniment to the verse slowly enters, while the band whistles the tune of the melody once through, the drums playing on the snare in a style similar to a military march.

11:28: The chorus is reprised three times in the same style as the second chorus, with a one bar quarter note chromatic walk up in between each chorus.

12:15: The one bar chromatic walk-up is extended into a four bar chromatic walkup, with the chromatic walkup modulating up a major third three times, similar to the passage at 2:34 at the beginning of the through-composed section. The chromatic build ends on a dominant C# major chord, which resolves to a low-voiced F# major chord in homophony that ends the piece.

What Techniques Did its Curator Use to Help Us Understand What is Being Expressed?

The interval of the *tritone* (often considered the most dissonant interval in Western music) is central to Anastasio's compositional processes in building tension. Anastasio expressed this sentiment himself in 1993; "The tritone is basically the basic building block of music...western music, as far as I'm concerned...anytime you have that tritone relationship, you have tension" (Greaves, 2009).

The use of the interval is extremely prominent in Reba's second and third sections. For example, the first major tonal shift in the second section occurs when the tonality drops a tritone at 2:41. Additionally, the chords in the chromatic walkups throughout the following section are fully diminished chords, which are built on tritones. At 3:49, during the "Temporary Neapolitan" section, the harmony shifts back and forth via an interval of a tritone, alternating between the chords of D minor and Ab major. The "final build" section is entirely comprised of fully diminished chords, which contain two tritone intervals. The entire third section is riddled with tritone intervals, most notably found in the section's coda, where the piano and guitar arpeggiate

through chords a tritone apart: D major and Ab major. It is also important to note that much of the tension created in a typical Reba jam is built on this interval of the tritone; as the harmonic structure of the jam is confined to the two chords of Eb major and F major in the key of Bb major, the melody passing through the 7th scale degree of Bb major, A, will create an interval of a tritone whenever the band is playing an Eb major chord, which is mathematically *half* of the jam segment.

Anastasio's fascination with the use of tritone can be traced back to the guitarist's fondness of the Broadway musical *West Side Story*, composed by Leonard Bernstein. Growing up as a child, Anastasio was exposed to the music of *West Side Story* by his mother, who often would play the cast albums of shows in the house like *South Pacific*, *Hair*, *Gypsy*, in addition to *West Side Story* itself.

West Side Story, premiered in 1957, and adapted into a musical feature film in 1961, is one of the most well-known and highly celebrated Broadway musicals of all time; it is likely Leonard Bernstein's most well-known work, and was celebrated lyricist and composer Stephen Sondheim's Broadway debut, writing the lyrics at only twenty-six years old. The recurring musical motif of the tritone is the musical's building block; it is the first sound the audience hears as the overture begins, it is the central leitmotif, or a recurring theme, that riddles the "Prologue", "Jet Song", "Something's Coming", the "Tonight Quintet", and countless others, and the interval's role in the show is a catalyst for the show's both most beautiful and heart-wrenching moments.

Anastasio himself has unabashedly proclaimed his love for the musical on multiple occasions:

West Side Story was the [musical] that I played the most. And it had a huge effect, on the Divided Sky's, and the You Enjoy Myself's, and the Colonel Forbin's and the Foam's, and the Reba's and the...no question. Because it was...now I'm not saying that I made a successful attempt, but I remember as a young child, listening to the finale of West Side Story, where Tony dies, and she's leaning over him...and you hear the theme comes back.. [sings], and the bass note, I know today, is a tritone away, it doesn't resolve. You've heard this theme earlier in the piece, but this time, it's so heart-wrenching, and at the very end --it's genius, it's some of the most genius music ever written, Leonard Bernstein. The bass note is dissonant from the melody, and even as a small child I was like 'Why...ah this is hurting my heart, why?' And I learned from that, that you can milk a melody by reharmonizing underneath it - there's ways that you can squeeze emotion out of music, without lyrics, just with arrangement, just with an elegant handling of the melody. (Budnick & Cadence13, 2019)

