Interpretation and comparison of Dream Theater's „Metropolis“ Pt. 1 and 2
Research paper in English as a main subject: English Major 2

Topic:

Dream Theater: A Progressive Rock Band
Interpretation of the Bands Album “Metropolis Pt. 2 - Scenes From A Memory”
and analysis of musical and lyrical resemblances to the Song “Metropolis Pt. 1 -
The Miracle And The Sleeper”

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“In order for any artist to reach their own creative vision, it is essential that the performer develop technique.”
- John Petrucci, “Rock Discipline”

“The more I learn, the less I know for sure”
- Pain Of Salvation, “Pilgrim”

“We were always much more human than we wished to be we will always be more human than we wish to be”
- Pain Of Salvation, “Beyond The Pale”

“The Cmaj7 voicing is real cool in that it doesn’t sound ‘nightclubby’ - it’s one way to play a major seventh voicing without sounding as if you belong in the Acapulco Lounge on the Love Boat”
- John Petrucci, “Wild Stringdom”
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1 Foreword

The band that surely influenced my guitar-playing the most, is Dream Theater and their guitar player John Petrucci. Their very unique style, containing elements of jazz, blues, funk and classical music, built in the context of heavy rock music, combined with their highly sophisticated and philosophical lyrics, has found fans and admirers all over the world. All members of the band are highly respected in the music world, and master their instruments at the highest technical level. They have opened my ear for complex music altogether and thus I wanted to write my research paper about the band that definitely changed my life, and about (in my opinion) one of their best albums so far.

In agreement with my English teacher I will not mention the sources of every single example of musical notes, as they are too diverse. They are summed up in the bibliography.

Because the main subject for this research paper is English and not music, I will keep the passages about musical aspects rather short. I will mention them, though, for in my opinion they are essential for understanding the lyrics and the band in general. I also recorded the used note examples, to make them useful for those who can’t read them. They can be found on the accompanying CD in the “Note examples”-folder.

This research paper exceeds the average volume, as a lot of additional background information is necessary to make the topic understandable also for non-experts in music generally and in Progressive Rock specifically.
Since the album “Images & Words” was released in 1992, Dream Theater became well known for all fans of progressive music. In 1999, as it is almost a tradition in Progressive Rock\(^1\), they tried to make a conceptional album the way bands like Rush did before them. The result - “Scenes From A Memory” - was one of their most successful releases ever and is still seen as one of their best albums by the fanbase.

But Dream Theater also have to face a lot of criticism. Many accuse them of playing far too technically, and of sacrificing the feeling of a song for “bragging shredding”. Whether this is justified or if there’s more to their music than just showing off shall also be revealed in this research paper.

\(^1\)I will focus on the specifications of “Progressive Rock” as a genre later, in the section “Dream Theater’s style and influences”, p. 17
3 The Band in general

3.1 History of Dream Theater

Dream Theater was formed by guitarist John Petrucci and bassist John Myung, after they signed in at Berklee College Of Music\(^1\) Boston, where they met drummer Mike Portnoy, who did not hesitate to join. Petrucci’s high school friend Kevin Moore was asked to play the keys and accepted. With Chris Collins\(^2\), they found a singer and settled on the name Majesty for the newly founded project. After performing some gigs together, they soon gained a lot of exposure. Due to that, Petrucci, Myung and Portnoy quit Berklee to concentrate on the band. Collins was unhappy with the music, left and was replaced by Charlie Dominici, who was older.

\(^1\)One of the best colleges for music worldwide
\(^2\)Chris Collins is not listed in the section “Current and former band members”, as there are no official recordings with him and he was not of any importance for the development of the band
3 The Band in general

and more experienced than the rest of Majesty. They continued writing and in 1987 released the legendary *Majesty Tapes*, a collection of demo material that they sold on tape. 1,000 copies were bought within six months and the reputation of the band became more prominent. Because of that, they caught the attention of a jazz group from Las Vegas also called Majesty, which threatened legal action if the band would not change its name. Mike’s father told him of a new movie house in California with the name *Dream Theater*, which became the band’s new name. Having found a new name (and gained further attention), they wrote more songs and played more gigs. The record label *Mechanic Records* offered them a record deal and Dream Theater released their first album “When Dream And Day Unite” in 1989. But Mechanic did not advertise the release widely enough and so the promised success did not come about. Due to that, Dominici left the band again and Dream Theater fought to be released from their contract. They succeeded and continued to write and look for a new singer. Fortunately, *ATCO Records* offered them a seven album contract, based only on their huge reputation and a three song demo of their new material. Additionally, they received a tape by the Canadian singer James LaBrie, who was immediately flown to New York City for an audition and became Dream Theater’s new singer. Together they recorded a new album, “*Images & Words*”, in 1992, and gained huge radio airtime with the song “*Pull Me Under*”. The album was credited with gold in the States and with platin in Japan and from then on, Dream Theater’s success was inevitable.

