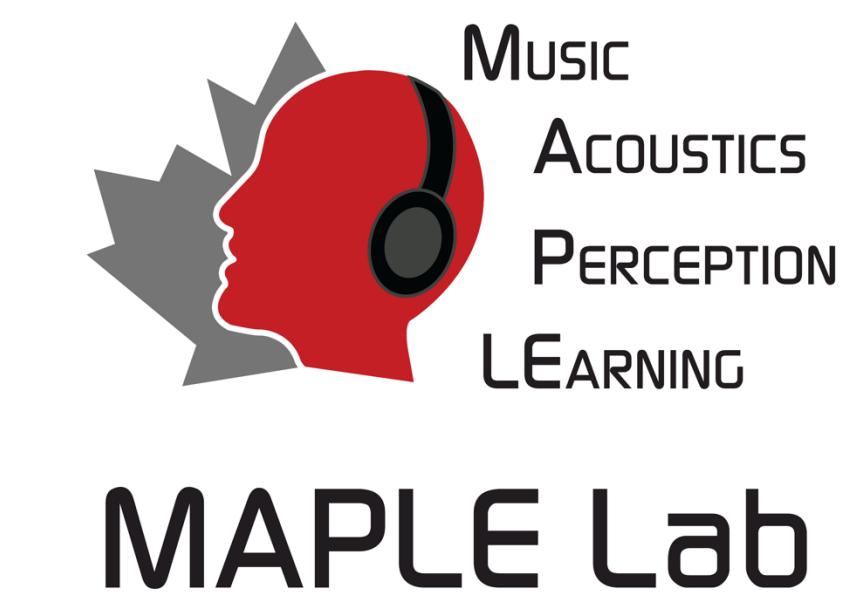


Exploring the Changing Use of Mode in the Classical and Romantic Eras



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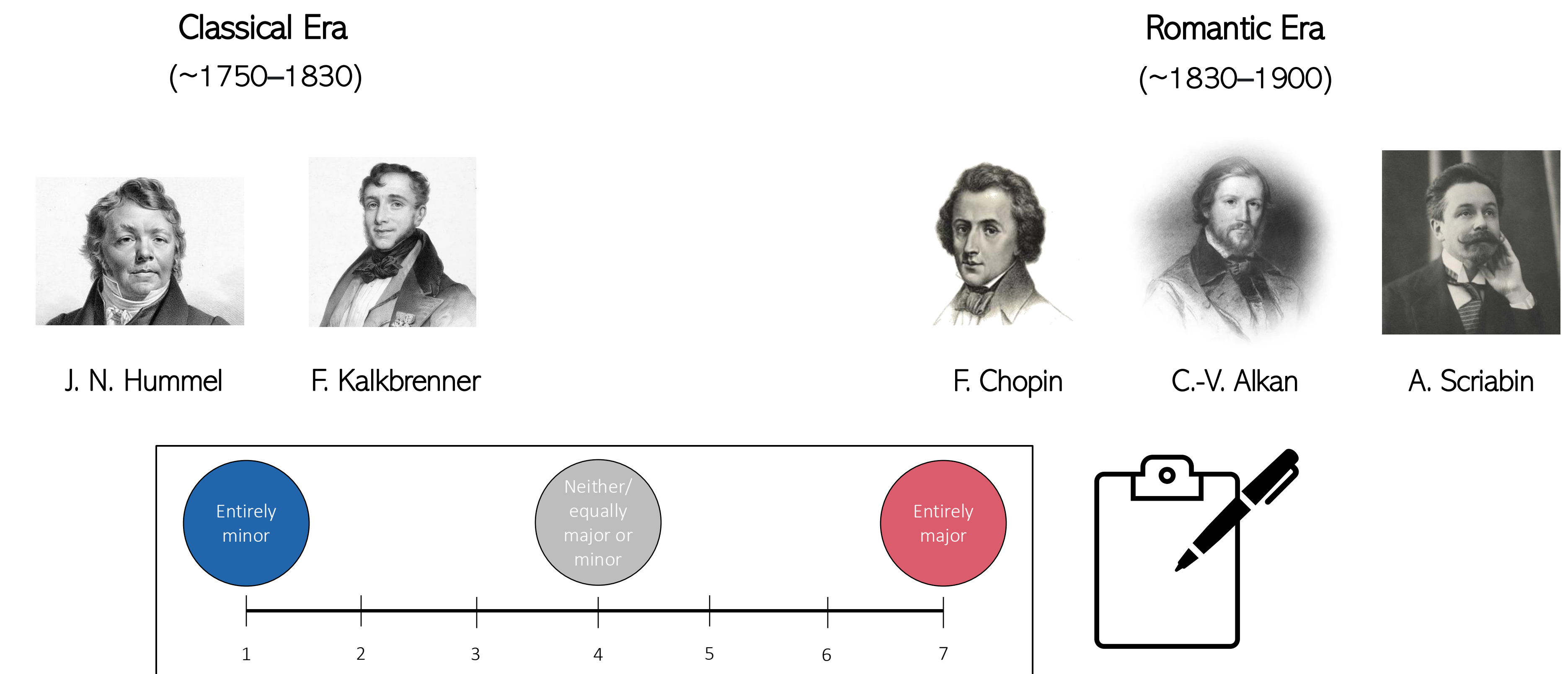


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Background

- Mode (major and minor) is a structural cue that plays an important role in musical emotion perception (Anderson & Schutz, 2022).
- Prior empirical research suggests that the way in which composers use mode has changed over time, with a large shift occurring in the Classical and Romantic eras, leading to an overall decrease in the major/minor distinction (Harasim et al., 2021; Horn & Huron, 2015).
- Mode's changing use and its blurred distinction has elicited high-profile debates between music theorists and music psychologists when assessing mode's nuances (Delle Grazie et al., under review).
- Here, we analyze data collected by Delle Grazie and colleagues (under review) to explore music theorists' (1) changing perceptions of mode and (2) levels of disagreement for music from the Classical and Romantic eras.

