



Music Language
Online Course

⋮ Handbook

Analysis

by Deborah Smith



This document is for use **ONLY** by participants in the
Music Language Online Course

Hyperlinks: All blue underlined text indicates a clickable link.

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What is the Music Language Online Course (MLOC)

The Music Language Online Course covers a variety of concepts. You do this step-by-step with Deb Smith - unpacking the fundamentals, applying the skills and learning strategies for further practice. Aside from the bonus live Analysis Tutorials with Deb via Zoom, you can do the MLOC in your own time.

Work through the material at a pace that suits you, watch and re-watch the Teaching Videos as required and use the Concept Handbooks to steadily build your understanding. Connect with other Online Course participants to support one another, ask questions and progress together via the [MLOC Facebook Group](#).

Everything moves in sequence, little by little, to make sure you really know all about these Aural, Theory and Analysis areas.

MLOC - Analysis

This resource has been designed to help music students and teachers:

- understand the language of music in a deep and meaningful way
- listen to others perform in a conscious and knowledgeable way
- understand how the expressive elements of Music can be manipulated to create specific expressive outcomes
- use this knowledge to become better, more engaging performers

Although this course can be undertaken as a standalone module, it has been designed to compliment, and work with, the [Decoding Sound: Music Analysis for the Secondary School](#) book.

Please do not share any videos or downloadable material (including this handbook) from the Music Language Online Course with others unless they have purchased a copy as well. They can purchase their own MLOC at the DSMusic [website](#).

Disclaimer

This resource has been designed to assist students and teachers involved with upper secondary/tertiary level music literacy. Though it can be used to prepare for the VCE Music Performance Aural & Written Examination (and equivalent), please note that the author and creator of the Music Language Online Course - Deborah Smith - is not officially associated with any external assessment authority.

The relevant external assessment authority (as per the list on [page 2](#)) is the official source for clarification, advice and formal parameters for structured music language assessment and examinations.

Disclaimer continued.

[Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority](#)

[New South Wales Education Standards Authority](#)

[South Australian Certificate of Education](#)

[Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards & Certification](#)

[Queensland Curriculum & Assessment Authority](#)

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The content, strategies and supporting material provided for the Music Language Online Course should be used in the context of the information, guidelines and parameters provided by the relevant external assessment authority.

Students and teachers involved with upper secondary/tertiary level music literacy or preparing for the VCE Music Performance Aural & Written Examination (and equivalent), should follow parameters set by the relevant external assessment authority.

This also applies to studying terminology for use in answering questions as well as the possible question format, type and wording.

Access Expiry

You can access all of this material at your leisure until it expires 730 days after the Digital Product Key was activated.

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Don't forget, you can also email Deb at deborah@dsmusic.com.au for further help and advice.

Analysis - Prerequisite Learning

Watch these two SHORT videos BEFORE watching ANY of the Analysis Videos



Begin your learning with the “Analysis – The Expressive Outcome” Video then BEFORE you move on to “Analysis - The Expressive Elements - Teaching Video 1: Tempo”

- watch **The Expressive Outcome Teaching Video**;
- if you are not COMPLETELY confident in your knowledge about the content taught in these two teaching videos, study all the information in Chapter 2 of [Decoding Sound](#) (Chapter 1 will help as well);
- re-do all analysis exercises completed in **The Expressive Outcome Teaching Video** AND complete all the “Your Turn” questions in Chapter 2 of [Decoding Sound](#);
- check all your answers to the “Your Turn” questions in Chapter 2 of [Decoding Sound](#) by studying the Sample Answers in the [Decoding Sound Digital Resources Library](#) on the [DSMusic Website](#).

AFTER each of the “Analysis - The Expressive Elements - Teaching Videos 1 to 7”

- if you are not COMPLETELY confident in your knowledge about the content taught in each teaching video, study all the relevant information (related to the expressive elements covered in the particular teaching video) in Chapters 1 and 3 of [Decoding Sound](#);
- re-do all analysis exercises completed in the relevant **Expressive Elements Teaching Video** AND complete all the “Your Turn” questions in the relevant sections of Chapters 1 and 3 of [Decoding Sound](#);
- check all your answers to the “Your Turn” questions in Chapters 1 and 3 of [Decoding Sound](#) by studying the Sample Answers on the [Decoding Sound Digital Resources Library](#) on the [DSMusic Website](#).

Analysis - Where To Find More.

Where Concepts are Taught in the [Decoding Sound: Music Analysis for the Secondary School books](#).