In 1993, “*Live At The Marquee*” was released and in 1994, “*Awake*”, a new studio album. Afterwards, Kevin Moore left the band, because he grew unhappy with the musical direction the band took and wanted to work without having to compromise. Jordan Rudess caught their attention through an article in the *Keyboard Magazine*, where he was awarded “Best New Talent”. He was invited to play one gig with them that went amazingly well, but he refused to join as a permanent member because he wanted more spare time for his family. So Derek Sherinian was chosen and with him the records “*A Change Of Season*”, “*Falling Into Infinity*” and “*Once In A LIVE
3 The Band in general

“Time” were recorded. In the meantime, Petrucci, Portnoy and Rudess founded a side project called “Liquid Tension Experiment”\(^5\). All three felt that the chemistry between them was perfect, and when Dream Theater asked Jordan again to join, he accepted. For Sherinian, this meant that he had to go, but the first release with Rudess on the keyboard - “Metropolis Pt. 2 - Scenes From A Memory” - proved that the band sounded far better this way. Especially because “Falling Into Infinity” was heavily criticized by the fans, the record company gave them the freedom to work on their music without any limitations from then on, which brought about a positive result: “Scenes From A Memory” is still considered one of their best releases so far. One gig in New York was recorded for a live CD and DVD and released as “Metropolis 2000 - Scenes From New York”. They played their longest show ever (about four hours) and LaBrie ironically apologized afterwards for the “short gig”. Unfortunately, the release date for the CD was September 11th, 2001, and had a skyline of New York (including the World Trade Center) on the cover. Due to the terrorist attacks, the production was stopped and the album was rereleased with an edited cover.

In 2002, “Six Degrees Of Inner Turbulence” followed and proved again that the

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\(^5\)See list of technical terms, page 36
combination Petrucci / Rudess was irreplaceable. “Train Of Thought” was released in 2003 and showed a much heavier side of the band, whereas their latest release, “Octavarium”, went back to their progressive roots.

During all that time, Dream Theater earned the reputation of being an excellent live band. Their gigs last about 3 hours without an opening act, and the setlist is chosen individually for every town, considering the last shows on this tour as well as the last time in this town or region. This means that on the latest tours, they had to practice 8 hours and more of music by heart before hitting the road. They have also played every single released song (except two) live, whereas most bands reduce their setlists to the latest releases and some classics. This way, Dream Theater still draw a lot of people to their shows, and each year more fans are added, whereas only few are lost. So the future still looks glorious for them.

3.2 Current and former band members

3.2.1 John Petrucci - Guitars

John Petrucci was born in 1967 and first touched a guitar when he was eight. But he only started really playing at the age of 12, when his friend Kevin Moore asked him to play in a band. This time he ‘got the bug’ and started practising, until he signed in at Berklee College Of Music when he was 18. There, he met Mike Portnoy and
3 The Band in general

together with Kevin and his childhood friend John Myung, they formed the band Majesty. As the band became more time-consuming, he left Berklee to concentrate on what would become Dream Theater. He also participated in the “Liquid Tension Experiment”, and is today known as one of the best and fastest guitarists in the rock section. In 2001, he went on tour with the famous G3 project, which was recorded on CD and DVD and released in November 2005.

3.2.2 Mike Portnoy - Drums

Figure 3.4: Mike Portnoy

Mike Portnoy was born in 1967 on Long Island and started to play drums at an early age. During high school, he played in several bands until he was offered a scholarship at the famous Berklee College Of Music, where he met John Petrucci and John Myung, who convinced him to form the band Majesty with them. He, too, left Berklee when the band became more successful. He won several Awards from the “Modern Drummer”-magazine: “Best Up & Coming Talent”, “Best Progressive Rock Drummer” (11 times), “Best Recorded Performance” (5 times), “Best Clinician” (twice) and “Best Educational Video / DVD” (twice) and is the youngest drummer ever to be inducted into the Rock Drummer Hall Of Fame (2004). Besides participating in Dream Theater, he was member of the projects “Liquid Tension Experiment”.}

6See p. 36
7Source: http://www.wikipedia.org/John_Petrucci
3 The Band in general

"Experiment", "Transatlantic" and "Office Of Strategic Influence" (with Kevin Moore again).

3.2.3 John Myung - Bass Guitar and Chapman Stick

John Myung was born in 1967 on Long Island to Korean parents. Though he started playing the violin at the age of five, he changed to bass guitar later on, when asked to play in a local band. When he was 18, he signed in at Berklee College of Music together with his friend John Petrucci, with whom he formed the band Majesty. Though he was also a member of a few other projects, Dream Theater is his only real band. He is known for using every single spare minute for practising, and can seldom be seen without his bass. The fact that he is quite introverted has already brought up the ironical question of whether he can talk at all, but a few scenes on tape and DVD have proven that he actually can. He also plays the Chapman Stick.

