

# Components For Analytic Hypotheses

## I. MEDIUM

- Voices or instruments or both?
- What kinds: strings, brass, woodwinds, percussion, mixed voices, female voices, male voices?
- How many: solo, duo, trio, etc.; chamber orchestra, symphony orchestra, wind band, wind ensemble, chamber choir, symphonic choir, etc.?

## II. TEMPO, METER, RHYTHM

- Tempo
  - Connection between tempi: Similar, contrasting, fluent change, abrupt change?
  - As a factor in general mood:
    - Slow: tragic, sombre, heavy, stately, majestic, etc.
    - Fast: gay, frivolous, joyous, exuberant, humorous, etc.
  - As a factor in formal structure
  - Interruptions of tempo: fermatas, grand pause
  - Changes: *accelerandi*, *ritardandi*
- Meter
  - Metric or non-metric? (omission of bar lines?)
  - Duple, triple, compound, mixed, multimetric, polymetric or irregular?
    - Duple (2/4, 4/4, 2/2, 4/8, 8/8, etc.)
    - Triple (3/4, 3/8, 3/2, etc.)
    - Compound (6/8, 9/8, 12/8, 6/4, etc.)
    - Mixed (5/8, 7/8, 8/8, 10/, etc.)
    - Multimetric (frequent change of meter)
    - Polymetric (simultaneous use of different meters) - synchronised bar lines or staggered bar lines
  - Devices for obscuring metric scheme:
    - Omission of bar lines, typing over bar lines, accenting unusual beats of the measure (syncopation)

- Rhythm
  - Simple or complex?
  - Prominence of rhythmic element (repeated pattern or lack of it)
  - Rigid (fixed, recurrent patterns, ostinato) or flexible?
  - Triplet, dotted patterns, odd rhythmic groupings?
  - Variety of note values?
  - Rhythmic mixtures?
  - Special rhythmic events: hemiola, polyrhythms, syncopations, augmentation (rhythmic “rallentando”), diminution (rhythmic “accelerando”)

### III. MELODY

- Identify the melodic ideas: themes, secondary themes, countermelodies, motifs, etc.
- Analyse each melody or melodic idea in terms of its characteristics:
  - Progression: diatonic or chromatic; conjunct or disjunct; repeated notes; prominence of certain intervals
  - Scale basis: modal, major, minor (natural, melodic, harmonic), pentatonic, chromatic, whole-tone, other scale systems ("hungarian", pseudo-oriental, primitive, octatonic), unconventional division of the octave
  - Contour: direction (ascending, descending, combinations), contour patterns
  - Dimensions
    - Vertical: narrow or wide range?
    - Horizontal: long, continuous lines or short motivic fragments?
    - Range or Tessitura: octaves in which most of the melodic line is written
  - Emphasis on certain scale degrees: repetition, recurrence, rhythmic Stress, contour
  - Ornamentation: embellishment, coloration, figuration
  - General qualities: lyric or dramatic, cantabile or instrumental, "tunefulness" (folksong quality)?
- Identify the use and transformation of melodic material employed:
  - Repetition, modification, variation, inversion, retrograde, mirror, retrograde inversion, augmentation or diminution, tone colour variations, transposition, as *cantus firmus*, sequence, ostinato, leitmotif, *idée fixe*

## IV. HARMONY AND TONALITY

- Analyse the overall harmonic and tonal structure, identifying the key centres of phrases, sections, parts or movements.
- Identify the scale basis:
  - Modal, major, minor, whole-tone, pentatonic, pantonic, polytonal, bitonal, atonal, multitonal, microtonal, serial, twelve-tone, etc.
- Identify the harmonic content and movement in more detail
  - Cadence structure (perfect, interrupted, plagal, deceptive, non-conventional)
    - Conventional: perfect, half, plagal, deceptive
    - Non-conventional: modal, others
  - Method of modulation: fifth, third, secondary relationships, others
  - Progressions: Intervals of root movement, emphasis upon certain scale degrees, sequence, parallelism - "chord streams", elision
  - Harmonic rhythm
  - Harmonic tension (consonance versus dissonance)
  - Relationship of harmony to melody
  - Treatment of dissonance Non-chordal tones
    - Presence or absence of preparation
    - Presence or absence of resolution
  - Clarity and precision versus obscurity and vagueness of key feeling:
    - Harmonic dissonance
    - Chromaticism
    - Extensive, extended modulation
    - Suspended key feeling
    - Absence of clear tonal concept
- Chord Structures
  - Tertian (built in 3rds): triads (major, minor, diminished, augmented), 7ths, 9ths, 11ths, 13ths)
  - Non-tertian: built in 4ths, 5ths, 2nds, heterogeneous
  - Chord inversions and chord spacing
  - Chord alterations (omitted tones, added tones)
  - Polychords
  - Tone clusters and other dissonant chord structures
  - Use of added tones to create tension or influence sound (add colour)

