

*Music in Context**Six Points of Musical Style (plus one)**Using Elements of Style as a Guide to Analysis*

After identifying a work's important features (elements of style) look at the work again as a whole and discover how the elements interact to create the composer's desired outcome.

When analysing music it is extremely important to have access to recordings of the works and listen to them regularly.

Check Points*Melody*

- does it move in leaps or steps?
- is the approximate range, small or large?
- are the phrases balanced or uneven?
- are there clear cut cadence points?
- is it motivic or lyrical?
- is there frequent and consistent use of sequence?

Harmony/Tonality

- is it diatonic, modal, atonal, polytonal?
- does it use another scale or tonal system?
- does it use chromatic chords
- treatment and resolution of dissonance, any unresolved dissonance?
- clear cadence points, consistent harmonic rhythm (when does the harmony change?)

Rhythm/Meter

- is it metric (clear time signature) or free flowing?
- does it use speech rhythms (Gregorian chant or recitative)?
- are there contrasts eg. 3 against 2?
- are there irregular meters time changes?
- are the note values all very similar or constantly changing?
- does the rhythm develop or is it made up of repeated motives?
- are the phrases balanced or uneven?

Timbered/Dynamics

- what instruments and/or voices are used? how are they combined?
- are there few or many?
- how is the sound built up?
- is the use of dynamics unexpected or logical?
- how does sound intensity (loudness or softness) contribute to the music?

Texture

- does one texture predominate (polyphonic, homophonic, monophonic) or is it a mixture? i.e multi layered.
- is it thick and heavy or light, clear and transparent?

Form

- is the structure clear? eg. binary ternary rondo, sonata, theme and variation etc.
- is it free flowing, episodic, through composed or cyclical? (all useful terms for 'it goes on until it stops with some repeats')
- is it determined by factors outside the music? eg. words or story

Underlying Ethos (please note: none of these points are mutually exclusive)

- why was it written? Is it a means of personal creative expression or a response to financial need (or both) or the composer just doing a job?
- what is its function? Church, concert, theatre, commission?
- is the emotional content personal or universal?

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