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Analysis - Where To Find More continued.

Where Concepts are Taught in the [Decoding Sound: Music Analysis for the Secondary School books](#) continued.

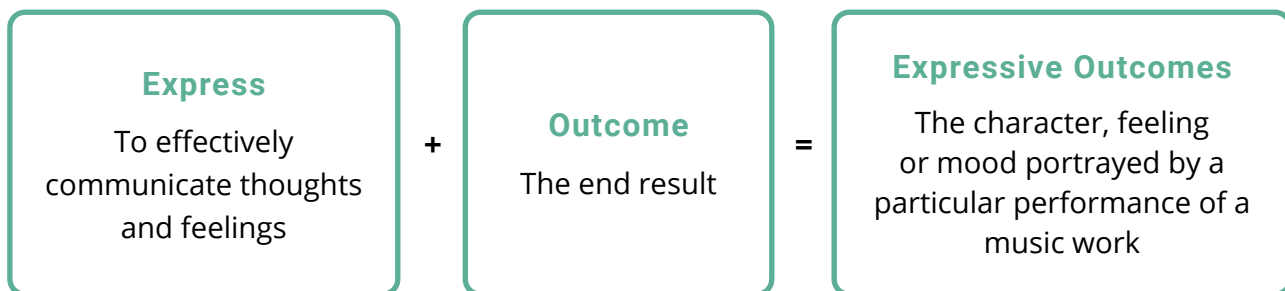
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Expressive Outcomes

Decoding Sound, pages 15 to 26

The character, feeling or mood portrayed by a particular performance of a work.



How to describe the expressive outcome?

Decoding Sound, pages 15 to 26 & 140 to 141

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 word lists on [page 8](#) (from pages 140 & 141 of [Decoding Sound](#)) can help you choose words to use when describing the Expressive Outcome. However, the BEST word lists are those you create yourself ([see page 10](#)).

Listen to this first version of [Another One Bites the Dust performed by Queen](#) (0'00" to 0'57") and use at least three words to describe the expressive outcome.

Vocabulary for describing the Expressive Outcome

Full list can be found in Decoding Sound, page 140

Angry character words

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

Scared character words

Anxious
Brooding
Chaotic
Dark
Disconcerting
Eerie
Foreboding
Frantic
Frightening
Haunting
Menacing
Mysterious
Mystical
Ominous
Oppressive
Overwhelming
Scary
Sinister

Sad character words

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

Full list can be found in Decoding Sound, page 141

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

Happy character words

Amiable
Amusing
Blissful
Boisterous
Cheerful
Earnest
Ebullient
Ecstatic
Effervescent
Elated
Euphoric
Excited
Friendly
Humorous
Idyllic
Jaunty
Jovial
Joyous
Light-hearted
Lively

Confident character words

Bold
Bombastic
Celebratory
Commanding
Confident
Courageous
Dignified
Dramatic
Energetic
Festive
Grandiose
Heroic
Jubilant
Majestic
Militaristic
Monumental
Passionate
Patriotic
Powerful

Your Turn - Vocabulary for describing the Expressive Outcome

Choose words from the previous lists that resonate with you (that you understand and can imagine using comfortably) or come up with others that work better for you. Use the category headings given or come up with your own that suit the way you think better. Aim to know at least four to five words for each category and include any other words not in these lists if you prefer them.

Listen to the [Mozart - Piano Sonata No. 11 in A Major, K. 331 Movement 3: Rondo Alla turca](#) (0'00" to 0'29") and use at least three words to describe the expressive outcome.

Listen to [Rockin' In Rhythm Performed by Ella Fitzgerald](#) (0'00" to 0'35") and use at least three words to describe the expressive outcome.

Listen to [Strong Enough Performed by Cher](#) (0'00" to 0'35") and use at least three words to describe the expressive outcome.

Listen to [Bad Guy Performed by Billie Eilish](#) (0'00" to 0'41") and use at least three words to describe the expressive outcome.

Listen to [That's On Me Performed by Jake Owen](#) (0'00" to 0'32") and use at least three words to describe the expressive outcome.

The Expressive Elements of Music

Decoding Sound, pages 1 & 27

What is an expressive element of music?

An expressive element of music is any aspect of a musical work that can be manipulated or adjusted by the performer to create a particular expressive outcome, character, atmosphere or mood. This manipulation is usually referred to as interpretation.

Expressive Element of Music

An element of music that can be manipulated by a performer to create chosen expressive outcomes

Which elements of music are expressive?

