

A guideline for analysis: SHMRTFO

SOUND. Analyze for aspects of *sound* in terms of:

1. Medium: for what is the piece written? Voices or instruments or both? What kinds? How many? Is it "unusual" in any way?
2. Timbre: instrumentation, coloristic effects and devices (i.e., mutes, harmonics, and so forth)
3. Range and tessitura
4. Dynamics
5. The *absence* of sound — is *silence* an important aspect of the work?

HARMONY AND TONAL STRUCTURE. Analyze for *harmony* and *tonal structure* in terms of:

1. Scale basis (identifiable pitch collections encountered, if present)
2. Is it chordal? If so, then is it mostly:
 - a. tertian?
 - b. extended tertian chords?
 - c. alterations of tertian chords?
 - d. chords with added tones?
 - e. quartal?
 - f. quintal/other?If the harmony is not chordal, then what is it?
3. Cadence types (how cadences are created: common-practice harmony; dynamics; tempo; range; stasis; silence)
4. Tonality / atonality (no readily identified pitch center) / modality / polytonality / other?
5. Key scheme; key relationships (near-related, chromatic-third-related, distant-related, other)
6. Modulation (location, method)
7. How is the pitch center established? [Common-practice harmony, reiteration (ostinato, pedal, other forms of recurrence), voice leading, register, and so forth]
8. Relationships (functional, non-functional; progression: intervals of root movement)
9. Diatonic or chromatic harmony
10. Harmonic rhythm

MELODY. Analyze for aspects of *melody* in terms of:

1. Prominence
2. Character (lyrical or dramatic, etc.)
3. Dimensions: vertical (narrow or wide range); horizontal (long lines or brief motivic fragments)
4. Intervallic structure / type of motion (conjunct or disjunct or mixed)
5. Contour (arch, inverted arch, ascending, descending, axial, etc.)
6. Ornamentation (embellishments, figurations, diminution, etc.)
7. Pitch organization: diatonic or chromatic, scales, pitch class sets, tone rows, motives, etc.
8. Nonchord tones: numerous or very few? used motivically? etc.
9. Motivic structure and techniques: variation, expansion, fragmentation and sequence, contraction

RHYTHM. Analyze for aspects of *rhythm* in terms of:

1. Meter: is it present or not?
2. Metric grouping(s): duple, triple, quadruple, asymmetric, changing, polymeter, non-metric, etc.
3. Type of beat division: simple, compound, irregular
4. Tempo (fast / slow, important changes and their affect on design, etc.)
5. Rhythmic patterns: motives, repetition, devices used (hemiola, syncopation, etc.); rigid or flexible?

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TEXTURE. Analyze for aspects of *texture* in terms of:

1. Monophonic (one line)
2. Homophonic
 - Chordal: familiar style, note-against-note (chorale)
 - Melody with accompaniment: sustained chord, repeated chord, arpeggio, Alberti bass, etc.
3. Polyphonic (contrapuntal)
 - Number of parts
 - Spacing of parts
 - Relative importance of parts
 - Degree of melodic and rhythmic independence of parts
 - Imitation (strictness, interval, temporal distance)
 - Dialogue (give and take, call and response)
4. Heterophonic
5. Location of important changes
6. Special devices: canon, fugue, stretto
7. Stratified or layered texture

FORMAL DESIGN. Analyze for aspects of *formal design* in terms of:

1. Smaller structures: phrase form, number of phrases, relationships (aba, abb, antecedent and consequent phrases, period structure, etc.)
2. Larger structures: sections, movements, etc.
3. Repetitive or non-repetitive structure?
 - a. repetitive — sectional, binary, ternary, rondo
 - b. non-repetitive — variational, developmental, through composed, etc.
4. **How all other parameters (SHMRT, and O) relate to and delineate formal design:**
 - a. significant organizational factors
 - b. developmental (growth) processes
 - c. aspects of closure and aspects of continuation
5. Temporal linearity (teleology, or goal-directedness): is it present (growth, drama) or not (stasis, moment form)?

OTHER aspects to consider:

1. Text: language; style of text setting — syllabic, melismatic; its impact on melody, harmony
2. Title? meaning?
3. Programmatic considerations
4. When was the piece written?
 - a. its relationship to other pieces written by the same composer
 - b. its relationship to pieces written by other composers
 - c. its relationship to other pieces within the same general style and/or genre

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