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8See p. 37
9See p. 36
10Source: http://www.wikipedia.org/Mike_Portnoy
11See p. 35
12Source: http://www.wikipedia.org/John_Myung
3 The Band in general

3.2.4 (Charlie Dominici - Vocals)

Figure 3.6: Charlie Dominici

Charlie Dominici was a member of Dream Theater for only a very short period of time. He auditioned in 1987 and recorded the famous “Majesty Tapes” as well as the album “When Dream And Day Unite” with them, but left again in 1989, as his style of singing did not fit the way the rest wanted Dream Theater to sound. After that he was musically inactive until he rejoined Dream Theater for one gig in 2004, where he sang the encore at a show celebrating the 15th anniversary of the release of “When Dream And Day Unite”, which encouraged him to resurrect his musical career. In 2005, his first solo album was released.\(^\text{13}\)

3.2.5 James LaBrie - Vocals

Kevin James LaBrie was born in 1963 in Canada. He started singing and playing the drums as a five year old boy and was involved in several bands at high school. His first album was released with the band “Winter Rose” in 1987. In 1991, he sent a tape to Dream Theater, when he heard they were looking for a new singer. The band was impressed by his voice and paid his flight to New York for a full audition that finally convinced them. Since then he has been a permanent member of Dream

\(^{13}\)Source: http://www.wikipedia.org/Charlie_Dominici
3 The Band in general

![Figure 3.7: James LaBrie](image)

Theater. Besides this he released three solo albums under the pseudonym “Mullmuzzler” and under his own name. He also appeared on releases of several projects like “Ayreon”\(^{14}\). In 1993, he was asked to fill in for Bruce Dickinson in Iron Maiden, but obviously refused in order to stick with Dream Theater.\(^{15}\)

3.2.6 (Kevin Moore - Keys)

![Figure 3.8: Kevin Moore](image)

Kevin Moore also grew up on Long Island and knew John Petrucci from his child-

\(^{14}\)A project founded by metal guitarist Arjen Lucassen consisting of him, a fixed band and about 10 singers singing different characters in an epic story

\(^{15}\)Source: http://www.wikipedia.org/James_LaBrie
hood. When they new formed the band Majesty, they asked him to join them on the keys, an invitation which he accepted immediately. But with time he became unhappy with being involved in a band, as that did not allow him to work independently. He also disliked the musical direction Dream Theater took, so he left the band in 1994 to start a solo career as “Chroma Key”\(^\text{16}\) which sounds quite different from what he did before. In 2003, he and Mike Portnoy worked together again in the “O.S.I.”-Project. \(^\text{17}\)

**3.2.7 (Derek Sherinian - Keys)**

![Figure 3.9: Derek Sherinian](image)

Derek Sherinian released his first album in 1993 together with Alice Cooper and has released several solo albums since then. He also played on albums of artists like Yngwie Malmsteen, Pat Torpey, Jughead and others. He replaced Kevin Moore on Dream Theater’s “Awake”-Tour and on the following two albums, as Jordan Rudess refused to join as a permanent member. In 1999, when Petrucci and Portnoy had already played with Rudess in the “Liquid Tension Experiment”-Project and asked him again, Jordan agreed and Derek was fired again. Afterwards, he formed his own band, “Planet X”, with drummer Virgil Donati and guitarist Tony McAlpine.\(^\text{18}\)

\(^{16}\)See p. 35
\(^{17}\)Source: http://www.wikipedia.org/Kevin_Moore
\(^{18}\)Source: http://www.wikipedia.org/Derek_Sherinian
3 The Band in general

3.2.8 Jordan Rudess - Keys

Jordan Rudess was born in 1956 and was already considered an exceptional pianist as a child. When he was nine, he went to *Juilliard School Of Music*\(^{19}\), but grew more interested in synthesizers than classical pianos and decided to become a progressive rock keyboardist. Up to the mid-90s he had participated in several projects and released his second solo album. He then replaced Kevin Moore for several Dream Theater gigs, but still refused to join as a permanent member. Instead, he joined the “*Dixie Dregs*”\(^{20}\), formed the “*Rudess / Morgenstein Project*”\(^{21}\) and worked with John Petrucci and Mike Portnoy at the “*Liquid Tension Experiment*”. After that experience, he was asked to join Dream Theater again in 1999 and this time he accepted. Since then has helped to develop the sound the band has today\(^{22}\).

\(^{19}\) A private school for musical education

\(^{20}\) A classic rock band

\(^{21}\) A small project consisting only of Jordan Rudess and “*Dixie Dregs*”-drummer Rod Morgenstein

\(^{22}\) Source: http://www.wikipedia.org/Jordan_Rudess
3 The Band in general

3.3 Dream Theater’s style and influences

“It is fortunate that each of the band members share the same influences; Rush, Yes, The Dregs, Genesis and Frank Zappa. Many of the attributes of Dream Theater’s style, odd time signatures and experimental harmonies, are the natural result of these common influences.”

It is quite obvious how much Dream Theater’s style is derived from factors that influenced them (In what way we’ll see later on). Apart from those musicians that inspired every band member individually, the bands that influenced the band most can be separated into two categories: on the one hand there are the early progressive rock bands Rush, Yes, Kansas, Genesis, The Dixie Dregs, Pink Floyd etc. and on the other hand the modern Hard Rock / Metal bands like Black Sabbath, Iron Maiden, Metallica and Pantera.