It can be noted here, too, that Anastasio's discovery of the emotional power of melody and arrangement could be one of his subconscious reasons for writing nonsensical lyrical content; if the true emotional weight that Anastasio writes lies within the instrumental arrangement, why not offset that weight with lyrics about, in the case of "Reba", "...a capitalistic moon-shiner's questionable relationship with the local meat proprietor?" (Calof et al., 2000, p. 163-164)

Anastasio continues,

... and I learned that from listening to West Side Story when I was a kid, and I've always been chasing it my whole life. Always, in everything I've ever worked on... and, that had a big effect on the music of Phish...it was a signpost to the storytelling power of music. (Budnick & Cadence13, 2019)

Anastasio has even gone so far as to quote the musical in live performance multiple times; “Maria” has been teased in five Phish song performances since 1998 (most notably, at the end of a thirty-five minute “Runaway Jim” in the same year) and “I Feel Pretty” was teased in Phish’s August 8th, 1993 rendition of “Bathtub Gin” (The Mockingbird Foundation, 2021).

Anastasio’s use of the tritone within “Reba” is not even the only musical allusion to the Broadway show; there are two more specific sections of “Reba” containing techniques that Anastasio very likely first heard in *West Side Story* and incorporated into not only “Reba,” but many of his compositions.

The “Makeshift Mambo” segment of “Reba’s” second section is extremely similar to a musical passage in *West Side Story*, and was named as such by the author of this thesis as an allusion to the musical. The said musical passage is found in the song “Dance at the Gym”, during the “Mambo” section, specifically at the 2:48 mark of the movie adaptation’s Original Soundtrack Recording; it features an ascending repeated sixteenth-note minor-major seventh chord similar in texture to the arpeggiated chord found in Reba. This comparison without context would likely not be enough alone for Anastasio’s passage to be considered a similarity, but given his history, obsession, and fascination with *West Side Story*, it is likely more than a coincidence.

The other technique that Anastasio incorporates from *West Side Story* is not one that is only used in Reba, but also many of his other compositions, namely, “Sample in a Jar,” “Ghost,” “Rift,” “Sparkle,” “Maze,” and others; it is the effect of “Delayed Entry.” In these five compositions, there are passages where one band member will sing lyrics, and another band member will begin to sing the same lyrics, with the same rhythm and melody, but entering a beat or two later, creating an echo that can often create an off-kilter and sometimes frantic effect. This exact same technique can be found in the instrumental section of *West Side Story*’s “The

Rumble.” At the 0:30 mark of the movie adaptation’s Original Soundtrack Recording, one can hear the brass and winds repeatedly enter with a frantic, high rising melody, while another set of brass and winds immediately enter delayed, creating intense dissonance that is considerably similar to dissonance created in the “Delayed Entry” section of “Reba’s” fugue.

However, in “Reba,” this technique is extended by the virtue of the melody’s delay *creating harmony with itself* the second time through. This method of composition requires extreme planning and intensive thought, and might even be compared to pieces of similar nature by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, and Bach, whom Anastasio studied with Ernie Stires. Attributed to Mozart, “Der Spiegelkanon (The Mirror Canon)” duet is intended to be played by two violins reading the same piece of sheet music, except one plays the sheet music upside down, playing from beginning to end. Bach’s first canon from his “*Musikalisches Opfer (The Musical Offering)*” is a *crab canon*, which is a melody played forwards, then backwards, and then played forwards and backwards at the same time, creating harmony with itself. Anastasio himself employs a similar technique in “The Divided Sky,” in which the band plays a section followed by playing it backwards, making it palindromic. These two pieces of similar technique, in addition to “The Rumble,” may have all had an influence on Trey’s compositional techniques, especially within “Reba.”

Chapter VI

Discussion and Conclusions

The main questions for this study asked, “What compositional choices or devices are used to tell a story in a Phish song?” and “In what ways might a broader mode of analysis inform one’s understanding of a Phish song?” Using the facets model as a guide, I analyzed two of Phish’s most popular non-strophic pieces, “You Enjoy Myself,” and “Reba,” whose analyses may provide insight into Anastasio’s early compositional style and technique as a whole.