## V. TEXTURE

- Identify the primary textures used in each movement, part, section, or phrase
  - Monophonic (one line)
  - Homophonic:
    - Chordal ("Familiar style", note-against-note)
    - Isorhythmic
    - Melody with accompaniment
    - Sustained chord accompaniment
    - Repeated chord accompaniment
    - Arpeggiated accompaniment (e.g. Alberti bass)
  - Polyphonic:
    - Imitation: strictness, interval, distance
    - Devices: inversion, retrograde, mirror, diminution, augmentation, stretto, fugato, canonic interplay, etc.
    - Free voice leading
    - Presence or absence of cantus firmus
    - Relative importance of parts
    - Degree of melodic and rhythmic independence of lines
    - Spacing of parts (crossing?)
  - Hybrid (combinations of homophonic and polyphonic factors)
  - Solo or prominent melody with polyphonic accompaniment
  - Quasi-contrapuntal style
  - Figuration
  - Special textures: antiphonal, responsorial, recitativo, etc.
- Analyse the textural densities of each movement, part, section, or phrase in relation to orchestration, harmony, and rhythm characteristics.

## VI. FORM

- Identify the overall structure of the piece to determine if its design falls into any standard recognizable form:
  - Multimovement forms (the individual movements might be individually identified as one or several other type of smaller forms):
    - Suite, symphony, concerto, *concerto grosso*, sonata, divertimento, serenade, cantata, oratorio, mass, opera, zarzuela, operetta, ballet.
  - Sectional forms:
    - Strophic/verse-repeating, binary (AB), ternary (ABA), arch-form (ABCBA), rondo (ABACADA), etc.
  - Variational forms:
    - Theme-and-variations, passacaglia, chaconne, etc.

- Developmental forms:
  - Sonata-allegro, rondo-sonata.
- Imitative forms:
  - Fugue, canzona, canon, ricercare.
- Dance forms:
  - Minuet, gigue, gavotte, bourrée, allemande, pavane.
- Free forms:
  - Sectional: toccata, prelude, fantasia, rhapsody, through-composed.
  - Based on extra-musical elements: poem, story, play, madrigal (based on secular text), motet (based on sacred text).
- Analyse the smaller components of the formal elements:
  - Identify parts, sections, subsections, periods, phrases, motifs,
  - Note and characterize transitions and development sections.
  - Analyse the articulation between the smaller components:
    - Balance between sections, symmetry, unity, continuity, contrast; number and relationship between phrases, sections, movements, etc.
    - Phraseology
    - Period structure
    - Thematic material (melody, harmony, rhythm, etc.)
- Large dimension considerations:
  - Balance and relationship between movements in dimensions, tempos, tonalities, textures, meters, dynamics, range of intensity.
  - Evolution between movements or sections: heterogeneity, homogeneity, differentiation, specialization.

## VII. SOUND

- Examine the orchestration carefully:
  - Identify each family of instruments used
  - Note every instrument choir, sub-choir, or section
  - Note the division of parts and doubling of parts
- Notice particular aspects of the use of the instruments:
  - Special effects:
    - Sutes, flutter tongue, trills, tremolo, pizzicato, glissando, pitch bending, bells in the air, multiphonics, harmonics, keystrokes, half-valve, etc.
    - Extreme register scoring (high or low tessituras)
    - Unusual unison or octave doublings

Idiomatic or non-idiomatic use of specific instruments  
Composite tone colours (timbre mixing)  
Unusual instrumental scoring combinations or mix of effects  
Contrasting tone colours:  
Vertical: melody to accompaniment  
Horizontal: section to section, phrase to phrase  
The use of the percussion instruments for rhythm accents, as an independent orchestral section, for coloristic effects, for dynamic reinforcement, etc.

## VIII. DYNAMICS

- Analyse the dynamic amplitude of a work, movement or section (loudest and softest dynamics)
- Identify climaxes, sub-climaxes, and low points
- Examine the dynamic curve of large sections, subsections, periods, phrases.
- Study the balances within each phrase (vertical dynamics)
- Evaluate dynamics between primary or secondary (subordinate) material
- Note the instrument tessituras and dynamics (register strength or weakness)
- Look into the composer's use of dynamic effects:

Terrace dynamics

Extremely loud or soft dynamics

Polydynamics (simultaneous use of contrasting dynamics)

Dynamic accent (fp, sf, sfz, sfp)

Orchestrated crescendo or diminuendo

Subtle dynamic nuances

Subito changes of dynamics

Extremely quick or slow crescendos or diminuendos

Notice the specificity and frequency with which the composer indicates dynamic changes as well as crescendi and decrescendi. Observe whether or not specific dynamic markings are indicated at the beginning and ending of crescendi and decrescendi.

## IX. TEXT

- Identify the type of text associated to the musical work and analyse it:
  - Poem, prose, libretto, short-story, etc.
  - Language and translation, if needed
  - Vocabulary used and style of writing

- Analyse the function, use, and influence of the text in the music:

Choice of timbre based on text

Exploitation of word-sound for mood and texture

Word evocation of chord and key change

Clarification of contrapuntal lines by emphasis on words

Influence of word and sentence intonation on musical line

Influence of word rhythms on surface rhythms and poetic meter on musical meter

Degree of adherence of musical form to text form (line, stanza, refrain, da capo, etc.)

Concinnity or conflict in mood changes, fluctuations of intensity, location of climax, degree of movement, etc.