Decoding Sound, page 28

The elements that are commonly considered expressive include

- **Tempo;**
- **Dynamics;**
- **Articulation;**
- **Tone Colour;**
- **Texture (Balance of music lines and Blend of instrumental voices);**
- **Phrasing;**
- **Ornamentation/Embellishment** and
- **Improvisation**

The other elements of music, not included in this list can also be expressive, depending on the style of music being performed. For example, in a jazz performance any of the elements of music can be manipulated by the performer (usually called improvisation) and therefore, even usually composed elements of music (such as rhythm and melody) can become expressive.

Expressive Element Evidence for Expressive Outcomes.

As you read on [page 7](#) :

Your choice of “Expressive Outcomes” CANNOT be “wrong”. And - changing your mind is allowed!!

However, it can be incomplete if you do not give enough ELEMENT based EVIDENCE to support the Expressive Outcome(s) you chose.

How can one work have different expressive outcomes?

(Answer 2)

Decoding Sound, pages 15 to 26

If you were to compare the expressive outcomes you gave for the three different versions of **Another One Bites the Dust** you will most likely find quite different responses for each.

Different performers can perform the same work in different ways. They can add to the music score by subtly (or not so subtly) shaping the expressive elements of music.

This is often referred to as **musical interpretation**.

Therefore, a performance of the same work by different performers can have very different expressive outcomes.

Listen to this first version of [Another One Bites the Dust performed by Queen](#) (0'00" to 0'57") and describe how the performers manipulate the expressive elements of music: tempo and tone colour.

Listen to this second version of [Another One Bites the Dust performed by Pomplamoose](#) (0'00" to 1'05") and describe how the performers the expressive elements of music: tempo and tone colour.

Listen to this third version of [Another One Bites the Dust performed by Angela](#) (0'00" to 1'05") and describe how the performers manipulate the expressive elements of music: tempo and tone colour.

Tempo

Tempo - the speed (usually of the beat/pulse) at which music is played.

Sample Vocabulary for describing the Tempo

Full list can be found in Decoding Sound, page 127

Accelerando	Moderato
Adagio	Piu Mosso
Allegretto	Presto
Allegro	Ritardando; Rallentando
Andante	Ritenuato
BPM	Rubato
Caesure	Stringendo

Non-music specific words to describe tempo:

Brisk	Lively
Changing	Moderate
Consistent	Plodding
Fast	Rapid
Inconsistent	Slower

Listen to this excerpt from [Swaz hie gat umbe](#) (1'57" to 2'29") from Carmina Burana by Carl Orff and discuss how the performers use tempo to achieve expressive outcomes.

Describe the expressive outcome of this excerpt.

Describe how the performers manipulate tempo in this excerpt.

Make connections between the performers' use of tempo and the expressive outcomes of the excerpt.

VCE specifics - Question 3 in both the [VCE Music Performance "2018 Aural and Written Examination"](#) and the ["2019 Aural and Written Examination"](#) papers include tempo as an option for the expressive element to be discussed in relation to the creation of expressive outcomes.

Dynamics

Dynamics - the volume of the music, commonly indicated by markings on the notated composition.

Sample Vocabulary for describing the Dynamics

Full list can be found in Decoding Sound, page 130

Crescendo (<i>cresc.</i>)	Forte (<i>f</i>)
Decrescendo (<i>decresc.</i>)	Fortissimo (<i>ff</i>)
Diminuendo (<i>dim.</i>)	Forte-Piano (<i>fp</i>)
Dynamic Swell	Mezzo-Piano (<i>mp</i>)
	Mezzo-Forte (<i>mf</i>)

Non-music specific words to describe dynamics:

Changing	Loud
Consistent	Silence
Inconsistent	Soft
	Softer

Listen to this excerpt from [Zadok the Priest](#) (1'10" – 1'54") (Coronation Anthem no. 1) composed by G F Handel and discuss how the performers use dynamics to achieve expressive outcomes.

Describe the expressive outcome of this excerpt.

Describe how the performers manipulate dynamics in this excerpt.

Make connections between the performers' use of dynamics and the expressive outcomes of the excerpt.

VCE specifics - Questions 1 and 2b in the [VCE Music Performance "2018 Aural and Written Examination"](#) paper include dynamics as the expressive element to be discussed (Q. 1) and as an option for the expressive element to be discussed (Q. 2b) in relation to the creation of expressive outcomes.

Articulation

Articulation - the techniques used by a performer that affect the quality of the sound being created. In particular, the attack (start) and decay (release) of a sound.