But the musicians that inspired the individual band members have also had an important impact on the general sound. John Petrucci mentions what he calls “the Steve’s and the Al’s”: Steve Morse, Steve Vai, Steve Howe (Yes), Al DiMeola, Allan Holdsworth and Alex Lifeson (Rush). John Myung was influenced very strongly by the bass players Chris Squire (Yes), Steve Harris (Iron Maiden) and Geddy Lee (Rush). Mike Portnoy often refers to Neil Part (Rush) as having the biggest influence on him, next to drummers like Simon Phillips, John Bonham, Keith Moon, but also Ringo Starr. In fact, the Beatles had a very strong impression on Mike; he once called “Sgt. Peppers Lonely Hearts Club Band” the first Progressive Rock album in history. Jordan Rudess’s style also stemmed from his classical education, but he, too, was dragged to the Progressive Rock genre by bands like Pink Floyd and Yes, and the fact that he played with The Dixie Dregs also influenced his playing style a lot. James LaBrie speaks of Freddie Mercury and Sting, but also artists

23John Petrucci: “Rock Dicipline”, p. 4. See p. 38
24I will only name them, as focusing on every single listed artist would be far too much for this research paper. In what way they influenced the band sound in general can be seen below
25A solo artist who also played for Frank Zappa, see “G 3”, p. 36
like Metallica, Nat King Cole and even Beethoven as having influenced his singing style.

These points explain a lot when it comes to analysing their music. Dream Theater is a “Progressive Metal”-Band. This term stands for a subgenre of “Progressive Rock” with a Heavy-Metal-Sound. That means a bigger emphasis on the guitars, a lot of distortion, faster tempi and altogether a heavier sound, often achieved by tuning the guitars down and playing double-bass\textsuperscript{26} rhythms.

The Progressive Rock genre was developed in the 60s. It is a term for rock music that implements elements of other styles unusual for “normal” rock, like extended chords, odd time signatures, unusual arrangements (with only few repeats) and a big variety of moods and creative elements within one song, like sudden changes from heavy to calm passages. Because of that, Progressive Rock songs are often much longer than other pop or rock songs. Song lengths of eight minutes or more are average, some even reach 25 minutes or more. The lyrics are normally of a higher standard, too. Common topics are philosophy, mythology, human nature in general or in relation to other human beings etc. Oftentimes, the musicians also possess enormous technical abilities (and are not afraid to show them).

Dream Theater are no exception to that, as they’re well known for the rhythmic complexity of their music. Their extreme usage of odd time signatures, changing tempo and time (see Figure 3.11) and of means like polyrhythm (See list of technical terms, p. 37) even beyond the usual amount in Progressive Rock has become one of their trademarks. The underlying chord structures are quite unusual as well. Because of their knowledge of jazz harmonies (acquired from their studies), most chord progressions are based on extended chord voicings\textsuperscript{27} (See Figure 3.12). The melodies played over these chords are not only derived from the normal major- or minor scale, but are based on modes\textsuperscript{28}. This approach allows them to play and improvise over any chord progression. Combined with their usage of chromatic

\textsuperscript{26}In this case, double-bass means two bass-drum pedals. With those it is possible to play for example constant 16ths on the bass-drum

\textsuperscript{27}extended chords are those which consist of 4 or more different notes

\textsuperscript{28}See p. 36
passing tones\textsuperscript{29}, they are able to create melody lines that do sound quite melodic, though the underlying chords might be strange (see Figure 3.13). This approach - again - is actually derived from jazz music. As Mike Portnoy also studied classical composing technique when he was in Berklee, some of Dream Theater’s songs call to mind classical (often baroque) melodies. The Song “Ytse Jam”\textsuperscript{30} for example was inspired by a Bach-melody (See figure 3.14).

This fusion of different genres and influences creates the unique sound of Dream Theater. There are far more aspects concerning their style, but these are the most defining ones, which have been present from their first album until today.

\textsuperscript{29}A note that is not in the actual scale, used to build a “bridge” between two notes
\textsuperscript{30}An instrumental song from the album “When Dream And Day Unite”
3 The Band in general

Figure 3.12: “A Change Of Seasons” - notice, that only two “normal” major- or minor chords appear, as well as the key change in measure 9

Figure 3.13: A guitar run similar to one in Metropolis Pt.1, based on F#-Mixolydian (the 5th mode of Ionian, See p. 36) with chromatic passing tones. The recording on the accompanying CD contains this example first fast (as it’s supposed to be) and then slow

Figure 3.14: “Ytse Jam” - Inspired by J.S. Bach
4 “Metropolis Pt. II - Scenes From A Memory”

4.1 Interpretation

4.1.1 Short Summary of Metropolis Pt.I and Pt.II

Before I go on to present a step-by-step interpretation of “Scenes From A Memory”, I would like to summarize the stories of both works, as it helps to follow the plot far better.

Petrucci is cited on the official Dream Theater FAQ\(^1\), saying that “Metropolis Pt. 1 - The Miracle And The Sleeper” is about the story of the telepathically linked twin-brothers Romulus and Remus, the founders of ancient Rome. Metropolis is a metaphor for Rome, whereas The Miracle and The Sleeper refer to Romulus and Remus. In roman mythology, they were the sons of Mars, the god of war, and were set out on the Tiber river when they were infants. A she-wolf nursed them until they were grown up. They wanted to found a new town, but could not agree as to where it should be built. In that fight, Romulus killed Remus and named the town after himself, Rome\(^2\).