The facets model of analyzing Phish provides the reader with not only a well-rounded account of each song, but a method of comparing both “You Enjoy Myself” and “Reba.” In the following section, I highlight noteworthy points regarding similarities and differences between the facets analyses of the two songs.

The Context of a Work

Following the outline of the facets model, I began this inquiry by asking the following questions to situate the piece:

Who created it?

When and where was it created?

Why and for whom was it created?

“You Enjoy Myself” was written by Anastasio in 1985, at the dawn of Phish’s beginnings as a band, while Reba was written circa 1987-1989, more than a few years into Phish’s live career. One of the interesting differences between the two work’s creation stories are in the location; “YEM” was written on the streets of Europe while Anastasio and co. were busking, with various segments of music pieced together, while “Reba” was likely written as a whole. In terms of their respective album’s contexts, “YEM” was joined on the album *Junta* by multiple

other long-form non-strophic works, while “Reba” stood alone as the only piece of its kind on *Lawn Boy* (“Run Like an Antelope” being multi-sectioned, but not nearly as complex). The reasons for both piece’s creations and structures also differ slightly; while “YEM” was written as music that was formed by method of jigsawing multiple ideas together, sometimes via live experimentation, resulting in its highly sectionalized form, “Reba” was deliberately written as a piece that never repeated itself, as an “exercise”, going hand-in-hand with the fact that “YEM” was played live by the band for four years before it was recorded in the studio, while “Reba” was recorded shortly after its first live performance.

The Expressive Meanings of a Work

What is its subject?

What is being expressed?

Both pieces share similarities in terms of their subjects, or lack thereof. The lyrical meaning in both compositions is quite ambiguous, via either a lack of lyrics in the case of “YEM”, or nonsensical sentence structures and words in “Reba”. As stated above, the pivotal reason for such is the band’s philosophical standpoint towards lyric writing: “giving creative power to the listener” (Caudy, 2016), in addition to Anastasio often writing melodies with gibberish words before writing lyrics.

Most of Phish’s music, especially their long-form compositions, is built on the expression of tension and release, which is expressed in both “YEM” and “Reba”, but in different ways. In “YEM”, the sections are longer, with textural changes happening less often, providing time for the listener to register growing tension across multiple phrases, before what is usually a cathartic release. In “Reba”, tension is created through rapidly-changing textures, with the exchange between tension and release happening much more frequently. However, “Reba” also features

structured tension and release in its macro-form as well: the second and third sections providing tension, while the jam segment as a whole is built to provide release.

The Musical Elements and Form of a Work

What does it sound or look like?

What kind of structure or form does it have?

Both compositions' general structure include a pre-composed section followed by a jam segment, yet vary slightly between the two.

“YEM’s” macro-structure is two-part; a composed section followed by a jam segment (split into three parts). “Reba’s” macro-structure is technically three-part; lyrical content, through-composed section (sections two and three combined), and jam (with the optional whistling and chorus reprise). It should be noted that the objective and structure of the two jams differ greatly. The “Reba” jam segment is built upon the foundation of a long-winded build towards a peak, at which point the band always abruptly stops the jam. This structure usually remains constant in Phish’s live performances of “Reba”; rarely does the band stray or venture into the “Type II” category within the jam, because of the nature of the jam itself. “YEM”, on the other hand, has more freedom within its inner jam structure and harmony, yet simultaneously contains more macro-structure than the “Reba” jam. The band will more often venture into “Type II” terrain when jamming “YEM”, but the jam itself has three distinct segments: “Jam”, “Bass and Drums”, and the “Vocal Jam”. However, it is important to note that there are no rules in regards to Phish jamming: on any given night, the band may decide to completely forego the normal procedures of any song (for example, see “Mike’s Song” from February 20th, 1993, which includes the “Reba” fugue within...).

Relating the Composer’s Craft to the Entire Work

What Techniques Did its Curator Use to Help Us Understand What is Being Expressed?