Sample Vocabulary for describing the Articulation

Full list can be found in Decoding Sound, pages 132 and 133

Multi-Instrumental Techniques

Attack
Decay, Release
Marcato
Portamento
Sforzando
Slur
Legato
Staccato
Rinforzando

Piano Techniques

Sostenuto pedal
Sustain Pedal
Vocal Techniques
Aspirate onset
Glottal onset
Vocal fry

String Instrument Techniques

Arco
Détaché
Pizzicato
Strummed
Up Bow

Wind Instrument Techniques

Double Tonguing
Flutter Tonguing
Slur
Tonguing

Percussion Instrument Techniques

Choke
Dampen/Muffle
Mallets/Sticks
Rimshot

Non-music specific words to describe articulation:

Abrupt
Clipped
Crisp
Echoing
Emerging
Explosive
Fading
Hard
Interrupted
Lingering
Muffled
Natural
Organic
Pattering
Precise
Prolonged
Short

Articulation continued

Listen to this excerpt from [Jazz Pizzicato](#) (0'00" – 0'47") composed by Leroy Anderson and discuss how the performers use articulation to achieve expressive outcomes.

Describe the expressive outcome of this excerpt.

Describe how the performers manipulate articulation in this excerpt.

Make connections between the performers' use of articulation and the expressive outcomes of the excerpt.

VCE specifics - Question 1b from the [VCE Music Performance "2017 Aural and Written Examination"](#), Questions 2b and 3 from the [VCE Music Performance "2018 Aural and Written Examination"](#) and Questions 2 and 3 from the ["2019 Aural and Written Examination"](#) papers all include articulation as either THE expressive element to be discussed OR as an option for the expressive element to be discussed, all in relation to the creation of expressive outcomes.

Tone Colour

Tone Colour - the sound quality of an instrument(s). Also referred to as timbre.

Sample Vocabulary for describing the Tone Colour

Full list can be found in Decoding Sound, pages 134 and 135

Breathy tone colour words:

Airy
Aspirate
Breathy
Croaky
Feathery
Hoarse
Husky
Muffled
Muted
Smoky

Bright tone colour words:

Bell-like
Brassy
Brilliant
Chiming
Clear
Delicate
Glittering
Jingling
Pure
Reedy
Shimmering

Harsh tone colour words:

Abrasive
Buzzing
Distorted
Forced
Growling
Harsh
Percussive
Pounding
Raucous
Rattling
Scratchy

Shrill tone colour words:

Blasting
Blaring
Cutting
Metallic
Nasal
Penetrating
Piercing
Screaming
Squeaky

Mellow tone colour words:

Bellowing
Blurry
Dull
Flat
Hollow
Mellow
Muted
Reverberant

Other:

Acoustic
Blended
Disparate
Eerie
Electronic
Homogenous
Synthesised

Tone Colour continued

Listen to this excerpt from [Small Town](#) (0'00" to 0'49") composed by Peter Sculthorpe, and discuss how the performers use tone colour to achieve expressive outcomes.

Describe the expressive outcome of this excerpt.

Describe how the performers manipulate tone colour in this excerpt.

Make connections between the performers' use of tone colour and the expressive outcomes of the excerpt.

VCE specifics - Questions 1a and 3 from the [VCE Music Performance "2017 Aural and Written Examination"](#), Questions 2a and 3 from the [VCE Music Performance "2018 Aural and Written Examination"](#) and Questions 2 and 3 from the ["2019 Aural and Written Examination"](#) papers all include tone colour as either THE expressive element to be discussed OR as an option for the expressive element to be discussed, all in relation to the creation of expressive outcomes.

Texture - Balance of music lines

Balance of music lines - the instrumental/vocal layers in the music, their roles, and how they relate to each other.

Texture - Blend of Instrumental Voices

Blend of instrumental voices - the way individual and/or groups of instruments/voices merge or stand out.

Sample Vocabulary for describing Texture

Full list can be found in Decoding Sound, page 137

Accompaniment	Foreground
Antiphonic	Heterophonic
Background	Homophonic
Balance	Melody and accompaniment
Blend	
Emerging Lines	Polyphonic

Non-music specific words to describe texture:	
Balanced	Inconspicuous
Blended	Layer
Dense	Projection
Discernible	Prominent
Impenetrable	Sparse

Listen to the first 20 seconds of Beethoven's [Grosse Fuge in B-Flat Major, Op. 133](#) and answer the following questions.

How many layers (melody/s accompaniment lines etc.) do you hear?

