

Simplifying Music Analysis

Outcome 3 Music Language

Presented by Deborah Smith,
The Ian Potter Southbank Centre ,
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Why analyse? Section A

"Music performance involves the synthesis of knowledge of the music work/s being performed including their structure, style, context and expressive qualities..... to present musically engaging performances". VCE Music 2017-2021 Study Design page 20

To be able to make informed choices about performance interpretation based on the study of the performances of others.

Link with works being prepared for performance by students – e.g. use works being prepared for performance by students for analysis.

The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (**VCAA**) is the **ONLY** official source for advice on this examination. Teachers should use this practice examination in the context of the information, guidelines and parameters provided by the **VCAA**.

In particular, teachers should only use the information given by the **VCAA** when advising students of terminology for use in answering questions, question format and wording, possible question types etc.

The following documents (published online at www.vcaa.vic.edu.au) have been referred to extensively in the preparation of this workshop:

- "VCE Music Advice for Teachers" 2017-2021 pages 27 to 29, 34 to 35 and 42 to 44, April 2017
- VCE Music performance 2017-2021 "School-based assessment report" about the 2017 Unit 3, Outcome 3 SAC
- "VCE Music Study Design" 2017 2021 "Music Language Chart" pages 20 to 23, January 2018
- "VCE Music Study Design" 2017 2021 pages 36 to 38, January 2018
- VCE Music performance 2017-2021 "Sample Aural and written examination", Version 3 – January 2018
- VCE Music performance 2017-2021 "Aural and written examination - End of year Examination specifications", Version 3 - January 2018

These documents give parameters and content for each question type. Teachers and students should be fully aware of this information.

The VCE Report for Teachers, based on previous VCE Aural and Written Examinations, also contains useful advice on how to approach and answer questions. A list of official resources is available on the **VCAA** website.

It is vital that before setting any assessment tasks, teachers study all information given by the VCAA in relation to the task being set so as not to disadvantage their students.

From the VCAA and the DSMusic websites: <https://zurl.co/KOUO>

Decoding Sound Page 15:

Chapter 2

Expressive Outcomes

(Character, Mood, Feeling)

Music is an art form which can evoke emotion, feeling, mood, atmosphere and character. As an audience listening to music, we can "feel" emotions or recognise and identify a character or mood embedded in the music we are listening to.

This character, feeling or mood portrayed by a musical work can be referred to as the expressive outcome.

The 1st movement (Adagio Sostenuto) of Ludwig Van Beethoven's "Piano Sonata No. 14 in C# minor", popularly known as the *Moonlight Sonata*, is famous for having a powerful impact on listeners.

The expressive outcomes of this piece of music can be described as funereal, sombre and brooding but it could equally be described as romantic and dreamy.

Express
To effectively communicate thoughts and feelings

Outcome
The end result

Expressive Outcomes
The character, feeling or mood portrayed by a particular performance of a music work

How to Create a Specific Expressive Outcome in Performance

The diagram illustrates a process for creating a specific expressive outcome in performance. It consists of three rows, each representing a stage. Each row starts with a circle labeled 'Possible Expressive Outcomes', followed by three circles labeled 'Outcome'. Lines connect the 'Possible Expressive Outcomes' circle to the first 'Outcome' circle, and then between the 'Outcome' circles. To the right of each row is a speaker icon, indicating audio content for each stage.

Excerpt 1: ***Send in the Clowns***
Faultline, Lisa Hannigan

Excerpt 2: ***Send in the Clowns***
Judi Dench - **Live**

Excerpt 3: ***Send in the Clowns***
Portfolio, Grace Jones

Decoding Sound Pages 140 & 141:

Vocabulary for describing the Expressive Outcome

Angry character words

Aggressive
Assertive
Belligerent
Confronting
Demonic
Determined
Enraged
Fierce
Fiery
Forceful
Frustrated
Hostile
Intense
Irritated
Malevolent
Menacing
Rebellious
Restless
Tense
Terrifying
Threatening
Volatile

Scared character words

Anxious
Brooding
Chaotic
Dark
Disconcerting
Eerie
Foreboding
Frantic
Frightening
Haunting
Heavy
Menacing
Mysterious
Mystical
Ominous
Oppressive
Overwhelming
Scary
Sinister
Suffocating
Suspenseful
Tentative
Unnerving
Unsettled

Sad character words

Bleak
Desolate
Dreary
Dull
Elegiac
Funereal
Gloomy
Lonely
Lugubrious
Melancholic
Mournful
Restrained
Sincere
Sorrowful
Sombre
Subdued
Wistful
Yearning

Vocabulary for describing the Expressive Outcome cont.