\(^1\)=Frequently Asked Questions - http://www.dtfaq.com/question/75
\(^2\)Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romulus_and_Remus
“Metropolis Pt. II - Scenes From A Memory” is about a man called Nicholas, who is haunted by visions and nightmares and therefore seeks out a therapist, who hypnotizes him and by doing so, sends him back in time to watch his former incarnation in 1928, a girl named Victoria, who’s in love with “The Sleeper”, Julian Baynes. But because she’s unhappy with this relationship (we’ll see why in the interpretation), she seeks out his brother, the senator Edward Baynes (“The Miracle”) and cries her heart out. This ends in a love affair between the two and Victoria is even more unhappy. She finally decides to stick with Julian. But Edward has already fallen in love with her and can’t stand to see Victoria and his brother together. Therefore, he kills them both, hides a fake suicide letter in Julian’s pocket and claims to have witnessed him shooting first Victoria and then himself.

Nicholas sees all that in his sessions with the therapist and so realizes that Victoria haunts him, her reincarnation, so that he gets to know the truth about her murder. When he finds out, he feels free and drives home, where the therapist suddenly appears. What happens now is not quite clear, but will be analyzed further below.

### 4.1.2 Interpretation of Metropolis Pt. II

#### 4.1.2.1 Regression

The album begins with the psychotherapist hypnotizing Nicholas for the first time. Nicholas already knows that the visions he has are from the past, as he says he goes “to rejoin the past once again”\(^3\). He feels “lost in the haze of a dream”, so one can assume that he does not yet know that the events shown in his visions are true and have actually happened. But he does know Victoria’s name already, though he’s not aware of their special link, as he greets her: “Hello Victoria, so glad to see you, my friend”

\(^3\)If not otherwise specified, the citations in this chapter are from the lyrics of the interpreted song
4.1.2.2 Overture 1928

(Instrumental)

4.1.2.3 Strange Deja Vu

Nicholas awakes again from his journey to the past and is curious about what his dreams will tell him. He “can't wait to get there again”, because every time he dreams “there’s another vivid surprise”. He senses that “chapters unfinished” await him there, a story that as of yet has just begun.

Then we’re told about what he saw in his hypnotized state. He tells of a house that he has seen before already, “familiar settings, nothing new” and he feels “a haunted chill in the air”. Inside, he sees a girl, Victoria, in a mirror, and asks her why he’s there, but she only speaks in riddles. She’s “searching for [...] a feeling that’s deep inside” her, and has “been searching for the one that nobody knows, trying to break free”. This could refer to her visiting Edward to seek comfort. She think’s she’s “not the one the sleeper thought he knew”, which clearly refers to her cheating on Julian. Nicholas also senses that “something [is] tearing at her soul”, which supports this assumption.

Back in his own mind, he wonders “why [...] this other life [is] haunting [him] every day”. He already suspects that he could be her, reborn, when he asks “Could I have lived in that other world?” and states that he’s “not the one [he] thought [he] always knew”.

4.1.2.4 Through My Words

Nicholas is now finally aware that the visions he has are from his former life: “We’re sharing one eternity living in two minds”.

23
4.1.2.5 Fatal Tragedy

Now he’s lying at home in bed and can’t stop thinking about Victoria. He meets with “an older man” who tells him that she had been killed in 1928, and that the murder was thought to be “a mystery still today”. He wants to know more, but the man leaves him with the promise that he’ll “know the truth as [his] future days unfold”.

4.1.2.6 Beyond This Life

This song reveals what the public thought had happened. Through a newspaper article, we’re told that a young girl (Victoria) was killed and that the killer “evidently [committed] suicide”. A witness (the senator) is said to have seen him kill her and then himself, because she had wanted to leave him. The DVD “Metropolis 2000 - Live Scenes From New York” helps us a lot here. About Victoria it is said: “She may have found a reason to forgive if he had only tried to change”. So obviously he did something wrong. The DVD clears this up in that it shows us Julian gambling and drinking, so he was probably an alcoholic and addicted to gambling, which made her seek out Edward. The witness is also said to have “found a switchblade on the ground”. On the DVD, Julian is shown losing that knife when fighting with his brother before the latter shoots him, but the listener is not supposed to know that yet. A note that could be a suicide letter is mentioned and cited: “I feel there’s only one thing left to do. I’d sooner take my life away than live with losing you”. This conveys the idea that Julian killed Victoria and himself, though one might wonder (if one did not yet know that the senator made this all up), why he did not write anything about killing her.

4.1.2.7 Through Her Eyes

Nicholas thinks he has found out who killed Victoria and cries for her. He definitely knows about his special link to her now, as he says he’s “learning all about [his] life by looking through her eyes”. He visits a cemetery and finds her grave there, with the
inscription “In loving memory of our child, so innocent, eyes open wide”. He decides to go back “one last time to grieve for her and say goodbye”

4.1.2.8 Home

This song functions as some kind of turning point in the story, which corresponds to the fact that it starts Act II. First, Julian tells us about the addiction that he struggles with, saying he “can't keep away from it's clutch” and “it's calling [him] back to [his] home”. A very nice point in this song is how all three characters - Julian, Edward and Nicholas - refer to their metaphorical “home”, with everyone talking about something else. Edward talks about the first time Victoria came to him to seek comfort. That he “was told there’s a new love that’s born for each one that has died” gives him the hope that she might fall in love with him, too. He tells us that he “never thought that [he] could carry on with this lie, so he’s not as ruthless as he might appear, but desperate. He talks about “her sweet temptation [that] calls [him] home” and about making her his wife. Nicholas realizes that there’s more to the story than we, the listeners, are supposed to know at this point and that “solving this mystery is everything that is a part of” him.

