

## **Expressive Asynchrony and Lyrical Meaning in Buffy Sainte-Marie Songs**

Studying *expressive asynchrony* investigates the de-synchronization of notationally-aligned events in performance. In two songs by Canadian singer-songwriter Buffy Sainte-Marie – “Winter Boy” from *Little Wheel Spin and Spin* (1966) and “Ananias” from *It’s My Way!* (1964) – this technique occurs without a referential score and serves to express lyrical meaning. “Winter Boy” laments a failed romance, then describes lost love as regained through the birth of a son. Sainte-Marie emphasizes specific phrase-unit beginnings with slowed tempo and asynchronized downbeat arrivals between voice and guitar. These asynchronies express lyrical narrative, as a weary-hearted woman finds home in the birth of her son. A similar process occurs in “Ananias,” where asynchrony is part of an expressively-timed opening that eventually yields to coordination between voice and guitar. Vocal accents are asynchronized from accented guitar entries, highlighting sensations of metric uncertainty that parallel lyrical questioning of faith. The timings progressively align, expressing her gradual affirmation of beliefs. Interpreting asynchrony in popular song necessitates comparison against an imagined, aligned prototype. I conclude by exploring asynchrony in popular song performance more broadly, proposing that expectations of synchrony (rather than an existing normative performance) enhance the effect of expressive timing.