Relaxed character words

Benevolent
Benign
Calm
Content
Delightful
Dreamy/Dream-like
Easy-going
Elegant
Gentle
Graceful
Innocent
Laid-back
Meditative
Mellow
Peaceful
Relaxed
Reserved
Romantic
Serene
Tender
Tranquil

Happy character words

Amiable
Amusing
Blissful
Boisterous
Cheerful
Earnest
Ebullient
Ecstatic
Effervescent
Elated
Euphoric
Excited
Friendly
Humorous
Idyllic
Jaunty
Jovial
Joyous
Light-hearted
Lively
Perky
Playful
Upbeat
Uplifting
Vibrant
Witty

Confident character words

Bold
Bombastic
Celebratory
Commanding
Confident
Courageous
Dignified
Dramatic
Energetic
Festive
Grandiose
Heroic
Jubilant
Majestic
Militaristic
Monumental
Passionate
Patriotic
Powerful
Regal
Soaring
Stately
Strong
Triumphant
Victorious

How to Create Specific Expressive Outcomes

<https://open.spotify.com/>

The diagram consists of three rows. Each row starts with a dark green circle containing the text 'Possible Expressive Outcomes'. This circle is connected by a thin line to a series of three light green circles, each containing the text 'Outcome'. To the right of each row is a speaker icon with sound waves, indicating audio content.

Excerpt 1: ***Bach Violin Partita No 2 in D Minor, BWV 1004 Chaconne*** Bach Solo Violin Sonatas, Itzhak Perlman

Excerpt 2: ***Bach Violin Partita No 2 in D Minor, BWV 1004 Chaconne*** Mari, Mari Samuelsen

Excerpt 3: ***Bach Violin Partita No 2 in D Minor, BWV 1004 Chaconne*** Bach Solo Violin Sonata & Partitas, Christian Tetzlaff

Other resources on the web:

How Music Alters Your Mood: <https://www.musical-u.com/learn/how-music-alters-your-mood/>

What is Tone Color? (Timbre): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5tGEDgkZIC8&feature=youtu.be>

What is Texture – Blend and Balance: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QoLWvT1iMoA>

Decoding Sound Chapters 1 & 3:

Chapter 3

The Elements in Depth

Being able to discuss the elements of music, and in particular the way a performer, ensemble or conductor interprets the expressive elements of music, is one of the first steps to making important interpretive decisions in our own performances.

Learning how to identify and describe the smallest aspects of a musical performance allows us to step back from the emotion and determine how it is achieved. Emotion, and the notion of “musicality” are very much intertwined, and are achieved not by chance or some innate skill, but by the careful planning of how to execute the expressive elements.

This Chapter examines each of the expressive elements in detail, within the context of how they can be manipulated to create different expressive outcomes.

Chapter 1

The Elements of Music


When we describe music, we divide it into its component parts, which are called elements. These include duration – beat, rhythm, metre and tempo; pitch – melody, harmony and tonality; dynamics; articulation; structure; tone colour; texture – balance of music lines and blend of instrumental voices; phrasing; instrumentation; ornamentation; embellishment and improvisation.

Breaking music down into these parts allows a discussion of the many different features that are included in compositions and performances. Music sounds the way it does because of how the elements are manipulated by the composer and the performer.

Element
A part of something

Quick Element Analysis of Music Activities

Identify and describe the **TEMPO** in this excerpt.



Tempo

Accelerando
A gradual increase of speed


Adagio
Slow

Allegretto
Moderately fast; brisk; quick

Allegro
Fast; brisk; quick

Andante
Moderately slow; walking pace

BPM
Beats per minute

Caesura
A short, total silence


Largo
Very slow and broad

Meno Mosso
Performed less quickly

Moderato
At a moderate speed

Piu Mosso
Performed more quickly

Presto
Very quick; very fast

Ritardando; Rallentando
A gradual decrease of speed

Ritenuo
A sudden decrease of speed

Rubato
A subtle, expressive, temporary slowing or quickening of the tempo


Stringendo
A sudden, temporary quickening of the tempo, driving forward

Vivace
Lively; fast

Waltz
A comfortable three metre tempo with a strongly accented first beat of each bar

Non-music specific words to describe tempo:


- Brisk
- Changing
- Consistent
- Even
- Fast
- Faster
- Inconsistent
- Lively
- Moderate
- Plodding
- Quick
- Rapid
- Slow
- Slower
- Steady



Decoding Sound Pages 11 & 127

Quick Element Analysis of Music Activities


Identify and describe the **DYNAMICS** in this excerpt.