“It’s calling me back to my home”

4.1.2.9 The Dance Of Eternity

(Instrumental)

4.1.2.10 One Last Time

Nicholas states his doubts once again, as it “doesn't make any sense” and “in spite of the evidence there’s something still missing”. Now, Victoria is talking to someone:

4a phrase that also appears in Metropolis Pt. 1
Again, the “Metropolis 2000”-DVD helps us here, for on the commentary track Mike Portnoy tells us that this is Victoria talking to Edward in this song, and Julian talking to Victoria when the sentence reappears in “Finally Free”. So this is her breaking up with the senator, whose house Nicholas is just searching, because “it holds so many clues to [his] suspicions”. He now seems to witness the actual murder as he tells of “some woman who’s screaming” and of a man pleading for forgiveness. The DVD later shows Edward doing so before he kills Victoria. But still, the real happenings are not yet told.

4.1.2.11 The Spirit Carries On

This song is a kind of central ballad about Nicholas talking to Victoria. He has now found peace of mind, says goodbye to her and tells her that he’s not afraid of dying anymore because he knows that “after we’re gone the spirit carries on”.

4.1.2.12 Finally Free

Now we’re finally told the true circumstances of the murder. Edward confesses his deeds and explains his reasons:

“Friday evening, the blood still on my hands, to think that she would leave me now for that ungrateful man [...] he’d seem hopeless and lost with this note. They’ll buy into the words that I wrote: [...] ‘I’d take my own life before losing you’”

Victoria talks about leaving him and going back to Julian:

“I ran into Julian, said we’d get together soon [...] I’ll break free of the miracle, it’s time for him to go
The two meet “in a pathway out of view”, where they think they are alone, until suddenly there comes “a shot out of the night”. This is, of course, Edward, shooting his brother and Victoria. We can hear her screaming and Edward saying “Open your eyes, Victoria” on the CD. But their death is described optimistically, since “all their fears disappear” and “an old soul [is] exchanged for a new”. Nicholas finally knows the truth and is “finally free”. He ends the song with the sentence:

“We’ll meet again, my friend [Victoria] someday soon”

4.1.2.13 The Ending

What happens next has been subject to suspicion for quite some time. I’ve heard several interpretations of the ending and made up several myself, but there was no clear answer to what it meant until the mystery was solved on the “Metropolis 2000”-DVD. What we can hear is Nicholas driving home, opening the door, turning on the TV, pouring a glass of something, turning the TV off again and starting his record-player. Then, suddenly, the psychotherapist appears, says “Open your eyes Nicholas” (notice that Edward directed the same words to Victoria before shooting her), Nicholas screams, and that’s how the album ends.

Mike Portnoy clears this mysterious part up on the DVD’s commentary track. Just as Nicholas is Victoria’s reincarnation, the psychotherapist is Edward’s, so the latter kills her (or actually her reincarnation Nicholas) again. The band’s actual commentary on this is:

Mike Portnoy: “OK, well, this is the closing scene […]. We’re kinda spelling out what happened right there after the hypnotherapist, coming up behind Nicholas and… doing damage. You gotta watch that in freeze frame if you wanna see what really happened.”

John Petrucci: “So, they sometimes say, again, when researching the reincarnation thing, that people sometimes, ahm, what’s the word, they migrate toward each other
that might have been from the same life. So, the therapist was actually Edward reincarnated and Nicholas was Victoria reincarnated, they somehow found each other. For the worse, actually.”

Mike Portnoy: “Well, it was kinda like, the only person on earth, that really knew what happened in 1928 was the hypnotherapist. [...] I guess he was scared, that Nicholas was gonna find out.”

The interesting point is that this interpretation already appeared in several theories (also among mine) before the DVD was released. So I guess they managed to convey what they wanted to say.
4.2 Similarities between the two works

4.2.1 Lyrical Similarities

This complex story is - of course - related to “Metropolis Pt. 1” in several ways. The most obvious one is of course the story itself. In Part 1, The Miracle and The Sleeper refer to the brothers Romulus and Remus and Metropolis refers to Rome. Romulus kills Remus in a fight over the city. In Part 2, it’s Edward who kills his brother Julian in a fight over Victoria. In the CD’s booklet, the two are even described as The Miracle and The Sleeper.

Apart from that, it’s interesting how several lyrics appear in both songs. Part 1 talks about three dances:

“Death is the first dance eternal [...] Deceit is the second without end[...] The third arrives[...]

Now The Miracle and The Sleeper know that the third is love. Love is the dance of eternity”

All three “Dances” - death, deceit and love - also occur in part 2: Victoria and Julian die, Edward deceives his brother, and Victoria loves Julian. This connection is also emphasized musically: After the phrase “The third arrives” in part 1, an instrumental part begins, which sounds quite psychedelic, intoning this third dance. The Song “The Dance Of Eternity” sounds quite similar, and the title refers quite clearly to that passage.