Anastasio often draws from his then-constant musical toolbox of techniques used in his early long-form pieces to create tension and release in both of these works. Both compositions are riddled with use of odd meter and irregular time signatures, in addition to polyrhythms that do not feature in “Reba” but are a mainstay in “YEM.” Specifically, Anastasio enjoys confusing the listener by employing constantly changing irregular time signatures; for example, in “YEM,” “Plunge into Darkness #2,” and in “Reba,” “Transition to Jam/Mistimings.” Harmonically, Anastasio enjoys employing progressions built around the circle of fifths in both pieces in order to move from section to section smoothly, and most importantly, uses chromaticism hand in hand with dynamic contrast in order to create the most tension when necessary. To create release, Anastasio sometimes employs a relaxed drum pattern (likely the idea of both Anastasio and Fishman) built on hi-hat sixteenth notes in both compositions, which can also be found in “The Divided Sky” and other Phish songs.

Answering the Research Questions***Research Question 1: What compositional choices or devices are used to tell a story in a Phish song?***

As mentioned above, Anastasio and Phish maintain a musical toolbox that is constantly drawn from in order to create tension and release, and tell a story. The techniques that fall within this “toolbox” include irregular time signatures, chromaticism, delayed entry, stark dynamic contrast, polyrhythmic writing, and more. Anastasio’s compositional choices usually are made in order to either confuse the listener, or to make a choice that is unexpected, generally in order to keep the interest of the listener, whether that be within a pre-composed section or within a jam. “I love that feeling of confusion, emotional confusion...you think, ‘Oh, this is coming to a place

of conclusion,' I'll kind of purposely point the needle towards the space where things don't resolve, because that's kind of always what I've loved" (Budnick & Cadence13, 2019).

Anastasio's passion as a young composer was "[to be] as different as possible" (Caudy, 2016), and through his compositional choices, the stories told within "YEM" and "Reba" are ones that feel and sound linear and simple, yet carry an intense, complex underlying textural and formulaic structure. These complex devices that Anastasio chooses to incorporate are an amalgamation of an influence of various musical figures that have had an impact on Anastasio over the course of his life; from Bach and Stravinsky to Bernstein, to Jimi Hendrix, Pat Metheny, Frank Zappa, and more.

Research Question 2: In what ways might a broader mode of analysis inform one's understanding of a Phish song?

Since the techniques that Anastasio and Phish incorporated into "YEM" and "Reba" are common throughout a plethora of their compositions, by analyzing one song, one can gain access to a common analysis of hundreds of Phish songs by ear. Through further listening after a broader mode of analysis, one's understanding of Phish's extensive catalog will become more in depth, by recognizing common patterns and techniques across compositions. In a similar regard, one might understand further the "why's" and "how's" behind Anastasio's (somewhat-facetious) 1993 summary of the band's message, "One man's trash is another man's treasure." *Why* did 85,000 people from across the country show up to a three-day festival on the eve of the millennium in 1999 to watch a band that most of the country had never even heard of? *How* can a band that has never had a chart-topping single, sell out Madison Square Garden thirteen nights in a row over the course of seventeen days, without repeating a single song? As an early Phish fan put it, "It was like there was a big joke going on and all the early Phish fans knew the punch

line—which was that this was gonna be something big” (Puterbaugh, 2009, 63). But *why* was it going to be big, and *how* did the band succeed without commercial success? Through these broader modes of analyzing Phish’s music, one can start to piece together the keys to the band’s success, and the specific textural moments and feelings that resonate with the band’s ever-passionate fans.

Implications and Applications to Practice

The process of analyzing Phish’s music from a theoretical and textural standpoint has implications for performers, musicologists, and music educators alike.

The next generation of jam bands, such as Goose and Twiddle, have and will continue to draw upon the music of Phish, just as Phish drew upon the music of the Grateful Dead, who originated the genre. Therefore, the research that is being conducted on the music of Phish is important not only to retain and carry on the legacy of the band, but to note the progression of the genre and its development since its origins in the 1960s. Those who choose to interpolate Phish’s music, whether it be cover bands, classical musicians, a cappella groups, or others, will benefit from broader analyses of the band’s music in order for ease of performance.