Non-music specific words to describe dynamics:

- Changing
- Consistent
- Inconsistent
- Loud
- Louder
- Silence
- Soft
- Softer

Dynamics

Caesura
A short, total silence


Crescendo (cresc.)
Gradually increasing in volume

Decrescendo (decresc.)
Diminuendo (dim.)
Gradually decreasing in volume

Dynamic Swell
Crescendo followed by a decrescendo and vice versa

Forte (f)
Loudly

Fortissimo (ff)
Very loudly

Forte-Piano (fp)
To play a single note or passage loudly and then immediately softer

Forte-Piano Crescendo
A dramatic sound which starts loudly, then drops immediately to soft, then grows in volume gradually. Can be on a single long note or a short passage

Mezzo-Piano (mp)
Moderately softly

Mezzo-Forte (mf)
Moderately loudly

Morendo
Dying away, often appears at the end of a piece

Niente
Literally "nothing", often appears at the end of a decrescendo

Pianissimo (pp)
Very softly


Piano (p)
Softly

Rinforzando (rfz)
An increased accent on notes, to "reinforce"

Sforzando (sfz)
A strong accent on a single note, to play it with force

Subito
Suddenly or at once e.g. *subito piano* - immediately play softly

Terraced Dynamics
Sections of loud followed by sections of soft and vice versa



Decoding Sound Pages 11 & 130

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Quick Element Analysis of Music Activities

Identify and describe the **ARTICULATION** in this excerpt.



finger, thumb or plectrum across the strings rapidly	Tonguing Patterns Patterns that have a combination of slurring and tonguing, such as two slurred, two tongued	Non-music specific words to describe: attack Crisp Emerging Explosive Gentle Hammered Hard Heavy Light Muffled Pattering Precise Sharp Splat Spiky Strong Subtle Thudding attack and decay Abrupt Blurred Clipped Gradual Organic Prolonged Short Sliding decay (fade/release) Echoing Fading Interrupted Lingering Natural
Sul Ponticello Pluck or bow the strings very near the bridge		
Sul Tasto Pluck or bow the strings very near the fingerboard	Percussion Instrument Techniques	
Tapping Using the fingers of both hands to "tap" on the string to cause it to sound	Choke A cymbal is struck with a mallet and then immediately dampened with the hand.	
Up Bow Play the note with an up bow	Dampen/Muffle Play the instrument with either the hand or a dampening device pressed against it to muffle the sound	
	Mallets/Sticks The type of mallet/sticks used affects the articulation of the notes. Types include: soft, medium, hard, brushes, metal, plastic, rubber, wood, wool	
Wind Instrument Techniques	Rimshot Hit the head and the rim of the drum simultaneously	
Double Tonguing An alternating pattern of tonguing using a forward stroke followed by a backward stroke. Often described as "ta-ka-ta-ka"	Rolls Play a rapid series of repeated notes as fast as possible	
Flutter Tonguing Rolling the tongue while blowing a note	Scrape/Scratch Play the instrument with a scratching or scraping motion	
Slur Play the notes connected with the same breath and no tonguing		
Tonguing Beginning, interrupting or stopping the flow of sound with the tongue against the mouthpiece or reed		

Decoding Sound Pages 11 & 133

Quick Element Analysis of Music Activities

Identify and describe the **TONE COLOUR** in this excerpt.

Decoding Sound Pages 11, 134 & 135



Breathy tone colour words: Airy Aspirate Breathy Croaky Feathery Hoarse Husky Muffled Muted Smoky Throaty Whispering Wheezing	Bright tone colour words: Bright Bell like Brassy Bright Brilliant Chiming Clarion Clear Delicate Glittering Jingling Light Pure Reedy Ringing Shimmering Silvery Sweet Tinkling Thin	Harsh tone colour words: Abrasive Buzzing Clanging Creaking Distorted Forced Growling Gravelly Gruff Harsh Metallic Percussive Pinched Pounding Raucous Raspy Rattling Raw Scraping Scratchy Screeching Strident Twangy	Shrill tone colour words: Blasting Blaring Cutting Metallic Nasal Penetrating Piercing Screaming Squeaky Shrill Tinny	Mellow tone colour words: Bellowing Booming Blurry Dark Dense Dry Dull Echoing Flat Full Haunting Heavy Hollow Leadens Lush Mellow Muddy Muted Pure Resonant Reverberant Rich Rumbling Sonorous Smooth Thick Warm	Other: Acoustic Blended Disparate Eerie Electronic Homogenous Synthesised
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Quick Element Analysis of Music Activities

Identify and describe the **Balance of Music lines and Blend of Instrumental Voices** in this excerpt.