The Song “Home” also bears resemblances to part 1, musically just as lyrically. The sentence “I was told there’s a new love that’s born for each one that has died” appears in “Home” as well as in “Metropolis Pt. 1”. The passage “Metropolis watches and thoughtfully smiles. She’s taken you to your home” from part 1 also reappears, slightly modified, in this song: “Victoria watches and thoughtfully smiles, she’s taking me to my home” (spoken by “The Miracle”, Edward) even has the same melody as the corresponding passage in part 1.
4.2.2 Musical Similarities

There are indeed far more musical similarities than lyrical ones. I will take three songs as examples.

At 1:35 in “Overture 1928”, the guitar plays the same melody that James LaBrie sings in “Metropolis Pt. 1” at 8:30 (the phrase “There must be the third and last dance...”, see Figure 4.1).

![Figure 4.1: This guitar line in Overture 1928 also appears sung in “Metropolis Pt. 1”](image)

Normally, an overture is a piece of music (in an opera for example) that introduces the main themes of a work. In this case, not only motives from “Scenes From a Memory” appear, but also from “Metropolis Pt. 1”. This way, the connection between the two works is pointed out clearly.

At 1:36 in “The Dance Of Eternity”, Petrucci plays the same guitar riff as in “Metropolis Pt. 1” at 7:00 (see Figure 4.2). As this is in the psychedelic part

![Figure 4.2: This guitar riff is played in “The Dance Of Eternity” as well as in “Metropolis Pt. 1”](image)

that symbolizes the third dance, it is a small wonder that it reappears in this song, where it emphasizes the connection between these two intonations of the dance. Both parts also contain a bass solo. Even if it’s not the same, it is still an interesting similarity.
The song “Home” also has references to part 1. I already mentioned the identical vocal line in the “Lyrical Similarities”-section. Besides that, at 4:46 of the song, the same guitar riff appears, as in “Metropolis Pt. 1” at 1:22 (See Figure 4.3).

Figure 4.3: This guitar riff is played in “Home” as well as in “Metropolis Pt. 1”

4.3 Dream Theater’s music - art or just showing off?

As I mentioned already in the introduction, Dream Theater are often accused of using their music only to “show-off”, with overlengthened soli and unnecessarily complicated riffs. I don’t agree with that. In my opinion, this interpretation of the band’s music has proven, that there is more to their music. The analyzed album in particular is a proof for the fact that they really think hard about what they play and why they play it. Not only are the lyrics far more interesting than those of most other rock bands, their music is also very supportive of those lyrics, as we’ve seen in the last section. Surely there will always be people who don’t like their music, and this is surely nothing I want to change, but I think the prejudice of Dream Theater being brags solely concentrated on playing fast soli is proven to be false.
5 Appendix

5.1 Band discography

1990 When Dream And Day Unite Their very first album with Charlie Domici on the vocals. As it did not get very much attention, the singer left the band afterwards.

1992 Images And Words Dream Theater’s breakthrough-album with new singer James LaBrie. “Pull Me Under” became a chartbreaker and a classic in Progressive Metal History.

1993 Live At The Marquee The band’s first live album which captures their amazing ability to improve their songs even after they have been recorded. Also proof that James has no difficulties in replacing Charlie on the vocals.

1994 Awake The follow up to “Images And Words” was not as successful as it was expected to be, but it contains several Dream Theater “classics”, like “The Mirror”, “Lie” or “Caught In A Web”.

1995 A Change Of Seasons This CD contains the 20-minute-song “A Change Of Seasons” that already existed for quite some time before it was recorded, as well as some cover songs recorded live.
1997 **Falling Into Infinity** This album was written under heavy pressure by the record company, who wanted them to make mass-conform MTV-hits. The album is still seen as their worst by most fans.

1998 **Once In A LIVE Time** Recorded live in France, this album mirrors again Dream Theater’s excellent live performances.

1999 **Metropolis Pt. 2 - Scenes From A Memory** The first album with Jordan Rudess, the first concept album, and the first one where Dream Theater had absolutely free hand in writing music.

2001 **Metropolis 2000 - Live Scenes From New York** Released as a CD and for the first time as a DVD, this one was recorded at a four-hour-gig at Roseland Ballroom in New York and features many acted scenes partly telling the story of “Scenes From A Memory”.

2002 **Six Degrees Of Inner Turbulence** The first two-CD-album with five songs on CD one and the 45-minute-song “Six Degrees Of Inner Turbulence” on CD two.

2003 **Train Of Thought** Dream Theater surprised their fanbase with an overall heavier sound. Still, it was quite successfull.

2004 **Live At Budokan** Their second DVD release was filmed at the famous Budokan in Tokio, containing songs from all their albums (except “Awake”).

2005 **Octavarium** Their latest release somewhat goes back to their roots, sounding more like classic progressive rock. It is a kind of counterpart to “Train Of Thought”.

### 5.2 List of footnotes

1. I will focus on the specifications of “Progressive Rock” as a genre later, in the section “Dream Theater’s style and influences”, p. 17

2. One of the best colleges for music worldwide
5 Appendix

3 Chris Collins is not listed in the section “Current and former band members”, as there are no official recordings with him and he was not of any importance for the development of the band.

4 Today, ATCO Records is called EastWest Records and is a division of ELEKTRA Records.

5 Further information concerning the albums can be found in the discography p. 32.

6 See list of technical terms, page 36.

7 See p. 36.

8 Source: http://www.wikipedia.org/John_Petrucci

9 See p. 37.

10 See p. 36.

11 Source: http://www.wikipedia.org/Mike_Portnoy

12 See p. 35.

13 Source: http://www.wikipedia.org/John_Myung

14 Source: http://www.wikipedia.org/Charlie_Dominici

15 A project founded by metal guitarist Arjen Lucassen consisting of him, a fixed band and about 10 singers singing different characters in an epic story.