Describe the texture - focussing on the balance of music line - of this excerpt.

Describe how the performers are playing this excerpt to make the texture - focussing on the balance of music line - sound the way you just described.

Describe how the performers use balance of music lines to achieve expressive outcomes in this excerpt.

Texture - Balance of music lines and Blend of Instrumental Voices continued

Continue listening to the first 20 seconds of Beethoven's [Grosse Fuge in B-Flat Major, Op. 133](#) and answer the following questions.

We have determined the texture of this excerpt and have described the texture from a balance of music lines perspective. Adapt what you wrote in Step 2 in the previous question to reflect the different textural element: Blend of Instrumental Voices.

Describe how the performers are playing this excerpt to make the texture - focussing on the blend of instrument voices - sound the way you just described.

Describe how the performers use the blend of instrument voices to achieve expressive outcomes in this excerpt.

VCE specifics - Questions in all three past papers: [VCE Music Performance "2017 Aural and Written Examination"](#), [VCE Music Performance "2018 Aural and Written Examination"](#) and ["2019 Aural and Written Examination"](#) include balance of music lines as the expressive element to be discussed in relation to the creation of expressive outcomes.

Phrasing

Phrasing - the way a performer divides the music into short, distinct sections (think phrase or sentence in English) during a performance.

Sample Vocabulary for describing Phrasing

Full list can be found in Decoding Sound, page 136

Antecedent Phrase	Motif
Back Phrasing	Musical Gesture
Balanced Phrases	Phrase
Consequent Phrase	Phrase Extension
Contrasting Phrases	Phrase Group
Irregular Phrase	Regular Phrase

Non-music specific words to describe phrasing:

Building	Relaxed
Consistent	Repeated
Continuous	Short
Disconnected	Similar
Even	Smooth

Listen to this excerpt from [The Entertainer](#) (1'43" – 2'30") composed by Scott Joplin, and discuss how the performers use phrasing to achieve expressive outcomes.

Describe the expressive outcome of this excerpt.

Describe how the performers manipulate phrasing in this excerpt.

Make connections between the performers' use of phrasing and the expressive outcomes of the excerpt.

VCE specifics - Question 1a in the ["2019 Aural and Written Examination"](#) includes phrasing as the expressive element to be discussed in relation to the creation of expressive outcomes.

Ornamentation/Embellishment

Ornamentation/Embellishment - the way a performer alters the main notes of the music being performed, usually by adding notes or altering the rhythm.

Sample Vocabulary for describing Ornamentation/Embellishment

Full list can be found in Decoding Sound, page 138

Bend	Tremolo
Doit Note and Fall Note	Trill
Glissando	Turn
Acciaccatura	Unvoiced/Ghost Note
	Vibrato

Non-music specific words to describe ornamentation/embellishment:

Consistent	Unpredictable
Decorated	Variety

Listen to this excerpt from [Nocturne No. 2 in E Flat](#) (2'55" – 4'10") composed by Frederic Chopin, and discuss how the performers use ornamentation/embellishment to achieve expressive outcomes.

Describe the expressive outcome of this excerpt.

Describe how the performers manipulate ornamentation/embellishment in this excerpt.

Make connections between the performers' use of ornamentation/embellishment and the expressive outcomes of the excerpt.

VCE specifics - Questions in all three past papers: [VCE Music Performance "2017 Aural and Written Examination"](#), [VCE Music Performance "2018 Aural and Written Examination"](#) and ["2019 Aural and Written Examination"](#) include ornamentation/embellishment as the expressive element to be discussed in relation to the creation of expressive outcomes.

Improvisation

Improvisation - a spontaneous musical passage, section or composition created by a performer.

Sample Vocabulary for describing Improvisation

Full list can be found in Decoding Sound, page 139

Ad lib, Ad libitum	Extemporisation	Riff
Altered Chords	Extended Chords	Scat
Cells	Fill	Targeting
Comping	Lick	Vamp

Listen to this excerpt from [My Favorite Things](#) (0'18" to 1'18") composed by Oscar Hammerstein II and Richard Rodgers, and answer the following questions.

Describe the expressive outcome of this excerpt.

Describe the improvisation in this excerpt.

Discuss how the performers use improvisation to achieve expressive outcomes.

VCE specifics - Questions in all three past papers: [VCE Music Performance "2017 Aural and Written Examination"](#), [VCE Music Performance "2018 Aural and Written Examination"](#) and ["2019 Aural and Written Examination"](#) include improvisation as the expressive element to be discussed in relation to the creation of expressive outcomes.

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