Decoding Sound Pages 11 & 137



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- Non-music specific words to describe texture:
- Balanced
 - Blended
 - Dense
 - Discernible
 - Harmonious
 - Impenetrable
 - Inconspicuous
 - Layer
 - Obvious
 - Opaque
 - Projection
 - Prominent
 - Sparse
 - Subtle
 - Thick
 - Thin
 - Translucent
 - Understated
 - Unified
 - Unobtrusive

Texture

Accompaniment
A musical layer that provides rhythmic and/or harmonic support or background for other musical layers

Antiphonic
Call (solo) and response (group) or two groups performing alternatively

Background
The music lines that are less prominent and provide a backdrop or foundation for the melody or the prominent line

Balance
How well the music lines are balanced in the texture

Blend
How well the instrumental voices merge together effectively

Emerging lines
Individual instruments or voices emerge from a dense texture to take a foreground role and then disappear again into the background

Foreground
The musical line(s) that is the most prominent



Heterophonic
The simultaneous performance of the same melodic line, with slight individual variations, by two or more performers

Homophonic
Melody and accompaniment

Interlocking
Two or more layers with alternating rhythms that fit together

Melody
The tune or the way pitch is organised horizontally

Monophonic
Solo melody with no accompaniment

Polyphonic
Two (or more) independent melodies

Da Pacem (Give peace)



1. Da pa - cem, Do - mi - ne,
2. da pa - cem, Do - mi - ne in di -
e - bus nos - tris.

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Tempo

What does it do to the Expressive Outcome

Angry character words	Scared character words	Sad character words	Relaxed character words	Happy character words	Confident character words
Aggressive	Anxious	Bleak	Benevolent	Amiable	Bold
Assertive	Brooding	Desolate	Benign	Amusing	Bombastic
Belligerent	Chaotic	Despair	Calm	Blissful	Celebratory
Confronting	Dark	Dull	Content	Boisterous	Commanding
Demonic	Disconcerting	Elegiac	Delightful	Cheerful	Confident
Determined	Eerie	Funereal	Dreamy/Dream-like	Earnest	Courageous
Enraged	Foreboding	Gloomy	Easy-going	Ebullient	Dignified
Fierce	Frantic	Lonely	Elegant	Ecstatic	Dramatic
Fiercy	Frightening	Lugubrious	Gentle	Effervescent	Energetic
Forceful	Haunting	Melancholic	Graceful	Elated	Festive
Frustrated	Heavy	Mournful	Innocent	Euphoric	Grandiose
Hostile	Menacing	Restrained	Laid-back	Excited	Heroic
Intense	Mysterious	Sincere	Meditative	Friendly	Jubilant
Irritated	Mystical	Sorrowful	Mellow	Humorous	Majestic
Malevolent	Ominous	Sombre	Peaceful	Idyllic	Militaristic
Menacing	Oppressive	Subdued	Relaxed	Jaunty	Monumental
Rebellious	Overwhelming	Wistful	Reserved	Jovial	Passionate
Restless	Scary	Yearning	Romantic	Joyous	Patriotic
Tense	Sinister		Serene	Light-hearted	Powerful
Terrifying	Suffocating		Tender	Lively	Regal
Threatening	Suspenseful		Tranquil	Perky	Soaring
Volatile	Tentative			Playful	Stately
	Unnerving			Upbeat	Strong
	Unsettled			Uplifting	Triumphant
				Vibrant	Victorious
				Witty	

Tempo

Accelerando	A gradual increase of speed
Adagio	Slow
Allegretto	Moderately fast; brisk; quick
Allegro	Fast; brisk; quick
Andante	Moderately slow; walking pace
BPM	Beats per minute
Caesura	A short, total silence
Largo	Very slow and broad
Meno Mosso	Performed less quickly
Moderato	At a moderate speed

Moderato	At a moderate speed
Piu Mosso	Performed more quickly
Presto	Very quick; very fast
Ritardando; Rallentando	A gradual decrease of speed
Ritenuo	A sudden decrease of speed
Rubato	A subtle, expressive, temporary slowing or quickening of the tempo
Stringendo	A sudden, temporary quickening of the tempo, driving forward
Vivace	Lively; fast
Waltz	A common tempo for waltzes

Decoding
 Sound
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How to Compare Performances

Possible Expressive Outcomes

Treatment of Element

Treatment of Element

Treatment of Element

Possible Expressive Outcomes

Treatment of Element

Treatment of Element

Treatment of Element

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Excerpt 1: *J S Bach Air on a G String* Light Classical Piano, Music Lab Collective

Excerpt 2: *Air on a G String* Light Classic, Hasuer