16 Source: http://www.wikipedia.org/James_LaBrie

17 See p. 35.

18 Source: http://www.wikipedia.org/Kevin_Moore

19 Source: http://www.wikipedia.org/Derek_Sherinian

20 A private school for musical education.

21 A classic rock band.

22 A small project consisting only of Jordan Rudess and “Dixie Dregs”-drummer Rod Morgenstein.

23 Source: http://www.wikipedia.org/Jordan_Rudess

5 Appendix

I will only name them, as focusing on every single listed artist would be far too much for this research paper. In what way they influenced the band sound in general can be seen below.

A solo artist who also played for Frank Zappa, see “G 3”, p. 36

In this case, double-bass means two bass-drum pedals. With those it is possible to play for example constant 16ths on the bass-drum.

Extended chords are those which consist of 4 or more different notes.

See p. 36

A note that is not in the actual scale, used to build a “bridge” between two notes.

An instrumental song from the album “When Dream And Day Unite”


Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romulus_and_Remus

If not otherwise specified, the citations in this chapter are from the lyrics of the interpreted song.

a phrase that also appears in Metropolis Pt. 1

5.3 Technical Terms

Chapman Stick A musical instrument developed by Emmett Chapman. It sounds like a bass guitar, but has 12 strings and is not played by plucking them but by hitting them on a certain fret (“tapping”) with both hands.

Chroma Key is Kevin Moore’s solo project. The name probably refers to the Chromatic Scale, which is a scale consisting of all twelve tones of the western notating system (thus, a song in the “Chromatic Key” would probably contain all twelve notes). So far he has released three albums under that name.
5 Appendix

**G 3** is a project founded by the two rock-guitarists Steve Vai and Joe Satriani, who are two of the best of their kind (in fact Joe Satriani is Steve Vai’s former mentor on the guitar). They usually go on tour with a third guest guitarist (who changes from tour to tour) and play a small set of four to five songs one after another until they finally go out on stage and jam some songs together. Guests have so far been (among others) the rock guitarist Eric Johnson, neo-classic guitar hero Yngwie Malmsteen (who is often referred to as the fastest guitar player on earth), and in 2003, John Petrucci.

**Ionian** Also referred to as Major-Scale. Parentscale of all ionian modes. Has the structure 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. See *Modes*, page 36.

**Liquid Tension Experiment** is a supergroup consisting of Dream Theater’s Mike Portnoy and John Petrucci, Jordan Rudess (before he joined Dream Theater) and Tony Levin (Bass player of the Progressive Rock band Marillion). Released two albums named “LTE” and “LTE 2”.

**Modes** A mode is a scale that is created by playing one of the parentscales (Ionian, Melodic Minor, Harmonic Minor) with a different tone as the root. For example, the Dorian mode (1, 2, b3, 4, 5, 6, b7) is the second mode of Ionian. It has the same notes as Ionian, but the second degree (in C-Ionian a D) is the root. (See Figure 5.1 and Figure 5.2)

![Figure 5.1: C-Ionian](image1)

![Figure 5.2: D-Dorian](image2)

**Office Of Strategic Influence (O.S.I.)** is a project formed by progressive guitarist Jim Matheos, head of the rock band “Fates Warning”, and keyboardist Kevin.
Moore. So far they have released one self-titled album on which Mike Portnoy participated playing the drums.

**Transatlantic** is a pop-/rock band consisting (among others) of Mike Portnoy and Steve Morse, the singer of the progressive rock band “Spocks Beard”. They released two studio and two live albums until Steve left the band for religious reasons.

**Polyrhythm** Playing two or more different rhythms with different meters, time feels or sometimes even with different time signatures, at the same time. Mostly used in native african music and music based on it. See Figure 5.3.

![Figure 5.3: A polyrhythmic example](image)

### 5.4 Bibliography

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2. Information about the Band and its members

- http://www.wikipedia.org
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3. Other Sources

- Dream Theater
  “Images And Words”
  CD, 1992 ATCO Records, division of Atlantic Recording Corporation

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  “Metropolis Pt. 2: Scenes From A Memory”
  CD, 1999 Elektra Entertainment Group Inc.

- Dream Theater
  DVD, 2001 Elektra Entertainment Group, Inc.

5.5 Index of the accompanying CD

- This research paper as a PDF-File
- The album “Metropolis Pt. 2 - Scenes From A Memory” by Dream Theater as MP3-Files (128kbps) in the subfolder “MP3s”
- The Song “Metropolis Pt. 1 - The Miracle And The Sleeper” as MP3-File (128kbps) in the subfolder “MP3s”
5 Appendix

• The lyrics to all songs appearing in this research paper both as Microsoft Office Documents (.doc) and Open Office 2.0 Documents (.odt) are in the subfolder “Lyrics”

• All internet sources used as HTML-Documents are in the subfolder “Internet Sources”

• All note examples used are recorded as MP3-Files (160kbps) in the subfolder “Note Examples”

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