It is important to note though, that as of the writing of this thesis, Phish is still creating new music and actively touring; musicologists may benefit from these analyses by applying research techniques used to analyze Phish’s older catalog to new Phish songs, in addition to older pieces in the same style as “YEM” and “Reba,” such as “Fluffhead,” “Harry Hood,” “The Divided Sky,” “David Bowie,” and more. Some of these other long-form, non-strophic pieces contain even more complex techniques than the ones analyzed earlier, in addition to many of the same techniques in different applications. Musicologists can also use the facets model not only to analyze Phish’s pre-composed music, but the improvised sections across over thirty years of live

performances by the band as well. Additionally (and surprisingly), there are no publicly available full band transcriptions of any of these long-form, non-strophic pieces written by Anastasio. It is understood that Anastasio did chart out these pieces on written sheet music, but they have never been released to the public. By these broader modes of textural analysis, future musicologists and Phish historians may be able to more accurately transcribe these types of pieces by the band.

These analyses of Phish's music also have curricular implications for music education, in regards to several subjects: songwriting, movement, storytelling, and analysis itself. By analyzing the process of how Anastasio and co. compose a song, for example, teachers can convert this process into a unit on songwriting, especially in terms of form and structure. Within an elementary setting, one might create an activity featuring listening charts, asking students to draw out where they hear tension and release, or when the music sounds "happy" or "sad." In a secondary setting, students could be asked to create a comparative analysis of Anastasio's compositions with his influences, such as Bach, Stravinsky, and Bernstein. However, this type of assignment need not only apply to Phish; students could have the opportunity to apply this type of analysis to *their* favorite artists and bands, comparing the music of the artists to their influences.

In an ensemble setting, Phish's music has potentially major implications; how can one apply the combination of quasi-classical composition and jam-based improvisation within an ensemble? Some music educators have already taken the leap of programming Phish's music within their ensembles, which may also lend itself to promoting participatory performance within a concert setting. When choosing repertoire for a school ensemble, educators often struggle finding pieces that promote a balance between highly-skilled music making that also includes the audience, and those who may not be as familiar with their instrument. Thomas Turino (2009), in

Four Fields of Music Making and Sustainable Living, rebukes the claim that participatory music making has to be simplified or dumbed down for all to participate—in addition to no formal audience-artist distinctions, all involved can and should participate at whatever skill level comfortable as to not alienate or bore them. “If everyone is to be attracted [to participatory music making], a participatory tradition will have a variety of roles that differ in difficulty and degrees of specialization required” (Turino, 2009, p. 98). Turino specifies that this is necessary for the accomplishment/feeling of what he calls “flow”, transcending past the self during a musical performance. It requires “proper balance between inherent challenges and the skill level of the actor” (p. 99). This proper balance is found in Phish’s music: there is a constant connection between the audience and performers that affects what songs the band might play on any given night, and what direction a jam may go in. With proper context, programming the music of Phish within an ensemble may give audiences the opportunity to connect further with their students’ music programs, and realize an opportunity to further understand the effect of the music classroom on students.

Recommendations for Future Research

It is recommended that future research conducted on this subject includes transcriptions of the works analyzed. I limited myself in this research to purely textural analysis of the works with some theoretical analysis, in the interest of time and objective of research. By transcribing these works, future researchers will inevitably discover more about the techniques used in these compositions, in addition to contributing as a whole to the Phish historical canon.

It is also recommended that future research involves interviewing those in the Phish community, musicologists that have previously studied Phish, musicians that cover Phish, musicians and staff associated with Phish, and most importantly, the band members themselves.

With interview material of those in the community and those who play and created the material, research such as this thesis that concludes in some hypotheticals regarding Anastasio's compositional techniques instead result in concrete knowledge regarding the composer's full intent.

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