

“Why Can’t I Just Do It Straightaway?”: *Bluey*, Joff Bush, and Accumulation

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This file includes the abstract, keyword list, bibliography, and related material for the video essay, “Why Can’t I Just Do It Straightaway?: *Bluey*, Joff Bush, and Accumulation” by Derek J. Myler. This video-essay may be found at <https://vimeo.com/societymusictheory/smtv112myler>

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Abstract for
“Why Can’t I Just Do It Straightaway?”: *Bluey*, Joff Bush, and Accumulation

by Derek J. Myler, *SMT-V11.2*

Like many kids’ TV shows, *Bluey* frequently repurposes classical music. In designing *Bluey*’s soundscape, lead composer Joff Bush has frequently favored an end-oriented approach to revealing classical themes, engaging a formal process that productively interfaces with Peter Burkholder’s (1995) idea of thematic growth via *cumulative form* and Mark Spicer’s (2004) extension of the concept, textural growth via *accumulative form*. In this video, I generalize both kinds of growth into a holistic process of *accumulation*, and I show how Bush and his creative team often apply this process to support *Bluey*’s narrative goals. Three analytical vignettes demonstrate how *Bluey*’s audiences are often taken on a journey of discovery in the seven to nine minutes each episode encompasses—themes are initially hinted at, gradually assembled, and finally revealed in their full splendor at the episode’s narrative climax.

Short Keyword List

Bluey, TV music, Joff Bush, children’s music, narrative, accumulation

Extensive Keyword List

Bluey, TV music, Joff Bush, children’s music, children’s media, children’s multimedia, narrative, narrative theory, motive, meaning, musical borrowing, development, growth, theme, texture, cumulative form, accumulative form, accumulation, music theory, Peter Burkholder, Mark Spicer, Paul Ricoeur, Holst, Jupiter, The Planets, Handel, HWV 333, Beethoven, Ode to Joy

About the Author

Derek J. Myler (PhD, Eastman) is Assistant Professor of Music Theory at East Carolina University in Greenville, NC. Most of Derek's research explores listener experience, especially as it relates to temporality; conceived broadly, this project recruits a wide array of disciplines, including music theory and analysis, cognitive science, and the philosophy of time. Derek specializes in a diverse range of repertoires, including the music of Charles Ives, Polish folk musics and the mazurka in the long nineteenth century, and music for children's media. He has presented his work on these topics regionally, nationally, and internationally. For a complete CV and information about ongoing projects and recent publications, visit derekmyler.com.

Discography, Filmography, and Media Credits (in order of appearance)

Joff Bush, “Bluey Theme Tune (Instrument Parade).” Track 1 on *Bluey: The Album*. Demon Records, 2021. ©2021 Ludo Studio.

“The Planets, Op. 32: IV. Jupiter, the Bringer of Jollity.” London Symphony Orchestra, Sir Colin Davis. Provided to YouTube by harmonia mundi. ©2003 London Symphony Orchestra Ltd. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RUIA8rjvFZg>

Bluey. Season 2, Episode 26, “Sleepytime.” Aired April 11, 2020 on ABC (Australia).

“Handel: Concerto a Due Cori No. 2, HWV 333: V. Allegro ma non troppo - Adagio.” The English Concert, Trevor Pinnock. Provided to YouTube by Universal Music Group. ©1985 Deutsche Grammophon GmbH. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5wv7IgU4pck>

Bluey. Season 2, Episode 27, “Seesaw.” Aired October 26, 2020 on ABC (Australia).

Bluey. Season 1, Episode 11, “Bike.” Aired October 11, 2018 on ABC (Australia).

David Barber and Joff Bush, “The Weekend.” Track 10 on *Bluey: The Album*. Demon Records, 2021. ©2021 Ludo Studio.

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