Methods



Results

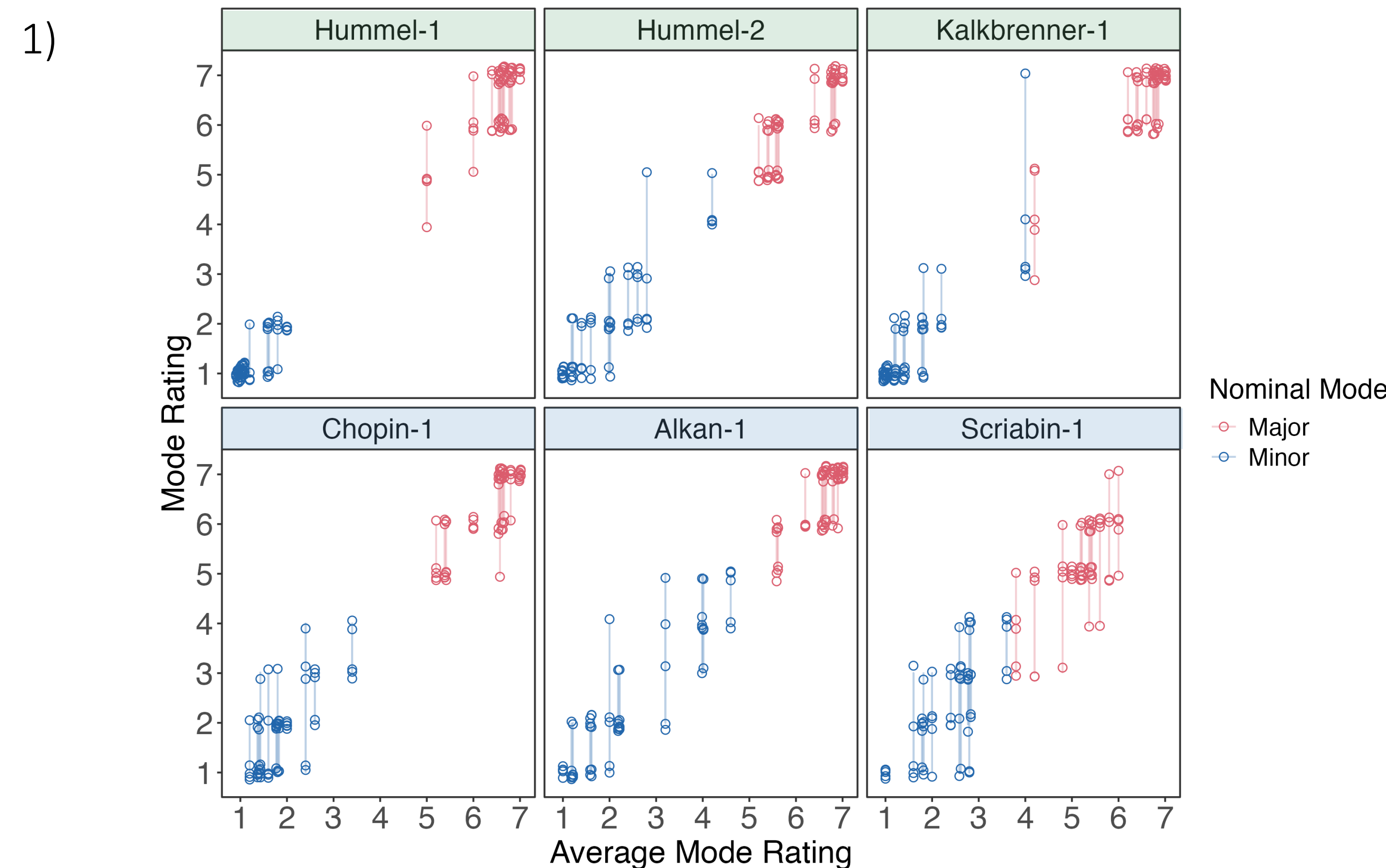


Fig. 1: Range of experts' mode ratings for three prelude sets from the Classical and Romantic eras. Each line represents one musical piece, and dots represent individual ratings.



Fig. 2: A word cloud depicting common terms used by experts when rating musical excerpts by Classical composers.



Fig. 3: A word cloud depicting common terms used by experts when rating musical excerpts by Romantic composers.

Summary

- The major/minor distinction is stronger in the Classical era and weaker near the end of the Romantic era; as tonal clarity decreases over time, music theorists rate mode as more ambiguous.
- The word clouds reveal qualitative similarities and differences in how music theorists rated pieces between the two eras.
- Using a detailed mode scale will allow researchers to capture the complexities of mode more effectively.

Acknowledgments & Selected References

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